

TEXT 1

Le Monde

For French universities, international students are a form of political, scientific and economic soft power

The presence of international students in France has pushed higher education institutions to innovate and rethink their courses. But they also reinforce the country's soft power and provide an economic windfall.

By Eric Nunès

Published on March 16, 2024

The only thing 22-year-old Joep Salet lacks in his new life as a student in the Paris region is the waves of Scheveningen beach (The Hague, Netherlands) in the North Sea, where he surfed until 2023. Now a master's student in perfume development at ISIPCA, the International Institute of Perfume, Cosmetics and Food Aromatics, on the Versailles campus, the native of The Hague decided at the age of 17 that he would become a perfumer, "a profession that combines science and creation and whose best schools are here and in Grasse" (French Riviera). In his class of around 20 students, he rubs shoulders with a Colombian, a Korean, a Chinese, an Italian... and two French students. In this niche of higher education, the reputation of the best French institutions knows no borders.

Milica Ritopecki, 24, also feels a touch of nostalgia when she recalls evenings spent with her friends on the banks of the Danube, in Pancevo, Serbia. But in 2022, as a physics and chemistry undergraduate at the University of Belgrade, she traveled around Europe in search of "the best European program in [her] specialty." She left Vojvodina, a province in northern Serbia, for the Ile-de-France region, at the Université Paris-Saclay. And she's not the only one. Out of 48,000 students, 35% are international.

For Dario Cervera Jorda, a newcomer to Paris, it's the warmth of the sun in his native Valencia, Spain, that he misses. With a bachelor's degree in piano from his local university, the 27-year-old set foot at the Paris Conservatoire as an Erasmus exchange student in 2022. In 2023, he was admitted, after a competitive examination, to the harpsichord master's program. The Holy Grail for the young Spaniard. "This school, open to the whole world, has a legendary status for all musicians. Its resources are impressive and its teachers exceptional," pointed out the student. "The years of study here open up many professional opportunities," he continued.

500,000 international students in 2027

In search of the skills and institutions they need to build their future, more than 400,000 international students chose France in 2024 to pursue their studies. They are also France's future ambassadors, and an accurate barometer of the country's attractiveness. According to a report

by Campus France, the national agency in charge of promoting French higher education abroad, published in June 2023, French universities are the leading institutions welcoming international students (65%), ahead of business schools (14%) and engineering schools (7%). The top regions of origin for their students are North Africa (75,477) in 2021-2022, sub-Saharan Africa (71,221), the European Union (46,938) and Asia (44,498).

The government's 2018 "Choose France/Bienvenue en France" plan aims to welcome 500,000 international students by 2027. This target is at odds with the immigration law passed by Parliament on December 19, 2023, which planned to tighten entry conditions for foreign students. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the majority of these students do not stay in France, noting that 43% of international students who arrived in 2010 had left the country by the end of their studies, and 80% had left 10 years later. The new provisions concerning these students in the immigration law were completely censured by the French Constitutional Council on January 25.

Welcoming international students has become a "priority" issue since the reform granting universities greater autonomy in 2007, stressed Sandrine Lacombe, vice-president of international relations and European affairs at Université Paris-Saclay. "The restructuring of our institutions has made French higher education more attractive and more competitive internationally." At a time when French universities are struggling to make it into the top 50 of international rankings, Paris-Saclay ranked 15th in the Shanghai ranking in 2023. Moreover, the cost of university studies is quite low: €170 for one year of a Bachelor's degree, €243 for one year of a Master's degree for students from the European Union and Switzerland. As for international students from outside the European Economic Area, they have been subject to higher fees since 2019: €2,770 for one year of a Bachelor's and €3,770 for one year of a Master's. However, only 13 out of 75 universities apply this option, with 42 fully exempting their non-European students, relieving them of a significant financial burden.

Business schools in demand

The most expensive French grandes écoles (the country's elite universities) also attract international students. Over the past five years, the number of foreign students enrolled in French business schools has doubled. International students make up 25% of the student body of Neoma Business School in Mont-Saint-Aignan (Normandy), each paying tuition fees of €16,000 per year. The largest cohorts come from Morocco, India and China. "They come to France in search of a quality education," commented Delphine Manceau, the school's director. "Our institutions are recognized by our international peers. They guarantee that [students] can pursue their studies anywhere in the world, and are a passport to employment." According to the *Financial Times* ranking of the best European business schools in 2023, five French schools feature in the top 10, and 23 in the top 90.

For non-public schools, international students have become an indispensable source of revenue, especially as the number of French students declines. As students born to the 2000 baby boom enter the job market, seats at French schools and universities are emptying out. In 2022, universities had 44,000 fewer students than in 2021, according to INSEE, the French National Institute of Statistics. "In fierce competition with Anglo-Saxon countries and Germany, we are forced to recruit abroad, in a market where there are more schools and fewer French students, so the cake to share is smaller," admitted Elodie Saint-Yves, director of international partnerships at Rennes School of Business.

This demographic decline is also a concern for engineering schools: "The pool of good candidates is beginning to dry up," warned Alexis Michel, president of the Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools. "The training of engineers and doctoral students is strategic for the country. So we have to anticipate!" Recruiting the best foreign students is a matter of urgency, because in this international war for talent, "the Americans are the masters of the game," pointed out Olivier Lesbre, director of the National Higher French Institute of Aeronautics and Space. The US is home to 1.5 million international students, and 21% of the world's students are on the American continent.

Gone are the days when students simply sought the best degree in their home country. "The best students are looking for the best schools," continued Lesbre, whose school boasts 40% international students from 70 different countries. "In this international competition, engineering schools must also prove that they are competitive and train excellent foreign students in France to compensate for the departure of French students abroad," emphasized the director. To exist in a globalized world, schools and universities need to attract the right students, regardless of their place of birth.

Opening up to other paradigms

This internationalization of institutions is also shaping teaching methods. Firstly, the language of instruction: "At the end of the 1990s, few French schools offered courses in English," recalled Elian Pilvin, director of the EM Normandie business school. "But now, it's a must." This is true in business and engineering schools, as well as public universities. "The international appeal of Paris-Saclay has led us to offer courses in English," admitted Lacombe. Secondly, cosmopolitan campuses are also adapting the content of their courses. "Topics linked to the ecological transition are not perceived in the same way in France, Norway or Malaysia, so we have to approach them by integrating nuances for an issue that is global," explained Manceau.

The internationalization of students and teachers is also driving schools to innovate. "Taking into account what is being done in other countries allows us to introduce a comparative dimension into our teaching and research, opening everyone up to other paradigms. It enriches our scientific experience, as well as our mindsets," noted Irini Tsamadou-Jacobberger, vice-president of Europe and International Relations at the University of Strasbourg, which is aiming for 22% of international students by 2022-2023. Learning about multiculturalism enables French students to be more agile, adaptable and sensitive to understanding other societies. "It's a better preparation for those aiming for an international career," summed up Manceau.

Foreign students are also a source of revenue for the country. According to a Campus France study published in 2022, they represent a financial windfall in terms of expenditure, amounting to €5 billion a year. If we deduct the €3.7 billion of public spending devoted to them – housing assistance, scholarships, access to healthcare, personnel expenses dedicated to cultural diplomacy and influence – the net balance is estimated at €1.35 billion.

Beyond national needs, welcoming international students is a form of political, scientific, economic and cultural soft power. By investing in these educated young people, France is building its influence. "These students enable us to establish peaceful and lasting relations between societies, to open up to different ways of thinking and doing things, and to provide keys to understanding for our students, whom we train to become enlightened citizens of the world," said Anne Chalard-Fillaudeau, vice-president of communications at the Université Paris-VIII. "Alumni become ambassadors for our universities and schools, and will participate in new collaborations

and projects," Tsamadou-Jacobberger also emphasized. Scientific diplomacy has to be a priority, which also means welcoming international students in the best possible way.

TEXT 2



Borrowers grapple with what Trump's win means for their student loan debt

Nov 8, 2024

By Cheyanne Mumphrey

Savannah Britt owes about \$27,000 on loans she took out to attend college at Rutgers University, a debt she was hoping to see reduced by President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness efforts.

Her payments are currently on hold while courts untangle challenges to the loan forgiveness program. But as the weeks tick down on Biden's time in office, she could soon face a monthly payment of up to \$250.

"With this new administration, the dream is gone. It's shot," said Britt, 30, who runs her own communications agency. "I was hopeful before Tuesday. I was waiting out the process. Even my mom has a loan that she took out to support me. She owes about \$18,000, and she was in the process of it being forgiven, but it's at a standstill."

President-elect Donald Trump and his fellow Republicans have criticized Biden's loan forgiveness efforts, and lawsuits by GOP-led states have held up plans for widespread debt cancellation. Trump has not said what he would do on loan forgiveness, leaving millions of borrowers facing uncertainty over their personal finances.

The economy was an important issue in the election, helping to propel Trump to victory. But for borrowers, concerns about their finances extend beyond inflation to include their student debt, said Persis Yu, managing counsel for the Student Borrower Protection Center.

"With this new administration, the dream is gone. It's shot."

"That's a big part of what is making life unaffordable for them is this burden of expenses that they can't seem to get out from under," Yu said.

Student loan cancellation was not a focus of the campaign for either Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris, who steered clear of the issue at her political events. The issue came up just once in the September presidential debate, when Trump hammered Harris and Biden for failing to deliver their promise of widespread forgiveness. Trump called it a "total catastrophe" that "taunted young people."

Biden promised the student loan cancellation program during his run for the presidency. From its launch, Biden's loan forgiveness faced relentless pushback from opponents who said it heaped

advantage on elites and came at the expense of those who repaid their loans or did not attend college.

Biden's first plan to cancel up to \$20,000 for millions of people was blocked by the Supreme Court last year. A second, narrower plan has been halted by a federal judge after Republican-led states sued. A separate policy intended to lower loan payments for struggling borrowers has been paused by a judge, also after Republican-controlled states challenged it.

Overall, Biden's efforts were relatively unpopular, even among those with student loans. Three in 10 U.S. adults said they approved of how Biden had handled student loan debt, according to a poll this spring from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Four in 10 disapproved. The others were neutral or didn't know enough to say.

Project 2025, the blueprint for a hard-right turn in American government that aligns with some Trump priorities, calls for getting the federal government out of the student loan business and doing away with repayment plans that pre-date the Biden administration.

Even without directly addressing student loans, Trump has made promises that would affect them. He has pledged to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, which manages the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio. It's unclear which entity would take that responsibility if the department were eliminated, which would require approval from Congress.

Yu noted the Biden administration managed to cancel student loans for about 5 million borrowers, even though the signature forgiveness effort has been blocked. The administration did it by leaning into loan cancellation programs already in effect. For example, an existing student loan forgiveness program for public service workers has granted relief to more than 1 million Americans, up from just 7,000 who were approved before it was updated by the Biden administration two years ago.

"A lot of the cancellation that we saw in the last couple of years was because the Biden administration was committed to making the programs that are actually enshrined in law work for people," Yu said.

Sabrina Calazans, 27, owes about \$30,000 on federal student loans from her college days at Arcadia University in Pennsylvania. Her payments also have been on hold, but she could soon face a monthly payment of over \$300.

"As a first-generation American, I live at home with my family, I contribute to our household finances, and that payment is a lot for me and so many others like me," said Calazans, who is originally from Brazil.

In her role as managing director for Student Debt Crisis Center, Calazans said she has been telling people to stay up to date on developments by using the loan simulator on the Federal Student Aid website and reading updated information on forgiveness qualifications and repayment programs.

"There's a lot of confusion about student loans," Calazans said, and not just among young people. "We're seeing a lot of parents take out more debt for their children to be able to go to school. We're seeing older folks go back to school and having to take out loans as well."

TEXT 3

The New York Times

It Can Be Lonely to Have a Middle-of-the Road Opinion on the Middle East

Some college students and faculty members are seeking space for nuanced perspectives on the Israel-Hamas war on deeply divided campuses.

By Sharon Otterman

Dec. 22, 2024

The scene has become emblematic at many American college campuses since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Students waving Palestinian flags face off against students waving Israeli flags, each group shouting chants that enrage the other side.

But sometimes, there is a quieter group standing in the middle.

Last spring, Mikey Aboutboul, an Israeli-born senior at the University of California, Los Angeles, and about 30 like-minded people stood in the center of dueling protests and began chanting slogans that challenged both camps. They wore purple T-shirts to stand out from those around them.

“Palestinians and Jews, war and killing we refuse,” they chanted, inspired by a grassroots peace movement in Israel. “In Gaza and Tel Aviv, all the children want to live.”

Protesters around them turned and stared, wondering what to make of them. Then, some people from both sides joined in, Mr. Aboutboul recalled.

“That was kind of an amazing moment for me,” he said, adding, “These things resonate, because they are human messages.”

Mr. Aboutboul is a founding member of Students for Standing Together, a new student group at U.C.L.A. that aims to unite Israelis and Palestinians to call for a cease-fire in Gaza. In the long term, they hope to push for a peaceful, equitable solution for both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He is also part of another, broader group: Students and faculty members on college campuses across the country whose nuanced views place them between the extremes of Israeli-Palestinian advocacy. While the number of people organizing for coexistence from within that middle ground remains comparatively modest, they say their effort is gaining momentum, even if taking such positions can be isolating and difficult.

One of the stumbling blocks, those involved say, is that for both Jews and Palestinians, the key constituencies for these efforts, there is intense pressure to be fully supportive of one’s own people in a time of war.

Left-wing progressive Jews particularly can find themselves caught in a kind of partisan no man’s land when they try to take a complex position on the conflict, like being highly critical of the Israeli government and yet still believing in a Jewish state.

Palestinians who want to call for empathy for both Palestinian and Israeli civilians also don’t hear themselves reflected in chants that sound like zero-sum solutions, either them or us, said Zahra

Sakkejha, 35, a Palestinian-Canadian and U.C.L.A. alumna. She was among those with Mr. Aboutboul last spring standing between the warring protest camps.

Ms. Sakkejha's 18-year-old second cousin, who has a Palestinian father and Jewish Israeli mother, was among those kidnapped by Palestinian militants on Oct. 7, 2023, and later released in a hostage deal, she said. It underscored to Ms. Sakkejha that the fates of the two peoples cannot be separated.

While she also wants a free Palestinian state, she wants a peaceful way forward. "I think what made me really take a beat was just the sheer violence done in the name of the Palestinian cause," Ms. Sakkejha said. "I just couldn't stand for it. And I really just started to try to find others who were feeling the same way I was."

At Columbia University, Aharon Dardik, an Israeli American student, formed a group called CU Jews for Ceasefire after finding that his viewpoint wasn't fully reflected in the main pro-Palestinian student movement. He is a pacifist who spent his teen years with his family in the West Bank but who ultimately refused to serve in the army in Israel. He believes in working with Israelis and Palestinians toward collective liberation and a world not divided by ethnonationalist allegiances.

His ad hoc group now has over 100 members, he said. Some are anti-Zionist — meaning they think Israel shouldn't exist in its current form as a Jewish state — while others take a range of viewpoints on the issue. But everyone, he said, has personal stories of being ostracized by some Jews for not being more pro-Israel, even as they are treated with suspicion by pro-Palestinian activists who reject dialogue with Zionists.

Mr. Dardik says he tries not to get hung up about it. "I would describe us as people who care very, very deeply about human life, both Israeli and Palestinian, and that doesn't go so well in areas that care very deeply about Israeli life exclusively," he said. "It also doesn't do so well in areas that care predominantly about Palestinian life."

At George Washington University, Celia Little, a junior, helped restart a campus chapter of J Street U, the college wing of a liberal pro-Israel organization. She hopes to give Jewish students who are devastated by the war a space to process and learn, "not in an abrasive way, but just teaching about it and having an open discussion."

"As a progressive, sometimes it's difficult to be in some Jewish spaces," she said, "and as someone who really cares about Israel, it's hard to be in more progressive spaces. My goal has been that there can be a space where having nuance is important and valued."

As the war in Gaza grinds on, some students have become more entrenched and, in some cases, more extreme in their points of view. Some pro-Palestinian student groups, for example, now openly glorify armed resistance by Hamas and other organizations that the U.S. government considers terrorist entities.

But at Swarthmore, a liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, Sa'ed Atshan tries to make sure there is complexity in everything he teaches in his Contemporary Israel and Palestine class. Mr. Atshan, a peace and conflict studies professor, is Palestinian, was raised in the West Bank as a Quaker Christian and is a pacifist.

"It's never been more fraught," he said.

He has hosted lectures featuring Jewish and Palestinian scholars, and taken positions that challenge expectations of how he should behave as a Palestinian, such as refusing to pledge that he would not penalize pro-Palestinian students who walked out of class as part of a protest.

“It’s hard because the pressure is very serious,” he said. “You have to have thick skin.”

At U.C.L.A., Dov Waxman, a professor of Israel studies, is stepping down at the end of the year as director of the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for Israel Studies after experiencing intense pushback from both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian critics, he said. As a tenured professor, he will continue to teach.

He had tried, even over the past year, he said, to turn his center into a space for discussion and understanding of Israel “that was neither pro-Israel, nor anti-Israel, but one that allowed for students from whatever their perspective, whatever their background, to come and learn and ask questions.”

But there was backlash nevertheless. The pro-Palestinian student movement last semester made the abolition of the Nazarian Center one of its central demands to U.C.L.A administrators.

Dr. Waxman also became a target of right-wing pro-Israel groups, including after he wrote on social media that he supported the International Criminal Court’s request for an arrest warrant for Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, a position he said he took as a supporter of international law. The groups coordinated a campaign to flood U.C.L.A. administrators’ inboxes with emails demanding he be fired. A prominent donor criticized the center’s direction.

“I’ve been repeatedly accused of basically being a traitor, being a self-hating Jew and siding with the antisemites,” he said. “There’s a demand that if you are an Israel studies professor, or an Israel studies center, you have to support Israel.”

He said he was surprised, as someone who has dedicated his academic life to understanding Israel, by how much it affected him.

“It can feel very lonely,” he said.

TEXT 4



The impact of the Supreme Court's reversal of affirmative action, explained in one chart

Preliminary data shows a negative impact on Black enrollment at some universities.

by Nicole Narea

Sep 12, 2024

New college admissions data for the first group of admitted students since the US Supreme Court sharply limited affirmative action last year suggests that the decision has had a negative impact on Black enrollment at some universities.

While some colleges have seen major fluctuations in the enrollment of students of color in the class of 2028, including notable declines among Black and African American students, the impact has appeared more muted elsewhere. Many universities have yet to release their data, however, so a more clear picture may emerge throughout the fall.

The most dramatic change was at MIT, which saw an 8 percentage point dropoff in Black and African American enrollment, down from 13 percent enrollment on average in the four years prior, and a 6 percentage point boost in Asian American enrollment, up from 41 percent. Washington University in St. Louis and Tufts University also saw a significant decline in Black and African American enrollment, which sank by 4 and almost 3 percentage points at each school, respectively.

Yale University saw no change in enrollment among Black and African American students, but it reported a 6 percentage point decline among Asian Americans.

[...] "I don't see many steps forward. I see more steps backward," said Wil Del Pilar, the senior vice president of Ed Trust, a think tank focusing on racial and economic barriers in American education.

What's driving disparate outcomes post-affirmative action?

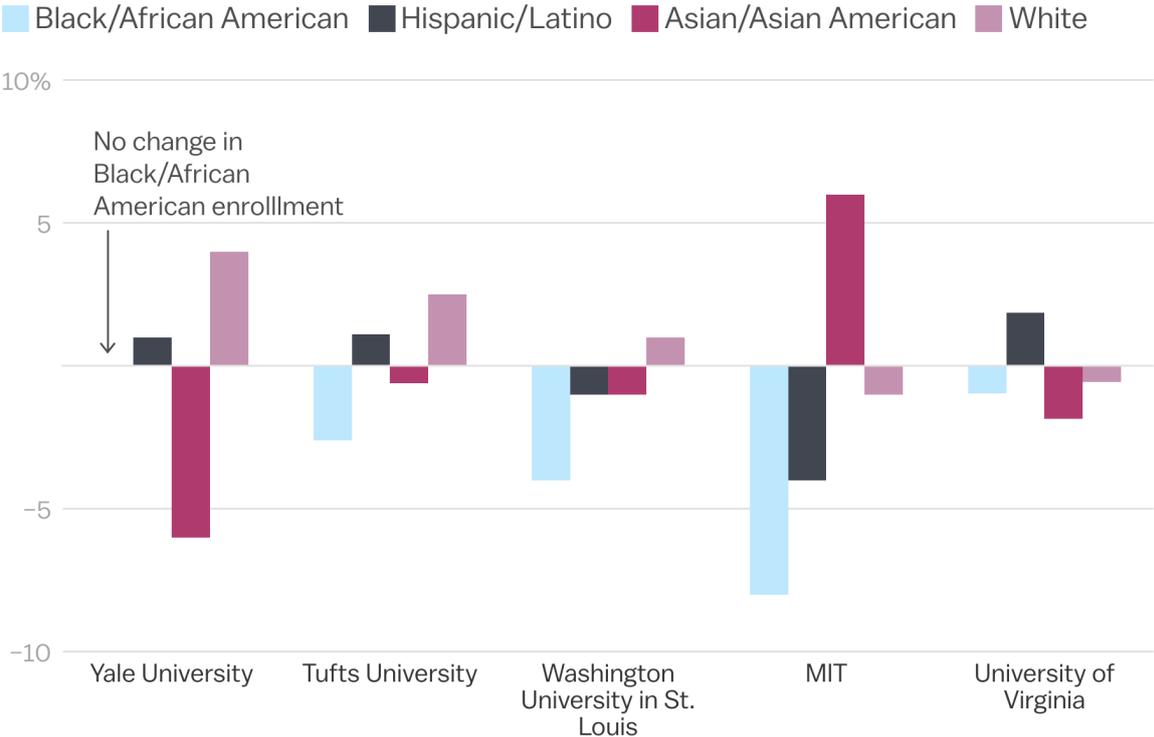
The Court's 6-3 decision found that race-conscious admissions programs at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and other factors. In the majority opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts [...] left open the possibility that race could still be considered in the context of essays describing an applicant's personal experiences.

[...] "What we saw overwhelmingly at selective public institutions was significant decreases in the number of Black students enrolled, and most of those institutions, especially the most selective, never recovered," Del Pilar said.

Preliminary 2024 enrollment figures suggest that at least some selective schools have seen similar declines in enrollment among students of color. [...] But the results vary, sometimes widely, by institution.

The Supreme Court's affirmative action decision has had a mixed impact on enrollment so far

Preliminary data from certain selective schools show that while some have seen dramatic percent changes in the demographic makeup of their incoming class since last year, others haven't seen much change at all.



Data on percent changes between 2024 and 2023, excluding international students. Data from MIT is based on differences in 2024 figures and four-year averages in 2023.

Source: Institutional data



[...] Even predating the Supreme Court’s decision, many schools had also given applicants the option to write a “diversity statement” explaining how their background, including their race, may have impacted their life experiences. Schools may come to rely more heavily on diversity statements as part of a holistic admissions process going forward, though it’s not clear that they’re doing so just yet. [...]

The Supreme Court’s decision didn’t just impact admissions deliberations but potentially also who’s applying where. After California banned affirmative action at public universities in 1996, Cook said, more students of color with the academic qualifications to apply to Berkeley or UCLA chose instead to apply to less selective California institutions.

If the Supreme Court’s 2023 decision has had a similar impact on where students choose to apply, selective institutions may have to work harder to recruit diverse applicants.

TEXT 5

The New York Times

How Universities Are Responding to Trump

President Trump has set his sights on defunding colleges, singling out some of the world's wealthiest schools in what critics say is an attack on academic freedom. Some are negotiating. Others are saying no.

By Alan Blinder

Feb. 5, 2026

Since taking office last year, the Trump administration has been exerting extraordinary influence over American universities by threatening to cut them off from funding and, in some cases, students.

President Trump and his allies have focused their attacks on elite universities, which they say are bastions of antisemitism and ideological indoctrination. A handful of the schools — Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Northwestern, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Virginia — have made deals with the administration. Some have agreed to pay millions of dollars to restore research funds and end federal investigations.

Harvard has fought back in court, even as it has negotiated with the White House, while others have exclusively pursued quiet talks with the government.

The Trump administration has also floated a proposal to steer financial benefits to schools that align with Mr. Trump's ideology for higher education. Most of the universities that the administration solicited for feedback rejected the proposal.

But as universities contend with Washington's demands, the long-term result could remake higher education across the country. Billions in funds for research have been frozen, while administration officials have also tried to prevent universities from enrolling international students.

The higher education industry has acknowledged shortcomings and failures, but university leaders have also warned that the federal government is trying to stamp out academic freedom, a cornerstone of the American education system.

Which schools have been targeted with funding cuts?

Since taking power in January 2025, the Trump administration has said it would end or limit federal money to a number of universities, including Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Harvard, Northwestern, Penn, Princeton and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dozens of other schools are also under scrutiny, largely by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, and are aware that some of their federal funding is imperiled.

Separately, the University of Virginia also drew the ire of the administration, which demanded the resignation of the school's president to help resolve a Justice Department inquiry into diversity,

equity and inclusion efforts. But Virginia, unlike, say, Columbia and Harvard, was not hit with such targeted funding cuts.

Which schools have made deals?

The Trump administration has announced six deals since the start of July.

First, Penn agreed to implement certain policies around transgender people in athletics and to apologize, in effect, for the trans athlete Lia Thomas's participation on its women's swim team several years ago. The agreement included no financial penalties.

Columbia, which faced accusations that it tolerated antisemitism on campus, later agreed to a suite of policy changes, as well as a \$200 million fine to the U.S. government. Brown University cut a similar deal, though its \$50 million payout was going to be directed toward state work force development organizations, not the federal government. In November, Cornell agreed to pay \$60 million over three years, with half of the money classified as a fine. And later in the month, Northwestern struck an agreement that included a \$75 million fine.

The universities have secured specific provisions intended to limit the Trump administration's involvement in academic matters.

Virginia also reached a settlement with the government months after its president exited. The terms of the agreement included a pledge from Virginia to follow the Trump administration's interpretation of a 2023 Supreme Court decision that essentially ended affirmative action as long as that guidance was "consistent with relevant judicial decisions." The university did not have to pay any money to resolve the matter.

What's happening with Harvard?

The Trump administration's biggest target has been Harvard, the country's richest university. The university has roughly \$9 billion at stake in its fight with the federal government.

The dispute erupted after Harvard rejected Trump administration proposals, including one for the use of an outsider to audit "programs and departments that most fuel antisemitic harassment or reflect ideological capture." The government also wanted Harvard to curb the power of its faculty and report international students who commit misconduct.

The Trump administration almost immediately began cutting off billions in funds. Officials have since said they would direct federal agencies to end all of their remaining contracts with the school. The government has also told the university not to expect grant money in the future.

Harvard sued the administration over the cuts. In September, a federal judge in Boston broadly ruled in Harvard's favor, and research money is largely flowing again. The administration filed a notice of appeal in December.

But the administration's onslaught goes beyond research funding. The university is confronting an array of investigations, some of which Harvard officials fear could become full-blown criminal inquiries. Mr. Trump has also threatened Harvard's tax-exempt status.

His administration has also tried repeatedly to bar the university from enrolling international students. A federal judge in Boston has blocked those efforts.

In June, Harvard and the White House began discussing the possibility of a settlement. Even as the talks unfolded, though, the administration kept hammering at Harvard with subpoenas, accusations of civil rights violations and a subsequent challenge to its accreditation.

Harvard told the government that it is willing to spend \$500 million to settle with the White House. The university wants that money to go toward work force programs. But the Trump administration shifted its demands as 2025 wore on, demanding that \$200 million be paid directly to the government.

After The New York Times reported in February that Mr. Trump was dropping his demand that part of Harvard's money go toward a fine, he took to social media and said the government would seek \$1 billion "in damages." He also wrote that the matter "should be a Criminal, not Civil, event," and he assailed The Times's reporting as "completely wrong."

Why are the schools being criticized?

The administration has frequently claimed that the targeted schools harbor antisemitism. When a protest movement against Israel's war in Gaza swept campuses around the country in 2024, for example, some of the most volatile scenes unfolded at Columbia.

But the roots of the administration's hostility are deeper than the turmoil tied to that war alone. Conservatives have looked askance at the elite echelons of higher education for decades, disturbed by affirmative action admissions programs, high tuition costs, the views of liberal professors and the proliferation of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives on campuses.

Many conservatives say their views have been marginalized in lecture halls, and regard top schools as incubators of so-called wokeness. They have said they want universities to emphasize academic programs that will lead students to jobs that are essential to the economy.

How is the administration trying to influence other schools?

In October, the White House released what it called the "Compact for Excellence in Higher Education." The document, drafted in part by Marc Rowan, a billionaire financier, laid the groundwork for schools to have easier access to federal money if they pledged fealty to Mr. Trump's ideology.

The document proposed limits on international students, tuition freezes, an embrace of standardized testing and definitions of genders "according to reproductive function and biological processes."

But, in parts that particularly alarmed free speech experts, the document's ideas also included schools accepting "that academic freedom is not absolute" and pledging to potentially shut down "institutional units that purposefully punish, belittle and even spark violence against conservative ideas."

Although the administration asserted that the document was "largely in its final form," it initially asked nine schools for feedback. Seven rejected the proposal: Brown, Dartmouth College, M.I.T., Penn, the University of Arizona, the University of Southern California, and Virginia.

Vanderbilt University did not flatly reject the compact, but its chancellor signaled that he had reservations about some of its terms. The University of Texas at Austin, through the chairman of the university system's board, expressed interest.

The White House has said that it intends to keep pursuing a version of the compact.

