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Wild assembly ushers in McBride era

With loud cheers and persistent applause, fans of the new junior class president show their support at his first classwide event



Above: "Hi. Good afternoon," says President McBride, a statement which drew wild cheers and applause. **Below:** McBride's supporters cheer for their president as he speaks to the class at the assembly.



The mass appeal which carried Ryan McBride to victory in last June's presidential election resurfaced in a big way Monday as his fans loudly voiced their support during the first classwide assembly of the McBride era.

From the moment President McBride opened his mouth to speak Monday, his supporters' lingering euphoria from their surprise victory five months ago bubbled to the surface. There were enthusiastic rounds of applause for descriptions of fairly mundane class fundraising rules, as well as wild and sustained cheers for the president's bold opening statement, "Hi. Good afternoon."

Every word out of McBride's mouth was dynamite.

"I can't compete with that charisma," said Tim Stevens, the former two-term class president who lost to McBride in last year's election.

"Ryan McBride is like Michael Jackson. Every time he moves, the crowd just goes wild," observed Marel Nasinnyk. "I don't understand."

Eventually, the mass excitement inspired by McBride mushroomed into general turmoil and bedlam, causing teachers to spend much of the assembly trying—usually without success—to quiet the



**"I need you
to be quiet!"
—Ms. Yukna**

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McBride's mass appeal strikes again

At assembly, supporters cheer for new junior class president

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students down and restore order.

None of this chaos was directly spurred by anything McBride or any of the other class officers said or did. In fact, the officers quickly accomplished the purpose of the assembly—informing the students about their class fundraiser—in a rather efficient manner.

But no amount of official efficiency could control the state of near anarchy which ruled the auditorium by the end of the assembly. The crowd had a mind of its own Monday.

From the very beginning of the assembly, there was some degree of disruptive noise coming from the crowd. Andrea Yukna, one of the junior class advisors, started things off by yelling at those who were already talking. “Knock it off! I want you to be quiet! Excuse me!” she exclaimed. “You need to be quiet, and you need to listen.”

Perhaps it was that initial scolding message, combined with the fact that the assembly was held in eighth period on the Monday before a day off from school, which put the students in a rebellious mood. At any rate, Ms. Yukna continued, “You need to give the other people in here the opportunity to hear about their fundraising so that you can find out what you’re going to be doing in this class.” With that, she lapsed into silence, effectively giving President McBride the floor.

McBride took a step forward and stated, “Hi. Good afternoon.”

Without warning, the crowd erupted into wild cheers and applause, along with several hoots and whistles. Suddenly, it was as if the class had been transported back in time to June 11, the day McBride clinched his presidential upset by ripping up his prepared script and giving a humorous campaign speech “from the heart.”

On Monday, much like on that fateful day in June, McBride's every word was met with an enthusiastic reaction from the crowd. Again, he said nothing extraordinarily hilarious or profound. He just talked, and his stage presence and charisma—to

“That was not a fundraising assembly.

That was a McBride pep rally.”

—Jenn May

“It’s nice to see some people excited about something for once.”

—Liz Rubasky

say nothing of his enthusiastic cheering section—did the rest.

“All right. Good afternoon. What we’re here for today...” McBride continued Monday, and then went on to explain the class fundraiser and to invite any interested persons to join a junior prom committee. When he was done, he stated simply, “That’s all I have to say.”

Of course, this conclusion drew another round of cheers and applause.

Class treasurer Jaimie Kwassman, who defeated Sara Colpitts in June, spoke next. Kwassman discussed the class dues

and explained why fundraising is important.

When Kwassman had finished, McBride added another comment. “By the way, you get thirty percent of what you sell,” he told the class. This assertion was greeted with another ovation of wild cheering and hooting.

Joan Mastrocola, the other junior class advisor, then began to outline more details of the fundraiser. While she spoke, the officers handed out envelopes containing the fundraising materials. As McBride walked around the auditorium handing out envelopes, he was greeted by occasional applause from the people he walked past. This contributed to a general rise in the noise level from a low murmur to a loud rumble.

Eventually, Mrs. Mastrocola finished talking, and for a while, no one picked up where she had left off. The noise in the auditorium went unchecked for well over a minute.

Finally, Ms. Yukna spoke up. “Okay, you need to listen up so that you have everything,” she said, and then raising her voice, shouted, “and I NEED YOU TO BE QUIET! You don’t seem to understand!”

This drew scattered “whoaaas” from the crowd, and things briefly quieted down slightly. Ms. Yukna began to go through the contents of the fundraising envelopes, but within a few moments the noise in the auditorium was out of control again. In complete frustration, Ms. Yukna stopped what she was doing for twenty seconds and just waited, then finally exclaimed,

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Above: President Ryan McBride speaks to the class on Monday. Behind him is Vice President Lauren Correll.

Bedlam erupts at first class assembly

Cheers for McBride eventually lead to increased noise, utter chaos

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"Excuse me! Ladies and gentlemen! Gentlemen!" She then walked up to near the top row of students and yelled, "Excuse me! Excuse me! I have asked you to be quiet, and now I'm going to say it again. I think you're being rude, and I don't expect that." With that, the students finally quieted down to a low whisper.

This relative peace was sustained for a few minutes while Mrs. Mastrocola explained more fundraising details, including the fact that only the Christmas candies, not the Easter candies, are for sale.

Alex Budney, either not hearing Mrs. Mastrocola's explanation or intentionally ignoring it for comic effect, noticed that the part of the

Munson's fundraiser book showing rabbit-shaped Easter candies was crossed out, indicating students are not allowed to sell it. Budney raised his hand and asked, "How come we can't sell the bunnies?"

"Because that's Easter. This is Christmas," replied Ms. Yukna in what sounded like a slightly mocking tone.

This exchange provoked a great deal of snickering from the crowd, disrupting the quiet. The noise level was on its way up again, this time for good. Just thirty seconds after Alex's question, at 2:02, Ms. Yukna wrapped up the business of the assembly with a few more words, but made no real attempt to reestablish the



Above: Tim Hazelton raises his fist as a symbol of support for President McBride, while Nelson Raposo gives McBride a thumbs-up.



Above: Holding up the Easter section of the Munson's fundraising book, Alex Budney asks, "Why can't we sell the bunnies?" The class's overall mocking reaction to this question caused a general increase in the noise level, bringing chaos back to the auditorium.

and applause.

Meanwhile, McBride seemed like a seasoned politician as he strolled slowly up the aisles, mingling with his supporters.

Nino DiBiase, one of those supporters, eventually

got out of his seat and walked to the front of the auditorium. He was greeted by chants of "Nino! Nino!"

Next there was a round of applause for Brian Zapatka, who was standing up in the front row.

Hoping to draw some of this attention to himself, Greg O'Donnell stood up and held out his arms, inviting tribute. Receiving none, he was greeted instead with virtual silence. This provoked him to yell, "Come on!" Some students responded to this by cheering, while a greater number booed.

The bedlam reached a fever pitch at 2:07, when the gym bell rang. Many students stood up and started to walk out, thinking that the school day was over. Even when they realized that there were still eight minutes left in the period, many remained standing, and almost all remained talking, for the duration of what was now a completely disorganized assembly.

"This is the first time I've actually sat [during an assembly]," said Tim Stevens, who, as president, was

rapidly deteriorating order in the noisy auditorium.

For the final thirteen minutes of the assembly and of the school day, chaos ruled.

When McBride walked toward the crowd and leaned forward to answer a student's question, he received another round of applause. He responded by looking up and smiling. In the crowd, Tim Hazelton raised his fist and Nelson Raposo gave the president a thumbs-up.

Moments later, when Vice Principal Donald King walked up the aisle toward the back of the auditorium, he too was showered with cheers



Above: President Ryan McBride shakes hands with one of his supporters, Bob Struzenski. Looking on is Joe DiNardi.

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Students react to wild class assembly

Opinions widely varied about conduct of talkative “derelicts”

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always standing front and center at assemblies in previous years. “Are we like this every year, this bad?” he asked, referring to the audience’s behavior.

Stevens neither criticized nor praised the performance of McBride and the other officers, stating, “It was the same thing every assembly does.”

Asked how he thought the assembly went, Chris Manzione—a staunch McBride supporter in last year’s election—stated, “Well, when McBride was talking, it went pretty good.”

“I think Ms. Yukna should shut up and let Ryan talk,” said Kevin Hauschulz.

“Ryan McBride is a demagogue,” proclaimed Sean Vivier.

Carmine Rinaldi—one of the students who was making noise and clapping for McBride’s every word—stated, “I think [the assembly] went particularly great. You know, no one’s going to take this seriously, and that’s why. Everyone gets what they want out of it.”

“I think that we have a bunch of derelicts in our class,” said Bob Struzenski, who voted for McBride last June. “I mean, seriously, there’s no need for clapping at times like that, just because [McBride] says ‘listen’ or— just because he says a word, people start clapping. It’s ridiculous.”

“I think it went well,” said Liz Rubasky, who described herself as a “Tim Stevens girl” after last year’s election speeches. “[Ryan] did definitely stimulate a lot of energy from the class,” she said Monday.

Asked if that increase in energy is a good thing, Rubasky replied, “To a point. I think if they get too rowdy, it’s really bad, but it’s nice to see some people excited about something for once.”

“That was not a fundraising assembly. That was a McBride pep rally,” said Jenn May.

May was a strong Stevens supporter last year, but she says she has gotten to know McBride better this year and believes that he is a good president. “I’m not totally against the Ryan McBride era. We’re juniors. We’ve got to have fun, right?...I’m pretty much for it. I’m for the whole Ryan McBride era. It’s good.”

Asked if the crowd’s rowdiness was bad, May said, “Oh, no. The teachers are way too up tight about that.”

“It was wonderful,” Ian Drayton said of the assembly, which he described as “a key campaign.” He continued, “I thought he boosted this whole fundraising event so wonderfully. I mean, he persuaded me to sell.”

But, Drayton admitted, the class’s reaction to McBride and the bedlam that eventually ensued “might have been a little uncalled for. A little on the rowdy side.”

Drayton added, however, that all the cheering for McBride may indicate that the students “care a little more” about their class “by having someone that riles them up.”

President McBride said that the assembly went “as planned.” Asked how he felt about the way the class behaved, particularly in relation to their cheers for him, the president said, “I didn’t mind it...It was just a bunch of kids being rowdy, and you should expect that from 16- and 17-year-olds.”

“I don’t think it was disruptive,” McBride added. “Kids will be kids.”

Asked if he thinks that he, as president, provokes more of that rowdiness from the class than his predecessor, Tim Stevens, would have in a similar situation, McBride said, “I don’t know. Possibly, but who am I to say?”

As for the general, continuing criticism from some of McBride’s opponents who think he is a joke who should not be taken seriously as president, McBride responded Monday by declaring, “I’m no joke. I’m for real.”