Vice-Presidential Debate Doesn’t Entertain Tech Students

By Artemis Allison

HOUGHTON, Mich. – After a presidential debate that had been considered by many Michigan Technological University students to be more akin to a “garbage fire”, the debate on Wednesday, October 7th between Vice President Mike Pence and Vice Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris is considered by many to have been more professional in its conduct; however, that does not mean that Michigan Tech students are happy with the message that Pence and Harris were sharing with the American public. To many, it felt as though they were not trying to spread a proper message, and instead just talk down against their opponent: Spencer Crawford, a first year computer engineering student, said “our candidates are merely jousting for a power grab, which is by far one of the most unamerican displays I have seen in my lifetime,” as he expressed his displeasure for what felt like “both parties are more caught up in smearing their opponent and pandering to their base instead of actually caring about the issues.”

A sentiment of both non-answers and pandering was common in how students felt about the debate, with one student, Lucus Bauder, made a remark to his friends about how common it felt like some words were being said between the two candidates: “can we get a counter on the number of times "American people" was said?” Zachary Kerman shared a similar sentiment, feeling as though “they avoided more questions then they answered” as they redirected the moderators questions on the coronavirus pandemic, the economy, and the idea of packing the Supreme Court with vague statements that seemed to only serve to bolster their side – or, as second year mechanical engineering student Cameron Whiteside felt, “dissuade maybe-Biden supporters from voting at all. Not even for Trump, just ensuring that they're not for Biden.”

As the 2020 election continues to feel more and more like a boiling point for the political situation in the United States, both candidates struggled to properly answer how we could bridge the divides forming in our society. The emphasis by the electorate on a debate normally ignored by most, partially due to how much of a disaster the first one felt to be by students, was noticed by Samuel Breur, a second year computer and electrical engineer, who said, “in past years we haven't really paid much attention to the debates other than the main presidential but with the current circumstances people are actually pretty interested in the vice debate as well. I think it also feels like a sign of the politicization of most every part of American life when the political debates of our potential future leaders becomes[sic] practically a spectator sport.”