
US Universities unite against Trump's higher Ed Policies



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Over 150 presidents of U.S. colleges and universities, including leaders from Harvard, Princeton, and Brown, have signed a joint statement condemning the Trump administration's "unprecedented government overreach" in higher education. Published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the statement marks a rare unified stand against what institutions describe as a campaign to erode academic independence.

The move follows a series of aggressive federal actions against prominent institutions, including threats to revoke funding, pressure to relinquish institutional autonomy, and calls to suppress campus dissent under the guise of combating antisemitism. Most notably, Harvard University recently filed a lawsuit after the government froze \$2.3 billion in federal funds and challenged its tax-exempt status.

The signatories, representing a diverse range of institutions, emphasized they are open to legitimate oversight but reject “undue government intrusion” in academic affairs. “Our campuses must remain places of open inquiry and free exchange of ideas,” the statement reads.

AAC&U President Lynn Pasquerella noted the effort came after weeks of internal deliberation and growing alarm over the administration’s tactics, which include audits of faculty views and threats to diversity initiatives. The White House’s demands, critics say, aim to intimidate campuses and dismantle long-standing educational freedoms.

While Columbia University accepted government conditions to restore funding, including placing a department under outside oversight, its president notably did not sign the joint letter.

The statement follows emergency meetings of university leaders who agreed to take collective action. Alongside legal challenges from Harvard and others, faculty networks are forming alliances to defend academic freedom. Pasquerella called the joint message “a signal to the public”

of what is at risk if political interference continues unchecked.

This collective pushback marks a pivotal moment in the evolving clash between academia and government.