

Tufts Climate Action is deeply disappointed by the administrative response to the faculty referendum on fossil fuel divestment. This referendum, which showed overwhelming faculty support for divestment, was the last in a series of measures that have demonstrated the unwavering community endorsement of divestment (including students, student government, and alumni). Additionally, the statement that all forms of divestment - in this case specifically divestment of our direct holdings in fossil fuel companies - would have an adverse impact on Tufts' endowment has not been demonstrated, as it simply omits a small number of corporations from our investment portfolio. Many other institutions have divested their direct holdings in fossil fuel companies without experiencing financial loss.

The administration's belief that divestment is a simple approach to a complex problem highlights their lack of understanding and engagement with the nuances of divestment and the urgency of climate change. The statement proposes that natural gas will bridge our fossil fuel economy to a lower-carbon future, and that divestment fails to recognize this fact. Divestment seeks to remove the social license of the fossil fuel industry and debunk myths circulating about climate change solutions. Natural gas is not the answer to a clean energy future and is potentially more destructive to our climate than traditional fossil fuels. Divesting from these companies is an important step in highlighting the misinformation surrounding the natural gas industry.

Furthermore, the conclusions of the 2014 divestment working group were not endorsed by the student and many faculty members of that group, and to imply otherwise is extremely misleading of those participants' perspectives.

Fossil fuel divestment and a transition to a clean power economy is inevitable because of the impending environmental catastrophes -- hurricanes, food shortages, species extinction, loss of land and human life -- will necessitate this change. It's not a question of how, but when. It's a question of whether Tufts will be remembered as a great leader among its students and its peers, or not. Most of history is a story of people doing things wrong, until enough people start doing things right. Those that have done the least to cause climate change are suffering the most, and the millions of people that have already died in the face of environmental catastrophe are evidence that this is an issue of justice. Climate change is our modern apartheid and our modern Holocaust. Tufts Climate Action is committed to continuing to work with our administration where possible, and apply pressure when necessary in order for our institution to take seriously its responsibility in confronting the climate crisis.

