



Ronald F. Mason, Jr.
President

November 28, 2016

Dear Firebirds:

These are trying times. In the wake of a bitter and divisive election, many of us are left feeling raw and fearful about what lies ahead. Others are angry and resentful. Some cautiously harbor hope, despite the often vicious nature of the political campaign we have just endured. In any event, it is fitting that during this season of thanksgiving, we focus on the virtues – in addition to some of the dangers – of our nation’s fundamental values which enabled such a forceful and dramatic political struggle to occur in the first place.

We believe wholeheartedly, completely, and passionately in free speech. But we also are here primarily to learn – students from each other as much as from our professors and other scholars. So let us speak our minds while also maintaining respect for the views of others. Let’s be curious about issues and each other! That’s the way knowledge is formed, after all. The UDC community is a powerfully diverse one which includes people of many origins, races, ethnicities, political, and other orientations. But we shouldn’t assume we can know an individual’s politics based solely on his or her skin color or personal style or accent.

Let us also not be discouraged. The election results may well be viewed as cataclysmic by many in our community – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students, for example, who worry they now may be forced to leave the country, despite being raised here, after voluntarily identifying themselves as undocumented under current rules; or African Americans, who dread ways that laws may be applied and justice interpreted by officials who have shown little respect for minority rights in the past. But there is also dismay among many who hailed (literally) the victory of the president-elect as he reconsiders, rethinks, and apparently backtracks on some of the most drastic policies he pushed during his campaign. Much remains unsettled and some may be open to change.

Let us search for opportunities presented by these events to become more committed to our values and active in promoting and enacting them. Let us move forward as a community with respect for each other and ever mindful of the better world we are striving to create.

Whatever our origin, status or politics, we are Team UDC, and together we will persevere, grow, and ultimately thrive.

God bless the Firebird Nation!

Sincerely,

Ronald F. Mason, Jr.