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Israeli professor Shai Davidai steps down from Columbia, prompting dismissal of university's investigation

Shai Davidai, the Israeli business school professor who emerged as one of the sharpest antagonists against Columbia University over its response to antisemitism on campus, has resigned from his employment there.

A university spokesperson confirmed that Davidai's resignation became effective on Tuesday. "The University thanks him for his service and wishes him the best in his future endeavors," the school said in a statement shared with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The resignation means that Columbia has closed its investigation into Davidai, whom it blocked from entering portions of the campus last year after alleging that he "repeatedly harassed and intimidated University employees in violation of University policy." University policy allows the Office of Institutional Equity to close investigations when a subject is no longer employed there.

Davidai did not immediately respond to a request for comment from JTA. But in a post on social media, he shared a screenshot of a letter sent to him by the school announcing the closure of the investigation. The letter said the investigation was ending without issuing any findings or conclusions of wrongdoing, and without imposing any discipline or penalty on Davidai.

"BOOM," wrote Davidai in the post on X. He added a parenthetical: "Please help me spread this. @Columbia tried to smear my name. I wouldn't let them. Today, they finally admitted that I hadn't done anything wrong."

Davidai was one of the earliest and most vocal public critics of Columbia's response to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel. That month, he went viral for delivering a speech condemning the university for allowing "pro-terror" student demonstrations and telling parents that their children on Ivy League campuses were not safe.

"I want you to know one thing: We cannot protect your child," he said at an outdoor vigil less than two weeks after the Hamas attack. "I'm speaking to you as a dad, and I want you to know, we cannot protect your children from pro-terror student organizations, because the president of Columbia University will not speak out against pro-terror student organizations."

Soon, lawmakers, pundits and pro-Israel activists were making the same point and pressing Columbia to make changes. Davidai's own tactics became increasingly confrontational. In one notable exchange in April 2024, Davidai requested the school provide him with a police detail "of at least 10 cops" to the edge of the pro-Palestinian encampment on the university's campus at the time. When Cas Holloway, the university's chief operating officer, declined his request, Davidai responded with an on-brand tweet: "F— YOU CAS."

While Davidai will no longer be on Columbia's campus, the university is continuing to face pressure to make the kinds of changes he sought. This month, the school entered its fourth month of negotiations with the Trump administration after the federal government cancelled $400 million in grants to the school over its handling of campus antisemitism in March.

Earlier this month, Acting Columbia President Claire Shipman issued an apology after leaked text messages showed she had suggested the removal of a Jewish trustee. And last month a report from Columbia found that nearly two-thirds of Jewish students at the school had reported not feeling accepted for their religious identity during the 2023 school year.

The announcements bring to a conclusion one of the most explosive dynamics on college campuses in the aftermath of Oct. 7, Israeli Columbia professor Shai Davidai has left the university.

Davidai, an assistant professor of business at Columbia, decided to depart from the university effective July 8, according to a Columbia spokesperson.

Davidai's departure from the university comes nine months after the school temporarily suspended him from campus after Columbia said he "repeatedly harassed and intimidated University employees in violation of University policy."

"The University thanks him for his service and wishes him the best in his future endeavors," the school said in a statement shared with JTA.

Following Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel, Davidai rose to prominence as a vocal and controversial supporter of Jewish students on campus, frequently confronting pro-Palestinian protesters and faculty.

Davidai's departure also allowed for the dismissal of an investigation into Davidai by the school, as university policy allows the Office of Institutional Equity to close investigations when an employee no longer works there.

On Wednesday, Davidai posted a screenshot of a letter allegedly from Laura Kirschstein, vice provost of the office, informing him that the school had closed its investigation into allegations made against Davidai in February 2024.

“BOOM. (Please help me spread this. @Columbia tried to smear my name. I wouldn’t let them. Today, they finally admitted that I hadn’t done anything wrong.),” wrote Davidai in the post on X.

In the letter the school said that it had closed the investigation without issuing any findings or conclusions of wrongdoing, and without imposing any discipline or penalty on Davidai.

The conclusion of Davidai’s yearslong battle with Columbia comes as the school has faced mounting scrutiny from the Trump administration over allegations of antisemitism on its campus. This month, the school entered its fourth month of negotiations with the Trump administration after the federal government cancelled $400 million in grants to the school over campus antisemitism in March.

Earlier this month, Acting Columbia President Claire Shipman issued an apology after leaked text messages showed she had suggested the removal of a Jewish trustee, and last month a report from Columbia found that nearly two thirds of Jewish students at the school had reported not feeling accepted for their religious identity during the 2023 school year.

Davidai did not immediately respond to a request for comment from JTA.

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Statement from a Columbia spokesperson:

“Assistant Professor of Business Shai Davidai has decided to depart Columbia, effective July 8, 2025. The University thanks him for his service and wishes him the best in his future endeavors.”

On background, from a Columbia official:

OIE policy allows for matters to close when an individual is no longer employed at the University. Columbia closed its investigations relating to Professor Davidai, without issuing any findings or conclusions of wrongdoing, and without imposing any discipline or penalty on Professor Davidai.