

A resolution for consideration by the Graduate and Professional Student Council on Tuesday, February 24, 2015:

A Resolution in Support of University Divestment from Fossil Fuels

WHEREAS, Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) is the recognized governing and representative body of all graduate and professional students at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC);

WHEREAS, the continued and expanding use of non-renewable fuels is by definition unsustainable, and businesses based primarily on the extraction and sale of non-renewable resources have an inherently unsustainable business model;

WHEREAS, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels is harmful to public health and the environment;¹

WHEREAS, the evidence that excessive use of fossil fuels is causing global climate change is overwhelming and undeniable, and according to the US Department of Defense climate change represents a serious threat to our national security;²

WHEREAS, we recognize the critical role that the extraction and sale of coal has played in the economic, social, and political development of Southern Illinois, but assert that a public research university has an obligatory role in the provision of leadership in areas of social, technological, and economic importance through education, innovation, and investment. The mission of Southern Illinois University affirms a dedication to “effective social and economic initiatives in community, regional, and statewide contexts;”³

WHEREAS, SIU has a long history of supporting sustainability and continues it today with a variety of initiatives on campus.⁴ Both the reputation and morale of SIU benefits from the university affirming a commitment to social justice and public health;

WHEREAS, SIU is in a position to take a leadership role among public institutions on this, one of the most important social and economic issues of our time;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that graduate and professional students call upon the President and Board of Trustees of SIU to immediately cease any new investments in fossil fuel companies or in commingled assets that include holdings in fossil fuel companies; and, for any SIU investments in commingled funds that are found to include fossil fuel companies, we urge the President and Board of Trustees to contact the fund managers and request that the fossil fuel companies be removed from the funds.

¹ 2010. Hidden Costs of Energy: Unpriced Consequences of Energy Production and Use. National Academies Press, Washington DC.

² United States Department of Defense FY 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap, http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/download/CCARprint_wForeword_c.pdf.

³ Success at Southern Illinois University: Fiscal Year 2013, Performance Report.

⁴ For example, see the SIUC Sustainability Council [<http://sustainability.siu.edu/about/council/index.html>] and the Talloires Declaration [<http://sustainability.siu.edu/about/history/talloires-declaration.html>].