

# Students respond to election results, political division

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Americans remain polarized after the presidential election results came out in President Obama's favor, according to UNC Asheville students.

"I haven't seen the U.S. so bitter and hostile within itself over an election that was so close before," said **Sarah Hoffman, a sophomore political science student.** "Even during the controversial 2000 election, I don't remember such vicious attacks on people for their beliefs."

Students said they feel discouraged by the hatred the two parties have shown against each other.

"I mean, regardless of who won, there is always going to be people who voted for the other candidate, said **Leigh Whittaker, a political science student and Student Government Association sophomore senator.** "Our two-party system has become so polar and extreme that it seems as if there is no common ground. That's why it's weird to me to vote straight-party. Democrat and Republican are just names that candidates have to wear if they want to gain votes from a certain amount of people just solely because of the party classification."

Students said part of this division comes from strong disagreements between Obama and Mitt Romney regarding the direction the country should head.

"Half of the country is upset about the election because almost half of the country didn't vote for Obama," said **Tarrah Tate, a junior management student.** "It's hard for them to be happy about the results when they do not agree with the direction Obama wants to take the country in."

Obama, while sweeping the electoral college, grasped just more than 3.2 million more individual votes than Romney. The close race of 51 to 48 percent has left many upset, according to students.

"Many people are upset because the election was so close," said Cole Regan, a sophomore atmospheric **sciences student.** "It was nearly a 50-50 election, much like the 2000 election. The people who voted for Romney were highly upset, and because there is much opposition to Obama's plans, much of the country is upset with the results."

Students who support Obama said one of the main reasons he was able to win the election was because of the seemingly far right opinions Romney held,



Photo by Marine Raynard - Contributing Photographer  
David Ostergaard celebrates President Obama's re-election at the Democrat election night celebration on Nov. 6 at Pack's Tavern.

which turned people away from him.

"The Republican platform seemed to be too far right, with a candidate that had to fight his own party to prove he was conservative," said **Rachel Collman, a political science student and SGA sophomore senator.** "We may never know if Mitt Romney would have acted on his promise to turn back the clock on women's rights, but I am glad we didn't get the chance to see."

It was common for students to say Romney's stances on women's rights and minorities was the main reason he lost their vote.

"What really confuses me is how the Republican Party tries to limit the liberties of minority groups," Whittaker said. "Telling a group of people that they are not allowed the same rights as other Americans just is not going to win their vote, simple as that. And don't get me started on the whole rape fiasco. It was just shameful and strategically stupid for republican candidates to try and justify when it's acceptable for women to

have an abortion."

Students said Romney's far right views on foreign affairs sealed in the election results.

"I don't think the Romney administration would have been prepared to respect the leaders or citizens of other countries in the way that the Obama one would," said Hoffman. "I believe that Obama has the best interests of our nation in mind, but is also culturally aware and is not as hasty to infringe upon the rights of other nations as Romney would be."

Social issues were put at the forefront of the campaigns, and students said it played a large role in the decision, regardless of which candidate they supported.

"I feel the country is divided now because the election sadly focused too much on social class," Tate said. "I felt like this made the country feel divided between the upper class and then the middle and lower classes, instead of looking at the people of the country as a whole."

Students who supported Romney said the lack of progress Obama has made played a large role in their decision not to support him.

"Many people believe Obama needs another term to get us back on track, while others like myself believe that four years was plenty, and nothing was really done," Regan said.

Romney supporters said they were fed up with how little improvement the U.S. economy shows, and they place part of that blame on the so-far failed policies of Obama.

"I believe (Romney's) plans would be beneficial to improve the American society and economy," Regan said. "While many people opposed the way he wanted to do things, I thought it was better that he was going to actually do something and create some change."

Regardless of the results of the election, all students agreed it is still essential to remain positive about the country and have hope for the future.

"I think it is important to still have hope," Tate said. "The election is over, and Obama is our president, so it's not helpful to bash his ideas. Instead, we should hope his policies are what America needs to get back on track. I felt like Romney was the best choice for our country, but again, Obama is president, and there's nothing I can do besides try and be supportive of our country."

Students who support Obama said they have an endless amount of hope for him and his policies, while students who favored Romney said they will support Obama unless his policies fail to make the progress he has promised.

"I believe we can still have hope, and I was a solid Romney supporter, so long as President Obama can fulfill his ideas to turn this country around," Regan said. "However, some of his ideas just don't seem to be right, so that will have an effect as well. However, I will stand behind President Obama, unless he continues to let our country continue a downfall."

Students said they were pleased with the impact women and minorities had determining the results of the election.

"I think women made the most impact in this election," Collman said. "Women's rights, especially regarding reproductive health and pay equity, came to the forefront, which I think got women out to vote."

The National Election Exit Poll found 54 percent of women favored Obama,

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