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week of 11/16/16

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alpha pi term
Fall 2016
Recent Chi Chapter
highlights

On the election

by Allison Wolhart

To say last night's results surprised me would be an understatement. Donald Trump will be the 45th president of the United States, and I am angry and ashamed. As much as I would love to lambaste the system, the reality stares us straight in the face, unflinching, unchanging.

I am scared and threatened by Trump's election. As I watched the results come in, I felt like my country was letting me down; it was choosing hatred and white supremacy over progress and equality. Last night I mourned somewhat selfishly, somewhat altruistically, for the dashed dreams of my future vision of America.

Today I have my perspective back. I remember now that although this election affects all of us, it does not affect all of us equally. In context, the pain I feel is small. Donald Trump has attacked women and many of the ideologies that I hold as central to my identity; however, I am not at risk of deportation, I am not facing persecution due to my religious beliefs, I will not lose my health insurance coverage. My privilege is still intact. So to those of you who are hurting more deeply than I, who woke up today feeling like this country is not for you, I stand in solidarity with you.

I still believe that we are part of a wonderfully diverse nation, born out of the idea that every person has the fundamental right to shape the direction of our country. Last night the electorate spoke loudly and clearly against this perspective. But that doesn't mean that liberty has abandoned us. I am ready to stand for what I believe in, I do not cave to the apathy of the system. This election has left deep wounds, tearing the nation apart in a savage ideological war. But we can only be stronger together. I refuse to believe that half the country condones the ugly realities of this election, but I do believe half the country voted to upend a system that they believe has failed them. That is something I can accept. The rhetoric of hate, I cannot. We are prouder than that, we are stronger than that, and we are not that America. Now is the time to unify, the time to work together to make an America that stands for everyone.

So continue to mourn today if that is what you need. Take time to process last night and reclaim the humanity Donald Trump has tried to take away from you, from all of us. Turn to me and to others for support. It doesn't seem like it right now, but I do believe that this country is still for all of us. Do not lose faith because we will not break; we will endure.



More on the election

by Minerva Paramo

Every time I think about last week I can't help but sigh. Undoubtedly so, Tuesday's elections stirred up different emotions for everyone regardless of where they fall in the political spectrum. Unfortunately, I can only speak for my own experience.

Our generation is so young. We grew up reading about past wars, movements, and events that have greatly affected our country. No war has gone by that has not left a scar on its people. I seemed to take in and learn about my country and its issues at some distance. What I learned and experienced never had a highly personal impact, but I never overlooked issues simply because they did not directly affect me. One thing my parents taught me was to always be aware. To me being aware means being mindful, informed, and conscious. When I arrived at UCLA that was one thing I really wanted to practice. I involved myself on issues I cared for and that affected the people around me. I did small things. Some such as being part of a call bank where we reached out to residents of Royal Oak informing them on Proposal A which upheld a Human Rights Ordinance for the LGBTQ community, attending and sharing events with others for Black Lives Matter, and donating every quarter to CALPIRG for healthier and safer environmental changes. Even though my efforts were small the impact was great and that made me feel a part of something special.

One of the most painful things about last week was seeing all those movements, protests, and reforms go unacknowledged by more than half of the country. Realizing that the dark history and racism of the US still greatly divides us. More so, being the daughter of immigrant parents, yet being a citizen of the US made me feel alienated from the country that I have always considered home.

I owe my entire life to my parents. When I think about them, I feel proud. Similar to many others in this country they came with nothing in their pockets but high hopes and dreams. They endeavored and worked immensely hard to provide a safe home for my sister and I. Their diligence and determination to live "The American Dream" is one that I highly admire. I have never suffered a single day in my life and it is all thanks to both of them. They were able to accomplish goals that I could never imagine myself doing.

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From being front row at all my Honor Roll ceremonies and having my mother take millions of embarrassing pictures, to taking me to my first day at UCLA and still having the embarrassing pictures.

But they are the only ones that have always been there. Whenever I need something, they have it. Whenever I have a question, they know the answer.

Nowadays I find myself really busy with school, work, APO, and just life that I forget time passes right by. 24 hours isn't enough for me sometimes, I forget to go home and I often forget to make a simple call to my parents. Yes, time passes for them too. Just like 24 hours go by in a blink of an eye, years do too and that scares me. I may forget to call or text, but you best believe I'll always get at least a goodnight text from my mom whether I reply or not.

They are my primary examples of generosity, care, and unconditional love and they constantly push and encourage me to do whatever I wish. And for all of that I feel incredibly blessed every single day.

Sadly enough not everyone sees my family and friends the way I do. To have an ignorant public figure who has had everything handed to him by silver spoon label them as criminals is absurd. The majority of people that migrate to this country, that identify as part of LGBTQ, or are simply people of color are ambitious and take on huge risks that takes guts to better their lives in a country that celebrates progress. Unfortunately, we don't live in a utopian world and there will always be people that will go against change. People that are not far away, such as the girl I stood next to while waiting for the BruinBus the morning after the election. She stood proud wearing her "Make America Great Again" hat and when someone asked, "Did you really vote for him?" she felt inclined to share her racist reasoning such as, "I don't give a f*** about immigrants, or black lives, everyone needs to go back from wherever the hell they came from." As she said that everyone, including myself, looked around only to realize that none of us were white or privileged like her.

After that I became more afraid than I was before. Having Trump as a president is not what truly upsets me. It is the awakening of the racism amongst the people that support him for those reasons. People who may have had racist, homophobic, or sexist tendencies before will now feel supported by a president that believes building a wall around the US will make all the "problems" go away.

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But this is where we come in. As a community who understands or empathizes with one another it is our duty to defend ourselves from these false accusations. America did not become America by complacency it IS ALREADY GREAT because of our unity and our passion to fight for what is right as a democracy. It hurt me deeply to hear someone so close such as a Bruin have to say that they do not want me here. And to be quite honest, I will ever understand how a stranger can strongly dislike someone else simply because of their race or by the way they look. So to anyone who has ever felt personally victimized by Donald Trump, I am with you along with everyone else who has felt the need to protest against hate. This country's history and progress came with a lot of loss and pain to simply be thrown away and forgotten by one election. Peaceful resistance and unity holds more power than violence ever has and I strongly believe that together we will move forward.

My girl Hillary said it best,

“If we stand together, and work together with respect for our differences, strength in our convictions, and love for this nation our best days are still ahead of us.”

