



Teaching Matters and Assessment Center

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Director's Note



You don't need me to tell you: it's been a momentous month of November after a stressful, interminable election season. This month's TMAC newsletter steps back to look ahead at prospects for teaching and learning in a new political landscape. How do we make a teaching moment of the soon-to-be post-Obama era? How do we promote dialogue and empathy and reasoned discourse given the growing divides within our culture? How do we reassure students and others who worry about what the incoming Trump administration may augur?

I am pleased that others on our campus are likewise addressing matters of education and citizenship at this critical time. Consider attending the panel discussion on November 30 sponsored by the Political Science department: "What Helps Us to Understand the 2016 Election Results?" (401 Penn, 3 - 5 PM) with Professors Wayne Glasker (History), Richard Harris (Political Science), Kim Mutcherson (Law), and Kris Lindenmeyer (Dean, Arts and Sciences). Below, you will find a sampling of the many perspectives and resources that speak to the work ahead.

Happy Thanksgiving, dear colleagues!

Let's Talk Teaching in a Post-Election Classroom

Conversations in education this past week have largely centered on how we might address the results of the presidential election. We teach students from all backgrounds, nationalities, religions, orientations, and political affiliations – how can we balance all student voices in the classroom while still addressing their needs and concerns?

This thought-provoking blog post from Mika Kennedy at the University of Michigan titled ["What to Do When You Teach at 8:30AM \(and Donald Trump Just Won the Presidency\)"](#) presents one instructor's attempt to help her students process recent political events.



The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching released a note about [“Returning to the Classroom after the Election,”](#) describing a few different strategies and approaches for incorporating political events in any class at varying levels.

In light of recent events, John Duffy’s 2012 essay titled [“Virtuous Arguments”](#) has been making the rounds again. Duffy argues for a classroom discourse similar to that of first-year writing courses. As Duffy writes, we can learn much from these courses that work every day to “promote an ethical public discourse grounded in the virtues of honesty, accountability, and generosity.”

In his [op-ed](#) published by *The New York Times*, past Army intelligence analyst and student at Wesleyan University Bryan Stascavage writes about how his education at a liberal university influenced his political beliefs (in a way that you might find surprising).

Students and parents alike are wondering how the change in government administration will directly impact their college experience. In response, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators released a statement summarizing the potential impact on financing a college education titled [“What Trump’s Election Means for College Students and Parents.”](#)

Are you concerned about how Trump’s election might affect your international students? Take a moment to review an example of how three Iowa universities are [handling this issue](#). *Inside Higher Ed* responded to similar questions by [releasing a report](#) on how universities might anticipate the impact on international student populations.

Following Tuesday’s election, universities reported multiple [attacks](#) and [assaults](#) on Muslim students. This [important piece](#) from the University of Louisville Writing Center explores the role of the Writing Center (and the University at large) in addressing students’ fears and concerns. Individual instructors and whole departments across the country have chosen to print and display this [viral post](#) as a message of safety and solidarity.

Some have criticized various educators’ and administrators’ attempts to address students’ reactions, resulting in a back lash against college “safe spaces” and reigniting a [debate](#) that took place last summer. Yale professor Steven Berry pushes back against such sentiments in [“My Students Aren’t Snowflakes, and They Don’t Melt,”](#) arguing that our students might be more resilient than we give them credit for.

What do *you* think? Let us know at teaching.matters@camden.rutgers.edu

Grant Opportunity

As part of the Open and Affordable Textbooks Project, the Rutgers University Libraries will be awarding twelve \$1,000 grants to full and part-time faculty from across the Rutgers system who agree to design (or redesign) a course to rely on open access education resources, library subscription resources, and/or course reserves. More information about the program can be found [here](#). Grant applications are due by December 9th and can be found [here](#).

Conferences and Events

Are you interested in gaining knowledge about project-based learning and developing strategies to implement this approach in your classroom? Consider applying for the **Institute on Project-Based Learning** next June. This 2.5-day intensive workshop is offered by the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and the AAC&U. Follow this [link](#) to learn more and apply! Applications will be accepted through February 13th.

Visit us at tmac.camden.rutgers.edu. Send us your questions, links, and comments at teaching.matters@camden.rutgers.edu

