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Today in History

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## Summers' Resignation Divides Harvard

By JUSTIN POPE  
AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) -- Leading the world's wealthiest and probably most famous university sounds like the plummiest job in academe - with a staff, a house, and a half-million dollar salary among the many perks.

But running Harvard isn't easy. Neil Rudenstine, school president from 1991 to 2001, was forced to take a leave of absence for exhaustion in 1994. His successor, Lawrence Summers, announced Tuesday he would resign June 30 after a tumultuous five years, his ambitious agenda to get Harvard's territorial undergraduate and professional schools on the same page done in by faculty revolts and a brusque management style.



AP Photo/MICHAEL DWYER

Harvard-watchers inside and outside the university said Wednesday they believe it's a job that can be done. Summers' successor, they said, will likely enjoy a honeymoon, given the unwillingness of the Harvard community to endure another failed presidency.

But the new leader will first have to heal a campus bitterly divided over Summers' departure. Then he or she will have to preserve Harvard's reputation while confronting the same obstacles that undermined Summers, namely a proudly independent faculty and intense media scrutiny.

Being popular with the students isn't enough at Harvard: Some came out to support Summers when they heard he was quitting and the Harvard Crimson student newspaper said in an editorial Wednesday that his flaws should not "have cost Summers his job."

"I wouldn't want to be on the search committee," said John Bethell, the retired editor of Harvard Magazine.

That search will be watched closely not only at Harvard but in higher education generally, because of what it will

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reveal about the priorities of a leading university. The question is whether Harvard will go with a safe candidate to calm the waters, or try to find someone who shares Summers' ambitions to shake up Harvard but can do so more tactfully.

"I think somebody can do the job," said Anne Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a conservative group. But, she added, "I think that the recent set of affairs will discourage those who have a reform agenda in mind."

Still, sociology professor Mary Waters, a Summers critic, said faculty generally supported his agenda to modernize Harvard's loose structure for the 21st century - and would support another bold president who had a less bruising style.

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"I think the new leader of Harvard is going to find people very energized to work together," she said.

One challenge for Harvard is that a number of prominent universities hired new presidents about the same time Summers took over in 2001. Several of that crop could be candidates but have not been in their current jobs long enough for a move to seem natural. Amy Gutmann, a Harvard alumna, has been popular at the University of Pennsylvania but only arrived there in 2004. Lee Bollinger, who was runner-up to Summers for the Harvard job and later became president at Columbia, has been embroiled in clashes over free speech and other issues there.

Possible internal candidates include Drew Gilpin Faust, dean of Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and Elena Kagan, the straight-talking and popular dean of the law school. Harvard has never had a woman president, though three other Ivy League schools have appointed them in recent years.

"The idea of choosing somebody from within makes sense," Bethell said.

Such a person would have a sense of the university's many moving parts - its 11 schools and colleges on nearly 5,000 acres, its 20,000 students and 270,000 living alumni - and all it's been through in the last year.

Approaching its 370th birthday, Harvard remains the envy of most colleges despite its tempestuous last year. Its endowment has passed \$25 billion, and nearly 23,000 students applied for a spot in a freshman class next fall of about 1,600. Even faculty who have criticized Summers' style credit him with some accomplishments: expanding financial aid, reconsidering the core curriculum for undergraduates and prodding researchers to work together across fields, particularly in science.

"Universities have been around for a long time. It's not unusual to have blips like this," said David Ward, president of the American Council on Education. "I think it becomes serious when you have four or five presidents in a row who only last two or three years."

The choice will have to be someone who knows how to get things done in the unusual structure of a university, where faculty - as they proved with Summers - hold many of the cards.

"The question is can you buy them off with love," said Claudia Goldin, an economics professor. "That's cheap, but it takes someone to do it. And Larry didn't have the ability to buy them off with love and kindness and affection and a sense that he truly respected what they did, though deep down inside he does."

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