

Dear Lawrence community,

The recently concluded election cycle raised deep concerns for many of us, including me. The tenets of a Liberal Arts community: respect for others, openness to new, challenging ideas, and reliance on research to help determine solutions, were largely absent from the discourse. But, as we heard from many elected officials today, it is now time for all elements of this nation to come together, as Americans do after elections are over.

That is especially true for us, here, at Lawrence. Some members of our community feel deeply threatened by the outcome; others wonder what this transition will mean for their futures. Others, who are residents from other countries, find themselves participating at a major moment in the history of the U.S. It is now, more than ever, a time when we need to be present for one another and listen carefully for concerns which need to be addressed. This morning's community gathering was a first step in that effort. Notes from that meeting are attached. Additional events will be posted on the [Diversity and Inclusion web page](#) under the "Post-Election Support" tab.

I take heart in knowing that you all join me in this effort.

In the past days a few members of the Fox Cities community have publicly demonstrated their prejudice. If at any point you feel your safety is at risk, please contact at once Campus Safety at x6999 or the Appleton Police Department at 911 or 920-832-5500.

I have faith we can work against this divisive trend in society and strengthen our community and the common values that bind us together.

Yours,

Mark

Mark Burstein
President, Lawrence University

Community Gathering Notes

November 9, 2016

This morning, a campus gathering was held to allow our entire community to consider the implications and to express comments in an open forum. Hundreds of members of the Lawrence community were in attendance, with short notice of the event. It was an opportunity to share thoughts and feelings. It was also an opportunity for campus leaders to listen to students, faculty and staff and to consider responses to the needs of the community.

The meeting was opened by Provost Dave Burrows. He explained that President Burstein was out of town at a meeting of ACM presidents but that he had suggested holding the gathering. The purpose, he said, was to address anxiety and to talk about implications and next steps.

Kimberly Barrett, vice president for diversity and inclusion, addressed the gathering and facilitated the discussion. She noted that Lawrence is a diverse community of Republicans, Democrats and Independents, all of whom are uncertain about the future. She noted that, at times like this, we need to be strong and support one another. We need to model behavior and respect the right of individual expression. She also noted the importance of seeking understanding of how each of us is feeling.

Associate Professor of Government Jason Brozek was called upon to offer some historical perspective. He also noted that he stood in support of anyone who feels unsafe, unwelcome or disrespected. If wanted, he would advocate for those individuals. He also pointed out that he himself is still processing the outcome and has yet to analyze the election in a comprehensive way. Professor Brozek stated that this was an historic election, notable for its divisiveness and resentment. Voting patterns revealed divisions between college educated and non-college educated voters, and between urban and rural voters. For those who wanted further insight into the underpinnings of these divisions, he suggested reading *The Politics of Resentment* by Katherine Cramer.

Professor of History Jerald Podair also offered some perspective, noting that despite his study of American politics and the American presidency, he had been wrong about nearly everything in this election. He cited the "Bradley Effect," in which people being polled did not answer questions truthfully, leading pollsters to believe that sentiment was leaning in ways that it wasn't. Professor Podair urged people not to lose faith in this country.

Vice President Barrett then invited comments from those in attendance. A number of people spoke up, providing personal perspectives, fears, frustrations, concerns, support, encouragement and ideas. After more than 45 minutes of open dialogue, Barrett urged everyone to be somewhat selfish, to get through the final weeks of the term and to engage in self-care by taking advantage of the many resources available. They include:

- Campus counselors through the Wellness Center
- Academic support through the Center for Academic Success
- Campus organizations such as the Diversity Center, CODA and Sankofa House
- Programs being planned for later today at Colman, Brokaw and Kohler residence halls
- Opportunities for physical fitness and release

Finally, Linda Morgan-Clement, Julie Esch Hurvis dean of spiritual and religious life thanked all those who spoke and reminded everyone that one way to move forward is through reflection and mindfulness. Dean Morgan-Clement invited those who wanted to participate to join Dean of the Conservatory Brian Pertl in a deep listening session, which concluded the gathering. Dean Pertl also noted that there will be a deep listening reflection event on the evening of Nov. 9 in the Memorial Chapel to begin at 9:00 pm.

There will be other opportunities to consider the implications of this election and to explore specific actions to address the fears and the uncertainty we all face. In the meantime, we encourage everyone to take care of themselves during this trying time.