
Update on Principles and Process to Govern Dissociation

Council of the Princeton University Community
September 20, 2021



Background

In May 2021, the Board of Trustees authorized the creation of an administrative process to guide dissociation from:

- Fossil fuel companies that participate in climate disinformation campaigns or otherwise spread climate disinformation, and
- Companies in the thermal coal and tar sands segments of the fossil fuel industry unless they prove able to meet a rigorous standard for their greenhouse gas emissions



Key Takeaways from Summer Conversations

- This is challenging work without already established answers
- This is important work that will matter to and beyond Princeton University
- Impartial scholarly input from a range of disciplines will be critical



Faculty Panel on Dissociation Metrics, Principles and Standards

- **Anu Ramaswami, Chair**
Sanjay Swani '87 Professor of India Studies. Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, and the High Meadows Environmental Institute. Director, Chadha Center for Global India.
- **Marcus K. Brunnermeier**
Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Economics. Director, Bendheim Center for Finance.
- **Jesse D. Jenkins**
Assistant Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment.
- **Melissa Lane**
Class of 1943 Professor of Politics. Director, University Center for Human Values.
- **Michael Oppenheimer**
Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs and the High Meadows Environmental Institute. Director, Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment.
- **Stephen W. Pacala**
Frederick D. Petrie Professor in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.
- **Elke U. Weber**
Gerhard R. Andlinger Professor in Energy and the Environment, Professor of Psychology and the School of Public and International Affairs. Associate Director for Education, Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment.
- **Karla Ewalt, Secretary**
Senior Associate Dean for Research



Questions for the Faculty Panel

- What metrics and standards should be used to assess whether a company is spreading climate disinformation or participating in disinformation campaigns? What information is available to assess whether a company is participating in a climate disinformation campaign? What distinguishes these acts from legitimate skepticism or challenging of scientific consensus?
- What constitutes material participation by a company in the thermal coal or tar sands segment of the fossil fuel industry? What would be an appropriate rigorous standard or target for greenhouse gas emissions for companies in this segment of the fossil fuel industry? How can the greenhouse gas intensity of these companies be assessed?
- What constructive engagement options exist to attempt to convince companies to remedy their conduct before dissociation? What standards and metrics can be used to assess whether a company is remedying its conduct? What is a reasonable time frame over which a company could be expected to make progress toward established standards and targets?
- How can the metrics, standards, and targets referenced above be flexible enough to meet changing conditions over time? On what time frame should they be revisited to keep pace with evolving knowledge?



Administrative Process Informed by Faculty Panel

- Administrative committee will use the findings of the faculty panel to propose for Board approval a set of actionable criteria for dissociation and a process for implementing them, now and in the future.
- Committee includes Vice President and Secretary Hilary A. Parker (chair), Dean for Research Pablo Debenedetti, PRINCO Managing Director Jon Erickson, Vice President and General Counsel Ramona Romero, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Jim Matteo, and Assistant Vice President Nakia White Barr
- Hope the faculty panel will interact closely with the administrative committee as it performs its work, and encourage the panel to update the broader community periodically while its work is in progress
- Goal is for administrative committee to complete its work by the end of this academic year – hope the faculty panel will complete its report substantially before that, and ideally by the end of the fall semester if possible
- More soon at fossilfueldissociationprocess.princeton.edu

