

Chancellor Chopp moves to stand with students



Divest DU left a meeting with the administration on November 9, 2015, frustrated. The campaign was invited to meet with the four people most responsible for DU's investments in the fossil fuel industry: Chancellor Chopp, Vice Chancellor Craig Woody, Board of Trustees (BOT) Chair Doug Scrivner, and BOT Investment Committee Chair KC Gallagher. Although Divest DU was optimistic about the opportunity to align the endowment with DU's values, no real progress was made by the meeting's end.

The meeting lacked any genuine engagement with Divest DU. Our administrators, led by Chancellor Chopp, did not come with specific questions or agenda items to discuss, and they explicitly said "No" to our two most important demands. First, they refused to publicize the amount of money the institution has invested in the fossil fuel industry, claiming that they were not legally required to be honest and transparent with their students as a private institution. Second, they explicitly refused to allow Divest DU to present at any BOT meetings for the rest of the year, citing that it was too short of notice to fit into their busy agendas. Chancellor Chopp sent a clear message — taking meaningful action on the climate crisis is not a priority.

Despite administrative inaction, campaign leaders returned to campus more committed than ever, holding a 20-hour strategy retreat the first weekend of winter quarter 2016. We quickly expanded the campaign and gained overwhelming support from students and faculty. These steps created a drastic shift in the Chancellor's response, and we are excited to announce the following developments:

First, in February, Chancellor Chopp agreed to provide the Faculty Senate with information on the endowment. While our administration's lack of transparency with students is

disappointing, the chancellor's move towards collaboration with faculty was a step in the right direction.

Then, in March, the chancellor reached out to Divest DU with an invitation to present to the full BOT at their April 14 meeting. At this meeting, we will ask the Investment Committee to commit to voting on divestment within the month. We know that a commitment to full divestment of the endowment is possible by June, as long as the BOT removes current roadblocks.

We celebrate the students who have taken action for Climate Justice. The chancellor's decision to stand with the 1,600 students who have signed the petition for Fossil Fuel Divestment and support our right to address the BOT is a result of students reclaiming their power to make change, and it would not have happened without your support.

The significance of our April 14 presentation to the BOT cannot be understated, and we need your help more than ever for the meeting to be a success.

Students: Sign our petition at DivestDU.org and attend our weekly general meetings Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in the JMAC classroom to empower this campaign.

Student Organizations: Stand with the 24 groups who have already endorsed Divest DU and publicly announce your support of our mission. Learn more by emailing DivestDU@gmail.com.

Faculty: Sign the Faculty Open Letter at DivestDU.org to demonstrate your public support of students fighting for a just, livable future.

In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."