



2007 Living Wage Report

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Letter to the Notre Dame Family

Members of the Campus Labor Action Project, staff, faculty, alumni, community members, and students alike, invite you— member of the Notre Dame Family— to read the information in this report both to develop a sensitivity to the experiences of the lowest-paid staff members here at Notre Dame and to work with us toward a better reality.

The past year, since this report was first issued, The Campus Labor Action Project has continued to build relationships with workers to increase its knowledge of Notre Dame as a work environment. Through these relationships, we have learned that while wages are still the primary issue, there are additional concerns that must also be addressed, such as treatment by supervisors and understaffing. This report focuses primarily on the wage issues and proposes a solution that we believe will benefit the entire Notre Dame community.

The living wage issue is urgent. A living wage means not having to rely on government assistance or the local food bank in order to support a family. As each day goes by, workers continue to struggle with little voice or hope for change. It is the responsibility of Campus Labor Action Project, along with the entire Notre Dame family, to address these concerns. In doing so, we hope that Notre Dame employees, the ones most affected by wage decisions, will play a primary role in this important process.

Also, Catholic social teaching stresses the importance of a living wage. As a premier Catholic institution, Notre Dame has the responsibility to uphold this principle for all of its employees. Our University also has the opportunity to stand alongside other elite universities such as Harvard and Georgetown, that have committed themselves to ending poverty. If Notre Dame wishes to remain the premier Catholic university, it must take the lead in addressing this issue, one of society's greatest ills.

Everyday, we should ask ourselves what Notre Dame and South Bend could be like with the institution of a living wage. Would the quality of the neighborhood invite energetic students looking for a Catholic education and inviting town be drawn to Notre Dame? Would renowned faculty and researchers be inclined to join our community with the promise of a great home and place for their children? Would community members be more amiable to an employer that invested in its workforce's well being? These questions drive the production of this report and the campaign for a living wage. Whether or not you support a living wage is a personal decision that each of us makes based on our own interpretation of theology, economics, and politics. However, we do ask that you appreciate and respect the important work that campus employees perform in our community.

We have outlined the economic facts and Catholic tradition supporting years of study on the living wage as well as the most important reason to act on this issue- people's lives.

Campus Labor Action Project
February 26, 2007

“My basic principle is that you don't make decisions because they are easy; you don't make them because they are cheap; you don't make them because they're popular; you make them because they're right.”

President Emeritus
Rev. Theodore Hesburgh

The Case for a Living Wage

The Catholic Church has a long history of teaching economic justice.

Since 1891, Popes and bishops have emphasized the living wage imperative. Notre Dame should set an example by paying not what the market dictates but what Christ demands.

Notre Dame supports a Living Wage for employees outside the United States – why not our own fellow members of the Notre Dame Family?

Notre Dame is committed to social responsibility and workers' rights in its apparel licensing and sets an example for others in this way. At the same time workers on campus struggle on poverty wages and feel powerless in the workplace. A commitment to social justice begins at home. Workers at Notre Dame deserve the dignity of a living wage and the ability to address their concerns. Let's make our commitment real on campus.

A Living Wage is a common practice that makes economic sense.

Over 30 campuses and 120 municipalities have made this work. Even conservative Economist Larry Summers supports mandatory wage floors for stable employment like food service and sanitation on college campuses.

We believe that our workers should not live in poverty.

Many of our workers make enough money to qualify for food stamps and other federal aid programs. We believe every full-time employee at Notre Dame should earn enough money from the service they perform for our community to feed their families.

A Living Wage is affordable.

We do not have all of the statistics, so we cannot estimate how much a living wage would cost. However, some of the cost is offset when factoring in the economic benefits of lower training and turnover costs, higher productivity, etc. In addition, in fiscal year 2004, the university had in excess of a \$415,000,000 operating surplus, and in 2003, had a surplus over \$250,000,000.

Let us as a Notre Dame family take this unique opportunity to refuse to be an institution that promotes poverty.

Defining a Living Wage

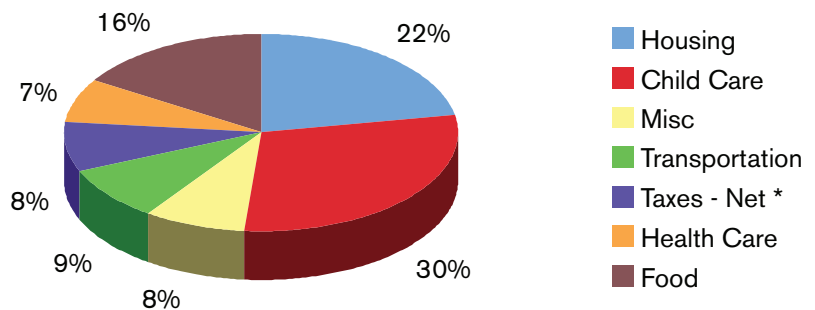
A Living Wage is the hourly rate of income that a worker in a specific area must make in a 40-hour workweek to support a family of four. Low wage earners have complicated networks of dependents, which may include partners, children, parents and other relatives. Many immigrants send earnings back to families in their native countries. Workers may be fathers, single mothers or teenagers or young adults helping to support their families

When calculating the Living Wage, seven factors must be taken into account: Housing, Transportation, Taxes, Food, Healthcare, Basic Necessities, and Miscellaneous expenses. It does not include amenities such as new school clothes, birthday parties, family trips, a home library, and entertainment.

Another good estimate for a Living Wage is generally 130% of the Poverty Line for a family of four.

A Living Wage should not be confused with a minimum wage. A minimum wage is the lowest legal limit that a worker can be paid per hour in a certain area. The national minimum wage is \$5.15 (although set to rise to \$7.25 over the next three years), whereas the Living Wage calculated in a certain area can be more than double that value.

Components of Living Wage



*Note: Percentages include the net effect of taxes and tax credits. Thus, the percentage of income needed for taxes is actually 17%, but with tax credits, the amount owed in taxes is reduced to 8%.

Chart from Self Sufficiency Standard for Indiana, 2002 by Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless issues

Our Catholic Mission at a Catholic University

Notre Dame's mission statement acknowledges that, "God's grace prompts human activity to assist the world in creating justice grounded in love."¹ Campus Labor Action Project (CLAP), an initiative co-sponsored by Progressive Student Alliance and the Higgins Labor Research Center, purports to participate in this inspiring grace by striving to achieve dignity for workers across campus. Specifically, CLAP concerns itself with the implementation of a living wage.

The documents of Catholic Social Teaching unequivocally demand a living wage. Workers have the "right to a wage determined by the criterion of justice."² The living wage imperative is reiterated, among others, in *Rerum Novarum*, 17; *Mater et Magistra*, 71; *Pacem in Terris*, 20; *Gaudium et Spes*, 67; *Laborem Exercens*, 19; and *Centesimus Annus*, 8 and 47.

The University of Notre Dame, ranked 20th among the nation's top institutions of higher learning, is the premier Catholic institution in the nation. As such, the University serves as a symbol and example of Catholicism for other Catholic universities, as well as for the nation. We believe that the best response to poverty, injustice and oppression is to respond to these societal issues first in our own community. Implementing a living wage policy is the first step the university can and should take. In our role as a Catholic example for the community and nation, our policies have the potential to affect others in their implementation of Catholic social teaching and in effect help create a more just world.

As a Catholic institution, we have a responsibility to live up to the obligations and responsibilities of our faith. Pius XI censures those who dismiss the teaching of the encyclicals as impractical. They "who would seem to hold in little esteem [*Rerum Novarum*] and its commemoration either blaspheme what they know not, or understand nothing of what they are only superficially acquainted with, or if they do understand convict themselves formally of injustice and ingratitude."³ We hope that Notre Dame, under the lead of President John Jenkins, will similarly respond to the call of Catholic social teaching by implementing a living wage for all campus workers.

In doing so, we strongly urge the Notre Dame administration to allow workers to join them in the decision-making process. Catholic Social Teaching, specifically *Rerum Novarum*, supports the principle of subsidiarity, which states that matters should be handled by the smallest competent authority. In this case, we believe that workers know their own needs better than any one, and must be part of the decision making process.

“The University of Notre Dame du Lac (“Notre Dame”) is committed to conducting its business affairs in a socially responsible manner consistent with its religious and educational mission. Notre Dame expects nothing less of its business partners and licensees. Therefore, Notre Dame will not do business with those who engage in business practices or follow work place standards inconsistent with this Code of Conduct.”

University of Notre Dame,
Licensing Code of Conduct

¹"Mission Statement," University of Notre Dame. www.nd.edu.

²*Pacem in Terris*, John XXIII.

³*Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI, 39.

“Can ND see its mission in a deeper and broader way? Can it take pride in not only how it prepares students for the world, but how it treats its workers? I think that Notre Dame is in a unique and powerful position to do just that. We can show the church, we can show America what it means to be a leader in how we treat our workers. That we are about not just paying just what the market dictates, but in paying what Christ demands. ”

Mr. Thomas Lenz CLAP
Alumni Member
From CLAP Assembly,
9/29/05

Call to the Notre Dame Family

The University of Notre Dame values the institution of family. This mirrors the reverence of family in Catholic Social Teaching as “one of the most important terms of reference for shaping the social and ethical order of human work.” While this reverence should include workers who facilitate the operation of Notre Dame’s campus, it currently does not. In order to promote the campus family and to uphold the “natural right” of workers to have and support families, a living wage policy is necessary. As detailed in *Laborem Exercens*:

Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing for security for its future. Such remuneration can be given either through what is called a family wage- that is, a single salary given to the head of the family for his work, sufficient for the needs of the family without the other spouse having to take up gainful employment outside the home- or through social measures such as family allowances or grants to mother devoting themselves exclusively to their families.

A living wage justly compensates for encouraging and sustaining families.

“ A living wage is not conservative or liberal; it is Catholic, demanded by Leo XIII, Pius XI, Paul VI, John XXIII and John Paul II. Catholics do not believe that the worth of human work is determined by the market, but that every human has the right to make enough to support his or her family through his or her labor. The ultimate end of any government or economy is not the market, but the human person. This is not welfare. This is not charity. This is justice. No person who works a full-time job should need government support to subsist. ”

Jacqueline Clark, CLAP
Student Member
From: Notre Dame Observer,
2/28/06

Am I a member of the Notre Dame Family?

The Catholic Church and Notre Dame have strong and intelligent teachings regarding social and economic justice. Here at Notre Dame, there are many opportunities of study and service that emphasize outward social responsibility at the global level. Yet, we also must turn our focus inward and take a critical look at our own campus and community. Often unnoticed and under-appreciated, hundreds of individuals work at all times of the day and night to bring us the food on our trays and guarantee the cleanliness of our classrooms, offices, libraries, laboratories, and dormitories.

Catholic Social Teaching states that all people have a right to productive work and fair wages. Level 3 jobs at the University of Notre Dame start at \$9.06 per hour. Many full-time Notre Dame employees who have been here for some time still only earn around \$9.50 per hour. Although CLAP does not currently have full access to comprehensive wage data at Notre Dame, it hopes to gain such access in the future in order to better understand this complex issue. One building services employee who has worked at Notre Dame for 25 years makes only \$11.83. When another employee asked how long it would take to earn maximum wage for the pay level, his/her supervisor responded, “forever.” “On-call” employees and workers from “Temp” agencies make even lower wages. Notre Dame Human Resources declares it “does not generally support step, longevity, cost of living or other increases based on term of service rather than contribution. Salary increases are generally based on the concept of “merit” which includes individual performance, equity (internal and external) and the responsibility and impact the position has on the mission of the University.”⁴

Working at Notre Dame full-time is not enough to support a family of four or more; many workers are forced to hold two jobs. “It would be nice to work only one job,” a dining hall worker said. One building services employee works the night shift 10 PM – 6:30 AM, after which he goes to his second job from 7 AM to 3 PM, a total of almost 17 hours each day. “What we are paid now is not reasonable. It’s like allowance when you’re a kid,” he said and added, “I’m just trying to support my family.” Another worker summarized, “It’s not about the money; it’s about happiness. It’s about having enough to pay your bills and a little more to live on.”

These problems stem from a lack of inclusion of workers in what we term the Notre Dame family. One worker expressed her feelings, “We aren’t part of the ‘Family.’ We’re brought out to clean, and otherwise we’re pushed aside.” According to a building services employee, “The first thing this place needs is an attitude change. They need to respect the workers.” One worker described her dejection after she was told she could not attend the blessing of a new building on campus, on which she had worked tirelessly to clean up after the construction. She felt this basic lack of respect made it hard “to take pride in my work”. Another worker in LaFortune said, “They talk to you like a twelve year-old,” and said that supervisors trying to cut budgets often create shortages in necessary supplies.

In order for Notre Dame workers to be fully included in the Notre Dame family, important change needs to happen, both in how they are treated and how they are compensated. Family means looking after one another’s needs, and the current pay policies of the University fall short in this respect. Notre Dame needs to take a comprehensive look at its employment policy and make sure that these issues, as well as others, are addressed.

⁴“Pay Philosophy,” Office of Human Resources. <http://www.hr.nd.edu>

Other Issues

In addition to the compensation and respect issues raised on the previous page, a number of other problems have arisen as Notre Dame has come to operate more like a business. CLAP has found that understaffing is an issue that affects many workers. A second shift building services worker said, “They say each worker has 25000 square feet. Well, not all square feet are the same. It’s hard to get everything done in buildings that have this many offices.” Many workers receive assignments that are too large, and the added load takes a toll on their bodies. A number of custodians have had surgery on their shoulders or backs due to job-related injuries and have been expected to return to work within two days. One worker on third shift pleaded, “Do not downsize workers in office buildings, do not sacrifice quality of work for saving a few dollars.” Understaffing makes it hard for workers to take pride in their work, as they cannot complete their tasks as well as they would like. A just work environment should ensure that workers feel a sense of pride and dignity in their work.

Another issue is that Notre Dame’s system of raises is slowly eating away at workers’ paychecks. The raises do not cover the rising cost of health insurance premiums, so in essence, they can serve as pay decreases. One worker in LaFortune said, “A nickel raise is a slap in the face.” And yet, many workers are finding that pay raises of this magnitude are becoming more and more common. Raises should not reflect budget constraints, but the rising cost of living in the South Bend area. Just raises are an integral part of just compensation.

Amidst these problems, many workers are scared to speak up for themselves because they fear reprisal. They do not view Notre Dame as a true family because they feel that they do not have a voice in this family. Some workers are even scared to use the independent hotline set up by the University at the end of 2006. They feel that there are increasingly fewer safe channels to voice concerns. This fear is also part of what many workers identify as a progressing departure from being a relational workplace; workers invest in Notre Dame while the University remains primarily concerned with business. Notre Dame must protect these workers who have problems with the work conditions but still come to work and do their jobs well.

We must strive for the day when every worker at Notre Dame can truly say, “I am a member of the Notre Dame Family.”

Living Wage in South Bend

As a standard for calculating a living wage for the Notre Dame community, we use the expenses of a family of four in South Bend. Using these inputs, the Self Sufficiency Standard for Indiana calculates the living wage to be \$19.81 per hour, or \$41,836 annually. The Economic Policy Institute calculates it to be \$20.94 per hour, or \$44,232 annually. A more conservative estimate is made by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, which states that only 30% of income should be spent on housing. It calculates the wage to be \$12.31 per hour, or \$25,600 annually. While these numbers vary considerably, they exceed the Federal Poverty Level of \$20,794 for a single-parent family of four.

A closer look at the Self-Sufficiency Standard gives a better idea of how this is actually calculated. This measures how much income is needed for a family of a certain composition in a given place to meet their basic needs without outside assistance. Of the \$3,486 per month, \$803 is allocated to housing, presumably a three-bedroom apartment necessary for a mother and three children. \$1200 is allocated to childcare, \$478 to food, \$217 to transportation, \$215 to health care, \$291 to miscellaneous needs, and \$637 to taxes. \$105 is earned back for childcare tax credit and \$250 for child tax credit.

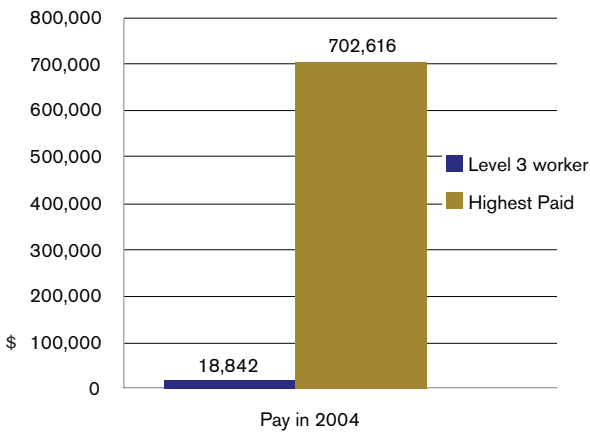
CLAP calls for a living wage of \$12.50 per hour or \$26,004 per year, just above 60% of the Self-Sufficiency Standard. This wage would put employees above both the poverty level and just above the Food & Nutrition Service eligibility requirement for food stamps for a family of four. No Notre Dame worker should need food stamps or other federal aid to support his/her family.

	EPI (2006)	Self - Sufficiency Standard (2001)	Fair Market Rent (2 bedroom Apt.)	Federal Poverty Line	Federal Benefits Line
Monthly housing	\$803	\$803	\$640 (30% of total)	-	-
Monthly food	\$562	\$478	-	\$578 (30% of total)	-
Monthly child care	\$1,075	\$1200	-	-	-
Monthly transportation	\$239	\$217	-	-	-
Monthly health care	\$290	\$215	-	-	-
Monthly other necessities	\$369	\$291	-	-	-
Monthly taxes	\$348	\$282	-	-	-
Monthly total	\$3,686	\$3,486	\$2,133	\$1,733	\$2,167
Annual total	\$44,232	\$41,836	\$25,600	\$20,794	\$26,000
Hourly wage	\$20.94	\$19.81	\$12.31	\$10.00	\$12.50

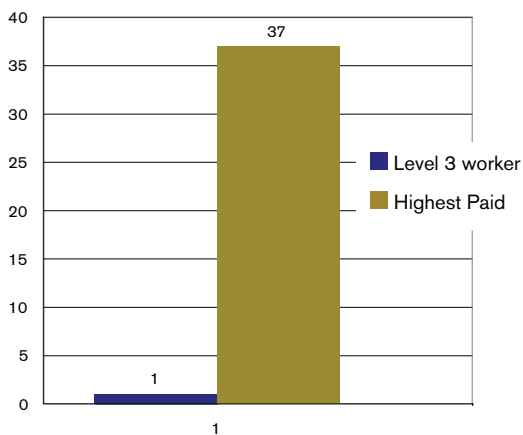
Fighting Inequality

Catholic social teaching denounces economic inequality. *Gaudium et Spes* disparages global inequality, manifest in “nations with a majority of citizens who are counted as Christians [who] have an abundance of this world’s goods, while others are deprived of the necessities of life and are tormented by hunger, disease and every kind of misery.”⁵ Paul VI describes the vast inequality as “the scandal of humanity.”⁶ In the face of poverty, it is the duty and obligation of Christians to give “out of the substance of their goods, and not only out of what is superfluous.”⁷ Paul VI moves towards an equalizing model of economic justice where the socioeconomic gap is reduced by the movement of both the upper and lower classes towards the middle, reducing economic stratification. This is not a form of charity. **By paying less than a living wage, Notre Dame actively maintains the poverty and powerlessness of its workers.**

Pay Inequality - Info for 2004



Pay Ratios- Info for 2004



In an application of these teachings, some Catholics compare the ratio of the highest to the lowest paid individuals in an enterprise. The highest paid employee of the university, the Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, earned \$702,614 or \$933,035 including deferred compensation and contribution to employee benefits in 2004. The second-highest paid employee, the President and Trustee, earned \$418,925 or \$464,323 including deferred compensation and contribution to employee benefits plans. On the opposite end of the scale, a minimum-pay level-one worker earns \$13,425 per year. In actuality, workers report that most of the lowest paid positions start at level 3 minimum pay, earning \$18,842 per year. The ratio of a level three employee to the highest paid employee without benefits is 1:37 and including benefits is 1:49. The ratio of a level 3 employee to the second highest paid employee without benefits is 1:22 and including benefits is 1:24. The benefits package of the top paid employee alone is 12 times greater than the salary of a level 3 employee.

Notre Dame has the resources to implement a living wage and lower economic inequality between employees – if it makes a just living wage policy a priority. While recognizing that earmarked donations complicate these matters, recent construction projects such as the Debartolo Center for the Performing Arts, the new entrance way, the Guglielmo athletic facility and the Jordan Science Building construction projects have all been sizeable investments. A university with such plentiful resources has the “great and principal obligation...to give everyone that which is just...To exercise pressure for the sake of gain, upon the indigent and destitute, and to make one’s profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine. To defraud anyone of wages that are his due is a crime which cries to the avenging anger of heaven.”⁸ A Catholic university, especially one with such vast resources, can afford to pay its workers a sufficient wage for supporting themselves and their families.

⁵Gaudium et Spes, 88.

⁶Gaudium et Spes, 88.

⁷Gaudium et Spes, 88.

⁸Rerum Novarum, encyclical of Leo XIII, 17

“Benefits don’t put food on the table. Here, we start at barely \$9. I need the benefits, but the day-to-day is hard on such a low wage. At [my work station], we have to eat our lunch in our break room, which is really a closet. We have to eat right next to our mop sink, chemicals, and garbage bin in a room with two chairs. It isn’t right.”

Anonymous Custodian,
University of Notre Dame

“The benefits are very good, especially the educational benefit. It is hard to pay the health insurance premiums, though, because they increase faster than the wages.”

Anonymous Worker,
South Dining Hall

Compensation and Benefits

The concerns prompting this report are based on conversations with workers, yet looking at compensation we can derive similar concerns. Notre Dame Human Resources claims that in addition to base pay “the university makes contributions on your behalf for such valuable benefits as medical insurance, retirement, and educational benefits.” Benefits, hard won by laborers and religious groups, must be protected. However, benefits do not replace a living wage.

- Medical insurance is a valuable benefit for workers, however as the portion they pay out of wages increases out of step with raises, income suffers.
- Claiming employer payments to Social Security as a part of total compensation is not fair. All employers by law are required to do so and employees will not see those fruits in the short term and continue to suffer in the day to day.
- Access to tuition benefits is a laudable act of the university, and possibly the one that long-time workers value the most. This benefit should remain intact and continue to promote Notre Dame’s value on education
- High prices to attend football games and to shop in the bookstore combined with low wages mean that access to tickets and on-campus discounts have little effect on workers’ lives.

Living Wage Beyond Notre Dame

Over the past decade, grassroots movements of citizens, workers, students, clergy and community organizations have sprung up throughout the nation and demanded economic justice for all workers. Baltimoreans United for Leadership Development (BUILD) paved the way in 1994 when the group campaigned and won an ordinance, which required that all city-contracted workers be paid a living wage. Since then, more than 120 city living wage ordinances have been implemented in such cities as Boston, Gary, Chicago, and San Jose. Today, the living wage movement is gaining momentum with active campaigns in about 75 counties and cities.⁹

By establishing a living wage for its employees, Notre Dame will join many other leading universities where students, faculty, and staff have lobbied their administrations to pay a living wage to campus workers such as housekeepers, security guards and dining hall workers. Students at Harvard University led a campaign that increased wages to \$11.35 per hour in 2002. Stanford, Swarthmore, and Wesleyan also pay a living wage to campus workers.

⁹ <http://www.livingwagecampaign.org/index.php?id=1959>

The Economic Benefits of a Living Wage

Contrary to common perception, there are numerous and significant economic benefits that accompany the implementation of living wage policies. These benefits are seen not only by the workers, but also by employers and society in general. At the individual level, a living wage ensures that workers receive just compensation for their labor.

- According to 1999 data distributed by the Economic Policy Institute, 26.8% of the American workforce earned wages that placed them below the poverty line.¹⁰
- Many businesses argue that minimum wage salaries primarily affect young people who are not in the position of supporting themselves. However, statistics show 70% of minimum wage earners are adults.¹¹
- Augmenting salaries would help to reverse the “downward trend in wages for low-wage earners” that the nation has experienced in recent years.¹²
- As wages increase, people have more money to spend and return to the economy, and businesses benefit from this increased spending.
- Living wage initiatives ensure responsible economic development. “Without living wage laws, governments could contribute to the creation of poverty-level jobs by hiring low-paying sub-contractors or giving businesses tax breaks or subsidies to create jobs without any guarantee that the new jobs will pay a decent wage.”¹³
- Livable wage initiatives encourage all employers in an area to raise wages in order to compete for needed laborers. This leads to responsible and just economic growth in the region.
- Reported increases in service contract prices in municipalities that have implemented a living wage are consistently very small, generally ranging between .003% and .07% of the localities’ budgets.¹⁴
- Despite some claims that a living wage will hurt the people it is trying to help by reducing jobs, campuses employ a stable workforce. Jobs such as security, food services and housekeeping cannot be eliminated.
- There is no evidence to show that livable wage initiatives substantially increase the cost to businesses. In fact, “evidence suggests that most firms absorb the wage increases through reduced training and recruitment costs.” Businesses benefit from the attraction and retention of skilled workers.¹⁵

As Notre Dame is the largest employer in the city of South Bend, the institution of a living wage would help not only the working members of the Notre Dame family, but would financially benefit the South Bend community at-large. Also, this investment in Notre Dame workers will create a better community around the university and help attract the best faculty and students in the country.

¹⁰Economic Policy Institute (EPI), www.epi.org.

¹¹VT Livable Wage Campaign

¹²Economic Policy Institute (EPI), www.epi.org.

¹³Economic Policy Institute (EPI), www.epi.org.

¹⁴The Brennan Center for Justice, www.brennancenter.org

¹⁵Economic Policy Institute (EPI), www.epi.org.

Demands and Recommendations

Meeting between Campus Labor Action Project representatives, workers, students and faculty, and Notre Dame administrators to discuss wage issues on campus.

Public statement by President John Jenkins affirming 115 years of Catholic social teaching on the right of all workers to a living wage this semester

Establishment of a joint task force of workers, students, faculty and administrators to examine campus labor practices and policies and to produce a Notre Dame Just Employment Policy to be commissioned by the end of the semester and to begin meeting by August

Interim meeting of CLAP leaders and administrators to establish the procedures, select members, and set a time line for Just Employment Task Force

Implementation of a living wage of \$12.50 per hour with a yearly COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) based upon the Consumer Price Index to cover all Notre Dame employees

Code of Conduct requiring contracted businesses to pay a the living wage on Notre Dame's campus

Enforcement of Code of Conduct penalizing violations of required living wage through suspension, non-renewal, or probation of such contracts or other sanctions

Affirmation of the right of workers to organize through a union neutrality clause