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Civility & Embracement

Fellow Faculty and Staff, and Students:

Following Tuesday's election, there has been some frustration and uneasiness expressed by some among our faculty, staff, and students. With so many good and bad emotions expressed during the campaign, it is natural that those emotions linger. We are, however, a University, and we are here to facilitate learning and enrichment from life's lessons.

Tonight, I have my first agendaless dinner with student leaders in our campus African-American community. I look forward to a wide-ranging and constructive conversation. Last night, I had dinner with some WKU students who spent time with Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu on a recent study abroad trip. Our conversation turned to "what would Desmond Tutu do with today's unrest." The consensus was that he would find a positive way to strengthen the love among us.

Our students need all of us and each other to lead by example. Our democracy is strong and good. Let's all support each other. Free speech is good, but let's encourage all among us to be civil, thoughtful, and respectful of everyone in our campus family.

Nice really does matter. Treat everyone as you would like to be treated. Tolerance for different views, ideals, and opinions is not enough. We need to embrace our differences, especially for those who might feel threatened. Our African-American students and our international students, particularly our Muslim students, and those in our LGBTQ family may be feeling a sense of uncertainty. We love them all and treasure what they bring to this richly diverse family. Let's all work extra hard in the weeks and months ahead to take extra steps to love, embrace, respect, and enjoy each other. Everyone in our campus family is as important as anyone among us. To use a phrase from my undergraduate days—peace and love!

Thank you.

Gary Ransdell



Gary A. Ransdell

President | Office of the President
Western Kentucky University