Cowell returned Abdul's good wishes and said he expected he and his former "American Idol" teammate would work on another project in the near future.

Paula Abdul joined the exodus from Fox's disappointing "The X Factor," attributing her departure to business trumping all else.

Abdul said Tuesday she won't return to "dear friend" Simon Cowell's singing contest when it begins its second season later this year. Her announcement followed Monday's exits of fellow judge Nicole Scherzinger and host Steve Jones.

"I've learned through my longevity in this industry that business decisions often times override personal considerations," Abdul said in a measured statement. She and others involved with the show understand the situation, she said, adding, "Simon is, and will remain a dear friend of mine and I've treasured" working on "X Factor."

In a separate statement, Cowell didn't address the reason for the changes but thanked the exiting trio "for everything they did last year."

Cowell and Antonio "L.A." Reid remained on the judging panel. There was no immediate word from producers on who might fill the open seats.

Cowell returned Abdul's good wishes and said he expected he and his former "American Idol" teammate would work on another project in the near future.

Despite respectable ratings, "X Factor" has failed to achieve popularity similar to Fox's "American Idol," which Cowell left to import "X Factor" from the U.K. to the U.S. He had predicted his new show would be a blockbuster.