

Denison University

Denison Digital Commons

Faculty Publications

2020

Vote 2020 :: Campus is “Ridin’ with Biden”

Paul A. Djupe
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/facultypubs>



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Djupe, Paul A., "Vote 2020 :: Campus is “Ridin’ with Biden”" (2020). *Faculty Publications*. 1820.
<https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/facultypubs/1820>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Denison Digital Commons. For more information, please contact eresources@denison.edu.

Vote 2020 :: Campus is “Ridin’ with Biden”

Paul A. Djupe

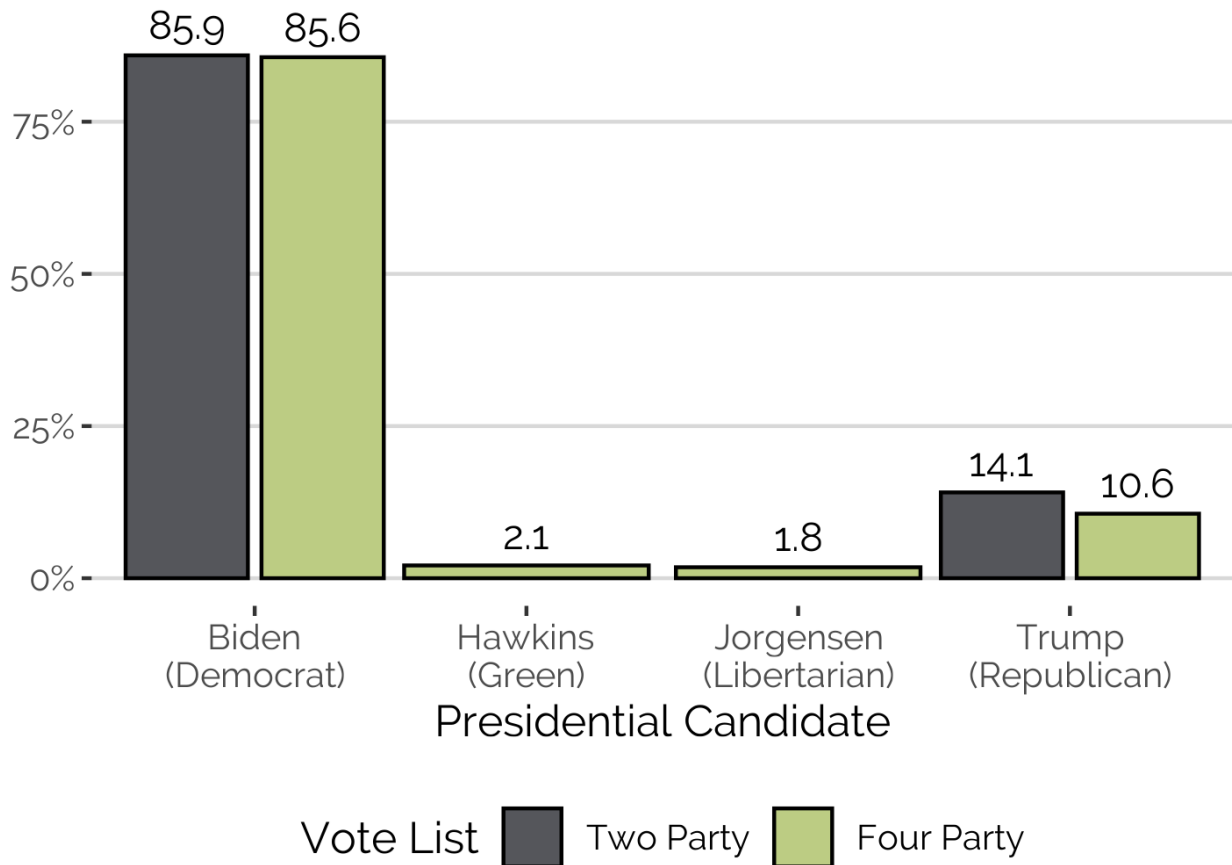
October 26, 2020

By Paul A. Djupe

We’re in the final days before the historic 2020 presidential election, in which the fate of American democracy arguably hangs in the balance. Not to my knowledge has a president ever before inspired such a high level of defection from elite members of his party, such as previous Republican National Committee chair Michael Steele, not to mention hundreds of former national security officials. Amidst a non-traditional campaign season due to covid-19, among other things, how are Denison students lining up?

127’s fall survey just wrapped up with nearly 600 responses. To capture vote choice, we ran an experiment, curious what the effect is of adding electoral options. That is, is the two party vote different from a more inclusive four party vote? The results, shown below, show overwhelming support on campus for Biden. In both versions of the question, Biden receives about 86 percent of student support. Adding options for the Green Party candidate, Howie Hawkins, does not draw down Biden support. Instead, adding minority party options draws down Trump support, though not by much. Trump receives about 14 percent support with two candidates listed and just under 11 percent with 4 listed. The minor parties receive about 4 percent support. Minor party support appears to be down from 2016 when Johnson (Libertarian) and Stein (Green) received at least 6 percent support.

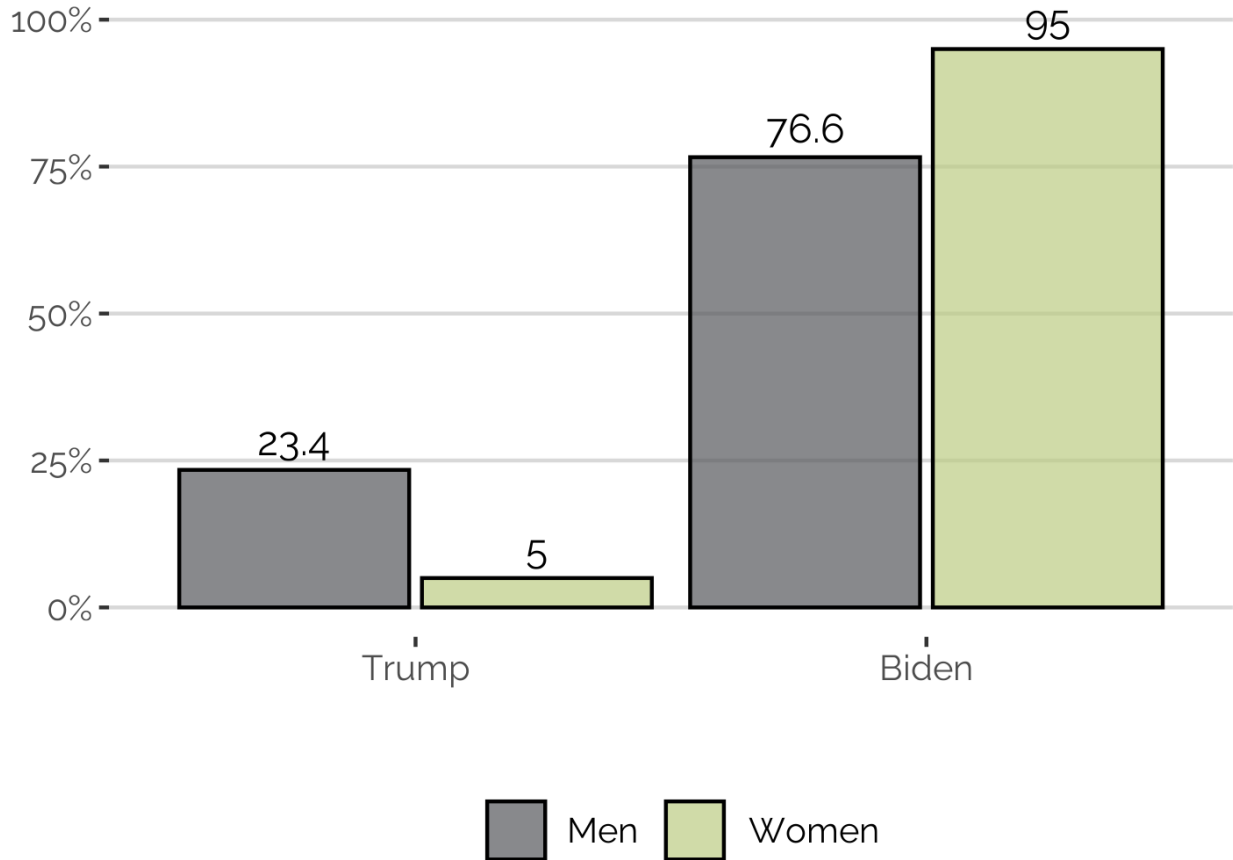
Minority Party Options Draw Trump Voters



Source: October 2020 Survey

Biden's support is considerably better than Clinton's support in 2016 when she captured 77 percent support in our survey. In that case, there was also a sizeable gender gap – 80% of women supported Clinton compared to 66 percent of men. That's no surprise with the first woman running for president on a major party ticket (the first woman to run for president was Victoria Woodhull in 1872; others have run for their party's nomination). Perhaps surprisingly, the gender gap is even more dramatic in 2020 when fully 95% of women are backing Biden compared to only 76 percent of men. That means Denison men have shifted Democratic, but not nearly as strongly as women have.

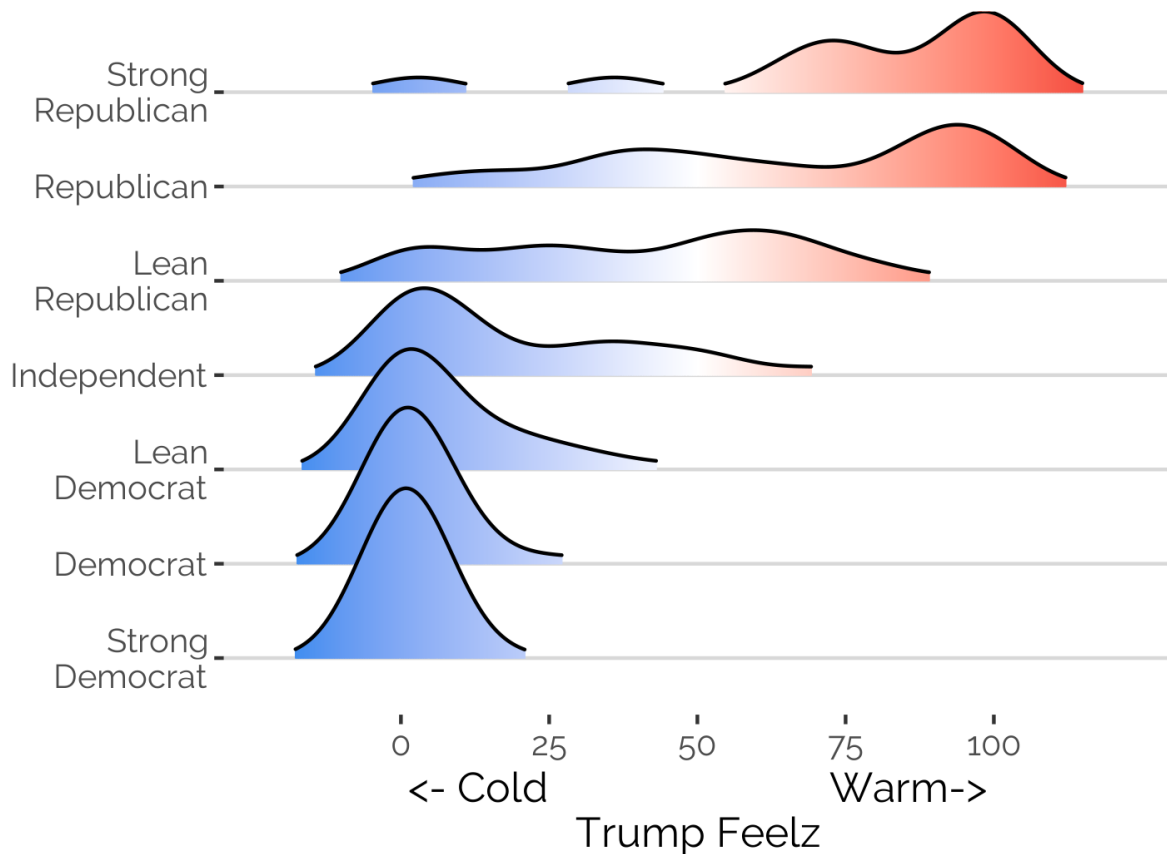
A Monster Gender Gap in 2020



Source: October 2020 Survey

Denison reflects the national mood, to an extent, with very strong feelings toward the president. That is, Democrats are very strongly united in their negative feelings toward the president, while Republicans are divided to an extent. Only among strong Republicans do we see a concentration of 100 point positive ratings, but even so there are sizable pockets of unease about their party's standard bearer. The average "feeling thermometer" score for Trump on campus is a frigid 14 degrees.

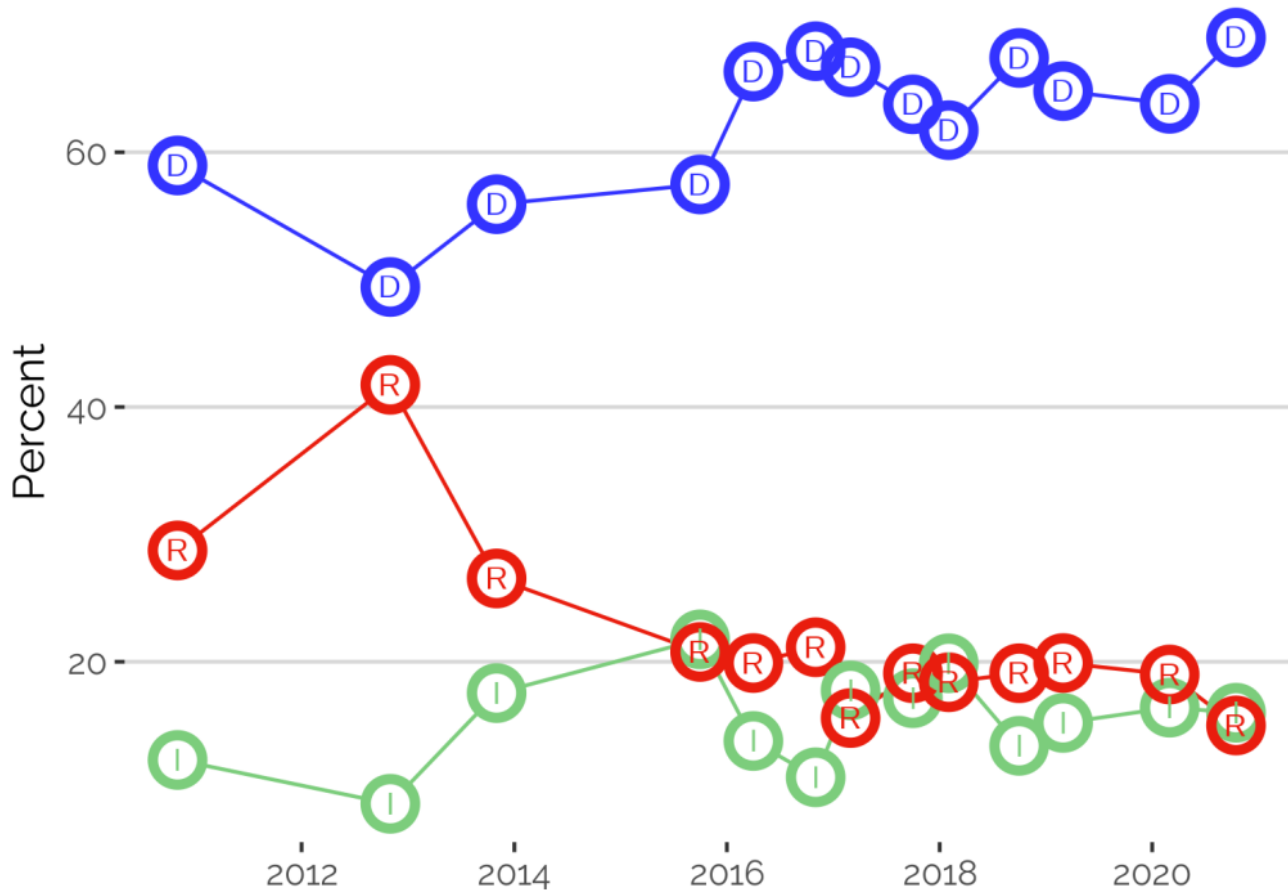
How Partisans Feel toward Trump



Source: October 2020 Survey

The disintegration of Republican feelings toward Trump are probably exacerbated by their continuing decline in numbers at Denison. More than two-thirds (69%) of Denisonians are in the Democratic camp – a record high number (the previous high was 67%). Moreover, Independents now outnumber Republicans (16 to 15%). Only 2.3% of campus calls themselves a “strong Republican.” By contrast, nationally there are more Democrats than Republicans (44 to 36%), but a sizeable portion eschew partisanship (16%) or identify with some other party (4%).

Denison Partisan Trend, 2010-2020



Right now, Biden nationally holds a 9 point lead, on average, while the race is neck and neck in Ohio (with Trump perhaps up 1 point). About one third of the electorate has already voted and weekend early voting is just starting in Ohio and many other states. At this point it's a turnout game and that is something incredibly difficult to predict in a pandemic with so many people choosing early voting options. Whatever you do, whoever you support, make your voice count – GET OUT AND VOTE.

Paul A. Djupe is a local cyclist who coincidentally has taught social science research methods and political science at Denison for millenia. He started onetwentyseven.blog a few years ago in a bid to subsidize collective action. He's on Twitter and you should be too, along with your president.