



Compensation at Swarthmore College

the *second* unauthorized, unofficial
and unsanctioned expose of the
new pay grades

*Class consciousness is knowing which side
of the fence you're on.*

(One fence being the new pay scales.)



Can you answer the following questions regarding the way you are paid at the College?

Don't want to wade through the fine print to figure out the complex pay issues at Swarthmore, here's the bottom line: while the administration focuses on "strained budgets," "difficult economic choices" and "educational mission," they increased their own benchmarks by 60% to over \$200,000 while actually reducing a number of the hourly employee salary benchmarks. So if you don't have time to read it all, skip to the end to see what to do.

1. The administration announced in many venues, in writing and verbally, that with the implementation of the new grades, "no one's pay will be cut." Is this true or false?

German filmmaker Fritz Kippler, one of Goebbels' most effective propagandists, once said that two steps were necessary to promote a lie so the majority of the people would believe it. The first was to reduce an issue to a simple black-and-white choice. The second was to repeat the oversimplification over and over. If these two steps were followed, people would always come to believe the lie.

Unfortunately the issues around pay at Swarthmore have always been complicated. If you want to be part of the group who "will not be fooled all of the time," read on:

Reduced to the black and white statement, "no one's pay will be cut" is it your understanding this would mean now . . . as well as in the future? In other words, with the implementation of the new policy, is there a way in which I could receive less than under the old scales? Some positions have been rewritten to lower categories, but what is confusing is that in certain grades *potential* earnings **have been** cut.

Here's an example of what happened in the former Grade 3, Office Support:

Former Salary Range non-exempt from 03-04
Min 14.44 Mid 17.68 Max 22.56
Current reassignment to grade 5:
Min 13.16 Target 15.63-17.27 Max 21.71

These new targets represent a significant decrease:

- newly hired employees in grade 5 will now see a starting wage of \$13.16, for a net loss of \$.132/hr.
- employees approaching their 5-year target, now see a range rather than a specific target; this is a net loss of at least .16/hr. at the higher number.
- employees approaching the maximum, now have the target of \$21.71, for a net loss of .85/hr.

2. How do I know if my grade benchmark were lowered?

Compare your current grade with the old rates below. However, be aware of these important considerations:

- These losses do not even reflect the 3% pay increases that were never recorded on the Salary Ranges for the past two years (in previous years the salary increases *were* reflected on the salary schedule). For example, Grade 3 office support person at the full market rate who received the 3% increases for the past two years would be earning around \$18.76. Considering the 3% over the years, there is a loss of \$1.

- In the past the College paid people at the market benchmark after five years employment. However, with ranges rather than a specific market number, how will staff and supervisors know *which* number in the range is the 5-year target for their position? In the past employees were guaranteed receiving a specific benchmark number after 5 years. Now with a range, an employee may very well fall below the older grade benchmarks.

- The other additional problem with the maximum category is that there is no information on what is the *current* College policy for staff members to arrive at the maximum. Currently employees and supervisors have no information on how or how long it takes for employees to reach the maximum. Some employees have been at the College for twenty years and have never have reached the maximum.

Old Salary Structure from 2003-2004/Non Exempt Ranges

Grade	Min	Mid	Max
8	6.88	7.64	9.55
9	7.47	8.29	10.37
10	8.26	9.18	11.47
12	10.10	11.22	14.02
13	10.99	12.22	15.72
14	11.93	13.26	16.57
16	13.08	15.39	19.24
17	13.98	17.47	21.85
Office Grades			
1	11.52	14.13	18.02
2	12.75	15.62	19.94
3	14.44	17.68	22.56
4	16.56	20.29	25.89
Trades			
71	16.17	17.97	22.46
72	18.49	20.55	25.69
73	19.88	22.09	27.61
74	21.72	24.13	33.94

For more information to compare current pay grades and pay grades by position:
http://www.swarthmore.edu/Admin/human_resources/compensation_pay_grades.htm

3. **If I decide to apply to another position at the College where the benchmarks have been lowered, wouldn't that mean I would receive a lower pay if I applied a year ago**

The only information you now have is the lower rates. It is true the College could offer you a higher wage, but they also could point to the lower benchmark as the new salary assignment for the grade you are applying.

4. **If I feel secure in my position and pay, are there any other negative consequences to lower benchmarks?**

Yes. For example, if you have been at the College for a number of years, there is no incentive for the College to keep you employed. It is true that if you are a "good" employee, follow all the rules and regulations, go along with your boss, etc., you might have longevity at the College. However, if you should have a grievance or problem, your leaving presents an opportunity to hire a lower-paid worker.

5. **How did they determine what the new benchmarks would be?**

There is no public information on how the administration arrived at the *figures* for the new grades.

6. **What percent increase in the top benchmarks did those at the highest grade receive with the implementation of the new salary schedule?**

- a. 25%
- b. 40%
- c. 60%

Answer: C

Previously at the highest grades,

Grade	Min	Market	Maximum
24	74,041	92,603	115,753
25	83,118	103,923	129,929

Now the two highest grades are

12	94,179	119,293-131,850	155,395
13	125,572	149,116-164,813	207,193

In contrast, rank and file staff received a 3% increase for 2004/05. For someone earning \$11 an hour, that's an additional 33 cents an hour. Another way to look at it is to consider a possible example . . .

Increase in pay a day for environmental services: **\$2.64**
 Increase in pay a day for VP: **\$180**

7. **While campus debate raged on concerning increases to those at the lowest levels, how many campus meetings were held to discuss the economic realignment of the grades and the cost at each level?**

- a. 2
- b. 1
- c. 0

Answer: C

8. **Last year, while faculty and staff were told that "budget restraints" would allow only 3% pay increases, what increase did the President receive?**

- a. 5%
- b. 10%
- c. 13%

Answer: C

9. **What can I do?**

- a. Begin talking with fellow co-workers/contact SAC representatives
- b. Send protest letters to President and Provost
- c. Join the Living Wage and Democracy Campaign
- d. Look at the salary scales on the web/evaluate the problem yourself
- e. Think about a union/solidarity movement for Swarthmore employees
- f. All of the above

Answer: F

10. **I'm a relatively new employee, where can I find the history of pay practice problems and issues?**

- a. HR website
- b. Employee Handbook
- c. http://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/org/living_wage/history/index.html

Answer: C Check out our "Bill of Rights" submitted to the College Community in 1998.

All the rights employees have won on job, 8-hour day, weekend, health coverage, etc., have come from solidarity actions of the workers. These rights can be taken away if

we don't continue or organize. Employers pit one group against another, demanding concessions in order to be "competitive." To be strong, we must be united.



Congratulations! You have managed to wade through the complexities of pay at Swarthmore. Knowledge is your first key to opening the door to solidarity. The second step is to do something!

Are you thinking . . .

"I don't believe this."

We don't claim to have all the answers. Do your own research! Check out the facts for yourself. Don't believe the Institution, either.

"What can I do? I'm just one person."

Take the responsibility of talking and joining with others. Make a plan.

"I don't want to get involved. I might lose my job."

You could lose your job anyway if our rights are eroded slowly one step at a time. It is your responsibility to take action . . . we will suffer and our children who follow in positions all over the country will suffer if we allow corporations and institutions to set the wage policies. Because of the solidarity of staff, students, and faculty we were able to raise the base wage to \$9. Imagine what we could do if **everyone** played a part in correcting these injustices!

I'm not a staff member; the issue doesn't concern me.

Shouldn't we support fellow community members trying to do the right thing? The community will benefit from democratic participation modeled by people bringing fairness and equity to College policy. Faculty chairs and supervisors, in fairness to the people they work with, must have an understanding of pay practices.