

Good afternoon. I am Brian Henning from the Philosophy and Environmental Studies departments and I'm here with my Environmental Studies colleague Greg Gordon to talk about the Fossil Free Gonzaga divestment campaign.

Because you have a busy agenda, I don't want to take up a lot of time. I'd like to make three quick comments and then leave time for discussion.

- 1) The first point I'd like to make concerns the *path* the divestment campaign is pursuing. The students and faculty divestment campaigns both adopted the same resolution and are slowly moving that resolution through our shared governance structures: GSBA and the Faculty Senate respectively. We hope someday to bring this resolution for a vote in the senate, but that day is not today. Today our goal is to get a sense of where the Senate stands with respect to this issue.
- 2) The second point I'd like to make concerns the *context* in which we are discussing divestment and our endowment. It is all too easy to reduce this to an abstract issue as though it were merely a financial concern divorced from our mission and from the growing climate crisis.

The idea of Gonzaga divesting from fossil fuels should not be controversial, *if* we are to live up to our charge of reflecting our mission and identity as a Catholic, Jesuit, humanistic university. Indeed, *morally*, it is indefensible for a Jesuit institution to seek to profit from the sale of the very substances causing the climate crisis. This message was communicated unequivocally by Pope Francis in his recent Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, "[On Care for Our Common Home](#)."

Beyond the compelling arguments based on our Jesuit mission, the *scientific* argument for divestment is similarly compelling. Fourteen months ago more than 190 nations of the world came together in Paris and agreed that the world must limit global temperature increase "well below" 2°C (3.6°F) beyond pre-industrial levels. We cannot forget that this "guardrail" is needed in order to avoid catastrophic climate change, which will very likely cause *massive* species extinction and *dangerous* sea level rise that could displace many millions of people, especially the poor. According to current scientific consensus, if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change, more than 80% of known fossil fuel reserves must not be brought to market; they must stay in the ground. In a very real sense, to continue to buy, sell, and burn these fossil fuels is ecocidal.

Thus, as the precedent of Gonzaga's South African divestment in the Apartheid era demonstrates, and as our own Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations affirm, we should consider whether our endowment investments are consistent with our values. We agree with the students of the Fossil Free Gonzaga campaign: the time is now for Gonzaga to take action and move toward divestment of fossil fuel. Most would agree that Gonzaga ended up on the right side of history with respect to Apartheid divestment. I have no doubt that the future will similarly judge what we do or do not do about fossil fuel divestment. I can only hope that we again end up on the right side of history.

- 3) Finally, I'd just like to extend an invitation. As of today 120 of our faculty colleagues have signed in support of the divestment resolution. If you or any of your department colleagues would like to add your name, just email me at henning@gonzaga.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to dialogue with us about this important issue.