

The clash over graduation attire

Graduation dress code squelches student creativity and keeps us in the past

by Nora Crumley

On June 4, the 2017 class will graduate at the Sears Center. Though the location has changed, because of Northwestern's Welsh-Ryan Arena's renovations, the graduation procedure (the white dresses, white tuxes, red roses, boy girl order etc) has gone through minor changes over the school's history.

Now, yes I will admit the pictures look fabulous; the rows of pure white and the vibrant red roses almost make the process of tracking down a white dress worth it.

But great pictures are not enough of an excuse for the uncomfortable, restricting, problematic issues this tradition causes.

First, It's expensive, uncomfortable, and enforces gender restrictions.

No one has a white dress or tux lying around in their closet (unless they have older siblings). This means a major extra cost in the form of buying a \$200 dress or renting a white tux.

Added to the cost, for girls at least, is buying a pair of white or nude shoes and accessories.

Though this is a grand event, renting a white cap and gown, or even wearing short dresses, will deliver a similar effect for a lesser cost.

But cost is only the first layer. Students, specifically female students, continuously express discomfort with the dress regulations. Girls don't wear dresses,

not to mention long dresses, every day.

Wearing a white long dress is going outside many girl's comfort zones. Additionally the modern woman is no longer defined by how they dress for events.

This is not a debutante ball. Girls are not being presented into high society, they are graduating high school. We should treat it as such.

Furthermore, we are graduating from high school. Hours of late nights, little sleep, hard tests, and a lot of studying came before this rite of passage.

Our graduation should be marked with clothing that does not cause uneasiness for a portion of the class.

New Trier encourages individuality. To reflect that on graduation day we must then allow some divergence in apparel.

Yes, girls can now wear all white jumpsuits or pantsuits as well as tuxes, but this is hardly a breach in gender discrepancy and ignores a small minority of students who do not favor either option the school has created.

Now, listing these problems is not in an effort to change the long-standing New Trier tradition, it is simply a plea to be more considerate and broaden the guidelines.

We can still embrace the tradition of white dresses and tuxes while remaining modern and considerate.

For example the guidelines for dresses should be less strict.

There is great irony in barely

having a dress code for every day, but being restrictive and obsessive on graduation day outfits.

Secondly, the school should not make people change out of their dress if they deem it inappropriate.

Now yes, no one should go on stage exposed, but I would argue that no one in the audience would be offended by an open back, and telling someone they cannot wear a dress at their own graduation is a little cold hearted.

Also the graduation dress requirement could allow for more self expression.

New Trier encourages individuality and being true to yourself, to reflect that on graduation day we must then allow some divergence in apparel.

I am not talking about a complete color change, but many allow some sequins or texture that would otherwise not be allowed. Or even permit self expression through our shoes.

I can imagine many girls and boys who might be more comfortable and self expressive if they could wear their favorite pair of kicks.

And I am sure the grandiosity of the event will not be impaired with students wearing Converse instead of white heels.

New Trier's graduation will always be a spectacle and I understand the appeal of keeping up tradition and the beautiful pictures that come with the white dresses and tuxes.

But like all traditions, they must be modified to best accommodate the modern public.

I am not saying we should convert to the classic cap and gown (though we are a public school and pretending we are not is a bit pretentious) I am just suggesting that the rules become a little more

Graduation attire has students celebrating their big day in style.

by Connor Josellis

As said in past editorials, tradition is very important to New Trier as our school has been around for over 100 years.

One of the most visible examples of our tradition is that every year, the graduating class gathers in an arena, completely clothed in white dresses and white tuxedos for the commencement ceremony.

It is mandatory for all those who want to walk at graduation to wear white tuxedos and long white or off-white dresses.

Although there are some allowance for variation in the dresses and tuxedos, attire must follow strict guidelines. These guidelines are made to ensure uniformity of all students.

This ceremony is the culmination of over ten years of schooling.

It is a reason to celebrate, it celebrates the hard work and lessons that we have learned.

For the same reason our parents pay thousands of dollars for a graduation party, seniors, advisers, and the administration dress up extravagantly for the ceremony commemorating this accomplishment.

It is something that is unique to New Trier. Almost every other public school in the country graduates in cap and gown, but not us. Conformity is not something in New Trier's DNA and we need to be proud of the uniqueness and longevity our traditions have produced.

There are undoubtedly aggravating and even outdated parts to the attire requirements, like how girls' dresses must be longer than mid-calf and that there cannot be colored accessories.

The school can and should keep the tradition, while making minor updates to the dress code.

The school can also take steps to help some afford the expensive dresses and help promote and expand the White Dress Project.

In order for the attire to work it needs to be affordable and not a burden.

It can be strict and maybe even annoying at times, but that does not mean we should abandon a long standing Trevian practice.

Storied traditions are the things that keep us one of the most well known and top schools in the nation.

The fact that all 1000 seniors graduate together, wearing the same color and looking similar, brings us closer as a class.

It is only standard that since we heard the same lessons, walked the same steps in the hallway every day, that we dress alike, and graduate together, uniformly.

Some of the complaints heard about the attire regarding the color of shoes and lack of variety in tuxedos seems slightly childish.

I don't think that it is a big deal for us to be sitting for a few hours at the ceremony and then at the graduation party. We can handle the few hours of possible discomfort.

Not to mention that dressing in tuxedos and white dresses is aesthetically pleasing and the utter coolness of wearing white tuxedos and dresses is something out of a movie.



Group projects are not just like the "real world"



by Sam Blanc

Before we start, let's get one thing straight: not all group projects are a negative experience.

Working with people, at least with people you like, can be a heck of a lot more fun than chugging along on a project by yourself.

However, there are some flaws that can infect a project like the plague, namely diffusion of responsibility, leaving a group-load of work on one student. Unfortunately as a resident try-hard, that's often me.

From my very first group project, my teachers have been spouting out the same reasons for giving these assignments. "You need to learn to work with people." "This is just like work in the real world."

Now, I get that teachers want us to work together, to develop in a way that promotes inclusion and respect towards others, but I don't think group work has done that since third grade. We know how to interact with each other.

When I'm mad about a group project it's not because someone called me a meanie-head or punched me in the face, it's because someone isn't pulling their weight. Group projects don't remedy that.

In fact, when people get a good grade after not doing any of the work, that behavior is more than likely reinforced.

Generally, I think group projects tend to do the opposite of what teachers want. Sometimes group projects just make me hate working in teams.

I find that group projects leave me so frustrated that I would rather have just done the entire thing myself. A project in a class setting, where my individual success is affected by someone else's effort, just drives me crazy.

I haven't had too much work experience, summer jobs and a volunteer gig here and there, but what I've found is working in groups outside school is not at all like school projects.

Group work in the real world usually doesn't have the same sort of redundancies that group projects in school have.

Group projects make me hate working in teams.

In school, everyone working on a project is usually bringing similar skills and background to the project. Outside of that, groups are often made up of people with very different skill sets.

As a result, it's more likely to be clear who should take the lead on what and who has expertise where, and that's much more efficient than the typical school project.

And at work, there's typically someone who's charge

to make decisions and hold people accountable. If someone doesn't do their fair share, there's someone to notice. In school, teachers don't seem to care if everyone works together, singing kumbaya, or if one kid stays up until 3:00 a.m. working on a powerpoint.

Even when a group is fully cooperative, it's just difficult to organize. I think teachers forget that our lives don't revolve solely around their class.

We've got other classes to study for, plus we're in school for a third of the day. We're sleep deprived as it is, we don't need another thing to stay up worrying about.

Now I pride myself in my time management skills, but there is just enough time in the week for me to go to class, do homework, study, do karate, layout a newspaper, watch The Great British Bake Off, and have relationships with my family and friends.

Add three, four, five others' schedules to the mix and group meetings become nearly impossible

to arrange.

So I'm not saying that we should scrap the group project all together or that we can't learn and grow from other people, but I think it needs some refinement. Class time can be really helpful, just to give everyone an opportunity to map out what is to be done and how to do it.

Then there's the issue of the group project free loaders. The grade leeches that plague massive nerds like me.

Just grading separately, making students pick parts of a project to do can help weed out the ones that don't do the work and hold them accountable for their actions.

And to all of you out there doing your group project sans group, remember, when the Federalist Papers were written, John Jay wrote five, James Madison wrote 29, and Alexander Hamilton wrote 51.

And it took a while, but which one of those people has the most popular musical of the century written about them? Your time will come.