



James Smith and Natalie Izlar table as part of UNCA Divest.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES SMITH

UNC Asheville Divest campaign to present at Global Climate Action Summit event

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Students from UNC Asheville will represent UNCA Divest, a student organization dedicated to divesting the university from fossil fuels, at the 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco. The summit will host an array of climate change and environmental related events, including an affiliate event called The Divest/Invest State of the Movement press conference.

“We are pushing to remove the school’s holdings in fossil fuel companies,” said Kelsey Hall, environmental policy management student and co-coordinator for UNCA Divest.

The strategy for achieving their goal is to withdraw from UNC management

company and pool endowments with a management firm not investing in fossil fuels.

UNC management company’s services are worked individually with each interested school in the UNC system, which means UNCA can make a decision as a school to no longer buy services from them without needing other schools to follow suit.

The idea is that if UNCA pulls away from UNC management company and finds other more sustainable investment firms whilst continuing to see returns, other UNC system schools will notice and follow suit.

James Smith, chemistry and environmental communications student and co-coordinator for the divest campaign, said UNCA and other UNC system schools

pool their endowments with the UNC management company, totaling \$5 billion.

Smith explained the UNC management company invests across a spectrum of asset classes, one of those being energy and natural resources.

The management company invests 5 to 10 percent of their \$5 billion endowments into that sector where a predominance of fossil fuels remain.

UNCA Divest was chosen to be a part of this press conference due to their connection with the greater UNC system and the implications of a cross-system divestment movement, according to Smith.

Because other states have similar thoughts on endowment investments, UNCA Divest hopes to bring their model to the national and

worldwide levels, spreading their strategy to other university divestment campaigns.

UNCA Divest is excited to have Smith present at the upcoming divest/invest press conference.

Natalie Izlar, environmental studies student and environmental student governance fund coordinator for UNCA divest, said having their campaign present at the summit looks toward positive change.

“Divest was reignited in the past four years or so and it is only now that we have made such headway with the administration to be able to participate in something like this. It is an exciting time to be a part of this movement and it feels amazing to be making a difference. The

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