

Orientation Guide and Organizing Toolkit for Campus Climate Coalition Members



“Organizing is realizing your own power and manifesting it within the community.”

- Will Wright CCC/MSU Alumni

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Section 1: Divestment

What is Divestment?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_fuel_divestment

"Fossil fuel divestment or fossil fuel divestment and investment in climate solutions is an attempt to reduce climate change by exerting social, political, and economic pressure for the institutional divestment of assets including stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments connected to companies involved in extracting fossil fuels."

<https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/what-is-fossil-fuel-divestment/>

This 2-minute video by 350 shows the basics of what divestment is through a very simple storyline. In this scenario, you give your neighbor money every week and your neighbor uses the money to buy rotten tomatoes and throw rotten ones at you. To stop your neighbor from throwing rotten tomatoes, you decided to stop giving your neighbor money. The video then shows a more complex example featuring you, "your neighbor," and "your school." You love your school! However, your school decides to give money to your neighbor. Your neighbor uses that money to buy rotten tomatoes and again throw them at you. So to get your neighbor to stop throwing rotten tomatoes at you, you need to get your school to stop giving your neighbor money. You and your friends do this by making it socially unacceptable to give money to your neighbor who buys and throws rotten tomatoes at your school. Your school decides to stop giving money to your neighbor and that is divestment.

When someone refers to the term divestment it means a company or institution getting rid of stocks, bonds, or unethical investment funds. Sometimes companies will divest because the things they are invested in are not as profitable as they hoped, or because they are becoming riskier. The phrase divestment movement refers to the many groups of people internationally that have come together to ask their institutions (schools, work, government, churches etc) to take their assets out of fossil fuels.

What does divestment mean?

It is asking institutions (a school, business, or even the whole government) to stop investing money in a certain company and to take out their holdings in those companies. This can be an example of both a symbolic and instrumental act. Divestment is symbolic in showing a moral standing that helps to shift the status quo and culture. Divestment is also instrumental because as it builds momentum it can devalue certain companies. This hit can force the companies and their politicians to consider the demands of the public and the climate movement.

Brief explanation @

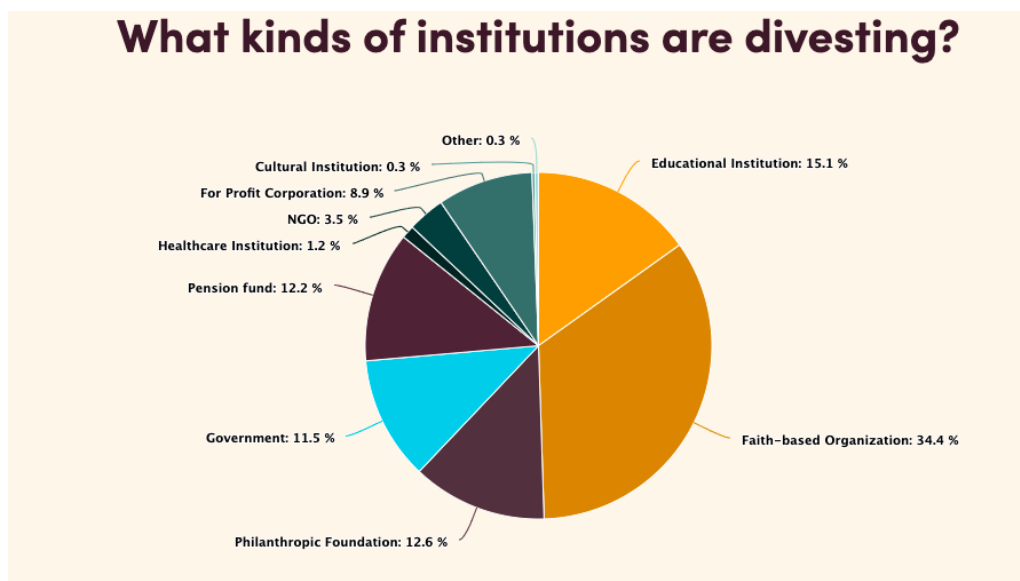
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/divestment.asp>

What can the MSU Campus Climate Coalition (CCC) do?

The CCC can be a part of this movement by pressuring the Alumni Foundation to divest its 225 million dollar endowment from fossil fuels. A common argument from the Alumni Foundation through the years has been that divesting a relatively small endowment doesn't make a difference and that to make a real impact students should focus on encouraging companies like Exxon or BP to stop polluting. However, it is through the divestment movement that we force oil and gas companies to make business models that don't produce so much CO₂. MSU divesting is significant to the progress of the whole movement because it signifies that even conservative states like Montana are understanding market forces and trending away from fossil fuels. MSU divesting participates in the collective movement to divest. The divestment movement over the last few years has resulted in **\$39.2 trillion of assets (!)** being divested. This has real consequences for the fossil fuel industry and has only been possible because many institutions/companies have joined in; the big and the small.

How many Universities have divested?

As of 2022, there have been 1,508 institutions that have divested from the fossil fuel industry for a total of \$40 trillion dollars. 227 (or 15%) have been educational institutions. 227 is not a large number, and further shows the impact of University divestment on the total divestment movement.



Graphic from and stats from: <https://divestmentdatabase.org/> and <https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/efforts/fossil-fuel-divestment-colleges-universities>

Invest/Divest 2021 Report

This is an incredible resource for seeing why divestment offers so much hope for fighting climate change. A lot of the divestment information in this document comes from this document and the

resources it points to. It is extremely well organized, and easy to read with lots of pictures, bullet points, and graphics. A great place to refer to if feeling overwhelmed or confused about divestment.

Report @ <https://www.divestinvest.org/invest-divest-2021/>

Why is Divestment important?

Some governments are making moves to divest from fossil fuels, however, most are not. In the US, big oil is even subsidized! Without governments making policy changes to decentivize fossil fuel, pressure for the end of fossil fuel comes from the economy and market pressures. The divestment movement is making progress in affecting the fossil fuel industry and resetting the status quo for institutions' involvement with fossil fuels. Many institutions are cutting ties to fossil fuels.

Pressure to divest has increased dramatically as major companies and institutions divest. Some significant divestments as a direct result of public pressure include U.S. Bank discontinuing funding for the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline following Indigenous-led global protests about the project's financing. Following opposition from local communities in Uganda, the banks Barclays, Credit Suisse, and ANZ banks announced they will not provide funding for the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline in Uganda. The Trans Mountain tar sands pipeline received significant and lengthy opposition led by Indigenous people in Canada, and the project can no longer find insurers. In 2020, Suncorp succumbed to similar pressures and stopped plans for any new gas or oil infrastructure projects.

The global trend is changing the status quo of investment and shifting capital away from fossil fuels. As of 2021, at least 150 large banks with assets of 10 billion each, have declared they will cut ties with one or more fossil fuel industries. [According to a study by Oxford](#), one in 5 of the world's most publicly traded/largest 2,000 companies have made net-zero commitments.

Similarly, According to a report by Insure our Future, most major insurance companies no longer offer insurance policies for fossil fuel projects, and coal, in particular, is becoming "uninsurable." A combined total of assets of \$ 22.8 trillion in holdings from Vanguard, BlackRock, and 43 other major investment firms, has been pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Even General Motors has pledged to stop selling gas-powered cars by 2035 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. and stop selling gas-powered cars and trucks altogether by 2035. ([Invest/Divest Report](#)) General Motors' pledge is especially significant considering they lobbied heavily in the 50s to reroute city infrastructure and make travel without vehicles inconvenient. ([Invest/Divest Report](#))

ESGs and SRIs

<https://www.investopedia.com/financial-advisor/esg-sri-impact-investing-explaining-difference-clients/>

Often as companies and institutions divest some of their money from unethical assets, they may choose to reinvest their money in stocks that are both profitable and ethical. ESG refers to a set of criteria to assess the environmental, social, and governance impact an investment may have.

The chart below shows different factors that are considered when considering an investment as an ESG.

Environmental	Social	Governance
Energy consumption	Human rights	Quality of management
Pollution	Child and forced labor	Board independence
Climate change	Community engagement	Conflicts of interest
Waste production	Health and safety	Executive compensation

‘Good’ ESG scores are investments that are determined to meet ESG criteria and have the potential to drive returns, while those with ‘poor’ ESG scores may inhibit returns. ESG criteria/scores are appealing to investors because they can help investors avoid the financial risk that can be expected from some investments with significant externalities. An externality is an impact something can have outside what was originally intended. For example, the purpose of fossil fuel extraction and consumption is to power the amenities we use every day. The purpose of fossil fuel consumption is not to cause climate change. Climate change is an externality of fossil fuel consumption. ESG are trackable along with non-ESG stocks. This compares how investments that meet environmental, social, and governance criteria do in comparison to stocks that don’t. Trends of the past 10 years show that ESGs outperform non-ESGs across the board. Between 2018 and 2020, sustainable, responsible, and impact investing grew at a more than 42% rate, rising from \$12 trillion in 2016 to \$17.1 trillion in 2020, according to the [U.S. Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment](#).

“SRI’s Socially responsible [investing](#) is similar to ESG’s but actively eliminates certain investments based on specific ethical guidelines. ESG still prioritizes profit as a part of its evaluation. With SRIs, making a profit is still important, but must be balanced against principles. The goal is to generate returns AND do so responsibly. ESG’s shape evaluation, while SRIs use ESG factors to apply negative or positive screens on specific types of investments. For example, an investor may wish to avoid any mutual funds that invest in firearms because they don’t support things associated with firearm sales. Or an investor may choose to set aside money

specifically for investments in charitable causes. Some other negative SRI screens include addictive substances, production of weapons and defense tools, [terrorism affiliations](#), human rights, labor violations, and environmental damage.”

From <https://www.investopedia.com/socially-responsible-investing-4689738>

Why is divestment better financially?

Lots of research on how ESG investments and divesting from fossil fuels are better financially. BlackRock, one of the largest investment firms in the world, has even researched and confirmed that divestment is profitable. A recent report from BlackRock stated: “

- “The broadest of all [divestment] options ... outperforms all other options and the benchmark portfolio on both a standalone cumulative and standalone annualized return basis .”
- “The standalone performance analysis shows the universe of [fossil fuel investments] has consistently underperformed the broader market over the past five years .”
- “Fiduciary investors must consider the potential increase of transition risks for fossil fuel reserve linked securities within their portfolios .”
- “Due to the mounting risks of climate change, technological advances and regulatory actions are signaling toward a global energy transition. The potential transition to a low-carbon economy presents investment risks to fossil fuel reserve owners, raising the possibility that fossil fuel reserves — which may be unusable in a low carbon scenario — will face precipitous devaluation or become ‘stranded assets .”
- (All from [Invest/Divest Report](#))

Why “Shareholder Engagement” isn’t always effective

Recent years have also proven that open-ended “shareholder engagement” strategies with fossil fuel companies are not an adequate substitute for divestment. [Research from the University of Cambridge](#) concluded

“The strategy fails because it does not include the threat of divestment or any timeline, so it ends by proposing levels of change that are too slow to scare fossil fuel companies.”
[Invest/Divest Report](#)

Section 2: Divestment Timeline

Divestment movement origins

The concept of divestment was started by student organizers to add international pressure to end the apartheid in South Africa. It worked! Link: @

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/08/protest-divestment-south-africa.asp>

Divestment throughout the last decade

A timeline outlined by the [Invest/Divest Report](#):

- 2011

“Fossil fuel divest-invest movement started a decade ago when students at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania launched a campaign calling on their university to divest from all fossil fuels. Students at another eight schools launched similar campaigns focused just on divestment from coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel. Soon, with the support of foundations such as the Wallace Global Fund, campaigns sprang up on campuses across the country.”

- **2012**

“While Hampshire College is acknowledged as the first institution to be divested from fossil fuels, Unity College in Maine announced plans to divest after a strong student-driven campaign.”

“The movement grew rapidly after Superstorm Sandy devastated the northeastern United States in 2012, causing tens of billions of dollars in damages.”

“Bill McKibben, 350.org, and student organizers launched the “Do the Math” tour.

- **2013**

“The non-profit organization Carbon Tracker Initiative also published its first two “Unburnable Carbon” reports, introducing many to the concepts of a “carbon bubble” and “stranded assets.” These events inspired divest-invest campaigns in cities and campuses across North America, Australia, Asia, and Europe.”

“The faith community, an influential contributor to past divestment campaigns, also quickly became actively involved.”

“The Church of Sweden, a leader in faith-based values-driven investing, was the first religious group to divest, completing a process in 2014 that it began six years earlier.”

- **2014**

“The movement received an endorsement from Bishop Desmond Tutu just as it released its first report and announced public divestment commitments totaling \$52 billion.”

“22 percent of divesting institutions were based outside of the U.S.”

- **2015 - 2020**

“The divest-invest movement has expanded substantially, becoming a central part of the broader climate movement and spawning critical offshoot campaigns. Divest-invest campaigns have proven to be a successful recruitment and training ground for climate activists who have then gone on to lead climate organizations and drive climate action across the world.”

- **2021**

“There are now institutions committed to fossil fuel divestment in 71 countries, up from the 37 recorded in the movement’s most recent report from 2018. By 2021, 69 percent of divesting institutions were based outside of the U.S., signifying the globalization of the movement.”

“Large insurance companies, pension funds, and universities with massive endowments have driven the biggest increases in assets under management committed to divestment, while faith and philanthropic institutions have driven the largest increases in the number of commitments in recent years.”

Moving Forward...

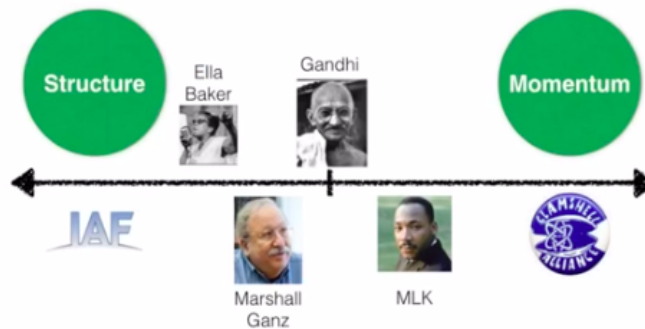
The Invest/Divest 2021 Report outlines three demands the movement should ask of institutional investors across the world to keep the momentum and success going:

1. “All institutional investors must make an immediate public commitment to fully divest from and stop all financing of coal, oil, and gas companies and assets. Institutions that have partially divested must now divest all of their assets from all fossil fuels. As linked to this commitment, all institutions must align their policy, regulatory positions, and political expenditures with this commitment.”
2. “All institutional investors must immediately move to invest a minimum of 5 percent of their assets in climate solutions, doubling to 10 percent by 2030, including investments in renewable energy systems, universal energy access, and a just transition for communities and workers. Further, investors must hold these companies accountable for respecting Indigenous and other human rights and environmental standards.”
3. “To achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050, all institutional investors should adopt Net Zero plans that both immediately cut investments in fossil fuels and ensure that all other assets in their portfolio develop transition plans that halve absolute emissions by 2030, consistent with science’s demands to limit global warming to 1.5°C.”

Section 3: What is organizing?

Overview

“Organizing” is a term to describe the process of building social movements. A social movement encompasses any type of effort to influence change on a local to an international scale. The movement for university divestment across the country is a social movement, and if you are a part of the divestment campaign, that makes you an organizer! There are many different strategies and theories for how to build social movements and if there was a perfect way, I imagine we would have figured it out by now. There are two dominant traditions of organizing; structure-based and momentum-based. Each has been utilized for success and has advantages/disadvantages based on the political climate and specific conditions of the situation. These traditions can also be used in conjunction; with integration theory.



Why learning about different types of organizing can be helpful to students and the CCC?

You may find that while different faculty, students, and stakeholders all share the same goal of taking steps toward a carbon neutral/livable future, people have very different ideas about how to achieve it. The disagreement can be frustrating! Theories on how change happens are not new. Strategies proposed by different stakeholders have likely been tried before. The following is an overview of different strategies for change students may hear about, their history, and their benefits/shortcomings. Hopefully, it can provide insight if students come to a dilemma about which route to take.

Structure-based Organizing Tradition:

The structure organizing tradition has roots in labor union organizing (*Which has deep roots in Montana! I won't get into this too much here, but if you want to learn about the significance Butte labor unions had on the entire labor rights movement, check out The Richest Hill Podcast <https://buttepodcast.org/>*). Structure-based organizing utilizes existing institutions and social networks to build people's power and support. It emphasizes relationship building and finding “organic leaders” that can bring their social network into movement, in a sustained way. This tactic allows the movement to consistently turn out the same group of people to actions and events. Structure-based organizing also focuses heavily on leader development.

Another characteristic of traditional structure-based organizing is that it doesn't try to change the entire political climate, it just focuses on building the support of people that are already in support. This is a key distinction between structure and momentum-based organizing. Structure-based works with the “weather,” and momentum-based works to change the “weather.”

Video overview @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VMYg_TnMXE&t=4012s

Teachings on structure-based organizing from Jane McLeavy:

One successful structure-based organizer is Jane McLeavy. She has helped teach thousands of people how to organize and sustain labor rights movements. She is a staunch supporter of structure, not momentum organizing, and so her tactics can't be applied to movements

universally. However she still has a lot of valuable insight to provide that can be directly related to the CCC. Specifically, the importance of relationship building, finding organic leaders, and taking advantage of existing social networks. Her book *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power* can be distilled down “movements don’t win when people don’t understand the difference between activism, mobilizing, and organizing.” So here is a brief overview of the three...

Advocacy: This doesn't include real people and all negotiations made amongst a few chosen representatives who lack accountability to the goals of the greater group.

Mobilizing: Brings large groups of people, but mainly the same type of people; those who consider themselves activists. People that dutifully show up to protests, but have no stake in the strategy. This approach is missing the backing of the community. Burnout is almost guaranteed.

Organizing: The primary goal is to transfer power from the elite to the majority. This type of movement is made of ordinary people, and many that wouldn't consider themselves activists. A community committed to changing conditions.

The CCC has used all of these. These different routes for change aren't mutually exclusive. Mobilizing and organizing support each other, and can help efforts of advocacy as well. However, many social movements can attribute losses to a lack of organizing skills. The CCC organizing efforts haven't been fully developed yet.

Here is a general overview of different types of action CCC has taken and how they fit into this theory of power.

Advocacy: MSUAF working group negotiations. Initially thought of as a win. The goals between the working group representative and the rest of the group quickly diverged and students lost some power. MSUAF ended up sending us a new investment policy in the middle of finals week Spring 2022 for our review and recommendations, knowing that this was outside the scope of our expertise and hard to deliver on with such short notice.

Mobilizing: Turning out many students to an event featuring Bill Mckibben.

Organizing: Building our base of support beyond the “activist” to include all students affected by an ill invested endowment such as teach-ins, charting, and trying to identify organic leaders.

In a nutshell, the difference between advocacy, mobilizing, and organizing is advocacy doesn't involve ordinary people, just privileged people pressuring decision-makers on behalf of others; mobilizing brings larger numbers of people to the fight, but they are usually the same people (dedicated activists); organizing places the agency for success with a continually expanding base of ordinary people.

Website/book link @

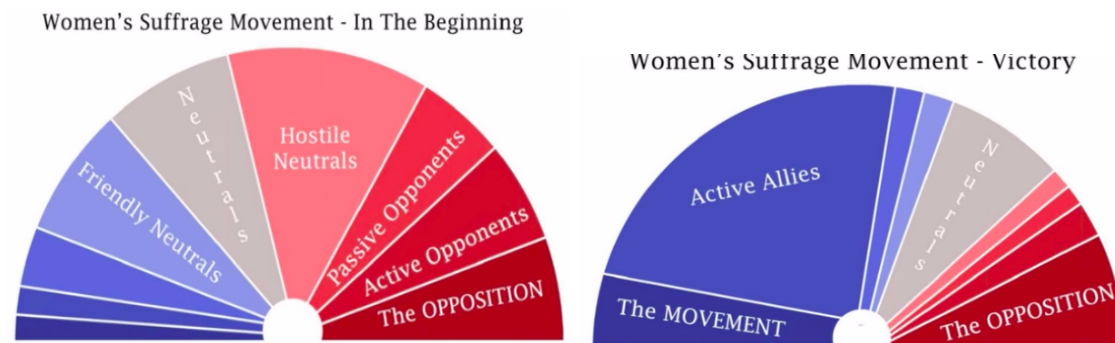
<https://janemcalevey.com/book/no-shortcuts-organizing-for-power-in-the-new-gilded-age/>

Momentum Based Organizing Tradition

Momentum-based organizing is the type of organizing that takes advantage of moments of mass public enthusiasm based on circumstances of the time (often referred to as moments of the whirlwind). This tradition seeks structural change, through “trigger events”, and different types of nonviolent actions, to move people to take a side on the issue. Momentum-based organizing is the type of organizing that turns thousands of people out to marches or political action and brings the masses to social movement meetings. This type of organization utilizes cultural momentum to build real people's power, and polarizes the public so that it becomes the new cultural norm to support their cause and demands. However, this mass scale people's power is often temporary. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, rather a realistic expectation to have and a reason momentum + structure-based organizing are a good combination. Absorption, the ability to bring interested people into the movement, is a challenge in moments of the whirlwind. Groups may not have the resources to give everyone the orientation or attention needed to become a committed participant in the mission, or the public may lose interest after the moment of whirlwind dies off.

An example of this type of movement is the women's suffrage movement. Women's right to vote wasn't originally a popular idea. However, over time the movement was able to shift the public consciousness so that today opposing women's right to vote would likely be ostracized.

Video overview @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VMyg_TnMXE&t=4012s



Integration Theory

Structure-based organizing holds strength in consistency and predictability but often does not lead to the systemic changes that come with taking advantage of moments of the whirlwind and mass public action. Integration theory refers to the way characteristics from both traditions can be utilized. Gandhi exemplifies integration theory with his use of organizing around the salt tax. It was timely, unifying, and an example of instrumental + symbolic change and the combination.

Video overview @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iq3IHACuxIs&t=3127s>

Decentralization

Decentralization refers to the different ways groups can align their goals with structure. Decentralization is a spectrum ranging from (centralized) Centralized command v total autonomy (decentralized). Types include:

Decentralized with decentralized design: Movements that arise organically with many people from different locations working to achieve common goals but in different ways.

A non-organizing example of this is how people manage to space out in a busy park without specific directions or rules.

Decentralized org with centralized design: A movement that has specific rules about how to participate and allows a vast amount of people to contribute to the goal. Wikipedia is an example of this.

Centralized command with decentralized components: A very clear goal with the resources for people to contribute without specific instruction or prompting. The Obama campaign is an example of this. Obama decentralized the VAN (a software for text banking used on grassroots organizing) so that anyone could volunteer to make a call. It was a radical shift and it worked!

Centralized command with centralized Components: Very specific rules, goals, and ways to participate. Union worker organizing is an example of this. committee

Centralized Ultra Rigid: Military status organization and control.

Video overview @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEk128wufRw&t=114s>

Characteristics	Centralized Organization	Decentralized Organization
Management structure	Command-Control	Self-management
Culture	production	Relational
Resource/support & Decision Distribution	Hoarding	Distributed
Function and Roles	Rigid	Fluid
Communications	Directional & Control	Open-source + Shared

Five Major Characteristics of Centralized and Decentralized Organizations

Section 4: How does this ALL relate to the CCC(Campus Climate Coalition)?

An understanding of what resources exist can hopefully make joining the divestment movement on campus more accessible. No one knew about divestment until they joined and no one expects incoming members to be knowledgeable about the movement either. Here are more specifics about what has been happening on campus relating to divestment in the last decade.

History of sustainability efforts on campus over the last decade

This information came from Emma Bode in an interview in April of 2022. She verified the following information.

10 years ago: The Network of Environmentally Conscious Organizations ([NECO](#)) was formed by students with faculty assistance. Efforts from student organizers in NECO are the reason MSU has a sustainability office and part of student tuition goes towards a sustainability fee. NECO also created an initiative to get 1000 new community gardens planted and NECO had a small divestment movement. The divestment movement had a petition and a few conversations with staff. It disbanded around 2013.

5 years ago: Emma Bode and Mathew Bane started Sustainability Now(SNow) with a similar model of initially decentralized targets to allow focus on different aspects of sustainability. Some of the different projects included Stoked on Spokes, Solar for Everyone, a sustainable fashion group, a composting program, and a reinvestment campaign. In 2016/17 Caitlin Piserchia was coordinating a divestment movement across several northwest campuses: UM, MSU, and UW. U of M had a more developed and aggressive divestment campaign. Some students got [arrested at](#) the UC center for refusing to leave until the UM divested. This allowed the reinvestment campaign at MSU to be taken more seriously, without having to push as hard. The SNow divestment campaign leaned into ESGs and focused on recommendations for what the Alumni Foundation should put its money towards. However, the official mission of the MSUAF is to “cultivate lifelong relationships and secure private support to advance Montana State University.” It is literally their job to make investments that serve students' well-being. However, when the MSUAF asked SNow for recommendations they thought it was a chance to get their foot in the door. Emma Bode has since reflected that this was a diversion tactic by the MSUAF. SNow got one thousand signatures on their petition and brought it to the MSUAF. They also got ASMSU to pass a resolution of support, which was controversial at the time and a win! However, ASMSU didn't/doesn't have much real power in influencing MSUAF policy. SNow then had conversations with MSU President Cruzado and the MSUAF in which the foundation told students they liked their passion and asked for more portfolio recommendations. SNow also did several high visibility actions in the meantime; crashing an award ceremony, and interrupting one of the Pres. Cruzados' speeches with chanting and banners. After the speech interruption, Cruzado agreed to hold semi-regular meetings to further discuss the reinvestment. This went on for two years. The core members of SNow graduated, the club's direction changed, and the reinvestment campaign died off.

Most recently: In 2020 student Atticus Cummings and Professor Paul Lachapelle restarted the divestment movement again. He reached out to different departments in support and local climate-focused groups to start gathering momentum for the movement again. Students started going to classes to talk about the divestment movement, tabling, re-upping a social media presence, and planning small actions.

At the same time as the divestment movement was starting to gain more students, the Campus Sustainability Advisory Council (CSAC) was finalizing details on the university Sustainability Plan. The plan had uninspiring goals, such as a carbon-neutral campus by 2040. There was tension between those who felt burnt out/threatened by the university bureaucracy/politics and those who committed to a sustainability plan that was in line with guidelines in the most recent IPCC report.

Rob Maher, an MSU Engineering professor, explains more of the politics involved in this process on his MSU webpage <https://www.montana.edu/rmaher/concerns.html>. He explains how,

“In the fall of 2020 the administration told the sustainability advisory council to stop work on the sustainability plan because of concerns that it would raise the ire of certain partisan factions during the biennial session of the Montana Legislature. Now in 2021, we find that university staff have been told to lie and say that the delay was “due to Covid,” not due to an administrative directive to cease work. If the administration wants to be taken seriously, the administration should not be compelling staff to blame something on Covid that was actually a deliberate delay out of concern over political appearances. Everyone else on campus still taught all their classes, wrote their manuscripts, and we had a record year for G&C activity, so why the administration is telling staff to say that the delay should be blamed on Covid is just, well, dishonest.”

The tension resulted in CSAC transforming into a much smaller group and several sub-committees focused on different scopes of the university's emissions (1,2,&3). Rob Maher further documents concerns with the sustainability plan and the university's response on the webpage [here](#). He also says,

Also regarding Strategic Plan item 3.3.6, the university administration has now decided that it is not desirable to have specific plans in writing where the public can see them, even with the legislature not in session. So although the MSU Strategic Plan clearly says “will develop a *comprehensive sustainability plan* by 2020,” the administration--on its own--decided that a “plan” is not advisable politically. Perhaps for the same reasons that the administration directed that the sustainability plan be delayed last fall, the administration now does not want public-facing details about what needs to be done on sustainability. Hence, the abrupt emergence of a “sustainability *framework*” with none of the details and specifics that would rise to the level of what any reasonable person would consider a “comprehensive plan.”

And worse, in my opinion, is that the administration has decided to squelch dissenting faculty voices by demoting the size and scope of what was the Campus Sustainability Advisory Council (established in 2008), from being “comprised of representatives from a broad range of campus constituents” to being a committee of something like seven or fewer individuals. Titles matter at MSU: a “council” participates in university governance, while a “committee” is simply an advisory function. The faculty voice is being reduced, and apparently the Faculty Senate doesn't mind, or has not bothered to have a debate about the administration unilaterally changing a “council” into a “committee.” - Rob Maher

The sustainability plan was ultimately passed in the fall of 2021 and none of these concerns were addressed.

In the fall of 2021, the MSUAF agreed to be a part of a working group with two CCC members, two MSUAF members, and two investment managers from the Investment firm the AF uses. The working group met every month for the academic year to discuss how the MSUAF could best serve the students. The rhetoric given to the students was that MSU divesting didn't do anything in the big picture and students should focus on directly targeting the fossil fuel companies if they wanted to make a real change. Students in the working group were also asked to reconsider whether or not divestment was really what they wanted.

In conversation with Emma Bode, I learned that CCC and SNow were given nearly identical responses from the university for their efforts. Both were given a seat at the table with the MSUAF, told they should present portfolio options, told they should focus on pressuring the companies themselves (because that would make a bigger impact), and told MSU divesting would not make a difference in the grand scheme of things.

Reflection on MSU's divestment progress from leader of the Harvard Divestment

This correspondence was in response to the proposed new investment policy the Investment firm sent students after a year of collaboration in the working group (Spring 2022).

The positive: These proposed policies represent a recognition that climate risk is real, that investment policies are necessarily connected with an institution's broader sustainability goals, and that consideration of ESG factors must be baked into prudent decision making. This is a step forward (some investors continue to deny this; my own school(Harvard) for many years did its very best to avoid admitting this fact), and one I imagine they would absolutely not have taken were it not for activist pressure. So props to you all!

The neutral: As I read it, and as Prof. Lachapelle has noted, there's a lot in this policy that is non-committal. They will "take into consideration" ESG factors when hiring new managers (to say nothing of existing ones), they will "consider" how to align the portfolio with long-term goals, and they will "consider" ways to reduce exposure to greenhouse gas emissions. They very much could do nothing, claim that they're following their policies, and not be lying — as I am sure you all have thought about, accountability is key.

The negative: The policies, as I read them, fundamentally misunderstand the nature of climate risk in financial markets. It treats divestment as the unknown risk, to be weighed and evaluated, and more vacuous, wishy-washy strategies as the stable choice. But the fact of the matter is that divestment is proven, while alternatives that avoid divestment are the risky bet.

A letter on why divesting from fossil fuels fits within the MSUAF job description

This is a letter written for a letter writing campaign. This was sent out to everyone who signed our petition to personalize and email to Chris Murray. The letter is from the student perspective to the Alumni Foundation stating why divestment is in the best interest of the students, university and the Alumni Foundation.

Dear MSUAF Board,

I commend you for all the progress made this last year, such as pausing all new investments in fossil fuels for one year. Creating a working group on sustainable investing that included MSU students.

Participating in a working group on sustainable investing with student and university representatives is a great step towards the MSUAF's "*one mission; to cultivate lifelong relationships and secure private support to advance Montana State University.*" Fulfillment of this mission is also integral to helping Montana State align with its land-grant mission *to integrate education, create knowledge and art and serve communities.*

As endowment funds support the teaching, research, and public service missions of this university, we the students understand the significant role an endowment plays in the financial well-being of MSU and the community it has been designed to serve.

I know that the Alumni Foundation does not take this responsibility lightly, and recognize how MSUAF itself draws attention to the intrinsic nature of the endowment on its webpage. <https://www.msuaaf.org/s/1584/index.aspx?sid=1584&gid=1&pgid=372>

"Growing the endowment is the best way to ensure that Montana State University remains healthy, strong, competitive, and able to fulfill its land-grant mission into the future."

Assuming that MSUAF makes these claims in good faith, it would be expected that the university invests in profitable portfolios that do not hinder the health of the community. However, MSUAF has privately disclosed that 19 million dollars of the endowment are invested in fossil fuel companies.

The fossil fuel industry is fiscally plummeting. With help from Eric Souder, Chartered SRI Counselor and Accredited Wealth Management Advisor, the 10-year loss for our endowment due to fossil fuel exposure is 5 million dollars, based on the rate of return on \$19 million in holdings at the end of 2021.

An investment in fossil fuels also directly harms the physical and financial well-being of Gallatin County residents. Fossil fuels are rapidly increasing temperatures. In Bozeman, the average temperature has already risen 2.7 degrees F since 1950 (more than double the national average) and is projected to rise 10 degrees by the end of the century (if no action is taken). Higher temperatures and entering spring with 45% of our typical snow-pack, guarantees hazardous fire season conditions and will be detrimental to regional agriculture, which comprises the largest sector of our local economy.

The discrepancy between MSUAF's proposed mission and the reality of its investments is unacceptable.

I, _____, ask that you uphold your commitment to MSUAF's mission and the success of this university by publicly disclosing fossil fuel exposure in our endowment portfolio. Divesting the \$19 million currently in fossil fuel companies. Reinvesting in higher-performing ESG funds. Making a public commitment to do these things over the next 5 years and telling students about it.

MSUAF Policies

Official policies and outline of fiduciary duty of MSUAF are very vague. Beyond what is stated in the letter or what is outlined here this [investment policy](#), there is also an official [gift policy](#) and [endowment spending allocation policy](#). In each of these docs benchmarks are not outlined and language is written in a way that easily absolves the MSUAF of responsibility to make good investments. Problematic language in the investment policy that minimizes MSUAF responsibility includes, “The investment managers selected by the Committee may invest at their discretion in stocks, exchange traded funds, bonds, derivatives, mutual funds, real estate, private equity, cash equivalents, and any other investments deemed appropriate by the Committee.” Giving full discretion to another party creates a cop out.

The CCC has continuously requested more transparency without success. The mission on the MSUAF website is also vague and non-committing. It would help everyone to have a better sense of what the official policies are and/or if any official policies guide the MSUAF.

- Overview of MSUAF fundraising efforts in the last 10 years: https://www.msuaaf.org/s/1584/images/editor_documents/foundation/what_it_took_campaign_report-low_res.pdf Has an aesthetically pleasing timeline of where major donations have come from and the philosophy of MSU current fundraising efforts.
- Policies page: <https://www.msuaaf.org/s/1584/index.aspx?sid=1584&gid=1&pgid=376>

Media coverage about MSU and divestment

[Leading environmentalist to discuss divestment at Montana State University](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *April 4, 2022*

- The CCC hosted Bill Mickiben with help from the Leadership Institute and the Office of sustainability. McKibben spoke about why divestment offers tangible solutions to the climate crisis.

[Editorial: Montana State’s sustainability goals noble, but short on detail](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *Dec. 14, 2021*

- This article acknowledges the positive parts of the recently passed MSU sustainability framework. The articles also bring to attention the areas where the framework is lacking. Gaps include, How will carbon emissions be measured? How will heating and cooling buildings be changed to minimize carbon emissions? How will students be incentivized to use public transportation and bicycles to get around? What will the university’s motor pool look like when transportation carbon neutrality is achieved?
- Along with answering questions like those, definitive benchmarks need to be established with concrete numbers, and deadlines must be set for reaching those benchmarks. And those responsible for reaching those benchmarks must be held accountable for making progress.

[Montana State University Faculty Senate declare climate emergency](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *Dec 10, 2021*

- Montana State University’s faculty governing body introduced and passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency, voicing its support for the sustainability framework, and encouraging the development of climate change focus curricula to “equip all MSU students with the perspective and skill sets needed to confront the climate crisis.”

[MSU adopts carbon neutrality, zero waste goals with new Sustainability Framework](#) (MSU Exponent) *Dec 9, 2021*

- “The MSU Office of Sustainability announced goals for the university to reach carbon neutrality by 2040 and zero waste by 2035, and achieve a Platinum rating under the Sustainability Tracking, Rating and Assessment System (STARS) by 2035 during the University Council meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 1.”

[Editorial: Divesting from fossil fuels a worthy effort](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *Dec. 7, 2021*

- “At the urging of student government leaders, the Montana State University Alumni Foundation has taken the initial steps to divest itself of socially and environmentally problematic investments — specifically those in fossil fuels, privately owned prisons and tobacco.”
- The article also says “Foundation money managers have an obligation to get the maximum return on investments. Pulling investments out of the fossil fuel business completely and trying to replace them with renewable energy investments without sustaining losses in returns on those investments could become challenging.”
 - ^^ This statement is misleading, as all evidence on divestment shows phenomenal financial returns. Denial of this may have something to do with the status of some MSU investors/donors and their personal stake in fossil fuels; such as Greg Gianforte. Here is a report (with great graphics!) on where donations have been coming from in the last 10 years.

[Montana State University Alumni Foundation exploring divestment from fossil fuels](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *Nov. 30, 2021*

- “While the divestment focus group is meeting, the foundation has agreed to pause working with any new managers who might be investing in the three areas of concern — fossil fuels, private prisons and tobacco companies,” Murray said. The Alumni Foundation has also tasked Wilshire with conducting a review of its portfolio to determine the extent of investment in those three areas. Murray said he anticipates the foundation doesn’t have many investments in private prisons or tobacco companies.”

[Alumni Foundation Creates Working Group to Study Divestment](#) (MSU Exponent) *November 4, 2021*

- “In response to activism by the Campus Climate Coalition (CCC), the MSU Alumni Foundation’s Board of Governors has created a working group to study divesting the university’s \$225 million endowment from funds containing companies operating in industries such as fossil fuels, private prisons, and tobacco.”
- “In addition to the CCC representatives, who were nominated by ASMSU President Norris Blossom, two members from the MSU campus were appointed to the working group by President Cruzado, and two members of the Board of Governors were appointed by Steven Rovig, chair of the board. Cruzado appointed Terry Leist, MSU vice president for administration and finance, and Gary Caton, finance professor in the College of Business. Rovig appointed William Sanderson, chair of the Alumni Foundation Finance Committee, and Mark Bacigalupo, chair of the Alumni Foundation Investment Committee. Alumni Foundation President and CEO Chris Murray will serve as the organizer of the group.”

[Land Grant Universities & Climate Change: Paul Lachapelle & Patrick Belmont](#) (KGVM) *November 3, 2021*

- “KGVM Board of Directors member, Yvonne Rudman, interviewed them on November 3, 2021 about the significant role Land Grant Universities can play in mitigating the negative impacts of climate change in The Age of the Anthropocene.”

[Climate action progressing at Montana State University](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *September 26, 2021*

- “The Associated Students of Montana State University declared a climate crisis this week and urged the university to use its resources to take strong action, as students, faculty and staff start the fall semester with a series of sustainability and climate actions on the horizon.”

[Montana State University faculty and students push for stronger climate action](#) (Bozeman Daily Chronicle) *June 11, 2021*

- “While applauding the university’s efforts to build sustainable buildings and create campus-wide systems to reduce waste, many students, faculty and staff are calling for larger actions to combat climate change, like setting an aggressive carbon-neutrality goal.”
-

Section 5: Student Reflection

When I first got involved with the Campus Climate Coalition I had no idea what I was doing. At the time I had been volunteering with the Sunrise Movement (a climate change advocacy group) for almost a year and had no idea what I was doing with that group either. I was deeply concerned about climate change, mostly from an immigration standpoint. I grew up in California and had seen friends and communities in my home have horrific experiences with the immigration process. When I learned that climate change would displace 600 million more people as climate refugees, I desperately wanted to do whatever I could to mitigate the effects of climate. I felt like there wasn’t time to wait to figure out the perfect way to get involved. I wanted to help as soon as possible.

I strongly stand by the idea that no one needs any specific background to get involved in social movements for change. However, there was a learning curve for me and so much I wish I had known at the beginning of my involvement with CCC and Sunrise. **BIG TAKEAWAY:** None of this type of work is new, there are many theories of change, and there is no one right way for social movements to work. There are many many tools, to be used for different settings and circumstances. My hope with this guide is to give a brief overview of the types of tools that exist and where to find them. As well as an insight into what has been done at MSU so far. None of this needs to be read in any particular order and I highly encourage watching the video links included with different sections for a fuller understanding.

A quick note on balance: This philosophy comes from the book *Emergent Strategy* by Adrienne Marie Brown, an incredible writer, organizer, and social justice leader. She talks about how organizing does not have to be your whole life to achieve the goal. We can hold a sense of urgency to take bold climate action and be intentional and meditative in our approach. There is always time to ask questions. There is time to take a step back and redirect. There is time to take a break! There is time to make your involvement in this work joyful. In fact, I believe enjoying this work is essential to the success of the movement. People may ask more of you than you are

willing to give and saying no will not hinder your efforts. Your existence is multifaceted and there is no need to reduce it to anything less than that. This is the advice I wish I received when I was first starting and wisdom that I now hold very dear to my heart.

Section 6: Resource Bank

CCC Information

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1-a2B7IRbkxDrJ9MqZwVyiLSzuJPV2fM->

What's in it!

- Working Group folder
- Training folder
- MUS (Montana University System)Reinvestment
- Meetings Notes
- Graphics
- Core
- Actions
- Petition
- divestmsu.org

General Overview of Divestment

- <https://www.divestinvest.org/invest-divest-2021/> This one is the best! So many fun facts and concise/digestible overviews of progress made. Does not need to be read to make sense either. The executive summary on the first page is a great place to start.

General Overview of Socially Responsible Investing

- <https://www.ussif.org/sribasics> Great and concise overview of sustainable investing.
- The United Nations has convened the [Net Zero Asset Owners Alliance](#) which provides a target-setting [protocol](#) and another organization is the [Science Based Targets initiative](#), which provides a parallel protocol.
- This is a quick and dirty [overview](#) of how the two organizations cover corporate emissions.
- The best source of information on the above organizations and how to set targets is Ceres. They have a working group focused specifically on aligning investment portfolios with net zero emissions goals (and actions)
 - Kaede Kawauchi kkawauchi@ceres.org
 - Natalie Queathem nqueathem@ceres.org
 - Kirsten Spalding spalding@ceres.org – she is the director of the initiative (but cc the others)
- Link to Ceres' [Asset Manager initiative](#) but it's very similar to what asset owners need to do.
- [This 2018 report](#) by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis 2018 finds that the financial case for divestment is strong, and the long-term prospects for fossil fuels weak

- [This report](#), also linked above, further develops the financial imperative for divestment (and how it's a necessary prerequisite of green reinvestment)
- Here's a recent [op-ed](#) Conor Chung wrote on how ESG strategies like shareholder engagement may be complements of, but are not alternatives to, divestment
- [Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis LINK?](#)

Legal Issues

From Connor Chung (Member of the [Harvard Divest Movement](#))....

He emailed us in April 2022 and stated the following: To explore the legal side of things: you may be familiar with how a key factor in our divestment victory was a legal complaint we filed against Harvard asserting that its fossil fuel investments represented a breach of fiduciary duty.

- [Op-ed](#) laying out the basics of the legal argument. This was written with legal and investment professionals in mind, so feel free to pass along to decision makers if that would be useful!
- Here was [our complaint](#), if you're looking for sources, and here was a good [news story](#) of ours and of some [followup actions](#) by others.
- If you want to chat with the lawyers we worked with, it's the fantastic team at [Climate Defense Project](#).

MSU Club Fundraising Page

- <https://www.montana.edu/engagement/organizations/funding-instructions.html>
- Mass funding timeline 2022
 - Application Opens: February 14th, 2022
 - Application Deadline: March 22nd, 2022 at 12pm
 - Application Review: March 23rd to April 29th
 - Notifications of Funding: May 2nd to May 7th
- Rolling funding
 - Available year round

Organizations and General Information

- <https://350.org/>
- <https://gofossilfree.org/> Organization keep tracking of different fossil fuel divestment efforts globally.
- <https://divestmentdatabase.org/>

Organizing

- [Momentum](#) — This is the social movement incubator that taught Sunrise everything. If you want to learn about Sunrise strategy, this is the place! Just recently, they've revamped their website and made MANY video trainings available for free
- [Ayni Institute](#) — Works with Momentum to put on trainings about theories of change. Their videos and [youtube channel](#) are fantastic

- Gene Sharp — He has passed away, but he was an academic who wrote *From Dictatorship to Democracy* which inspired uprisings around the world. His nonprofit, the [Albert Einstein Institute](#), makes every resource free... the book, his list of actions, and more
- [Erica Chenoweth's 3.5% "rule"](#) research — (there are a couple exceptions, but pro-democracy nonviolent movements that achieve participation from 3.5% of the population are almost always successful)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJSehRIU34w> (12 min Ted talk version)
- [Beautiful Trouble](#) — An org that provides resources for civil disobedience. Isabel has all the books. Kind of like Gene Sharp's list of actions, but it is newer and organized differently. Check out their toolbox — in addition to actions, it has principles, theories, etc.
- [Resistance School](#) — Fantastic video trainings on a multitude of progressive skills with incredible teachers. Project out of Berkeley
- [International Center for Nonviolent Conflict](#) — A more academic look at nonviolent movements with plenty of resources
- [Saul Alinsky](#) — old fashioned, very successful, structural-style organizer who had relationships to Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Wrote a couple books. One, called *Rules for Radicals*, shared specific principles. I've linked an article with them
- [Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung](#) — A German foundation named for a famous leftist. A bit hard to navigate, but has videos, articles, analysis, and training. This was the group that put on the Jane McAlevey training folks did last year. There are some recordings of other Jane McAlevey talks
- [MobLab](#) — Another group that offers trainings and free resources to movements
- [Project Drawdown](#) — a more sciency look at all of the climate solutions available to us to achieve "drawdown" of emissions
- [Jane McAlevey](#) — Labor organizer. Does she need an introduction
- [We Make the Future](#) — The home for resources and trainings on Race Class Narrative, a data backed messaging strategy for multiracial coalitions, winning progressive messages, and anti-dog whistle styles.
- [Climate Advocacy Lab](#) — resource library for campaigners, seems to be more frequently updating. Also a great polling focus. Have to be a member (working on it). Idea courtesy Ian/MEIC
- <https://www.theorganizerfilm.com/> Movie for ff you want to get stoked on social movements!!