Resolution 8.35: Student Life Support

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Highlighting Wesleyan’s commitment to an ever more diverse student body,

Citing Wesleyan’s involvement with the Creating Connections Consortium (C3), an organization with the mission of promoting full participation of students in academia and all that a university has to offer,

Highlighting low-income students as a population of Wesleyan students with substantial need,

Commending Wesleyan for its increase in the number of low-income and first generation students on campus, through partnerships with programs such as QuestBridge and Prep for Prep,

Noting the resultant increasing student need for financial assistance from the University,

Commending Wesleyan University for steps it has taken to serve low-income students seeking further financial assistance,

Pointing to the Career Center’s fund for low-income and first generation students in need of business attire for interviews and internships,

Noting that many low-income and first generation students are not aware of funds and resources available to them,

Recognizing the recent creation of the Dean’s Discretionary Fund to assist low-income students,¹

Understanding that these and other currently available funds are remarkably insufficient given the number of students on campus currently seeking financial assistance,

Noting that work-study programs are also insufficient to support students, and that they detract from students’ ability to participate in curricular and co-curricular activities,

Citing the high number of students eligible for at least $1,000 of work-study funding², thereby requiring substantial time spent working to pay tuition rather than working on academics,

Citing the minimum personal student contribution of $2,200 towards tuition,

Recognizing that most single minimum wage work-study jobs do not amount to $2,750 a year³,

¹ The Deans’ Discretionary Fund is an emergency fund dedicated to serving the acute needs of low-income students. At present, it is endowed at $60,000, or under $3,000 per year.
² 1217 Students
³ 90 Students, 7% of all work-study students, earned the full $2,750
Citing the fact that Wesleyan University mandates possession of health insurance in order to attend here,

Noting that students who are not already covered by health insurance are required to pay $760 to enroll in the university health insurance plan (and that figure rises annually),

Citing that outside scholarships and grants reduce the delivery of Wesleyan Financial Aid rather than reducing the expected student contribution,\(^4\)

Noting the Federal Pell Grant goes directly towards tuition and does not assist in paying the student contribution,

Noting that work-study is not intended to help with the student contribution,

Asserting that the main objective of undergraduates here at Wesleyan is to learn and not to work,

Asserting that many work-study jobs are particularly low-skilled, with few opportunities for advancement or the development of career-building skills or networks,

Asserting that low-income students have particularly high need for jobs that will assist them in finding and building careers later in life;

Acknowledging that the language of the financial aid system is often not clear to students and parents,

Highlighting that financial aid formulas do not always meet full demonstrated need to pay tuition,

Recognizing that the “allowances” allocated in financial aid packages do not meet full student need for books, travel, and other essential educational expenses,

Noting the lack of consideration within the current financial aid policies towards additional costs to the expense of student life,

Challenging the university to respond to the increasing inequality within the student body and to promote full participation of all students both inside and outside the classroom, regardless of background,

Aspiring to making Wesleyan University affordable and accessible for all,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Wesleyan Student Assembly:

1. **Calls upon** the University to establish fund pools for books and supplies, athletics and co-curricular activities, and travel;

\(^4\) http://www.wesleyan.edu/finaid/scholarships/outside_scholarship.html
2. **Supports** making these funds available by an application based on need;
3. **Urges** the University to establish a commission of students, faculty, parents, and administrators to reconsider Wesleyan’s financial aid formulas;
4. **Urges** the University to establish a quarter-time or half-time Low Income Student Dean position under the Vice President for Student Affairs to support the well-being and academic success of low-income students on campus;
5. **Asserting** that the University must re-evaluate the impacts of work-study loads, particularly for students working over 10 hours per week;
6. **Asserting** that the University must re-evaluate the specific areas in which work-study funds are allocated;
7. **Recommends** the creation of a resource center for low-income and first generation students;
8. **Resolves** to remain actively seized in the matter.

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