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**Occupation of Victoria College: U of T Students Demand That Vic Divests**

**TORONTO, ONTARIO, Victoria College, Univesity of Toronto** - More than fifty students began occupying Victoria College at the University of Toronto ahead of a vote by the Victoria College Board of Regents on fossil fuel divestment. In October 2021, [U of T announced its divestment timeline](https://www.utoronto.ca/news/u-t-divest-fossil-fuel-investments-create-climate-positive-campus), joining the [1,485 institutions](https://stand.earth/insights/1485-institutions-with-assets-over-39-2-trillion-have-committed-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/) that have committed to divesting from fossil fuels. However, this commitment does not apply to Victoria College and U of T’s two other [federated colleges,](https://thevarsity.ca/2021/11/13/op-ed-u-of-t-federated-colleges-divestment/) which maintain their own endowments. Despite the ongoing and worsening climate crisis, Victoria College has invested over 17.5 million dollars into the fossil fuel industry and currently [owns an oil well](https://thestrand.ca/vics-spoiled-reputation/) in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

This occupation comes days after the release of a [new IPCC](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/) report outlining the catastrophic effects of climate change and the need to transition away from fossil fuels immediately. Over four hundred Victoria College students have [signed a petition](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPo_w781_BQmViGYRLIp7gI4V36PmYU_CrSHC-SvKlpSd0xw/viewform) demanding that Victoria College divest from fossil fuels, a call supported by many within the broader U of T community, including the University of Toronto Student Union. Despite U of T’s divestment commitment and widespread student pressure, Victoria College has failed to make an official statement on divestment.

"Victoria College is funding the destruction of the planet, extracting oil on stolen land, and fueling a crisis that is already causing displacement and death of those that live in frontline communities," said Zoe Lazaris, the coordinator of Vic Students for Collective Resistance. "The science on climate change is clear: the vast majority of our planet's fossil fuel reserves must be kept in the ground to prevent us from eclipsing 1.5 degrees of warming. So long as Victoria College invests in oil companies, they are accomplices in the destruction of our planet and our future."

For the coming days, U of T students will be camped out in the Old Vic Building, demanding that Victoria College join U of T and divest from fossil fuels.

“We’re not going anywhere,” said Atlas Changulani, a first-year Victoria College student with Climate Justice U of T. “We will continue to fight until Vic commits to full, transparent, and timely divestment.”

*Please find photos of the action available* [*here*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y3lpSh-Wi4ihrQXxecotJXQoGEvXJzb2?usp=sharing)*. Any photos published should credit the individuals in the photo and the photographer. More photos of the occupation will be made available at the link above in the coming days.*

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