Duke University's Financial Contribution to Climate Change: Recommendations for a Climate-Responsible Investing Approach

Duke Climate Coalition and the Graduate and Professional Student Government Climate Crisis Committee

Report on Fossil Fuel Divestment to the Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility
December 2022

I. Introduction

On behalf of the Duke Climate Coalition (DCC) and the Graduate and Professional Student Government Climate Crisis Committee (GPSG CCC), we are formally requesting that the Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility (ACIR) conduct a detailed reevaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of Duke divesting its full endowment from fossil fuel companies. We acknowledge that the ACIR has already addressed the issue of fossil fuel divestment on two occasions previously, in 2014 and 2019, and, at both times, declined to recommend divestment. However, given the worsening state of the climate crisis, the instability of fossil fuels as shown by the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the recent Climate Commitment, and the moves toward divestment by other universities around the globe, we believe that the issue of divestment must be reevaluated. In the following report, we aim to emphasize how the circumstances surrounding divestment have changed since 2019 to strengthen the argument that Duke should divest from fossil fuel companies. For a more detailed overview of the concept of divestment and why it is a tool for combatting the climate crisis, please see the 2014 report submitted to the ACIR by Divest Duke.[1] For an overview of the legal reasoning behind why divestment falls within the fiduciary duties of the Duke administration, please see the legal complaint submitted to North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein by DCC in April 2022.[2]

II. Scope and Timeline for Divestment at Duke

1. **Scope:** Duke must eliminate all direct (directly-owned stocks and bonds) and indirect (third-party managed funds) investments in fossil fuel companies that are listed in the Carbon Underground 200.[3] This database lists the top 100 coal and top 100 oil and gas companies that are responsible for the most carbon dioxide emissions each year. The Carbon Underground 200 is one of the most widely-used guides that institutions have used to create fossil fuel divestment policies.

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[1] Divest Duke. *Report Proposing Fossil Fuel Divestment for the President's Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility*. 2014.
[2] Duke Climate Coalition. *Duke Climate Coalition Legal Complaint*. 2022.
[3] FFI Solutions. "The Carbon Underground 200". 4 Dec. 2022.

2. **Timeline:** Duke should achieve full divestment by 2030. This timeline aligns with the divestment announcements from many of Duke's peer institutions.[4, 5] Based on the plans of other universities,[6] we propose the following steps toward full divestment and endowment sustainability:
    a. Immediately, Duke should commit to make no new investments (direct and indirect) in companies that are included in the Carbon Underground 200.
    b. Between 2023 and 2030, Duke should divest from all other fossil fuel investments (indirect and direct) and prioritize investments that aid in the transition to a clean and just economy (e.g., clean energy and environmental justice initiatives). We propose this extended timeline since we recognize that:
        i. Rapid sale of private equity investments can cause large financial losses.
        ii. Private investments in fossil fuels can take many years to liquidate. Consequently, it is in the best interest of the university to begin the liquidation process soon after making a commitment to divest.
    c. Annual progress reports should also be released that measure the carbon footprint of the endowment's investments.

III. New Reasons for Why Duke Should Adopt a Fossil Fuel Divestment Policy

1. **Worsening state of the climate crisis:** According to the 2022 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "Any further delay in concerted global action will miss a rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future." The report later also states a global warming greater than two degrees would cause "endless suffering".[7]

    Climate change-intensified disasters have become more common and more severe. According to the World Meteorological Organization, weather-related disasters have increased by five-fold over the past 50 years.[8] In 2022 alone, this has been exemplified through the 29 billion-dollar weather disasters that have occurred (those that have resulted in over $1 billion in damage). Pakistan, for instance, was subjected to such intense flooding that over one-third of the country was underwater at one point and nearly 1,700 people lost their lives. In Europe, heat waves were so intense that over 16,000 people were killed as a result. In the United States, these disasters have cost the country $202 million in losses daily. Hurricane Ian, for example, caused more than $20 billion in damage, and such costly disasters have been on the rise in recent years.[9] North Carolina specifically is expected to have a "front-row seat" to the effects of climate change, according to some experts. For instance, Hurricanes Dorian (2019), Florence (2018), Michael

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[4] University of Cambridge. "Cambridge to Divest from Fossil Fuels with 'Net Zero' Plan". 1 Oct. 2020.
[5] Stamm, Kathryn. "Cornell to Effectively Divest from Fossil Fuels, Trustees Vote". *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 22 May 2020.
[6] Brown, Robert. "Board of Trustees Approves Fossil Fuel Divestment Policy". 23 Sep. 2021.
[7] Working Group II. "Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability" in the *IPCC Sixth Assessment Report*. *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2022.
[8] World Meteorological Organization. "Weather-Related Disasters Increase over Past 50 Years, Causing More Damage but Fewer Deaths". 9 Sept. 2021.
[9] Masters, Jeff. "World Rocked by 29 Billion-Dollar Weather Disasters in 2022". *Yale Climate Connections*, 20 Oct. 2022.

(2018), and Matthew (2016) were all made more intense due to global warming, with Florence alone causing 42 fatalities and costing the state over $22 billion.[10]

Such climate disasters have also caused intense food instability across the world. Madagascar, for example, experienced the first famine caused solely by climate change in 2021, with a death toll of over 40,000 individuals.[11] In the United States, record-low water levels in the Mississippi River have caused increases in food prices while worsening the economic situations of American farmers.[12]

2. **Divestment is fiscally responsible:** It is becoming increasingly clear that divestment from fossil fuel companies is a fiscally responsible decision that aligns with the fiduciary duties of the Duke administration.[13] University endowments are meant to be managed in a way that maximizes their returns in the long run so as to provide a steady source of funding for the institution.[14] However, fossil fuel companies are poised to see steadily declining revenues as the world transitions away from fossil energy toward a clean energy economy. A 2022 report from Resources for the Future predicted that US fossil fuel company revenues will fall regardless of strong climate action.[15] Researchers also expect half of the world's fossil fuel assets to become worthless by 2036 if we achieve a net zero transition.[16] Thus, the lower profitability of these companies will translate to reduced returns in the stock market, weighing down the portfolios of institutional investors.

   Furthermore, a recent report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis argues that the recent volatility of fossil fuel companies in the stock market is an indication that they are no longer good long-term investments:[17]

   > "Today, we are told that the oil and gas industry is on its way back. The last few quarters have left the industry flush with cash; stock prices are rising and management is said to have finally learned the secret of capital discipline. Yet despite the political crisis that led to the recent price spikes, the market fundamentals for oil and gas remain weak. No one can say how the Ukrainian conflict will end or predict the political re-alignments that will occur in its wake. For investors seeking a steady, stable investment, fossil fuels are an unreliable option. They offer volatility, spurious innovations and political calamity. In this sense, divestment is a defensive strategy designed to compel innovation in cleaner alternatives across the power, transportation and petrochemical sectors."

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[10] Moore, Andrew. "Mapping the Future: Climate Change and Flooding in Coastal North Carolina". *PreventionWeb*, UNDRR, 12 Nov. 2021.

[11] Baker, Aryn. "Madagascar Famine Is First Caused Entirely by Climate Change". *Time*, 20 July 2021.

[12] Baker, David R, et al. "Shrunken Mississippi River Slows Us Food Exports When World Needs Them Most". *Bloomberg.com*, 9 Nov. 2022.

[13] Duke Climate Coalition. *Duke Climate Coalition Legal Complaint*. 2022.

[14] North Carolina Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act. N.C.G.S.A. § 36E-3(a).

[15] Resources for the Future. "US Revenues from Fossil Fuels, Responsible for $138 Billion Annually, Expected to Fall Regardless of Climate Action". 13 Jan. 2022.

[16] Watts, Jonathan, et al. "Half World's Fossil Fuel Assets Could Become Worthless by 2036 in Net Zero Transition". *The Guardian*, 4 Nov. 2021.

[17] Sanzillo, Tom, et al. *Two Economies Collide: Competition, Conflict, and the Financial Case for Fossil Fuel Divestment*. *Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis*, 13 Oct. 2022.

As of the end of 2021, the S&P 500 index had gained approximately 189% in value since 2011, while the S&P Oil and Gas Exploration index had lost 56% of its value over the same time period.[18] Geopolitical instability in Ukraine and Russia was the only factor that was able to reverse the long-term slide of fossil fuel stocks. Still, the World Energy Outlook's 2022 report stated that, despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine, all forms of fossil fuels are expected to peak or plateau across all scenarios in the coming years, while clean energy is expected to see an increase in value of greater than 50% from today.[19] Thus, divestment is the only investment strategy that will guarantee that university endowments achieve long-term growth and stability.

3. **Actions of peer institutions:** As of November 2022, 1552 institutions worldwide – including universities, philanthropies, and governments – that hold a collective $40.5 trillion worth of investments have divested from fossil fuel companies.[20] This represents a significant increase from five years previously in 2017, in which less than $10 trillion had been divested,[21] showing how institutions are rapidly embracing divestment as both a mechanism of climate action and a means of ensuring financial stability. Even though individual universities may only hold small amounts of fossil fuel investments relative to the overall market, the huge valuation of the collective divestment pledges means that fossil fuel companies are losing access to a large pool of capital that could potentially fund their projects.

   In particular, many of Duke's peer institutions have chosen to adopt a divestment policy in recent years. Most recently, Princeton announced its intention to divest both its direct and indirect endowment investments from all publicly traded fossil fuel companies.[22] Other schools that are divesting their direct investments in fossil fuel companies, as well as plan on moving away from third-party fund managers that have stakes in these companies, include Brown,[23] Columbia,[24] Oxford,[25] and Cambridge,[26] among many others. Unless it follows these actions quickly, Duke risks being left behind other universities at a time when it is claiming to be a leader in climate action with its new Climate Commitment.

4. **Increasing amount of support for divestment in the Duke community:** In its 2014 report on divestment, the ACIR wrote that "there has not been a significant enough level of informed engagement on campus to meet the criteria set forth in its guidelines" to recommend divestment to the university president.[27] However, over the past decade, students, faculty, and staff from across the Duke community have repeatedly affirmed their support for fossil fuel divestment. A few recent demonstrations of support include:

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[18] Data from S&P Dow Jones Indices, S&P Global, Dec. 23, 2021.
[19] International Energy Agency. "World Energy Outlook 2022 Shows the Global Energy Crisis Can Be a Historic Turning Point towards a Cleaner and More Secure Future - News". 1 Oct. 2022.
[20] Stand Earth, and 350.org. "The Database of Fossil Fuel Divestment Commitments Made by Institutions Worldwide". *Global Fossil Fuel Commitments Database*, visited 4 Dec. 2022.
[21] Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, et al. *Invest Divest 2021*. 26 Oct. 2021.
[22] Princeton University. "Fossil Fuel Dissociation". Sept. 2022.
[23] Paxson, Christina H. "Letter from President Paxson: Brown's Actions on Climate Change". *Brown University*, 4 Mar. 2020.
[24] Columbia University. "University Announcement on Fossil Fuel Investments". *Columbia News*, 22 Jan. 2021.
[25] Oxford University. "Oxford University and Fossil Fuel Divestment".
[26] University of Cambridge. "Cambridge to Divest from Fossil Fuels with 'Net Zero' Plan". 1 Oct. 2020.
[27] Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility. *ACIR Report and Recommendations on Fossil Fuels*. 24 Nov. 2014.

a. A Duke Student Government (DSG) referendum in March 2022, in which almost 90% of the voting undergraduate student body voted in favor of divestment;[28]
b. Resolutions from the DSG and Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) in support of divestment in October 2018,[29, 30] and again from the GPSG in December 2021;[31]
c. And the signing of DCC's legal complaint to the NC Attorney General in April 2022 by 11 Duke faculty, 10 Duke student organizations, and 14 internationally-recognized climate scientists.[32]

Duke's primary mission is to educate the youth of the current generation, so it should therefore be responsive to their concerns about university governance and how Duke acts as an institution on the global stage.

5. **The Duke Climate Commitment:** Fossil fuel divestment clearly aligns with the goals set forth in the Climate Commitment, which aims to involve every area of Duke in fighting the climate crisis. More specifically, divestment fits into the following focus areas of the commitment:
   a. Sustainable operations. While we applaud Duke for the ambitious climate action goals laid out within the Climate Commitment, few specific programs to reduce the carbon footprint of its campus operations have been announced. Fossil fuel divestment would be a key mechanism for reducing the climate impact of Duke's financial assets. This would advance the goal of supporting climate action at all levels of the university, and also demonstrate that the Climate Commitment is more than just an education and research initiative.
   b. The energy transformation. The Climate Commitment website states that Duke aims "to become a changemaker in the field of energy transformation".[33] Although researching the best paths to achieving a sustainable energy system is important, direct action by Duke would carry an even stronger weight in directing global climate policy. The adoption of a fossil fuel divestment policy by Duke would help usher the world toward a clean energy economy by no longer supporting the companies that are polluting our planet. Furthermore, Duke risks being criticized for hypocrisy if it publicly calls for a transition away from fossil fuels, but continues to invest its own money in this archaic industry.

IV. Responses to the ACIR's Previous Arguments Against Divestment

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[28] Wenn, Sevana. "Duke Students Overwhelmingly Voted for Divestment: What's next?". *The Duke Chronicle*, 24 Mar. 2022.
[29] Griffin, Matthew. "DSG Senate unanimously passes resolution calling for Duke to divest from fossil fuel investments". *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 18, 2018.
[30] Duke Graduate and Professional Student Government. *2018 GPSG Divestment Resolution*. Oct. 2018.
[31] Duke Graduate and Professional Student Government. *GPSG Climate Crisis Resolution*. 5 Dec. 2021.
[32] Duke Climate Coalition. *Duke Climate Coalition Legal Complaint*. 2022.
[33] Duke University. "What We're Doing". *Duke Climate Commitment*, visited 4 Dec. 2022.

Below, we respond to each of the concerns with divestment, as well as a proposed alternative, that the ACIR raised in its 2019 report, *Duke University's Contribution to Reducing Greenhouse Gasses: Toward A Climate-Responsible Investing Approach*.[34]

1. "Divestment by Duke in any of the companies that might be identified would have no impact on the companies concerned and would serve merely as a symbolic gesture."
    a. We would first like to point out that Duke is no stranger to using symbolism to advance its institutional values. So far, actions resulting from the Climate Commitment have largely seemed symbolic. The administration has provided few public disclosures of the specific actions that will be taken to improve the sustainability of Duke's operations, despite the commitment's goal to include every aspect of the university's mission into the initiative. With the Climate Commitment, Duke announced its intention to be a leader in climate action among universities, which is a commitment it will eventually have to follow up with substantive steps. Similarly, divestment involves making a public commitment to endowment sustainability that will eventually result in Duke eliminating any fossil fuel investments.
    b. Regardless of its symbolic significance, multiple studies have shown that divestment has significantly harmed the business prospects of fossil fuel companies. As of 2021, the divestment movement has helped pressure over 150 large (assets >$10 billion) banks, insurers, and asset managers around the world to cut ties with all or portions of the fossil fuel industry.[35] A recent report from Insure our Future said that coal projects have now become "uninsurable" because of the dwindling number of insurance companies that are willing to be involved in this industry, making it difficult to move forward with fossil fuel extraction projects.[36] Most significantly, even fossil fuel companies themselves are recognizing that divestment can financially harm them. In its 2020 disclosures to investors, Shell wrote that divestment efforts "could have a material adverse effect on the price of our securities and our ability to access capital markets."[37] In combination with the financial industry's shift away from fossil fuel projects, the divestment movement has made it increasingly difficult for fossil fuel companies to fund their expansion.

2. "The sale of shares held by Duke would not have sufficient volume to affect stock prices, and the shares would quickly be bought by other investors."
    a. Even if the size of Duke's investments in fossil fuel companies is small compared to the overall valuation of these corporations, divestment is at its most effective when done in concert with other universities and nonprofits. As was mentioned in Section III, institutions worldwide have committed to divesting a collective $40.5 trillion worth of investments.[38] This is a huge pool of funds that is now inaccessible to fossil fuel

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[34] Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility. *Duke University's Contribution to Reducing Greenhouse Gasses: Toward A Climate-Responsible Investing Approach*. May 2019.
[35] Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, et al. *Invest Divest 2021*. 26 Oct. 2021.
[36] Bosshard, Peter, et al. "With New Coal Uninsurable, Insurers Start to Move on Oil and Gas". *Insure Our Future Global*, 3 Nov. 2022.
[37] Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, et al. *Invest Divest 2021*. 26 Oct. 2021.
[38] Stand Earth, and 350.org. "The Database of Fossil Fuel Divestment Commitments Made by Institutions Worldwide". *Global Fossil Fuel Commitments Database*, visited 4 Dec. 2022.

companies and can no longer support their resource extraction activities, reducing their potential for growth.

3. "Symbolic gestures work well where the activities of the company concerned are condemned as evil, immoral, or unacceptable, and there is clear and strong consensus that this is the case. To the extent that Duke and its entire community is dependent on the consumption of fossil fuels and will be for a long time, a symbolic gesture would be hollow and, to a visible degree, downright hypocritical."
    a. Again, we would like to push back against the claim that divestment is merely a symbolic action. Like we described above, when done in concert with other large institutions, divestment has been shown to prevent fossil fuel companies from accessing a huge pool of assets to fund their operations.
    b. We also disagree with the suggestion that the activities of fossil fuel companies are not immoral, and that there is no consensus on this issue. There is widespread agreement that fossil fuel companies are the main contributors to what Greenpeace calls "fossil fuel racism", in that the pollution and other negative effects associated with fossil fuel extraction disproportionately burden the most marginalized sectors of the population.[39] This alone should be enough to conclude that fossil fuel extraction is immoral. The fact that fossil fuel consumption is the main cause of climate change – which is in the process of making the planet unlivable for all humans – further emphasizes the "evil" nature of these companies. The consensus also extends up to the international level, which is exemplified by the agreements at the recent COP27 climate summit to mobilize financial institutions worldwide in the fight against climate change.[40]
    c. Finally, we believe that fossil fuel divestment by an institution like Duke is not hypocritical in any regard, especially considering its recent commitment to fight climate change at all levels of the institution. Even if members of the Duke community will continue to use fossil fuels in the near-term future, it is impossible for individuals to adopt a clean energy lifestyle unless the major institutions in their lives lead the way in the transition. Putting the blame of climate change on individuals does nothing to further widespread climate action, especially considering that many sustainable products like electric cars are still unaffordable for a large portion of the population.[41] On the other hand, by leveraging its investment portfolio to disincentivize fossil fuel companies and send a message to the world that we need to transition to a clean energy economy, Duke would actually accelerate the political and technological advances needed to spread these changes around the world.

4. "Divestiture in the complex arena of fossil fuels and the development of alternative energy is likely to be counterproductive, serving to polarize the debate over climate change rather than contribute constructively."

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[39] Greenpeace. "Fossil Fuel Racism - Greenpeace". 13 Apr. 2021.

[40] Gelles, David, and Max Bearak. "Poor Countries Need Climate Funding. These Plans Could Unlock Trillions". *The New York Times*, 9 Nov. 2022.

[41] Heglar, Mary Annaise. "I Work in the Environmental Movement. I Don't Care If You Recycle". *Vox*, 28 May 2019.

a. This statement ignores the already highly polarized nature of the debate about climate action. Instead of increasing polarization, divestment by a prominent, well-regarded institution such as Duke would signal to the world that more decisive action on climate change is needed. For instance, researchers at the Oxford University Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment (SSEE) found that divestment drastically raises public awareness, thus influencing government officials.[42]
b. The Oxford researchers also found that the stigmatization of fossil fuel companies, which has occurred in part due to the divestment movement, "poses the most far-reaching threat to fossil fuel companies and the vast energy value chain." They also found that, in almost every divestment campaign (from Darfur to Apartheid), divestment campaigns were "successful in lobbying for restrictive legislation affecting stigmatised firms." This shows that the stigmatization that would occur from fossil fuel divestment would be beneficial for the climate action movement rather than polarizing.

5. "Strict prohibitions against certain investments could interfere with fund manager relationships."
   a. Divestment policies have become common enough that they no longer carry the stigma that they used to have with fund managers. This shift in perspective can be seen in how even governmental entities are willing to take the step of divestment, despite the strict laws that constrain their investing practices. For example, New York City announced its intention to divest its employee retirement funds from fossil fuel companies in 2018.[43] Even more importantly, the New York City comptroller was willing to publicly demand for Blackrock, the world's largest manager, to uphold its climate commitments,[44] thus demonstrating that divestment and sustainability targets are within the interest of institutional investment funds. Duke would not be going alone in the push for divestment, as over 1500 institutions worldwide have taken this step.[45]
   b. Furthermore, a prohibition on fossil fuel investments should not be viewed as a negative constraint on the growth of Duke's portfolio. As we described in Section II, fossil fuel companies are poor long-term investments that are poised to see declining profits as the world transitions to a clean energy economy. The investment prohibition in this case is relegated to a declining sector of the economy, and should therefore align with the mandates fund managers have to maximize long-term returns.

6. "Fossil fuel divestment could set an ambiguous precedent with the potential for an ever expanding scope. For example, would there be a demand that Duke University stop investing in or providing meat dishes in its cafeterias and restaurants, since methane from cows are a major contributor to GHG?"

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[42] Ansar, Atif, et al. "Stranded assets and the fossil fuel divestment campaign: what does divestment mean for the valuation of fossil fuel assets?" *Stranded Assets Programme*, Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Oct. 2013.
[43] Milman, Oliver. "New York City Plans to Divest $5bn from Fossil Fuels and Sue Oil Companies". *The Guardian*, 10 Jan. 2018.
[44] Lander, Brad. "BlackRock Inc.'s Commitment to Net Zero Emissions". *The City of New York Office of the Comptroller*, 21 Sept. 2022.
[45] Stand Earth, and 350.org. "The Database of Fossil Fuel Divestment Commitments Made by Institutions Worldwide". *Global Fossil Fuel Commitments Database*, visited 4 Dec. 2022.

a. We would first like to emphasize that our divestment request is limited to a clearly defined set of fossil fuel companies – those listed in the Carbon Underground 200.[46] Consequently, there should be little debate over which investments in Duke's portfolio would be impacted by a divestment policy.
b. Second, Duke has been willing to adopt divestment policies in the past in spite of the "slippery slope" argument, including those for the Sudan conflict and Apartheid South Africa. In those cases, it was likely quite difficult for Duke's asset managers to identify whether every company they were invested in had ties to each country. Even so, these challenges did not discourage the Board of Trustees from adopting the policies, as there was widespread agreement that divestment from these nations was a morally righteous cause. Fossil fuel divestment should be no different, and it may even be easier to identify the culprit companies in this case. Fossil fuel companies are contributing to the destruction of our planet, and Duke's investment policies should recognize this moral reality.
c. Finally, concerns with other aspects of Duke's carbon footprint, such as with the food production example mentioned above, are being addressed by means other than divestment. For example, the Campus Sustainability Committee has been working to create policies for local procurement and carbon neutral sourcing to reduce the environmental impact of Duke's operations. Fossil fuel divestment is narrowly-tailored to address an industry over which Duke has little direct control, ensuring that the university makes climate action a priority on all fronts.

7. By remaining invested in fossil fuel companies, Duke can influence the companies to improve their sustainability policies through shareholder engagement and proxy voting.
    a. Multiple lines of research have concluded that engagement with fossil fuel companies is an ineffective tactic for fighting the climate crisis. Researchers at the University of Cambridge wrote that "evidence of positive results [from shareholder resolutions] are lacking, and these results are incremental at best – if there is any real-world outcome at all."[47] While some fossil fuel companies have publicly committed to achieving net-zero emissions, a New York Times investigation found that the executives at these companies often had little intention of following this path.[48] For example, Shell internal documents said that employees should "not give the impression that Shell is willing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to levels that do not make business sense." Alternatively, fossil fuel companies have frequently refused to even engage with shareholder activism at all. The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility found that "150 requests from various responsible shareholders asking fossil fuel companies to evaluate financial risk from climate change regulation [between 1992 and 2015] were ignored or met with a

[46] FFI Solutions. "The Carbon Underground 200". 4 Dec. 2022.
[47] Quigley, Ellen, et al. "Divestment: Advantages and Disadvantages for the University of Cambridge". *The Centre for the Study of Existential Risk*, University of Cambridge, 1 Oct. 2020.
[48] Tabuchi, Hiroko. "Oil Executives Privately Contradicted Public Statements on Climate, Files Show". *The New York Times*, 14 Sept. 2022.

dismissive reply," with leaders of companies including ExxonMobil and Shell explicitly stating their intentions to continue producing fossil fuels without interruption.[49]

V. Conclusion

The campaign for full divestment from fossil fuels has a long history at Duke, beginning in 2012 and remaining strong to the present day. Much has changed in the climate space over the course of this decade due to the evolving circumstances of climate science, geopolitics, fossil fuel finance, and other such factors. In light of these changes, the ACIR should reevaluate their original 2014 decision to not recommend divestment to the Duke Board of Trustees. Duke has the opportunity to truly display its dedication to climate action by divesting fully from fossil fuels, while at the same time making the endowment's investments more financially stable. The DCC and GPSG CCC hope that the ACIR is able to see this as an opportunity to improve the endowment composition so that it becomes fully aligned with Duke University's climate action mission.

[49] Tillmann, Tavi, et al. "Fossil fuel companies and climate change: the case for divestment". *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 22 June 2015.