

UW Oshkosh Faculty Senate Climate Action Resolution

Whereas, our world is currently in an intensifying climate emergency that impacts public safety, public health, food security, ecological integrity, and the welfare of future generations;

Whereas, these harms disproportionately impact communities of color, the poor, and those living in the developing world, despite the fact that these communities bear least responsibility for the problem;

Whereas, the window of opportunity to address climate change is rapidly closing, with scientists predicting that we have a decade or less to reduce carbon emissions dramatically so that exponentially escalating impacts can be avoided;

Whereas, pursuing carbon neutrality and divesting from fossil fuels are two of the most impactful actions institutions can take to address the ethical, biological, and financial imperatives presented by the climate crisis;

Whereas, the State of Wisconsin has been urged, in the recent Governor's Task Force Report on Climate Change, to pursue climate neutrality goals and to seriously consider divestment in order to protect the long-term viability of the state's investments and pension fund¹;

Whereas, numerous universities, both public and private, have already begun addressing institutional investment in fossil fuels and campus climate neutrality goals, including the University of California system, Stanford University, Syracuse University, Cornell University, Georgetown University, Oregon State University, and the University of Maryland²;

Whereas, the faculty senates at University of Wisconsin Madison and University of Wisconsin River Falls have adopted resolutions calling for fossil fuel divestment by their associated foundations³;

¹ <https://climatechange.wi.gov/pages/home.aspx>

² <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/uc-s-investment-portfolios-fossil-free-clean-energy-investments-top-1-billion>; <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/06/12/trustees-commit-accelerating-transition-to-net-zero-greenhouse-gas-emissions/>;
https://www.syracuse.com/schools/2015/04/syracuse_university_to_divest_fossil_fuel_investments.html;
<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/05/cornell-announces-moratorium-fossil-fuel-investments>;
<https://www.georgetown.edu/news/fossil-fuels-divestment-continues-georgetown-commitment-to-sustainability/>; <https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/divest-success>;
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/education/bs-md-usmf-divestment-20160628-story.html>

³ <https://secfac.wisc.edu/uw-faculty-senate-climate-divestment-and-procurement-resolution/>

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Whereas, today the scientific certainty surrounding anthropogenic climate change is even more compelling, and the forecasted severity of its impacts have greatly increased, since the UW Oshkosh Faculty Senate last endorsed fossil fuel divestment in 2014;

Whereas, sustainability is a “foundational element” for the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh has built a national reputation as a sustainability leader in higher education;

Whereas, the UW Oshkosh Student Association (OSA) resolved in December 2019 (OSA Resolution 19-025) that the University should pursue a goal of reaching climate neutrality in its operations by 2030 and reinforced this resolution in Fall 2020 (OSA Resolutions 20-009, -010, and -011), and identified fossil fuel divestment as a key component of this strategy (OSA Resolution 20-008);

Be it resolved that the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Senate urges the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh to address the climate crisis by

- conducting a thorough review of policies and procedures in all aspects of campus operations that will reduce the university’s carbon footprint;
- adopting a goal of achieving climate neutrality in campus operations by 2030;
- committing financial and human resources to this goal;

Be it further resolved that the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Senate urges the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Foundation to address the climate crisis by:

- disclosing its fossil fuel assets and investments for the purpose of full transparency for faculty, university and academic staff, students, donors, alumni and the citizens of the state;
- including concerns about fossil fuel divestment and socially responsible investing in future requests for proposals in the search for an asset management firm;
- establishing a clear plan and timetable to fully divest from fossil fuel investments as well as to develop a fossil-free alternative for donors.

Approved by the Faculty Senate (11-May-2021)

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