

# Trump inspires unity reading

STORY AND PHOTOS BY COLLIN BEREND

On Thursday, Jan. 19, Clackamas Community College students and faculty members gathered in the Community Center's Fireside Lounge to listen and read written work by either themselves or from other authors that related to the current political atmosphere. The event lasted two hours, from 1-3 p.m. and was hosted by the Writer's Club.

Snacks and warm drinks, like coffee, were available for visitors to enjoy as everyone introduced themselves in a circle. From time to time, someone new would walk in and join. Some of the readings were the works of authors such as Howard Zinn, whose work student Christopher Zimmerly-Beck, one of the head organizers, read at the gathering.

Throughout the event, topics diverged a little, but still were connected to the general theme. Attendees brought up

topics about President Donald Trump being a bigot, racist, sexist and more. Some participants expressed their feelings surrounding the whole election based on their past. It was a collective of emotion and expression from the extraordinarily divisive win by Trump.

"I've always been kind of political as a kid," said Becky Lauer, an English major at the college. "I was raised in an environment where that was encouraged."

Lauer spoke about how Trump being elected was not what she was aligned with, let alone what the country should be striving for.

"I know revolutions are won with young people," said Lauer, "because we're the ones that go out and do things."

Lauer further said, "Revolutions are built on school grounds."

Comments about the protests on Friday, Jan. 20, for the inauguration and Saturday, Jan. 21 for the Women's March were geared toward the element of danger, both to protestors involving police officers, and violence distributed around the city.

When asked, Lauer explained that while she doesn't want someone's window broken, that problem is extraordinarily minuscule in comparison to black people being "murdered" by police officers.

Zimmerly-Beck also pitched on this issue, saying something similar, and talking about violence. He alluded that in the minds of those who would protest, it's not simply about Trump, but a plethora of issues.

"Look for compassion," said Lauer regarding Trump and his supporters. Lauer was questioned about a student having been harassed following a public comment the day after Trump was elected.

"I don't support harassment. I support empathy. People are complex. You need to be able to disagree with people as a person, not as a stereotype," Lauer said.

Zimmerly-Beck gave his own thoughts. "Politics aren't just this thing that happens above us or to us, it's actually something we can engage in," said Zimmerly-Beck.

Zimmerly-Beck explained how he saw a swastika carved into a bathroom stall on campus.

"And that sort of thing really makes me

uncomfortable. And it makes me want to do something about it."

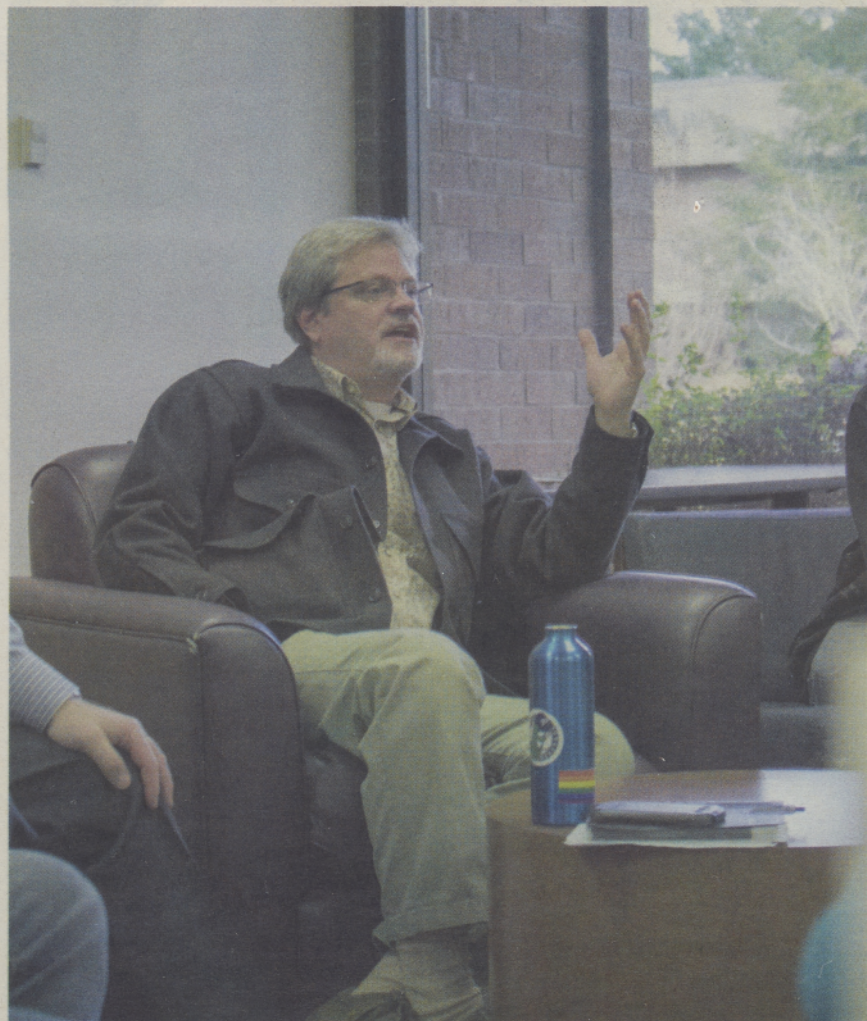
John Ginsburg, the director of student leadership and engagement and adviser for the Associated Student Government, spoke about how the election results did ripple through the school and through students. He suggested that regardless of views, some students feel threatened or scared. As one of the administrators, his goal is to help these students.

"My goal as a staff member, as an administrator, is to enable all students here to feel like it's safe for them," Ginsburg said. "As an advocate for all students of all backgrounds, [I want] everyone to feel that they're accepted."

But he was clear that because he supports the safety of students who may feel threatened, that doesn't mean he's picking sides based on a politician. Rather, he is doing his job and looking out for all students.

Over the weekend, many gathered in Portland to protest. On Friday, Jan. 20, the protests against Trump ended in chaos. But the following day ended peacefully for many who participated in the Women's March, which, with roughly 100,000 participants, was arguably Portland's biggest march.

Check out photos from the protests at [theclackamasprint.net](http://theclackamasprint.net).



James Eikrem, theater instructor, attends the reading, and voices his thoughts on the recent election.



Attendees included staff, students and community members.