The Week of Welcome: fun times or colossal boner?

John Krench

To me, orientation week has always seemed like some kind of grotesque, David Lynch-directed music video for RE/MAX’s Hiking Happy People. Everyone has their happy face on, campus is bustling, and the five-year-olds are dressed like those refrigerator magnets you see in the storefront of a designer clothes outlet.

This is all a very clever facade that masks the midnight trail of cold reality that rolls around by the end of September, when stock prices for swimmers and pajama pants go through the roof. But out of this nightmarish carnival of faculty cheers and fall-weather school spirit, the most amusing element in my opinion is the clubs fair.

The clubs fair is like the great room of vendors at the Calgary Stampede or Capital Rex, but with a slightly smaller selection of tackle shops and amusement-P.T. food stands.

Even though you know that you don’t particularly need or want what anyone is offering, it’s still intriguing to walk around, marvel at the sheer volume of groups you can be a part of, and pretend that in just several months’ time, you will be a dedicated member of the Society for Cheese Enthusiasts, the Blotter Prince Jr Appreciation Club, or the Model Swedish Parliament.

Interestingly enough, almost every five-year-old I talked to said they were only there "because they had an hour to kill," reaffirming my entrenched belief that the clubs fair is the place where time goes to die.

Victor Vargas

Orientation is supposed to be a big welcome to new students, but every year it comes off as a great, candy-coated “Thank you.” Rather than give incoming students what they want, the Student Union, against all logic and reason, continues to create an event that resembles Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, when it should resemble a short trip to a postsecondary establishment.

What new students want is to get their One Card, find their classes, find the location of their relevant labs and libraries, receive some pieces of wisdom about campus life, and then be directed towards the closest bar. It’s inexpensive, sensible, and would only take an hour of their lives.

Instead the Student’s Union invades that incoming students also want to be led around by an insane person wearing a tacky, neon-colored “Orientation” T-shirt who insists on singing anything songs that are supposed to show school spirit, but which really only serve as a mateing call for other like-minded crazies.

In addition, these pipe-plug wannabes then expect new students to follow them for hours and stay up on spectacular events that include picking up generic swag with the SU logo on it, chanting “Greeen and Gold” and listening to campus leaders make speech after boring speech.

It’s like all the same students are the ones who decide to strip the whole delancey and go get their One Cards in 60 minutes flat so they can go home and play Wii Rockpapers. Whereas the future SU executives seem to be the only ones that actually enjoy the whole monotonous and believe I’m worth the massive time.

Mario Kotowsky

Cently the best thing about Week of Welcome is the sheer number of bars because that student organizations hold in Quad.

I turn to the biggest supporter of any club or student group that can provide me with a tasty beverage for just two bucks. Having BILLY for lunch is awesome plus it’s cheaper and tastier than most other options on campus, and I get to support different student organizations on this campus.

I also love how these bars continue in Quad long after the rest of the first week’s hoopla has ended. While most of the Week of Welcome activities will die by Friday, bars will offer spring sports in the subsequent weeks, allowing students to enjoy a drink and cheap lunch here on campus for once.

The thing that I like the best about these bacchus is that it’s quiet, unannounced, and considerably less obnoxious than the deafeningly loud beer gardens that usually overtake Quad—not unlike a bad beat of garbage affecting an innocent limb.

After all, a bar/bacchus only takes a small amount of space, makes very little noise, and has no bearing on prosperity with no interest in participating.

Any student clubs interested in doing a bit of 80’s-themed fund-raising during Week of Welcome (and beyond) are sure to have my support.

Canal Pierce

Week of Welcome is by far the biggest bacchus/bacchanal at the university. Everybody’s all shirts and giggles, asking “why did you do this over the summer?” Unfortunately, the answer is never, “I remembered not to stop in the middle of a crowd of half-year old kids thinking of all the sad, wasted, and fallen in the past year.”

It’s bad enough that almost everyone woke up late, meaning the meals are consumed as hell, but what’s worse is getting to campus and finding that it’s practically a stock job.

Even if you somehow manage to find a way to beat the crowds—either by taking clever routes or simply relying on the tried-and-trusted method of pushing people out of the way—there’s still no escaping the sea of feet.

Whether it’s orientation leaders pretending school is nothing but beers and bowls or an English professor telling you that you’re going to have a promising future in anything but art, nobody wants to feel left out that this fall fails to reveal the cold, monochromatic inside.

The fact is, that drunken guy fighting to maintain his balance in the beer gardens is, despite his claims, most likely not a medical student, a ski club card will not get you all the free ladies, and despite appearances, that’s not actually beer in your RATT burger.

You might think that I’m just being jaded and cynical, but when that two-week-long “start of school” brouhaha and suddenly everything you eat seems to taste slightly of salt well, you’ll get the bigger in you too (unless you’re a stunning Unicorn born, that is).

Paul Blitov

I’m one of those students that the SU totally hates; my apathy greatly concerns me, but even when it comes to Week of Welcome’s celebrations, I skimped the poster only to see if any hands that I know were playing, then put my eyes back and kept moving.

Don’t get me wrong; there’s an undeniable atmosphere of excitement bubbling around campus these few weeks, and that’s absolutely great and justified. However, that doesn’t mean I want to hear someone chant screeches in French, or shout about how my Arms degree will never be the same, for my cool job.

After two years, the whole thing feels a little forced, a little too over the top and, generally just a little too much. Fuck off, and let me do my learning in peace.

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TOY STORY

The Week of Welcome is for everyone to have a good time, but some students find it boring and uninteresting.

However, others enjoy the chance to get involved with new organizations and make friends. It's a mix of fun and learning experiences.

The Week of Welcome is a great opportunity for students to get to know each other and start building the community they will call home for the next few years.