

Inauguration Fail

By: Paige Daul

Getting anyone to attend anything is tough. After all, people have prior commitments, work, homework and of course may not want to go. So when the president of St. Norbert College's inauguration ceremony came up, she did the only logical thing in her power: canceled classes and forced student representatives to attend.

I admit I tried to get out of it. Attending the inauguration of a college president was not on my bucket list and I was in no place to add it. I thought her team wouldn't notice if one student from an organization wasn't in attendance. I was wrong. She and her team did notice and I was promptly emailed several times with many bolded and highlighted words. With the scary language and fear of punishment, I decided I would attend.

The dress code for the event left some things to be desired. All students were required to wear the SNC provided green polo along with black slacks or khaki pants and close toed dress shoes. I came dressed as was asked of me, and got in the incredibly long line of students waiting to be checked in. Once I made it to the front, I was given my sign and a number.

The people organizing the student representatives tried to get us together and coordinated. They used many rhetorical appeals, none of which seemed to do the job. From asking us to pretend to be kindergarteners to standing on chairs trying to check everybody in, it was clear the staff was just as unprepared as the students. They even leveled with us and revealed that they didn't want to be there either. This was of course after they tried to get our attention by yelling "marshmallows" to no avail.

The precessional was long and awkward. We held our signs above our heads and photographers and the local news recorded it. The theater was scarcely filled, with student representatives being the majority. Some select staff joined, donning their regalia as usual. The president of course also had her friends and family in attendance. A very bright and cheery bunch of people. During the ceremony the audience was incredibly quiet, only clapping when prompted.

This leads one to ask, why require students to go? Ideally, if people feel drawn to support a president they'd go on their own volition. They wouldn't need to be forced, threatened or coerced. Perhaps all of the time they spent trying to get students excited about going, they could have spent listening to the students.

After all, if you're getting inaugurated, wouldn't you want to look into the audience and see people happy to be there? Instead, the president looked into the audience and saw students who were forced to attend. Many in fact did not clap throughout the ceremony. The students weren't the only ones. Many of the staff who attended did not clap nor stand up when the President was officially inaugurated. The disdain between students and the inauguration was shown again when most failed to show up to the reception afterwards. Maybe this is the start of a new chapter for St. Norbert, or maybe it's the continuation of actions made "for students" without ever actually consulting or listening to us.