

A RESOLUTION FOR FUNDING TRANSPARENCY AT [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT]

WHEREAS The George Washington University is committed to protecting academic freedom, including “the conduct of authorized research activities without interference or disruption by individuals or groups inside or outside the University community.”¹

WHEREAS Higher education has become increasingly reliant on nonprofit and private sector donors for university research funding.

WHEREAS Numerous studies show that with industry-funding comes potential for biased researched outcomes that disproportionately align with industry interests.^{2 3 4}

WHEREAS A lack of independence from donors threatens a researcher’s academic freedom.

WHEREAS A lack of funding transparency emboldens industries to enforce coercive funding agreements and increases the likelihood that conflicts of interest will be left unnoticed.

WHEREAS After pledging to eliminate fossil fuel investments from the endowment in 2020, the University Board of Trustees assembled an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Responsibility Task Force to identify ways for the university to proactively manage ESG responsibilities beyond fossil fuel divestment.⁵

WHEREAS The ESG Responsibility Task Force recommended divestment transparency as a key tenant of environmentally and socially conscious governance after comprehensive engagement with the GW community.⁶

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT]

That: all restricted gifts of at least \$50,000 to [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT] from for profit and nonprofit entities shall be disclosed in a publicly accessible database or listed on [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT’s] website until the Office of Development and Alumni Relations institutes aligned university-wide funding transparency policy.

¹<https://provost.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs626/f/downloads/Resources/Academic%20Freedom%20Guidelines%28ApprovedVersion%29.pdf>

²<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9605902/>

³<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6187765/>

⁴<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001578>

⁵<https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/environmental-social-and-governance-responsibility-task-force-holds-community-forum>

⁶https://trustees.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2786/f/downloads/ESG%20Report_BOT.pdf

That: all externally-sponsored research projects shall be disclosed in a publicly accessible database or listed on [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT's] website, including the project sponsor, amount of funding, research subject, and the name of the lead researcher, until the Office of Sponsored Projects institutes aligned university-wide funding transparency policy.

That: the [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT's] templates for gift agreements that align with university commitments to protect academic freedom and integrity must be made publicly accessible on the [INSERT SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT's] website, until the Office of Development and Alumni Relations institutes aligned university-wide funding transparency policy. Any gift agreement not using one of the templates must be publicly accessible in the gift database or website.

That: to ensure donors do not attempt to manipulate the system, multiple donors or multiple gifts totaling \$50,000 or more proposed with the same or similar purposes and agreements must also be publicly accessible through the gift database or website.

That: donations from individuals of at least \$50,000 will not be required for disclosure, but voluntary disclosure must be encouraged.