

## CHAPTER 2: THE SWARTHMORE IDEA: THE CRADLE OF FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

John Winthrop might be surprised at the updates to his “city upon a hill.” It relocated, evidently, from the rocky coastline of Massachusetts to the wooded knolls of suburban Pennsylvania. Its residents, the Puritan immigrants who forsook England for the dangers and promises of the new world, have metamorphosed into the heirs of a rebellious Quaker heritage.

The new “city” is Swarthmore College. The number-three ranked liberal arts college in the country, founded by Quakers in 1864, nestles into the hillsides of sedate Swarthmore Borough, which has 6,194 residents,<sup>134</sup> counting the college’s 1,534 students.<sup>135</sup> (The colony Winthrop led landed with about 700.) For the last five years, since the college birthed the first fossil fuel divestment campaign in 2010, the eyes of many have been upon it, much as the “eies” of seventeenth century Europe watched the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Kate Aronoff, a 2014 Swarthmore graduate, made the comparison in a March 2015 essay about Swarthmore’s divestment campaign in the left-leaning web magazine *Common Dreams*. “Like most elite institutions, Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania fashions itself as a sort of secular city upon a hill.”<sup>136</sup> Aronoff noted the college’s founding by pacifists wanting out of the Civil War, and its contributing “generations of progressive organizers” who had worked to shape American society. These included suffragette Alice Paul (1905) and innumerable “civil rights and anti-war activists.”

Aronoff didn’t name them, but Paul, the woman behind the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and president of the National Woman’s Party for half a century, is not Swarthmore’s only famous activist alumni. Cathy Wilkerson, Swarthmore ’66, spent eleven months in prison for trying to blow up a military officers’ dance at Fort Dix, New Jersey, in 1970. She was a member of the Weather Underground and had participated in the Chicago “Days of Rage” actions, where for three days in October 1969 thousands of Weathermen and other members of the radical Students for a Democratic Society vandalized homes, smashed business windows, took hammers to parked cars, and charged into police officers. Two hundred eighty-seven Weathermen and SDS leaders were arrested. SDS spent \$243,000 covering bail, including Wilkerson’s.<sup>137</sup>

134 “Demographics and Maps,” Swarthmore Borough, 2015. <http://www.swarthmorepa.org/1581/Demographics-Maps>.

135 “Facts and Figures,” Swarthmore College, 2015. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/about/facts-figures>.

136 Kate Aronoff, “Swarthmore Students Launch First Indefinite Occupation for Fossil Fuel Divestment,” *Common Dreams*, March 23, 2015. <http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/03/23/swarthmore-students-launch-first-indefinite-occupation-fossil-fuel-divestment>.

137 Sale, Kirkpatrick, *SDS*, Vintage Books, 1974.

Carl Wittman, who when he entered Swarthmore in 1960 was already a civil rights activist and spent summers canvassing the South, joined the national council of the SDS in 1963 as a college junior. He parted ways with SDS and the “New Left” for its failure to embrace homosexuality, and in 1969 wrote *Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto*. In the manifesto he accused “Amerika” of oppressing homosexuals in the “ghetto” of San Francisco. There, “capitalists make money off us, cops patrol us, government tolerates us as long as we shut up,” and “daily we work for and pay taxes to those who oppress us.”<sup>138</sup> Wittman’s manifesto was published by The Red Butterfly of the Gay Liberation Front, the violent umbrella group that started the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

The activism brimming in the ‘60s and ‘70s at Swarthmore, which edged the 220-acre Crum Woods, reputedly brought Richard Nixon’s first vice president, Spiro Agnew, to dub the college “the Kremlin on the Crum.”<sup>139</sup> Even if the attribution to Agnew is a folk legend, the phrase encapsulates the side of Swarthmore’s activist legacy that Aronoff does not emphasize: the radicalization that can lead students at a Quaker college to violence, and the intemperate rhetoric that takes America as simply hateful.

Is this the history Aronoff had in mind when praising Swarthmore’s heritage of rebellion? Aronoff and fellow fossil fuel divestment activists with her have taken pledges to engage only in nonviolent actions. They have no declared intention to wield hammers or pulverize glass. But Swarthmore’s mottled activist heritage “congealed,” Aronoff said, until the “college’s institutional identity” is now “as a place that prides itself as an incubator for social change.” Fossil fuel divestment was just the latest chick to hatch.

Aronoff’s history is dubious: Quakers are pacifists, but Swarthmore was founded to provide an institution of higher education for Hicksite Friends, not as a refuge from the Civil War. Quakers traditionally look back to George Fox and William Penn, not John Winthrop and that Massachusetts “city upon a hill” where they put Quakers in the stocks in one mood and hanged them in another. But Aronoff’s preference for the Boston of stocks and gallows is telling.

***The fossil fuel divestment campaign at Swarthmore has been marked by intolerance, righteous indignation, and obstinacy.***

138 Carl Wittman, *The Gay Manifesto*, The Red Butterfly, 1970. <http://paganpressbooks.com/jpl/TRB-WITT.PDF>.

139 Miles Skorpen, “Where Does ‘the Kremlin on Crum’ Come From?” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 6, 2007. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2007/03/06/ask-the-gazette-where-does-the-kremlin-on-the-crum-come-from/>.

The fossil fuel divestment campaign at Swarthmore has been marked by intolerance, righteous indignation, and obstinacy. Students have denounced dissent as irrelevant and elitist, condemned administrators who repeatedly met with them as uncooperative, and shamed students into conformity.

As Swarthmore's divestment campaign has been a model for the national one, a chronicle of its deeds illuminates the character of the larger movement. Activism campaigns are often treated by the press anecdotally, or with broad statistics. Both approaches obscure the social and cultural dynamics at play on the ground. A very small number of deeply engaged activists can project a movement much larger than it really is. To clarify the nature of the fossil fuel divestment campaign, we offer a history of the movement's origins at Swarthmore, an investigation of the campaign and its tactics, and an analysis of the response from the college community.

### **A Model of 1980s Activism**

Swarthmore's fossil fuel divestment campaign traces its legacy to a previous generation's apartheid divestment campaign. From the late 1970s until the late 1980s, students nationwide asked their colleges and universities to cancel investments in companies with assets, interests, or investments in apartheid South Africa. By 1988, 155 colleges and universities had withdrawn at least some investments from companies linked to apartheid.<sup>140</sup>

The Swarthmore Anti-Apartheid Committee organized in 1978. It circulated a petition that listed the injustices in South Africa and demanded Swarthmore divest, lest it sully its Quaker heritage. In two days, 640 students signed the petition. The board a month later adopted the "Sullivan Principles," a popular outline of responsible investment guidelines drawn up in 1977 by a Baptist pastor, who recommended that all businesses adopt a race-neutral hiring policy but not that they cease activity in South Africa. Over the next seven years, Swarthmore divested from companies that failed to meet the Sullivan guidelines—\$3 million in stocks moved. This did not satisfy divestment activists.

The next year, 1985-86, was a tug of war. In September 1985, students spent 20 days sleeping on the porch of Parrish Hall, the administrative building, leading up to a September 28 board meeting. They rotated in shifts and passed out red armbands to show support for divestment. Professors joined each evening to give talks. The night before the board met, 500 students converged from Swarthmore and the nearby colleges of Haverford and Bryn Mawr to sleep on the grass and ring the building with a candlelight vigil.

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140 Richard Knight, "Sanctions, Disinvestment, and U.S. Corporations in South Africa" in *Sanctioning Apartheid*, Africa World Press, 1990. Reprinted on *Homestead.com*. <http://richardknight.homestead.com/files/uscorporations.htm>.

The board decided not to divest but appointed a committee to investigate other, more effective, ways to condemn apartheid. In response, on October 7, 35 students arranged a sit-in at Parrish Hall. On December 6, the board agreed to divest from additional companies that failed certain Sullivan Principles, but declined further divestment. In response 70 students marched into the middle of the meeting and sang. The board adjourned until the serenading intruders left.

From December 11-19, 50 students rotated through the president's office for another sit-in. They wanted complete divestment from apartheid, and more recruitment of black students and professors to Swarthmore. The board agreed to the latter but again rejected divestment.

The first day in March 1986, students held a die-in on the lawn outside a board meeting. Six students and one professor attended the meeting to demand divestment. There, the board caved. It agreed to divest in stages. Three years later, in 1989, it adopted a schedule to divest \$42.5 million, on the condition that "prudent" means were available. By 1990, the college fully divested.<sup>141</sup> That year, the African National Congress was legalized, and Nelson Mandela was freed from prison. Britain became the first country to lift all restrictions on new investments in South Africa. Mandela won the presidential election in 1994, the first election in which citizens of all races were allowed to vote. All remaining international sanctions were lifted.

When Mandela visited California in 1990, he listed a litany of US allies: warehousemen from Union Local 10, who refused to unload a South African ship in 1984; the "workers, trades people, community activists and educators" who had held protests; the Bay Area Free South Africa Movement; and the University of California Faculty/Student Action for Divestment, which had successfully led the university to divest.<sup>142</sup>

Swarthmore was slow to the apartheid divestment movement. When students formed their Anti-Apartheid Committee in 1978, banks had already begun five years previously to restrict loans to South Africa. In 1976, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger announced that the US would try political and economic levers against Apartheid; in 1977, the US supported a UN weapons embargo, though it then resisted a UN economic embargo on the nation. That year, Canada began phasing out commercial activity in South Africa.

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141 Hannah Jones, "Swarthmore College Students Win Divestment From Apartheid South Africa, 1978-1989," *Global Nonviolent Action Database*, April 2, 2010. <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/swarthmore-college-students-win-divestment-apartheid-south-africa-1978-1989>.

142 Nelson Mandela, "We Cannot Turn Back," June 30, 1990. Reprinted in *Inside Bay Area News*, June 27, 2013. [http://www.insidebayarea.com/news/ci\\_23553867/mandelas-1990-speech-oakland-we-cannot-turn-back?source=pkg](http://www.insidebayarea.com/news/ci_23553867/mandelas-1990-speech-oakland-we-cannot-turn-back?source=pkg).

By the time Swarthmore joined the movement, many colleges had already arranged to divest. Hampshire College, which in 1977 became the first American college to divest, beat Swarthmore to the mark by thirteen years.<sup>143</sup> Swarthmore's decision to divest itself of South African investments barely anticipated South Africa's decision to divest itself of apartheid.

### **Divestment Central**

The Swarthmore board of trustees has twice rejected divesting from fossil fuels. Activists have yet to lose hope. A quarter century ago the board rejected divesting from companies with ties to apartheid four times before finally agreeing.

*Swarthmore remains a hub of divestment activism, and in many ways offers a microcosm of the larger divestment campaign.*

Unlike their predecessors' sluggish entrance into the apartheid divestment campaign, Swarthmore students led the way with the fossil fuel counterpart. The national campaign lifted off, of course, with McKibben's endorsement in August 2012—almost two years after Swarthmore Mountain Justice formed—and 350.org rose to become the key sponsor of the divestment campaign. But Swarthmore remains a hub of divestment activism, and in many ways offers a microcosm of the larger divestment campaign.

When Bill McKibben first trotted the country doing his math, it was a Swarthmore sophomore, Sara Blazevic, who joined him onstage at his November 2012 Philadelphia stop. Blazevic acknowledged the importance of 350.org's help: "Despite a wide base of support for our growing student power, it is abundantly clear that we alone cannot convince Swarthmore to divest. We need a mass movement to get this ball rolling."<sup>144</sup> Blazevic afterwards explained to the college's student newspaper, the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, that "We made an alliance (with 350.org) because of their clout in the political and social movement world. Us being backed by 350 will give the message more force on campus."<sup>145</sup>

McKibben returned the compliment. "Swarthmore's in the lead," he told the *Gazette*.<sup>146</sup> "It's one of the

143 Doug Tooley, "The Hampshire College Report on Socially Responsible Investment," Chapter 6: Divestment, *Hampshire College*, April 1983. <https://www.hampshire.edu/library/chapter-6-divestment#26D>.

144 Sara Blazevic and Bill McKibben, "Do the Math Philadelphia," *Swarthmore Mountain Justice* and *350.org*, November 17, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRWVlqvTYDE>.

145 Lily Jamison-Cash, "Mountain Justice Takes State with National Activists," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 19, 2012. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2012/11/19/mountain-justice-takes-stage-with-national-activists/>.

146 *Ibid.*

places in the country where the argument's more advanced, going further down that road." He added, "Swarthmore's one of my favorite colleges in the country."

The following three years have been marked by collaborations between Swarthmore Mountain Justice and divestment activists nationwide, including those with 350.org. In February 2013, the College hosted students from 70 colleges in what became the first of an annual "convergence" of divestment activists. During the summer of 2013, Swarthmore students helped found the national Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network, which appointed itself responsible for training students and alumni nationwide. Swarthmore grads now work at nearly every organization active in the divestment movement (except, notably, 350.org). One set of six devoted alumni live together as the Maypop Collective for Climate and Environmental Justice. This donations-supported commune mentors activists and supports divestment and other campaigns that "fight the root causes of climate change to create a just and equitable future."<sup>147</sup> Swarthmore's spring 2015 sit-in for divestment coincided with ten others nationwide, but lasted longer than its counterparts: 32 days. More than 200 students, alumni, staff, and faculty cycled through the building, taking turns keeping the hallways full.

350.org, for its part, checks in with Swarthmore Mountain Justice on a weekly basis. One of its divestment organizers, Katie McChesney, is based in Philadelphia and joins the students' weekly planning meeting.

### **Mountain Justice**

Swarthmore Mountain Justice was born out of a trip to Appalachia, and it shares its name with the larger "Mountain Justice" movement of coal mining opponents active there. In October 2010, when George Lakey, a visiting professor of peace and conflict studies, packed his students into Swarthmore College vans and carpooled to a Mountain Justice group in West Virginia, he intended his students would consider joining current campaigns to stop coal mining. By the time the vans returned to Swarthmore's Pennsylvanian woods, students began conceiving a sister campaign of their own.

Lakey, a wizened gray-haired Quaker activist with forty years of protests on his résumé, was teaching "Strategy for Non-Violent Struggle." This was a subject Lakey knew well from experience. In the 1960s and '70s, he had campaigned with feminists and joined Men Against Patriarchy. He protested the Vietnam War and steered boats full of medicine into Vietnamese war zones. Lakey, who identifies himself as a gay man, joined the LGBTQ movement in its infancy.

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147 "What We Mean by Climate Justice," *Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice*. <http://maypopcollective.org/about/>.

In the mid-2000s, Lakey had transitioned to environmental activism. The environmental movement, more than its predecessors, had unique power to rattle the political and economic systems of American society: “The gay rights movement doesn’t challenge power holders as fundamentally as the environmental one does,” Lakey explained in an interview. “Power holders” could “accommodate gay people” so long as “gay people are willing to play by the rules of the game of the empire”—that is, marry, and then cease criticizing the government as prejudiced. Settling into passive citizenship meant having to “join in the economic oppression that is central to the empire’s work.” Meanwhile the environmental movement could confront the power structures of oppression and upend them entirely. Lakey points to Nordic nations: “In each of these countries—all of them are way ahead of the US with regard to climate work—it has been the capitalist class that has resisted change, and the workers and their middle class allies who have been in the forefront of forcing those changes against the will of the capitalist.” Lakey added, “I’m a sociologist”—not a socialist—and “not really a bona fide Marxist.”<sup>148</sup>

Lakey’s course was a middle-level research seminar cross-listed under “Peace and Conflict Studies” and “Sociology and Anthropology.”<sup>149</sup> Enrollment was capped at 12 students—9 for Peace and Conflict Studies, and 3 for Sociology and Anthropology. Usually the class met at the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, named for investor and philanthropist Eugene Lang, who graduated from Swarthmore with a degree in economics in 1938.

“Strategy for Nonviolent Struggle” examined past peaceful resistance movements and analyzed what worked when. “Nonviolent struggle” meant “a technique of struggle that goes beyond institutionalized conflict procedures like law courts and voting,” Lakey said.<sup>150</sup> Nonviolent struggles despaired that civic institutions, unthreatened by popular uprising, could accommodate the social changes activists required. They presumed that, for the most part, institutions and systems were unjust and biased. How else could such inequality arise? Those systems should be replaced, but only a popular resistance movement of coordinated actions could do it. Lakey had identified 199 distinct types of nonviolent actions. These included petitions, slogans and caricatures, vigils, picketing, as well as withholding rent due landlords, “protest disrobing,” “rude gestures,” and something tactfully labeled “Lysistratic nonaction.”<sup>151</sup> The idea was to peacefully express dissatisfaction, and to create alternative networks of power and communication that rivaled “official,” biased ones.

148 George Lakey, interview with Rachelle Peterson. November 3, 2014.

149 “Stgy-Non-Violent Struggle (W),” Swarthmore College Course Schedule, fall 2010. [http://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/registrar/schedule\\_201004.pdf](http://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/registrar/schedule_201004.pdf). Swarthmore divides courses by number: 001-010 indicates introductory courses, 011-099 are “other courses,” some of which are which are not open to “first-year students” or sophomores, and 100-199, which are reserved for upper-class students and graduate students. Lakey’s course was numbered 071.

150 George Lakey, “Nonviolent Action Defined,” *Global Nonviolent Action Database*, August 8, 2011. <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/nonviolent-action-defined>.

151 “The Methods of Nonviolent Protest,” *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. [http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/browse\\_methods](http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/browse_methods).

Mountain Justice (also known as “MJ”) fit Lakey’s bill. Mountain Justice describes itself as a “call to action and request for help” to “save our mountains, streams and forest from greedy coal companies.”<sup>152</sup> Activists in West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia try to stop mountaintop removal coal mining, a process that involves dynamiting mountains to expose coal veins beneath. Mountain Justice pickets mines, drops banners from bulldozers, and stirs up anger among nearby residents. The group eschews violence but pulls no other punches in its activism. It is profoundly pessimistic of political systems and convinced that somewhere along the line, someone manipulated free markets to his own advantage and bartered away Appalachian autonomy.

In June 2010, a few months before Swarthmore students visited, forty MJ activists dressed as clowns “rallied” at PNC Bank, which had loaned money to some coal mining companies. (Lakey would label such action an “assembly of protest or support,” or nonviolent struggle technique #47.) They released a banner (technique #8) that read “PNC + Your Money = Toxic Tap Water” and leafleted (#9) the customers. Then they acted out a skit (#35) that involved blasting off a mountaintop, extracting a bag of money, and passing the bag around “like a hot-potato” to symbolize PNC’s coldhearted willingness to lend to businesses others had rejected. The loan recipients were “causing the total annihilation of a culture by their use of MTR (mountaintop removal),” accused one activist.<sup>153</sup>

Three months previously, in March, MJ had hosted a spring break training session for youth activists, promising “the skills and knowledge you need to fight back” against coal mining. Plus, since it was a school break, there would be “plenty of time between rabble rousing to relax, reflect, and have a great time with each other.” The options for “having a great time” included hula hooping, playing music, and “cuddling in a hammock!”<sup>154</sup> (Exclamation point included.) Lakey, who in spring 2010 had brought another class to visit MJ, may have joined the festivities.

Much of Lakey’s class involved building the Global Nonviolent Action Database, an electronic archive he hoped would include synopses of every peaceful protest movement in the history of the world. The oldest entry dates back to an 1170 BC Egyptian wage strike. Apparently Ramses III was repeatedly late in providing food to the laborers building his necropolis. After four months of tardy rations deliveries, according to the database, artisans laid down their tools and marched to the “local government officials”

152 “Why Mountain Justice?” *Mountain Justice*. <https://www.mountainjustice.org/who-we-are/why-mountain-justice/>.

153 Ashley Browning and Martin Mudd, “Mountain Justice Shames PNC Bank’s Mountaintop Removal Financing,” *Mountain Justice*, June 7, 2010. <https://www.mountainjustice.org/2010/06/mountain-justice-shames-pnc-banks-mountaintop-removal-financing/>.

154 “March 12-20, 2010: Mountain Justice Spring Break,” *Mountain Justice*, March 2, 2010. <https://www.mountainjustice.org/2010/03/march-12-20-2010-mountain-justice-spring-break/>.

and then to the Vizier, who partially repaid the workers.<sup>155</sup>

Each student in the class was responsible for writing 11 case studies. Lakey taught the course for eight semesters,<sup>156</sup> and the database now includes 1,000 synopses.<sup>157</sup> Lakey hoped the database would yield important discoveries about the efficacy of various tactics. He expected that Mountain Justice would provide students a live example of the actions they were studying. He also hoped they would become involved in environmental activism, perhaps of the sort he was organizing with his own Quaker environmentalist group, Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT).

Lakey got his wish. “I chose (mountaintop-removal mining) because it is one of the nastiest things you can do to the planet, and it’s so apparent,” Lakey explained his decision to bring the students to West Virginia. “It’s very unsettling. I don’t know anyone who looks at it and says, ‘that’s all right.’ Students grasped it very quickly.”<sup>158</sup> As they returned to campus, shaken by the sight of raw earth next to peaks slated for dynamiting, Lakey discussed options for action. The “romance” of the movement—“gallant Appalachian people struggling to keep their mountains”—strongly appealed to students, he said, but Lakey, ever analytical, asked them to determine what precisely the movement required. Which of the 199 tools would work here?

Just that year Lakey had founded EQAT, a “grassroots, nonviolent social action group founded by Quakers and inclusive of people of all faiths or no faith,” to nonviolently fight “for a just and sustainable economy.”<sup>159</sup> Its first campaign was “Bank Like Appalachia Matters!” (or BLAM!). BLAM! targeted PNC bank—the same bank Mountain Justice had leafleted in June. It organized a march from one end of Pennsylvania to another, arranged skits and banner drops akin to MJ’s,<sup>160</sup> and sent some of its members, including Lakey, to jail after a protest at a bank branch in DC.<sup>161</sup> There, Lakey and his “comrades” had erected a dirt pile with a “stop” sign planted in it in the middle of the bank floor (nonviolent action #35), and then sat down around it (#162). The gospel choir from the Church of Life After Shopping performed (#37); the church’s Reverend Billy preached (a variation on #1, “public speeches”); and activists raised a banner, “PNC Bank: The Mountaintop Removal Bank”(#8).<sup>162</sup>

155 Kelly Schoolmeester, “Egyptian Laborers Strike for Pay, ~1170 BCE,” *Global Nonviolent Action Database*, March 3, 2010. <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/egyptian-laborers-strike-pay-1170-bce>.

156 “FY 2012-2013: Annual Report,” Swarthmore College Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility. [http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/administration/langcenter/LangCtrAR\\_12\\_13.pdf](http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/administration/langcenter/LangCtrAR_12_13.pdf).

157 “1,000 Campaigns from 200 Countries,” *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/>.

158 George Lakey, interview with Rachelle Peterson.

159 “EQAT History” *EQAT*. <http://eqat.org/eqat-history>.

160 *Ibid.*

161 GreenPNC, “Account of Action & Arrest in DC by George Lakey,” *EQAT*, September 28, 2010. <http://eqat.org/blog/account-action-arrest-dc-george-lakey>.

162 *Ibid.*

“The students would start joining in action with the Earth Quaker team, as their hearts would lead them,” Lakey said. Protesting with EQAT was “not compulsory” to the course, but “several” did join, including at the September 2010 bank takeover.<sup>163</sup> Several experienced their first arrests with EQAT.

### **Branching Out**

Lakey doesn’t credit himself with starting the fossil fuel divestment campaign, and students don’t cite him as their inspiration. Swarthmore Mountain Justice’s *Institutional Memory Document*, a 35-page campaign autobiography drafted in 2012, doesn’t mention Lakey.<sup>164</sup> Campaign founders don’t mention him either, unless asked specifically about his role, which they downplay. The *Institutional Memory Document* simply says that “Swarthmore Mountain Justice formed in mid-October of 2010” after “students traveled to West Virginia to learn about mountaintop removal coal mining” during “Swarthmore’s Spring and Fall breaks of 2010.”<sup>165</sup> William Lawrence, a 2013 graduate and founding member of SMJ explains that when he arrived at Swarthmore, he “met others who had prior relationships with community members in central Appalachia fighting mountain top removal coal mining.”<sup>166</sup> Kate Aronoff, who graduated in 2014, says it was “upperclassmen” who “organized a trip to West Virginia to visit communities living with and resisting mountaintop coal mining there.”<sup>167</sup>

Lakey’s students founded Swarthmore Mountain Justice immediately after returning to campus, and though SMJ students joined EQAT for rallies and trainings for a year or so, the groups separated. Lakey and the students we talked to declined to explain what separated SMJ from Lakey. Lakey said only that his students “developed the confidence to launch a campaign of their own,” and that he “chose not to be a mentor.”

“A role conflict emerged, because I was a professor,” Lakey said, adding that he offered to nudge other faculty members toward supporting divestment. “I told (my students), ‘I’ve taught you so much, you can take another course with me, but you’re learning rapidly about all this stuff, this is your campaign. I’m one of the faculty you can think of as an ally.’”<sup>168</sup>

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163 *Ibid.*

164 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*, Swarthmore Mountain Justice, August 2012. [https://swatmountainjustice.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/mj\\_institutional\\_memory\\_2011-2012\\_final\\_draft.pdf](https://swatmountainjustice.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/mj_institutional_memory_2011-2012_final_draft.pdf).

165 *Ibid.*

166 William Lawrence, interview with Rachelle Peterson, November 12, 2014.

167 Kate Aronoff, interview with Rachelle Peterson, October 29, 2014.

168 George Lakey, interview with Rachelle Peterson.

*Larry Gibson showed students the rubble of mountaintop removal sites and charged them, in Aronoff's words, "If you don't do anything about this, then I've wasted my time."*

Larry Gibson is the name most activists cite. "Keeper of the Land" Gibson had refused to sell his West Virginian backyard to mining companies. Stubborn and increasingly bitter, he led efforts to obstruct the miners. Mountain Justice activists often visited his cabin, hidden in a mountain surrounded by flattened peaks. During the fall trip to West Virginia, Lakey's class met Gibson. He showed students the rubble of mountaintop removal sites and charged them, in Aronoff's words, "If you don't do anything about this, then I've wasted my time."

Aronoff, a freshman history major at the time, recalls riding back to campus with her classmates, "racking our brains about how we could live up to that call" from 400 miles away.<sup>169</sup> From their research into previous protests, the students hit upon an idea: "We stumbled across stories of Apartheid divestment, and looked to that as something that had been used in solidarity with struggles for political, social, and economic rights," all of which the students considered part of mountaintop removal mining. (Political, Aronoff explained, because the legal decisions had been made outside the immediate community; social, because the changing environment was disrupting the local lifestyle; and economic because each mountaintop removal site required a paltry 8-12 workers, while most jobs were outsourced to distant offices.) A divestment campaign "was something we could do in our own context, and potentially it could be spread. So we started a divestment campaign."

Lakey's influence remains visible, however diminished. SMJ members take annual trips to visit their Mountain Justice forebears and refresh their witness to the scarred earth that first motivated their work. Lakey taught them the techniques of nonviolent direct action that they espoused and began to enact on campus. He provided a metanarrative of bottom-up, conflict-driven social change that undergirds the SMJ principles.

## Structure

According to the *Institutional Memory Document*, SMJ espouses six principles:

- **Direct action strategy:** *employing public forms of protest (such as street theater, rallies, and sit-ins) without a mediating body between ourselves and our target*

<sup>169</sup> Kate Aronoff, interview with Rachelle Peterson.

*audience; willingness to go around and outside institutional forms of making change*

- **Participatory organizing/shared leadership:** *maintaining nonhierarchical group roles, rotating facilitation duties, making decisions using consensus; a desire to empower each member to grow as an organizer*
- **Incorporating anti-oppression into organizational culture:** *working to empower healthy and cooperative relationships between all members while healing the oppressive relationships brought on by sexism, homophobia, ableism, racism, classism, and all forms of hierarchy; allying ourselves with other campus groups doing this work*
- **Commitment to ‘frontline communities’:** *grounding climate activism in the ongoing struggles and priorities of extraction communities and those directly affected by the fossil fuel industry*
- **Linking divestment with broader struggle for climate justice:** *ending financial support for fossil fuels is necessary, but not sufficient at achieving climate justice; understanding our role in the broader climate justice and environmental justice movement, building diverse allies, and sharing analysis and strategy<sup>170</sup>*

SMJ holds weekly public meetings for all members and interested students, and weekly three-hour strategy meetings for a “core team” of organizers. At SMJ’s founding, all decisions were made by “consensus.” Every decision required unanimous consent from its members. The *Institutional Memory Document* explains,

*Swarthmore Mountain Justice reaches consensus on all group decisions. We use what we call “starfish”: when we think we are ready to make a decision, everyone in the group holds up one hand with anywhere from 0 to 5 fingers up. The more fingers they are holding up signifies how much they agree with the decision. We then hear from those people with fewer fingers up to hear their objections, and continue conversation if we feel it necessary. If we have all 4s and 5s, we go ahead with the decision.<sup>171</sup>*

Pure democracy proved unwieldy. By fall 2013, SMJ transitioned to a hierarchical model of authority. The “core team” of five students now meets weekly to strategize and make key decisions. The public meeting, an hour and a half each week, is a time to share emotions and discuss upcoming events. Initially, SMJ had rotating teams of two “facilitators” per meeting, “so that people have a chance to participate equally.”

<sup>170</sup> Swarthmore Mountain Justice: *Institutional Memory Document* 2011-2012.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

Meetings are now generally run by the core team. During the 2014-2015 school year, SMJ's core team consisted of Sara Blazevic ('15), Guido Girgenti ('15), Stephen O'Hanlon ('17), Laura Rigell ('16), and Nathan Graf ('16).

*Swarthmore Mountain Justice's membership has ebbed and flowed. From the 12 students in Lakey's class it dropped in fall 2013 to as few as 6-8 active members.*

SMJ's membership has ebbed and flowed. From the 12 students in Lakey's class it dropped in fall 2013 to as few as 6-8 active members, according to an SMJ member. In fall 2014, after the People's Climate March in September, meeting attendance jumped to 25.

Public actions have two purposes. One is to pressure the board of managers. The other is to maintain morale among activists. To recruit and retain members, SMJ follows a cycle of visible action and quiet training, a series called "act-recruit-train." Every few months, SMJ aims to perform some public action—collecting signatures for a petition, holding

a rally, having a teach-in— that draws attention, gives members an outlet for activism, and maintains members' interest. Members of the core team expect to lose some participants along the way but replace them with new recruits from later actions. The People's Climate March in September, which 200 Swarthmore students, alumni, and professors attended, significantly boosted SMJ's membership.

Swarthmore Mountain Justice is run by students, but closely advised by others. Early in the Swarthmore campaign, Dan Apfel from the Responsible Endowments Coalition taught SMJ the jargon of investments. As divestment spread, the Energy Action Coalition provided an early network of divestment activists. After 350.org entered the campaign, Katie McChesney, 350.org's Mid-Atlantic divestment organizer, became a key adviser to SMJ. McChesney still participates in the core team's weekly strategy sessions.

While Lakey's importance as an advisor to SMJ diminished, the Peace and Conflict Studies department remains a central resource. Lakey had been director of the department, a position offered on a rotating basis to professors. His replacement, Lee Smithey, became an official advisor to SMJ, according to a SMJ member responsible for securing faculty support, though Smithey denied this in an interview. Other faculty members, especially Mark Wallace, professor of religion, have closely allied with SMJ.

SMJ also commits to emotionally buoying its members. Because divestment campaigns involve "a lot of obstacles" and "we often have to deal with defeats and harsh words from outsiders," SMJ members found it necessary to regularly "affirm" one another. To protect against disappointments, such as getting

a “no” from administrators, seeing “harsh words” in the comment sections of an online newspaper, or “feeling that we’re working hard and not getting very far,” SMJ adopted the following policy:

*We have found that it is very important in our own work to constantly affirm our great ideas and hard work. Sometimes, this comes in the form of “sparkling” (waving our fingers in the air) when we agree with what someone is saying. Very often, it comes in the form of loudly and cheerily saying “Affirmation!” whenever someone does something that we want to affirm. Lastly, it means taking the time to appreciate the work that all of us are doing. This is especially true for jobs like research, and behind-the-scenes tasks that don’t get as much public acknowledgement, but it is true for everything we do. We are all working hard on the campaign, and it is important to take the time to acknowledge it.*<sup>172</sup>

***“We have found that it is very important in our own work to constantly affirm our great ideas and hard work. Sometimes, this comes in the form of “sparkling” (waving our fingers in the air) when we agree with what someone is saying.”***  
**- Swarthmore Mountain Justice**

Swarthmore Mountain Justice actively allies itself with other student groups. “Coalition building” is one of the ten original working groups listed in the *Institutional Memory Document*. Four students— Pat Walsh, Ali Roseberry-Polier, Zein Nakhoda, and Rachel Giovanniello—aimed to “connect with other student groups” on the grounds that “we share a common goal” of conforming the administration to “the values that we, as students and activists, hold.”<sup>173</sup> During the spring of 2013, when the college was roiled by waves of student grievances, SMJ positioned itself as the sponge for all discontent. Its members took over the May 2013 board meeting to demand divestment, but also commandeered microphones to let twenty-six other disaffected students express their anger.

SMJ is officially committed to fighting oppression in all forms. One of its six founding principles is “Incorporating anti-oppression into organizational culture.”<sup>174</sup> At the group’s founding, one of its “most

<sup>172</sup> Swarthmore Mountain Justice: *Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

important group norms” was the slogan “move up, move back.” This meant evenly dividing the speaking time at meetings and public events among participants and “categories” of participants, such as “older students, or men.” The *Institutional Memory Document* explains, and then immediately questions itself:

*When there’s an article that is going to be written, or a situation where someone is going to speak publicly, we reach out to people who may not have done those tasks before, to see if they want to, and provide them the tools necessary if they do. (does this sound too patronizing?)*<sup>175</sup>

SMJ’s “patronizing” is the reason that at one point the strategy backfired. On April 9, 2015, two weeks into SMJ’s month-long sit-in at Parrish Hall, 18 students published an op-ed in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* criticizing SMJ for falling into white elitism. The students, including one of SMJ’s “core” members, Laura Rigell, argued that SMJ had tried too hard to depict the interests of minority groups as subcategories of environmental justice, rather than as equally important independent projects with loose ties to environmental problems. SMJ had created a “polarized campus context where one must either be pro-environment and pro-MJ OR anti-environment and anti-MJ.” Students felt forced, they alleged, to choose between pushing for environmental justice or racial justice.<sup>176</sup>

The 18 students noted a consolidation of power within Swarthmore Mountain Justice. SMJ’s focus had shifted away from “frontlines communities” and toward the “leaders” of the divestment campaign, with only “a tokenizing mention of the frontlines.” This marked a structural change in the group as well: in the years since SMJ’s founding they recognized “a shift in the structure of the group, from inclusivity and consensus to a hierarchy that does not make space for critique.”<sup>177</sup>

## The Campaign

What does a fossil fuel divestment campaign look like up close? We present an analysis and history of Swarthmore’s campaign before turning to the response it provoked. A timeline of the campaign at Swarthmore is provided at the end of this chapter.

SMJ has transformed over time, both in the details of its demands for divestment and in the rationales it provides for these demands. When Swarthmore Mountain Justice first pushed for divestment, it asked the board to withdraw from the “sordid sixteen,” a list of sixteen fossil fuel companies SMJ members drew up at about the same time that Wallace Global Fund-sponsored campaigns began using the “filthy

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175 *Ibid.*

176 Sanaa Ali-Virani et al., “Re-Imagining the Campaign: What Climate Justice Can Teach MJ,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 9, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/09/re-imagining-the-campaign-what-climate-justice-can-teach-mj/>.

177 *Ibid.*

fifteen” list. McKibben and 350.org popularized the “Carbon Underground” list of 100 coal and 100 oil and gas companies put together by the Carbon Tracker Institute. In fall 2014, SMJ increased its divestment demands to include the entire Carbon Underground list.

The current proposal asks that the board

1. *Immediately freeze all new investments in the “Carbon Underground 200,” including the “Sordid Sixteen.”*
2. *As soon as contracts allow, divest the college’s direct holdings in the “Carbon Underground 200.”*
3. *Over a period of 2-5 years, divest our comingled funds from the “Carbon Underground 200.”*
4. *Reinvest at least 1 percent of the endowment into community and renewable energy solutions, including community development financial institutions and revolving loan funds. Feedback on allocation will be provided by campus stakeholders working through the Committee on Investor Responsibility.<sup>178</sup>*

### **Schedule**

Swarthmore Mountain Justice keeps a detailed activism schedule planned up to a year in advance with the help of McChesney, the 350.org organizer. SMJ also coordinates its actions, such as its spring 2015 sit-in, with other student activists from the Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network.

SMJ’s 2014-2015 activism schedule, as it stood in draft form in September 2014, is included in Appendix IX. By the end of the 2014 summer, SMJ had already planned for a single volunteer to “stand up and interrupt” the February 2015 board meeting and read a “student ultimatum” for divestment. This board meeting would be followed by a “big ass party” to celebrate.

*Swarthmore Mountain Justice keeps a detailed activism schedule planned up to a year in advance*

Already scheduled, too, was the sit-in for March and April. The scheduled start date for “escalated action” was Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. (The sit-in began on the 19<sup>th</sup>.) SMJ had planned its target media

178 “Our Campaign,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/ourcampaign/#ourproposal>.

coverage (*New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*; neither came through, though the *Guardian* ran a story on the sit-in). They aimed for 200 pledging to sit in (almost exactly the number they got), accompanied by 30 phone calls a day to administrators and 100 emails a day to chairman of the executive committee, Chris Niemczewski. SMJ was already coordinating with other campuses planning their own sit-ins: “multiple campuses, escalated action til victory mid-spring.”

The schedule mentions the “act-recruit-train” schedule to boost membership, and lists the academic departments it would target for “organizing”: political science, environmental studies, sociology and anthropology, peace and conflict studies, math, and biology. The sociology and anthropology department endorsed divestment by letter in April 2015, and professors from each of the other departments signed the SMJ’s faculty letter, also in April 2015, in support of divestment.

SMJ spells out in this schedule specific students groups it planned to target: the Intercultural Center and Black Cultural Center at Swarthmore (ICC/BCC), the Women’s Resource Center (WRC), the Student Council (StuCo), and Swarthmore’s paid student green advisors (“greens”). The schedule also shows targeted campaigns to alumni, who SMJ hoped would endorse divestment and refuse to donate to Swarthmore until the college divested.

*The goal was to “polarize the campus,” pick out the “passive” and “active” allies, and ask “which side?”*

The schedule also lists staff members the activists would target: Liz Braun, the dean of students who had declined to intervene when SMJ took over the May 2013 board meeting; Maurice Eldridge, then the vice president for college and community relations; and Chris Niemczewski, chairman of the investments committee. One board member was singled out for special cultivation: David Gelber, the producer of *Years of Living Dangerously*, a TV series about climate change. SMJ talked about “creating space for him to be a climate movement hero.”

The goal was to “polarize the campus,” pick out the “passive” and “active” allies, and ask “which side?” Their messaging would center on the question: Will you be on the right or wrong side of history?

### **Stages of the Campaign**

Swarthmore's divestment campaign has undergone three main stages that closely mirror the transitions of the larger fossil fuel divestment movement: Solidarity, Crusade, and Occupy. Stages represent strategic decisions to emphasize or de-emphasize parts of the divestment campaign. Elements of each stage are visible in each other stage. But at two distinct inflection points the campaigns (at Swarthmore and nationally) have altered the rhetoric and reasons surrounding the case for divestment.

Swarthmore's "Solidarity" stage, lasting from the campaign's founding in late 2010 until McKibben's Do the Math tour in fall 2012, is marked by a symbolic battle against a powerful oppressive force, conceptualized in the form of the fossil fuel industry, especially the coal mining sector. During this stage, students describe their work as a "struggle," "resistance," and a "burden" undertaken in "solidarity" or sympathy with the "frontlines" communities, who live near extraction sites. At this stage, divestment is seen not as an active tool to spark broad-scale change but as a passive measure to thwart in small ways the work of the fossil fuel industry and to show support for people directly affected by the extraction of fossil fuels. Divestment is a way to acknowledge the "privilege" of attending an elite institution, and to do one's part to support and cheer on the battles of those who are less well-off.

The Crusade stage, inaugurated by McKibben in 2012, caught on at Swarthmore during the spring 2013 semester and began to fade around fall 2013. Activists during this stage depict divestment as a moral good that promotes environmental purity. McKibben's slogan, "If it's wrong to wreck the planet, then it's wrong to profit from that wreckage," spread this message to campuses across the country. During the Crusade stage, students argue that because their colleges already count sustainability among their core values, failure to divest exposes hypocrisy. Moreover, because mass movements of morally-minded citizens can break through industry-imposed gridlock, divestment leverages the power of a moral majority to introduce climate legislation and save the planet from destruction. Social justice, inequality, and "disproportionate impacts" of climate change remain sub-themes, but the urgency and morality of halting climate change for everyone's sake takes precedence.

The Occupy stage is "escalation" stage. It blends a social justice-style concern for uplifting the oppressed with a self-righteous anger toward authorities. Sometimes it involves literal occupation—sitting-in, as Swarthmore students did in spring 2015. But its main features are borrowed from the "Occupy Wall Street" movement popular in 2011. Students deride the wealthy "1 percent" who control the endowment and call for democratic consensus in deciding how to invest it. They emphasize the importance of student voice and characterize trustees who fail to divest as oligarchs. They also focus on the plight of minorities and the poor (sometimes but not always still called the

“frontlines”). But rather than depicting divestment as a solidarity effort meant to lend emotional and symbolic support to the frontlines struggle, activists see divestment as a tool with the power actually to alleviate social injustice. Divestment, in this sense, combats all oppression by rejecting the oppression of wealthy, aging trustees, and by stigmatizing the oppression by the fossil fuel industry. The conscious rhetorical shift away from the Crusade stage’s eco-purity began at Swarthmore in fall 2013, spread on a national level by spring 2014, and emerged in full at both Swarthmore and the national stage by fall 2014.

Nationwide, most students entered with McKibben during the “Crusade” stage. Moral arguments premised on the harm of climate change remain among the most popular. Since Swarthmore’s shift to “Occupy”-style rhetoric, arguments for divestment based on social justice have grown in popularity. A fourth stage, just beginning to emerge and focus on divestment as a risk-management technique, is described in chapter 5.

### **The “Solidarity” Campaign at Swarthmore: October 2010-Spring 2013**

The Solidarity stage at Swarthmore is marked by an awareness of “privilege” that elicits both embarrassment and opportunism—embarrassment at how much harder life is on the “frontlines,” and opportunism as students realize they can capitalize on attending a college with social prestige.

*The Solidarity stage at Swarthmore is marked by an awareness of “privilege” that elicits both embarrassment and opportunism.*

“We have done a lot of thinking about how we, as Swarthmore students, can best support communities on these front lines of climate change and fossil fuel extraction,” the *SMJ Institutional Memory Document* records. “While we are not often on those front lines, we can stand in solidarity with those communities and use the power we have. We are members of an institution that controls huge amounts of money.”<sup>179</sup>

“Solidarity” meant cheering from the sidelines of a game they couldn’t play. “As students at Swarthmore, we were very far removed from where coal mining and MTR was actually taking place,” the *Institutional Memory Document* explains. But they

were, as students whose college had an endowment with some investments in fossil fuel companies, tenuously tied to the money that supported MTR. Staging a campaign against those investments would give heart to campaigners against MTR: “By working on a campaign that targets extractive industries,

179 Swarthmore Mountain Justice: *Institutional Memory Document* 2011-2012.

including those practicing MTR, we see ourselves as supporting the struggle of folks in Appalachia and in other frontline communities.”<sup>180</sup>

The founders, including Aronoff, Lawrence, Alexa Ross, Dinah DeWald, Hannah Jones, Sachie Hayakawa, and Zein Nakhoda, cast Swarthmore Mountain Justice as a way to buoy Appalachian activists. “We were inspired by them and wanted to act in solidarity with their efforts to defend their home,” Lawrence explained.<sup>181</sup> “We didn’t know what it’s like to live in West Virginia or to organize down there,” Aronoff said, but “we wanted to play some role that’s responsible.”<sup>182</sup>

That role needn’t have included divestment. Any action that showed support for Appalachians would have done. Fossil fuel divestment was incidental. In fact, SMJ did not officially launch its divestment campaign until October 2011, a year after it organized. In the interim, students dabbled in Lakey’s EQAT activism against PNC bank.

Campaigns conceived of as solidarity efforts have distinct traits. One is a self-conscious emphasis on the underprivileged people the campaign aims to support. SMJ’s campaign put the people living near coal mines front and center. It is “essential,” the *Institutional Memory Document* instructs future campaigners, that SMJ continues to “communicate with a variety of frontline activist groups and community members” and “continue to visit and speak with community members.” They would “check in” with frontlines activists for “feedback” on the helpfulness of the divestment campaign. On trips, scheduled once a semester, to West Virginia, they would solicit advice about “how we can best support the work of frontline communities.”<sup>183</sup>

In November 2011, Larry “Keeper of the Mountains” Gibson came to Swarthmore to give a lecture as part of SMJ’s “frontlines series.”<sup>184</sup> In July 2012, at least four Swarthmore students and several companions from a newly launched coal divestment campaign at Earlham College took a “Frontlines Listening Tour” in West Virginia. They visited the Whipple Company Store museum to learn how Whipple coal miners once worked 12-hour days, paid pittances in a “scrip” that they only could spend only at the company store. An organizer from the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition told them about West Virginians suffering Crohn’s disease after mines contaminated drinking water. At the end of the trip, SMJ students joined Radical

180 “Campaign History,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/ourcampaign/#campaignhistory>.

181 William Lawrence, interview with Rachelle Peterson.

182 Kate Aronoff, interview with Rachelle Peterson.

183 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

184 “MJ Hosts Frontline Activist Larry Gibson,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, November 21, 2011. <http://swatmountainjustice.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/larygibson/>.

Action for Mountain People's Survival (RAMPS) on a blitz at Hobart, the largest strip mine in West Virginia. They marched on the mine and dropped banners from mine equipment and shut down operations for three hours.<sup>185</sup>

There is irony to the campaign's delight in helping the frontlines. Those on those "frontlines" don't always consider themselves a battle front. Those working on the frontlines are not always locals. Self-described campaigns for "local community rights" can be planned by professional organizers raised elsewhere. A solidarity campaign undertaken by outsiders to cheer on the insiders can end up cheering on only another set of outsiders.

RAMPS, the group SMJ joined for the Hobart mine assault, describes itself as a group of "predominately outsiders" from "a position of privilege" who occupy West Virginian mine sites and drop banners from dump trucks in "solidarity" with "local residents"<sup>186</sup> Not all West Virginians appreciated its goals. A counter protest from Friends of Coal, a group of miners who want to protect their jobs, met RAMPS at the Hobart mine site. The RAMPS protest "elicited a lot of fear and anger" from the locals, SMJ activist Ali Roseberry-Polier and Earlham divestment campaigner Margaret Christoforo wrote afterwards. People "saw it as an attack" on their livelihood and economy. This was a "misconception" that only confirmed Roseberry-Polier and Christoforo's fears that the mining industry had fed its workers propaganda.<sup>187</sup> Why else would West Virginians defend coal mining?

Second, in addition to focusing on "frontlines" struggles, solidarity campaigns disregard standard channels of communication and of decision making, not just because those channels are deemed hopelessly biased (as "direct action" campaigns at all stages presume) but because they are not the primary focus. If the college divests, so much the better—but the real goal is to stage a lively side show to the main show on the frontlines. Even the main show aims less at generating political changes than at sparking a guerilla war of obstruction. The purpose is to enact small-scale acts of defiance, usually described as a "struggle" or "resistance." "Resistance" is an expression of individualistic power, a demonstration that one has not been cowed by the fossil fuel industry, meant more to raise the morale of the activist resisting than to harm the industry resisted.

Each of SMJ's "actions" for the first two years fit this description. First, in October 2011, it stuffed student mailboxes with smudged fake \$100 bills from "The United Corporations of America" and a letter declaring

185 Ali Roseberry-Polier and Margaret Christoforo, "From Education to Direct Action on the Divest Coal Frontlines Listening Tour," *Waging NonViolence*, August 2, 2012. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/from-education-to-direct-action-on-the-divest-coal-frontlines-listening-tour/>.

186 "About Us," *Radical Action For Mountain People's Survival*, 2015. <http://rampscampaign.org/about-us/>.

187 Roseberry-Polier and Christoforo, "From Education to Direct Action."

that since “Swarthmore is an institution that should give back” to its community, the college would share its lucrative profits from Exxon’s complicity in “military force and torture” and “oil and...coal.”<sup>188</sup> An accompanying op-ed in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* explained: “MJ is dedicated to privileging the voices and agendas of affected ‘frontline’ communities,” and by investing in fossil fuel companies, the college was “enabling destructive extraction projects and climate change” that MJ countered.<sup>189</sup>

In December, SMJ tried street theatre on the college lawn: a “remixed version” of *A Christmas Carol*<sup>190</sup> in which E.B. Neezer Scrooge (the board) meets the Ghosts of Investments Past, Present, and Future and learns to work “in solidarity with those communities already most affected by the extractive industry.”<sup>191</sup> SMJ members then gave each board member a stocking full of coal. In March 2012, students convened outside the Science Center to award the college the mock honor of a “Black Gold” plaque from the “US Dirty Energy Council.”<sup>192</sup> It cited the college’s Dedication to Short-Sighted Investments. None of these damaged or caught the attention of the fossil fuel industry. None had much chance of convincing the board.

***“Resistance” is an expression of individualistic power, a demonstration that one has not been cowed by the fossil fuel industry, meant more to raise the morale of the activist resisting than to harm the industry resisted.***

Swarthmore Mountain Justice did not wholly ignore the administration. Students collected signatures—nearly 700—for a petition they delivered to President Rebecca Chopp in March 2012. They arranged a meeting with her and presented a proposal for divestment.<sup>193</sup> In April they sought an endorsement from the Sustainability Committee, and in May they snagged a meeting with the board that ended in frustration.<sup>194</sup> The board wanted to see empirical evidence that divesting would in any way improve the environment or the lives of West Virginians. SMJ couldn’t provide it.

188 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012.*

189 “Mountain Justice: Mailbox Money Letters, an Explanation and a Call for Discussion,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 5, 2011. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/10/05/op-ed-mailbox-money-letters-an-explanation-and-a-call-for-discussion/>.

190 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Street Action 12.03.11,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 19, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCNl0Wv\\_TGU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCNl0Wv_TGU).

191 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012.*

192 “Swarthmore Receives a ‘Black Gold’ Award from the U.S. Dirty Energy Council,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 19, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4NrmUfbiQ&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4NrmUfbiQ&feature=player_embedded).

193 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012.*

194 *Ibid.*

For all of its calls for the administration to engage in “good-faith” negotiation, SMJ disdained showing good faith toward the administration. In one of its first op-eds in the *Daily Gazette*, SMJ publicly announced for the first time that it demanded detailed information in six categories of investments from the Investment Committee and the Finance and Investment Office.<sup>195</sup> It also demanded that Finance and Investment Office respond publicly.<sup>196</sup> (It did, in a *Daily Gazette* op-ed two and a half weeks later, suggesting the students set up a meeting with the Committee on Investor Responsibility.<sup>197</sup> They did and gave a presentation a month later.)

In April 2012, SMJ sent a “delegation” into President Chopp’s office with an “invitation” to support divestment.<sup>198</sup> A delegation, as SMJ defines the word, is “an unscheduled meeting” called abruptly when a “large number of group members” suddenly “made a demand.” The goal is to “bring a sense of urgency by putting the administrator on the spot.”<sup>199</sup> Two weeks later, students delivered President Chopp a “gift”—popcorn and a video of Swarthmore student Hannah Jones, Responsible Endowments Coalition executive director Dan Apfel, and Wallace Global Fund executive director Ellen Dorsey discussing divestment.<sup>200</sup>

In July, just as McKibben was doing the math for *Rolling Stone*, SMJ took its frontlines listening tour to Appalachia. “In forming relationships with organizations on the frontlines of the struggle against MTR,” Lawrence and Aronoff wrote, “students hope to more effectively act in solidarity with these groups.” They expected to “weave divestment, both symbolically and materially, into an ecology of resistance against the fossil fuel industry.”<sup>201</sup>

### **Crusade at Swarthmore: Spring 2013**

When Swarthmore’s Sara Blazevic spoke at the Philadelphia “Do the Math” stop alongside McKibben in November 2012, she was still talking about “resistance” and “solidarity” with “frontlines communities.”<sup>202</sup>

195 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, “Open Letter to the Finance and Investment Office and Board of Managers,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 15, 2011. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/11/15/mountain-justice-open-letter-to-the-finance-and-investment-office-and-board-of-managers/>.

196 *Ibid.*

197 Suzanne P. Welsh, “Response to Swarthmore Mountain Justice’s ‘Open Letter,’” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, December 5, 2011. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/12/05/response-to-swarthmore-mountain-justices-open-letter/>.

198 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice Invites President Chopp to Support Divestment // 4.6.12,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, April 7, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEj5S6vQD0&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEj5S6vQD0&feature=player_embedded).

199 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

200 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice Treats President Chopp to a Movie Night!,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, April 20, 2012. <http://swatmj.org/2012/04/20/swarthmore-mountain-justice-treats-president-chopp-to-a-movie-night/>.

201 Will Lawrence and Kate Aronoff, “Divestment Listening Tour Connects Students and Anti-Coal Activists,” *Waging NonViolence*, July 18, 2012. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/divestment-listening-tour-connects-students-and-anti-coal-activists/>.

202 “Sara Blazevic / Do The Math Philadelphia / 11.17.12,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, November 22, 2012.

She talked about the listening tour in West Virginia, which she had attended, and she named Larry Gibson as one of her heroes. She repeated the story about coming back from Appalachia, asking “how to support people living on the frontlines,” feeling “pretty powerless at first,” and then discovering the “efficacy of leveraging our college’s financial and symbolic influence” against the extractive industry.

McKibben focused on a different narrative that night. He told about the planet’s fight for survival despite the fossil fuel industry’s short-sighted greed. “The logic is brutal and simple,” he crooned in a quiet, methodical recitation. “If it is wrong to wreck the planet, then it is wrong to profit from that wreckage.” McKibben articulated a metric by which activists measured up but the investors, once weighed, were found wanting. “We can’t avoid each of us participating somehow in the consumption of fossil fuels. That’s just how life is set up,” McKibben explained. “But we don’t have to be involved in perpetuating it.”<sup>203</sup>

McKibben conceived of divestment as a means to stigmatize fossil fuel companies, not just resist them. In *Rolling Stone* he had named them “Public Enemy Number One,” part of a “rogue industry.”<sup>204</sup> Divestment was a way to go on the offensive, part of a moral war against capitalists and the politicians who served them. McKibben also made climate change—a planet-wide concern—rather than local Appalachian towns the backdrop for divestment. To delay acting on climate change was a moral failing, a sin of omission. That harmed everyone—especially the “frontlines,” but everyone nonetheless. At universities that had pledged to make sustainability the core of their operations—as nearly 700 signatories of the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment have—the sin was worse still. Failing to divest after avowing the importance of trimming carbon footprints and recycling papers and plastics evinced duplicity.

Swarthmore Mountain Justice has never wholly dropped the “solidarity” idea. It maintains annual trips to West Virginia. But since McKibben’s entrance into the divestment movement, SMJ has recast its tone to match his. In January 2013, when the *New York Times* held a “Room for Debate” forum on whether fossil fuel divestment could be an “effective means of protest,” McKibben and Swarthmore’s Aronoff responded with near-identical arguments. McKibben said divestment was a matter of “morality.” Labeling fossil fuel companies as wrong could turn them into “pariahs” and “revoke the social license” they enjoyed, sparking political changes.<sup>205</sup> Aronoff said divestment could jumpstart political action,

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRWlqvTYDE>.

203 *Ibid.*

204 McKibben, “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.”

205 Bill McKibben, “Turning College’s Partners Into Pariahs,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/01/27/is-divestment-an-effective-means-of-protest/turning-colleges-partners-into-pariahs>.

because the fossil fuel industry had a “stranglehold” over the political system that it stood to lose. If students tapped their colleges’ “moral suasion and material wealth,” they could simultaneously “act alongside” the people on the “frontlines” and enact climate legislation.<sup>206</sup>

As McKibben’s influence soared, SMJ mimicked him in other ways. As late as May 2013, when SMJ published an online textbook, *Fossil Fuel Divestment 101*, the group still used its “sordid sixteen” list of fossil fuel companies as its benchmark for divestment.<sup>207</sup> By fall 2013, however, when activists presented another proposal to the board, SMJ had replaced the “sordid sixteen” with the “Carbon Underground” list of 200 companies recommended by McKibben. SMJ’s current proposal asks that by 2020 the board will “exclude companies listed in the Carbon Underground 200,” which it describes as “the industry standard for fossil fuel free investment.”<sup>208</sup>

***McKibben conceived of divestment as a means to stigmatize fossil fuel companies, not just resist them.***

In December 2012, as McKibben was wrapping up his math tour, and two days after the *New York Times* made Swarthmore its lead example in a story on the growing divestment movement, SMJ staged the collapse of a cascade of oversized cardboard dominoes down the steps of Parrish Hall, Swarthmore’s main administrative building. Each represented a phase of the divestment campaign. None of the phases included trips to West Virginia. Instead, the first domino represented the *New York Times* article. After that came the activist “convergence”

planned for February, Swarthmore’s divestment, mass divestments elsewhere, “bold climate legislation” in the US, “international climate action,” and finally “climate justice and sustainable communities.”<sup>209</sup> Sara Blazevic, who had talked about Appalachia on the Do the Math stage, gave an introduction that never mentioned coal mining, avoided the word “solidarity,” and described divestment as a way to get “legislation passed”, rather than as a passive means of “resistance.” Will Lawrence, in a speech that channeled McKibben, talked about “delegitimizing” the fossil fuel industry.

In Crusade mode, Swarthmore Mountain Justice adopted an acidic tone and pugilistic stance toward both

206 Kate Aronoff, “A Powerful Way to Galvanize Protest Over Climate Change,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/01/27/is-divestment-an-effective-means-of-protest/a-powerful-way-to-galvanize-protest-over-climate-change>.

207 *Fossil Fuel Divestment 101*, Swarthmore Mountain Justice. May 2013. [https://swatmountainjustice.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/fossil-fuel-divestment-101\\_may-2013.pdf](https://swatmountainjustice.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/fossil-fuel-divestment-101_may-2013.pdf).

208 “Fossil Fuel Divestment Proposal to be Presented at Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Negotiation with Board Members,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*. <http://swatmj.org/proposal/>.

209 “Fossil Fuel Divestment Dominos // 12.7.12,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, December 7, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1vpTEspU>.

the fossil fuel industry and the board of managers. Both were guilty, one of “wrecking the planet,” as McKibben put it, the other of voting to “profit off that wreckage.” During Crusade stage, the board became a real enemy, rather than an incidental prop in a stage act. Board members not only voted to accept the profits of the fossil fuel industry. They also stood between student fervor and the political action SMJ thought divestment could rouse.

### **No More Business as Usual**

Swarthmore Mountain Justice’s most famous action occurred during the Crusade stage. On May 4, 2013, students hijacked a board meeting, drove out dissenters, and convinced the administration that their doing so was a part of Swarthmore’s “Quaker heritage.”

A few weeks before, thirteen SMJ members published an op-ed called “No More Business as Usual” that gave warning of their actions to come. During the 2012-2013 school year, SMJ had met 25 times with administrators who unilaterally declined to push for divestment. SMJ took this as a license for “turning a new page.”<sup>210</sup> They ridiculed the board’s demurring to divest—“an immoral and irresponsible position”—and concluded that since any additional meetings would be “unproductive,” it was now open season for protests. May 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> would kick off a “weekend of action.”

At Swarthmore president Rebecca Chopp’s request, the board had previously agreed that its May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting would be open to the entire campus: this would be the first open board meeting in the college’s history. It would be held in the 200-seat Science Center auditorium; Swarthmore Mountain Justice could share a panel with board members and give a presentation; anyone interested could come and comment. SMJ worried this would be just another step of delay: “The cumulative experience of these 25 meetings has led us to realize that more meetings of this type would be unproductive.”

That semester, Swarthmore Mountain Justice in Crusade mode had reconceived itself as the moralistic prophet of social justice. Curbing oppression of all kinds had been a goal from the beginning. As early as the drafting of the *Institutional Memory Document*, SMJ’s core principles included a commitment to “healing the oppressive relationships brought on by sexism, homophobia, ableism, racism, classism, and all forms of hierarchy,” and to “allying” with other groups working on those issues.<sup>211</sup>

Spring 2013 brought SMJ unique opportunities. It had been a rough semester. President Chopp in a school-wide email dubbed it “the spring of our discontent.” She said, “We are all tired. The community

210 Alexa Ross, et. al., “Op-Ed: No More Business as Usual,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 19, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/19/op-ed-no-more-business-as-usual/>.

211 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

*In Crusade mode, Swarthmore Mountain Justice adopted an acidic tone and pugilistic stance toward both the fossil fuel industry and the board of managers. Both were guilty, one of “wrecking the planet,” as McKibben put it, the other of voting to “profit off that wreckage.”*

we love, at least most of the time, is fraying at its edges.” A handful of women who tried to start a sorority on grounds of “equality” (there were two fraternities) accidentally set-off a school-wide vote to dissolve Greek life altogether. Someone or some group had repeatedly urinated on the door to the Intercultural Center, an act taken as aggression and racism. Two women claiming sexual harassment filed a Title IX lawsuit against Swarthmore for dawdling over their accusations. In April, Swarthmore alumnus Robert Zoellick, invited to speak at commencement that May, announced that he would withdraw from the ceremony. Student activists led by SMJ co-founder

William Lawrence had threatened to disrupt commencement and had called him a “war criminal” for his role as deputy secretary of state under President George W. Bush.<sup>212</sup> Meanwhile Swarthmore Mountain Justice was campaigning against “unjust” investments, while also positioning itself as the champion of morality, social justice, and equality.

“MJ began to speak for the whole campus,” explained Swarthmore student Danielle Charette, an English major from the class of 2014 and the founder of the Swarthmore Conservative Society. Charette opposed divestment and had clashed with SMJ activists repeatedly. “We did a lot of coalition building,” said another Swarthmore student, a member of Swarthmore Mountain Justice who spoke on condition of anonymity. “MJ is the most deliberate of all groups about what we do” to reach out to others.<sup>213</sup> “There is a whole organization of subgroups,” said another SMJ member who also requested anonymity. He mentioned training sessions that taught that in order to become loud enough to be heard, all groups would need to speak as one. “Everyone might have their own causes and have to embrace the other.”<sup>214</sup>

By the time the “weekend of action” came, Swarthmore Mountain Justice had channeled a semester’s frenzied energy into its cause. Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, SMJ held a pep rally with “anti-mountaintop removal activist” Dustin White and a screening of the film *Burning the Future*. On Friday, a lunchtime rally in the Kohlberg Courtyard warned the board to support divestment.

212 Sam Sussman and Lorand Laskai, “Defending Zoellick: Let’s Be Clear,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 26, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/03/26/op-ed-defending-zoellick-lets-be-clear/>.

213 In-person interview with anonymous member of Swarthmore Mountain Justice, October 23, 2014.

214 In-person interview with anonymous member of Swarthmore Mountain Justice, October 23, 2014.

On Saturday, two SMJ members sat at a table with board members at the front of the science auditorium. At the lectern, Chris Niemczewski, chairman of the investments committee, began describing the costs of divestment. He did not finish. Two minutes in, Pat Walsh, one of the SMJ students at the table, interrupted to deliver a speech about the “frustration, anger, and hurting on our campus” and the “daily acts of aggression” that dirtied Swarthmore’s social environment. Walsh warned he was “creating a platform for student voices” and turning the tables on the “authority” of the board; anyone who left the meeting would evince his or her “unwillingness to listen and to respond to the needs of this community.”

Walsh’s speech gave the signal to waiting SMJ activists and allies. More than 100 students flooded into the room. They held placards and posters that read “Check ur ignorance,” and “This is social responsibility.”<sup>215</sup>

Grabbing the microphones from the board members, students began a series of tirades about the need for “radical, emancipatory change” at Swarthmore. Two students from the student group Swatties for a DREAM asked Swarthmore to support undocumented students and to lobby Congress to grant them citizenship.<sup>216</sup> A young woman from the Sexual Misconduct Advisory Resource Team (SMART) patiently explained the need for sensitivity training for all administrators, and especially for professors, because the faculty, with their “privileged power positions” over their classes, “can be very damaging to the students.”<sup>217</sup> Another complained about the lack of diversity on campus—only 93 black students— and how the college treated minorities as “diversity tools” to advertise the campus’s racial heterogeneity, “but then you don’t take care of us. You don’t treat us as individuals.”<sup>218</sup> Hope Brinn, one of the women suing the college, accosted the board: “Serial rapists—why are they still on this campus? We are fully aware of them.”<sup>219</sup>

The tirade lasted for ninety minutes. At ten minutes, Danielle Charette and Preston Cooper, two students from the Swarthmore Conservative Society opposed to divestment, stood up from their seats in the audience to ask the meeting to return to order. Cooper, an economics major in the honors program, had hoped to speak during the open comment section—now cancelled by the protesters who insisted that anyone wishing to speak, including board members, must stand at the end of the line of protesters.

215 “Open Meeting with the Board of Managers,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, May 4, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00Med0treVE>.

216 “Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting – Swatties for a DREAM,” *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 9, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDVb-Gr-MFI&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hG1qkZQ>.

217 “Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting – Miriam Hauser,” *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 9, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3iix9c9gHg&index=8&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hG1qkZQ>.

218 “Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting: Jusselia Molina,” *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 11, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QalSXlMQ1Rg&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hG1qkZQ>.

219 “Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting: Hope Brinn,” *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 11, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Qv6JHm8YEM&index=3&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hG1qkZQ>.

"The board has given us an hour of their time," Charette remonstrated, but the students had "hijacked the meeting." "Get in line!" responded an activist. Another called, "You are also free to leave."<sup>220</sup>

***Grabbing the microphones from the board members, students began a series of tirades about the need for "radical, emancipatory change" at Swarthmore.***

In an instant the activists started clapping in unison, drowning out Charette. Silencing Charette was "not appropriate—not okay," SMJ leader Nathan Graf acknowledged in an interview a year and a half later. SMJ had planned the clap-down technique only for "appropriate" times—that is, not against students, but against any "board member who tried to filibuster."<sup>221</sup>

There was no chance of that. The board members sat patiently in their chairs. Early in the meeting takeover, one elderly voice can be heard to ask for Niemczewski to be allowed to finish his presentation. "He can get in line if he'd like to make a statement!" students call back.<sup>222</sup> That ended any resistance. Another board member, Dulany Bennett, a conciliatory silver-haired woman, stepped up to the microphone to announce the board's surrender: "I think the board of managers are prepared to stay, just to sit and listen to what you have to say."<sup>223</sup> At the end of the meeting, Nate Erskine, a 2010 graduate and new board member, confessed, "It's obvious that we do not have the proper trust and communication in the Board of Managers and the students. I care for you guys, I want you guys to feel safe and empowered and that Swarthmore is doing all that it can for you."<sup>224</sup> Susan Levine, another board member, assured the students, "All the issues that you have been raising today we have been talking about with great seriousness and concern in our Board meetings."<sup>225</sup>

Charette and Cooper asked the moderator to intervene, but she did nothing. President Rebecca Chopp, who had begun the meeting at the table with board members and SMJ activists but demurely slipped to the audience once the ruckus began, conceded to Charette that the takeover was "outrageous" but refused to take action. Charette approached the Dean of Students, Liz Braun, who made no response.

220 "Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting: Watufani M. Poe," *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, Youtube, May 9, 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=TS3Xa9UMZu8#](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=TS3Xa9UMZu8#).

221 Nathan Graf, interview with Rachelle Peterson, September 23, 2014.

222 "Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting: Ian Perkins-Taylor," *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 11, 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19encr\\_eB4s&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hGlqkZQ&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19encr_eB4s&list=UUh7suaodj9Vppl00hGlqkZQ&index=4).

223 *Ibid.*

224 Andrew Karas and Cristina Abellan-Matamoros, "Student Protesters Take Over Open Board Meeting, State Wide Array of Concerns," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 6, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/06/student-protesters-take-over-openboard-meeting-state-wide-array-of-concerns/>.

225 *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, angry Swarthmore student Watufani Poe stepped up to the microphone to fulminate about the urinations on the Intercultural Center, an act he took personally and labeled as anti-gay bigotry. After Poe completed his rant, accompanied by the cheers of the protesters, he ran up the auditorium aisle and out of the room. Two other Mountain Justice students then stepped forward to tell Charette to get in line or leave

Eventually Sara Blazevic and Nathan Graf presented SMJ's divestment proposal. The board should read the SMJ divestment plan by August 2013. If necessary, board members could call "an ad hoc meeting, whenever, in the summer"; by September 1<sup>st</sup> publish a report showing a strategy for divesting; by the September 27-28 board meeting, release an official decision to divest; and by October 6-7, demonstrate full implementation of the plan. "For me, this is a question of accountability," Blazevic explained. "What we're doing right now in this room is holding you, the board of managers, and the administration of Swarthmore College, holding you accountable. We want everyone in this room to hold each other accountable."<sup>226</sup>

"You have been educated. You have the information. You no longer can justify your inaction with ignorance as you have in the past," Graf accused, reminding the board of the "packets of information" SMJ had repeatedly sent to them. "The time for education has passed and now is the time for divestment."<sup>227</sup>

### **Occupy: Swarthmore Mountain Justice, Fall 2013-Present**

"We are the ninety-nine percent!" was the chant of the Occupy Wall Street protesters in Manhattan's Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011. Nearly a thousand gathered for the opening rally early in the afternoon. Three hundred spent the night in sleeping bags. For fifty-nine days, they occupied the park. Micah White (Swarthmore '04), a writer for *Adbusters* magazine, conceived of OWS after traveling in Egypt. The Arab Spring of early 2011 provided an "epiphany": "America, too, needs its Tahrir Square moment and its own kind of regime change," he recounted with *Adbusters* editor Kalle Lasn.<sup>228</sup> Soon the two advertised in *Adbusters* their Wall Street camp-out idea.

Divestment's Occupy stage doesn't exactly mimic the end goals of OWS. White is a self-described "mystical anarchist."<sup>229</sup> Marisa Holmes, who coordinated OWS's General Assembly and the drafting of its

226 "Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting: Swarthmore Mountain Justice," *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 11, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq6jMleNRjY>.

227 *Ibid.*

228 Kalle Lasn and Micah White, "Why Occupy Wall Street Will Keep Up the Fight," *Washington Post*, November 18, 2011. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-occupy-wall-street-will-keep-up-the-fight/2011/11/17/gIQA5RJZN\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-occupy-wall-street-will-keep-up-the-fight/2011/11/17/gIQA5RJZN_story.html).

229 *Ibid.*

grievance list, considers herself an anarchist, as does Justine Alexandra Roberts Tunney, a Philadelphia-based transgender activist who founded the OccupyWallSt.org website. Swarthmore Mountain Justice and the rest of the divestment activists with them want more government, not less of it.

Outside political theory, those distinctions fade away. OWS wants to end corporate power by regulating it. Occupiers aim to promote popular power by government protection. 350.org and Swarthmore Mountain Justice want the same.

In October 2011, as Occupy movements popped up at cities and parks around the country, Bill McKibben joined an Occupy camp in New York's Washington Square Park. "The reason that it's so great that we're occupying Wall Street is because Wall Street has been occupying the atmosphere," he addressed the crowds. 350.org was going to Washington to hold President Obama to his promise for climate legislation. Big corporations with wads of cash had replaced him with "some sort of stunt double" who was serving their every wish. For that rally, McKibben said, "I hope we can move, just for a day, Occupy Wall Street down to the White House."<sup>230</sup>

Simultaneously in Los Angeles, Guido Girgenti, an Occidental College sophomore, was spending his weekends sleeping outdoors with Occupy LA and his weekdays recruiting students for Students Occupy LA and Occupy Colleges. He organized a student "walk-out" and a teach-in in October. In November, at an Occupy camp, he was arrested. Occidental named him "Activist of the Month" in November 2011 for his work with Occupy<sup>231</sup> and gave him a grant of \$747 to spend Christmas break organizing with OWS and write a paper about the experience.<sup>232</sup> That spring he quit Occidental to work full-time as an organizer with 99Rise, a group that aims to "reclaim our democracy from the domination of big money" and give it back to the "99 percent."<sup>233</sup> In fall 2013 he transferred to Swarthmore with the express goal of joining Swarthmore Mountain Justice, where he became a member of the "core" organizing team.

Girgenti's arrival at Swarthmore coincided with a conscious shift in Swarthmore Mountain Justice's tactics. That year, solidarity with frontlines communities for the first time did not make SMJ's annual list of arguments for divestment, according to SMJ members. In September 2013, after the board announced for the first time its rejection of divestment, Girgenti and Blazevic arranged to occupy an October board

230 Brad Johnson, "Bill McKibben At Occupy Wall Street: 'Wall Street Has Been Occupying the Atmosphere,'" *Think Progress*, October 10, 2011. <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2011/10/10/340142/bill-mckibben-at-occupy-wall-street-wall-street-has-been-occupying-the-atmosphere/>.

231 "Activist of the Month: Guido Girgenti," *Occidental College Campus Conversations*, November 11, 2011. <http://www.oxy.edu/campus-conversations/oxy-engages-la/news/activist-month-guido-girgenti>.

232 Elisa Mala, "Voices From the Front," *New York Times*, January 22, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/01/22/education/edlife/20120122\\_edlife.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/01/22/education/edlife/20120122_edlife.html).

233 "About 99Rise," *99Rise*. <http://www.99rise.org/about>.

meeting. When campus security locked them out, they sent the board a message that mixed McKibben's moralistic slogans with OWS's class warfare:

*You agreed that the climate crisis is urgent. But if it is wrong to wreck the climate, it is also wrong to profit from that wreckage....If you are ready to seriously consider divestment, we are prepared to participate in this conversation with you. If you are not, we will stand here and bear witness to your decision to financially endorse the poisoning of communities and the destruction of our planet.<sup>234</sup>*

To be sure the board got the message, students crammed into the hallway outside the board room and shouted the directive through the walls—in the same call-and-response style that OWS protesters had used at park gatherings.

In September 2014, when 200 Swarthmore students and professors bussed to New York for the People's Climate March, some stayed afterwards for Flood Wall Street, a mash-up of OWS and climate activism in which anti-capitalists poured into streets of the Financial District and, like Occupy Wall Street, refused to leave until forced out by police. Unlike the People's Climate March, which was legal and cleared with city commissioners beforehand, Flood Wall Street was illegal and formally unannounced. At least two "Swatties," Kate Aronoff, who had graduated a few months before, and Sara Blazevic, then a senior, participated.<sup>235</sup>

In stage three of the divestment campaign, activists tout divestment as primarily a means of popular democracy that upends the cartel of corporate interests. "Solidarity" is used to refer to other student campaigns more often than to poorer communities. Boards that oppose divestment find themselves guilty not only of climate change denial (as in the Crusade stage) but also oligarchic behavior. If the students want divestment, how can the board say no?

Aronoff conceptualized in early form the transition that the fossil fuel divestment movement was making. "The climate movement lacks a culture of organizing," she wrote in an April 2014 draft memo circulated among the members of the Divestment Student Network.<sup>236</sup> For too long the national environmental movement had focused "on moments of resistance" to corporate or political agencies, blocking roads to

234 Elena Ruyter, Morgan Williams, and Andrew Karas, "Mountain Justice, Shut Out of Board Meeting Demonstrates Regardless," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/10/01/mountain-justice-demonstrators-shut-out-of-board-of-managers-meeting-multimedia-spread/>.

235 Allison Hrabar, "200 Swatties March For Climate Justice in New York," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, September 25, 2014. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2014/09/25/200-swatties-march-for-climate-justice-in-new-york/>.

236 Kate Aronoff, "DSN Narrative," April 2014. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15kOUjKmV95OW5E-ZDk2yBSCHy7Qilm9Nf4mrvREd8vU/edit>.

refineries, chaining themselves to oil rigs, picketing the White House to protest pipelines. The divestment movement had been heading that direction, too, by relying on momentary publicity stunts that had little power behind them. "Direct Action, no matter how well planned and executed, is a nuisance to Boards of Trustees rather than a threat." Instead, activists need to create "an organizing culture" that kept them engaged in "confrontational campaign politics."

Elements of that argument peppered some of the original divestment literature. McKibben in his *Rolling Stone* article blamed the fossil fuel industry for paying the government to stall the climate action the citizens wanted:

*Left to our own devices, citizens might decide to regulate carbon and stop short of the brink; according to a recent poll, nearly two-thirds of Americans would back an international agreement that cut carbon emissions 90 percent by 2050. But we aren't left to our own devices. The Koch brothers, for instance, have a combined wealth of \$50 billion, meaning they trail only Bill Gates on the list of richest Americans.<sup>237</sup>*

Swarthmore Mountain Justice spoke of its campaign as a way to make the board enact student desires. "We define a coalition on the Swarthmore campus as being focussed on student power," the *Institutional Memory Document* explains.

*We intend to connect with other student groups with the explicit acknowledgement that, although our campaigns differ, we share a common goal of trying to hold the administration and the institution accountable to the values that we, as students and activists, hold.<sup>238</sup>*

During the fall of 2013, that message became a more central part of SMJ and the broader divestment campaign's talking points. Katie McChesney, 350.org's Mid-Atlantic divestment organizer and a mentor for Swarthmore Mountain Justice, signaled the shift in December 2013 when she announced the #RejectionDenied strategy to "escalate" divestment campaigns. "What we're going to do is bring more students, more staff and faculty, and more alums into the fold," she wrote at the Go Fossil Free website.

*People who meet three times a year to talk about finances do not make up our institutions. Our alums, our faculty and staff, and our students are what make our schools great. We will leverage the collective power of these groups to demand our universities do what is right.<sup>239</sup>*

237 McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math."

238 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012.*

239 McChesney, "National Escalation Strategy Team #rejectiondenied!"

## Occupation Divest

Swarthmore took “occupy” literally in spring, 2015, when 200 students, alumni, faculty members, and staff rotated through a sit-in at the Parrish administrative building for 32 days. This was the brave charge that Aronoff, who participated, thought warranted Swarthmore’s comparison to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Jon Isham, the Middlebury professor whose winter-term course helped launch the student group that became 350.org, also flattered Swarthmore with the comparison to the city on the hill. He traveled from Vermont to Pennsylvania to see the sit-in and left a note on a tablet: “Thank you for your inspiring vision, action, and drive. The whole world is watching. Jon Isham. Middlebury College (birthplace of 350.org).”<sup>240</sup>

Swarthmore’s sit-in kicked off “divestment spring,” the series of 11 sit-ins at campuses across the country.<sup>241</sup> The divestment movement, like Occupy Wall Street, depicted itself as a mimic of the welling demands for democracy in the Middle East. McKibben had named fossil-fuel companies “Public Enemy Number 1” because they had bought the American political system.<sup>242</sup> That made college trustees Public Enemy Number 2. Trustees enjoy “privileged” positions of power over students, and, having rejected divestment, were entrenched of systematic oppression of students.

Swarthmore students set up house in the hallways of Parrish Hall, where Swarthmore’s finance and administrative offices are located. In a press release, they cited a litany of grievances, foremost that the board of managers had shirked “productive dialogue” in a series of meetings with the activists by declining to develop a divestment plan.<sup>243</sup> The “Swarthmore community” had spoken, they said: 1,100 faculty members and alumni and 970 students (61 percent of the student body) had signed a petition for divestment. “We cannot stand idly by” while the board chairman and finance chairman “continue to prevent the Board of Managers from responding to the mandate from the Swarthmore community to align our investments with our values.” By failing to divest, “Right now, the Swarthmore Board is choosing to be a part of the problem.”

*In stage three of the divestment campaign, activists tout divestment as primarily a means of popular democracy that upends the cartel of corporate interests.*

240 SwatMountainJustice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 26, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/581288943825608704>.

241 Deirdre Fulton, “With Sit-Ins Around Country, Students Escalate ‘Divestment Spring,’” *Common Dreams*, April 9, 2015. <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/04/09/sit-ins-around-country-students-escalate-divestment-spring>.

242 McKibben, “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.”

243 “BREAKING: 37 Swarthmore Students and 6 Alumni Begin Sit-In in Finance and Investments Office for Divestment,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 2015. <http://swatmj.org/breaking-37-swarthmore-students-and-6-alumni-begin-sit-in-in-finance-and-investments-office-for-divestment/>.

Bill McKibben visited Swarthmore early in its 32-day sit-in and congratulated students on their efforts. He said, "Right now and right this week the absolute white hot center of the movement to try to slow down the destruction of the planet is on the second floor of Parrish hall."<sup>244</sup> Twelve or so professors joined for a sit-in in a corner hallway, where they talked.<sup>245</sup> Some professors brought their classes to the sit-in. SMJ set up rows of chairs and computers for students cycling to and from class.<sup>246</sup>

Swarthmore Progressive Christians held their "pizza and a parable" night at the sit-in.<sup>247</sup> Quakers of Alabama sent salads.<sup>248</sup> Alumni shipped in 32 pizzas.<sup>249</sup>

Interim president Constance Hungerford read a statement to the protesters, acknowledging their request to immediately meet with board chairman Gil Kemp (who was away on philanthropic work in Asia). She thanked them for expressing their opinions:

*On behalf of the Board and the College, I want to tell you that we hear you. We are listening to your voices, and to all of the voices of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. We are considering what we hear thoughtfully. We respect your decision to engage in peaceful protest.*<sup>250</sup>

Christiana Figueres, a 1972 Swarthmore graduate and current executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, wrote to the board of managers to endorse the sit-in.<sup>251</sup> The sociology and anthropology department made its endorsement during the sit-in, and the faculty senate voted for divestment.

On April 21, the board of managers announced that it would reconsider divestment at the May board meeting. Students ended the sit-in and vacated the building.

244 Lily Tyson, "Environmentalist Bill McKibben Shows Support for Swarthmore Divestment Movement and Encourages More to Join," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 27, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/03/27/environmentalist-bill-mckibben-shows-support-for-the-swarthmore-divestment-movement-and-encourages-more-students-faculty-and-alumni-to-join-in/>.

245 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 26, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/581176761184051200>.

246 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 26, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/581232133328498689>.

247 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 31, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/583126423663177728>.

248 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 27, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/581613564999385088>.

249 FossilFuelD.S.N., @StudentsDivest, Twitter, March 26, 2015. <https://twitter.com/StudentsDivest/status/581207913689157632>.

250 Allison Hrabar, "BREAKING: President Hungerford Responds to Mountain Justice Sit-In," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 19, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/03/19/breaking-president-hungerford-responds-to-mountain-justice-sit-in/>.

251 "UN Climate Chief and Swarthmore Alumna Christiana Figueres '79 Supports Sit-in," *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 23, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/03/23/un-climate-chief-and-swarthmore-alumna-christiana-figueres-79-supports-sit-in/>.

When the board announced on May 2 its decision to maintain endowment fossil-fuel investments,<sup>252</sup> activists accused the managers of crossing a “mandate from the Swarthmore community” and standing “on the wrong side of history.”<sup>253</sup> Bill McKibben tweeted, “The students @SwarthMJ have worked longer and harder than just about anyone in climate fight. The college board is a corporatist disgrace.”<sup>254</sup>

### **The Response**

The college administration has held firm in its resolve against divesting the endowment, though it has gone out of its way to meet with SMJ members and advocates. By May 2013, SMJ members estimated they had met with members of the administration upwards of 25 times. When SMJ and its allies took over the May 2013 board meeting, members of the board and the administration quietly let SMJ dominate the discussion. If the college has not divested, why not?

### **The Cost**

“Will divestment cost money?” has been a major question at Swarthmore, as at many institutions. The board in 2013 estimated that divestment would cost a total of \$200 million over the course of 10 years.<sup>255</sup> This was based on the assumption that the managers of commingled investment funds would decline to screen out fossil fuels (on the basis that this would affect other fund investors who did not wish to divest) and the college would have to swap actively managed commingled funds with index funds such as those offered by Aperio. (Aperio, an index fund management firm that offered fossil fuel-free portfolios, had been recommended by Swarthmore Mountain Justice.) Calculating that index funds performed at a lower rate than commingled funds, investments chairman Chris Niemczewski estimated that the cost would be about \$11.2 million for the first year and compounding after that. The board has not released an updated estimate of costs since then.

Several students have expressed concerns that divestment could result in a cut in financial aid. One student, Andrew Taylor, noted in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* in May 2015 that about half the student body received financial aid totaling \$30 million a year, in addition to scholarships. He worried that his own aid might get cut (“I need every last dime”) and told how he nearly left school that semester “due

252 Gil Kemp, “Sustainability and Investment Policy,” *Swarthmore College Board of Managers*, May 2, 2015. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/board-managers/sustainability-and-investment-policy>.

253 “Swarthmore College Continues Investments in Fossil Fuels Despite 32-Day Sit-In and Faculty Resolution,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, May 2, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/05/02/swarthmore-college-continues-investments-in-fossil-fuels-despite-32-day-sit-in-and-faculty-resolution/>.

254 Bill McKibben, @billmckibben, Twitter, May 2, 2015. <https://twitter.com/billmckibben/status/594613131814526977>.

255 Andrew Karas, “Swarthmore Pegs Cost of Divestment at \$200 Million Over 10 Years,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 9, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/09/college-pegs-cost-of-divestment-at-200-million-over-10-years/>.

to my general state of impoverishment." He accused Swarthmore Mountain Justice of avoiding real "debates" about "the pros and cons" of divestment:

*We need to actually debate this thing—to weigh the pros and cons—because the fact of the matter is that divestment would have some downsides, and Mountain Justice doesn't like admitting it. Divestment would likely cost the school quite a bit of money. It's hard to get choked up about a slip in cash flow, but the truth is that this could mean putting valuable parts of Swarthmore—like low income students on financial aid—at risk.<sup>256</sup>*

Eight students from the Swarthmore Conservative Society raised multiple concerns with divestment in an op-ed, "In Defense of Our Endowment," including the potential costs. "We're not in the business of defending Big Oil, but we are in the business of common sense," they noted, observing that "Unlike many of our peer institutions," Swarthmore funneled a significant portion of its endowment into subsidizing each student's education. "Even full-pay students receive a 'scholarship' of \$28,652." They noted that "according to the College's 2011-12 Financial Report, philanthropy provided 45 percent of educational costs, while student tuition accounted for 42 percent." Jeopardizing financial aid was "naive and elitist" and "threatens the socioeconomic diversity of our campus."<sup>257</sup>

Supporters of divestment have two go-to responses for divestment: 1) Divestment is worth the cost, and in any case, Swarthmore can afford it. 2) Divestment will actually make money.

Early in its campaign, SMJ repeatedly made the first claim. In a May 2013 op-ed, Nathan Graf and Zein Nakhoda responded to the Swarthmore Conservative Society, claiming "it's far from certain whether divesting from fossil fuels will threaten the endowment at all," but if it does, "Let's be clear, Swarthmore Mountain Justice will not accept any plan to divest from fossil fuels that would harm financial aid under any circumstances." They saw the "'threat to financial aid' argument as a scare tactic."

In a September 2014 letter to the editor, SMJ argued that "we have more than enough" money and that Swarthmore, if necessary, could endure losing some money to divestment. They noted that Swarthmore's board projected spending 4.25 percent of the total endowment each year, while the average return over the last 10 years was 8.4 percent. "What does this mean?" SMJ asked? The "extra

256 Andrew Taylor, "The True Cost of Divestment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 3, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/03/the-true-cost-of-divestment/>.

257 Zoe Wray, et. al., "In Defense of Our Endowment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 29, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/29/op-ed-in-defense-of-our-endowment/>.

money” wasn’t going into scholarships, but just back into the endowment, to make yet more money. “If we didn’t have this extra money, it wouldn’t actually harm the operations of the school.” (In reality, increasing the endowment means that the 4.25 percent spending rate actually equals a larger and larger sum of money each year. A higher spending rate could well end Swarthmore’s future ability to increase spending.) They also noted that the ten-year average for the S&P 500 Stock Index was 5.8 percent, and for the international MSCI All Country Excluding U.S. Index was 7.2 percent—two index funds (that Swarthmore could passively invest in and screen out fossil fuels) would provide more than the 4.25 percent the board aimed to spend.<sup>258</sup>

Recently some have begun arguing that divestment is a savvy financial move. Peter Meyer, a 1965 economics graduate and Professor Emeritus of Urban Policy and Economics at the University of Louisville and President and Chief Economist of The E.P. Systems Group, Inc., made this case in February 2015. An op-ed for the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* was titled “Divestment: It’s not Morality – It’s Economics.” He argued that “Fossil fuel investments are risky business these days,” and said some Wall Street bankers were taking note as well.<sup>259</sup> Gregory Kats, a consultant who visited Swarthmore to speak on divestment, argued a similar point: “Divestment from fossil fuels – especially coal – has become the more fiscally rational and morally grounded option.”<sup>260</sup>

When Bill McKibben visited Swarthmore in March 2015, he addressed a crowd of students and faculty members: “Places that paid attention to their students a few years ago and divested have bigger endowments as a result, can offer more scholarships, can fund more important work. If Swarthmore had had the good sense to listen to its students when they raised this issue 5 years ago than Swarthmore would be in an even richer spot than it is in now.”<sup>261</sup>

### **Professors for Divestment**

When in spring 2015, SMJ held its sit-in at Parrish Hall, Bill McKibben visited for a rally. He called on faculty members to join the campaign: “This is what tenure was made for.”<sup>262</sup>

258 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, “Letter-to-the-Editor: The Cost of Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, September 26, 2013.<http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/09/26/letter-to-the-editor-the-cost-of-divestment/>.

259 Peter Meyer, “Divestment: It’s not Morality – It’s Economics,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 16, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/02/16/divestment-its-not-morality-its-economics/>.

260 Gregory H. Kats, “The Financial Advantages of Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 5, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/03/05/the-financial-advantages-of-divestment/>.

261 Tyson, “Environmentalist Bill McKibben Shows Support for the Swarthmore Divestment Movement.”

262 Lily Jamison-Cash, “Mountain Justice Takes Stage with National Activists,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 19, 2012. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2012/11/19/mountain-justice-takes-stage-with-national-activists/>.

Swarthmore Mountain Justice actively recruits professors to join the campaign. This is called “organizing the faculty.” Among the 10 “working groups” listed in the 2011-2012 *Institutional Memory Document*, one, “Faculty/Alum,” was given the responsibility to “gain support from faculty and alumni on the divestment campaign.”<sup>263</sup> Three students, Pat Walsh, Dinah DeWald, and Ryane Disken-Cahill, headed this group.

During the 2014-2015 school year, according to an SMJ member who had been involved in reaching out to faculty members, five professors agreed to advise the Swarthmore Mountain Justice divestment campaign: Lee Smithey, associate professor of sociology and coordinator at the time of the Peace and Conflict Studies program; Mark Wallace, professor of religion and member of the Environmental Studies Committee; Betsy Bolton, professor of English literature; Micheline Rice-Maximin, associate professor of French and Francophone studies; and Alex Baugh, assistant professor of animal behavior. Via email or interviews, all but Professor Wallace denied having any formal affiliation with SMJ. All have signed an open faculty letter that endorses divestment.<sup>264</sup>

Professors have partnered with SMJ in three main ways: writing letters endorsing divestment; participating in rallies and other events; and signing official faculty petitions or Faculty Senate resolutions supporting divestment.

Four academic departments have endorsed divestment at Swarthmore. The History department was the first to do so in April 2013. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 33 student history majors published in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* a letter drafted by Kate Aronoff that called divestment “our chance to stand on the right side of history.”<sup>265</sup> The students wrote that “fossil fuel extraction has been inextricably linked to histories of colonization, racism, social marginalization, and ecological degradation” and cited examples from every history professor’s research.

***Four academic departments  
have endorsed divestment  
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The same day, Robert Weinberg, the acting department chair during the sabbatical of department chair Timothy Burke (who opposes divestment), published a letter in the *Gazette*. Weinberg, writing “on behalf of the members of the Department of History,” said there was “no greater testament to the value of a liberal arts education than Mountain Justice’s campaign for

263 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

264 “Faculty Open Letter,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, as of September 1, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/faculty/>.

265 “History Students for Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 25, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/25/op-ed-history-students-for-divestment/>.

divestment.”<sup>266</sup> Weinberg denies that his letter endorsed divestment. He claims he praised the campaign independently of its stated purpose. But the letter said Weinberg wrote “in support of Mountain Justice’s campaign to have Swarthmore College divest its endowment from the fossil fuel industry,” and SMJ lists Weinberg’s letter among its list of endorsements.<sup>267</sup>

On May 19, 2013, two weeks after SMJ took over the May board meeting, the Religion department gave its blessing to divestment. Drafted by Mark Wallace and signed by all five members of the department, the letter in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* expressed “solidarity” with the students who demanded divestment. It called for the college to “wage the moral equivalent of war” against “global ecological depredation.”<sup>268</sup>

A year and a half later, in October 2014, 30 English majors signed an open letter endorsing divestment. They claimed that “the methods of questioning” they learned in English classes—“Who are the actors? Who are the objects? What is the narrative arc of this story and whose ideology does it serve?”—were the same ones they needed to “employ” in building the “community power” it would take to “survive the climate crisis.”<sup>269</sup> They cited seven English professors as sources for their views.

The same day, a letter signed simply “Department of English Literature” requested a series of faculty lunch meetings to discuss the endowment. The professors noted that “since burning fossil fuels privileges the present generation at the expense of the future, investing for purposes of intergenerational equity in fossil fuel companies seems oxymoronic at best.”<sup>270</sup> The letter did not officially call for divestment. Swarthmore Mountain Justice also lists this letter among its endorsements.

The Sociology and Anthropology department was more forthright. In April 2015, as SMJ was holding its sit-in, the department added its “departmental voice to supporting divestment” in a *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* op-ed.<sup>271</sup> The letter continued, “as citizens of this Department and the College, we endorse the particular strategy of divestment from companies whose main goals include the extraction and burning of fossil fuels.”

266 “History Faculty Support Divestment in Open Letter,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 25, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/25/op-ed-history-faculty-supports-divestment-in-open-letter/>.

267 “Endorsements,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, as of September 1, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/endorsements/>.

268 “Religion Faculty Call for Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 19, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/19/op-ed-religion-faculty-call-for-divestment/>.

269 Sara Blazeovic, “Time to divest: An Open Letter,” *Swarthmore Phoenix*, October 23, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/10/23/12655/>. And “Open Letter to the College Community,” English Students for Divestment, October 2014. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZQPm5CSqT5iUsVAsodRyLB5anyMRCY\\_9Se7ByARqc-s/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZQPm5CSqT5iUsVAsodRyLB5anyMRCY_9Se7ByARqc-s/edit).

270 The Department of English Literature, “The college must recommit to environmental responsibility,” *Swarthmore Phoenix*, October 23, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/10/23/12651/>.

271 Grant Torre, “BREAKING: Department of Sociology and Anthropology Urges Board to Divest,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 17, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/17/breaking-department-of-sociology-anthropology-urges-board-to-divest/>.

Several professors have written independently to support divestment. Mark Wallace wrote an op-ed for the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* comparing divesting from fossil fuels to screening out businesses “engaging in child labor, blood diamonds, and sex tourism.”<sup>272</sup>

Professors have also participated in SMJ events. In December 2012 Betsy Bolton, a professor of English literature, gave a short speech at the SMJ event that involved toppling dominoes down the steps in Parrish Hall.<sup>273</sup> She encouraged students to use their “privilege” to “amplify the voices” of those whose struggles were not being heard.

At a February 2013, Bolton spoke in favor of divestment at a teach-in, along with George Lakey, Lee Smithey, Mark Wallace, political science professor Cynthia Halpern, Professor for Issues of Social Change Giovanna Di Chiro, and physics professor Peter Collings. Two economics professors, Mark Kuperberg and Philip Jefferson expressed doubts about divestment’s efficacy and feasibility.<sup>274</sup>

In May 2013, when SMJ hijacked a board meeting, Bolton was there too. She marched into the room with the student activists and stood near the front of the auditorium with students holding posters. She was the only professor to speak at the meeting. She echoed SMJ’s demands for more information and more student control: “I also want to speak for transparency on the part of the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Managers,” she said. “I think we can all do better on that front.”<sup>275</sup> She also praised Liz Braun, the dean of students, for pushing for diversity among the faculty and other reforms: “Liz Braun has been pushing the faculty to confront their own limitations to see what we are not doing well and to work on what we can do.”

In October 2013, when SMJ shouted its message through the walls of a board room, sociology and peace and conflict studies professor Lee Smithey and religion professor Mark Wallace attended and participated.<sup>276</sup>

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272 Mark Wallace, “A Response to the Administration on Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 3, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/02/03/a-response-to-the-administration-on-divestment/>.

273 Isabel Knight, “MJ Demonstrates Divestment with Dominoes,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, December 11, 2012. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2012/12/11/mj-demonstrates-divestment-with-dominoes/>.

274 “Faculty Teach-in on Climate Change and Divestment,” *Swarthmore College News & Events*, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/faculty-teach-climate-change-and-divestment>.

275 Andrew Karas and Cristina Abellan-Matamoros, “Student Protesters Take Over Open Board Meeting, State Wide Array of Concerns,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 6, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/06/student-protesters-take-over-open-board-meeting-state-wide-array-of-concerns/>.

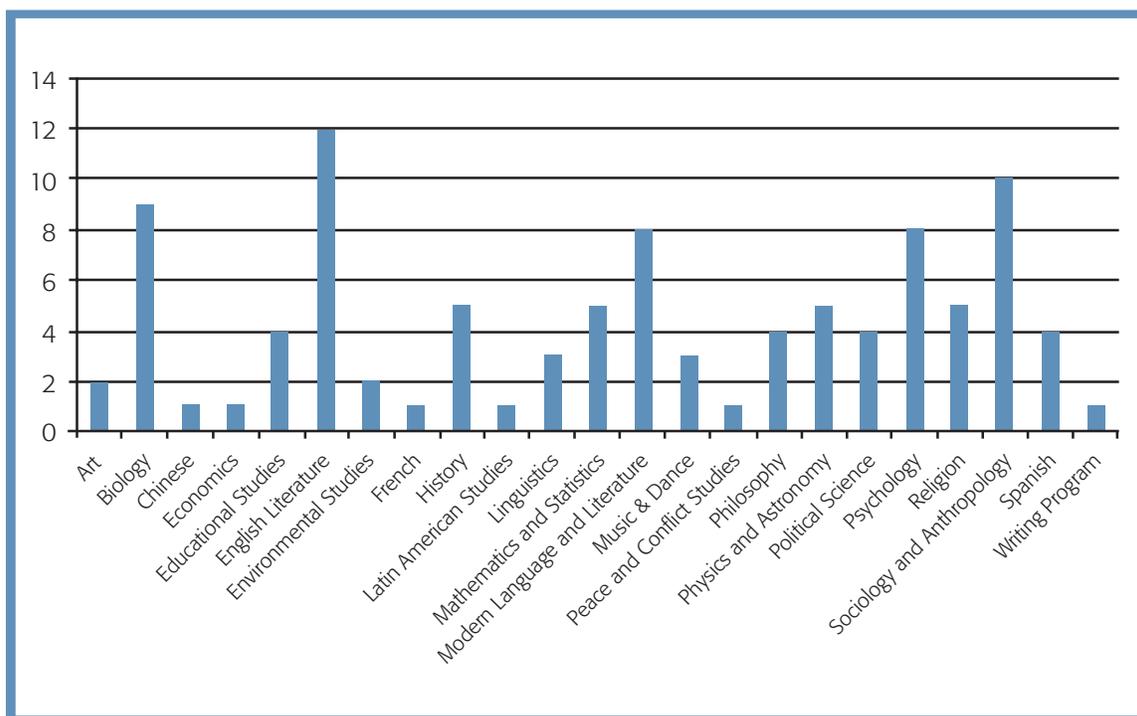
276 Elena Ruyter, Moran Williams, and Andrew Karas, “Mountain Justice, Shut Out of Board Meeting, Demonstrates Regardless,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/10/01/mountain-justice-demonstrators-shut-out-of-board-of-managers-meeting-multimedia-spread/>.

Several professors participated in the March-April 2015 sit-in, including Mark Wallace, Betsy Bolton, and Lee Smithey, who brought along his daughter and his dog.<sup>277</sup> At least two classes held discussion sessions in the hallways. Philosophy professor Peter Baumann held his “Meaning of Life” seminar in the occupied hallway,<sup>278</sup> and the biology department hosted a discussion of science’s role in combating environmental injustice.<sup>279</sup>

Swarthmore professors have also signed SMJ’s petition and passed a resolution in the faculty senate. An open letter, first released in April 2015, has been signed by 99 Swarthmore professors.<sup>280</sup> It notes that one of Swarthmore’s financial advisors had recently indicated it would open a fossil-fuel-free investment option, and urges Swarthmore to use it.

The 99 professors were drawn from 23 of Swarthmore’s 43 academic departments (53 percent), plus one instructor from the writing center.

**Figure 2 Number of Pro-Divestment Swarthmore Professors by Departmental Affiliation**



277 SwatMountainJustice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 21, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/579336471297040385>.

278 SwatMountainJustice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, April 11, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/586993272205225985>.

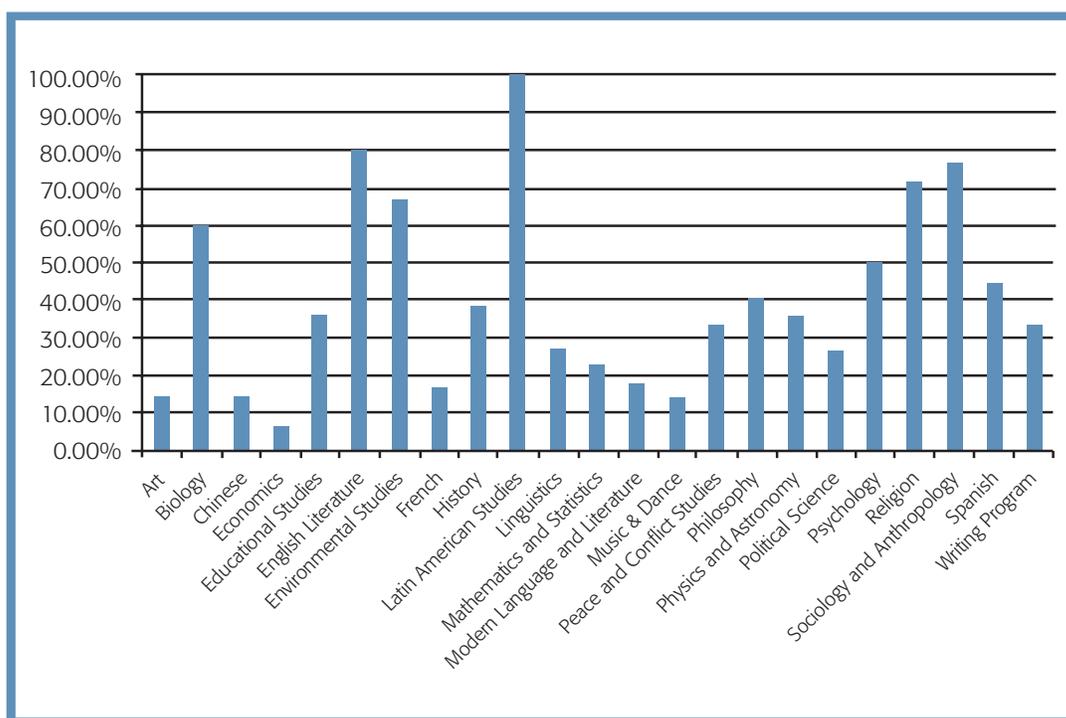
279 SwatMountainJustice, @SwarthMJ, Twitter, March 31, 2015. <https://twitter.com/SwarthMJ/status/583012470517809152>.

280 “Faculty Open Letter,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, as of September 1, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/faculty/>.

The most heavily represented department is English Literature, with 12 signatories, followed by Sociology and Anthropology (10), Biology (9), Modern Language and Literatures (8), and Psychology (8). One economics professor signed the letter.

Proportionally, Latin American studies is the department with the most complete support for fossil fuel divestment. The department has only one Latin American studies professor (plus several professors from the History, Sociology, and Spanish departments who also teach courses on Latin America) and he has signed SMJ's letter of faculty support. English literature is the department second most supportive of fossil fuel divestment (with the signatures of 80 percent of affiliated faculty), followed by Sociology and Anthropology (77 percent), and Religion (71 percent). Environmental Studies comes in at 67 percent, just above Biology (60 percent). In the History department, despite its endorsement of divestment by way of Professor Weinberg's letter, only 38 percent of faculty members signed up to support fossil fuel divestment. Twenty departments have no signatories of the faculty letter.

**Figure 3 Proportional Distribution of Pro-Divestment Swarthmore Professors by Departmental Affiliation**



The faculty senate has also voted to support divestment. On April 17, 2015, as students occupied Parrish Hall, the senate voted 40 to 20 with 4 abstentions to support a resolution drafted by seven professors, Mark Wallace, Betsy Bolton, Carol Nackenoff, Carr Everbach, Lee Smithey, Sarah Willie-LeBreton, and Joy Charlton. The resolution asked the board to divest from direct holdings in fossil fuels—rather than all holdings, including those in mutual funds—as a first step.<sup>281</sup>

### **Professors Against Divestment**

A smaller number of professors have voiced opposition to divestment. When the faculty senate considered the resolution on divestment, two voted against and four abstained. Stephen Golub, professor of economics, found divestment “schizophrenic..., hypocritical, at least illogical” because it condemned fossil fuels without curbing the use of them. “I find it morally questionable as an approach. It’s passing the buck to the college and involves taking no personal responsibility,” he said. “I think it sort of allows you to feel good without doing anything.”<sup>282</sup>

Arthur McGarity, professor of engineering, also questioned McKibben’s scales that scapegoated the industry and forgave the consumer: “I am bothered by an inconsistency lurking in the faculty’s divestment resolution which would have the college attempt to harm the fossil fuel extraction industry while, at the same time, remaining a loyal customer of that industry as we purchase and consume their products daily.”<sup>283</sup>

McGarity also questioned the appropriateness of the faculty involving themselves in the divestment campaign. “I fully support and have much respect for my faculty colleagues who have given their personal time to join the student divestment protest or to counsel the student activists on strategies and compromises,” he commented. “Generally though, I do not agree that it is the proper business of the faculty to pass resolutions supporting a particular political viewpoint in a national debate.”<sup>284</sup>

Mark Kuperberg, professor of economics, has straddled the fence on the question of divestment. “I don’t have a dog in the fight,” he said in an interview.<sup>285</sup> He doubts the efficacy of divestment but criticized the board’s reasons for rejecting it. “I don’t really support divestment,” Kuperberg told the *New York Times* in 2014. “I don’t think it will affect company behavior. But I don’t think it will hurt the endowment

281 Lindsay Holcomb, “Faculty Vote in Favor of Fresh Divestment Proposal,” *The Phoenix*, April 23, 2015. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2015/04/23/faculty-vote-divestment/>.

282 *Ibid.*

283 *Ibid.*

284 *Ibid.*

285 Mark Kuperberg, interview with Rachelle Peterson, October 22, 2014.

much, either.” Kuperberg has argued that the board has overstated the costs of divestment by assuming that the fund managers would refuse to accommodate a screen on fossil fuel investments, leaving the board to hire new fund managers, presumably worse or more expensive.<sup>286</sup> But divesting would do no good, because other investors would buy the divested stocks, and because it would spur no changes to the fossil fuel companies. The apartheid divestment movement made a “reasonable” demand that companies could meet, he said. If they ceased doing business in apartheid South Africa, they could regain investments. But fossil fuel companies would have to change their entire industry in order to meet the demands of divestment activists. Kuperberg has participated in events with Swarthmore Mountain Justice, including at a teach-in on divestment<sup>287</sup> and a panel session with SMJ’s Kate Aronoff and professor of political science Cynthia Halpern (who supports divestment).<sup>288</sup>

Chairman of the history department, Timothy Burke, has been a more outspoken opponent of divestment. On his blog in October 2013, as SMJ was transitioning out of Crusade mode and into Occupy mode, he wrote that the fossil fuel divestment movement “frustrates me.” He explained:

*First and foremost in the way that participants in the movement are anointing themselves as sole moral paragons struggling through a wasteland of sin and sinners.... I’ve read advocates for divestment protesting that their case is proven beyond any shadow of a doubt and thus to oppose divestment is the moral equivalent of personally upending a barrel of sour crude on a sack of baby kittens. I think what they are often doing is transposing the moral and empirical certainty of the first part of a long chain of thinking onto the last part of the chain.*<sup>289</sup>

Burke agreed that climate change was real, dangerous, and anthropogenic, that fossil fuels were “THE major contributor” to climate change and were artificially cheap because of environmental externalities and government subsidies. But he saw “a very long history of disagreement” among historians of all political backgrounds whether stigmatizing the fossil fuel industry was an effective strategy. And he wondered if it was “elitist” to demand that all institutions divest, including those that might not be able to afford it.

286 Mark Kuperberg, “Rebecca Chopp, Economist,” *The Phoenix*, September 4, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/09/04/op-ed-rebecca-chopp-economist/>.

287 Rachel Berger, “Teach-In on Climate Change and Divestment Draws Students, Faculty,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 12, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/02/12/17221/>.

288 “Focal Points: Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, 2013, accessed October 15, 2015. <https://vimeo.com/63042887>.

289 Timothy Burke, “The Cheese Stands Alone,” *Easily Distracted*, October 3, 2013. <https://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/blog/2013/10/03/the-cheese-stands-alone/>.

A year and a half later, Burke made a similar but more reticent case in an op-ed “Against Divestment” in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*.<sup>290</sup> “Moral purity is hard enough to pursue for an individual,” let alone an institution, he wrote. “This kind of purity—a severing of ties with that which is impure, a desire to create a strict distance between the ethical and the unethical—is generally only possible through a sequestration from the world. Individuals can go into caves and monasteries, institutions and communities cannot.”

## Alumni

SMJ actively recruits alumni to join its campaign. In April 2015, 350 alumni pledged to withhold any donations to their alma mater until Swarthmore divested.<sup>291</sup> Several delivered letters to the board of managers as well. “We urge the Board to reaffirm the college’s highest purposes and ideals, and in the light of the humanitarian disaster of climate change, that surely requires divestment,” said one 1965 alumnus, Peter Meyer, who delivered a letter in support of divestment.<sup>292</sup>

SMJ also aims to retain recent graduates who worked on the divestment campaign. The Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network created a pledge to “not graduate out of this movement,” which several SMJ members have signed. Sara Blazevic (‘15) published an article on the DSN blog, promising “to pledge my commitment to this movement for the long haul.”<sup>293</sup> Dinah DeWald (‘13) wrote

*If everyone graduating from the divestment movement pledged to continue organizing in some capacity, for the long haul, how much stronger could our movement become in even a few years? I want to see that movement. That’s why I’m committed to building the long-term power of the movement for fossil fuel divestment, for climate justice, and for a just and equitable world.*<sup>294</sup>

We identified 10 of the founders of Swarthmore Mountain Justice. Seven remain professionally involved in the fossil fuel divestment campaign, six of them in the Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice. The Maypop Collective, in Philadelphia, is a donations-supported commune

290 Timothy Burke, “Against Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 11, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/02/11/against-divestment/>.

291 “350 Swarthmore Alumni Pledge Not to Donate Until the Board Commits to Fossil Fuel Divest,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, April 10, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/04/10/350-swarthmore-alumni-pledge-not-to-donate-until-the-board-commits-to-fossil-fuel-divest/>.

292 Alumni Deliver 360 Pledges Not to Donate Until the Board divests & 1083 Petition Signatures,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, April 17, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/04/17/1901/>.

293 Sara Blaze, “Sara Blazevic, Swarthmore ‘15,” *Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network*, April 1, 2015. [http://www.studentsdivest.org/sara\\_blaze\\_swarthmore\\_15](http://www.studentsdivest.org/sara_blaze_swarthmore_15).

294 Dinah Dewald, “Dinah Dewald, Swarthmore ‘13,” *Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network*, April 1, 2015. [http://www.studentsdivest.org/dinah\\_dewald-swarthmore](http://www.studentsdivest.org/dinah_dewald-swarthmore).

“fighting for a just transition away from a fossil fuel economy of exploitation to community-centered, clean-energy economies.”<sup>295</sup> All six members volunteer as local community organizers.

**Table 1: Current Occupations of Founding Members of Swarthmore Mountain Justice**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Kate Aronoff	Coordinating committee, Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network Communications coordinator, New Economy Coalition
Dinah DeWald	Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
Ryane Disken-Cahill	Assistant costume designer, The Blunderer, Killer Films
Rachel Giovanniello	Unknown
Sachie Hayakawa	Coordinator of regranting and reinvestment, New Economy Coalition People of Color caucus, Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network Fellow, The Wildfire Project Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
Hannah Jones	Organizer, Responsible Endowments Coalition Coal finance campaign organizer, Rainforest Action Network Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
William Lawrence	Coordinating committee, Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Zein Nakhoda	People of Color caucus, Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
Alexa Ross	Member, Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice
Pat Walsh	Tutor, Varsity Tutors

Several alumni participated in the May 2015 sit-in.

Not all alumni support divestment. All forty of the board members who have twice voted against divestment are alumni, including investment committee chairman Chris Chris Niemczewski ('74) and then-chairman Gil Kemp ('72).

Several have published op-eds about divestment, 8 by 23 alumni in favor; 1 by 1 (speaking for the rest of the board) opposed.

295 “What We Mean by Climate Justice,” *Maypop Collective for Climate and Economic Justice*. <http://maypopcollective.org/about/>.

**Table 2: Swarthmore College Alumni Op-Eds on Fossil Fuel Divestment**

<b>Name and Affiliation</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>In Favor of Divestment</b>		
Duncan Gromko ('07)	"Alumnus Responds to Divestment Decision," <i>Swarthmore Daily Gazette</i> , September 20, 2013.	"Whether or not divestment advocates eliminate their personal carbon footprint has no bearing on the moral calculus of divestment. If the Board believes that profiting from fossil fuel production is immoral, it should divest regardless of what others do."
John F. McDiarmid ('68)	"John F. McDiarmid '68's Proposal for Divestment from Fossil Fuels," <i>Swarthmore Daily Gazette</i> , September 10, 2014.	"Climate change is a threat that has already overtaken us and that we have barely begun to address. Divestment, responsibly carried out, would be the greatest contribution Swarthmore could make. If the College of today fails to face the challenge, it risks losing the meaning that Swarthmore has had for so many of us for so many years."
Fran Putnam ('69)	"A Collision Course With a Problem of Our Own Making," <i>Swarthmore Daily Gazette</i> , January 19, 2015.	"It was with shock that I discovered in a <i>New York Times</i> article last spring that Swarthmore College holds investments in the coal industry. A Quaker college, located in a state that has been devastated by mountain top removal, has investments in coal?"
<b>Name and Affiliation</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Peter B. Meyer ('65), Professor Emeritus of Urban Policy and Economics, University of Louisville; President/Chief Economist, E.P. Systems Group, Inc.	"Divestment: It's not Morality – It's Economics," <i>Swarthmore Daily Gazette</i> , February 16, 2015	"I favor divestment as an investment strategy for a number of reasons, ... and I also favor the tactic as part of a larger political strategy."
Dana Lyons ('82)	"An Open Letter to the Swarthmore College Students Sitting in for Divestment," <i>Swarthmore Phoenix</i> , April 2, 2015.	"Divesting in the near future will show Swarthmore as a leader in the climate change movement, which will inspire students and alumni, build pride in the college, and yield larger gifts now and into the future."

Ladulé Lakolosarah ('09)	"Support of Swarthmore Mountain Justice Student Escalation," <i>Swarthmore Phoenix</i> , April 2, 2015	"Fossil fuel companies actively destroy our world's ecosystems, undermine democratic institutions at home and abroad, and poison and exploit people worldwide, moving us ever closer to the point of no return. It is unconscionable that our beloved Swarthmore College seeks to gain financially from the destructive operations of fossil fuel corporations."
Dean Baker ('80), co-founder, Center for Economic and Policy Research	"The Case for Divesting from Fossil Fuels," <i>Swarthmore Phoenix</i> , April 16, 2015.	"Swarthmore's decision to divest its holdings in fossil fuel companies will encourage other colleges and universities, foundations, and pension funds to follow the same path. This can help to create a political environment in which effective regulation of carbon emissions is more acceptable."
Lucinda White Lohr ('43) and 15 other signatories	"Divestment: It's not a gesture – It's an Imperative," <i>Swarthmore Phoenix</i> , April 16, 2015.	"The vital steps that the College is taking to reduce its carbon footprint through conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy are not sufficient. Swarthmore also needs to use its considerable influence by publicly divesting from fossil fuels."
<b>Opposed to Divestment</b>		
Gil Kemp ('72)	"Divestment an Empty Gesture, College Seeks Better Solutions," <i>Swarthmore Phoenix</i> , November 20, 2014.	"The Board's decision not to divest is broad and deep. While we've arrived at this position from several different paths, it is our collective judgment that the cost of divestment would far outweigh any potential benefit. If we thought divestment would change the behavior of fossil fuel companies, or galvanize public officials to do something about climate change, or reduce America's reliance on fossil fuels, this would be a much tougher decision. We believe we have other, more effective means to achieve this objective."

## The Board

Swarthmore's board of managers has met repeatedly with members of Swarthmore Mountain Justice. According to the college's Quaker tradition, decisions must be made by consensus. There are forty members, all alumni of the college. The board has twice rejected divestment, once in September 2013<sup>296</sup> and again in May 2015.<sup>297</sup>

The board has made two primary objections to divestment. One is the economic cost (estimated at \$200 million over 10 years) of screening out what has been in the past a reliable investment. The other is a

296 Kemp, "An Open Letter on Divestment."

297 Kemp, "Sustainability and Investment Policy."

concern that divestment is ineffective to improve the environment. "If we thought divestment would change the behavior of fossil fuel companies, or galvanize public officials to do something about climate change, or reduce America's reliance on fossil fuels," chairman Gil Kemp wrote in the 2013 decision to decline divestment, "this would be a much tougher decision."<sup>298</sup>

The board prefers measures that actively reduce consumption of fossil fuels and the emission of pollution. It is concerned that divestment removes responsibility from individuals who use fossil fuels and transfers it entirely to the industry that produces the energy. In the 2013 decision, Kemp wrote:

*We understand that such a divestment campaign is a symbolic act designed to mobilize public opinion against fossil fuels. Many Board members question the efficacy of a symbolic campaign since it does not sufficiently consider, from a moral perspective, the link between personal sacrifice and making an impact on the industry's profits. Divestment's potential success as a moral response is limited—if not completely negated—so long as its advocates continue to turn on the lights, drive cars, and purchase manufactured goods, for it is these activities that constitute the true drivers of fossil fuel companies' economic viability—their profits. It is important that we ourselves acknowledge that our consumption of energy makes us complicit in the threat to the planet and that it is in our hands to reduce our demand for it.<sup>299</sup>*

Instead of divesting, the board has approved a number of sustainability measures. In its 2015 rejection of divestment, Kemp noted that "the College will intensify its sustainable practices as an institution," including "all aspects of College operations including new construction, energy consumption, water usage, and recycling, and also the curriculum and investment practices."<sup>300</sup> Kemp announced that the college would also

- *Accelerate improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings, including an evaluation of the College's rental properties for their use of energy and water.*
- *Implement the Sustainability Framework for all construction and renovation projects.*
- *Manage the acquisition and use of college-owned vehicles to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions through smarter vehicle usage.*
- *Explore the use of solar energy to provide a portion of the College's electricity.*
- *Take steps toward becoming a zero waste campus in order to respect our community neighbors, reviewing the College's purchasing habits and implementing ways to reduce waste sent to the Chester incinerator.*

298 Kemp, "An Open Letter on Divestment"

299 *Ibid.*

300 Kemp, "Sustainability and Investment Policy."

- *As a prelude to ambitious curricular initiatives, support pilot programs, such as the development of an interdisciplinary course for fall 2015. Initially this will provide year-long stipends for student research and project management assistants.*
- *Create cultural change within the campus community by supporting the work of our student Green Advisors in the residence halls and academic buildings.<sup>301</sup>*

Swarthmore has joined the Pennsylvania Environmental Resource Consortium; created a position of Sustainability Director; joined the Investor Network for Climate Risk; developed a Climate Action Plan; signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment; pledged to go carbon neutral by 2035; established a Green Fund that will not be invested in fossil fuels; and held a two-day campus-wide "sustainability charrette" (a meeting in which all stakeholders attempt to resolve conflicts and propose solutions) to discuss ways to improve the sustainability of the college.

### **Free Speech**

Divestment activists commonly argue that the time for civil discourse is over. Talk is only a means of delay that the earth cannot afford. Discourse is the territory of the fossil fuel companies, who have, activists say, seeded the scientific literature with inconclusive studies to delay a verdict in favor of endless debate. Discourse is also the labyrinth of politicians, whose opinions the fossil fuel companies have also bought.

"We won the argument," McKibben said, when he visited Swarthmore's March 2015 sit-in.

*20 years ago we lost the fight and that's because the fight was never about data and all of that. The fight, as fights usually are, was about power and there was another side to it and that side was the richest industry in the world, the richest enterprise that humans have ever thrown up—the fossil fuel industry. And they are, as it turns out, willing to take the planet over the hill if they can keep what they're doing now going a little longer.<sup>302</sup>*

***Aronoff, in an article "F\*\*\* Your Constructive Dialogue," criticized her fellow liberal students for too willingly continuing to debate the facts of the matter.***

Swarthmore Mountain Justice members feel no more warmth toward discussion than does McKibben. In April 2013, shortly before SMJ marched into the board meeting to demand "radical emancipatory action," Kate Aronoff published an article on the student blog Swat Overlaps called "What Swarthmore Really Stands for, or F\*\*\* Your

301 *Ibid.*

302 Tyson, "Environmentalism Bill McKibben Shows Support for the Swarthmore Divestment Movement."

Constructive Dialogue.”<sup>303</sup> It had no asterisks. There, Aronoff criticized her fellow liberal students for too willingly continuing to debate the facts of the matter. “Liberals and conservatives have found themselves suddenly united,” she wrote, by “deploying identical arguments in defense of tolerant civil discourse.” Those who stood for “constructive dialogue” about “facts and reason” rather than “hyperbole and emotion” were just putting up smoke screens to block their “elitist” intentions. Dialogue and debate “validated” certain types of people with certain “elite” credentials. It kept out people with non-elite backgrounds, and so perpetuated inequality: “We cannot escape the fact that the college was originally set up in direct service of a white, upper class elite.”

“Free speech cannot exist where freedom, or even the desire for freedom, does not exist,” Aronoff argued. Swarthmore did not have freedom when it resorted to “tolerance” and “dialogue” that maintained the status quo. So free speech—and tolerance with it—would have to go. “Conflict,” the very thing that dialogue sought to avoid, by finding out a right answer that would seek the rational consent of all participants, was precisely what Swarthmore needed. Conflict was “fundamentally uncomfortable for those whom more traditional avenues of change have benefited.” It upended social structures and made space for the oppressed.

At the takeover of the board meeting a few weeks later, “conflict” was on full display. SMJ activists said they were “flipping the power dynamics” and “creating space” for a new forum of discussion. That conflict was precisely why the tactic was so good, George Lakey gushed afterwards.

The “frequent usefulness of conflict” throughout history boiled down to letting the otherwise disenfranchised “margins” of society speak, Lakey argued in an op-ed for the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*. At Swarthmore, that was “women, students with Hispanic ancestry, working class people, the LGBT community, representatives of an over-stressed eco-system, African Americans” who all did a service to the board by telling them of struggles that the board would not otherwise hear. “Conflict reveals critical information about what the stakes are,” Lakey attested, “information that is often only expressed when the conflict is hot enough.” That meant “open conflict” could “correct a bias,” such as Swarthmore’s “bias toward cognitive linearity,” that is, logic-driven debate. For those oppressed by the emphasis on “cognitive linearity,” conflict was a “ritual of healing.”<sup>304</sup>

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303 Kate Aronoff, “What Swarthmore Really Stands For’ or, F\*\*\* Your Constructive Dialogue,” *Swat Overlaps*, 2013.

304 George Lakey, “Overlooked Aspects of the Student Intervention in the May 4<sup>th</sup> Board of Managers Meeting,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 14, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/14/op-ed-overlooked-aspects-of-the-student-intervention-in-the-may-4th-board-of-managers-meeting/>.

Conflict brought more benefits. “Another way that conflict serves a place like Swarthmore is in its challenge of control,” Lakey wrote. As an “elite college,” Swarthmore had emphasized its “unwritten mission” to perpetuate its classist civilization by “emphasizing control, including student self-control.” Even activists succumbed to the “control” technique, like those Aronoff criticized for succumbing to dialogue, by “trying to control others through political correctness.” Saturday’s “upending control” by cancelling the agenda and putting board members and students alike in a single comment line (headed, of course, by the activists who established the line) demonstrated true egalitarianism.

In another piece, written for the activist Quaker publication *Waging Nonviolence*, Lakey praised conflict for “awakening” Swarthmore to the “oppression in its midst.” The oppression had been submerged, he said, in a sea of talk and drivel about tolerance. Tolerance and political correctness were dangerous. Political correctness made people with racist and prejudiced beliefs hide them. It would be better if they got their biases out in the open and then sought treatment. “Repression substitutes for expression,” and pretty soon “students brought up with a traditional narrative” (Lakey elsewhere calls these people the “1 percent”) are engaging in “covert acts like homophobic graffiti.”<sup>305</sup>

Substituting debate for a direct clash was a dodge, not a solution: “Conflict-aversion is an ally of the 1 percent because it keeps people apart and solidifies the status quo.” The board’s plans for an hour of “civil discourse” would never fix the problem. Swarthmore Mountain Justice exercised wisdom by “taking over the 1 percent’s space.”<sup>306</sup>

Swarthmore president Rebecca Chopp did not seem to mind SMJ’s conflict-based version of resolving disagreement. She defended the meeting takeover as a “fairly orderly” expression of student opinion and an example of the Quaker “discourse” that reigns on campus. “The board has a firm policy of not trying to shout down students, so long as it’s fairly orderly – and this one was fairly orderly,” she told *Huffington Post* shortly after Swarthmore Mountain Justice hijacked the meeting.<sup>307</sup> Responding to questions from Stanley Kurtz at National Review Online, she defended her determination not to interrupt the SMJ hecklers because of the importance of listening to all sides:

*As a College that honors its Quaker roots of tolerance, at Swarthmore we try to allow students to have their say, and we seek to listen to their points of view before we make decisions. Sometimes this is difficult and messy, sometimes people do not agree, and sometimes it does*

305 George Lakey, “Swarthmore College’s Rude Awakening to Oppression in its Midst,” *Waging NonViolence*, May 21, 2013. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/swarthmore-colleges-rude-awakening-to-oppression-in-its-midst/>.

306 *Ibid.*

307 Joy Resmovits, “Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign Escalates At Swarthmore,” *Huffington Post*, May 17, 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/17/fossil-fuel-swarthmore\\_n\\_3294687.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/17/fossil-fuel-swarthmore_n_3294687.html).

*not work the first time. As I have stated, at Swarthmore we try to allow everyone to have their say, and we seek to listen to their points of view before we make decisions. This spirit of intellectual challenge and conversation is a core element of our educational philosophy. But so are fact-based inquiry, intelligent and deep analysis, respect, fairness, justice, the common good and civility.<sup>308</sup>*

A semester later, after SMJ yelled its message through the walls of a board room in October 2013, Chopp defended SMJ's behavior in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* as a matter of "academic freedom."

"The Constitution of the United States promotes free thought, and it is the special obligation of the academy to do all we can to promote and protect the right of free opinion, including the right of dissent," Chopp wrote in a letter to the editor. Swarthmore Mountain Justice had not technically infringed the academic freedom policy that prevented students from forcibly entering board meetings, so its yell technique was fine:

*As an academic community we must support a multiplicity of views because knowledge often advances—and learning most certainly increases—in the clash and connection between different ideas. Academic freedom also preserves the nature of Swarthmore as a diverse community composed of individuals with different ideas about how to live together. To advance knowledge and learning as well as to preserve our diverse community, we need to protect the right of others to speak and conduct their work even as we demand our right to speak and conduct our own work. So long as the dissent is expressed in ways that do not violate the rights of others in this community, it will be fully respected and supported. The Mountain Justice protest in the public space outside of Scheuer on Saturday expressed dissent with the Board's decision while simultaneously respecting the Board's academic freedom and the right to conduct its business.<sup>309</sup>*

Not all found Swarthmore Mountain Justice's version of academic freedom attractive. When Timothy Burke, chair of the history department, published his op-ed opposing divestment in the *Gazette* in February 2015, he noted his hesitance to speak publicly about divestment, because Swarthmore Mountain Justice demonized those who disagreed:

308 Stanley Kurtz, "Swarthmore's President Chopp Replies to My Queries," *National Review Online*, May 13, 2013. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/348138/swarthmores-president-chopp-replies-my-queries-stanley-kurtz>.

309 Rebecca Chopp, "Rebecca Chopp on Saturday's MJ Action," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/10/01/letter-to-the-editor-rebecca-chopp/>.

*If I'm reluctant, that is because it feels like a thankless task to dissent from a view that has anointed itself the expression of the unified will of the faculty and student body. Divestment advocates sometimes make one of the mistakes that has often hobbled progressive and left political movements, namely, mistaking an argument about tactics for an argument about core values. That in turn leads to treating those who disagree about tactics as if they are enemies on questions about values. I'd rather not be regarded in that way.<sup>310</sup>*

***Respecting free speech and promoting open discourse is what, if anything, could make Swarthmore a city on a hill in higher education today.***

An undergraduate, Andrew Taylor, made the same point a year before. He observed that “a lot of students who oppose divestment won't even talk about it” for fear of reprisal. Meanwhile, “Mountain Justice doesn't really discuss divestment so much as it preaches it.” SMJ had so thoroughly polarized the issue into a simple for-or-against answer that no one was seriously discussing whether it was a good idea. “Proponents of divestment often seem so set in their ways that discussing the issue with them seems, at times, futile,” he wrote.

*That needs to stop. We need to actually debate this thing—to weigh the pros and cons—because the fact of the matter is that divestment would have some downsides, and Mountain Justice doesn't like admitting it.<sup>311</sup>*

Taylor noted that those who opposed divestment often kept their mouths closed. “Many of us are often silent,” he wrote:

*We all have our reasons—some don't want the drama of the debate that will ensue, and some are frustrated with being called anti-environment. I, for one, just suck at disagreeing to people's faces. But we have to do a better job of weighing pros and cons and speaking up when something we value is at risk. It can be scary to disagree with our friends, but we have to do it.<sup>312</sup>*

310 Burke, “Against Divestment.”

311 Andrew Taylor, “The True Cost of Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 3, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/03/the-true-cost-of-divestment/>.

312 *Ibid.*

Respecting free speech and promoting open discourse is what, if anything, could make Swarthmore a city on a hill in higher education today.

### Timeline of events at Swarthmore

**October 2010.** Visiting Peace and Conflict Studies professor George Lakey, a longtime Quaker activist, takes his students to visit West Virginia activists opposed to mountaintop removal coal mining. Upon returning to campus, students found Swarthmore Mountain Justice.

**October 5, 2011.** SMJ members stuff student mailboxes with a letter from a satirical “Committee on Investment Profitability,” which celebrated Swarthmore’s lucrative investments in fossil fuels.<sup>313</sup>

**October 2011.** Swarthmore hires its first sustainability coordinator, Clara Changxin Fang.<sup>314</sup>

**November 15, 2011.** SMJ demands detailed information about the endowment and its investments in an open letter to the finance and investment office and the board of managers.<sup>315</sup>

**December 5, 2011.** Suzanne P. Welsh, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer, responds to MJ’s request for more information and invites interested groups to share their ideas with the Committee on Investor Responsibility.<sup>316</sup>

**November 21, 2011.** Larry Gibson, “Keeper of the Mountains,” gives a talk on campus as part of SMJ’s “frontlines series” before a standing-room only crowd of approximately 60 people in Bond Hall.<sup>317</sup> Swarthmore alumnus Ken Hechler (’35) also speaks. Hechler represented West Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives for nearly 20 years and has campaigned against mountaintop removal full-time since 2004.

**December 3, 2011.** SMJ performs “a remixed version of ‘A Christmas Carol’” in which E.B. Neezer-Scrooge learns from the Ghosts of Investments Past, Present and Future.<sup>318</sup> SMJ gives each member of the board a stocking full of coal and a letter calling for fossil fuel divestment.<sup>319</sup>

**March 7-10, 2012.** Six students go to West Virginia to meet “frontlines activists.”<sup>320</sup>

313 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, “Mountain Justice: Mailbox Money Letters, an Explanation and a Call for Discussion,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 5, 2011. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/10/05/op-ed-mailbox-money-letters-an-explanation-and-a-call-for-discussion/>.

314 “College Hires First Sustainability Coordinator,” *Swarthmore College Bulletin*, October 2011. <http://bulletin.swarthmore.edu/bulletin-issue-archive/index.html%3Fp=763.html>.

315 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, “Open letter to the Finance and Investment Office and Board of Managers,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 15, 2011, <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/11/15/mountain-justice-open-letter-to-the-finance-and-investment-office-and-board-of-managers/>.

316 Suzanne P. Welsh, “Response to Swarthmore Mountain Justice’s ‘Open Letter,’” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, December 5, 2011. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2011/12/05/response-to-swarthmore-mountain-justices-open-letter/>.

317 “MJ Hosts Frontline Activist Larry Gibson,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, November 21, 2011. <http://swatmj.org/2011/11/21/larrygibson/>.

318 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice: Street Theater Action 12.03.11,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, March 19, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCNlOWw\\_TGU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCNlOWw_TGU).

319 *Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

320 Rachel Giovanniello, “Mountain Justice Spring Break,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 20, 2012. <http://swatmj.org/2012/03/20/mountain-justice-spring-break/>.

**March 16, 2012.** A student petition asking President Chopp to support divestment gains close to 700 signatures.<sup>321</sup>

**March 20, 2012.** SMJ awards Swarthmore a “Black Gold” award from the “US Dirty Energy Council.”<sup>322</sup>

**March 2012.** SMJ meets with President Rebecca Chopp.<sup>323</sup>

**April 7, 2012.** SMJ sends an uninvited, unscheduled “delegation” with an “invitation” to President Chopp to support divestment.<sup>324</sup>

**April 10, 2012.** SMJ holds a panel discussion on divestment, including Ellen Dorsey from the Wallace Global Fund, Dan Apfel from the Responsible Endowments Coalition, and Hannah Jones from Swarthmore Mountain Justice.<sup>325</sup> On April 20, SMJ delivers to President Chopp a video of the event, with some popcorn.<sup>326</sup>

**April 19, 2012.** President Rebecca Chopp publishes an op-ed (adapted from a letter she sent to Swarthmore Mountain Justice) officially declining to support divestment.<sup>327</sup> She cites the college’s numerous commitments to sustainability, including her signing the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment in 2010, the creation of a tenure-track position in economics and the environment, the addition of new courses to the Environmental Studies Program, and more.

**July 15-27, 2012.** Divestment activists at Swarthmore College and Earlham College go on a “Divest Coal Frontlines Listening Tour” in Appalachia, where they meet local activists and participate in resistance efforts against coal mining.<sup>328</sup> With six divestment campaigns to date, the students work to arrange for campaigns to begin on another six campuses in the fall.<sup>329</sup>

**November 17, 2012.** At the Philadelphia “Do the Math” tour stop, Swarthmore Mountain Justice’s Sara Blazevic joins Bill McKibben onstage.<sup>330</sup> She talks about the importance of “active struggle” in “solidarity” with the people of the “frontlines.”

**November 2012.** SMJ launches an alumni petition for divestment: “Considering [that the College has become a leader in sustainability], I find it contradictory that Swarthmore invests its endowment—and therefore alumni donations—in the fossil

321 “Petition Success Demonstrates Widespread Support,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 17, 2012. <http://swatmj.org/2012/03/17/petition-success-demonstrates-widespread-support/>.

322 “Swarthmore Receives a ‘Black Gold’ Award from the U.S. Dirty Energy Council,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, March 19, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4NrnUfbiQ&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4NrnUfbiQ&feature=player_embedded).

323 *Swarthmore Mountain Justice Institutional Memory Document 2011-2012*.

324 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice Invites President Chopp to Support Divestment // 4.6.12,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, April 7, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEj5S6vQD0&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEj5S6vQD0&feature=player_embedded).

325 “Fossil Fuel Divestment Panel // April 13, 2012,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, April 14, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3B24B1EEDD201F34&feature=plcp>.

326 “Swarthmore Mountain Justice Treats President Chopp to a Movie Night!” Swarthmore Mountain Justice, April 20, 2012. <http://swatmj.org/2012/04/20/swarthmore-mountain-justice-treats-president-chopp-to-a-movie-night/>.

327 Rebecca Chopp, “Chopp on Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 19, 2012. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2012/04/19/12697/>.

328 Ali Roseberry-Polier and Margaret Christoforo, “From Education to Direct Action on the Divest Coal Frontlines Listening Tour,” *Waging NonViolence*, August 2, 2012. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/from-education-to-direct-action-on-the-divest-coal-frontlines-listening-tour/>.

329 Will Lawrence and Kate Aronoff, “Divestment Listening Tour Connects Students and Anti-Coal Activists,” *Waging NonViolence*, July 18, 2012. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/divestment-listening-tour-connects-students-and-anti-coal-activists/>.

330 “Sara Blazevic / Do The Math Philadelphia / 11.17.12,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, November 22, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRWlqvTYDE>.

fuel industry... Reliance on fossil fuels is an environmental and human rights crisis that demands bold action. I ask that Swarthmore divest its endowment from the fossil fuel industry."<sup>331</sup>

**December 5, 2012.** Swarthmore Mountain Justice is featured as the lead example in a *New York Times* article about divestment.<sup>332</sup>

**December 7, 2012.** SMJ sets up oversized dominoes, each representing a stage of the MJ campaign, in the main stairwell of Parish Hall.<sup>333</sup>

**February 2013.** The first national student divestment activist "convergence" is held at Swarthmore College. PowerUp! Divest Fossil Fuels draws students from 77 colleges and universities who develop coordinated messages and strategies.<sup>334</sup>

**April 1, 2013.** The *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* publishes an April Fools' Day column reporting that the board of managers divested from Solyndra and reinvested in TransCanada, the innovative Calgary-based company behind the soon-to-be-approved Keystone XL pipeline.<sup>335</sup>

**Mid-April 2013.** Kate Aronoff publishes an article, "F\*\*\* Your Constructive Dialogue."<sup>336</sup>

**April 19, 2013.** In an op-ed, "Op-Ed: No More Business As Usual," SMJ announces that it will become more aggressive.<sup>337</sup>

**April 25, 2013.** Thirty-three history majors publish a letter, drafted by Kate Aronoff, in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* calling fossil fuel divestment "our chance to stand on the right side of history."<sup>338</sup> They write that "fossil fuel extraction has been inextricably linked to histories of colonization, racism, social marginalization, and ecological degradation" and cite examples from every history professors' research.

331 Ross Layton, "Mountain Justice Persistent on Divestment Despite Criticism," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 5, 2012. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2012/11/05/mountain-justice-persistent-on-divestment-despite-criticism/>.

332 Justin Gillis, "To Stop Climate Change, Students Aim at College Portfolios," *New York Times*, December 4, 2012 [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/05/business/energy-environment/to-fight-climate-change-college-students-take-aim-at-the-endowment-portfolio.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/05/business/energy-environment/to-fight-climate-change-college-students-take-aim-at-the-endowment-portfolio.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1).

333 "Fossil Fuel Divestment Dominos // 12.7.12," *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, December 7, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1vpTEDespU>.

334 Phil Aroneanu, "Students Divest Convergence Brings Hundreds Together to Power up Student Movement," 350.org, February 24, 2013. <http://gofossilfree.org/students-divest-convergence-brings-hundreds-together-to-power-up-student-movement/>. Also Thomas Ruan, "Dozens of Colleges Converge to Talk Divestment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 22, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/02/22/dozens-of-colleges-converge-to-talk-divestment/>.

335 "Board of Managers Divests," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/01/board-of-managers-divests/>.

336 Kate Aronoff, "'What Swarthmore Really Stands For' or, F\*\*\* Your Constructive Dialogue," *Swatoverlaps*, April 2013.

337 Alexa Ross, et. al., "No More Business as Usual," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 19, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/19/op-ed-no-more-business-as-usual/>.

338 "History Students for Divestment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 25, 2013 <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/25/op-ed-history-students-for-divestment/>.

**April 25, 2013.** The History department also endorses divestment, by means of a *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* letter signed by Robert Weinberg, acting department chair during the sabbatical of Timothy Burke.<sup>339</sup> Weinberg, writing “On behalf of the members of the Department of History,” says that there is “no greater testament to the value of a liberal arts education than Mountain Justice’s campaign for divestment.”

**April 29, 2013.** Eight students associated with the Swarthmore Conservative Society publish an op-ed, “In Defense of our Endowment,” at the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* opposing divestment.<sup>340</sup> The students argue that the endowment “should not be subjected to students’ political whims”; that the costs of divesting could hinder financial aid; that fossil fuel companies are actively exploring renewable energy; and that under a “free enterprise” system, where companies can adapt to changing tastes and preferences, a carbon bubble is unlikely.

**May 4, 2013.** At a specially convened meeting of the Swarthmore College board of trustees with students, staff, and faculty to discuss fossil fuel divestment, 100 students with Swarthmore Mountain Justice disrupt the meeting and take over the microphones to demand divestment and reparation of numerous other grievances.<sup>341</sup> When one student in the audience stands up to request that the meeting return to order, SMJ activists clap her down.<sup>342</sup>

**May 9, 2013.** The board estimates the cost of divestment will be \$200 million over 10 years.<sup>343</sup>

**May 2013.** McKibben says of the Swarthmore students, “I think they’re doing a great job – and shame on Swarthmore, with its long Quaker tradition, for not having divested ages ago.”<sup>344</sup>

**May 14, 2013.** George Lakey defends Mountain Justice’s taking over of the board meeting as a necessary “conflict” that upends the power of the “1 percent” and provides “rituals of healing.”<sup>345</sup>

**May 15, 2013.** Danielle Charette writes an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*: “My Top-Notch Illiberal Arts Education,” that recounts SMJ’s clap-down technique and criticizes its disrespect for dialogue.<sup>346</sup>

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339 Bob Weinberg, “History Faculty Supports Divestment in Open Letter,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 25, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/25/op-ed-history-faculty-supports-divestment-in-open-letter/>.

340 Zoe Wray, et. al., “In Defense of Our Endowment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 29, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/04/29/op-ed-in-defense-of-our-endowment/>.

341 “Swarthmore Students to Board of Managers: No More Business as Usual,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, YouTube, May 4, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00Med0treVE>.

342 “Student Testimony at Swarthmore Board Meeting - Watufani M. Poe,” *SwarthmoreInterACTS*, YouTube, May 9, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS3Xa9UMZu8>.

343 Andrew Karas, “Swarthmore Pegs Cost of Divestment at \$200 Million Over 10 Years,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 9, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/09/college-pegs-cost-of-divestment-at-200-million-over-10-years/>.

344 Joy Resmovits, “Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign Escalates At Swarthmore,” *Huffington Post*, May 17, 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/17/fossil-fuel-swarthmore\\_n\\_3294687.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/17/fossil-fuel-swarthmore_n_3294687.html).

345 George Lakey, “Overlooked Aspects of the Student Intervention in the May 4th Board of Managers Meeting,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 14, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/14/op-ed-overlooked-aspects-of-the-student-intervention-in-the-may-4th-board-of-managers-meeting/>. And George Lakey, “Swarthmore College’s Rude Awakening to Oppression in its Midst,” *Waging NonViolence*, May 21, 2013. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/swarthmore-colleges-rude-awakening-to-oppression-in-its-midst/>.

346 Danielle Charette, “My Top-Notch Illiberal Arts Education,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 2013. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324216004578483080076663720>.

**May 13, 2013.** Rebecca Chopp explains the importance of letting SMJ take over the board meeting because of the college's "Quaker tradition" of "tolerance."<sup>347</sup>

**May 19, 2013.** The Religion Department publishes an open letter in the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, writing "in solidarity" with their students who demanded divestment, and calling for the college to "wage the moral equivalent of war" against "global ecological depredation."<sup>348</sup> It is drafted by Mark Wallace and signed by all 5 members of the department.

**September 11, 2013.** The board announces its rejection of divestment.<sup>349</sup> Chairman Gil Kemp, writing on behalf of the rest of the board, acknowledges that "Too little is being done to stop the fossil fuel industry from disposing of dangerous greenhouse gases into the atmosphere." But divesting "would have no measurable effect on halting climate change and at the same time would pose an unacceptable risk to the College's finances."

**September 13, 2013.** The *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* conducts a poll of 331 students.<sup>350</sup> 192 (58 percent) responded that Swarthmore should "not alter its current investing system over the issue of fossil fuel divestment." 139 (42 percent) thought that it should "divest its endowment from funds owning stock in companies that produce fossil fuel."<sup>351</sup>

**October 1, 2013.** President Chopp submits a letter to the editor of the *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* defending the board's rejection of divestment.<sup>352</sup> "The decision is that divestment from fossil fuel companies would have little or no impact on carbon emissions and would pose an unacceptable level of risk to the College's ability to continue to offer need-blind access to—and a superb faculty and staff in support of—a world-class liberal arts education."

**October 2013.** SMJ holds a demonstration outside a board meeting and shouts its message through the walls.<sup>353</sup>

**January 27, 2014.** Kate Aronoff joins a *New York Times* Room for Debate on the question "Is Divestment an Effective Means of Protest?"<sup>354</sup>

**June 12, 2014.** Rebecca Chopp announces that she will leave to become the chancellor of the University of Denver.<sup>355</sup>

347 Stanley Kurtz, "Swarthmore's President Chopp Replies to My Queries," *National Review Online*, May 13, 2013. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/348138/swarthmores-president-chopp-replies-my-queries-stanley-kurtz>.

348 Steven Hopkins, et. al., "Religion Faculty Call for Divestment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, May 19, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/05/19/op-ed-religion-faculty-call-for-divestment/>.

349 Gil Kemp, "An Open Letter on Divestment," Swarthmore College Board of Managers, September 11, 2013. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/board-managers/open-letter-divestment>.

350 "Divestment Poll," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, September 13, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/09/13/divestment-poll/>.

351 *Ibid.*

352 Rebecca Chopp, "Rebecca Chopp on Saturday's MJ Action," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/10/01/letter-to-the-editor-rebecca-chopp/>.

353 Elèna Ruyter, Morgan Williams and Andrew Karas, "Mountain Justice, Shut Out of Board Meeting, Demonstrates Regardless," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, October 1, 2013. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2013/10/01/mountain-justice-demonstrators-shut-out-of-board-of-managers-meeting-multimedia-spread/>.

354 Kate Aronoff, "A Powerful Way to Galvanize Protest Over Climate Change," *New York Times*, January 27, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/01/27/is-divestment-an-effective-means-of-protest/a-powerful-way-to-galvanize-protest-over-climate-change>.

355 Rebecca Chopp, "Community Message from President Rebecca Chopp," Swarthmore College President's Office, June 12, 2014. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/presidents-office/community-message-president-rebecca-chopp>.

**September 21, 2014.** 200 Swarthmore students, professors, and alumni, organized by Mountain Justice and Ecosphere, march in the People's Climate March in New York City.<sup>356</sup> Sara Blazevic '15 and alum Kate Aronoff '14 attend Flood Wall Street.

**September 25, 2014.** The *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* endorses divestment in an editorial.<sup>357</sup> "The movement to divest from fossil fuels started at Swarthmore in the Spring of 2011. It's time that the institution from which the movement grew support it. Swarthmore needs to divest, and it needs to do it now."

**October 23, 2014.** Thirty English majors release an open letter endorsing divestment.<sup>358</sup> They cite the inspiration of professors Betsy Bolton, Peter Schmidt, Rachel Buurma, Craig Williamson, Bakirathi Mani, Eric Song, and Nora Johnson.

**October 23, 2014.** The Department of English Literature publishes an open letter requesting a series of faculty lunches to discuss the investment of the college's endowment.<sup>359</sup> They "call for a more focused and active transition away from fossil fuel dependence and from the extreme extraction methods currently poisoning our air and water" and note that "since burning fossil fuels privileges the present generation at the expense of the future, investing for purposes of intergenerational equity in fossil fuel companies seems oxymoronic at best."

**November 19, 2014.** Cambridge Associates, Swarthmore's biggest financial adviser, announces that it is willing to help clients divest from fossil fuels.<sup>360</sup>

**January 29, 2015.** Swarthmore Mountain Justice releases a proposal for divestment, in advance of the February 2<sup>nd</sup> board meeting.<sup>361</sup> They offer a schedule of divestment ending on December 31, 2020, at which point each of the college's 70 accounts would move to investments without fossil fuel. Gregory Brown, Swarthmore's Vice President for Finance and Administration, responds that the student proposal "oversimplifies" the matter and "ignores the potential negative consequences" for the college's budget.<sup>362</sup>

**February 11, 2015.** Tim Burke writes a *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* op-ed opposing divestment and noting that "Divestment advocates sometimes make one of the mistakes that has often hobbled progressive and left political movements, namely, mistaking an argument about tactics for an argument about core values. That in turn leads to treating those who disagree about tactics as if they are enemies on questions about values. I'd rather not be regarded in that way."<sup>363</sup>

356 Allison Hrabar, "200 Swatties March For Climate Justice in New York," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, September 25, 2014. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2014/09/25/200-swatties-march-for-climate-justice-in-new-york/>.

357 "Divestment Is Possible and Necessary," editorial, *The Phoenix*, September 25, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/09/25/divestment-is-possible-and-necessary/>.

358 Sara Blazevic, "Time to divest: An Open Letter," *The Phoenix*, October 23, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/10/23/12655/>. And "Open Letter to the College Community," English Students for Divestment, October 2014. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZQPm5CSqT5iUsVAsoDRyLB5anyMRCY\\_9Se7ByARqc-s/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZQPm5CSqT5iUsVAsoDRyLB5anyMRCY_9Se7ByARqc-s/edit).

359 The Department of English Literature, "The College Must Recommit to Environmental Responsibility," *The Phoenix*, October 23, 2014. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/10/23/12651/>.

360 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, "BREAKING: Swarthmore's Largest Financial Advisor Willing to Assist in Divestment, MJ Calls for Board of Managers Action," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, November 19, 2014. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2014/11/19/breaking-swarthmores-largest-financial-advisor-willing-to-assist-in-divestment-mj-calls-for-board-of-managers-action/>.

361 Swarthmore Mountain Justice, "Fossil Fuel Divestment Proposal for the February Board of Managers Meeting," February 2, 2015. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/182yypRIIWZlIF-DKOZkRvIS76yhFz7ZSEvpk5aN3as/edit>.

362 Gregory Brown, "Divestment: It's More Complex Than One Might Think," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 2, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/02/02/divestment-its-more-complex-than-one-might-think/>.

363 Timothy Burke, "Against Divestment," *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, February 11, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/02/11/against-divestment/>.

**February 11-12, 2015.** A campus-wide Sustainability Charrette discusses ways to make Swarthmore greener.

**March 19, 2015.** “Divestment spring,” an intentional nod to the “Arab Spring,” begins with a sit-in at Swarthmore College. Activists with SMJ vow to remain in the finance building until Swarthmore Board Investment Committee Chair Chris Niemczewski and Board Chair Gil Kemp agree to develop a plan for divestment.<sup>364</sup>

**March 19, 2015.** Interim president Constance Hungerford acknowledges the sit-in with a statement.<sup>365</sup> “On behalf of the Board and the College, I want to tell you that we hear you. We are listening to your voices.” She notes that Gil Kemp is unavailable to meet with them as they request, because he is doing philanthropic work in Asia, nor could he unilaterally change the board’s decision.

**March 23, 2015.** Swarthmore alum and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres endorses the Swarthmore sit-in.<sup>366</sup>

**March 27, 2015.** McKibben holds a rally at Swarthmore: “Right now and right this week the absolute white hot center of the movement to try to slow down the destruction of the planet is on the second floor of Parrish hall.”<sup>367</sup>

**April 1, 2015.** The *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* publishes an April Fools’ article, “BREAKING: Swarthmore College Divests From Everything.”<sup>368</sup> In the fictitious piece, board chairman Gil Kemp concludes that all investments are inevitably tied to some injustice, and that the college’s very existence contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, so “I came to an inescapable yet stunning conclusion: the only way for Swarthmore to be truly socially conscious – especially when it comes to our impact on the environment – is for the College to disband altogether.”

**April 8, 2015.** Three hundred fifty alumni pledge to refuse to donate until the college divests.<sup>369</sup>

**April 9, 2015.** Eighteen students publish an op-ed critical of Mountain Justice for failing to be diverse.<sup>370</sup> They criticize the “polarized campus context where one must either be pro-environment and pro-MJ OR anti-environment and anti-MJ,” and note that students feel forced to choose between pushing for environmental justice or racial justice.

**April 10, 2015.** Two philosophy professors give a presentation on the morality of divestment, presenting arguments for and against.<sup>371</sup>

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364 “BREAKING: 37 Swarthmore Students and 6 Alumni Begin Sit-in in Finance and Investments Office for Divestment,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 19, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/03/19/breaking-ttk-swarthmore-students-begin-sit-in-finance-and-investments-office-for-divestment/>.

365 Allison Hrabar, “BREAKING: President Hungerford Responds to Mountain Justice Sit-In,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 19, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/03/19/breaking-president-hungerford-responds-to-mountain-justice-sit-in/>.

366 “UN Climate Chief and Swarthmore Alumna Christiana Figueres ‘79 Supports Sit-in,” *Swarthmore Mountain Justice*, March 23, 2015. <http://swatmj.org/2015/03/23/un-climate-chief-and-swarthmore-alumna-christiana-figueres-79-supports-sit-in/>.

367 Lily Tyson, “Environmentalist Bill McKibben Shows Support for the Swarthmore Divestment Movement and Encourages More to Join,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, March 27, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/03/27/environmentalist-bill-mckibben-shows-support-for-the-swarthmore-divestment-movement-and-encourages-more-students-faculty-and-alumni-to-join-in/>.

368 “BREAKING: Swarthmore College Divests From Everything,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 1, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/01/breaking-swarthmore-college-divests-from-everything/>.

369 Anna Gonzales, “No Divestment, No Donations, Some Alums Say,” *Swarthmore Phoenix*, April 9, 2015. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2015/04/09/no-divestment-no-donations-some-alums-say/>.

370 Sanaa Ali-Virani, et. al., “Re-Imagining the Campaign: What Climate Justice Can Teach MJ,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 9, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/09/re-imagining-the-campaign-what-climate-justice-can-teach-mj/>.

371 Isaac Lee, “Philosophy Professors Discuss Morality of Divestment,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 10, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/10/philosophy-professors-discuss-morality-of-divestment/>.

**April 17, 2015.** The Sociology and Anthropology Department adds its “departmental voice to supporting divestment” in a *Swarthmore Daily Gazette* op-ed.<sup>372</sup>

**April 17, 2015.** Faculty vote 40-2 for divestment from direct holdings.<sup>373</sup> Proposal authored by Mark Wallace, Betsy Bolton, Carol Nackenoff, Carr Everbach, Lee Smithey, Sarah Willie-LeBreton, and Joy Charlton.

**April 20, 2015.** After 31 days, SMJ ends its sit-in at Parrish Hall when the board of managers agrees to formally consider divestment at its May meeting.

**May 2, 2015.** The board formally rejects divestment for a second time.<sup>374</sup>

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372 Grant Torre, “BREAKING: Department of Sociology & Anthropology Urges Board to Divest,” *Swarthmore Daily Gazette*, April 17, 2015. <http://daily.swarthmore.edu/2015/04/17/breaking-department-of-sociology-anthropology-urges-board-to-divest/>.

373 Lindsay Holcomb, “Faculty Vote in Favor of Fresh Divestment Proposal,” *The Phoenix*, April 23, 2015. <http://swarthmorephoenix.com/2015/04/23/faculty-vote-divestment/>.

374 Gil Kemp, “Sustainability and Investment Policy,” Swarthmore College Board of Managers, May 2, 2015. <http://www.swarthmore.edu/board-managers/sustainability-and-investment-policy>.