



# Northeastern

April 28, 2013

Devon Grodkiewicz  
Co-Executive Director  
NU Husky Environmental Action Team

Dear Devon:

Thank you for your recent letter to President Aoun regarding climate change and divestment. Your commitment to environmental sustainability issues on campus is appreciated and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

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As you know, Northeastern University is a recognized leader in sustainability—in the higher education sector and beyond. In 2007, the university became a founding member of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, a nationwide initiative to neutralize greenhouse gases among institutions of higher learning. In 2010, Northeastern adopted a climate action strategy called “Sustainable Action Plan: Roadmap towards Carbon Neutrality.”

For its commitment to sustainability, last year the Green Metric Ranking of World Universities cited Northeastern as “America’s Greenest College.” In addition, the Sustainable Endowments Institute gave Northeastern an A-, one of its highest ratings in North America, on its 2011 College Sustainability Report Card. Among other accolades, Northeastern has made the Princeton Review’s “Green Honor Roll” for several consecutive years and has been honored by the Mass Save Program for its leadership in energy efficiency.

The university’s commitment to advancing environmental sustainability is also reflected in its research and teaching. Sustainability is one of Northeastern’s primary research priorities, and faculty members leverage the university’s approach to use-inspired interdisciplinary research to address global challenges such as disaster resilience, renewable energy, and climate change. In addition to integrating sustainability into more than 100 academic courses and experiential learning programs, last fall the university hosted the Millennium Campus Conference on poverty and sustainable development, further demonstrating Northeastern’s dedication to impacting the world around it.



With respect to investments in energy companies, you may be interested to learn that according to a January 2013 World Wildlife Fund Report, several energy firms comprising the FORTUNE 100 are the leading investors in renewable energy in the world today. This includes BP and Chevron, which have pledged \$8 billion and \$2.2 billion, respectively, to develop new renewable energy and efficiency sources by 2015. Rather than encouraging responsible action and supporting shareholder-led efforts, divestment by institutional investors may do more to impede the active clean energy transition now underway.

It is also important to note that the university bears a fiduciary responsibility to maximize endowment returns to honor donor intent and support the institution's mission, which includes many of the sustainability achievements already cited.

Northeastern remains committed to maintaining its leadership on sustainability. Whether employing green building design, reducing carbon emissions, or training the next generation of environmental policymakers, be assured that in the months and years ahead the university will continue to drive sustainability innovation and lead change.

Sincerely,

Michael Armini  
Senior Vice President