

UCSF Office of the Ombuds
Preparing for the Election; A Guide for Leaders
(adapted from University of Washington, Office of the Ombuds)

The impact and stressors surrounding this election are exacerbated by the unprecedented context: a global pandemic, the racial justice moment, economic concerns, transition to remote working/ learning, physical and mental health concerns. Despite people's resilience over the past 7 months, many students, faculty, and learners are feeling brittle. While we don't know what will happen, we (roughly) know when. While there may not be a final result on November 3rd we can prepare. Below are suggestions.

1. Create time and space
 - a. Leave the week of Nov 3rd free for what may emerge
 - b. Consider whether to cancel classes or shift discussions
 - c. Assess whether students will be present
 - d. Consider that staff and faculty may need time to process
 - e. Consider group meetings to process as people and to plan as leaders
 - f. Possible options: town halls, open virtual office hours

2. Don't make it harder
 - a. Avoid humor (which is often used to diffuse challenging situations, but not likely to connect you to people who are struggling)
 - b. Don't be dismissive, using phrases like "calm down" (which can feel patronizing)
 - c. Now isn't the time to be contrarian, playing devil's advocate

3. Expand our empathy
 - a. True empathy is imagining how someone who is maybe very different from you might be thinking; It requires imagination and curiosity and listening; Empathy isn't agreement
 - b. Ask questions and actively listen
 - c. Reconsider your experience; Generational differences may impact responses

4. Ground yourself with a stable foundation for yourself as a leader
 - a. This election, in context of everything else, is different from other stressors
 - b. Engage in physical, mental and social practices that help ground yourself

5. Finding your voice
 - a. Send a message to team, colleague, departments
 - b. Jot down some of your ideas, experiences, quotes before election day
 - c. This is time to live out both your personal and institutional values

6. Spotlight Resources
 - a. Connect to ensure that resources are widely known and distributed; Personalize the services rather than just distribute a list of acronyms

7. Office of the Ombuds
 - a. We are here for university leaders, faculty, staff, learners
 - b. ombuds.ucdavis.edu

