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## Trump Victory: Faculty Assess Election, Path Forward

'A new unwritten chapter in American politics has opened,' says Pope 'Mac' McCorkle



**Steve Hartsoe**

Donald Trump's surprising victory Tuesday means "a new unwritten chapter in American politics has opened," according to a Duke political expert.

"Trump's win was an ugly, divisive victory not supported by a majority of American voters. But it has overwhelmed the old Democratic and Republican establishments," said Pope "Mac" McCorkle, an associate professor of the practice in public policy at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy.

Trump's win caused global markets to initially recoil and left many political pundits wondering how they -- and the polls -- missed the degree of support he had against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"The Trump victory, as with the Brexit vote, has a simple origin: The reaction of those who have been on the losing side of globalization," said finance professor Campbell Harvey. "While most agree that globalization is beneficial for the overall economy, there are a few big winners -- and a large number of losers. Those losers spoke up yesterday, as they did on June 23 in the Brexit vote."

Political scientist John Aldrich said Trump's first priority should be to reunite the country.

"Many expected this would not be Donald Trump's strong suit. His speech (early Wednesday morning), however, was about as close to the best beginning as one could hope.

"How -- and even whether -- he intends actually to do this remains, of course, to be seen, but all Americans ought to be giving him the full benefit of the doubt. It should be up to him to show us otherwise," Aldrich added.

Political scientist David Rohde said with the Republicans now in charge of both houses of Congress and the White House, "their chances of enacting their preferred policies are substantially improved -- albeit not certain.

"It also focuses responsibility on their party, offering the possibility of a backlash from the voters in 2018 or 2020 if things do not go well. The last three mid-term elections with unified party control (1994, 2006 and 2010) produced very negative results for the party in power," Rohde noted.



*Students gathered at the Sanford School of Public Policy to watch the results come in. Photo by Joel Luther.*

Duke political scientist Peter Feaver, who worked in the administrations of Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, joined a number of colleagues to publicly oppose Trump's candidacy earlier in the campaign.

In a [blog](#) Feaver co-wrote Wednesday in *Foreign Policy*, he said he and others do not regret their #NeverTrump stance. They did not oppose the candidate merely because they thought he would lose, they did not consider him fit to be commander in chief, Feaver wrote. They cited the real estate mogul's "temperament, poor command of national security policy, and stances that we believe were inimical to America's national interests."

Feaver added it's possible he and his colleagues were wrong about their assessment of how good a President Trump would be, noting he became a better candidate in the final week of the campaign.

"But he did not become better on the policies. He did not assemble a stronger national security team. And he did not adjust his policy stances on a Muslim ban, on trade, on immigration, or on shirking our allies," Feaver wrote.

Feaver's recommendations for a Trump presidency include mobilizing other countries to partner with the U.S., and to prioritize outreach to NATO allies, Japan, South Korea and Israel. Trump also needs to beef up his foreign policy and national security team, Feaver wrote.

"Some of the best people on the Republican side of the aisle are #NeverTrumpers, like us, and so are ruled out of consideration. But fortunately for the country, some very fine professionals kept their powder dry and so are available to serve. We hope the Trump inner circle will reward competence and experience, and not just enthusiastic loyalty. And we hope our friends will heed the call."

This election possibly signals a dramatic change in the importance of a candidate's moral character to voters, said behavioral economist Dan Ariely, who has studied why people lie.

"The public in general does not seem to punish politicians for their moral character," said Ariely



“It’s clear that the political game is different now, it’s clear that being dishonest in particular has no cost in political life. Whether Trump will create a lot of damage in terms of economics and education and health policy isn’t yet known, but what is clear is that there is new standard for what political discourse can be, and that one I don’t think we’ll be able to take back.”

Harvey said he was not surprised by the market fluctuations.

“Given markets have been pricing in a Clinton win, there is considerable turmoil -- particularly in Asia and Mexico -- which have the most to lose from Trump’s policies,” Harvey said. “Trump is well acquainted with the concept of risk given his history in business. He likely knows that right now his number one job is to reduce the uncertainty.”

If the uncertainty persists, Harvey said businesses will not make capital investments and may freeze or reduce hiring plans. And consumers may hesitate to spend -- not knowing what the future may bring.

“One way to reduce uncertainty is to ditch the campaign rhetoric and immediately reach across the aisle,” Harvey said. “I would expect a series of olive branches to be extended.”

One such branch that could also calm markets would be a surprise commitment to push President Obama nominee Merrick Garland through to the Supreme Court, Harvey said.

“Another priority is to put the highest possible caliber team together. It is essential that Trump reaches out to people that opposed him to form that team. This is about the future of our country -- not about only choosing people that were loyal to him during the election campaign.”

Aldrich said Trump will face two important opportunities early in his administration. “Sometime, likely early February, the debt ceiling will have to be reconsidered. Failure to raise it represents a major risk to the U.S. economy and well-being. How he wants that handled -- and how well he and Congressional Republicans are able to execute their plans -- will say a lot.

“And, of course, there is the Supreme Court position, which I assume he will deal with fairly early or very early on.”

Rohde does wonder what the consequences of this election will be, given “the context of a nation deeply divided along racial and class lines, and an electorate intensely dissatisfied with how government functions and how elections are conducted.”

“In a CBS/N.Y. Times poll last week, 82 percent said the presidential campaign made them feel disgusted. And in the exit polls yesterday 77 percent of Trump supporters said they felt angry about the federal government and 60 percent of all respondents said Donald Trump was not qualified to be president. This is not a context in which people on opposite sides coming together is likely.”

McCorkle agreed. “Can something good come out of all this repudiation of politics as usual? That will be quite a challenge for the American people and our politics.”

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