

**swarthmore living wage &
democracy campaign**
swarthmore college
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FACTSHEET: Brief Chronology of the Living Wage at Swarthmore

Fall 2000: Five months of on-campus research begin, during which students meet with staff members on a one-on-one basis and in small group meetings to discuss their concerns about their jobs at the College. From these discussions emerge two primary areas of concern: **wages and respect**.

February 2001: The SLW&DC issues a report to College President Al Bloom and his senior staff, calling for increased wages and democratic decision-making involvement for low-wage staff members.

Spring 2002: The Staff Compensation Review Committee, while explicitly stating that its intention was not to implement or consider a living wage, **recommends that the Swarthmore minimum wage be raised from \$6.66 to \$9 an hour**.

April 4, 2002: The SLW&DC holds the “Keep on Movin’ Forward” rally on the National Student-Labor Day of Action. The campaign applauds the College’s first step toward a more just compensation system. But since many Swarthmore staff members still do not earn a living wage, the College must “Keep on Movin’ Forward.”

May 2002: After a faculty straw vote in support of the goals of the SLW&DC, President Bloom creates the **President’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Living Wage** to determine what a Swarthmore living wage is.

Fall 2002: The Ad Hoc Committee begins meeting.

February 2004: The Ad Hoc Committee releases its preliminary report on what constitutes a living wage at Swarthmore:

- a wage increase to \$10.72/hour (majority recommendation) or \$13.89/hour (minority recommendation),
- a childcare benefit,
- full health coverage for employees and their families,
- and a plan to “decompress” wages (that is, to increase wages, in decreasing amounts, for those making above the new minimum wage).

As per its charge, however, the Committee does not offer a funding proposal. *Still, this proposal is viewed by the College community as one of **the most creative and progressive in the country**.*

April 2004: A professor asks a dining services employee if she believes that staff members really care about a living wage. In response, she organizes an **anonymous survey** – the only action to effectively gauge opinion – which receives over 50 responses from dining services staff, **all of which are positive**.

October 2004: President Bloom releases a proposal which he plans to bring to the Board of Managers, **suggesting that the College only offer an increased healthcare benefit for family coverage**. Later, upon discovering CHIP (a federally-subsidized state program offering health coverage to children of low-income workers), he amends his proposal to suggest that the College offer extended coverage for spouses only. In response, **faculty members draft their own proposal**, calling for a wage increase to \$10.72, and that the College cover employees’ family members who may not qualify for CHIP.