

Emissions Impossible: template motion for divesting to invest

Based on the Fossil Free Student Union Motion Template which can be found [here](#).

This Union Notes:

1. That *<Insert Institution Here>* has made public commitments to tackling climate change and has carbon emission reduction targets. Two-fifths of our universities are predicted to miss these targets,¹ which is unacceptable.
2. That *<Insert Institution Here>* has an endowment of £xx (you can find out this information by [contacting NUS](#)) which includes investments in fossil fuel companies, such as *<insert company names>* totalling <£x> (you can obtain this info through Freedom of Information requests – NUS has data on institutions from 2015)
3. That *<insert company names>* are among the world's 200 largest fossil fuel companies,² by proven carbon reserves. These reserves are well in excess of the amount of carbon that can be safely burned to have a chance of staying below the internationally agreed limit of 1.5-2 degrees celcius of global warming. The Paris Agreement, signed in December, 2015 by 195 countries including the UK,³ reaffirmed a commitment to this limit.
4. Anthropogenic climate change is indisputable and needs to be acted upon immediately. NASA's website, at the time of writing, states that the world has already warmed by 1.4 degrees celcius and that the atmospheric carbon parts per million is 404.48 (the highest it's been in 650,000 years).⁴
5. Carbon Tracker's Unburnable Carbon report (2013)⁵ highlights the overvaluation of fossil fuel reserves and the huge financial risks of investing in fossil fuels. Not divesting from this sector could thus be in contravention of the fiduciary duties⁶ of the university's trustees/governors.
6. That the National Union of Students (UK) was mandated at their National Conference in both 2015 and 2016, to support fossil fuel divestment and ethical reinvestment as a high profile campaign. Where possible they collaborate with People & Planet who began their Fossil Free campaign in 2013. This calls on UK higher education institutions to divest from fossil fuels and sever their links with these companies.⁷
7. NUS research which analysed the investment portfolios of universities found £100 million in extractor fossil fuel companies across the Higher Education sector.⁸

¹ <http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/25-universities-to-miss-carbon-targets/>

² <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QgU9VN23JaNh2B0pb9eoHM5EMozsznaojpIulQuljDg/edit#gid=663041172>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris/index_en.htm

⁴ <http://climate.nasa.gov/>

⁵ 'Carbon bubble will plunge world into another financial crisis - report', 19 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/19/carbon-bubble-financial-crash-crisis>

⁶ NUS' Positive Investment Briefing, <http://bit.ly/2aae9Jo> p 21

⁷ <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>

⁸ NUS' Investments Report, <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/divest-invest-report-investments>

8. The three campaign asks of NUS' Emissions Impossible campaign are:
- a) £100million to be divest–invested from extractor/producer fossil fuel companies into positive, socially responsible options.
 - b) Commitments from universities and colleges, regardless of current investments, that new investments be fossil-free.
 - c) Pledges by universities and colleges to commit to be powered by 100% renewable electricity by a date set by them (bought or generated).

This Union Believes:

1. As NUS Policy states, that: "the world's poorest people will suffer most from climate change. Local and indigenous communities on the front-line of fossil fuel extraction face land grabs, violence and ill health. The colonial models of extraction employed by the fossil fuel industry must not be replicated as we construct our low-carbon future".⁹
2. That in order to truly support a just transition to a renewably powered world the reinvestment of divested funds should reflect a challenge against the monopolisation of natural resources by neoliberal capitalist corporations and to the fossil fuel industry's colonial behaviour. Energy democracy, and where possible, solidarity with communities in the Global South, should be at the heart of reinvestment decisions. This might take the form of community energy projects on campus or investments into indigenous community energy projects, like the Yansa Group in Mexico.¹⁰
3. That we are running out of time to keep global warming below 1.5-2C above pre-industrial levels - the limit for ensuring a safe and stable future for the planet and all people on it.¹¹
4. The current UK government's decision to slash renewable subsidies, such as their cuts to the feed-in tariffs which financially incentivised the transition to renewable energy and a low-carbon economy,¹² whilst increasing those to the fossil fuel industry, displays a complete disregard for their signing of the Paris Agreement.¹³
5. That our university should be a role model and leader in society, acting responsibly and helping create a safe future that is better for everyone.
6. That the fossil fuel industry, by extracting, processing, promoting and facilitating the use of, selling and profiting from fossil fuels, as well as by having a major influence on government policy, is complicit in causing climate change and its catastrophic impacts.
7. That we must do everything in our power to rapidly reduce the global use of fossil fuels and expand clean energy alternatives.
8. That *<Insert Institution Here>* investments in the fossil fuel industry undermine positive developments across Higher Education such as renewables on campuses,

⁹ NUS' Society and Citizenship Policy, <http://bit.ly/2aTzHJo> P 22

¹⁰ <http://www.yansa.org/about/our-story/>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/03/climate-crisis-media-relegates-greatest-challenge-hurtle-us-collapse-planet>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2015/dec/17/uk-cuts-renewable-energy-make-a-mockery-of-its-pledge-paris-climate-talks>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-paris-agreement-proves-that-the-transition-to-a-climate-neutral-and-climate-resilient-world-is-happening>

and other environmental policies *<Insert policy/policies Here>*

9. That *<Insert Institution Here>* commitment to tackling climate change should extend to its investment portfolio, as well as its own operations and research priorities.

This Union Resolves:

1. To link up with the NUS' divestment and reinvestment campaign and adopt their campaign asks *<or choose whichever are relevant>*
2. To mandate the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to coordinate, and put resources towards, a high-profile divestment and reinvestment campaign on campus, including the dissemination of information about *<Insert Institution Here>* investments and the companies it invests in.
3. To commit resources to explore, with support from NUS if required, the viability of *<Insert Institution Here>* reinvesting at least 10% of divested funds into local community energy projects, on or off-campus, and/or community energy projects in the Global South, such as the Yansa Group.¹⁴
4. To mandate the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to request quarterly updates of the university's investment portfolio.
5. To mandate the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to lobby for and secure student representation on all university investment committees.
6. For the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to lobby the university to end all future investments in fossil fuel companies and to divest from fossil fuel industry companies immediately.
7. To mandate the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to lobby the Careers Service to ensure no fossil fuel companies are allowed to recruit potential graduates onto campus, and to lobby for the provision by the Careers Service of ethical careers advice.
8. To mandate the *<relevant Students' Union officer>* to actively work with People & Planet groups and other societies involved in fossil fuel divestment and related campaigns to ensure that Union work is linked up with grassroots campaigners.
9. To support and encourage other student unions to submit similar policies and launch their own campaigns.
10. To link up with other campaigns taking place on campus in order to support one another and to create a movement aimed at social justice that is intersectional in nature.

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¹⁴ <http://www.yansa.org/about/our-story/>