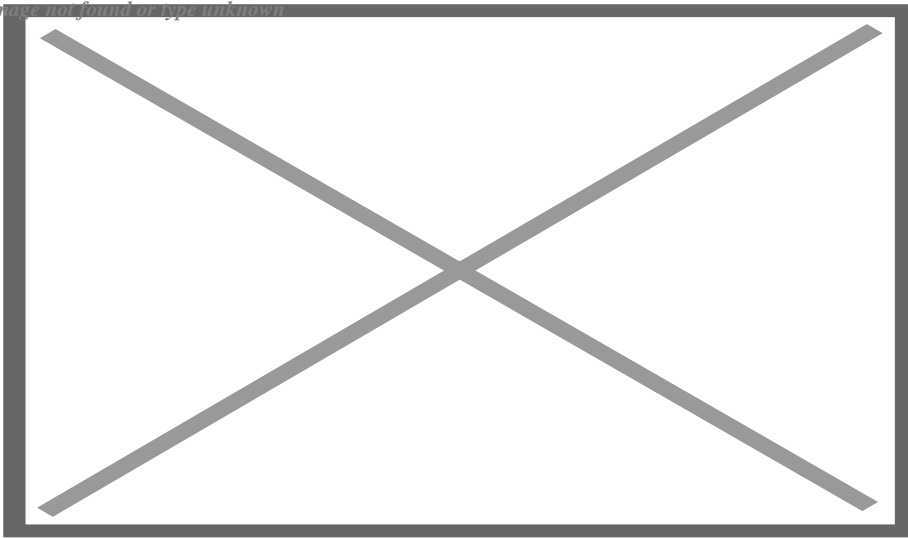


U.S. freezes \$2 billion in federal funding for Harvard University after it rejects Trump's demands

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Boston, April 15 (RHC)-- The U.S. Department of Education on Monday froze more than \$2 billion in federal funding for Harvard University, just hours after the school rejected President Donald Trump's demands that it make deep policy changes on diversity.

A Department of Education task force on combating antisemitism said in a statement that it was freezing \$2.2 billion in multi-year grants and \$60 million in multi-year contract value to Harvard University.

The move marks a new level of contentiousness between President Donald Trump's administration and American universities it accuses of being captured by the extreme left.

Trump's administration has frozen hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for numerous universities, pressing the institutions to make policy and other changes and citing what it says is a failure to fight antisemitism on campus.

Deportation proceedings have begun against some detained foreign students who took part in pro-Palestinian demonstrations, while visas for hundreds of other students have been canceled. The crackdown has raised concerns about speech and academic freedoms.

Harvard on Monday rejected Trump administration demands that to receive federal funding it end diversity efforts and take other steps that the university said would stifle intellectual freedoms of faculty and students.

Harvard President Alan Garber wrote in a public letter that demands made on Friday by the federal Department of Education would allow the federal government "to control the Harvard community" and threaten the school's "values as a private institution devoted to the pursuit, production, and dissemination of knowledge."

"No government - regardless of which party is in power - should dictate what private universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue," he added.

The Department of Education said in a written statement that the letter from Garber "reinforces the troubling entitlement mindset that is endemic in our nation's most prestigious universities and colleges – that federal investment does not come with the responsibility to uphold civil rights laws."

The issue of antisemitism on campus erupted before Trump took office for his second term, following pro-Palestinian student protests last year at several universities following the 2023 Hamas attack inside Israel and the subsequent Israeli attacks on Gaza.

White House spokesman Harrison Fields said in a statement on Monday that Trump was "working to Make Higher Education Great Again by ending unchecked anti-Semitism and ensuring federal taxpayer dollars do not fund Harvard's support of dangerous racial discrimination or racially motivated violence."

In a letter sent from Washington, the education department stated that Harvard had "failed to live up to both the intellectual and civil rights conditions that justify federal investment."

The department demanded that Harvard, work to reduce the influence of faculty, staff and students who are "more committed to activism than scholarship" and have an external panel audit the faculty and students of each department to ensure "viewpoint diversity."

The letter also stated that Harvard, by this August, must only hire faculty and admit students based on merit and cease all preferences based on race, color or national origin. The university must also screen international students "to prevent admitting students hostile to American values" and report to federal immigration authorities foreign students who violate conduct rules.

Last week, a group of Harvard professors sued to block the Trump administration's review of nearly \$9 billion in federal contracts and grants awarded to the school.

The Trump administration is reportedly considering forcing fellow Ivy League school Columbia into a consent decree, that would legally bind the school to follow federal guidelines in how it combats antisemitism. Some Columbia professors, like those at Harvard, have sued the federal government in response. The government has suspended \$400 million in federal funding and grants to Columbia.

Harvard president Garber said the federal government's demands that it "audit" the viewpoints of its students, faculty and staff to ferret out left-wing thinkers generally opposed to the Trump administration clearly violated the university's First Amendment rights to freedom of speech.

"The University will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights," Garber wrote. He added that while Harvard is taking steps to address antisemitism on campus, "these ends will not be achieved by assertions of power, unmoored from the law, to control teaching and learning at Harvard and to dictate how we operate."

Harvard agreed in January to provide additional protections for Jewish students under a settlement resolving two lawsuits accusing the Ivy League school of becoming a hotbed of antisemitism.

To ease any funding crunch created by any cutoff in federal funding, Harvard is working to borrow \$750 million from Wall Street.

[SOURCE: REUTERS and NEWS AGENCIES]

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