# Harvard University Adopts Policy of Institutional Neutrality Amidst Controversies



### Harvard University Declares Policy of Institutional Neutrality

On Tuesday, Harvard University announced it will cease issuing official statements on public matters unrelated to its core function. The decision follows a recommendation by an Institutional Voice Working Group, established over a month ago to examine the issue.

This move toward "institutional neutrality" comes amid ongoing debates and controversies surrounding the Israel-Hamas war, which thrust many universities, including Harvard, into public scrutiny. The working group's report emphasized that the university's integrity and credibility are compromised when it speaks officially on issues outside its domain of expertise.

Harvard's interim president, Alan Garber, convened the working group, emphasizing the need for a policy that aligns with the university's mission of fostering open inquiry and diverse viewpoints. This decision reflects a broader trend, with institutions such as Columbia University and faculties at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale advocating for similar stances to remain neutral on divisive social and political topics.

The report clarified that while the university values open inquiry and diverse perspectives, it will prioritize its core mission of education and research over official stances on external matters. The policy is a contemporary adaptation of principles first articulated in the 1967 Kalven Report by the University of Chicago, which advocated for academic institutional neutrality during the Vietnam War era.

This development marks a significant shift in how universities handle their public voices in a highly polarized political landscape.