



Fossil-Fuelled Universities

About the report

Anthropogenic climate change is now more catastrophic than it has ever been, with the world being perilously close to the 1.5C warming threshold established by the Paris Agreement, and the IPCC Working Group 1 Report released on August 9 being "a code red for humanity". The world is already too late to avoid an increase in extremes and will definitely breach the 1.5C threshold in the next 20 years. Without unprecedented and immediate action we will also be too late to limit the intensity of those extremes and end-of-century warming close to 1.5C or even 2C.

Fossil fuel companies and their activities are amongst the greatest drivers of anthropogenic climate change, with 20 fossil fuel companies generating a third of all modern emissions, and being bastions of climate denial, contrarian science, and undermining global climate action. Till this day, these companies continue to show inadequate commitment to tackling the climate crisis. We no longer have time to give companies 'space' to transition at their own pace. Fossil fuel companies must transition or be rejected, and only the serious threat of the latter can incentivise the former.

In exchange for a variety of benefits, companies such as Shell, ExxonMobil, and BP have entered our education systems to promote their brands and recruit new talent. Our universities' linkages and close partnerships with these companies allows them to gain broad social acceptance and approval, and purchase a "social license" to continue their status quo. We believe that our universities' passive relationship with the fossil fuel industry is not acceptable in today's environmental and social context.

'Fossil-Fuelled Universities' presents an inexhaustive detailing of linkages between fossil fuel companies and Singapore's universities, elaborate on the harms created by these linkages. Lastly, it calls for our universities to reconsider ties with these companies in a phased out, gradual, roadmap that matches the scale and urgency of climate action needed, while remaining cognisant with operational realities.

Key Findings

Linkages and partnerships run deeply embedded between fossil fuel companies ("FF companies") & our local universities. This includes the areas of corporate governance, in academia, in professional development, in finances, in use of campus spaces, as well as through other activities.

Finance & Management

Endowment investments & donations: University activities & research should not be funded by returns created from driving the climate crisis. Fossil fuel investments are also increasingly unreliable, risky, and not financially prudent.

Management: University leadership with linkages who have links to FF companies may create concerns over a conflict of interest as the pressure on universities worldwide to stop move away from fossil fuels increases.

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- NUS
 - A "low single digit" percentage of endowment is currently indirectly invested in fossil fuels (e.g., 1% = S\$59 million)
 - One board member was a senior leader in a FF company
 - NTU
 - Undisclosed percentage of endowment indirectly invested in fossil fuels
 - Two board members, including the Board Chair were senior leaders in FF companies
 - SMU
 - Emirates National Oil Company LCC had donated over S\$1m, Shell International Eastern Trading Company and Koch Refining International donated over S\$500,000 and S\$250,000 respectively, amongst other FF company donors
 - One board member was a senior leader in a FF company
 - Undisclosed whether endowment is invested in fossil fuels
 - SUTD
 - One board member, the Board Chair, was a senior leader in a FF company
 - Undisclosed whether endowment is invested in fossil fuels
 - SIM
 - One board member, the Board Chair, is currently a senior leader in a FF company
 - Undisclosed whether endowment is invested in fossil fuels
 - YALE-NUS
 - Yale-NUS's endowment is pooled together with NUS'
 - One board member was a senior leader in a FF company

Academia

When academia is inextricably linked to the fossil fuel industry, self-censorship creates a chilling effect on academic freedom potentially restricting universities from being critical about the industry's environmental impacts, and impinging upon intellectual integrity and critical thinking. This could begin from just a polite unwillingness to criticize benefactors.

- NUS
 - Two ExxonMobil visiting professors (Engineering)
 - Research fellowships (e.g., ExxonMobil NUS Research Fellowship)
 - 6 prizes (e.g. BP Gold Medal Award, Shell Medal and Prize)
- NTU
 - 4 prizes (e.g., ExxonMobil Gold Medal, Shell Gold Medal)
- SMU
 - Keppel funds the Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics in SMU, and has established an associated professorship in the institute
 - 4 scholarships (e.g., BB Energy Scholarship)
- SUTD
 - 2 prizes (e.g., Keppel Bursary Award)
- SIT
 - 1 prize (e.g., SP Group Book Prize in Electrical Systems)
 - 3 scholarships and bursaries (e.g. Naterra Resources International Scholarship, Geo Energy Bursary, etc.)

Professional Development

Professional development programmes & activities with the industry provides it social license and a steady stream of talent, supporting companies that are endangering the world, while sending students into a sunset industry.

- ▶ **On-campus career events:** e.g., Women in Shell event in NUS (2019), BP personal branding workshops and talks in NTU (2019), NTU Career Fair including FF companies (e.g., ExxonMobil) (2020), ITI@SMU Networking Night including FF companies (e.g., Shell, Emirates National Oil, Total)
- ▶ **Industry-linked professional programmes:** e.g., SMU's International Trading Track in partnership with O&G majors such as Total and Shell, NTU's International Trading Programme's corporate partners advising curriculum design and providing internship opportunities include BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell and Trafigura

Use of Campus Spaces

By entering campus spaces through promotional sponsorships, fossil fuel corporations use university spaces and platforms to improve their public image, greenwash, purchase social acceptance, and normalize their presence despite actively driving our climate crisis. Just as universities do not offer platforms to tobacco or weapon companies, it is time to stop letting fossil fuel companies market themselves in university spaces.

- NUS
 - ExxonMobil has been sponsoring the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts series in NUS since 1986.
 - ExxonMobil also sponsors programmes with the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum (2017, 2018, and 2019).
- SUTD
 - SUTD and ExxonMobil have collaboratively launched a mobile fabrication lab.
 - ExxonMobil also holds other talks and events on campus.



About Students for a Fossil Free Future

Students for a Fossil Free Future (S4F) was formed to hold our universities accountable for their role in the climate crisis and their capacity to address it.

We are an inter-university, student-led campaign, with a team consisting of students from five local universities: NUS, NTU, SMU, SUTD, and Yale-NUS.

We urge Singaporean universities to critically reassess and transition away from their current associations with the fossil fuel industry, and work towards a more just and livable future for all. We are inspired by the global Fossil Free movement to end the age of fossil fuels and build a world of community-led renewable energy.

Moving Forward: Recommendations & Proposed Timeline

	In 1-2 years	In 3-5 years	By 2030
Finance & Management	<p>Develop and publish a timeline for complete divestment from fossil fuels.</p> <p>Commit to ceasing new direct and indirect investments in fossil fuels.</p> <p>Sign on to the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI).</p> <p>Restrict the appointment of individuals who currently hold or previously held senior leadership positions in a fossil fuel company to universities' Boards.</p>	<p>Divest from investments in fossil fuel companies that receive >10% of their revenue from coal and tar sands, and assets that seek to exploit coal and tar sands.</p>	<p>Fully divest all financial holdings from fossil fuel companies and fossil fuel-linked assets.</p>
Academia	<p>Regarding scholarships and prizes where the money is guaranteed in trusts, remove the name branding of fossil fuel companies.</p> <p>Develop and publicly announce a plan to secure alternative modes of funding from companies which are committed to a post-carbon transition.</p> <p>Implement climate crisis education for all students in our universities.</p>	<p>Secure alternative funding from industries committed to a post-carbon transition to replace scholarships and prizes that are currently associated with the fossil fuel industry.</p> <p>Expand opportunities, resources, and support for university stakeholders to research, learn about, and take action on climate change and climate justice within their departments and units</p>	<p>Discontinue all funding for scholarships, prizes, and research associated with the fossil fuel industry.</p>
Professional Development	<p>Stop seeking new industry partnership programmes with fossil fuel companies which are related to the extraction, refinement, or use of fossil fuels.</p> <p>Seek to increase the advertisement of roles centred on alternative and sustainable industries to replace fossil fuel companies' advertisement of roles related to the extraction, refinement, or use of fossil fuels.</p>	<p>Secure alternative partnerships with companies in sunrise industries that are committed to a post-carbon transition.</p> <p>Develop and publicise training, certification, and job transition pathways for employees of fossil fuel companies seeking to move to renewable or other</p>	<p>Cease prevailing industry partnership programmes with fossil fuel companies and the hosting of fossil fuel companies at on-campus career events.</p>
Use of Campus Spaces	<p>Secure funding for campus events and spaces from companies committed to the post-carbon transition.</p> <p>Continue holding and promoting events which critically engage with the climate crisis on a systemic level.</p>	<p>Discontinue existing sponsorship programs with fossil fuel companies.</p>	