

Greeting

Stan Seltzer

Chair, Faculty Council, Ithaca College

The Inauguration of Thomas R. Rochon

April 17, 2009

President Rochon, trustees, distinguished guests, students, staff, colleagues, and friends . . .

As chair of Ithaca College's Faculty Council, it is an honor to welcome you on behalf of the faculty of IC.

By now some of you may have forgotten that Tom Rochon came to campus last spring as—in his own words—"candidate number three" for the position of IC's new president.

At the sessions I attended then, he spoke at length about academics, calling for a common academic direction and posing the question: "What *is* it that distinguishes Ithaca College academically?"

My notes also include Tom's words, "Remember, we are all here for a common purpose."

He spoke more than I would have expected about governance—is this any way to campaign for office?—but what he said was that he hoped to see increased faculty participation. He also asked the question: What is the best use of faculty time?

It's a bit easier to see—well into his first year now—that President Rochon's first concern is academic excellence. This became evident from the time he arrived on campus in July. It was months before I ever heard him speak publicly without the phrase "academic excellence" being front and center. I would be quite surprised if his remarks at this ceremony don't also reflect that.

Tom's emphasis on academic excellence should be no surprise. Before becoming an administrator, he had a distinguished academic career, starting at Princeton, including a Fulbright at Kobe University in Japan, and a professorship at Claremont Graduate University. And he has published a highly acclaimed book, titled *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values*.

The scheduling of this inauguration is yet further testimony to Tom's commitment to academic excellence, as it was scheduled to take place in conjunction with the Whalen Academic Symposium, an annual event that showcases and honors student accomplishment, which many of you attended yesterday. Believe me, this is no coincidence.

I am glad that you have come to share in this celebration, and I know you all join me—and the faculty—in wishing Tom Rochon all the best as the eighth president of Ithaca College.