



Background and Challenges

In March of 2017, the Barnard College Board of Trustees approved a recommendation from the Presidential Task Force to Examine Divestment, comprised of staff, trustees, faculty and students, that Barnard divest its endowment from companies that deny climate change or otherwise seek to thwart efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change. **Barnard's goal was to align its investment portfolio with its mission and values as an academic institution supporting evidence-based solutions to society's problems.** Barnard sought to develop and assess companies using a methodology to differentiate between fossil fuel companies based on their statements, actions, and attitudes towards climate science and climate change.



Though its stakeholders agreed on a broad framework to evaluate companies, **Barnard sought subject matter expertise and resources** to refine the criteria and conduct the actual assessment.



The universe of fossil fuel companies is large, and **not all companies take measurable positions** with respect to climate science and climate change.



An assessment would require **thorough review of a large number of documents, and a variety of scoring adjustments would have to be made** to account for unique regional factors.

Solutions

Working with the College and assisted by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), FFI crafted a customized methodology to evaluate companies' statements, actions, and attitudes towards climate science and climate change.

FFI developed a methodology for selecting thirty oil & gas companies from its Carbon Underground Oil & Gas 100 list (O&G100) to be subject to evaluation. This selection methodology considered the free float market capitalization, the potential emissions embedded in reserves, and the geographic location of the O&G100 universe.

FFI and UCS created indicators and detailed scoring guidelines for each indicator to facilitate the assessment of company positions and actions versus the criteria. These indicators and scoring guidelines functioned as sub-criteria that, when assessed in aggregate, provide an assessment of and a score for the criteria as a whole.

FFI's methodology relied on publicly available data (e.g., SEC filings, annual reports, sustainability reports, company websites, third-party sources) and emissions data provided by third parties to assess each selected company.

After completing the preliminary assessment, companies were provided an opportunity to clarify information about their climate-related policies and actions and that feedback, when offered, was incorporated into company scores.

Outcome

Armed with FFI's custom methodology and analysis Barnard is in position to make an intellectual contribution to the discussion of climate science and climate change and to align its investments with its values; ensuring its endowment remains invested only with those companies whose positions on climate science are consistent with its broader mission.

Have a question?

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