

OPRIG hosts McMaster's first Alternative Welcome Week

Alternative Welcome Week 2010 enthralls students with the more serious side of university life

NATALIE TIMPERIO
SENIOR INSIDEOUT EDITOR

While “frosh” week has abruptly come to an end and most of us painfully wallow in despair at the thought of the new term, all is not lost. For students of McMaster University, Alternative Welcome Week 2010 made its debut this past Monday as Welcome Week 2010 came to a close.

Alternative Welcome Week is hosted by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group at McMaster (OPRIG), which is “a student funded/student directed organization” that has been “working on issues of human rights, the environment, and social justice” since 1975. Alternative Welcome Week is primarily an effort to “engage students in the struggles that

are so important for social and environmental justice...[and] to bring those students who have interests in justice together,” explains Brian Jeffery, Alternative Welcome Week Coordinator.

As Alternative Welcome Week is new to McMaster campus this year, Jeffery, who is a contract staff person at OPRIG, has, for the past three months, tended to the organization and coordination of Alternative Welcome Week.

Encouraging students to burst out of the bubble that, often, many grow accustomed to with campus life and the like, Jeffery explains that outside of McMaster grounds as well as the Westdale area, Hamilton has a rich history, despite that it is often perceived to be a polluted city stricken with extreme poverty.

Sharing his personal experiences while living in Hamilton, Jeffery emphasizes that “a lot of the message you get about Hamilton is this dirty city that people don’t really feel good about living in. But... once I started hanging out downtown and meeting a lot of the people...that really shift[ed] my idea of what the city was about. I think once you interact and engage with this place it can yield some pretty fabulous results.”

Sponsored by a number of organizations here on campus, including the McMaster Students Union (MSU), the Faculty of Engineering, the School of Social Work and the School of Labour Studies, Alternative Welcome Week goes beyond simply spreading the word about politically pressing issues to making the genuine effort to inter-

act with students through a variety of campus events.

Rather than opposing Welcome Week, Alternative Welcome Week is meant to be a positive experience for students of McMaster; adding onto their already vast extent of knowledge and providing numerous opportunities for fun learning experiences.

Jeffery, although not denying that Welcome Week serves as a great medium for students to get to know one another, admits that “it seems like we could be doing a bit more than painting our face every day for a week and doing chants.”

Indeed, Jeffery raises an interesting point. While spending countless nights face flat on your bedroom floor, is it too difficult to spend even a minute of your day contemplating the greater issues in

life – no, this doesn’t include what bottle of rum you will buy for tomorrow night’s party.

Rather, we are, after all, attending university, an institute of higher learning, where, without shining a critical eye on the world, may indeed defeat the purpose of attending this fine educational establishment in the first place.

So, if you’re looking to broaden your horizons, get to know fellow students who share with you in your passions and add to your university experience in a unique and stimulating way, then Alternative Welcome Week may just be better suited for you.

If you’re interested in attending Alternative Welcome Week events, or to simply learn more about it, check out www.oprig.ca.

The lowdown on classifying your classmates

From smart ass to serial texter, meet the characters gracing your classroom this fall

MERCEDES MUELLER
THE FULCRUM

OTTAWA (CUP) — Meet your fellow classmates. You sit next to them everyday, attempt to copy off them during exams and, sometimes, even befriend a couple of them. But, for the most part, you spend your lecture looking around wondering what the hell is the deal with these people. Here are some of the kids you can expect to see in each course, every semester, until you graduate.

The teacher’s pet

Just like in elementary school, each university class has a teacher’s pet. You’ll see her walking your professor to class, talking to him or her at break and hanging back after the lecture finishes so she can rattle off

more useless facts meant to impress your professor.

Best known for: Monopolizing the professor’s time. You’ll hate her because: The hour-long wait outside your professor’s office every time she’s in there, which is all the time.

The ridiculously over-dressed kids

For these students, being in class is like being at a job. And with their blouses and blazers, they dress like they work on Wall Street.

Best known for: Pencil skirts, stilettoes, silk ties and Italian leather lap-top bags. You’ll hate them because: They will make you feel so homely you’ll feel compelled to trade in your oh-so-comfortable sweats for something from Banana Republic.

The tardy kid

As if he can’t figure out how to set his alarm clock 15 minutes earlier, the tardy kid shows up for class late every day. After loudly shutting the classroom door, noisily making his way to the back of class, selecting the creakiest chair and opening his notebook, he’s finally ready to go back to sleep.

Best known for: Complete obliviousness. You’ll hate him because: He always looks well-rested.

The daydreamer

Spending most of the lecture doodling in her notebook or looking outside the window, the daydreamer always comes to class and never learns a thing. The only time she acknowledges her surroundings is

when the professor attacks her with a surprise question. Professors can pick out these kids like a bro can spot a kegger filled with drunken girls.

Best known for: That glazed-over, stoned look in her eyes. You’ll hate her because: While you’re trying to understand Marx’s Circuit of Capital, you just know she’s writing a Pulitzer Prize-winning book.

The hand raiser

Remember when Socrates kept asking questions and then was sentenced to death — more or less? Apparently the hand raiser skipped that class. On average, he will ask the professor one question per 10 minutes, and only one question per lecture has anything to do with the topic at hand.

Best known for: His freakishly fast arm-raising abilities. You’ll hate him because: Your professor can’t get through a lecture with this kid in class. You may also love him for this reason.

The serial texter

Seconds into your lecture, she whips out her BlackBerry and begins texting. You have a hunch most of these texts are unnecessary — “Hey girl, are we still getting shit-hammered at Tila later?”

Best known for: The time she forgot to put her phone on silent during the midterm and the final exam. You’ll hate her because: The sound of a vibrating phone on a hard surface every 30 seconds makes nails on a chalkboard sound like Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The popular kid

It seems as though this student is best friends with everyone in your class. He even plays a weekly squash game with the awkward daydreamer.

Best known for: That confidant, drawn out walk to his chair, stopping to shake hands and exchange greetings with every student. You’ll hate him because: You’re the only person he doesn’t seem to know.

The gossip girls

Unaware the couches in the campus coffee shop are more comfortable and conducive to conversation, these girls come to the lectures just to fill each other in on what’s happened since last class. But don’t you dare turn around and give them the I’m-a-serious-student-and-you’re-driving-me-crazy stare or you’ll become the next topic of conversation.

Best known for: Not-so-quiet whispering and giggling. Oh, the giggling. You’ll hate them because: Did I mention they giggle?

The I’ve-got-better-things-to-do kid

This student feels the need to leave class 10-15 minutes early. You will spend every class wondering if this guy is a secret government agent

always running off to impromptu government meetings. Sweet job or not, each class he will noisily pack up his books, give the professor a nod and strut out the door.

Best known for: All the jokes the professor cracks at his expense after he leaves. You’ll hate him because: You wish you had the balls to leave class early, too.

The class couple

You actually get to watch their romance unfold: One day they’re sitting on opposite sides of the classroom, a week later they’re sitting beside each other and the next day they’re holding hands before, after and during lectures. How adorably revolting.

Best known for: Completely inappropriate displays of affection. You’ll hate them because: How are you supposed to solve the prisoner’s dilemma when the class couple is going to second base beside you? That, and you’re totally jealous you aren’t getting rubbed down every class.

The smart ass

This student divides her time between correcting the professor and engaging in a dialogue with the professor on an advanced topic no one else understands, or cares about. She believes she should be teaching the course, and launches a mini coup every class.

Best known for: Starting sentences with, “Well, last night when I was reading [insert book not on the syllabus that your professor hasn’t even read]...” You’ll hate her because: She makes you feel stupid. Then again, she reminds you what your life would be like if you stayed up until 5:00 a.m. reading the Economist every night.

The Internet junkie

These kids — there are at least 20 in every course — always come to class with a laptop in hand. They’ll open a word document, name it “Lecture 10,” and then embark on an 80-minute journey through the World Wide Web. Three thousand Facebook pictures, 15 blogs, 13 tweets, nine MSN conversations, four visits to BBC News and an episode of Mad Men later, class is over and Lecture 10 appears to be about an “essay due next week.”

Best known for: Their ridiculous multi-tasking skills. You’ll hate them because: You’ll wish you brought your laptop to class.

The eye candy

Genetically blessed with a smoking body and face made for Vogue, it’s hard to understand why these students bother coming to class when they could be gracing the runways in Paris or Milan. Either way, they make 8:30 a.m. classes worth waking up for.

Best known for: Their sweet asses. You’ll hate them because: They will never sleep with you.

How-to-do-it

KAITLIN PETERS & NATALIE TIMPERIO
SENIOR & ASST. INSIDEOUT EDITORS

Simply walking through the Student Centre can be quite the challenge in and of itself. From frantically running through the crowds in a desperate attempt to make it class to a paranoia of people brushing up against you, the student centre can be likened to a war zone. So, how to handle those crowds? We’ve

devised some tips and tricks to get you through those high-traffic times in the student centre.

1. Don’t bathe for a while. That means no soap, deodorant or spray. Just let your natural aroma consume you. You’ll find you can drift around in your own personal bubble courtesy of the stink you send off in all four directions.

2. Pretend you just saw someone drop their medication. Elbow and kick your way through

the crowd while yelling “Hey! You’ve forgotten your important and potentially life-saving medication!” People will understand you’re saving a life.

3. Try to tail behind an extremely tall or large person, the crowd tends to part for these people automatically and you can bank on their success.

4. Hack viciously while sneezing and “forgetting” to cover your mouth. Look as sick as humanly possible, if in doubt corpse-like is optimal. Around midterms and finals people will run from you in droves.

5. Coming in from the arts quad cut to the right. You may annoy anyone seated when you clip them in the head with your bag, but you can avoid the deadlock

6. Act as a positive enforcer for faster movement, by strategically poking and pinching the lollygaggers in front of you. With enough practice you can probably get everyone up to a slow jog.

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