

No more greenwashing at Imperial

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Union Notes:

1. Climate change is an urgent threat to humanity's existence.
2. The UN's International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported a 2030 deadline [1] for urgent and drastic climate action to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5C.
3. Fossil fuel corporations such as Shell and ExxonMobil knew about climate change due to internal research decades ago, and kept it out of the public view, actively promoting and funding climate denialism to protect their profits [2][3].
4. The College currently hosts events where these companies promote their 'green' image, either via departments such as at seminars and careers fairs or through the Union's student societies. This practice is referred to as 'greenwashing'.
5. Twice in the last few years (10 February 2015 and 16 May 2017) this Council passed a fossil fuels divestment motion, the latter of which resulted in the College's Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) policy.

Union Believes:

1. The actions of fossil fuel companies in covering up scientific research and funding denialism has been a direct cause of the delay in radical climate action and of the existential threat we face.
2. That no amount of investment in renewable energy technologies, or initiatives to promote sustainability, absolves these corporations of taking responsibility for this issue that they themselves created.
3. That as this Council has repeatedly affirmed its opposition to investment in these companies, in order to be consistent with our position we must also oppose other forms of financial support (such as the College or the Union providing a platform for them to promote their 'green' image unchallenged).
4. Therefore, greenwashing has no place at Imperial.
5. That the SRI Policy does not go nearly as far enough to tackle the full support Imperial College offers to the fossil fuel industry.

Union Resolves:

1. To prohibit all Union events that facilitate greenwashing.
 - a. For the purposes of this paper, an event that facilitates greenwashing is defined as: "an event that gives a platform to fossil fuel companies, or other sorts of companies complicit in the climate crisis, to promote an environmental/sustainable image without challenge".
 - b. Challenge is defined as: "a planned and promoted publicly stated opposition to the company's claims, particularly one that brings to light its climate record".
 - c. As an example, a debate where a representative of a fossil fuel company is in discussion with a climate activist that will bring up that company's record meets these criteria and will be allowed to go ahead, as the company will be challenged on

what it is asserting. A discussion where nobody is invited to specifically challenge the representative on their company's record will not be allowed to go ahead.

2. To lobby College to adopt an equivalent internal policy to prohibit their own greenwashing events.

References

[1] [Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC](#)

[2] [Shell and Exxon's secret 1980s climate change warnings | Climate change | The Guardian](#)

[3] [America Misled](#)