



Your Power as an Alumnus/Alumna

As a potential donor, your role can be important to current students' campaigns and establishing responsible endowment practices. Whatever you do, REC is a resource for assistance and support.

How you can leverage your power:

- 1) **Ask what support students working on campaigns would need or like.** REC can help connect you to students working on campaigns you're interested in. Be sure to work in conjunction with their work, so you can productively add to their efforts. Some suggestions include:
 - Refuse to donate until specific demands are met. Tell the administration by writing a letter of non-giving. See our website for an example, and guidelines below.
 - Writing a letter of support for the student campaign to the administration. Consider making the letter public by publishing it in your school's newspaper.
 - Providing specific skills, such as finance consulting.
 - Make and circulate a petition for alumni. Consider a photo petition, where individuals or groups hold up posters that identify themselves as alumni and express support for the campaign. The photos are compiled and given to administrators.
 - Financially support a student to come to REC's conferences or retreats.
 - Attend student events and protests. Be sure to have your presence known, for example, by being photographed.
- 2) **Write a letter to your alumni giving office.** Feel free to use REC's [sample alumni letter](#). When writing a letter of non-giving or to an administrator, be sure that:
 - The ask is SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound. Instead of saying "I won't donate until the endowment is invested responsibly," say "I won't donate until the university stops investing in fossil fuels and makes a public statement that it will divest within five years, reinvesting that 5% of the endowment in clean energy within five years."
 - You refute the argument you'd expect to hear back. Respond to the economic viability of divestment from fossil fuels (for example) and the school's continued ability to generate positive returns.
 - Whatever you do, be sure to reach out to other alumni and recruit their support. The more of you there are, the more convincing you'll be. REC can help connect you to other interested alumni.
- 3) **Serve on your school's committee for investor responsibility.** This committee discusses issues relating to endowment responsibility, votes on proxy ballots, and creates shareholder resolutions. Not all schools have one, and not all schools have alumni members on their committee. Ask the Investment Office for more information, or ask REC if we've worked with your school's committee in the past.

- 4) **Create or serve on an alumni group for social responsibility.** Some universities have an organization of alumni who work to support student campaigns and responsible investment practices at their alma mater. University of Rochester's Alums for Social Responsibility (ASR) and Wesleyan's Progressive Alumni Network (PAN) are strong examples.
- 5) **Reach out to other alumni.** Many schools allow access to an alumni directory. Organize a phone banking event and make phone calls asking alumni to send letters of advocacy or letters of non-giving. Tell them more about why responsible investment is important, and send them a form email so that it is simple for them to take action. You might focus your attention on gaining the support of a few high net worth donors, or alumni who have made a name for themselves as advocates for environmental or social justice. Or you may want to contact more recent alumni who have worked with REC on campaigns in the past, who will be more willing to give their time and support. We're always here to help you network.
- 6) **Support REC.** Speak at one of our events or conferences, sponsor a student to come to one of our retreats, or donate!