Trump administration issues list of demands Columbia must meet to maintain federal funding

The conditions outlined in a Thursday letter to Armstrong must be met by March 20.



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By Gabriella Gregor Splaver / Columbia Daily Spectator

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The letter to Armstrong stated that the University must comply with required policy shifts, listing nine bullet points.

BY MOLLY BORDOFF • MARCH 14, 2025 AT 1:44 AM

The Trump administration outlined a series of preconditions and policy changes for

Columbia in order to restore \$400 million in federal funding and maintain a "continued financial relationship" between the University and the federal government in a Thursday letter addressed to interim University President Katrina Armstrong. The letter stated that the University must comply with required policy shifts, listing nine bullet points. Demands include the abolition of the University Judicial Board, the

implementation of a mask ban, and the granting of "full law enforcement authority,

meet the demands by March 20 in order to participate in "formal negotiations" with the federal government. The Trump administration wrote that the letter was a "follow up" to a March 7 letter announcing the cancellation of \$400 million in federal grants and contracts to Columbia

including arrest and removal of agitators" to public safety officers. The University must

The letter requires that the University complete disciplinary proceedings for students involved in the April 2024 "Gaza Solidarity Encampments" and occupation of Hamilton Hall, adding that "meaningful discipline means expulsion or multi-year suspension."

after the University had requested guidance for "next steps."

Rules Administrator and professor of political science Gregory Wawro announced in a Wednesday email that hearings for the involved students had been completed. On Thursday, the University Judicial Board issued expulsions, multi-year suspensions, and temporary degree revocations for students involved in the Hamilton occupation.

The letter demands that the University abolish the University Judicial Board and "centralize" all disciplinary processes under the Office of the President," empowering the Office of the President to suspend or expel students. The letter introduces a precondition that Columbia Public Safety officers have "full law enforcement authority, including arrest and removal of agitators."

Demands further include a mask ban policy for masks "intended to conceal identity or intimidate others" and that individuals wearing masks for religious and health reasons display their Columbia University ID visible on their clothing.

The letter stated it was a "formal response to the current situation on the campus of Columbia University," and that Columbia has "fundamentally failed to protect American students and faculty from antisemitic violence and harassment in addition to other alleged violations of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Compliance would also require that the University begin the process of placing the Middle East, South Asian, and African studies department under academic receivership—a process that requires an outside chair to run the department—for a minimum of five years. The letter demands that the University's compliance with this particular demand include "date certain" deliverables by the March 20 deadline.

The letter was signed by Josh Gruenbaum, commissioner of the Federal Acquisition Service, Sean Keveney, acting general counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services, and Thomas Wheeler, acting general counsel for the Department of Education.

It further demands the implementation of "time, place, and manner rules," including a "plan to hold all student groups accountable," and "a plan for comprehensive admissions reform." It additionally adds a demand for the adoption and promotion of a formal definition of antisemitism.

In February 2024, Columbia established "Demonstration Areas" and "Regular Demonstration Times" in an interim demonstration policy. The policy required protests to be pre-registered, stipulating that student groups and their individual members were not permitted to advertise demonstrations before they were approved.

The policy has since expired, and at the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year, the senate Rules of University Conduct committee issued a set of revised guidelines to the Rules that does not require protests to be registered and approved in advance. Instead, the guidelines request groups to notify Public Safety and University Life before making any public announcement of a protest.

"We expect your immediate compliance with these critical next steps, after which we hope to open a conversation about immediate and long-term structural reforms that will return Columbia to its original mission of innovative research and academic excellence," the letter read.

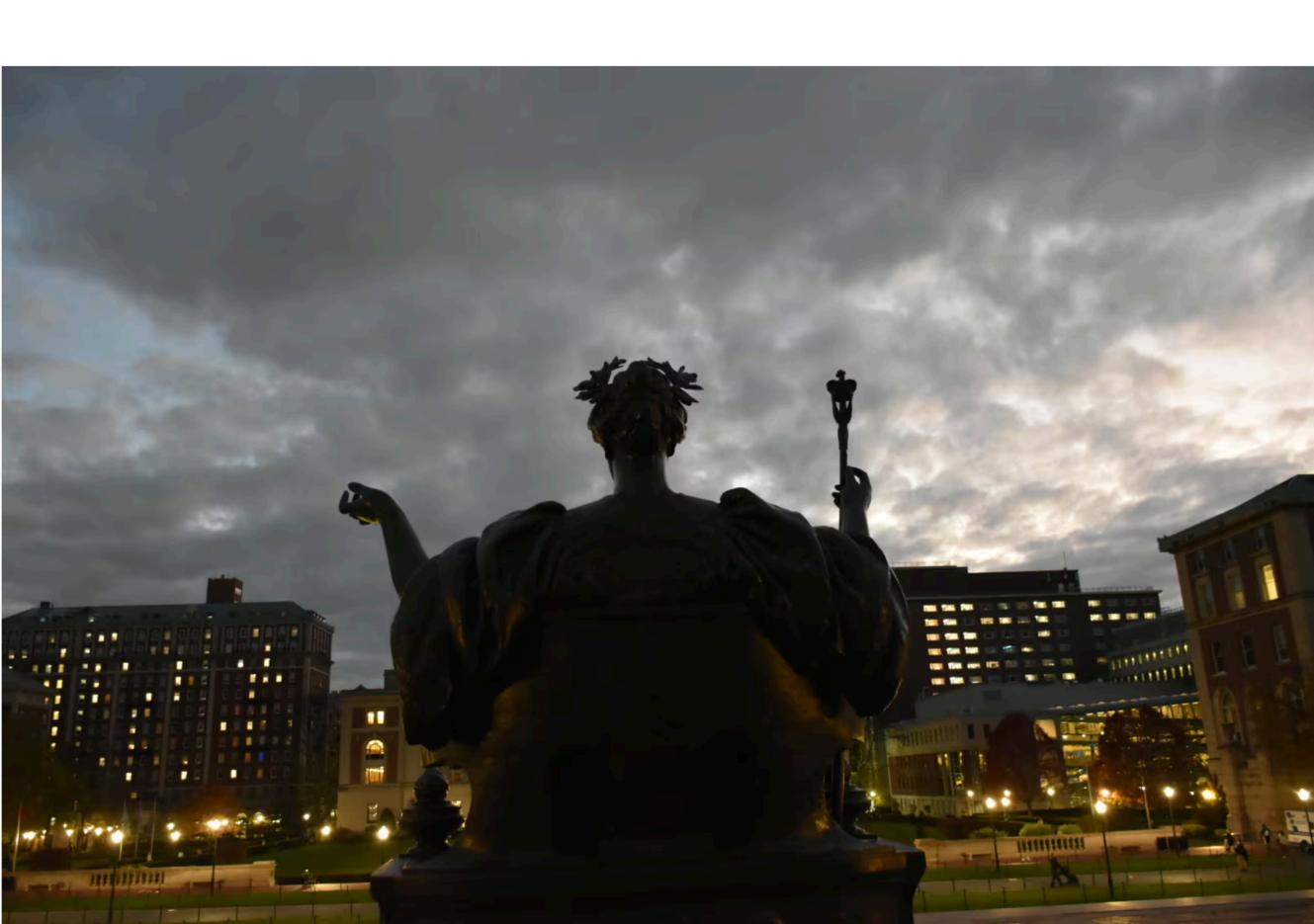
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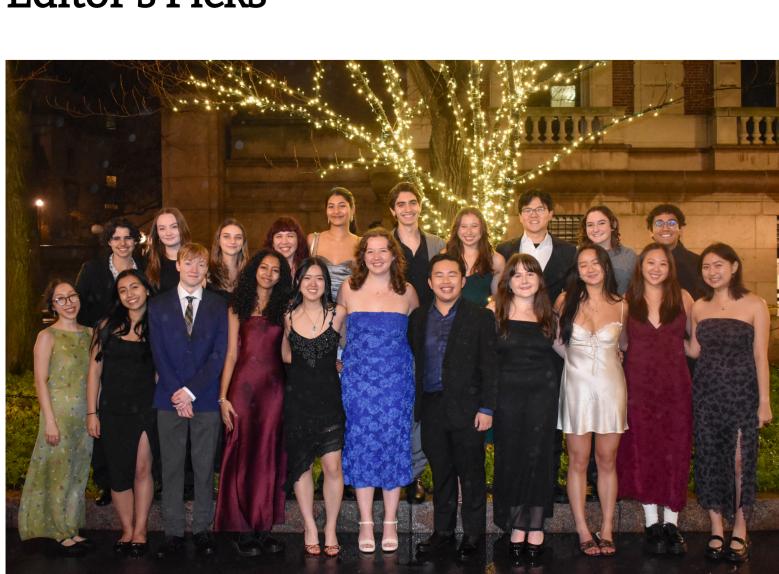
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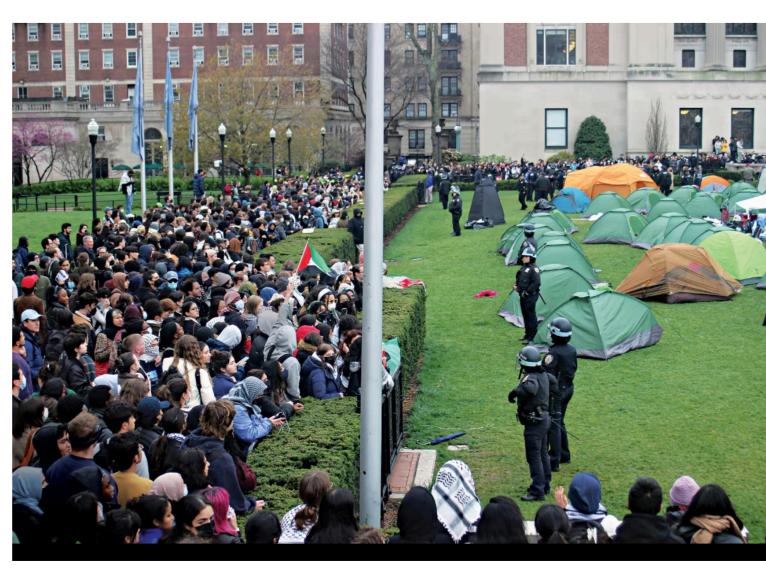
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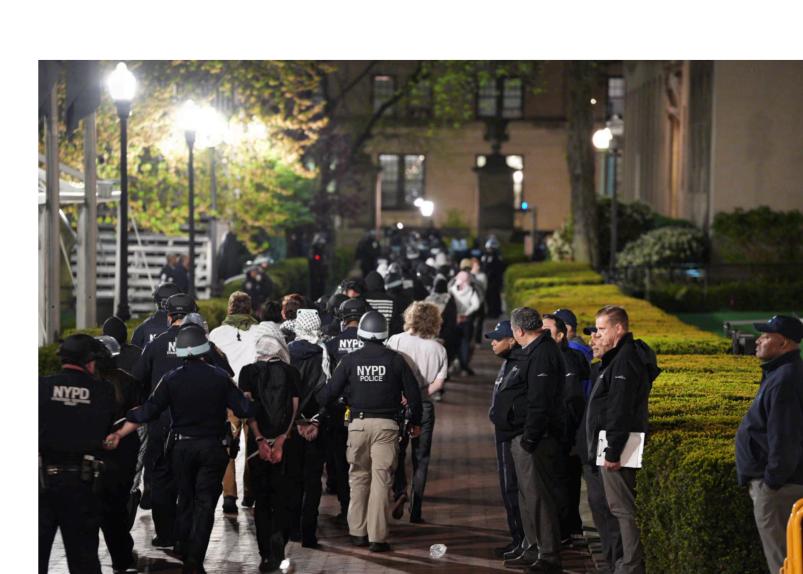


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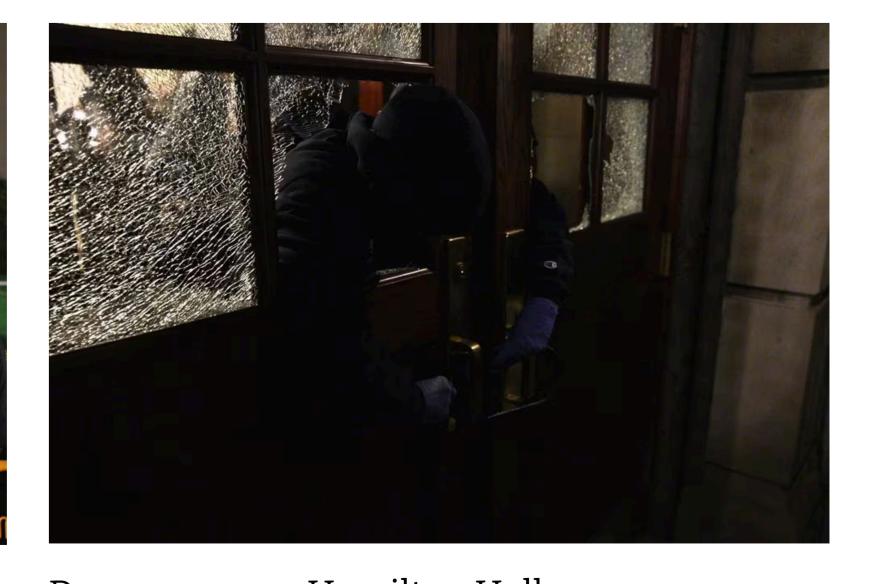


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