Recent announcements in the Weekly News inviting contributions to the long-range planning process have inspired a group of faculty, staff and students to come together to discuss issues relating to the staff experience at Swarthmore. We are submitting our recommendations before the first Collection so that you will have some time to consider our suggestions before we meet on January 30 and February 13.

Two procedural issues are of immediate concern. First, the name that best represents our concerns, first described to us last spring as "The Staff Experience," has now become "Staffing." This conveys a clear impression to us that staff has instrumental value only for the College. The names of the committees entitled "Faculty Experience" and "Student Experience" imply both a personal and a broad scope of concern, whereas "Staffing" seems to present a more limited, impersonal view. This may have been an oversight, but we believe the title "Staff Experience" would better express the equal importance of the staff's contributions to Swarthmore College.

Second, we are concerned that the Staffing Committee does not currently include representatives from each of the major areas (clerical, library, maintenance, dining services, environmental, etc.), including both exempt and non-exempt personnel. In the entire membership of the group on Staffing, there is only one non-executive member of the staff, and there has been no general solicitation of input from members of the staff. We feel that it is very important that this be rectified as soon as possible. Staff at all levels and from all aspects of College activity would provide a more balanced and accurate view of the staff experience at Swarthmore. Assigning leadership positions on the Committee to traditionally underrepresented staff positions would also demonstrate the College's dedication to equality of voice.

We wish to submit the following concerns and questions for consideration for inclusion in further study of the staff experience.

- Does the College need to redefine and clarify the differences between exempt and non-exempt positions?
- How can the College arrive at fair compensation and reclassify job categories in light of the rapid technological changes that have occurred in the past five years?
- As has happened elsewhere in the job market, Swarthmore seems to have moved toward greater bureaucratization and away from the perceived benefit to employees that this is a low-paced, non-competitive, flexible workplace. How can the College recognize this change and compensate employees for the true state of the high-paced, competitive, and often stressful workplace environment?
- What positive approaches can be implemented to bring additional democratic processes into the workplace?
- How can COSP become a more effective voice for all employees?
- To many, the hierarchy at Swarthmore creates a feeling of preferential treatment toward some employees (for example, Kohlberg Lounge is open only to faculty). What positive initiatives would bring Swarthmore closer to its Quaker traditions?
The absence of a published salary schedule can create both perceived and actual salary inequities. Will the benefits of a salary schedule be evaluated so that previous work experience, educational background and newly acquired skills of each employee can be recognized and rewarded?

Do evaluations of work performance translate into salary increases clearly enough for all levels of the College Community to understand the process? Are the criteria used to determine the salary increases awarded clearly understood? The awarding or lack of awarding of what is in reality a very small merit increase based on evaluation may have a negative effect on morale, since in a zero sum game it functions as a reward for one but punishment for another. Department Heads often express dissatisfaction with the current system of evaluation.

Should considerations of salary be unlinked from formal written evaluations?

Are grievances of staff members dealt with as seriously or as carefully and fairly as are those of the faculty? The procedures stated in the current Standards of Conduct are not always applied, or are carried out only in part. How can grievance procedures be revised so that they are strong, clear and effective? Should the College consider the appointment of an ombudsman?

In considering our relationship with Chester Borough it is of the utmost importance to consider paying the highest possible minimum wage to those employees who would benefit most greatly by furthering their economic contributions to their home community of Chester, and in so doing to enhance the College's links to the Chester community.

We include an attachment that presents a more detailed way of looking at these concerns as they represent broader issues. We hope and expect that these recommendations will be added to the future agendas of the planning group on Staffing. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss issues that can bring positive changes to our College community.

Sincerely,

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