

For Immediate Release  
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## **BREAKING: Principal Fortier Meets with Divest McGill Activists**

*Students highlight inconsistencies in her words and actions;  
administration concedes to incremental changes.*

**MONTREAL (March 31, 2016)** – This afternoon nine student activists of Divest McGill met with Principal Suzanne Fortier in her reception area, where they have been staging a sit-in since Tuesday. The discussion was centred on community disappointment and lack of transparency regarding the decision made last week by the Board of Governors [against fossil fuel divestment](#). [The McGill Daily](#) conducted a [livestream](#) of the meeting, with McGill's administration barring external media outlets from the premises. Divest McGill has not been afforded a meeting with Principal Fortier since 2014, despite continuous requests.

The students repeatedly reminded Principal Fortier of their [three demands](#): community consultation and a subsequent revision of the divestment report submitted to the Board, transparency regarding experts consulted during the deliberations, and a statement acknowledging the grave social injury caused by the fossil fuel industry. The activists also questioned inconsistencies in the Board's report, as well as in the words and actions of the administration on issues of climate justice.

In response, Fortier committed to participate in open forums in the indeterminate future, focusing on McGill's response to climate change but not explicitly on divestment. She also agreed to ask the experts who provided testimony in the decision-making processes to consider making their statements public. Regarding the final demand for a statement acknowledging social injury, Fortier firmly reiterated the conclusion of the divestment report: that the harm caused by the fossil fuel industry does not qualify as "grave," and so does not call for remedial action such as divestment. She repeatedly refused to consider revising the divestment report, saying, "It's over — I want to move on."

Activists are still sitting-in, and expressed their commitment to continue taking action until their demands are met. Tomorrow at 11:30 in front of the James Administration Building, over 20 McGill alumni will return their diplomas to condemn McGill's continued investment in fossil fuels.

"Listening to the conversation, I found it shocking that the principal of McGill would employ such blatant logical fallacies. The Board ignoring unlawful acts by fossil fuel companies with the reasoning that all companies break the law; the narrow-minded view of social injury; the fundamental ignorance of our arguments; these all point to a Principal who is failing McGill by not upholding the high intellectual standard for which the university is known," explained Julia Bugiel, U2, International Development Studies.

Daniel Seggie, U4 Philosophy and Sit In Activist added, "I'm reminded of an old joke that goes: 'if at first you don't succeed...redefine success!' McGill's take on the issue of climate change seems to be this: if you can no longer honestly maintain that fossil fuel industries do not cause social injury, redefine social injury with the qualifier 'grave,' such that business as usual with fossil fuel industries can be maintained."

**Background:** Despite [Divest McGill](#)'s three-year campaign on campus, the McGill administration has advised against **fossil fuel divestment**. Divest McGill is responding by sitting-in the office of Principal Suzanne Fortier and camping outside of the James Administration Building.

Divestment is a worldwide campaign asking institutions to withdraw their investments from the fossil fuel industry because of the social and environmental harm they cause. So far, almost 500 institutions have divested or committed to divestment.

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