



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The following message was sent this evening to the Columbia community. Due to its time-sensitive nature, we are making an exception to our usual practice and sending this to our alumni on Friday evening.

Dear members of the Columbia community:

Columbia's mission is to teach, create, and advance knowledge. For over 270 years, that mission has been grounded in an enduring and essential commitment to freedom of expression, open inquiry, and generous, respectful debate.

Today, we were notified of federal action from Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Education (ED), and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) cancelling \$400 million in federal funding to the University. The federal agencies cite "the school's continued inaction in the face of persistent harassment of Jewish students."

There is no question that the cancellation of these funds will immediately impact research and other critical functions of the University, impacting students, faculty, staff, research, and patient care.

But let me be very clear: Columbia is taking the government's action very seriously. I want to assure the entire Columbia community that we are committed to working with the federal government to address their legitimate concerns. To that end, Columbia can, and will, continue to take [serious action toward combatting antisemitism on our campus](#).

This is our number one priority.

Today's announcement will undoubtedly create anxiety and concern for our entire community. These impacts will touch nearly every corner of the University. But it is during periods like this that our collective dedication to this institution and our mission takes on critical importance.

Our north star has not changed. We are committed to education and research that will benefit our nation and our world. We believe in the power of knowledge to drive progress and improve lives. Our mission as a great research university does not waver.

Sustaining this mission requires us to actively nurture a community that values viewpoint diversity and rigorous, fact-based debate built upon mutual respect and

personal accountability. Our ability to successfully fulfill our purpose depends on us defending these values. Antisemitism, violence, discrimination, harassment, and other behaviors that violate our values or disrupt teaching, learning, or research are antithetical to our mission. We must continue to work to address any instances of these unacceptable behaviors on our campus. We must work every day to do better.

When I accepted the role of Interim President in August 2024, I knew Columbia needed a reset from the previous year and the chaos of encampments and protests on our campus. The University also needed to acknowledge and repair the damage to our Jewish students, who were targeted, harassed, and made to feel unsafe or unwelcome on our campus last spring.

My first action as Interim President was to clarify our Rules of University Conduct and strengthen our disciplinary process. We did that by appointing a new Rules Administrator, establishing an Office of Institutional Equity to combat antisemitism and all forms of harassment and discrimination on campus, and increasing resources and training for our Public Safety team.

We have transformed the University's approach to managing demonstrations, built and put into action disciplinary processes that previously existed only on paper, created collaboratives across our campuses to provide relevant education and training, implemented new anti-discrimination policies and trained our entire community on those policies, changed our protocols for campus access, and redesigned our leadership structures to more swiftly respond to incidents of antisemitism and discrimination on campus. As a result, our campus has retained its focus on our academic mission throughout this academic year.

Each morning, I remind myself that I am standing up for our students. Because every student deserves to have the best possible experience and because our nation deserves to have the best leaders that the best universities can create. The only way we can achieve that goal is to look honestly and deeply at not just our achievements, but at our failures and shortcomings, and ask ourselves how we can do better. That's something doctors do for their patients every day, and something I'm committed to doing for as long as I have the privilege of serving as the leader of this distinguished and storied institution.

At this time of great risk to our University, I challenge every member of our community, including our students, faculty, and staff, to reaffirm your commitment and participation in building a Columbia that truly reflects the ingenuity, curiosity, excitement, and sense of purpose we share as part of this unique institution.

No one can forecast with certainty what the future will hold. However, I do know this: a unified Columbia, one that remains focused on our mission and our values, will succeed in making the uncommonly valuable contributions to society that have distinguished this great university from its peers over the last 270 years. Being part of

this esteemed institution of learning and research is a privilege that we should never take for granted.

We must hold firm and summon the courage to meet this moment with determination, integrity and humility. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve exactly this.

Sincerely,

Katrina Armstrong
Interim President, Columbia University in the City of New York