Dear staff colleague:

On March 5, the Planning Sub-Group (PSG) on Staffing held a two-hour open meeting as part of its ongoing consideration of issues related to staff at Swarthmore. The meeting included "breakout" sessions on seven topics; each breakout session was co-facilitated by members of the PSG, the Senior Staff, and COSP. Each team of facilitators was asked to provide to the PSG a one-page summary of their session to help reflect the dialogue and to inform the work of the PSG. Community members in attendance asked if the summaries could be shared, and Paul Aslanian, who chairs the Staffing PSG, agreed to distribute them.

The summaries have now been compiled and are included below, as prepared by the facilitators, for your information. (They will also be distributed in hard copy to individuals who do not have email access.).

Warm regards,

Barb Carroll

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***GOVERNANCE***

Breakout Group on Staff Governance
Long Range Planning Collection on Staff issues
March 5, 1998; 12 - 2 pm

To: Paul Aslanian,
From: Jeff Lott & Amy Dalton
Re: Breakout Session Report

Attached is a one-page summary of the discussion in the March 5 breakout session on governance. This session was attended by:

David Reese, student
Ushi Tandon, library
Martin Warner, registrar
Robin Mamlet, admissions
Amy Dalton, student
Jeff Lott, publications

The breakout group on governance started by listing perceived problems in the relationship between management and staff, communications problems, the drawbacks of current governance structures, and possible solutions to these problems. As the discussion progressed, it focused on three main issues that were felt to be of primary importance to staff. Each issue generated a series of questions and possible solutions that the group felt needed to be addressed by the College.

The planning process itself-especially since it was made more open and representative in the past few weeks-is an example of good governance. We hope that it will continue. Yet while we feel that while there are many issues before the PSG that require a long-range effort, there are others that could (and should) be addressed immediately.
One of these is governance. The issues and questions raised in this brief report are keenly felt at this moment by members of the staff, and action ought to be taken this spring to address them. Once the staff feels secure that it has adequate representation, a number of other short-term issues, such as grievance procedures, could be taken up in parallel with the PSG's discussion of long-range policy questions about staffing.

ISSUE: Members of the staff often feel powerless and voiceless in the decisionmaking processes of the College.

Questions and Possible Solutions:
* How can staff have a greater voice at Swarthmore, and what structures or procedures can be devised to empower that voice?
* Improve governance structures (COSP), increase opportunities for staff meetings and public discussion of issues, ensure that hourly service employees are included at such meetings.
* How can governance procedures work more positively in the interests of both the administration and the staff?
* Improve communication from management, increase representation of staff on committees.

ISSUE: The hierarchical structures of the College both aids and impedes the resolution of staff issues. Questions that are raised through supervisors and management are often "tabled" or discounted by managers in favor of other questions that the manager thinks are more important.

Questions and Possible Solutions:
* How can we develop alternate ways of having questions rise through the hierarchy of the College to reach decisionmakers at the top?
* Provide parallel structures not dependent on the management chain.
* How can employees have their concerns addressed in a timely, effective, and accountable manner?
* Set up timetables to facilitate accountability, regular communication, and due process.

ISSUE: Current staff governance procedures do not always empower staff, or give them the security and confidence the need to raise important questions.

Questions and Possible Solutions:
* How can COSP (and other committees where there is staff representation) be made more accountable to the views of the staff?
* Assure broader participation and more direct communication about staff issues, both from management and staff representatives.
* How can employees be made to feel secure in expressing their views on important issues without fear of retaliation?
* Review the relationship of management to committees that represent staff concerns.
* How can employees whose jobs prevent them from attending meetings, or who do not receive e-mail, be included in all communications and deliberations concerning staff issues?
* Hold meetings in their workplaces at times convenient to their schedules.

***COMPENSATION & JOB CLASSIFICATION***

To: paslan1
From: jglacki1@cc.swarthmore.edu (Joyce Glackin)
Subject: Thursday, March 5th meeting
Cc: dosborn1

Our group had COMPENSATION & JOB CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

Paul Aslanian, Joyce Glackin & Don Osborne

Group felt HR could give more help in upgrading job descriptions &
procedure for upgrading position. As new people are hired at the higher
grade, people in similar positions should be reviewed. Most clerical jobs
need to be reevaluated with all the new computer technology changes
(Banner for example)

There were questions about the criteria for difference in grades.

How are raises determined - fair or arbitrarily given? The small
percentage allocated for merit really pits employee against employee.
Lots of hard feelings over the 1/4 or 1/2 % differences given. Of course
the question of such a big difference in percentages for faculty and staff
in yearly increases always comes up. Al Bloom tried to address this explaining the promotions professors
go through to arrive at these increases where staff many times
just remains in same job. There could be some adjustments made taking
into consideration years of service, upgrading of jobs with all the new technology that has to be learned.

How is the fair market value determined (need better understanding of this
figure) and what COMPARISON GROUP is used? INDUSTRY and/or NONPROFIT?

Staff would like to see salary ranges and maximum salaries along with
minimum and fair market value. Fair market value is reached within 5
years when job is thoroughly learned. When is mid point and maximum
expected to be reached?

Concerns about advancement and moving ahead - some jobs really don't have
career paths - and that has to be an individual decision of staying on in
a position.

Communication is always a biggie and I am sure was brought up in every
group. The latest was about the new time slips to be filled out - too
many rumors (time clocks, change of pay periods, etc). If changes had
been communicated before the meetings (somewhat) it would have been
helpful. Staff feels lack of trust when actually the new slips are for
their benefit. Much easier to keep track of overtime/comp time.

I think this item should be passed to benefit group:

Staff tuition reimbursement should be increased to at least cover one course.
If you are a single person, no children, can you draw on the tuition grant
set aside for those with children?

Don and I would like to see a follow-up progress meeting as was suggested
at the closing session of the meeting yesterday.

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***DIVERSITY***

To: Paul Aslanian

From: Maurice G. Eldridge
        Pat Trinder

Re: Diversity Breakout Session Report

The session on diversity at the College was attended by

    Mary Ellen Chijioke
    Maurice Eldridge
    Eric Freedman
There was consensus in the group that the College should rightly reaffirm its commitment to creating and sustaining a diverse community of students, faculty and staff and that it should renew its efforts particularly to diversify staff at middle and higher levels since the preponderance of the lowest paid jobs are held by African-Americans.

In support of current employees in the lower paying positions, but throughout the organization, it is felt that the College ought to provide training and educational opportunities for employee advancement, encompassing GED preparation to access to College classes. To the extent possible training and promotion from within should be a goal of the College as a means to furthering diversity. Release time must be considered as a necessary cost of such training efforts.

The group also felt that the College should conduct searches accountable for the diversity of their pools and that the report of outcomes from searches expressly describe the outreach for diversity.

The College must work to create a climate which allows it to retain a diverse workforce and which overcomes the prevailing perception of unequal treatment based on minority status.

The College should include in its performance expectations and performance evaluations of all employees the ability to interact with people of diversity backgrounds.

Intentional diversity training should be made available for all employees and mandated for supervisors and managers. Such training should have as an objective changing the culture of departments in the College which have not been traditionally welcoming to diverse membership within them.

The College should make use of existing committees to further define and implement its diversity program, e.g., SALNAH, the Diversity Task Force and the Diversity Umbrella.

Finally, the College must be mindful of its image and practices as a major employer in S. E. Delaware County and its opportunity to set a progressive example.

***TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CAREER PATHS***

TO: Paul Aslanian

FROM: Barbara Carroll
Theresa Handley

RE: Summary of Training, Professional Development, Career Paths Session
    held March 5, 1998

The following appear to be the main sentiments that came out of our session:

a Lack of funding in many departmental budgets for training and professional development, plus a sense that some units have $$ and some managers aggressively support professional training, while others don’t (so a material issue of disparity among units). Perhaps central support could be established to help staff attend seminars which would enhance their job performance and bring additional value to the College.

b The Tuition Reimbursement program currently pays $500.00 per year (50% of one course per semester up to $250. for up to 2 semesters) to those seeking to obtain their Bachelor’s degree. This is paltry and doesn’t even cover the cost of one course at the least expensive college. There is no support at all for post-bachelor’s courses. This is an area which really needs to be addressed. Can the dollar amounts be raised? Should employees be able to attend classes at Swarthmore and earn their degree or at least transfer
the credits they earn? For an institution so committed to the concept of the core value of education, this situation seems ironic. Shouldn't we be at least as supportive of employees themselves as we are of their children? Perhaps there could be a required commitment of some length of service after the employee has completed their course work if the College pays, like the military?

* Another strong recommendation was that Management Training be required for all supervisors on an ongoing basis. Department Chairs change every few years and really need to have supervisory training. No one is born a supervisor and training is really important.

* Career Paths or lack thereof. There is frustration at the lack of promotional opportunities and the feeling that we should try to retain staff who are motivated and continue to improve their educational/professional development. Promotional opportunities should be encouraged for those who are advancing themselves. Consider whether internal candidates should be given priority over external candidates if they apply for a position that is not quite the same as they are currently doing but feel they could accomplish. We should be aware of the skills and assets of our staff and seek them out if there is a position into which they could move and advance. There is a sense that the only way to advance is to leave Swarthmore, and people generally like it here and would like ways to both stay and advance.

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***BENEFITS ISSUES***

Summary of Benefits Issues Raised at Open Meeting on Planning for Staff of 3/5/98

Issues can be divided into three broad categories: concern about current benefits, suggestions about possible new benefits, and more general issues of principal.

A. Concern About Existing Benefits

1. The existing tuition benefit grant for employees is so small as to be almost useless, especially for people moving toward a degree rather than perhaps taking a single, skill-enhancing course.
2. The rationale behind the existing structure of college tuition benefits for employee children should be reexamined.
   a. Current structure imposes a kind of economic discrimination against those who can't afford big ticket schools which would be reduced if tuition benefits were no longer capped at 50% of the school's tuition
   b. Employee couples with more than two children only get tuition benefits for one person.
3. The College should make sure that all benefits are clearly explained to employees, including eligibility criteria and claim procedures. In the case of disagreements about benefits (eg., short-term disability claims) a clear, impartial procedure for resolving disputes should be in place.
4. The College should make a public commitment that it's new benefits eligible policy (only at least 50% time employees) will not lead to employment strategies designed to minimize benefit costs to the College.
5. Concern was expressed that each year medical benefits cost more and provide less. Though people realize that this is to a large extent outside the College's control, the College should examine combining with Bryn Mawr and Haverford to explore more cost effective options.

B. Possible New Benefits

1. The College should revisit yet again the possibility of providing some kind of child care, which despite the cost, will provide benefits to the College in a workforce that is better able to keep mind and body on the job. [The Women's Concerns Committee is developing some financial feasibility plans.] Relatedly, the College should explore being more flexible about job starting times to enable parents to get their kids off to school or day care.
2. Something should be done to reward long-time employees. Two suggestions made were increased contributions to retirement plans and some sort of early retirement buyout plan.
3. Some sort of sabbatical plan for staff should be considered.
C. General Issues

1. The College commitment to a "total compensation" strategy should be reexamined. It may not be adequate to trade benefits against salary in a world in which, for example, health insurance costs keep going up and coverages keep getting worse. Perhaps the College should consider committing itself to providing a certain level of benefits whatever the cost, without in effect paying for them out of salary, much as it is committed to meeting financial aid needs of students, whatever the cost.

2. The College should try to develop a policy about whether provision of benefits in general is guided by principles of equality or principles of need. The logical extreme of principles of equality is a benefit bank in which everyone gets the same amount and is free to allocate it among a cafeteria plan of benefits. Need-based allocation would acknowledge e.g., that families have need for greater amounts of health care coverage than single individuals and allocate benefits accordingly. While in practice, a compromise between these two guiding principles is unavoidable, it would be helpful for the College to have a position on this issue to guide it in its benefit decisions.

3. Staff are concerned that the College's willingness to spend substantial sums making small changes in the physical plant and apparent reluctance to spend money on staff compensation reflects inappropriate priorities. To be the best College in the country, Swarthmore needs to have the best staff in the country.

Respectfully submitted by Gretchen Stroh and Barry Schwartz, co-facilitators.
March 9, 1998

***JOB EXPECTATIONS, PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS, LINKS TO COMPENSATION***

Job Expectations, Performance Evaluations, Links to Compensation

There were approximately 12 people in the group to discuss Job Expectations, Performance Evaluations and Links to Compensation. The group had a diverse attendance that included faculty, administrative assistants, computing center staff, library staff and facilities management staff.

We identified four areas of concern:

*Clearly defined goals and objectives of the evaluation process
Issues were raised concerning a lack of clear communication & understanding of the overall evaluation process.
It was recommended that a clearly defined process be established & communicated to everyone. From an explanation of the salary pool structure and how salaries are determined to employee expectations and the way evaluations are documented. It was recommended that a detailed letter of explanation be generated to all so that supervisors and staff hear the same information.

*Performance Evaluation Criteria
Issues were raised on how the college currently has a wide range of forms that are used for evaluations, how some evaluators do not give excellent ratings for certain job responsibilities. It was recommended that performance criteria be established from a standard set of college performance expectations that would branch off to individual department expectations (a two part form). Consideration of innovative methods (cooperative or 360 degree evaluations) and modernization of the current process was recommended.

*Training
Issues concerning a deficiency in training of supervisors and middle management on how to conduct evaluations were discussed. It was recommended that a program in professional development be established to assist in conducting these evaluations. It was also noted that it was critical faculty responsible for evaluating staff be included in this training program.

*The Salary Survey Relevant to Evaluations
Although not a true topic in this area, issues were discussed concerning the overall comparison between Swarthmore and other employers to determine salary. There was also some discussion concerning the perception that evaluations occurring after the raise percentages have been determined. It was recommended that Swarthmore College continue the local, regional and national comparison but to compare more closely to institutions with similar staffing levels and performance expectations.

Larry Schall
Leon Francis

***GRIEVANCE***

The discussion about grievances was attended by approximately twenty-five Swarthmore employees, including staff and faculty. Several members of the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee were present. The discussion was facilitated by Michelle Hartell, Jennie Keith and John Scalio.

John Scalio invited the group to share their ideas about what issues related to grievances needed to be addressed. The discussion was energetic and there appeared to be consensus about the pressing need to address the following issues:

--CONFIDENTIALITY of persons who bring forward grievances must be protected. This has not always been the case, which has made some employees reluctant to bring forward grievances.

--INFORMATION about how to bring a grievance needs to be available in clear, simple and easily accessible form, e.g. posted in various work areas.

--CONSISTENCY in grievance procedures should be maintained across different categories of employees to the greatest extent possible.

--SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY for the person bringing a grievance should be built into grievance procedures. Individuals have in the past felt alone and vulnerable when bringing a grievance, which has made others hesitant to pursue a complaint.

--TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY for supervisors should be part of the College’s creation of an effective system for addressing grievances. Supervisors need to understand the procedures and must be accountable if they are ruled against in a grievance procedure.

--EO OFFICER should be an independent position. It was noted that the EOAC has recommended this, but that the job description posted for EO Officer described the position as one to be combined with an individual’s existing job. A member of the EOAC said that Al Bloom was going to meet with the Committee to talk about the reasons for defining the position in this way.

--NEW GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE is needed urgently. Creation of a new procedure should not be part of long-term planning, but receive immediate attention.

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