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More commencement season silliness: this time it's Smith

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Time it's Smith

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More Commencement Season Silliness: This Time it's Smith



International Monetary Fund (IMF) Head Christine Lagarde, one of the most powerful people in the world, withdrew as commencement speaker at Smith College, a women's college in Northampton, MA.

An [online petition](#) criticized IMF conditionality, and by implication the leader of the organization:

The I.M.F. has been a primary culprit in the failed developmental policies implanted in some of the world's poorest countries. This has led directly to the strengthening of imperialist and patriarchal systems that oppress and abuse women worldwide.

It is safe to say that this characterization of the IMF does not represent the broad consensus among economists, policymakers and Western governments. Conditionality is typically understood to be economic policies that, while often painful in the short run, are necessary to reverse the harmful outcomes that have resulted from poor economic choices made by developing country governments.

Lagarde withdrew so protests would not distract from the celebrations honoring graduates.

[Michael Hemesath](#) | May 15th, 2014 | Categories: [Economics](#), [Higher Education](#) | [1 Comment](#)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).