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What are we learning from the election results?

By Dave Jenkins, associate vice president for University Excellence

A few days have passed since Election Day, and it feels as if the bipartisan political bickering has only just begun. As the results remain uncertain, some election staff are predicting a “national nervous breakdown.” I have a different vision of our country, however, and I believe this election has been a call to action for us all.

(1) It is a much closer race than any side expected or wanted. We are a deeply polarized country; some believe the other side is unpatriotic and should not be trusted. We need to take this opportunity to choose to trust one another, and to respect those who have different beliefs. Let’s choose to believe the best about our fellow Americans, even if we disagree. (If you have friends or family members who are strong supporters of the other candidate, reach out to them. Explore their concerns, and see if you can have a genuine conversation. Be patient and open-minded.)

(2) We all are taking a dose of patience and waiting for all votes to be counted. I know this is a lot to ask; we are used to getting our information quickly, and waiting is sometimes difficult. Yet, it creates anxiety. Yet, it is our democracy at work. Remember, we are an electoral college democracy, not a presidential democracy. We have 50 states, and the Republican Party controls the House of Representatives, while the Democratic Party controls the Senate. Let’s respect the system, and not give up on it.

(3) The USA is a union of states. Each state has their own rules and they are being followed and respected following the basic premise, “If you voted, your vote should be counted,” (regardless of who you voted for). All states have laws and regulations in place for the election, and they are being followed. The states with the most people are represented in Congress. We need to respect the laws and regulations in place.

(4) Let me say this again: this is a very close race. This means we all have friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers, who voted differently than we did. We all need to do our best to respect that difference, be tolerant and constructive, build on it to become more agreeable going forward. Let’s be respectful of our co-workers who voted differently than we did. Let’s respect their right to vote and have their say. Let’s respect the democratic process, and let’s respect those who took the time to vote.

Let’s use this moment to become more engaged citizens. Let’s vote in future elections, and let’s support the candidates who reflect our values. Let’s choose to be active participants in our democracy. Let’s choose to be respectful of our fellow citizens, even if we disagree. Let’s choose to be engaged citizens, and let’s choose to be active participants in our democracy.

MASON SCIENCE COMMUNITY

Online seminar at National Academy of Sciences

If you have questions about science, please send them to facaward@gmu.edu. One of our science experts will answer a question each week.

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Leading the fight against Lyme disease

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 | 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Saving the Date: College of Science Virtual Celebration of Success for all faculty and staff

Friday, November 20, 2020 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hands-On Workshop: Deep Learning in MATLAB

Thursday, November 19, 2020 | 7 to 9 p.m.

Galileo's Science Cafe: COVID-19 Myth Busters

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 | Noon to 1 p.m.

QSEC Quantum Computing Seminar Series

Friday, November 6, 2020 | 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

CMAI Colloquium: Deep Learning and Computations of PDEs

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 | 2 to 3:30 p.m.

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