

**CAMPUS VOICES**

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## More discomfort, not less



**Nicholas Rhyne**  
Senior

I woke up this past Wednesday to the same surprising news as my 300 million fellow Americans: Donald Trump had defeated Hillary Clinton in the previous day's electoral contest. As a Republican, I was proud to see my party maintain control of both chambers of Congress, and I remain cautiously optimistic that a Trump administration can effectively lead our nation.

What I was also surprised by that morning was being called a "racist" and a "bigot" on my way to class for wearing a pin voicing support for the party I voted for while exercising a civic duty that we are all so privileged to have.

It would be a lie if I said being called those names by fellow students didn't hurt a little. That said, I could write endlessly about the hate that was flung at Republicans on Wednesday or about some of the detestable comments made by my party's candidate throughout this election, but that gets us nowhere. What is most important now is

exposing ourselves to those with whom we disagree and not letting the anger and fear paralyze us. The easiest path we can take now is one of disengagement, partisanship and hate.

I am asking that, as students, we take the more difficult path of respectfully discussing, disagreeing and compromising.

At this wonderful university, that process is extremely easy. There are hundreds of groups on campus filled with thousands of welcoming, passionate students who could talk your ear off about their passion.

If you are a climate change skeptic, go to a Sierra Club meeting. If you have never been to the CREDE, go have your voice heard. If you are not a member of Fraternity and Sorority Life, go to a Panhellenic or an Interfraternity council meeting. If you are a Democrat, go to a College Republicans meeting. If you are a Republican, go to a College Democrats meeting. Get out of your comfort zone and engage in thoughtful and constructive conversations with your peers.

Disagreement among students is to be expected after such a contentious election, but this does not mean we cannot civilly challenge each other's ideas to create a stronger, more open United States.

## When democracy hurts



**Carlos Andino**  
President of The North Carolina Student Legislature

Democracy can hurt. Our competitive system forcibly leads to winners and losers. These titles bring with them an array of emotion from euphoria to melancholy. But, this election has awoken an emotion like never before: fear.

Fear is an immobilizing force. It can be a destroyer of cherished progress. Today, this fear exists within the minority. Not only minority groups — those most threatened by the current state — but also those who felt the need to defend these groups through their votes. This fear cannot be called unwarranted by any, for no one can understand this fear unless experiencing it themselves.

But fear has also led us to our current state. This fear came from those who now stand with the majority, but once the minority. This fear, too, cannot be dismissed. Those supporting the current status quo at one point felt their livelihood under attack, and the fear produced from this attack enacted the path currently traveled — a path paved by fear.

Fear is harmful no matter its source, and being unable to understand the fear felt by others leads to a hateful haze

toward all. Being that fear cannot be dissolved without comprehension, we find ourselves at a standstill. We can all see the lack of progress produced by this standstill festering in our country today.

This is why I believe a new burden has risen upon the people of the United States. We have all seen the deterioration of our political system over recent decades, and all have felt the pain of a government unable to hear our voices. We now sit at the horizon of an even larger threat occurring at an accelerated rate due to the increase in fear felt in our country. Something must change.

I write today not to tell you to agree nor to love one another, but to encourage every American — no matter your political affiliation — to come together with the understanding that we have all felt fear. Knowing no one has enjoyed the feeling of fear, we can try to find a way to alleviate us all.

This cannot be done unless we listen and speak to one another. So I pledge to hear every viewpoint I can, despite my opinions, and I pledge to ensure my voice is also heard for others to consider. With my pledge, perhaps I can help ease the fears felt toward a Trump presidency, and with this pledge, I also hope to ensure that the fears that led us to our current state are never felt again by any American. So I ask you: Will you also make this pledge?

# United we stand, divided we fall



**Stephanie Ntim**  
Columnist

When the clock strikes midnight, a sense of fear and angst is said to erupt. This common trope very much

**Donald Trump was declared president-elect three hours after midnight, early Wednesday morning, defying predictions.**

describes the events that transpired this week. On Wednesday, Nov. 9, the clock struck three hours past midnight when Donald Trump was elected to the presidency. No one could have predicted this outcome. The pollsters, mainstream media and even Republicans ruled him out. Today, we must come to the realization that Donald Trump is our

president because many citizens who voted elected him to office — a telling indicator of disunity in our country.

On election night, I sat patiently, awaiting the results with an unclear image of a Trump presidency and even a Clinton presidency.

Fatigued and a little stressed by my daily routine, the election was an additional headache — a process I did not truly value until now.

As I watched the CNN telecast, thoughts of the physical makeup of this country captured my mind. No part of the United States was identical to another. California, undoubtedly the most easy-going state, proposed its own secession under the title "Calexit" — a cousin of Brexit, obviously — after Trump won the presidency.

Michigan and Wisconsin, historically Democratic states, turned bright red for the first time in 30 years. In the coveted states of North Carolina and Florida, the electoral map teetered between red and blue for several hours.

I was surprised, even scared,

to see Elon University as half blue and half red.

I say all of this because the boundaries between party lines are a vivid depiction of the boundaries between the American people. Disenchanted with habits of the past, many cried for change. Frustrated with international politics, many sought out seclusion. Disappointed with our governmental infrastructure, many sought out an outlier.

It is important to emphasize that Trump's divisive rhetoric has instigated horrific and unacceptable acts of hatred toward minority groups.

And though I lean more toward Clinton than Trump, I empathize with both sides, blue and red. Generalizing Trump supporters as xenophobes, racists and homophobes only intensifies division.

Asking hardworking people to leave the country has monstrous social and political implications. Portraying a particular, one-sided image of the United States through mainstream media will also do no good. Right now,

our country looks more like an assorted food tray distributed on an airline flight than the overcooked "melting pot" we constantly yearn for.

At Elon, empathy is crucial in this uncertain age of democracy. In 2016, we need to listen to the Rust Belt states, the Californians, the North Carolinians and all

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other parts of our country. We need to pay attention to the physical and political global climate. Most importantly, we need to communicate with each other on the fundamentals that make our country so driven, impassioned and historically unique.

I am a minority in this country, but I am part of a

majority in my ability to exercise my civic duties. If our president fails us with divisive rhetoric, we have the right to check his power.

I am cognizant of and grapple with deep-seated fears that are inherent in all chapters of this country's history.

But when we channel our fears into hopefulness, we are

capable of achieving progress and attaining prosperity. This is the United States we must hold onto: a country that supports ingenuity, perseverance and people of different backgrounds. The United States is great, but we have the opportunity to make it better.

This election year is unprecedented, but it is definitely not insurmountable.

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THE PENDULUM

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