

Tri-co staff meet to discuss concerns

BY GABRIEL HETLAND

Staff members from Bryn Mawr, Haverford and Swarthmore colleges met last Thursday to discuss issues common to the three campuses. The meeting was the fourth such gathering since 1999 organized by Kae Kalwaic, an administrative assistant in Swarthmore's education department.

Kalwaic said she sees this tri-college meeting as a way to move toward greater workplace democracy. The meeting's title, "A Voice in Our Work Places," epitomized Kalwaic's main concern: how staff can gain a greater say in their work environments.

The meeting this year brought together representatives from each of the colleges' staff advisory councils. As in past years, staff members got a chance to talk with one another and to hear about events on the other campuses.

Pat Coyne, the Rose Garden Circle representative of Swarthmore's Staff Advisory Council (SAC), said she thought the meeting went very well. Coyne is the administrative coordinator for the Deans' Office and was one of five Swarthmore SAC members who were present at the meeting.

"It was very informative to find out about other colleges' issues, and nice to get together and talk about all this," she said.

Judy Lord, SAC's moderator and the music and dance department coordina-

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tor, said the meeting was "a good exchange." Lord praised Kalwaic for organizing the event and bringing together staff to hear about interesting developments at the other colleges.

Lord said that she was particularly interested in a fund at Bryn Mawr for staff in financial difficulties. At the end of each year, when students are cleaning out dorms, volunteers go and collect anything that has been left behind. The goods are then sold or recycled, with the money going to a special fund for staff in need.

Kalwaic said that she was very pleased by this year's gathering, and noted that staff from all three colleges expressed interest in having meetings more frequently. "The greatest part about the meeting is that you get to share some of the common issues and to bounce ideas off of each other," she said.

Representatives of the Living Wage

and Democracy Campaign from Swarthmore were also present at the meeting. Kalwaic said that all the groups present were supportive of the concept of a living wage for staff, and that there was interest among staff and students at Bryn Mawr and Haverford in possibly coordinating similar campaigns there.

One issue that arose during the meeting this year, Kalwaic noted, was the time constraint. "This extra work takes lots of time outside of your job," she said, adding that a lack of free time has held back some of her ideas for more leadership training at Swarthmore.

Kalwaic said there was also interest around Haverford's policy of having one staff member meet with the college's board of managers. She wondered if Swarthmore could implement a similar policy