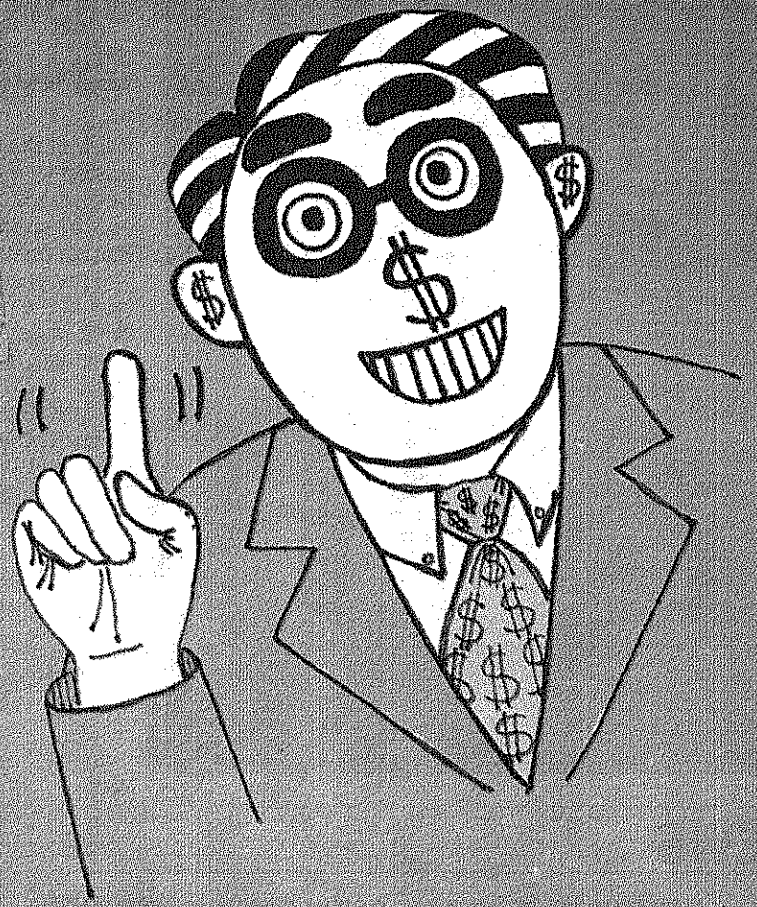


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Campus network fails Tuesday

BY ELIZABETH WRIGHT

Tuesday morning, in the midst of a routine upgrade, the college computer network went down across the entire campus. While the computing center worked quickly to get as much of the network back online as possible, some buildings remained affected by the outage until after noon on Wednesday. During the downtime, Swarthmore community had a chance to relearn what life is like without working e-mail, network or Internet access.

The outage began at about 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, when a piece of hardware called a gigabyte switch failed. The switch is connected to the main server and handles all Internet traffic coming from outside the campus network. It also routes traffic to the five main network hubs on campus.

"The biggest box with the biggest connecting pipe in the system went belly-up," manager of user services Robin Jacobsen said in summary of Tuesday's network problems.

Mark Dumic, manager of networking and systems, did not know for sure what caused the switch to fail. "We suspect it was a power spike," he said. The power supply to the server was turned off early Tuesday morning to allow for maintenance that was supposed to take five to ten minutes. He explained that switching the power on and off seems to put stress on equipment, and if a part is going to fail, it is likely to fail when the system is powered up again. That appears to have been the case with the gigabyte switch.

"We certainly understand how important the network is to [the college] community," Dumic said, noting he will be trying to "dissect what happened" and work to prevent similar problems in the future. He noted, however, that "it's fact of life that outages will happen."

Dumic said about half the campus network was back together by one o'clock Tuesday afternoon after a replacement part arrived from Philadelphia. It was only a partial fix, however, because final repairs could not be completed until another replacement piece arrived from California on Wednesday.

In order to restore network services to as much of the campus as possible before the new switch arrived, Dumic and others in the computing center spent the rest of Tuesday afternoon scrambling to reroute the network.

"What we did [Tuesday] afternoon involved a lot of reconfiguration programming on secondary switches," Dumic said.

One hundred twenty secondary switches on campus feed into five main hubs located in Parrish, Beardsley, McCabe, Sharples and a service building. These five hubs then feed into the main server in Parrish, where the failure occurred. To route network connections away from the broken switch, traffic that usually goes through five hubs was squeezed through two hubs located on a backup card.

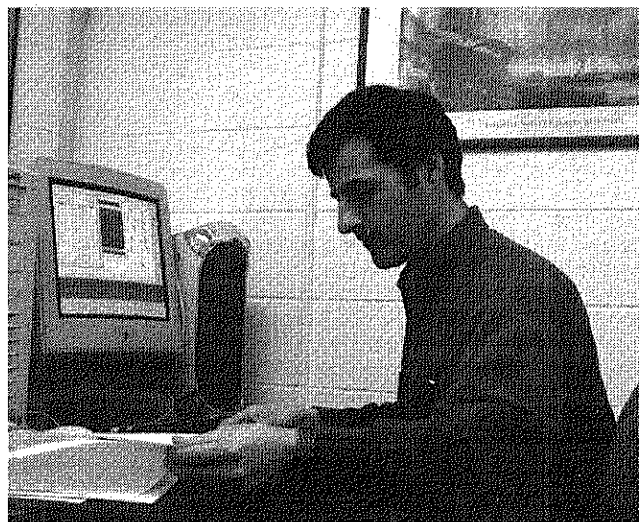
"Unfortunately, this taxed the capacity of the two hubs, so there were a of couple buildings [that] couldn't get back on the network Tuesday," Dumic said.

All public areas, as well as McCabe and most dorms were back on the network by six o'clock Tuesday evening.

Some dorms, however, such as Worth and the Lodges, were not re-connected to the network until Wednesday morning.

Although inconveniences caused by the outage were minor — Jacobsen said one student called the computing center to complain that he couldn't check his stocks online — students who had work saved to their class folders on the server had difficulties.

The network outage had no ill effects for students like



Michael Pasahow Phoenix Staff

Mark Dumic, manager of networking and systems works to restore network access to the campus Tuesday afternoon.

Rob Cox '03. Having completed a paper due Tuesday well before the network outage occurred, he was able to "enjoy not needing the extension the professor granted the class because of the outage."

To aid students without network connections in their rooms, computers in Trotter, Kohlberg and DuPont were kept open as public areas until 2 a.m. Wednesday morning, providing access to 100 networked computers.

SC advises against changing alcohol policy

BY ELIZABETH WRIGHT

As part of an ongoing process of scrutinizing the college's alcohol policy, Student Council submitted a report to the Deans' Advisory Committee Monday outlining its stance that the current policy should remain unchanged.

According to Dean Bob Gross, the college currently takes the approach of "harm reduction" in determining the alcohol policy. Under this policy, preventing danger that comes from excessive drinking is emphasized over attempting to prevent underage drinking.

The council report was written at the request of the Deans' Advisory Committee (DAC). The committee specifically charged the council last October to respond to reports that students fraudulently use college money from the Student Activities Fee to purchase alcohol. The council was asked to propose a solution to the problem of fraud. A report issued by DAC in October stated, "If no acceptable solution is presented, the deans will need to impose restrictions on SAF spending, policies and practices to address the problem."

The DAC report summarized the findings of a year-long review of the alcohol policy. The review was instigated as a part of the fallout from the undercover police raid at the annual Delta Upsilon Margaritaville party in April 1999 at which 18 Swarthmore students were arrested for underage drinking.

In the course of the review, reports of fraud were brought to the committee's attention, and the problem of fraud became the focus of the review. DAC made several specific suggestions, such as having non-students review receipts that are submitted to the Student Budget Committee (SBC) for reimbursement for party expenses, randomly taking inventory of supplies at parties to compare against the receipts that are submitted, and limiting the stores from which students could buy party supplies.

Student Council determined that since the 1999

Margaritaville party, sufficient changes have been made by SBC and the Social Affairs Committee, the two student organizations involved in the process of funding parties. Official changes on the level of altering the college alcohol policy, they determined, are unnecessary.

"The [council] report doesn't call for drastic changes," said SBC treasurer and council member Marvin Barron '02, who helped write the report. Rather, the report encourages the deans of the college to let the current alcohol policy stand.

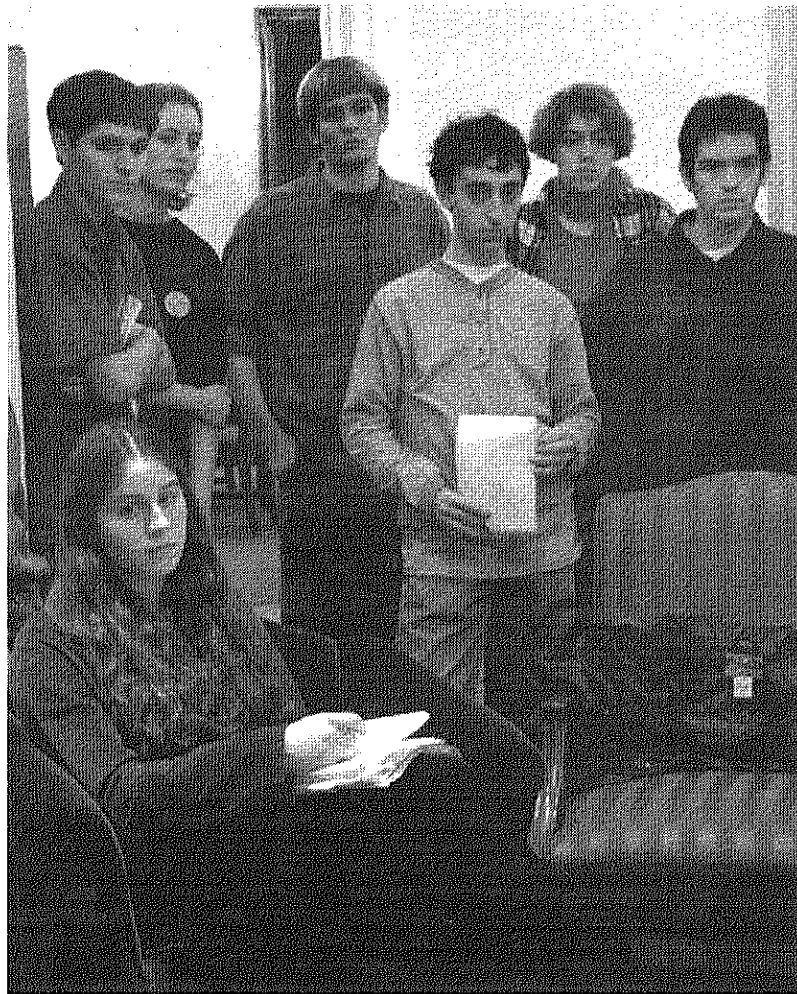
According to Barron, the council tried to strongly express the belief that neither DAC nor any other entity can come up with a set of regulatory procedures that are "Swattie-proof." He said that the council also attempted to spell out that it "would be a mistake" if the college "decides to favor a more draconian approach" to the alcohol policy without taking into account the procedural changes that SBC and SAC have independently made to address fraud. He also felt the college should consider the possibility that the fraud may have been overstated.

Associate Dean for Student Life Tedd Goundie said he had not had a chance to review the council's report yet, but that he did not expect it to propose major changes. He said he expected it to propose means for reducing the possibility of fraud.

A "mutual movement" on the part of SBC and SAC to tighten their procedures has been effective in reducing the possibility of fraud, according to Barron. "Little changes to system made over the course of the year have gone a long way," he said.

Efforts at improving communication have meant that neither group assumes the other has already screened party requests, which Barron said was a "real problem" in the past.

SBC now requires that every request for reimbursement be reviewed twice, and every check given out must be signed twice. SBC has also be-



Claire Weiss Phoenix Staff

Members of the Swarthmore Living Wage Democracy Campaign ask Student Council to support their campaign at Monday's meeting. The council did not endorse the committee's petition, but after several hours of debate, the council approved a brief statement of support for a living wage at Swarthmore by a majority vote. See pg. 13.

See ALCOHOL, pg. 4

OPINIONS

EDITORIAL

Tackling the living wage dilemma

For all the emphasis Swarthmore places on "ethical intelligence," it is surprisingly rare that we find ourselves in a real-life situation that challenges our ethical faculties. But the living wage is precisely that sort of situation.

Strip the Living Wage Campaign of its rhetoric and activist bluster, and you'll find that the living wage has at its core a moral claim. It is a way of expressing the idea that people have intrinsic value, a fundamental worth that cannot be accounted for by the economic market system. The living wage, then, is an attempt to correct the market system and to assert this intrinsic value.

In an ideal world, there might be no need for a living wage — a person's fundamental worth might be obvious and acknowledged by the system. But we live in a practical world, and ironically enough, economics can even put a price on intrinsic value, at least as defined by the Living Wage Campaign.

And therein lies the dilemma. In its existence as an educational and cultural institution, the college should put its money where its mouth is and strive to treat people as ends in themselves rather than means to some other end — this is at least a part of ethical intelligence. Yet the college also exists as an economic entity — an employer that, despite its sizable financial resources, is still beholden to the market forces that run the world.

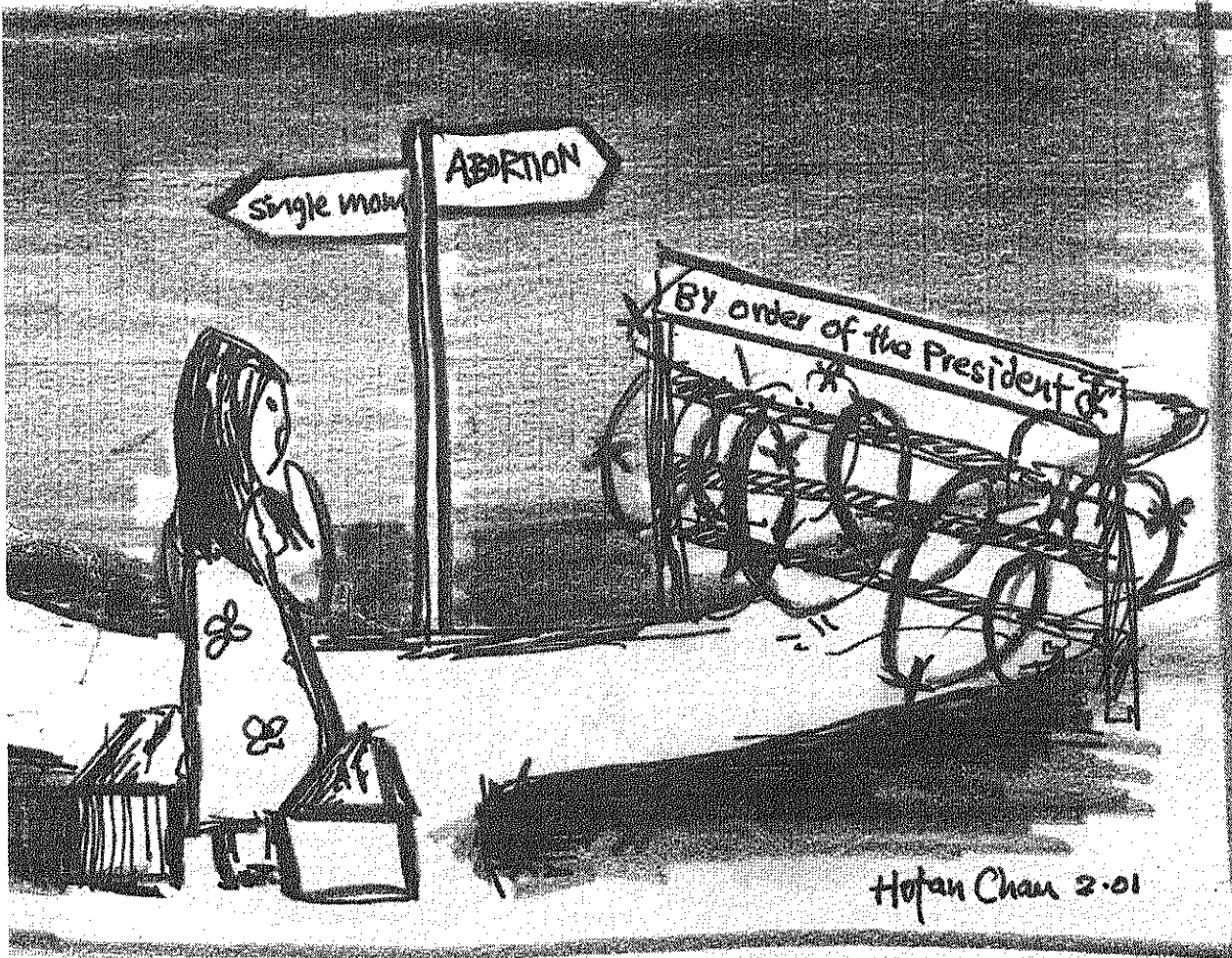
Neither kowtowing to market forces nor denying the reality of economics is a truly viable option. Although we support the idea of a living wage — indeed, it's difficult not to think that human beings have intrinsic value — there are significant problems with the campaign itself: worries about how it is being run, questions about from where the money for increased wages would come, and even concern that increased wages would cause other, more significant economic problems for staff members. And despite the widespread support among students, the campaign has nothing close to unanimous support from staff and faculty.

But ethical intelligence should demand more than mere acknowledgement of the dilemma. Action is required, and since the option presented doesn't seem particularly economically feasible, a compromise is needed.

A more limited solution can be culled from the comments of faculty, staff and students. Economics professor Larry Westphal suggested equalizing the percentage of the market rate that faculty and staff are paid (see In Depth, pg. 11); currently, faculty are paid 102.5 percent of the market rate, but staff only receive 100 percent of the market rate. There could also be more room on the upper end of the pay scale for senior staff to advance their careers, a response to the complaint that staff aren't rewarded for their seniority.

In interviews, many staff members have mentioned wanting increased respect and recognition. Although it is always difficult to legislate morality, giving staff a greater say in college affairs and making a better effort to integrate staff into college events would be a solid start. And thoughtfulness, politeness and simple respect for the staff on the part of students would also go hand-in-hand with this administrative effort.

These are all simpler solutions, approaches to the dilemma that treat the moral problems of the current system and at the same time attempt to minimize the economic impact. There are undoubtedly more solutions like these out there. If Student Council's Action Group is more efficient and aggressive than Student Council itself in approaching the issue, its efforts will likely result in a comprehensive solution that can be both morally laudable and economically tenable — in other words, an ethically intelligent approach to this dilemma.



Medeski Martin & Wood a great choice for large event

Dear Editor:

I loved the Medeski Martin & Wood concert on Saturday. They're the most amazing jam band that I have ever seen.

I want to thank those who organized it and the administrators who approved it. They made the right choice.

Seeing a show of that caliber at my school makes me proud. I hope that there will be more concerts of this quality in the future.

Francisco Estrazulas '03

MORE LETTERS

For more letters to the editor on the living wage campaign, including Student Council's official position statement and one dissenter's explanation for why he did not support making the statement, see pg. 10.

CORRECTIONS

Last week's article on the engineering department's hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) had a number of misstatements.

Chevrolet, not Chrysler, manufactured and donated the Beretta.

The story read, "Gas cars are run by burning natural gas." The story should have read, "Gas cars are run entirely by the combustion of fossil fuels."

Hybrid vehicles do burn fuel, but burn less fuel than traditional vehicles.

The story read, "In contrast, hybrid electric cars have a

90 percent or greater efficiency and give off no emissions whatsoever." The story should have read, "In contrast, electric motors used in hybrid electric cars can achieve efficiencies greater than 90 percent with no emissions whatsoever."

Garnet One, not all electric cars in general, cannot travel much farther than 25 miles on battery power alone.

Project leader Kiyoyuki Miyasaka's name was spelled incorrectly as Mayasaki and Miyasaki.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters and opinions pieces represent the views of their writers and not those of The Phoenix or its staff. The Phoenix is a community forum and welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and have the writer's contact information. Please limit letters to 400 words. The Phoenix reserves the right to edit all letters for content, length and clarity.

Submit letters to phoenix_letters@swarthmore.edu or to The Phoenix, Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081.

To report a correction, e-mail phoenix@swarthmore.edu, write to the editor in chief at the above address or call 610-328-7363.

Some contend living wage may be counterproductive

What former Human Resources director Barbara Carroll termed the FMV, however, is the median hourly wage. This, Young said, could be compared against "living wages," calculated by organizations such as WAWA.

According to Young, Carroll had only published the beginning and middle ranges of salaries. Young has proposed a new set of ranges.

After approval by the Board of Managers, she said, the new ranges — beginning, middle and high — will be published.

Young stressed that Swarthmore's ranges are competitive in the larger market. "The compensation is up to the FMV," she said.

The concept of a living wage, Young said, "is a very different way to think about wages." She said that wages are generally tied to the value of a particular job within a marketplace. While she

said that implementation of a living wage would be complicated, she believes that "it has great human value." Young said she would include the living wage idea in the planned compensation review.

Young pointed out, however, that "people for whom money is the most important thing aren't in higher education." Indeed, the biggest issue she has heard from staff has not been about the living wage, but rather the desire "to be recognized for their work ... to be treated the same from department to department."

Young hopes to have a "series of dialogues" about staff respect. She wants the atmosphere, she said, to be a place that "employees are happy to be in."

Young hopes to have a "series of dialogues" about staff respect. She wants the atmosphere, she said, to be a place that "employees are happy to be in."

FACULTY VIEWPOINTS

Economics professor Larry Westphal said he views the campaign as a "very important issue

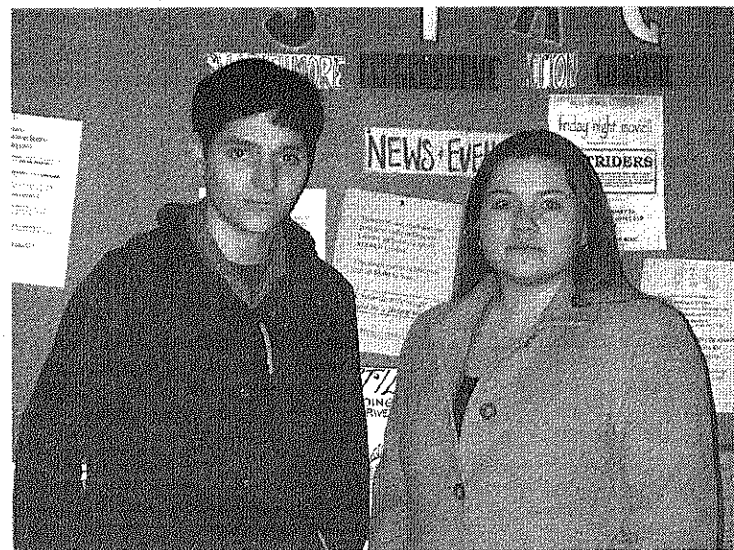
with lots of misguided opinion." Westphal said he feels that poverty and inequality are significant issues but he doesn't believe that Swarthmore can resolve low wages by itself. "[It's] a social problem, and needs to be solved on the national level," he said.

Most economists, according to Westphal, agree that significant increases in minimum wages would have negative consequences in terms of employment, although he added that the area is still controversial. Westphal said that economists do not yet know the magnitude of effects that minimum wage increases have on employment, but he does not think it is "wise to monkey around with market forces." He asked, "Who's to determine what a 'just' wage is?"

A better approach to combating poverty, according to Westphal, is the earned income credit. Although the economics is somewhat complicated, the earned income credit is effectively a negative income tax for working people below a certain income level. Those below a certain income would receive cash payments instead of paying an income tax. Most economists, said Westphal, regard the earned income credit as a positive option because it doesn't distort marketplace incentives.

Swarthmore's current staff wages are based on market comparisons with similar employers in the Philadelphia area. Swarthmore is considered to be a decent place to work in the area, Westphal said. Addressing whether college staff are paid appropriately, Westphal said that he believes they are paid similarly to what they would make in the general marketplace.

But Westphal was highly critical of one area of the college's labor practices, citing the distinction that is regularly made between meeting targeted wages for staff and faculty. Faculty pay is targeted at 102.5 per-



Talia Welner/Phoenix Staff

Sam Blair and Mariah Montgomery lead the Living Wage Campaign.

cent of the commensurate market rate, and this goal is usually met or surpassed, Westphal said. By contrast, staff's targeted wages are only set to 100 percent of the market rate, and have not always been met, according to Westphal and college pay records.

Westphal said he is "galled by this invidious distinction," adding, "Swarthmore is no less demanding on staff than on faculty."

Westphal said he is impressed that students are concerned about these issues but feels there are some problems with their arguments. He criticized students as being insensitive to the laws under which the college and Board of Managers operate. Board members' first responsibility, Westphal said, is to ensure that the college will be just as viable in the future as it is at present.

"If there is a trade-off between the present versus later generations," he said, "it cannot be made at the expense of the future."

Students should know where the

money will be coming from, Westphal said, rather than just assuming that the college's endowment is infinite. "There's a trade-off," he said. "Students advocating a living wage must also think about where to make cuts."

Some faculty were impressed that students are involved in the living wage campaign.

Ken Sharpe, professor of political science, attended the teach-in held last Tuesday. Sharpe said the homework done by the group was excellent. "It's extraordinarily valuable that students are looking at how issues they're studying affect their community."

The campaign is something that he would expect of Swarthmore students, said Sharpe. Students who have gotten involved, he said, can better understand the daily lives of those who make it possible. "[They] learn to not take staff people for granted."

SC supports living wage campaign's principle

BY IVAN BOOTHE

After more than two hours of discussion Monday night, Student Council endorsed the statement, "Student Council supports a living wage at Swarthmore." Three members voted against the resolution.

The council decided not to support the petition for the Swarthmore Living Wage Democracy Campaign, which was presented by campaign organizers at the meeting. The petition was signed by 755 students, 40 staff members, eight faculty and one alumnus.

The council also unanimously approved a proposal by Marvin Barron '02, student groups advisor, to create a subcommittee to investigate prioritizing staff budgeting, increasing staff representation and obtaining information from the administration. The proposal was worded specifically to avoid the phrase "living wage."

Barron said he felt the council should not take a stance either for or against the campaign. "In my mind, it would be a great harm to activism at Swarthmore," he said.

Many council members expressed concern over the specific details of the campaign's proposal. Members wanted to know how a living wage is calculated for each staff member, how many workers fall into each wage category, where money would come from to raise staff salaries and how to keep distinctions between experienced and new employees when entry-level wages are increased. Members of the campaign, however, were not sure that the information would be made available to them by the administration.

Colin Moore '02, co-chair of Student Council, cautiously approved of the campaign. "I don't think we can skirt our responsibility to come to a decision in one way or another," he said. In addition, he said, not taking a stand would "make us look like a weak organization."

Members of the campaign were not impressed by the council's action. "To say you need to get all the specifics, you're missing the boat, and when you make your decision, it won't be an issue anymore," Mariah Montgomery '04 told the council.

Poulami Roychowdhury '03, the council's secretary, called for a vote on the statement at the end of the meeting. The three members who voted against supporting the statement were Barron, Peter Holm '01 and Jordan Brackett '01.

—ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY NICOLE BRUNDA AND ELIZABETH WRIGHT

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Living wage woes

The Living Wage Campaign has at last launched into full swing. When this mobilization began, I didn't expect that it would cause much dissent among students on campus. Essentially, the campaign calls for a wage that would allow people to adequately provide for themselves and their families without having to juggle multiple jobs and still struggle to make ends meet. The issue speaks not only to class but also to topics of race and gender. For instance, I'm sure that no student or faculty member has failed to notice that almost the entire housekeeping staff is black and female. The living wage seemed to me an intuitively worthy cause, one toward which Swat students would be either supportive or neutral. Indeed, there is a great base of support for the campaign, demonstrated through much positive feedback and over 700 signatures on the petition so far.

Naturally, there are dissenters. Some of these dissenters have chosen to express their disagreement in useless, disrespectful, even hostile manners. Though they are definitely in the extreme minority, their asinine behavior can overshadow the outpouring of support that the campaign has received from most of the campus. Although I have long since abandoned the Swattie delusion ("That couldn't happen here!"), even I was shocked at the venomous responses of these few, obnoxious members of the student body.

Take, for instance, the comments that were hand-written on living wage signs in Wharton: "Not Happy? Then Quit" and, in response to the observation that Swarthmore spends more on its plants than on its employees, "THEN LEAVE." Those comments were written on signs posted on the doors through which staff members walk every morning. Now, whether these staff members completely agree with the campaign or not, if they read such comments, they would feel disrespected and utterly devalued by the very same people whose nasty messes they clean up every day. Did the person who scrawled these words not bother to think of those people or just not care?

The living wage was also extensively discussed on that favored anonymity-granting outlet for Swarthmore's "silenced" right-wingers, immature idiots, and closeted bigots: the Daily Jolt forum. Some arguments against the living wage took the form of theory-ridden econ major rants insisting that paying anything more than the market value for the work of these unskilled laborers would be charity and Swarthmore is not a charity (God forbid!).

Then, there was the less-intellectual Daily Jolt stance: "Dear Living Wagers, nobody wants to sign your FUCKING petition. Go away." Many of my friends are involved with the living wage campaign. When I spoke to them about it, they expressed their frustration about the negative responses that they've received. One friend spoke about the surprising amount of defensiveness that people have exhibited when speaking against the campaign. To her, the nature of the issue at hand makes people feel that if they disagree with the campaign, they'll be seen as standing against people's rights. This viewpoint gets internalized, leading to guilt and defensiveness that is vehemently expressed. This expression sometimes turns hostile, as exhibited in the examples I cited above. My friend offered another possible explanation for the strong negative reactions elicited by the campaign: "People don't want to look at injustice, especially when it's right outside of their doors." Perhaps it's not that the signs and petitions are economically faulty or just plain annoying; perhaps people are made uncomfortable by the issues that they bring up.

The following is not addressed to those who, while disagreeing with the campaign, have expressed this disagreement in constructive and respectful ways or have tried to learn more about the campaign. This is addressed to those who can't find it in them to express themselves in non-anonymous, non-hostile, dialogue-fostering manners. Do these issues shake up your world a little too much? These are the people who sustain your life, who cook and serve your food, who clean up after you, and who allow this campus to function. If they weren't here to do this "unskilled labor" that you value so little, I seriously doubt that you'd be able to concentrate very much on the education that you're here to obtain. Yet you come at the issue with empty theoretical arguments that don't seem to take into account the fact that we're talking about real people: the workers, their families, and their children. Alternatively, you attack the students and staff members of the campaign in bitter, immature, and cowardly ways. Are you so used to not giving a damn about this sector of the population at Swarthmore and in the world at large that you have no choice but to react in such a disrespectful fashion? Have you become so comfortable with being blind to the lives of those less privileged than you that, when confronted with the realities of these lives, you cling bitterly to your ability to keep your eyes firmly shut?

(Many of the ideas included in this article came from conversations I've had with people involved in the Living Wage Campaign, especially Chela Delgado and Mattie Weiss. Thanks, you guys!)

Does a person need to wear a suit to earn a living wage?



Is hard work not enough?

Council supports living wage, forms action group

Dear Editor:

We agree with those proposing adoption of a living wage policy who think that many staff members at Swarthmore — in particular wage workers — do not enjoy adequate representation in decision-making processes that affect their lives in multiple and visceral ways. We also agree that the living wage is an idea with merit that needs to be studied further in order to determine how Swarthmore could implement it without jeopardizing employment, benefits, work loads and the like.

Therefore, we are creating an Action Group within Student Council to work with the administration to achieve three things: first, the creation of a new col-

lege-wide committee to evaluate staff compensation policies at Swarthmore and to recommend changes to those policies; second, better representation of staff concerns in existing college institutions; and third, the release of wage, salary and demographic information by the college in order to facilitate more informed and tangible discussion of the living wage and its possible implementation at Swarthmore.

We have been working hard over the past three months to guarantee students receive adequate consideration when decisions are made affecting student interests; we believe staff members merit the same consideration when their own interests are at stake.

Student Council

SC member explains dissenting vote

Dear Editor:

This Monday night Student Council voted in favor of a resolution stating that it supports a living wage. While six members of the council did vote in favor of this resolution, there were several who did not. As one of the dissenters, I wish to state my reasons for not supporting the majority.

First, I would like to state that I am in favor of improving working conditions for Swarthmore staff. I believe that staff members are too often left out of important decisions that directly impact their lives, and that they often do not have adequate representation on college committees. I believe that staff should be treated as equal members of our community. And yes, I believe that the college should do all that it can within its power to ensure that its employees receive the compensation necessary to support themselves and their families.

However, I cannot in good conscience support the living wage proposal as it currently stands. The main problem with "the living wage" is that its proponents, in conjunction with the administration, have not yet determined what it would entail. The Living Wage Committee presented Student Council various versions of a living wage, ranging from \$7.33 per hour to \$22.47 per hour. While the final living wage minimum would likely be set closer to the smaller rate, it is unclear what implications its implementation would have for Swarthmore College.

While it may be nice to imagine a college with infinite resources, the fact of the matter is that increased staff wages will likely come from one of two sources: a reduction in the budgets of other college expenditures or an increase in tuition. Implementation of a living wage necessarily implies a trade-off: either higher tuition or a reduction in some type of college program

(or the opportunity of creating another college program such as loan-free financial aid). Because this trade-off has not yet been defined, I do not yet feel comfortable supporting the living wage as it currently stands, as its effects may be detrimental to important segments of the Swarthmore community.

Moreover, I feel that there is a strong possibility that a living wage would actually harm Swarthmore's employees. While the LWC maintains that it does not support a reduction in the number of staff, such a wage would almost necessarily result in such a decrease. For example, in lean economic times, under harsh budget realities, and under no living wage, the college might be faced with two ways of erasing a budget deficit: freeze wages or lay off employees. Most would agree that wage stagnation is preferable to unemployment, and under the current system, such a provision is possible.

However, under a living wage — which could be pegged to some external definition of a self-sustaining wage — Swarthmore would not have the freedom to freeze wages and would be forced to let some employees go. This is not my vision of better employee treatment and this is why I cannot support the living wage as it now stands.

Proponents of the living wage may argue that the final conception of a living wage will ensure that all my fears do not come true. And this is possible. But it is also possible that programs will be cut and employees will lose jobs. The point is that we just do not yet know. And until we have better answers, until the living wage is better defined, until we know that the living wage can be effectively implemented without unduly harming large factions of campus, I feel that, especially as a representative body, it is practically and morally irresponsible to endorse such a proposal.

Jordan Brackett '00

LIVING WAGE DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

Over 750 signatures have been collected in support of the group's initiatives. But how do staff members themselves feel about the issues?
BY IVAN BOOTHE AND GABE HETLAND

Last Tuesday, students gathered in the Hicks Mural Room for a teach-in sponsored by the Swarthmore Living Wage Democracy Campaign. One staff member showed up. Campaign organizer Mariah Montgomery '04 said that more staff could not attend because they were working for the college, employed at second jobs or home with their families.

Primarily due to the support of the Living Wage Campaign, staff wages at the college have become a major issue this semester. A recent petition circulated by the campaign included the signatures of 755 students.

Staff support, however, has not been unwavering. Some staff have accused the student campaign of taking over an issue they do not fully understand. Faculty also have concerns about the nature of the campaign. Only eight faculty have signed the campaign's petition, and just 40 staff, out of a workforce of over 600 employees.

Currently, staff salaries are set by the college by comparing an average wage with wages in local and national labor markets. The hourly wage of a card-swiper in Sharples or a housekeeper in a dorm, for instance, is calculated based on the wages of workers in similar positions around the country. The college also compares its wages with other educational institutions in the Consortium on Financing Higher Education.

Criteria published by the Women's Association for Women's Alternatives (WAWA), based in the borough of Swarthmore, said that a living wage "allows a person to be self-sufficient, to meet all her needs without government support." According to their 1998 study, a single parent in Delaware County would need about \$13 per hour to achieve self-sufficiency. Other estimates range from \$10 to \$15 per hour, and depend on the size of the family.

FOUNDATION FOR A LIVING WAGE

The roots of the current living wage campaign go back over a year, when an ad-hoc committee on long-range staff planning began to research how staff wages were determined and distributed. Last semester, students from the Conscious Consumers group began talking with staff members about issues important to them. In November, Sam Blair '02 and others met with Melanie Young, Human Resources Director, and in December with members of the College Budget Committee.

This semester, student and staff activists have been meeting with other staff members, senior staff, and Student Council. Campaign leaders hope to create a dialogue among all members of the college community about the issue of staff compensation and participation in decision-making structures. Students and staff also want to begin discussions with the college's Board of Managers and administration about implementing some of the proposals.

Blair and Montgomery stressed that they see the role of students as listening to staff concerns and helping in whatever ways they can. "We've been trying to be good listeners," Blair said. "We want to use our privilege as students to advance the concerns that they brought to us, and to make a space where their voices can be heard."

More than 75 students attended the teach-in last Tuesday, and hundreds of posters have been placed around campus by the campaign. Supporters believe the college has the resources and responsibility to make sure that every employee has enough to live on. To members of the campaign, it is as much an issue of respect as one of income.

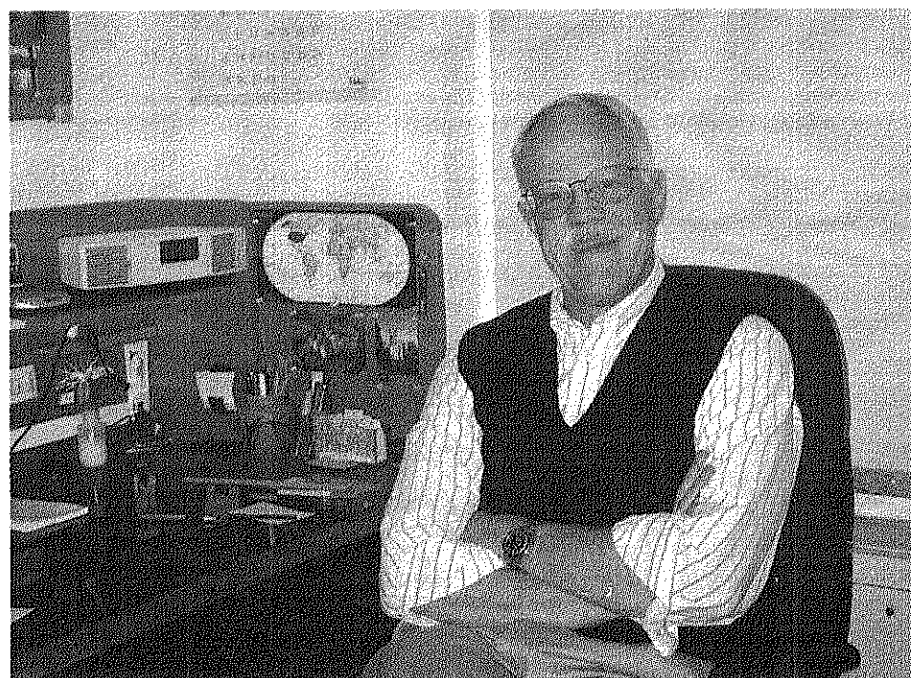
The lowest wage category in Swarthmore's fiscal year 2000 pay scale have minimum hiring salaries ranging from \$5.36 to \$8.53 per hour. Most employees of Dining Services, including those who have worked at the college for several years, earn between \$7 and \$9 per hour.

Student activists assert that such hourly wages are not adequate to maintain oneself or a family. According to supporters of the campaign, such wages do not pay for food, housing, transportation, taxes, and health and child care.

Blair realizes that the issue of staff pay is a contentious one. "Implementation is indisputably complicated," he said, "but when I look back at the general principle —



Claire Weiss Phoenix Staff



Claire Weiss Phoenix Staff

Top: Director of Human Resources Melanie Young wants to include the issue of a living wage in an examination of staff compensation.

Above: Economics professor Larry Westphal says that most economists believe that increasing minimum wages would have a negative impact on employment.

that everyone should be able to support themselves and their families on what they make — it's pretty simple. It just makes sense."

STAFF MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

While most staff members interviewed supported higher wages for staff, there was no general agreement regarding the living wage campaign specifically.

Kae Kalwaic, an administrative assistant in the education department, has been one of the campaign's strongest supporters.

She believes that the campaign has been a thoughtful and concerted effort. "Students see staff treated in a certain way, as not respected," she said. "Students are looking for a real community atmosphere, where everyone has a voice to participate in decisions affecting their lives, where all are free to speak out on issues."

Kalwaic said that she welcomes the efforts of the campaign's organizers. "The greatest part of working on labor issues at Swarthmore," she said, "has been working with students on campus."

Kalwaic views the issue of a living wage as one affecting not just staff, but the entire college community. "If the college modeled its principles of social justice by treating staff well, that would affect the tenor of the whole campus," she said.

Kalwaic feels that many staff enjoy the positive working conditions at the college.

See LIVING WAGE, pg. 12

Diverse views on living wage

From LIVING WAGE, pg. 11

She believes, however, that the lack of adequate pay and inclusion in decision-making processes show little respect for the importance of staff on campus. "One way Swarthmore could show itself as a true leader in social justice is to model those principles in the ways it treats all people on campus," she said. "A living wage would be indicative of respect."

Hamza Wali, an Environmental Services employee in Martin, also sees a link between the living wage and respect. Wali feels that Environmental Services staff are not treated with the level of respect that should be accorded to them. He views himself as a professional, and he noted that his job requires knowledge of chemicals and the operation of machinery. He said that more respect should be given to such work in the college and in society at large.

Wali, who has strongly supported the campaign for a living wage from the beginning, said it is simply a way "to put fairness into practice."

With wages at current levels, some staff have had to hold down two jobs to make ends meet. Kalwaic believes that a gap exists between the college's philosophy of social justice and the reality of staff pay. While the college supports a tutoring program in Chester, she noted, it pays staff wages that are not adequate without another source of income. "Tutoring kids might be well-intentioned," she said, "but we need to help the families be present for their children."

Wali said he enjoys working at Swarthmore and that working in Martin "feels like part of a family." But Wali said he has struggled to meet all of his living needs. Currently, he attends night school three times a week at a Delaware County community college after a full day of work in Martin. Before he enrolled in the community college, Wali said he often had to work up to 14 hours per day - eight hours at Swarthmore and five to six hours at other jobs.

According to Michelle Hartel, a Dining Services employee who works in the Kohlberg Coffee Bar, the staff "just want something decent." While she does support the campaign in principle, Hartel was concerned that many newly hired employees receive wages close to those of experienced employees. "How are they going to work out that an employee making \$16 per hour has been here for nine years, and they're hiring a new employee for \$14?" she asked.

Hartel said experience does not seem to play a large part in determining staff salaries. "Essie Mae was here for 39 years, and when she left [five years ago] she made \$10.50 an hour," she said.

"I know that students are the

number-one priority," Hartel said, "and that's the way it should be." But she said that staff are also extremely important to the college. She questioned the level of respect "when you've been here 16 years and you're making the same as a new employee."

Hartel also noted that "students' salaries are higher than some of the employees' [salaries]." Having heard arguments that not many people were being paid on the lowest pay scale, she questioned the reasoning behind its existence. "If they say, 'Well, nobody makes \$5.75,' then why have it? Eliminate that level,"

"A LIVING WAGE WOULD BE INDICATIVE OF RESPECT"

she said.

Melanie Young, the director of Human Resources, pointed to what she called a strong benefits package that staff receive. The package includes a \$2,200 "bank" of options that staff may choose to take as additional pay.

Wali agreed that "the benefits are grand." But, he said, "you can't live on benefits." He would like to work at Swarthmore until he retires, but isn't sure that there's room for much advancement at the college.

Not all staff members are as supportive of the campaign as Wali and Kalwaic. An employee from Environmental Services, who asked not to be identified, said that she is "satisfied with the way things are."

"I'm not against a living wage," she said, "but I am against the way in which it has been presented." She said that the campaign has relied too heavily on strong-arm tactics. In addition, she is concerned that some of the information presented in posters around campus gives an inaccurate representation of staff working here.

The employee felt that many staff in Environmental Services were never given an idea of just what the living wage proposal was, or where the money would come from. These concerns were echoed in Monday night's Student Council meeting (see sidebar), when members agreed to endorse the campaign in principle only.

"It's not that I'm completely opposed," the staff person said, "but the timing doesn't seem right." She also believes that supervisors should have been included in the campaign. Overall, she said, "I think there needs to be more honesty."

As for communication between staff and the administration, the Staff Advisory Council (SAC), which makes recommendations to President Al Bloom, is one avenue by which staff concerns can be aired. Kalwaic noted, however, that because the staff council is advisory in nature, it has no final say in how decisions are made at the college. "We basically don't have much voice in decision-making," Kalwaic said.

Hartel is cautiously optimistic



Claire Weiss Phoenix Staff

Kate Corbett and Michelle Hartel hand Philip Hoefs his coffee Thursday morning. Hartel is concerned that senior staff often don't make much more than newly hired staff.

about the council. "SAC has come a long way," she said. But she, like Kalwaic, feels that it could only promote staff concerns on a limited basis.

Kalwaic also said that some staff may be reluctant to talk to Bloom or others about their concerns, because they are afraid of losing their jobs. She believes that the administration "should do something positive to show commitment to free speech, to making people feel comfortable voicing their concerns."

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

At this point, the college's administration seems willing to listen to the arguments for the living wage. Paul Aslanian, vice president for finance and planning, declined to comment, citing a busy schedule. Director of Human Resources Melanie Young, however, did agree to talk about staff issues.

Young, who was hired last April after the top position in human resources had been vacant for over a year, said she has "been working at a pretty furious pace" since arriving at Swarthmore. She attributed much of that to the "pent-up demand" created by the absence of a director. Her predecessor, Barbara Carroll, resigned in March 1999 after less than three years on the job.

Since arriving, Young said she has addressed some of what she felt were the main concerns of the staff, and is looking forward to continuing that trend. She is beginning periodic staff training seminars on a wide variety of subjects, from supervisor training to simple financial planning. Young said this ini-

"BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR, THERE WILL BE A NEW COMPENSATION PLAN."

tiative is in response to a number of staff concerns.

"They were dissatisfied in the lack of opportunities for personal development," she said. The staff community, according to Young, will decide the type of training to be offered.

Young said that salary issues came up only after the most pressing concerns were ameliorated. "I didn't hear about the living wage until last fall," she said.

Last semester, Young was busy with issues that fell "outside the budget cycle," such as working on a new staff handbook and develop-

ing a new vacation policy. Now that next year's budgeting is wrapping up, Young wants to have a "re-evaluation of the compensation system." The living wage issue, she said, would be a part of that examination.

"By this time next year, there will be a new compensation plan," Young said.

Much of the controversy surrounding the staff wages hinges on the Full Market Value, or FMV, of the college's staff salaries. The FMV measure is unique to Swarthmore, according to Young.

In the normal business world, she said, each company has a beginning, middle and high pay rate for each pay grade. Each job is in a grade, and each grade has a range of possible pay rates. Every employee is placed in one of the ranges based on experience and skill level. Most businesses compare the middle rate to the average middle rate in the market.

See LIVING WAGE, pg. 13

LIVING WAGE DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

JACKIE APONTE

SCOOTERDYKE



Living wage woes

The Living Wage Campaign has at last launched into full swing. When this mobilization began, I didn't expect that it would cause much dissent among students on campus. Essentially, the campaign calls for a wage that would allow people to adequately provide for themselves and their families without having to juggle multiple jobs and still struggle to make ends meet. The issue speaks not only to class but also to topics of race and gender. For instance, I'm sure that no student or faculty member has failed to notice that almost the entire housekeeping staff is black and female. The living wage seemed to me an intuitively worthy cause, one toward which Swat students would be either supportive or neutral. Indeed, there is a great base of support for the campaign, demonstrated through much positive feedback and over 700 signatures on the petition so far.

Naturally, there are dissenters. Some of these dissenters have chosen to express their disagreement in useless, disrespectful, even hostile manners. Though they are definitely in the extreme minority, their asinine behavior can overshadow the outpouring of support that the campaign has received from most of the campus. Although I have long since abandoned the Swattie delusion ("That couldn't happen here!"), even I was shocked at the venomous responses of these few, obnoxious members of the student body.

Take, for instance, the comments that were hand-written on living wage signs in Wharton: "Not Happy? Then Quit" and, in response to the observation that Swarthmore spends more on its plants than on its employees, "THEN LEAVE." Those comments were written on signs posted on the doors through which staff members walk every morning. Now, whether these staff members completely agree with the campaign or not, if they read such comments, they would feel disrespected and utterly devalued by the very same people whose nasty messes they clean up every day. Did the person who scrawled these words not bother to think of those people or just not care?

The living wage was also extensively discussed on that favored anonymity-granting outlet for Swarthmore's "silenced" right-wingers, immature idiots, and closeted bigots: the Daily Jolt forum. Some arguments against the living wage took the form of theory-ridden economic major rants insisting that paying anything more than the market value for the work of these unskilled laborers would be charity and Swarthmore is not a charity (God forbid!).

Then, there was the less-intellectual Daily Jolt stance: "Dear Living Wagers, nobody wants to sign your FUCKING petition. Go away." Many of my friends are involved with the living wage campaign. When I spoke to them about it, they expressed their frustration about the negative responses that they've received. One friend spoke about the surprising amount of defensiveness that people have exhibited when speaking against the campaign. To her, the nature of the issue at hand makes people feel that if they disagree with the campaign, they'll be seen as standing against people's rights. This viewpoint gets internalized, leading to guilt and defensiveness that is vehemently expressed. This expression sometimes turns hostile, as exhibited in the examples I cited above. My friend offered another possible explanation for the strong negative reactions elicited by the campaign: "People don't want to look at injustice, especially when it's right outside of their doors." Perhaps it's not that the signs and petitions are economically faulty or just plain annoying; perhaps people are made uncomfortable by the issues that they bring up.

The following is not addressed to those who, while disagreeing with the campaign, have expressed this disagreement in constructive and respectful ways or have tried to learn more about the campaign. This is addressed to those who can't find it in them to express themselves in non-anonymous, non-hostile, dialogue-fostering manners. Do these issues shake up your world a little too much? These are the people who sustain your life, who cook and serve your food, who clean up after you, and who allow this campus to function. If they weren't here to do this "unskilled labor" that you value so little, I seriously doubt that you'd be able to concentrate very much on the education that you're here to obtain. Yet you come at the issue with empty theoretical arguments that don't seem to take into account the fact that we're talking about real people: the workers, their families, and their children. Alternatively, you attack the students and staff members of the campaign in bitter, immature, and cowardly ways. Are you so used to not giving a damn about this sector of the population at Swarthmore and in the world at large that you have no choice but to react in such a disrespectful fashion? Have you become so comfortable with being blind to the lives of those less privileged than you that, when confronted with the realities of these lives, you cling bitterly to your ability to keep your eyes firmly shut?

(Many of the ideas included in this article came from conversations I've had with people involved in the Living Wage Campaign, especially Chela Delgado and Mattie Weiss. Thanks, you guys!)

Does a person need to wear a suit to earn a living wage?



Is hard work not enough?

Council supports living wage, forms action group

Dear Editor:

We agree with those proposing adoption of a living wage policy who think that many staff members at Swarthmore — in particular wage workers — do not enjoy adequate representation in decision-making processes that affect their lives in multiple and visceral ways. We also agree that the living wage is an idea with merit that needs to be studied further in order to determine how Swarthmore could implement it without jeopardizing employment, benefits, work loads and the like.

Therefore, we are creating an Action Group within Student Council to work with the administration to achieve three things: first, the creation of a new col-

lege-wide committee to evaluate staff compensation policies at Swarthmore and to recommend changes to those policies; second, better representation of staff concerns in existing college institutions; and third, the release of wage, salary and demographic information by the college in order to facilitate more informed and tangible discussion of the living wage and its possible implementation at Swarthmore.

We have been working hard over the past three months to guarantee students receive adequate consideration when decisions are made affecting student interests; we believe staff members merit the same consideration when their own interests are at stake.

Student Council

SC member explains dissenting vote

Dear Editor:

This Monday night Student Council voted in favor of a resolution stating that it supports a living wage. While six members of the council did vote in favor of this resolution, there were several who did not. As one of the dissenters, I wish to state my reasons for not supporting the majority.

First, I would like to state that I am in favor of improving working conditions for Swarthmore staff. I believe that staff members are too often left out of important decisions that directly impact their lives, and that they often do not have adequate representation on college committees. I believe that staff should be treated as equal members of our community. And yes, I believe that the college should do all that it can within its power to ensure that its employees receive the compensation necessary to support themselves and their families.

However, I cannot in good conscience support the living wage proposal as it currently stands. The main problem with "the living wage" is that its proponents, in conjunction with the administration, have not yet determined what it would entail. The Living Wage Committee presented Student Council various versions of a living wage, ranging from \$7.33 per hour to \$22.47 per hour. While the final living wage minimum would likely be set closer to the smaller rate, it is unclear what implications its implementation would have for Swarthmore College.

While it may be nice to imagine a college with infinite resources, the fact of the matter is that increased staff wages will likely come from one of two sources: a reduction in the budgets of other college expenditures or an increase in tuition. Implementation of a living wage necessarily implies a trade-off: either higher tuition or a reduction in some type of college program

(or the opportunity of creating another college program such as loan-free financial aid). Because this trade-off has not yet been defined, I do not yet feel comfortable supporting the living wage as it currently stands, as its effects may be detrimental to important segments of the Swarthmore community.

Moreover, I feel that there is a strong possibility that a living wage would actually harm Swarthmore's employees. While the LWC maintains that it does not support a reduction in the number of staff, such a wage would almost necessarily result in such a decrease. For example, in lean economic times, under harsh budget realities, and under no living wage, the college might be faced with two ways of erasing a budget deficit: freezing wages or lay off employees. Most would agree that wage stagnation is preferable to unemployment, and under the current system, such a provision is possible.

However, under a living wage — which could be pegged to some external definition of a self-sustaining wage — Swarthmore would not have the freedom to freeze wages and would be forced to let some employees go. This is not my vision of better employee treatment and this is why I cannot support the living wage as it now stands.

Proponents of the living wage may argue that the final conception of a living wage will ensure that all my fears do not come true. And this is possible. But it is also possible that programs will be cut and employees will lose jobs. The point is that we just do not yet know. And until we have better answers, until the living wage is better defined, until we know that the living wage can be effectively implemented without unduly harming large factions of campus, I feel that, especially as a representative body, it is practically and morally irresponsible to endorse such a proposal.

Jordan Brackett '01