October 23, 2004

President Al Bloom
Swarthmore College

Dear President Bloom:

The Campaign has been carefully following the progress of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Living Wage. It appears as if they will come to a decision concerning the amount of the living wage sometime in the next two months. The Committee will be soliciting the community for input, which may extend the process of decision-making. The important point, however, is that a decision to pay a living wage will be made. It is important therefore, that the funds for the increase be set aside now. Estimates range from around $500,000 to $1,300,000. It is not unreasonable to ask that these amounts be put in reserve so that the funding stream is in place when the request is made to finance the living wage.

Members of the campaign have been patiently working on living wage issues since the Fall of 2000, therefore, we are most anxious that the living wage be implemented. Assurances that the wage will be included in the on-going budget process will assure that the living wage is part of the plan. We do not want the Ad Hoc Committee to have made the decision to pay a living wage only to be told that it is too late for this budgeting cycle.
Another year’s hardship for employees to live on wages less than a living wage cannot compare to any other budgetary urgencies the College may be facing.

According to the Mid-Atlantic

The compensation goals for staff have lagged behind. The result of the deficiency is that the burden for operating the College at with minimal spending of the endowment has been to place that burden on the back of our employees. Given this historical lag in optimum payments, the College must now correct this injustice by not allowing another year go by replicating the racial and gender inequalities integral to the colleges pay policies and the market injustices.

Ending choices:

We would like to meet with you to discuss this budgetary consideration. Meanwhile, we are examining ways in which we believe the college can trim expenses. We will be asking faculty, students and staff for input into where more careful analysis might reveal places in which we can trim expenses. Students have been asked to make sacrifices, so we may request some budgetary figures so that we may make an informed decision. We are also examining ways in which we can help the College to raise funds. You might be interested to know that we already have $500 that we earned doing workshops.

Please be in touch through our email: SWATLIVINGWAGE@YAHOO.COM on a good time for us to meet.

Sincerely,
Swarthmore College Living Wage and Democracy Campaign