



Who Will Win and Will We Be Okay?

On Wednesday, October 30th, the Institute for Education (IFE) presented *Finish Line: The Political Landscape at the End of a Historic Campaign*. The event was co-hosted by Sophie Karlshausen, Chargée d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium to the United States, and IFE Founder and CEO Coach Kathy Kemper as part of IFE’s Media & Technology roundtable series. The night brought together 15 leaders from media, business, and the nonprofit sector, with special guests Jerry Seib, former *Wall Street Journal* executive Washington editor and current visiting fellow at the Dole Institute of Politics, and Damian Paletta, *Wall Street Journal* Washington Coverage Chief.

The evening began with Belgian beers and champagne on the picturesque terrace of the Belgian residence at sunset. Chargée d’affaires Sophie Karlshausen offered introductory remarks, Coach Kemper welcomed attendees, then IFE Steward, Marci Robinson offered charming personal anecdotes and introductions of the distinguished journalists. As guests enjoyed a three-course dinner of black cod, branzino, and lemon creme brûlée, Mr. Seib opened the conversation by addressing the two questions he is most often asked about this high-stakes presidential race: “Who will win, and will we be okay?”

These questions provided a framework for the evening’s discussion, with both Seib and Paletta emphasizing the factors that make the race a true toss-up. Seib offered a hopeful prediction that, regardless of the outcome, the country would persevere. Paletta shared insights from his real-time coverage of the race. While issues like immigration and the economy were seen as advantages for Trump, a potential realignment among pro-choice suburban women could place Harris in the lead.

As the conversation continued, guests engaged in a lively exchange on polling accuracy, the effectiveness of new media outreach strategies by both campaigns, and the growing threat of deepfakes.

To conclude the evening, Coach Kemper initiated IFE’s traditional pre-election “crystal ball poll,” predicting Election Day outcomes for the White House, House of Representatives, and Senate, in which attendees set aside personal preferences and collectively predicted election outcomes. Only four of the 15 attendees anticipated a Harris victory, though 10 were confident that the House would flip to the Democrats. Just one guest predicted that the Democrats would retain the Senate, evoking fond memories of IFE supporter David Fenstermaker’s successful lone prediction of Trump’s 2016 win.

As dinner drew to a close, Chargée d’affaires Sophie Karlshausen offered her thoughts and hopes from the European perspective. Guests left full of Chef Wout Sabbe’s gourmet Belgian cuisine, wine, and, most importantly, new perspectives.

Contributed by IFE Senior Advisor Kaivan Shroff



SPOTTED (Politico Playbook): Sophie Karlshausen, Coach Kathy Kemper, Jerry Seib, Damian Paletta, Colleen Paletta, R. David Edelman, David Fenstermaker, Matt Lira, Shaun Modi, Marci Robinson, Barbara Rosewicz, Jennifer Rudy, Kaivan Shroff, David Spence and Kelsey Kemper Valentine.

