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Barnard College to divest from climate deniers

In historic student-led decision, Barnard will be the first institution to cut ties with climate denying corporations

New York, NY -- This afternoon, Barnard College made history. In an unprecedented decision, the Board of Trustees [voted in favor](#) of divestment from coal, tar sands, and fossil fuel companies that deny the climate crisis. In a campus-wide email Barnard President Debora Spar announced that “At today’s Board meeting, the trustees unanimously approved a path-breaking recommendation from our Task Force to Examine Divestment that will put Barnard at the very forefront of organizations striving to have an impact on climate change and fossil fuel use.” Not only is Barnard the first women’s college committed to divestment from fossil fuel companies, but it is the first institution to take this groundbreaking climate denier approach.

“It is incredible to have such overwhelming support for divestment from administration and faculty,” said Divest Barnard sophomore organizer Sam Doss. “We hope that their demonstrated commitment to working with students will raise the bar for other administrations being asked to take on the challenge of fossil fuel divestment. We also hope that this moment will inspire ongoing campaigns.”

Divest Barnard is extremely proud of the work that the campaign has done over the last three years to achieve this victory. The greater Barnard community has also demonstrated their continued support, from last Spring’s referendum passing with [95% of voting students in favor](#), to our [current petition](#) over 4,000 New York signatures strong. This decision also would not have been possible without the members of the Presidential Task Force to Examine Divestment from Fossil Fuels and their thoughtful, dedicated, and intellectually rigorous deliberations towards their recommendation.

The unique focus of this new divestment approach to combat climate denial is particularly relevant in today’s political climate. Climate deniers now occupy some of the highest political offices in the United States. From Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil, to staunch climate denier and now EPA director Scott Pruitt, our political leaders have regressed to a stance which opposes both scientific fact and necessary climate action. Campaigns like the #ExxonKnew campaign have increased public awareness of the actions ExxonMobil has taken to obstruct climate science. Similarly, this new divestment path has the power to catalyze colleges and universities to redefine fossil divestment within their academic mission.

Today was a victory, as is any opportunity for cutting ties with the fossil fuel industry for the global fossil fuel divestment movement. The process of divestment at Barnard is far from over, and Divest Barnard is excited to take on the challenges of defining climate deniers and implementing this new divestment approach. Barnard College has taken an inspiring step for climate action and Divest Barnard looks forward to continued climate action that promotes scientific fact, centers the Harlem/Morningside community, and galvanizes academic institutions across the country to take a stand for climate justice.