

January 10, 2025



Duke Rejects Divestment from Israeli Apartheid—We Need Your Support

Dear Duke Community,

Duke’s Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility (ACIR) has failed us again. On December 10, we received their brief [one-page response](#) to our 56-page [divestment proposal](#) calling on the University to divest from entities complicit in Israeli apartheid against Palestinians. **They refused to act.** They stated:

- “More than 20 years ago (February 2003), in response to a petition to divest from companies with military ties to Israel, then-Duke President Keohane observed that ‘divestment is not the right response; it is too blunt an instrument to use in [this] situation.’”
- “Members of the committee also felt, as President Keohane observed in 2003, that the university should not utilize divestment as a symbolic (or other) adjudication of decades-long, complex global conflicts.”

ACIR relying on a 20-year-old rationale reflects a troubling failure to engage with the evolving social, political, and institutional realities surrounding divestment calls. ACIR dismissed the moral clarity of this issue by claiming, “The committee noted that there continues to be considerable evidence of strongly held views on both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and that this remains a divisive and polarizing issue on campus.”

Such reasoning ignores the mounting evidence of apartheid and Duke’s responsibility to act. By concluding that “ACIR therefore does not ask the President and Board of Trustees to consider divesting from companies with ties to Israel,” the committee has abandoned its mandate.

University policy says if broad and deep support for divestment exists, ACIR must notify the president to take action. In their response, ACIR unfairly claimed that the presence of conflicting opinions inherently means there could not be broad and deep support for divestment. **This is not true.**

It is clear ACIR is currently unwilling to actually engage with the Duke community to meaningful assess support. We asked them to consult Duke experts on Palestine and Israel, but they refused. ACIR also failed to properly promote the fall open forum to gather community input. The event was buried in a newsletter, and most attendees only knew about it because we shared the details.

ACIR is ignoring its responsibility and the voices of the Duke community.

Here’s our plan:

In the spring term, we will re-engage with the ACIR with an updated proposal and supplemental evidence, including the divestment support petition signatures demonstrating the broad and deep support for divestment from Israeli apartheid within the Duke community.

Here's how you can help:

1. **Sign to Support Divestment** – Showing broad and deep support for divestment is crucial. Please sign [here](#) and share with your peers. Your information will remain private.
2. **Write to ACIR** – Demand ACIR respond to the divestment proposal seriously. Insist they reassess the current presence of broad and deep support today, rather than relying on outdated rationale. Use our [email form](#) to amplify your voice.

Let's turn this moment into a movement to show Duke's leadership that we will not stand for complicity in apartheid.

In solidarity,

Duke Divest Coalition