

## Divestment is a decisive point for DU



On April 14, 2016, [Divest DU](#) organized a rally with over 100 students to ask the Board of Trustees (BOT) to vote in favor of the university divesting from fossil fuels, causing the group to gain more attention than ever. Currently, over 1,700 students, faculty and community members are demanding that DU divest from fossil fuels. Divest DU states that it is immoral for the university to claim to be environmentally sustainable [as it profits off of climate destruction by investing in fossil fuels](#) which cause many of the environmental problems the world faces today, including climate change, air pollution, oil spills and acid rain. In response, the group has been questioned on the reality of the demand for DU to divest. When taking into account the moral benefits of divesting and the history of other universities' divestment, it is clear to see that divesting from fossil fuels is a realistic demand.

In order to collect information on the reality of DU divesting from fossil fuels, senior Nick Stubler, one of Divest DU's institutional coordinators, gave the Clarion an interview explaining the benefits, importance and possible negative effects that could come from the university divesting.

"Divesting from fossil fuels is one of the most significant and impactful acts DU can take towards combatting climate change," Stubler started. "As an institution with a vision of being a 'great private university dedicated to the public good,' DU has a moral obligation to take action in combating the climate crisis. Furthermore, by investing in the fossil fuel industry, DU remains complicit in the violence and injustice perpetuated by the fossil fuel industry and forces the DU community to bear those costs."

Stubler went on to talk about the benefits of divesting.

"Divesting from fossil fuels would realign our institution with its values, decreasing

institutional hypocrisy; protect and stabilize our finances, since the fossil fuel industry is falling rapidly and taking our financial returns with it; rebrand the university as an innovative and ethical institution, which would increase student interest on our campus; and give the DU community pride in our institution, increasing alumni donations in the process."

The question some students and faculty have still remains: How would DU divesting from fossil fuels potentially harm the university?

"Some argue that it [divesting] has the potential to harm DU financially, though we [Divest DU] advocate that DU reinvests the divested funds in just and sustainable solutions that champion the public good. We believe these investments are the direction society is headed, and must head towards, and believe doing so will actually increase the financial stability and security of the university," said Stubler.

When asked about the reality of DU divesting, Stubler responded with certainty.

"Yes, absolutely. It is unacceptable for DU not to. Over 60 universities have already partially or fully divested from fossil fuels, demonstrating that it is wholly realistic to do so. On the contrary, it is unrealistic for our administrators to think that their students would allow the university to continue remaining complicit in the perpetuation of the climate crisis," said Stubler.

The passion of Divest DU is undeniable, and they remain strong in their fight for climate justice. Only one question still remains: when will DU answer the call of thousands of students and faculty to fight the injustice of climate change?

It is not enough for DU to simply have sustainability councils and "zero-waste" hockey games. Though these are helpful programs and events, it is not enough for the university to claim it is environmentally sustainable if it is not doing everything it can to be as sustainable as possible. The community of DU will bear the responsibility of being a part of climate destruction as long as DU takes part in investing in fossil fuels.

Furthermore, DU has a responsibility to answer the demands of its student and faculty body. DU's community has made it clear that they do not want to be a part of the destruction of our environment, yet still Chancellor Chopp and Board members refuse to answer these demands.

Divest DU's work to influence the university is admirable, as they show a passion for the earth and its wellness. This conversation is important, because it helps DU reflect on its

morals and what it stands for. DU must take responsibility for its part in environmental destruction, as well as answer the demands of its students and faculty.