

works toward unity, compassion

not affect his ability to lead.

But since the election, she's kept a list of names she's been called: Racist, bigot, Islamophobic and jerk are on the nicer side of the ones she can remember.

In total, she said she's being falsely labeled.

"There's a good amount of conservatives on campus, and you wouldn't even know it because they wouldn't tell you," Collins said. "Some of the most loving people that you know on people could very well be conservative, and you wouldn't even know it."

Freshman Caroline Enright agreed with Collins and said those harsh premises are harmful to the country and to Elon.

"The election is over and we're still trying to process it," Enright said. "There's a way to realize that we're still one country ... to still show love and acceptance. What matters now is how we react."

Collins denounced the whiteboard incident, saying it made her angry, an emotion she rarely feels. The misconception that every Trump supporter is a bigot is a dangerous one because she said it paints the majority with a broad brush. To the extremist, stereotypical conservatives bolstered by Trump's campaign rhetoric, Collins told them to stop defaming her party.

"I know a lot of them think they're really deep Christians from what I have read, and I want to look them in the eye and say, 'If that's true, what do you think God would say?'" Collins said. "These hurtful things really show the content of their character. I know it's sad to me to think that those people are the basis for some many people's assumptions. I would look them in the eye and tell them, 'What are you thinking?'"

Confiding in each other

Collins said the best way for Trump supporters to comfort those afflicted is to simply lend a soothing hand.

"Just showing people love and saying, 'I respect their opinions,' can go a long way," Collins said. "Even if we might not agree on some things, I'm going to respect you. You're a child of God, too. No matter what you think, no matter what you say, I'm here for you."

Protests in cities like Los Angeles and Oakland, California, lashing out to the chants of "Not my president" have made headlines in the immediate aftermath of Trump's win. But Elon students have taken a different approach.

A number of different organizations, including the Latin American Student

Organization (LASO), the Asian Pacific Student Association (APSA) and the Center for Leadership (CFL), held meetings and dialogues in the days following the election. They branded them as "safe places" — venues where people could air their concerns without fear of backlash.

Some people worshiped. Some people cried. Some people hugged.

But most importantly, everyone listened. Interim Director for the Center of Leadership Dana Carnes said the Nov. 9 CFL gathering was meant to give students a safe, non-biased space to talk about how they were feeling after a night of events that stunned those on both sides of the aisle.

"We wanted to give folks an opportunity to come together ... to share their feelings, to process," Carnes said. "There's fear on both sides."

Senior Tyson Glover, one of the more vocal participants at the CFL gathering, said the election had taken a toll on him. Calling the last year a "reality television show," Glover said that, while the election is over, a season of divisiveness has taken its place — and he does not know how to react.

"I'm not about to put on a face and say it's going to be okay," Glover said. "I cannot find a silver lining. I just feel exhausted."

The overarching theme at most of these events was to comfort those who were distressed and offer any guidance needed.

Williams said this path is the best route people should take, saying to "take it one day at a time" and not to let the "craziness of this world consume you."

On Nov. 13, huddled in the pews of Whitley Auditorium, similar to how church congregations seek answers on Sunday mornings, students flocked to the "After the Election" discussion panel hosted by Elon's Political Science department to hear a different kind of post-election discussion from experts in the field.

The panelists — Jason Husser, Carrie Eaves, Jessica Carew, and Elisha Savchak-Trogdon, all of whom are assistant professors of political science — addressed the fear many students have expressed.

Husser said while many people are discouraged, they have to accept the election results. The peaceful transition of power is a constant of U.S. democracy and a luxury the majority of the world doesn't have.

Eaves said understand-

ing each other and stopping the harsh rhetoric is imperative for people on both sides.

"It's easy to show frustration right now and quickly fire off a tweet or a Facebook post, but there is hurt on both sides, and it's something that needs to be addressed," Eaves said. "This is something we have to support each other with on both sides of the aisle. All voters on either side are not bad people."

Carew echoed Eaves' thoughts and said the only way to move forward is to recognize everyone is still a human being.

"If we focus less on attacking one another and rather focus on the issues that we are facing, we will start to be in a much better position," Carew said.

Moving forward together

Williams sees president-elect Trump's tone and demeanor already making moves in that direction, away from the harsh attacks that she said characterized his campaign in her mind. She said she was "encouraged" by this shift, saying she hopes he will not be a "buffoon" while he is president as he was during the last year and a half.

Though O'Neil and Collins differ on numerous ideologies, they agreed on one thing — the country is more divided than ever, and after the initial shock, it is now the country's mission to reach across the aisle with a friendly hand.

But in order to compromise, O'Neil said, everyone has to recognize where they stand.

"Empathize with us if you can't sympathize with us," O'Neil said. "Spend some time with us. Put yourself in our shoes. Regardless of whatever side you stand on, be careful because there are a lot of hurt people out there."

K McKay, contributor, Bryan Anderson, Enterprise Manager, and Meg Malone, Assistant News Editor, contributed reporting.



SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED.

CARRIE EAVES | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE