

## **MU wages not enough**

*MU Student – Letter to the Editor – 11.15.05*

Brad Gabriel, in his letter last Friday, refuses to acknowledge that the current worker's starting wage of \$8.50 is before taxes and that this wage must account for all of the worker's living expenses, even those accrued on the job, such as meals (which they pay full price for), and, come next year, parking.

Yes, even those "generous benefits the university offers" must be paid for, and the university already increased the amount taken out of payroll for health care benefits by up to 30 percent for the coming year, after implementing health care costs for the first time only last year (The Student, Oct. 11). The current wage is not enough to afford even basic needs, let alone amenities. After taxes, bills and deductions, the average Miami worker would barely have enough to sustain him/herself, which may explain why approximately 43 percent of Oxford's population is in poverty (2003 National Census data). The current situation is comparable to working for eight hours a day and only being paid for two. Gabriel's viewpoint devalues the nature of work. We need custodians and bus drivers just as much as teachers, physicians and lawyers. The truth is, the university could not function at a basic level without the wonderful people who comprise its staff. Granted, most of us are here for intellectual pursuits, but could these pursuits continue if our most basic needs are not being met?

All work, no matter the nature, has value and should be respected, and that should be reflected in wages. A living wage would not be anything extravagant or luxurious, but merely the basic minimum the workers need to get by.

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