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On the scene: the SWA sit-in

Updated Mon., May 4, 2:30 p.m.

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Prospective students and their parents could not help but watch as the Student Worker Alliance (SWA) sit-in got underway Monday afternoon. At 11:45 a. m., two demonstrators climbed Busch Hall, dropping a banner over the side facing the Quad that read, "Living wage now." Shortly after, a maintenance worker removed the banner.



Media Credit: David Brody

Junior Ryan Mackin, standing outside of Brookings, began speaking to the crowd with a bullhorn.

"There's a lot of [prospective freshmen] here. We want them to know that the administration of Wash U doesn't support a living wage," said Mackin.

Students outside of South Brookings and inside the Office of Admissions began chanting slogans including, "What's outrageous? Wash U's wages! What's disgusting? Union busting!" and "Wash U-shame on you!"

Signs taped to the windows of the Office of Admissions by the 25-30 students sitting inside read, "Living Wage Sit-In: Day 1." According to senior Ojiugo Uzoma, SWA members and their supporters are setting up for a round-the-clock campout in Brookings, with runners to bring food and other items to the students involved. Some students have brought sleeping bags and other personal items.

Freshman SWA member Katherine Lavela expressed her willingness to remain in Brookings for as long as possible.

"I'm prepared to stay until the chancellor concedes to our demands or negotiates with us," said Lavela.

All offices in Brookings except for the main one have been locked. Approximately seven Washington University police officers were present in and around South Brookings, including Detective Bob Marss.

The Office of Admissions closes at 5:00 p.m., so administrators must decide whether students will be allowed to remain inside Brookings for the night. Joan Suarez, a volunteer with Jobs for Justice, and a former union organizer, said that the protestors were waiting for a decision to come down from the administration between 4:30 and 5 p.m.

Chancellor Wrighton was in a meeting and unavailable for comment at the time of this update.

