

THE CATALYST

(kat'ə-list) n., an agent that provokes change

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Bucknell's Mission Statement Declares: *"Bucknell's residential character provides a matrix within which institutional programs and practices that exemplify compassion, civility, and a sense of justice form an aspect of the educational experience."*

"Our campus inspires a love of place that, to my knowledge, is unsurpassed by any institution in this country." President Rogers, Bucknell's Annual Report, 1999-2000.

As we have discovered, it depends on whom you ask. When we asked dining service members, here were some of their responses:

"Lydia" has been working for Dining Services for four years. Her primary desire is for Dining Services to pay better wages so she can earn more and so that it could hire enough workers to do the jobs. She believes the pay and working conditions are what make Bucknell unable to hire more people.

"Jake" works in Dining Services forty hours a week, without benefits. His chief concern is that he wants to be "treated fairly." He wishes that Bucknell would replace the old and dangerous equipment some of his co-workers have to use. He also thinks that people should be paid more, in order for them to make "enough so that you can live on it."

"Amelia" is a single parent with four children. She, like "Lydia" and "Jake," figures that Dining Services is short-staffed because of working conditions, rates, and no benefits for some of the workers. All that she requests to make her job livable would be a decent wage, the necessary number of people to do the jobs, and for the Bucknell students, faculty, and Dining Services management to treat her with respect. Ultimately, she wants to be treated fairly -- *to be looked upon as a human being.*

THE FAIR LABOR CAMPAIGN: WHERE WE ARE NOW

January 2000 – Campaign Launched

Proposals – Status Now:

- 1. That the university add three support staff members to the University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB).** *Last fall, the Faculty added these three members.*
- 2. That President Rogers establish a permanent Fair Labor Committee, made up of support staff members, that will report regularly to the campus about the state of working conditions and serve as a confidential grievance committee for the support staff.** *This spring, Bucknell's administration decided to hire an outside firm to evaluate its labor practices and their structure. We applaud that decision and await the announcement of what firm will make the assessment and when it will begin its work.*
- 3. That the university adopt a minimum living wage of \$10.54 per hour,* adjusted annually for inflation, plus access to subsidized benefits, for all employees.** *This proposal is now before the University Committee on Planning and Budget, which will report by early next fall.*

*Our suggested living wage of \$10.54 is a composite for the three counties where almost all Bucknell staff workers live. The composite is based on the *2001 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Pennsylvania*, published by the Women's Association for Women's Alternatives (WAWA). One may obtain a copy by calling (610) 543-5022. WAWA is supported by, among others, the U.S. Department of Labor, First Union Bank, PA. Dept. of Community Economic Development, the United Way, and the following foundations: Rockefeller, Ms., William Penn, Samuel S. Fels, Barra and Cassett.

THE BUCKNELL "FAMILY" NOW – A FEW RICH, MANY JUST GETTING BY

President's salary, 1999: \$191,652

President's Benefits (Including Health Care, Retirement, etc.): \$35,456

Special Presidential Extras: Free Housing, Utilities, Vehicle, and More

Average Salary, Plus Benefits, of Top Three Administrators: \$150,000

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Number of Workers on Support Staff Making Less than a Living Wage

(Based on updated 1999 administrative data): 230

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE FUTURE: WHY WE WON'T GO AWAY UNTIL THE CAMPAIGN IS SUCCESSFUL

We will be back next fall! Most of our members are returning, and though we will lose talented seniors, more students join each year to continue the effort. All of us in BCEJ/PULSE -- students, staff, alumni, and faculty -- have deepened our belief in the Campaign as it has progressed. We don't see a living wage as a luxury but as the *minimum necessary* for a family to be able to live without public or private assistance. The most recent wage increase, which made income distribution here ever more unequal, has fortified our commitment. We see the current distribution of income and power as grossly unfair, unjust, and uncivil. We will not stop pointing that out, and trying to do something about it, until the university adopts labor practices that make Bucknell's Mission Statement come alive and embody its noble promises.

WANT TO JOIN US OR COMMUNICATE WITH US?

TO ADD YOUR NAME to the endorsement petition – along with over 800 other Bucknell staff, students, alumni, and faculty -- send us an email. To send information, as many have, about unfair labor practices at Bucknell (we carefully protect anonymity), or other comments, email, or write us at our mailbox, B 2915. JOIN US NEXT FALL, WHEN WE RE-CONVENE. For more information, check our web site for our history and for all our past issues, at www.orgs.bucknell.edu/catalyst.

The BCEJ/P.U.L.S.E. Steering Committee: Lori Adamczyk, Meredith Clayton, Kristen Erickson, Josh Fisher, Lizz Fiedler, Janet Knoedler, Dawn Lonsinger, Mike McCaffrey, John Molitoris, Emily Park, Sandra Morris, Beth Oesterling, Karl Patten, Cindy Peltier, Charles Sackrey, Geoff Schneider, Doug Sturm, Paul Susman, Tom Travis, Hilbourne Watson, Carol Wayne White, Nicole Wiederspiel, Aaron Young