

## Letters to

### *Eliminate Class Inequity at the College*

To the Editor,

The Faculty-Only Lounge editorial in last week's *Phoenix*, as well as Janice Gallagher's informational article in the same issue, provide a forum for discussion of inequality at Swarthmore and remind us of the ideals the College has set forth for all members of our community. For me, a member of the staff, these articles offer encouragement in the pursuit of equal rights within the College community.

We can draw further support for equality in the workplace from Robert Levering, a Swarthmore alumnus, who has written several books that define specific practices that build good morale within an organization. He states in his book, *A Great Place to Work*, "Assuring fairness requires addressing two major problems: the huge imbalance of power of the organization over the individual employee and the proclivity for management to be treated as first class citizens and other employees as second class citizens at best." Good workplaces reduce class distinctions.

Some may claim that Swarthmore is more democratic than many other organizations or businesses that display outright autocratic controls. Rudolf Dreikurs in *Social Equality: The Challenge of Today* warns us that we often have a parody of democracy "witnessed whenever powerful groups control institutions." Certain dominant groups monopolize the power, "and all the control is exercised with an unbelievable capacity to maintain the appearance of democratic procedures.

Railroading and extremely skillful manipulations by apparently scrupulous observation of the rules of order permit dominant groups to exert their control." Does this happen at Swarthmore? Will the issue of the faculty-only lounge become bogged down in the bureaucracy, passed along from committee to committee only to come to rest in someone's pile of paperwork, when all that would be required would be the removal of the faculty sign?

The elimination of discrimination based on job description or socioeconomic class should not stop with the faculty-only lounge but should con-

tinue as we struggle to create a college environment without such barriers. The College community might also consider the following thoughts:

- adding socioeconomic class or job description to the list of areas of discrimination to ensure equal opportunity.

- allowing the staff to vote on the staff handbook as the faculty does on its handbook.

- appointing additional staff representatives to serve on College committees. For example, the College Planning Committee will be evaluating the "staff experience" and yet not one representative from Environmental Services, Physical Plant, Grounds, clerical/administrative assistants, paraprofessionals, or library staff serves on this committee.

- opening social activities to everyone. The Fall Fest and Ice Cream Social were created specifically for staff on the premise that faculty have their own social events. Faculty can come to these events, but they are not "invited."

- addressing general correspondence to Members of the College Community instead of Faculty-Staff. A recent e-mail addressed only to staff announced a meeting to acknowledge the contribution of employees who have served the College for ten years or more. Wouldn't the faculty also wish to be present to offer congratulations to their fellow co-workers?

Since the Swarthmore College Bulletin asks students "to sustain an educational and social community where the rights of all are respected," shouldn't we as members of the College community demonstrate that we can reach common ground on these problems? We can work toward a consensus on these issues by offering a model and demonstrating hope for resolving differences. Participation in decision-making will foster mutual understanding and cooperation among the different groups at Swarthmore. To break bread with each other in Kohlberg we show our willingness to feel and live with each other regardless our of job classification.

—Kae Kalwaic  
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