THIS ISSUE OF THE PHOENIX CONTAINS ABOUT $$ INEQUALITY $$ AT A TOP LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE!!
Campus network fails Tuesday

BY ELIZABETH WRIGHT

Tuesday morning, in the midst of a routine upgrade, the college computer network went down across the entire campus. While the computing center worked quickly to get as much of the network back online as possible, some buildings remained offline until after noon on Wednesday. During the downtime, Swarthmore community had a chance to reassess what life is like without working email, network or Internet access.

The outage began at about 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, when a piece of hardware called a giga switch failed. The switch is connected to the main server and handles all Internet traffic coming from outside the campus network. It also routes traffic to the five main network hubs on campus.

"The biggest box with the biggest connecting pipe in the system went belly-up," manager of user services Rob Jacobson said in summary of Tuesday's network problems. Mark Dumin, manager of networking and systems, did not know for sure what caused the switch to fail. "We suspect it was a power spike," he said. "The power supply to the server was turned off early Tuesday morning to allow for maintenance that was supposed to take five to ten minutes. He explained that switching the power on and off seems to put stress on equipment, and if a part is going to fail, it is likely to fail when the system is powered up again. That appears to have been the case with the giga switch.

"We certainly understand how important the network is to [the college community]," Dumin said, noting he will be trying to "disconnect what happened" and work to prevent similar problems in the future. He noted, however, that "it's fat of life that outages will happen."

Dumin said about half the campus network was back together by one o'clock Tuesday afternoon after a replacement part arrived from Philadelphia. It was only a partial fix, however, because final repairs could not be completed until another replacement piece arrived from California on Wednesday.

In order to restore network services to as much of the campus as possible before the new switch arrived, Dumin and others in the computing center spent the rest of Tuesday afternoon scrambling to reroute the network.

"What we did [Tuesday] afternoon involved a lot of reconfiguration programming on secondary switches," Dumin said.

One hundred twenty secondary switches on campus fed into five main hubs located in Paulette, Boardman, McCabe, Sharples and a server rack in the basement of the Library. Traffic that usually goes through five hubs was squeezed through two hubs located on a backup card.

"Unfortunately, this was the case as the campus was busy," Dumin said. "All public areas, as well as McCabe and most dorms were back on the network by six o'clock Tuesday evening. Some dorms, however, such as Worth and the Lojedes, were not re-connected to the network until Wednesday morning. Although inconveniences caused by the outage were minor -- Jacobson said one student called the computing center to complain that he couldn't check his stock online -- students who had worked moved to their class folders on the server had difficulties.

The network outage had no ill effects for students like Mark Dumin, manager of networking and systems, works to restore network access to the campus Tuesday afternoon.

Rob Cox '89. Having completed a paper due the 'Friday well before the network outage occurred, he was able to "enjoy not needing the extension the professor granted the class because of the outage."

"To aid students without network connections in their rooms, computers in Trotter, Kohlberg and Dupont were kept open as public areas until 2 a.m. Wednesday morning, providing access to 100 networked computers."

SC advises against changing alcohol policy

BY ELIZABETH WRIGHT

As part of an ongoing process of scrutinizing the college's alcohol policy, Student Council submitted a report to the Dean's Advisory Committee Monday outlining its stance that the current policy should remain unchanged.

According to Dean Bob Gross, the college currently takes the approach of "harm reduction" in determining the alcohol policy. Under this policy, preventing danger that comes from excessive drinking is emphasized over attempting to prevent underage drinking.

The council report was written at the request of the Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC). The committee specifically charged the council last October to respond to reports that students frequently use college money from the Student Activities Fee to purchase alcohol. The council was asked to propose a solution to the problem of fraud.

A report issued by DAC in October stated, "If an acceptable solution is presented, the deans will need to impose restrictions on SAP spending, policies and practices to address the problem."

The DAC report summarized the findings of a peer review of the alcohol policy. The review was instigated as a part of the fallout from the undercover police raid at the annual Delta Upsilon Margaretaville party in April, 1999 at which 13 Swarthmore students were arrested for underage drinking.

In the course of the review, reports of fraud were brought to the council's attention, and the problem of fraud became the focus of the review. DAC made several specific suggestions, such as: provide students with an open book that describes the alcohol policy, and that are submitted to the Student Budget Committee (SBC) for reimbursement for party expenses, and that they be trained in inventory of supplies at parties in comparison to receipts that are submitted, and that the store from which students could buy party supplies. Student Council determined that since the 1999 Margaretaville party, sufficient changes have been made by SBC and the Social Affairs Committee, the two student organizations involved in the process of funding parties. Official changes on the level of altering the college alcohol policy, they determined, are unnecessary.

"The council report doesn't call for drastic changes," said SBC treasurer and council member Marvin Barron '04, who helped write the report. Rather, the report encourages the deans of the college to follow the current alcohol policy.

According to Barron, the council tried to "strongly impress the belief that neither DAC nor any other entity can come up with a set of regulatory procedures that are "frightening." The report also stated that the council also attempted to spell out that the "would be a mistake" if the college "decides to favor more draconian approach" to the alcohol policy without taking into account the procedural changes that SBC and DAC have independently made to address fraud. He also felt the college should consider the possibility that the fraud may have been overstated.

"I think Dean Frank Liotta is correct," said he had not had a chance to review the council's report yet, but that he did not expect it to propose major changes. He said he expected it to propose means for reducing the possibility of fraud.

"A mutual movement" on the part of SBC and DAC to tighten their procedures has been effective in reducing the possibility of fraud, according to Barron. "Little changes to system made over the course of the year have gone a long way," he said.

Effects of improving communication have meant that neither group assumes the others has already screened party requests, which Barron said was a "real problem" in the past. SBC now requires that every request for reimbursement be reviewed twice, and every check given out must be signed twice. SBC has also be...
Tackling the living wage dilemma

For all the emphasis Swarthmore places on "ethical intelligence," it is surprisingly rare that we find ourselves in a real-life situation that challenges our ethical faculties. But the living wage is precisely that sort of situation.

Strip the Living Wage Campaign of its rhetoric and activist bluster, and you'll find that the living wage has at its core a moral claim. It is a way of expressing the idea that people have intrinsic value, a fundamental worth that cannot be accounted for by the economic metrics that measure living wages, then, is an attempt to correct the market system and to assert this intrinsic value.

In an ideal world, there might be no need for a living wage — a person's fundamental worth might be obvious and acknowledged by the system. But we live in a practical world, and ironically enough, economic incentives even put a price on intrinsic value, at least as defined by the Living Wage Campaign.

And therein lies the dilemma. In its existence as an educational and cultural institution, the college should put its money where its mouth is and strive to treat people as ends in themselves rather than means to some other end — this is at least a part of ethical intelligence. Yet the college also exists as an economic entity — an employer that, despite its sizable financial resources, is still beholden to the market forces that run the world.

Neither bowing to market forces nor denying the reality of economics is a truly viable option. Although we support the idea of a living wage — indeed, it's difficult not to think that human beings have intrinsic value — there are significant problems with the campaign itself: worries about how it is being run, questions about where the money for increased wages would come from, and even concern that increased wages can cause other, more significant economic problems for faculty members. And despite the widespread support among students, the campaign has no clear plan of action, no support from staff and faculty.

For ethical intelligence to demand more than mere acknowledgment of the dilemma. Action is required, and that action is particularly economically feasible, a compromise is needed.

A more limited solution can be called from the comments of faculty, staff, and students. Economics professor Larry Wiegand suggested equalizing the percentage of the market rate that faculty and staff are paid. In 1997, for example, faculty are paid 89.5 percent of the market rate, while staff only receive 86 percent of the market rate. There could also be some room for the upper end of the pay scale for senior staff to advance their careers, a response to the complaint that staff aren't being rewarded for their seniority.

In interviews, many faculty members have mentioned wanting increased respect and recognition. Although it is a difficult and frustrating notion, the fact is that the system is set up to be inefficient, and people need to change their expectations of the system.

Another solution is to adopt a more limited approach, such as the one proposed by Wiegand. This would not address the larger issues, but it would provide some relief for those who are struggling to make ends meet.

These are just a few examples of the dilemmas that the moral problems of the current system and the same time attempt to minimize the economic impact. There are undoubtedly many more solutions like these out there. If Student Council's Action Group is to be more effective and more aggressive than Student Council itself in approaching the issue, its efforts will likely lead to a more comprehensive solution that can be both morally laudable and economically tenable — in other words, an ethically intelligent approach to this dilemma.

Medeski Martin & Wood a great choice for large event

Dear Editor,

I saw the Medeski Martin & Wood concert on Saturday. They are the most amazing jam band that I have ever seen. I went to see them last year and was so impressed. I hope that there will be more concerts of this quality in the future.

Francisco Estrada '03

Letters to the Editor

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Some contend living wage may be counterproductive

What former Human Resources director Barbara Carrol termed the FMV, however, is the median hourly wage. This, Young said, could be compared against “living wages,” calculated by organizations such as WAWA. According to Young, Carroll had only published the beginning and middle ranges of salaries. Young has proposed a new set of ranges.

After approval by the Board of Managers, she said, the new ranges—beginning, middle and high—will be published. Young stressed that Swarthmore’s ranges are competitive in the larger market. “The compensation is up to the FMV,” she said.

The concept of a living wage, Young said, “is a very different way to think about wages.” She said that wages are generally tied to the value of a particular job within a marketplace. While she sold that implementation of a living wage would be complicated, she believes that “it has great human value.” Young said she would include the living wage idea in the planned compensation review.

Young pointed out, however, that “people for whom money is the most important thing aren’t in higher education.” Indeed, the big issue she has heard from staff has not been about the living wage, but rather the desire “to be recognized for their work...to be treated the same from department to department.” Young hopes to have a “series of dialogues” about staff respect. She wants the atmosphere, she said, to be a place that employees “are happy to be in.”

FACULTY VIEWPOINTS

Economics professor Larry Westphal said he views the campaign as a “very important issue with lots of misguided opinion.” Westphal said he feels that poverty and inequality are significant issues but he doesn’t believe that Swarthmore can resolve low wages by itself. It’s a social problem, he said, and needs to be solved on the national level.

Most economists, according to Westphal, agree that significant increases in minimum wages would have negative consequences in terms of employment. Although he added that the area is still controversial. Westphal said that economists do not yet know the magnitude of effects that minimum wage increases have on employment. Nor does he think it is “wise to monkey around with market forces.” He asked, “Who’s to determine what a ‘just’ wage is?”

A better approach to combating poverty, according to Westphal, is the earned income credit. Although the economics is somewhat complicated, the earned income credit is effectively a negative income tax for working people below a certain income level, below certain income, who would receive cash payments instead of being charged income tax. Most economists, said Westphal, regard the earned income credit as a positive option because it doesn’t distort marketplace incentives. Swarthmore is considered to be a decent place to work in the area, westphal said. Addressing whether college staff are paid appropriately, Westphal said that he believes they are paid similarly to staff in the general marketplace. But Westphal was highly critical of one area of the college’s labor practices, citing the distinct that is required of meeting targeted wages and college staff. Faculty pay is targeted at 80.2 percent of the comparable market rate, and this goal is usually met or surpassed, Westphal said. 

By contrast, staff’s targeted wages are only set to 80 percent of the market rate, and have not always been met, according to Westphal and college payroll records.

Westphal said he is “galled” by this invisible distinction, adding, “Swarthmore is no less demanding on staff than on faculty.” Westphal said he is impressed that students are concerned about these issues but feels there are some problems with their arguments. He criticized students as being insensitive to the laws under which the college and Board of Managers operate. Board members first responsibility, Westphal said, is to ensure that the college will be just as viable in the future as it is at present. “If there is a trade-off between the present versus later generations,” he said, “it cannot be made at the expense of the future.”

Students should know where the money will be coming from, Westphal said, rather than just assuming that the college’s endowment is sufficient. “There’s a trade-off,” he said. “Students advocating a living wage must also think about where to make cuts.” Some faculty were impressed that students are involved in the living wage campaign.

Ken Sharpe, professor of political science, attended the teach-in held last Tuesday. Sharpe said the homework due by the group was excellent. “It’s extraordinarily valuable that students are looking at low issues they’re studying affect their community.”

The campaign is something that he would expect of Swarthmore students, said Sharpe. Students who have gotten involved, he said, can better understand the daily lives of those who make it possible. “They learn to not take stuff for granted.”

SC supports living wage campaign’s principle

BY NIAN BOOTHE

After more than two hours of discussion Monday night, Student Council endorsed the statement: “Student Council supports a living wage at Swarthmore.” The campaign, according to the resolution, was “the result of a cooperative effort between student activism and efforts from administration.”

The council decided not to support the petition for the Swarthmore Living Wage Democracy Campaign, which was presented by the campaign organizers at the meeting. The petition was signed by 765 students, 40 staff members, eight faculty and one alumna.

The council also unanimously approved a proposal by Martin Barron ’02, student group advisor, to create a subcommittee to investigate the prioritizing of student funding, increasing student representation and obtaining information from the administration. The proposal was worded specifically to avoid the phrase “living wage.”

Barron said he felt the council should not take a stance either for or against the campaign. “In my mind, it would be a great harm to activism at Swarthmore,” he said.

Members of the council expressed concern over the specific details of the campaign’s proposal. Members wanted to know how a living wage is calculated for each staff member, how many workers fall into each wage category, what effects would come from to raise staff salaries and how to keep the distinctions between experienced and new employees when entry-level wages are increased. Members of the campaign, however, were not sure that the information would be made available to them by the administration.

Colin Moore ’02, co-chair of Student Council, cautiously approved of the campaign. “I don’t think we can skirt our responsibility to come to a decision in one way or another,” he said. In addition, he said, not taking a stand would make us look like a weak organization.”

Members of the campaign were not impressed by the council’s action. “To say you need to get all the specifics, you’re missing the boat, and when you make your decision, it won’t be an issue anymore,” said Mariah Montgomery ’03 said. Montgomery, who was the coordinator of the Petition, requested that the council’s decision, called for a vote on the statement at the end of the meeting. The three members who voted against supporting the statement were Barron, Peter Holm ’01, and Jordan Brackett ’03.

THE PHOENIX FEBRUARY 15, 2001
Living wage woes

The Living Wage Campaign has at last launched into full swing. The launch of this movement began, I didn’t expect that it would cause much of a stir among students on campus. Essentially, the campaign calls for a wage that would allow people to adequately provide for themselves and their families without having to juggle multiple jobs and still struggle to make ends meet. The issue speaks not only to class but also to topics of race and gender. For example, I’m sure that no student or faculty member has failed to notice that almost all of the customer-facing staff is black and female. The living wage seemed to me an intuitively worthy cause, one toward which Swarthmore students were driven by a drive to provide a service to their community. Indeed, there is a great base of support for the campaign, demonstrated through much positive feedback and over 200 signatures on the petition so far.

Naturally, there are dissenters. Some of these dissenters have chosen to express their disagreement in useless, disrespectful, and even hostile manners. Through these methods, in the spirit of minority, their statement can overshadow the opposing statement that the campaign has already received from most of the campus community. I have long since abandoned the Swattle debate (“That couldn’t happen here”), even if I was shocked by the venomous responses of these few, obsessive members of the student body.

Take, for instance, the comments that were handwritten on the Living Wage Petition poster? “Then quit that job!” or “It’s their choice.” These comments are in response to the observation that Swarthmore spends more on its plants than on its employees. “Then leave!” Those comments were written on signs posted on the doors through which staff members walk every morning. Now, whether these staff members completely agree with the campaign or not, if they read such comments, they would feel disrespected and unfairly denigrated by the very same people whose nasty messages they clean up every day. Did the person who scrawled these words bother to think of those or just not care? I don’t know.

The living wage was also extensively discussed on that favored anonymity granting outlet for Swarthmore’s “silent minority,” right-wing, immature blogs, and discredited blog the Daily Jolt forum. Some arguments in favor of the living wage took the form of riddle ridden even major points insisting that paying anything more than the market value for these jobs (which would of course make one’s job harder to fill) and living wage and Swarthmore is not a charity (God forbid).

Then, there was the less intellectual Daily Jolt stance: “Dear Living Wage, nobody wants to sign your FUCKING petition. Go away.” Many of my friends are actually in the living wage group. When I discussed the issue with them, they expressed their frustration about the negative responses that they have received. One friend spoke about the sense of disappointment in feeling that people are not listening when speaking against the campaign. To her, the manner of the issue at hand made people feel bad for disagreeing with the campaign. They were seen as standing against people’s rights. This viewpoint gets internalized, labeled as guilt and defensiveness that is vehemently expressed. People feel unloved if they are not part of the cool club. The examples I cited above. My friend offered another possible explanation for the stronger negative reactions against the campaign: Those people don’t want to look at injustice, especially when it’s right outside of their doors. Perhaps it’s not that the signs and petitions are economically or just plain annoying, perhaps people are made uncomfortable by the issues that this brings up.

I don’t think that those who, while disagreeing with the campaign, have expressed this disagreement in such a way that we have any chance of ever coming to a conclusion on the campaign. This is addressed to those who can’t find it in them to express themselves in non-agonistic, non-hostile, dialogue fostering manners. Do these issues shake up your world a little too much? These are the people who sustain your life, who cook and serve your food, who clean your rooms, who allow that celebration to take place. If they weren’t here to do this “unskilled labor” that you value so little, I can’t imagine being able to concentrate on my work, being able to focus on the education that you’re here to obtain. Yet you come at the issue with empty theoretical arguments that don’t seem to take into account the fact that we’re talking about real people, the workers, their families, and their children. Alternatively, you attack the students and staff members of the campus in bitter, inaccurate, and cowardly ways. Are you so used to not giving a damn about this sector of the population of Swarthmore and in the world at large that you have no choice but to react in such a disrespectful fashion? Have you become so comfortable with being blind to the realities of these lives that you, when confronted with the realities of these lives, you cling bitterly to your ability to keep your eyes firmly shut.

Of course, this article came from conversations I’ve had with people involved in the Living Wage Campaign, especially Choi Delgado and Mattei Weiss. Thanks, you guys!

Does a person need to wear a suit to earn a living wage?

Council supports living wage, forms action group

Dear Editor:

We agree with those proposing adoption of a living wage policy who think that many staff members at Swarthmore — in particular wage workers — do not enjoy adequate representation in decision-making processes that affect their lives in multiple and visceral ways. We also agree that the living wage is an idea with merit that needs to be studied further in order to determine how Swarthmore could implement it without jeopardizing employment benefits, workloads and the like.

Therefore, we are creating an Action Group within Student Council to work with the administration to achieve these things: first, the creation of a new college-wide committee to evaluate staff compensation policies at Swarthmore and to recommend changes to those policies; second, better representation of staff concerns in existing college Institutions; and third, the release of a wage, salary and demographic information by the college in order to facilitate more informed and transparent discussion of the living wage and its possible implementation at Swarthmore.

We have been working hard over the past three months to guarantee students receive adequate con- sideration when decisions are made affecting student interests; we believe staff members merit the same consideration when their own interests are at stake.

SC member explains dissenting vote

Dear Editor:

This Monday night Student Council voted in favor of a resolution stating that it supports a living wage. While six members of the council did vote in favor of this resolution, there were several who did not. As one of the dissenters, I wish to state my reasons for not supporting the majority.

First, I would like to state that I am in favor of improving working conditions for Swarthmore staff. I believe that staff members are too often left out of important decisions that directly impact their lives, and that they often do not have adequate representation on college committees. I believe that staff should be treated as equal members of our community. And yes, I believe that the college should do all that it can within its power to ensure that its employees receive the compensation necessary to support themselves and their families.

However, I cannot in good conscience support the living wage proposal as it currently stands. The main problem with the “living wage” is that its proponents, in conjunction with the administration, have not yet determined what it would entail. The Living Wage Campaign’s proposed Student Council version resides of a living wage, ranging from $9.50 per hour to $22.47 per hour. While the final living wage minimum would likely be set closer to the smaller rate, it is unclear what implications its implementation would have for Swarthmore College.

While it may be nice to imagine a college with infinite resources, the fact of the matter is that increased staff wages will likely come from one of two sources: a reduction in the budgets of other college expenditures or an increase in tuition. Implementation of a living wage necessarily implies a trade off: either higher tuition or a reduction in some type of college program (or the opportunity of creating another college program such as low-financial aid). Because this trade-off has not yet been defined, I do not feel comfortable supporting the living wage as it currently stands, as its effects may be detrimental to important aspects of the Swarthmore community.

Moreover, I feel that there is a strong possibility that a living wage would actually harm Swarthmore’s employees. While the LWC maintains that it does not support a reduction in the number of staff, such a reduction would almost necessarily result in such a decrease. For example, in less economic times, under harsh bidding realities, and under no living wage, the college may be faced with two ways of raising a budget deficit: freezing wages or laying off employees. Most would agree that wage stagnation is preferable to unemployment, and under the current system, such a provision is possible.

However, under a living wage — which could be pegged to some external definition of a self-sustaining wage — Swarthmore would not have the freedom to freeze wages and would be forced to lay some employees off. This is not my vision of better employee treatment and this is why I cannot support the living wage as it currently stands.

Proposers of the living wage may argue that the final conception of a living wage will ensure that all our fears do not come true. And this is possible. But it is also that possibilities that will be cut and employees will lose jobs. The point is that we just do not know. And until we have better answers, until the living wage is better defined, until we know that the living wage can be effectively implemented without unfairly harming large factions of campus, I feel that, especially as a representative body, it is completely irresponsible to endorse such a proposal.

SC member explains dissenting vote

Jordan Brackett ’08
Over 750 signatures have been collected in support of the group’s initiatives. But how do staff members themselves feel about the issues?

BY IVAN BOOTHE AND GABE HETLAND

Last Tuesday, students gathered in the Hicks Mural Room for a teach-in sponsored by the Swarthmore Living Wage Democracy Campaign. One staff member showed up. Campaign organizer Marisha Montgomery ‘04 said that more staff could not attend because they were working for the college, employed at second jobs or home with their families.

Primarily due to the support of the Living Wage Campaign, staff wages at the college have become a major issue this semester. A recent petition circulated by the campaign included the signatures of 751 students.

Staff support, however, has not been unanimous. Some staff have accused the student campaign of taking over an issue they “do not fully understand.” Faculty also have concerns about the nature of the campaign. Only eight faculty have signed the campaign’s petition, and just 40 staff, out of a workforce of over 600 employees.

Currently, staff salaries are set by the college by comparing an average wage with wages in local and national labor markets. The hourly wage of a card-sweeper in Swarthmore or a housekeeper in a dorm, for instance, is calculated based on the wages of workers in similar positions around the country. The college also compares its wages with other educational institutions in the Consortium on Financing Higher Education.

Criteria published by the Women’s Association for Women’s Alternatives (WAWA), based on the research of Swarthmore, said that a living wage “allows a person to be self-sufficient, to meet all her needs without government support.” According to a 1998 study, a single parent in Delaware County would need about $13 per hour to achieve self-sufficiency. Other estimates range from $10 to $15 per hour, and depend on the size of the family.

FOUNDATION FOR A LIVING WAGE

The roots of the current living wage campaign go back over a year, when an ad-hoc committee on long-range staff planning began to research how staff wages were determined and distributed. Last semester, students from the Concerned Consumers group began talking with staff members about issues important to them. In November, Sam Blair ‘02 and others met with Melanie Young, Human Resources Director, and in December with members of the College Budget Committee.

This semester, student and staff activists have been meeting with other staff members, sector staff, and Student Council. Campaign leaders hope to create a dialogue among all members of the college community about the issues of staff compensation and participation in decision-making structures. Students and staff also want to begin discussions with the college’s Board of Managers and administration about implementing some of the proposals.

Blair and Montgomery stressed that they see the role of students as listening to staff concerns and helping in whatever ways they can. “We’ve been trying to be good listeners,” Blair said. “We want to use our privilege as students to advance the concerns that they brought to us, to make a space where their voices can be heard.”

More than 75 students attended the teach-in last Tuesday, and hundreds of posters have been placed around campus by the campaign. Supporters believe the college has the resources and responsibility to make sure that every employee has enough to live on. To members of the campaign, it is no small an issue of respect as one of income.

The lowest wage category in Swarthmore’s fiscal year 2000 pay scale has minimum hourly salaries ranging from $5.36 to $8.33 per hour. Most employees of Dining Services, including those who have worked at the college for several years, earn between $7 and $9 per hour.

Student activists assert that such hourly wages are not adequate to maintain oneself or a family. According to supporters of the campaign, such wages do not pay for food, housing, transportation, taxes, and health and child care.

Blair realizes that the issue of staff pay is a contentious one. “Implementation is inordinately complicated,” he said, “but when I look back at the general principle —

STAFF MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

While most staff members interviewed supported higher wages for staff, there was no general agreement regarding the living wage campaign specifically.

Kase Kralovic, an administrative assistant in the education department, has been one of the campaign’s strongest supporters.

She believes that the campaign has been a thoughtful and concerted effort. “Students see staff treated in a certain way, or not respected,” she said. “Students are looking for a real community atmosphere, where everyone has a voice to participate in decisions affecting their lives, where all are free to speak out on issues.”

Kralovic said that she welcomes the efforts of the campaign’s organizers. “The greatest part of working on labor issues at Swarthmore,” she said, “has been working with students on campus.”

Kralovic views the issue of a living wage as one affecting not just staff, but the entire college community. “If the college modeled its principles of social justice by treating staff well, that would affect the tenor of the whole campus,” she said.

Kralovic feels that many staff enjoy the positive working conditions at the college.

See LIVING WAGE, pg. 12
Diverse views on living wage

From LIVING WAGE, pg. 11

She believes, however, that the lack of adequate pay and benefits in decision-making processes show little respect for the importance of staff on campus.

"One way Swarthmore could show itself as a true leader in social justice is to model those principles in the ways it treats all people on campus," she said. "A 'living wage' would be indicative of respect."

Hanna Wall, an Environmental Services employee in Martin, also sees a link between the living wage and respect. Wall felt that Environmental Services staff were not paid a wage that was reflective of the respect that should be accorded to them. He views himself as a professional, and he noted that his job requires knowledge of chemistry and biology.

He said that more respect should be shown towards the college and in society at large.

Wall, who has strongly supported the campaign for a living wage from the beginning, said it is simply a way "to put fairness into practice."

With wages at current levels, some staff have had to hold down two jobs to make ends meet. Wall said he would really like to see staff members get raises to increase the stability of staff pay. While the college supports a tutoring program in chemistry, she noted, it pays staff wages that are not adequate with- out a second job. She has also noticed a downturn in the morale of students. "Tutoring kids might be well-working for them," she said, "but we need to help the families be present for their children."

Wall said he enjoys working at Swarthmore and that working in the community is an extension of family. But Wall said he has struggled to meet all of his living needs. Currently, he attends night school three times a week at a Delaware County community college after a full day of work in Martin. Before he enrolled in the community college, Wall said he had often worked up to 24 hours per day — eight hours at Swarthmore and five to six hours at other jobs.

According to Michelle Hartel, a Dining Services employee who works in the Kohlberg Coffee Bar, the job is "definitely something decent." While she does support the campaign in principle, Hartel was concerned that many newly hired employees receive wages below those of experienced employees. "How are they going to work out if an employee making $15 per hour has been here for nine years, and they're hiring a new employee for $10 an hour?" she asked.

Hartel said experience does not seem to play a large part in determining staff salaries. "Diet Masc was here for 36 years, and when she left (five years ago) she made $10 an hour. They said, "I know that students are the number-one priority," Hartel said, "and that's the way it should be." But she said that staff are also extremely important to the college. She questioned the level of respect "when you've been here 36 years and you're making the same as a new employee."

Hartel also noted that students' salaries are higher than some of the employees' salaries. Hartel has heard arguments that not many people are being paid on the lowest pay scale, which questioned the reasoning behind its existence. "If they say, "Well, nobody makes 65.7," then why have it? It illustrates that level," she said.

"A LIVING WAGE WOULD BE INDICATIVE OF RESPECT"

Melanie Young, the director of Human Resources, pointed to what she called a strong benefits package that staff receive. The package includes a 22,000 "back" of options that staff may choose to take as additional pay.

Wall agreed that "the benefits are great." But, he said, "you can't live on it." He has been at Swarthmore until he retires, but Wall said he has had to find other ways of paying bills. "I'm not against a living wage," he said, "but I am against the way in which it has been presented." She said that the campaign has relied too heavily on strong-arm tactics. In addition, she is concerned that some of the information presented to posters around campus gives an inaccurate representation of staff working here.

The employee felt that many staff in Environmental Services were never given an idea of just what the living wage proposal was, or where the money would come from. These concerns were echoed in Monday night's Student Council meeting (see sidebar), when members agreed to endorse the campaign in principle only.

"If I'm completely opposed," the staff person said, "but the timing doesn't seem right." She also believes that superiors should have been included in the campaign. Overall, she said, "I think there needs to be more honesty."

For communication between staff and the administration, the Staff Advisory Council (SAC), which makes recommendations to President Al Bloom, is one avenue by which staff concerns can be aired. Kaulewitz noted, however, that because the staff council is advisory in nature, it has no final say in how decisions are made at the college. "We basically don't have much voice in decision-making," Kaulewitz said.

Hartel is cautiously optimistic about the council. "SAC has come a long way," she said. But, like Kaulewitz, she feels that it could only promote staff concerns on a limited basis.

Kaulewitz also said that some staff may be reluctant to talk to Bloom or others about their concerns, because they are afraid of losing their jobs. She believes that the administration "should do something positive to show commitment to free speech, to making people feel comfortable voicing their concerns."

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

At this point, the college's administration seems willing to listen to the arguments for the living wage. Paul Aslandin, vice president for finance and planning, declined to comment, citing a busy schedule. Director of Human Resources Melanie Young, however, did agree to talk about staff issues.

Young, who was hired last April after the top position in human resources had been vacant for over a year, said she has "been working at a pretty furious pace" since arriving at Swarthmore. She attributed much of that to the "gentle demand" created by the absence of a director. Her predecessor, Barbara Carroll, resigned in March 1995 after less than three years on the job.

Since arriving, Young said she has addressed some of what she felt were the main concerns of the staff, and is looking forward to continuing that trend. She is beginning periodic staff training seminars on a wide variety of subjects, from supervisory training to simple financial planning. Young said this im-

Kate Corbett and Michelle Hartel hand Philip Hoefler his coffee Thursday morning. Hartel is concerned that senior staff often don't make much more than newly hired staff.

"BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR, THERE WILL BE A NEW COMPENSATION PLAN."

Young said that salary issues came up only after the most pressing concerns were addressed. "I didn't hear about the living wage until last fall," she said.

Last semester, Young was busy with issues that fell "outside the budget cycle," such as working on a new staff handbook and developing a new vacation policy. Now that next year's budgeting is wrapping up, Young wants to have a "rebalancing of the compensation system."

The living wage issue, she said, would be a part of that examination.

"By this time next year, there will be a new compensation plan," Young said.

Much of the controversy surrounding the staff wages hinges on the Fall Market Value, or FMV, of the college's staff salaries. The FMV measure is unique to Swarthmore, according to Young.

In the normal business world, she said, each company has a beginning, middle and high pay rate for each pay grade. Each job is in a grade, and each grade has a range of possible pay rates. Every employee is placed in one of the ranges based on experience and skill level. Most businesses compare the middle rate to the average middle rate in the market.

See LIVING WAGE, pg. 13
Does a person need to wear a suit to earn a living wage?

Council supports living wage, forms action group

Dear Editor:

We agree with those proposing adoption of a living wage policy who think that many staff members at Swarthmore — in particular, wage workers — do not enjoy adequate representation in decision-making processes that affect their lives in multiple and visceral ways. We also agree that the living wage is an idea with merit that needs to be studied further in order to determine how Swarthmore could implement it without jeopardizing employment, benefits, work loads and the like.

Furthermore, we are creating an Action Group within Student Council to work with the administration to achieve three things: first, the creation of a new college-wide committee to evaluate staff compensation policies at Swarthmore and to recommend changes to those policies; second, better representation of students on existing college institutions; and third, the release of a wage, salary and demographic information by the college in order to facilitate more informed and transparent discussion of the living wage and its possible implementation at Swarthmore.

We have been working hard over the past three months to guarantee students receive adequate consideration when decisions are made affecting student interests; we believe staff members merit the same consideration when their own interests are at stake.

SC member explains dissenting vote

Dear Editor:

This Monday night Student Council voted in favor of a resolution stating that it supports a living wage. While six members of the council did vote in favor of this resolution, there were several who did not. As one of the dissenters, I wish to state my reasons for not supporting the majority.

First, I would like to state that I am in favor of improving working conditions for Swarthmore staff. I believe that staff members too often left out of important decisions that directly impact their lives, and that they often do not have adequate representation on college committees. I believe that staff should be treated as equal members of our community. And yes, I believe this college should do all it can within its power to ensure that its employees receive the compensation necessary to support themselves and their families.

However, I cannot support the living wage proposal as it currently stands. The main problem with the "living wage" is that its proponents, in conjunction with the administration, have not yet determined what it would entail. The Living Wage Committee has presented Student Council various versions of a living wage, ranging from $12.50 per hour to $22.47 per hour. While the Real Living Wage minimum likely would be set closer to the smaller rate, it is unclear what implications its implementation would have for Swarthmore College.

While it may be nice to imagine a college with infinite resources, the fact of the matter is that increased staff wages will likely come from one of two sources: a reduction in the budgets of other college expenditures or an increase in tuition. Implementation of a living wage necessity implies a trade-off either higher tuition or a reduction in some type of college program (or the opportunity of creating another college program such as loan-free financial aid). Because this trade-off has not yet been defined, I do not feel comfortable supporting the living wage as it currently stands, as its effects may be detrimental to important segments of the Swarthmore community.

Moreover, I feel that there is a strong possibility that a living wage would similarly harm Swarthmore's em-

Jordan Brockett '05