

Resolution for a Living Wage

Whereas, the starting wages of non-exempt (hourly) Texas A&M University employees currently are as low as \$6.15/hour¹; and

Whereas, the starting wages of many TAMU employees rank near the bottom versus comparable positions at other universities in the Big Twelve, even when adjusted for the cost of living²; and

Whereas, the Texas A&M Department of Human Resources estimates that 801 workers currently are working in job classifications with wages of \$9.00/hour or less (\$18,792 annually)³; and

Whereas, wages less than \$18,792 annually fall below:

- 130% of the current federal poverty guideline for a family of three (\$20,371)⁴,
- The current standard for fair market rent in Brazos County (\$23,840 for a 2 bedroom apartment)⁵, and
- The current estimated self-sufficiency budget for a family of three in Brazos County (\$31,033)⁶; and

Whereas, wages less than \$18,720 annually may force Texas A&M University employees to rely on federal government assistance including, but not limited to, food stamps and Section 8 housing; and

Whereas, employees making poverty-level wages face personal hardships and often are forced to depend on public assistance, take second jobs, and live in sub-standard housing; and

Whereas, every employee at Texas A&M University is vital to the fulfillment of our teaching, research, and service missions⁷; and

Whereas, the implementation of a living wage would benefit valued employees, Texas A&M University, and the Bryan/College Station community⁸; therefore be it

Resolved that,

1. The Texas A&M University Faculty Senate endorses the implementation of a living wage for all Texas A&M employees.
2. The living wage be defined as a wage that meets or exceeds 130% of the federal poverty level⁹ guidelines for a family of three (\$9.76/hour in 2004 based on 2088 hours/year) plus standard benefits.
3. The central administration of Texas A&M University will be responsible for the implementation, funding, and administration of the living wage.

4. The University will make annual adjustments as necessary to maintain the living wage provided to employees at or above 130% of the federal poverty level guidelines for a family of three.
5. No increases in work assignments, reductions in force, or reductions in employee benefits will be initiated to cover the cost of providing a living wage.
6. All new hires by the University will be covered under this living wage resolution.
7. As part of its long-term commitment to provide a living wage for all employees, should the University contract out work currently being performed by A&M employees, the University will require contractors to pay those workers wages no less than 130% of the annual federal poverty level guideline plus basic benefits equal to those of A&M employees.
8. A report of the University's efforts to comply with this living wage resolution will be included in the president's annual address to the Faculty Senate.

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- ¹ Texas A&M University (2004, September 2). Texas A&M University Classified Personnel Pay Plan. Retrieved November 10, 2004, from:
<http://hr.tamu.edu/classification/table1.asp>
- ² McDonnell, G. (2002). *Where there is a will: There is a living wage*. Unpublished manuscript. Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.
- ³ Personal Communication (September 29, 2004). Lallah M. Howard, CPA, Assistant Vice President for Finance, Texas A&M University. [Note: Total income based on 2088 hours/year.]
- ⁴ United States Department of Health and Human Services (2004, February, 13). *Annual Update of HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from:
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/04fedreg.htm>
- ⁵ National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2003). *Out of reach 2003: America's housing wage climbs*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from:
<http://www.nlihc.org/oor2003/data.php?getstate=on&getcounty=on&county%5B%5D=brazoscounty&state%5B%5D=TX>
- ⁶ Economic Policy Institute. (2004). *Basic family budget calculator*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from
<http://www.epinet.org/cgioutput.cfm?template=epiucalc.XaFMys&title=Basic%20Family%20Budget%20Calculator>
[Note: Data reported on the website are from 1999; they have been adjusted here for the change in the cost of living between 1999 and 2004 by multiplying by 1.14. See:
<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>]
- ⁷ Consider, for example, the recent statements made by Chuck Sippial, TAMU Vice President of Administration regarding the custodial staff: "Without these guys we couldn't go to class or to work each day...They are among the lowest paid, but the most valuable because they build our reputation. It is their efforts that visitors see when they come to our campus."
Sledge, C. (2004, September 15). Custodial staff honored for work [Electronic Version]. *The Battalion*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from:
<http://www.thebatt.com/news/2004/09/15/News/Custodial.Staff.Honored.For.Work-719032.shtml>
- ⁸ Pollin, R., & Luce, S. (1998). *The living wage: Building a fair economy*. New York: The New Press.
- ⁹ Implementation of a living wage of 130% of the federal poverty level will permit A&M employees to cease their dependence on public assistance in the form of food stamps.