

# Faculty Divestment Toolkit

## Introduction

Faculty are an important part of the growing fossil fuel divestment movement. You will find an excellent resource guide on fossil fuel divestment at [http://www.facultydivest.org/divestment\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.facultydivest.org/divestment_toolkit.pdf)

That tool kit includes:

1. A resource guide for understanding endowments [see page 8]
2. A 6 step strategy for building a fossil fuel divestment campaign [see page 14]
3. A guide to getting media attention [see page 29]

This guide is intended to offer expanded resources specifically geared to faculty.

## Why Divest

There are many important things being done to deal with the climate crisis and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. Divestment is just one tactic among many. A really important part of dealing with climate change is government legislation, such as California's A.B. 32, which sets firm targets for greenhouse gas emissions. At the state and federal levels it has been very difficult to pass those sorts of laws because of the powerful opposition of the fossil fuel industry. The main thing divestment accomplishes is that it builds public opposition to the fossil fuel industry, which undermines their ability to manipulate our political system. Our movement is primarily about public opinion. We are trying to take away the social license of the fossil fuel industry to harm our climate.

This means that:

1. Even a small endowment, which does not have holdings in fossil fuels, can make a powerful difference when it divests.
2. Divestment is a powerful tactic even if full divestment of all colleges and universities would have a relatively small financial impact on the fossil fuel industry.
3. Getting publicity for your divestment success is the main goal.

## The role of faculty

Faculty and students each inhabit different parts of our intuitions. Being mindful of these differences can help us work synergistically

Issue	Students	Faculty
Willingness to engage in controversial behavior like protests	Tend to see themselves as short term members of a community and therefore are more able to take risks and burn relational bridges	Tend to see themselves as long term members of a community and tend to be more cautious
Ability to work inside networks	Often new to an institution and not sure how to navigate it	Often with institutional knowledge and savvy on navigating the system. Know who to ask and who to get what from
How seriously we are taken	Often receive condescending responses	Treated as knowledgeable
How moved people are by us	Institutional players often don't want to disappoint or look bad in front of students	Often seen as self-interested players

## Tactics

At most campuses that have a divestment campaign there is an active group of students who carry much of the weight and do much of the work on a divestment campaign. Faculty are often in a supportive role.

**If there is already an existing student organization, you can work with them to develop a strategy and take the leadership in some actions that are specific to the faculty. You can:**

1. Get a faculty sign-on letter going to your college president or foundation board advocating for divestment
2. Get an academic senate resolution passed
3. Organize an education event on climate change and the importance of divestment
4. Work with your union (if applicable) to get a resolution in favor of divestment
5. Serve as official or unofficial advisors to student groups
6. Help student groups navigate your institution
7. Form a faculty delegation to meet with key decision makers
8. Join the Faculty Divestment Network listserve by visiting our web page at <http://www.facultydivest.org/>

**If there is not an existing student divestment organization you can help get one started by:**

1. Offering a service learning assignment
2. Connecting with a relevant club
3. Finding some students to start a club
4. Simply calling a meeting to start organizing
5. Organizing an educational event, such as a lecture or a film showing, and take this opportunity to start an organization

**General organizing advice**

1. Build a sense of community and optimism in your group
2. Work to build leadership in people as they join by assigning tasks to newer people and making sure they succeed
3. Think strategically- develop a thoughtful plan that analyzes the power dynamics on your campus and has a clear sense of a path forward
4. Be thoughtful about getting media attention for your work. That is one of the main goals of fossil fuel divestment.