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Seattle University Community Evaluates President Biden's First 100 days in Office

Matt Price, Staff Reporter

As President Joseph R. Biden nears the end of his first 100 days in office, the Seattle University community reflects on the state of the country thus far. The Political Science Department hosted a panel May 6 with four professors focusing on how Biden has handled issues such as foreign policy, immigration, COVID-19 and harnessing bipartisan support to push through economic relief.

Some campus expectations at the beginning of Biden's first term were relatively low. The country had recently suffered a domestic terrorist attack while dealing with a deadly pandemic that has claimed the lives of 579,366 Americans.

For some, the American Recovery Act is the most important legislation that has passed through Congress and signed by President Biden. Patrick Schoettmer, a professor of political science, was impressed by Biden's ability to efficiently pass legislation given the increasing polarization of Congress.

"Biden's biggest accomplishment so far has been helping to shepherd through the American recovery Act, which was essentially the roughly \$2 billion recovery and stimulus package that went through Congress... and he was able to help hold the entire Democratic coalition in the U.S. Senate together to get that done," Schoettmer said.

Bipartisanship has been a priority concern for Biden during his entire political career. To pass the new \$4 trillion proposed spending package on infrastructure, Biden will need to welcome Republican support, emphasized Schoettmer.

Biden was able to organize efforts of vaccine distribution after former President Trump designated plans to the states. As a result of his work, the U.S. has become one of the leading nations in vaccine distribution. To continue the fight against COVID-19, additional money will have to be spent to aid many Americans who are still struggling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

First-year Political Science major, Natalie Neumeier argued that the U.S. government could have spent more money to aid citizens during these hard times.

"I feel like honestly it could have been more because ~\$1.7 trillion is a huge number but then you think about all the hospitals that are over capacity... I feel like we should be giving more money because this should be our number one priority right now, keeping Americans safe and healthy while also trying to get rid of the pandemic. That is not going to happen without spending the proper amount of money," Neumeier said.



Jordie Simpson

With the priority focus of the first 100 days having been the pandemic and rebuilding the economy, the Biden administration's handling of the immigration policy along the southern border has stayed out of the light.

Second-year Psychology major, Miriam Paulino is disappointed with Biden's progress in dealing with immigration.

"He has not really done anything. There are still families at the border, still children separated from their families, and there are still unaccompanied children at the borders. If anything it sounds like the situation is getting worse and he has not been saying anything about it," Paulino said.

Schoettmer elaborated on the possible reasons why Biden has stayed relatively quiet regarding immigration.

"Basically he can't be inhumane as Trump was, but he can't significantly liberalize migrant or refugee entry, which is why we're seeing him focus more on the parts of immigration reform that are more popular like working towards permanent residency and ultimately citizenship for dreamers while trying to invest more in the countries of origin by sending foreign aid to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and stuff like that to try to help stabilize the situation in country so that there's less pressure to migrate," Schoettmer said.

Overall, the Seattle U community has been surprised with Biden's first 100 days in office. As his first year continues, an issue that waits to be addressed is police reform. With broader issues of the pandemic, immigration and economic reform though the country may have to wait longer into Biden's term to see legislation signed.