

**Sustaining a Student-Led Environmental Movement at  
San Diego State University: Leveraging Collaboration to  
Create an Environmentally Sustainable Endowment**

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## **Abstract**

As the global economy grows, environmental activists increasingly work towards more environmentally sustainable investing practices, especially at higher education institutions. As Sustainability Commissioner (2019-2020) at San Diego State University (“SDSU” or “the University”), I set out to reform SDSU’s investing practices by building a partnership with the organization which manages the University’s endowment, The Campanile Foundation (“TCF” or “the Foundation”). The endeavor was made possible by the inspiring advocacy and leadership from students at the Green Love Sustainability Commission, the Associated Students (“AS”), and San Diego’s entire climate activist community. The project produced measurable sustainable investing commitments and generated the implementation of revitalized investing practices on behalf of the Foundation. Moreover, the now-ongoing sustainable investing initiative at SDSU demonstrates the value and effectiveness of collaborative activism to people—especially young people—fighting for system-wide sustainability.

## **Author’s Note**

In the 2019-2020 school year, I was SDSU’s Associated Students Green Love Sustainability Commissioner. As Commissioner, I worked with TCF and pressed for reimagined, more environmentally-responsible investing practices. Though Commissioners weren’t successful in pressing the issue with TCF in the past, a variety of factors presented this year as a perfect opportunity. With the year’s campus-wide surge in climate activism, change in leadership at TCF, and rising, global success of environmentally sustainable investments, we made real progress. By the end of the year, TCF made measurable commitments to reform their investing practices. Leaders at

Green Love and beyond will need to increasingly nurture our partnership with the Foundation and similar institutions—influencing and ensuring commitments and subsequent actions.

My hope is that this report shares how activism, especially climate activism, can be a crazy success when we channel our passion into finding mutual solutions. The information presented is based on a principle close to my heart—that, at some level, all people want to solve the same problems. By accepting and understanding other points of view, we can simultaneously create solutions and open a trust-based channel for people who disagree with us to change their own minds. This project started with a goal to change one small part of the global financial system, but morphed into a deeper lesson about navigating the daunting world of power dynamics, politics, and adulthood.

### **Disclaimer**

The information in this report does not, and is not intended to, provide financial advice. All content is for general information purposes only. The views expressed in this report are of my individual capacity only—not of my affiliated organizations, including the Green Love Sustainability Commission, Associated Students, or San Diego State University.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** Student Activism, Collaboration, ESG, Sustainable Investing, Endowments, San Diego State University

<sup>1</sup> This legal disclaimer was built on a model from the American Bar Association (n.d.).

## Background

### The Sustainable Investing Movement

Over the past decade, a branch of the environmental movement has grown focused on shifting financial assets away from the nonrenewable energy sector—the fossil fuel industry. The fight was sparked by Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, an international organization which works to stop the use of fossil fuels and protect people against the effects of the climate crisis.<sup>2</sup> McKibben most pointedly expresses that “[divesting from fossil fuels] is one big action you can take against climate change without big cost.”<sup>3</sup> The sustainable investment effect gradually grew more popular across public institutions, charities, and churches. Generally, the movement signals how individuals, companies, and governments can and will make feasible, financial adjustments to uphold their values and maintain a livable world. In this report, I use the terms “sustainable investing,” “socially responsible investing,” and “responsible investing” interchangeably.<sup>4</sup>

### Universities at the Forefront

Higher education institutions play a significant role in sustainable investment initiatives. According to the Intentional Endowments Network, an organizing and information hub for investing reform, institutions are driven by one or a combination of factors: the business case; the moral imperative; stakeholder demands; and mission alignment.<sup>5</sup> Further, many institutions have doubts that their shift in investing practices will actually make a difference. At the risk of being labeled as a “bad environmentalist,” I’d contend that their doubts aren’t entirely unfounded—as the combined total

<sup>2</sup> Local 350 chapters are decentralized and spread all over the world. Learn more at 350 (n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> McKibben (2018) wrote this quote in an Op-Ed for the Guardian.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Intentional Endowments Network (“IEN”), these terms can each be used describe the alignment of investment practices with institutional mission and values and/or the explicit consideration of ESG risks/opportunities in the investment process (regardless of the strategies used to do so). See the *Intentional Endowment Network: Primer* (2019) for more information.

<sup>5</sup> These factors come from a 2020 IEN study which evaluated progress of sustainable endowments. Find more at Dyer, et al. (2020).

of all higher education assets account for a relatively small portion of the global economy. In fact, the sum of all university endowments only account for a quarter of a percent of the global financial market.<sup>6</sup> But if there's one thing universities have, it's *influence*, and their actual money doesn't matter as much as their clout.

Few institutions are more popular and touch more people's lives than the education system...it's a big deal when there's a social movement sweeping through its funding source! When schools market social values, other schools see an opportunity to do the same (I see it as something of a competition for the most responsible portfolio). Accordingly, progress of one higher education institution's responsible investing initiatives leads more higher education institutions to do the same. From 2011 to 2015, sixteen American universities divested/partially divested from fossil fuels, creating a path for thirteen more to make the change from 2016-2018.<sup>7</sup>

## **Risk and Fiscal Sustainability**

Asset management can be risky business. Though "fiscal sustainability" may seem to be a way for big business to claim that money trumps environmental sustainability, a deeper look clarifies how the term unifies two perspectives that are traditionally at odds. The Engaging Local Governments Leaders Network's "Gov Love" podcast describes fiscal sustainability as the alignment of budgeting (fiscal) and long-term goals (sustainability).<sup>8</sup> At their foundations, hardcore capitalists have a knack for responsible budgeting and environmentalists have a thing for long-term goals.

<sup>6</sup> Ansar, a researcher quoted in Ryan & Marsicano (2019) provides context to the global financial market.

<sup>7</sup> Ryan & Marsicano (2019) discuss the influence that higher education institutions have on each other and society.

<sup>8</sup> Gov Love is produced by the Engaging Local Government Leaders Network, an association of local government professionals around the United States. Their 2020 podcast with consultant Kevin Shepard focuses on fiscal sustainability. Check Wyatt, K., et al. (2020) for more information.

Leaders of institutions big and small agree that they can only thrive with a stable economy, healthy people, and a livable environment. At a bridge that unites conflicting ideologies, the fiscally sustainable approach is based upon the notion that social and environmental progress are necessary to conserve an institution.

## Going Mainstream

Sustainable investing practices have grown further mainstream over the past decade. Especially among universities, advocates argue that financial practices should align with long-term goals of universities. Hampshire College, the first higher education institution to completely divest from fossil fuels, maintains that “poor business practices related to human rights, the workplace and the environment pose reputational, financial, operational, and legal risks to the College’s investments and therefore the future financial security of the college.”<sup>9</sup>

Many universities have used the same logic in reinventing their endowments, arguing that socially responsible investing is necessary to avert risk. Exemplifying a peak risk-aversion argument was the entire University of California (“UC”) system announcement of its new, fossil-fuel-free portfolio in early 2019.<sup>10</sup> In a peak blend of left and right ideology, managers of the system described their environment-forward approach as fiscally conservative—characterizing fossil fuel investments as a “significant financial risk.”<sup>11</sup> The UC’s approach centers on the incorporation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (“ESG”) principles and investment into climate change solutions. When describing the approach, the managers denounce any moral imperative represented by the decision, instead presenting the logical conclusion that clean energy will power the future.<sup>12</sup> Ironically enough,

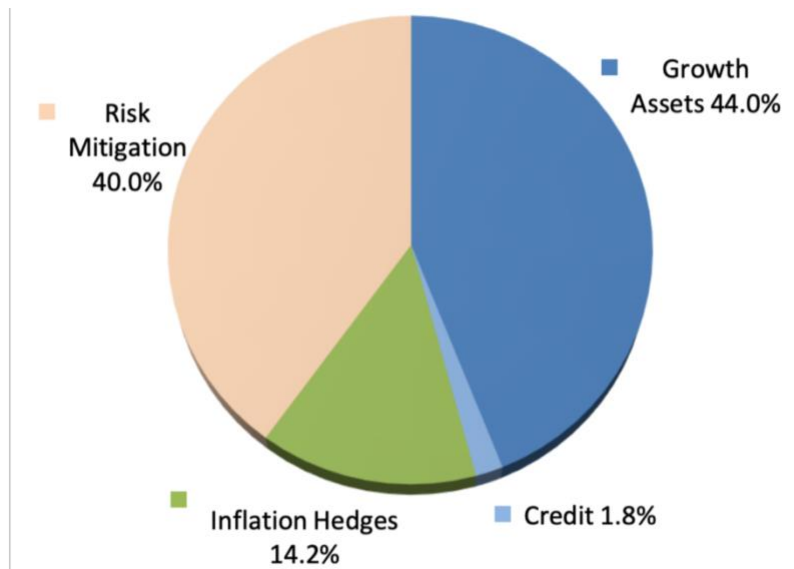
<sup>9</sup> Cited in *Creating an Environmentally Sustainable Endowment at SDSU* (2019).

<sup>10</sup> Work towards the UC’s divestment from fossil fuels began in 2014. Find more in Bachher & Sherman (2019).

<sup>11</sup> Bachher & Sherman (2019).

<sup>12</sup> Bachher & Sherman (2019).

Figure 1: Asset Allocation Policy as defined by the Finance and Investment Committee



- The Campanile Foundation

the UC's approach represents the greatest moral imperative of all: that science and data should be the basis of decision-making.

## Field Notes

### Starting Off: Spring Semester 2019

I began looking into the SDSU's investment practices at the very beginning of the Spring 2019 semester—my third year of as a student in college and my first year at SDSU. I may have heard something about sustainable investing from my advisor, Glen Brandenburg, or one of my friends, or maybe even my YouTube algorithm put me onto it. Regardless, I started learning more about the impact of financial markets on our environment—soon connecting University endowments and their role. As I learned more, I increasingly wanted to know what companies the Foundation was invested in—the “holdings” in the portfolio. Unfortunately, reports published on the TCF website

only showed their portfolio's mutual funds and the categories/percentages of sectors in which they invested (Figure 1).

As the semester went on, I learned more about the global market and its environmental justice implications independently and in my classes, as I was enrolled in SDSU's Sustainability major. One day after class, I shared my frustrations with a trusted professor and vented about not being able to access TCF's holdings information. My professor recommended that I look into the California Public Records Act (PRA) and make a request for the records, considering SDSU's status as a public university.

Over the next few weeks I researched California's PRA and found that it does, indeed apply to public universities and their auxiliaries (like TCF). I pondered whether to send a request, eventually deciding go for it. I think I used a WikiHow guide to help me figure out how to send an "official" request, or maybe a template from an online divestment campaign? Either way, it felt exhilarating to send the email.

## **Learning to Lead**

I received a reply from TCF a week later with a more complete report than the one available online, though it didn't have the information about specific holdings that I was searching for.<sup>13</sup> After trading a few emails, I set up a meeting with Leslie Levinson, TCF's Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to learn why I couldn't find the information I was after.

Around the time I sprung into this project I was chosen to be the Green Love Sustainability Commissioner for the 2019-2020 school year. With the elevated position and new group I

<sup>13</sup> This report was sent by TCF in response to a Public Records Request sent in Spring 2019. See Meketa Fiduciary Management, LLC (2019) to access the report.



represented, I knew I would need to tackle the issue with a different lens. After talking with the two former Green Love Commissioners, two of the greatest people on campus, I discovered that Green Love Commissioners had been nudging TCF to work with us for years. They connected me with the past Commissioner who first reached out to TCF and SDSU's Office of Sustainability (which managed records of investment policy changes relating to sustainability). Next, I enlisted the help of my Green Love advisor, Glen Brandenburg, who shared context of how California State University endowments have formed and reformed over time. With the help of Glen and the green community, I gained a valuable, historical knowledge of how students and SDSU's endowment have interacted in the past.

Notably, my search for SDSU investing history changed the way I communicated our goal to the Foundation. Many of the people I spoke with told me about the 2016 campus protest surrounding the Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) movement. The campus' BDS campaign and surrounding events caused a frustration-laden clash between students and administration.<sup>14</sup> After learning about the situation, I noted how the word "divest" was politically charged at SDSU (and that I probably shouldn't use it outside of environmental circles). Ever since, I opt to communicate our goal to remove assets from fossil fuels with words and phrases like: "removing investments," "shifting funds," "using exclusionary screens," and other variations/combinations. I still think it's crazy that I could have squashed the whole initiative with a tiny trigger word! The example shows how working with your peers, sharing information, and passing history to others is vital. In my experience, sharing sustainability projects is just a cool way to spend time with my pals! Overall, the green team's

<sup>14</sup> The BDS movement calls for divestment from Israel-based companies. SDSU's BDS protests are documented in the student newspaper, the Daily Aztec. See Ballard and Sisneros (2016) for a more comprehensive account.

support and knowledge gave me the confidence to position myself as a student leader and communicate our goals.

Although my meeting with Leslie, the Interim CFO, didn't have a quantifiable outcome, I felt excited that I effectively communicated my new leadership status, the environmental perspective on investing, and my intent to lead AS and Green Love in advocacy for a solution at SDSU. It seemed like Leslie was able to see the perspective I was coming from because she knew about AS and Green Love and what we were about. Although our meeting was brief, I think Leslie had a big impact on my perspective. She was kind, looked like she could be my mom, and lived in the exact suburb I grew up in. At the time, I had no idea how underrepresented women are in the financial sphere<sup>15</sup> (especially in leadership), but here was an Interim Chief Financial Officer who I shared so much in common with. By knowing that she existed and occupied the role, she implicitly assured me that someone like me could be successful working with TCF (and the financial sector, in general).

## **Building Up**

I dedicated the summer of 2019 to prepping for the upcoming year of green initiatives. I continued to research endowments and dug into the “Campanile” folder buried in the Commissioner Google Drive. I soon came across the “Carbon Underground 200” (“CU 200”)—a list of the 200 most polluting fossil fuel companies, ranked by carbon emissions and fossil fuel reserves.<sup>16</sup> The CU 200 is a tool for investors looking to implement more responsible investing practices. Its creators manage CU 200-free funds with encouragingly high success rates. Many university endowments have, at least

<sup>15</sup> Find accessible, relatable information about sexism and money from the Indicator from Planet Money (n.d.): *Gender Pay Gap* podcast series.

<sup>16</sup> Fossil Free Indexes (2017).

in part, modeled the CU 200's "Short-Long Energy Transition" strategy to transform their portfolios and 94% cite net positive or neutral impact on their endowments.<sup>17</sup>

After learning more about how mutual funds work, investing in some of my own, and listening to a slew of NPR's "Planet Money" podcast episodes<sup>18</sup>, I discovered a workaround to the problem looming over me: not knowing TCF's holdings. Since I knew TCF's mutual funds from my PRA request, I realized I could search for the prospectuses of individual funds and cross-reference their holdings with the CU 200 list (Figure 2). I did briefly consider searching for every fund and using the information to calculate how much money was invested in CU 200 companies, though I soon remembered why I wasn't an Accounting major. The cross-reference process was tedious in and of itself, but I knew that having problem-holdings to point to—the ability to say "Look! SDSU is invested in (insert problematic fossil fuel company)!" would help me when looking for support from the student body and the AS executive officers.

<sup>17</sup> Find updated information about the Short-Long Strategy at Fossil Free Indexes, LLC (2020).

<sup>18</sup> National Public Radio (NPR) (n.d.). presents jargon-free and fun stories about the economy and the world in *Planet Money* from NPR.



Indeed, I touched base with the AS executive officers after I compiled the information.

Communicating the scope of the problem and getting support was definitely easier with the specific data. Although the Foundation's funds were dispersed, many of their funds had assets in not-so-great companies. Soon after, with the cautious backing of AS leadership, I asked to meet with the newly-appointed CFO at TCF and the investing team.

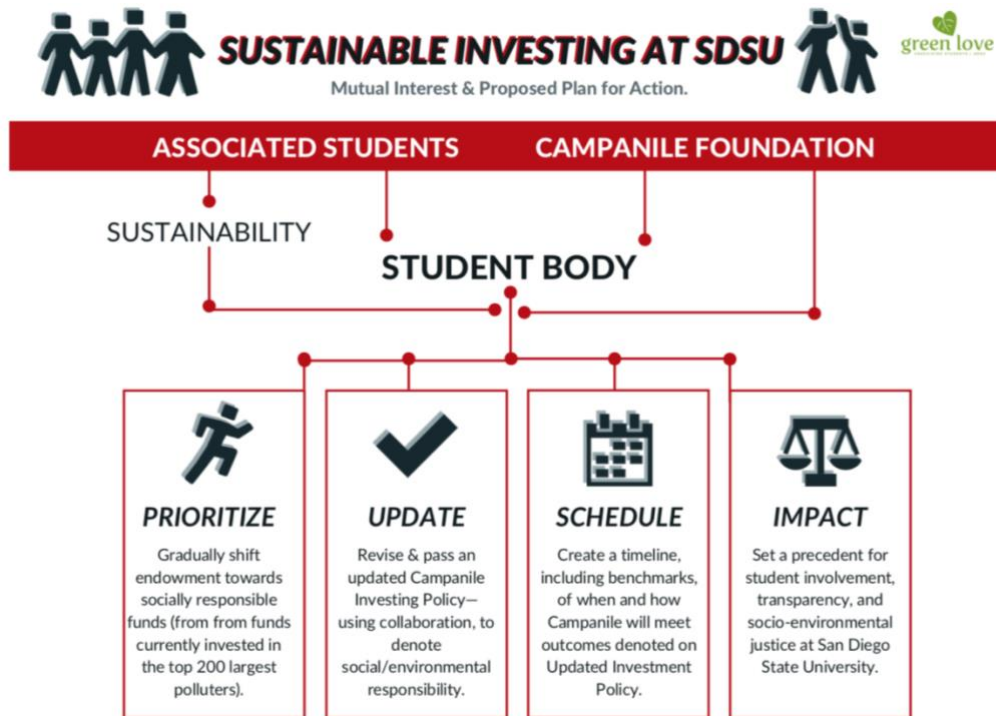
I was fortunate to have the support of George Scott, the AS Vice President of University Affairs and Christian Onwuka, the AS President, at the meeting. They didn't say much, but their presence meant that the issue was a concern for all students and TCF needed to take it seriously. As I prepared for the meeting with Leslie (the outgoing CFO), David (the newly appointed CFO), two of TCF's investment managers, George, and Christian, I realized I had a lot to communicate. Thankfully, Gener, my friend and intern in charge of tracking sustainability metrics at SDSU's Office of Sustainability, helped clarify goals that were informed by measurable results from other universities (shared through the AASHE STARS sustainability reporting system).<sup>19</sup>

In planning the big August meeting, I first wrote an agenda and typed annotated notes for George, Christian and myself. It was difficult to process how I was about to sit across from people who controlled millions of dollars and justify a complete shift in their funding model...based on a worldview we didn't share. Seeing no other way to go about it, I made an infographic (Figure 3).

I still think back to that meeting and how both sides worked to actually *bear* each other. I used the "DEAR" formula (Describe, Explain, Ask, Reaffirm) that my therapist taught me (go figure) to communicate our environmental lens and hold my ground. Both sides agreed early on that our

<sup>19</sup> AASHE STARS is a platform where higher education institutions self-report and track sustainability metrics. It connects institutions and provides proven strategies to achieve sustainability goals. Learn more from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (n.d.).

Figure 3: Infographic presented in August 2019 meeting



common goal was student success—and we always circled back to that point when things got tense.

Moreover, I felt like we both had a reason to work together.

## Collaboration

### Building Multi-Stakeholder Relationships

The larger August 2019 meeting led to a series of individual meetings over the course of the Fall 2019 semester with David Fuhriman, TCF's new CFO. David's new leadership at TCF was integral to the sustainable investing initiative, and our smaller age gap made for less of a communication barrier. Over the course of the semester I presented David with examples of other universities'

socially responsible investment policies,<sup>20</sup> how they came to be, and a proposed timeline to reform investment practices at SDSU.<sup>21</sup> David even went to an ESG roundtable event at UC Berkeley to learn more! Our meetings gave me the opportunity to learn about David, what he did as a CFO, and where he was coming from as a leader trying to do the right thing. The one-on-ones allowed us to share the different, yet equally-valid perspectives coming from our respective communities and empathize with each other. During our meetings I briefed him about the work at Green Love and SDSU, including the school's 2017 Climate Action Plan.<sup>22</sup> Per recommendation from Gener and the Green Love Executive Committee, I also pressed for an ongoing Committee on Investor Responsibility, made up of students, staff, and faculty.

The motivation to pursue this goal (along with other climate action goals at SDSU) was aided by the visible surge in campus climate activism beginning in the Fall 2019 semester. On Global Climate Walkout Day (September 20, 2019), over 500 people gathered on campus to demand action from the school (Figure 4).<sup>23</sup> Though I didn't plan it, David and I scheduled a meeting for a few hours after the strike. Many of the students who organized the event were my friends, some of them involved in Green Love—in other words, people who were in the loop about our project with TCF. In creating goals for the strike, they agreed that we shouldn't call out the Foundation, as it might politicize an issue that we were in the process of solving. When I filled David in, he appreciated how the organizers intentionally left out the Foundation because they knew we were working on it. At least in this portion of the project, our work was more productive without the tension that would have resulted from publicly calling for the Foundation to divest from fossil fuels (especially with the rigid response to student-led BDS protests in years prior). It could have been self-imposed, but from

20 *Creating an Environmentally Sustainable Endowment at SDSU* (2019).

21 Access the proposed timeline at *Proposed Sustainable Investing Implementation at SDSU* (2019).

22 The *SDSU Climate Action Plan* was instituted in 2017. Find more information at Abram, et al. (2017).

23 The Daily Aztec reported about the 2019 SDSU Climate Strike. Learn more at Brandt (2019).



Figure 4: SDSU Climate Strike, September 2019



that point forward I felt a sense of trust and priority on behalf of David. Moreover, I felt TCF's legitimate intention to act (though, I still needed to push for *how* to act).

### Adjusting my Advocacy

It took some time for me (an avid earth-lover) to be okay with the idea that I couldn't just demand an immediate pull of all fossil fuel investments. Frustratingly, I also couldn't blow up the institutionalized bureaucracy and hierarchy that I saw at TCF and SDSU (however well-intentioned it was). Slowly, though, I grasped how I had the data, connections, and support to make "big, structural change"<sup>24</sup> from the inside-out. I both realized and harnessed this awesome power as I made considerably bold asks from David and TCF.

<sup>24</sup> "Big, structural change" is a signature quote from a personal hero of mine, Elizabeth Warren. Learn more from NPR's Khalid and Masters (2019).



In truth, I felt torn and irked during much of the project. I was a college student floating in the proverbial existential void: figuring out my own opinions about democracy, leadership, and what it means to “blow up the system.” At a lot of points I felt like a terrible, undemocratic leader who couldn’t manage to spread the opportunity to contribute to this cool project. Working alone, without a committee or project team, felt odd at first. I always got advice from the AS council and Green Love, but the project primarily demanded interpersonal and focused interaction. In reflection, the independent approach to leadership that I employed for this project was vital and I developed a new dimension of organization and management. The best leaders need to make necessary organizational changes (even when it’s uncomfortable), compromise (but still push hard), and represent their coalitions (while also strengthening them).

## **Simultaneous Green Work**

By the end of Fall 2019, Green Love’s newly-formed Climate Action Committee was meeting consistently with administration to discuss climate action goals. Personally, I’m most proud of our recommendation to remove the natural gas infrastructure and “electrify” the energy infrastructure at a planned campus expansion—which they took!<sup>25</sup> It amounted to a 5,000 metric ton reduction in carbon dioxide. Work on this issue demonstrated the productivity and dedication of students at Green Love and how important our sustainability was to the entire SDSU community.

As a sappy side note, the people I worked with at Green Love taught me how to validate the inspiration I feel in myself and others. Without them, I wouldn’t have learned how to turn passion into action—and I can’t be more grateful. The love, dedication, and support we had for each other

25 The recommendations were presented via Green Love’s *Comment Letter to the SDSU Mission Valley Draft Environmental Impact Report*. Access the letter at Green Love Sustainability Commission (2019).

was an echo chamber for more of the same. As Commissioner, I initially felt like I was being manipulative when I would intentionally validate people's work and express positive feelings with people at Green Love (an attempt to be welcoming and foster a positive environment). I soon found a giant fault in my logic, though, as I noticed that the purposeful-positivity I expressed with Green Love started to show up in other parts of my life. Turns out, life is a lot happier when you focus on validating the people you love, expressing your emotions, and communicating your problems (kindly, of course). I now understand that it's not manipulative to intentionally show people how much you care, especially when you're working towards the same goal.

Within other branches of AS, I noticed how each of the executive officers ended the year as leaders who used their platforms, power, and connections to advocate for sustainability—even though none of them started as outright environmental champions. As the year went on and students from all levels of leadership pushed, the interest from administration (and TCF) grew. Our work at Green Love and AS eventually culminated in our AS Climate Action Resolution approved on Earth Day (April 22), 2020.<sup>26</sup>

## Results

At a meeting at the very end of the Fall 2019 semester, David mentioned something about writing a memo to announce TCF's already-implemented and planned actions towards responsible investing. I didn't know how to take this at first, but I've never received a memo and it sounded important, so I took it as a good thing. I got the impression that David wanted a "win" for SDSU's green students,

<sup>26</sup> The AS *Resolution Calling for SDSU's Commitment to Climate Action, Justice, and Leadership* (the "Climate Action Resolution") calls for carbon neutrality by 2030 at all SDSU campuses/sites. It signifies the need for a staffing and shared governance model to support sustainability initiatives. The AS Resolution was echoed weeks later by a similar Sustainability Resolution and Policy passed in the SDSU University Senate. Learn more at Associated Students of San Diego State University (2020).

but I was still a bit skeptical of *actual* change happening. He mentioned how he'd present the memo to the TCF Finance and Investment Committee for approval, which would take a while.

Over the next couple of months I checked in with David, sending him sustainable investing articles occasionally. He sent the memo at the beginning of March; I opened it on my phone as I was walking back to my favorite campus parking garage—but made myself wait until I was in my car to read it (as avid a multi-tasker I may be, I couldn't be interrupted by clumsy campus skateboarders). After I read the memo, I immediately sent a screenshot to the Green Love leadership team. It was great!<sup>27</sup> Most notable were the commitments to sign the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing and to establish an ad-hoc Advisory Board to the TCF Finance and Investment Committee, made up of students, staff and faculty. The Advisory Board would assist in creating sustainable investing goals for the endowment to achieve by 2025.

Though Coronavirus hit as David and I were trying to schedule a follow-up meeting, we managed to schedule a Zoom call in mid-March. We went through David's memo, line by line, and I made suggestions (another thing that was unfamiliar to me, as I've never edited something that's addressed to myself. I've concluded that this is how things work in the world). I had the help of the Green Love Leadership Team in identifying questionable points and suggesting changes. Generally, we focused on clarifying details, asking about targets, and other specifics—including dates of when they'll publish reports and what data they'll make publicly available. Any substantial changes to David's initial memo would need to be approved by vote of the Foundation Board.

<sup>27</sup> Find a draft of the memo at Fuhrman (2020).

The memo and its goals helped Green Love when we wrote the AS Climate Action Resolution, passed on Earth Day 2020. It felt good to know that we were making a “Resolved” point that aligned with a project that was already in the works:

“The University and its auxiliaries will continue to pursue environmentally responsible investing. By 2025, The Campanile Foundation (TCF), a philanthropic organization which manages the University endowment, will use an inclusionary screen for funds invested in positive environmental industries and an exclusionary screen for funds in specified fossil fuel industries. TCF will create an advisory board to the Finance and Investment Committee consisting of students, staff, faculty, and TCF Board Members to formalize and manage goals and strategies.”

- A Resolution Calling for SDSU’s Commitment to Climate Action, Justice, and Equality

I sent two final memos of my own back to David, per his recommendation, to share with the Foundation Board.<sup>28</sup> The first memo described who I was, how David and I had worked together so far, and why the suggested changes were important. My second memo was to inform David that my term as Commissioner was concluding and the appointment of next year’s Commissioner.

Days before, I briefed the incoming Green Love leadership about what to expect as they take over the project. It was clear that next year’s team would be passionate about pushing the work forward, but I could tell that it was a lot to take in. The worst part about the briefing was that I couldn’t tell them how to make the next steps happen—it’s a new, unknown phase of the project. I’m not too

<sup>28</sup> Access the two memos sent in response to Fuhriman: *Re: Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Investing (2020); Next Steps—Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Investing (2020)*.

worried, though. The green leaders at SDSU are so darn capable (and also have an awesome staff/faculty/community support network). The expansion of this project will be a huge, institutional contribution in building a full-scale sustainability movement at SDSU.

## Conclusion

Though I'm finalizing the account of this initiative from the depths of COVID-19-inflicted quarantine, I expect SDSU's sustainable investing initiative to continue. Our climate crisis will only continue, morphing to social conditions. Needless to say, action from activists and institutions—whether six feet apart, behind a mask, or from home—must continue. With an abundance of passion *and* practicality, we have no choice but to successfully adapt and implement climate solutions.

This paper is an account of work that I was scared of at first (ew, capitalism) but turned into a project that I'm proud of. The initiative's progress, represented by the Foundation's commitment to create a more environmentally sustainable endowment, confirms the value and effectiveness of collaboration in activism (especially for young people starting their activist journeys). In all circumstances I'll continue to have nothing but hope for the passionate people (at SDSU and beyond) fighting for our earth and each other.

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