

November 9, 2016

To the members of the Macalester community,

The American people have decided, and Donald Trump has been chosen as the next President of the United States. Regardless of how each of us voted, we must all hope that he rises to the awesome responsibilities and profound challenges of the office.

We must also acknowledge what many at Macalester--students, faculty, staff--are feeling today: grief, fear, anger, bewilderment. Some of the messages sent in this campaign were deeply hurtful, frightening, and offensive to many on and off campus, and the results of the election can feel like a shocking repudiation of the things in which we most strongly believe. A college built on a mission of intellectual rigor, internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to others seems anomalous in the America of this moment.

I have no easy response to these feelings, with many of which I am struggling myself. But here is what I do know.

We are allowed to grieve, we are allowed to feel anger, we are allowed to feel fear. I would encourage those who are overwhelmed by these feelings to seek support from our Counseling Center, the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, and others on campus to whom you feel a connection. To our students especially: we are here to help and embrace you.

What we are *not* allowed to do, what we must never allow ourselves to do, is give up. People before us have been killed, injured, and imprisoned when fighting for racial justice. People have made enormous sacrifices in the battle for gender equity, fairness for members of the LGBTQ community, and religious freedom. Every day I see students and colleagues perform acts of kindness and selflessness, empathy and understanding, that fill me with pride. Each of these things is no less real because of the results of an election.

Among the lessons we should take away from November 8, 2016 is that Macalester is *necessary*--perhaps more necessary than ever before. The education we provide here, the values we proclaim here with a resonant voice, matter. Our calling is to ensure that individually and collectively we better the lives of those who are not fortunate enough to be in this wondrous place. It is to convince others through example that tolerance and generosity are better--for our society and for the human spirit--than fear and hatred. This is no less true today than in was yesterday, even when the hill we must climb seems steeper than before.

Best wishes to you all,

Brian Rosenberg