

Columbia University president quits amid Trump's crackdown on social activism



Columbia University's interim President Dr. Katrina A. Armstrong has resigned and will return to

lead the school's prestigious Irving Medical Center in New York City. (Photo by AP)

New York, March 29 (RHC)-- Columbia University's interim president stepped down on Friday, marking the second leadership departure, after the Donald Trump administration's crackdown on pro-Palestinian student activities prompted her to agree with sweeping policy changes at the Ivy League school.

Katrina Armstrong resigned effective immediately, and journalist Claire Shipman, the school's board chair, has been appointed as the new interim president. Armstrong had taken over the role from the university's former president, Minouche Shafik, who stepped down in August.

Armstrong's resignation came just a week after the institution conceded to a series of demands from the Trump administration to open talks to regain access to \$400 million in frozen research funding, which had been withheld over allegations of anti-Semitism on campus.

Trump's joint task force to combat anti-Semitism welcomed Armstrong's resignation, calling it "an important step toward advancing negotiations as set forth in the pre-conditional understanding reached last Friday" in a statement.

The Trump administration is investigating scores of universities for what it claimed to be anti-Semitism over Israel's brutal aggression on the Gaza Strip. The White House has repeatedly accused the university's leadership of not doing enough to address "anti-Semitism" during students' mass campus protests against the Israeli regime forces' genocidal war against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The Trump administration has warned at least 60 other academic institutions that they could face penalties over ongoing probes into "anti-Semitism on college campuses."

Columbia University is currently facing multiple federal investigations, and it has become a primary focus of Trump's immigration crackdown targeting pro-Palestinian student activists.

One such individual, former Columbia graduate student and green card holder Mahmoud Khalil, is currently being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In recent weeks, the State Department has moved to deport several Columbia students with visas over alleged "pro-Hamas" sentiment. The university has also confirmed that Department of Homeland Security agents have been present on campus.

Armstrong, the fourth Ivy League president to resign amid Republican pressure on universities' responses to pro-Palestinian student activism, follows in the footsteps of the presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania, who stepped down after intense scrutiny from the House education panel.

Armstrong will now return to her previous job of leading Columbia's Irving Medical Center in New York City.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and ASSOCIATED PRESS]

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