

swarthmore living wage & democracy campaign

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FACTSHEET: Living Wage Vocabulary

- **self-sufficiency wage:** one that enables an employee to meet her most basic needs (ie. housing, food, health coverage, etc.), without government assistance, if she works a full-time job (may be combined with benefits).
- **living wage:** goes beyond a self-sufficiency wage to allow an employee to make basic economic choices that go slightly beyond day-to-day expenses, such as saving for a child's education, buying a car, or replacing broken appliances, etc.
- **benefits:** non-monetary aspects of compensation, ie. health coverage, child care, ability to take classes, etc.
- **Ad Hoc Committee on the Living Wage:** An official College committee created by President Bloom (after faculty pressure) to examine what a living wage for Delaware County would be and how to implement it. The Committee was not asked to create a plan to fund it.
- **Swarthmore Living Wage & Democracy Campaign (SLW&DC):** A campaign of mostly students, working in solidarity with staff and faculty, that initiated the push for a living wage on campus, as well as more inclusive decision-making processes.
- **budget:** The amount of money that Swarthmore allots each year to spend on compensation, academic programs, and other expenses.
- **endowment:** A pool of money, originating mainly from donations, which is invested, and provides the College with financial stability. The College may spend a portion of the endowment each year (which often "regenerates" due to interest and wise investment), but legally it may not spend above a certain percentage. For the past several years, the endowment has been slightly above or below \$1 Billion, and is one of the largest (per student) of any college or university in the country.
- **qualification creep:** the myth that as wages go up for a given job, candidates with "higher qualifications" will push out "less qualified" candidates for once low-wage jobs. This is a false myth because "qualification" generally refers to an individual's years of experience in a job category which would give her an advantage, regardless of the wage.
- **wage decompression:** The idea that if the lowest wages are raised, those just above should also receive a raise to maintain a fair distribution of wages for differing jobs. This can be done through a series of "decreasing increases," ie. the higher an employee's wage, the smaller her increase.
- **sub-contracting:** The process by which an organization or company does not directly hire employees, but rather contracts with another company to provide labor. Swarthmore does not subcontract most jobs, save for building projects and some grounds maintenance.