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How Did Denison Vote?

Paul A. Djupe

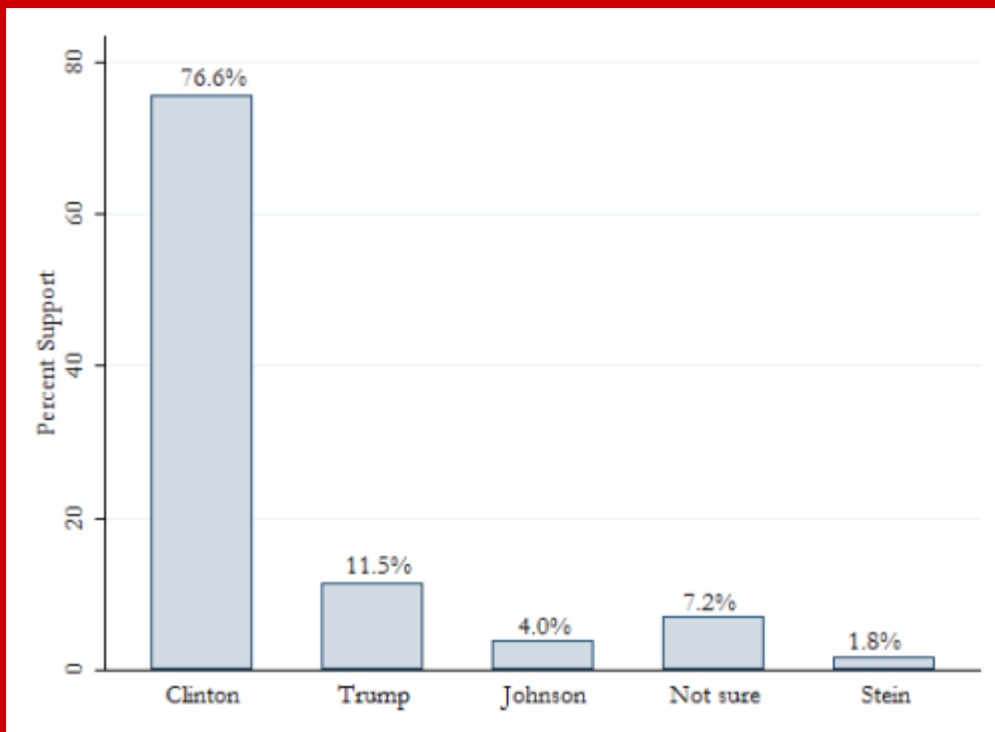
November 9, 2016

By Paul A. Djupe

November 8, 2016 hosted a stunning upset of the political order in the United States. Political novice Donald Trump ran a non-traditional campaign that was marked by relatively little organization, racked up the fewest newspaper endorsements in the modern era, had few elite surrogates echoing his message, and generally followed a script few would have thought salable. So perhaps it is fitting that there was almost no forecast that presaged his election. In the end, he may yet narrowly lose the popular vote, but Clinton conceded and does not appear poised to head to court.

That leaves us with questions about where Denison fits in this new landscape. The 127 team has been in the field with a poll of the student body over the last week designed to help us assess where our commitments are. 600 have responded and the sample looks reasonably representative of the Denison student body. A series of posts will explore a range of questions of interest in the coming weeks. For now, the place to start is the vote!

Figure 1 – The 2016 Big Red Presidential Vote

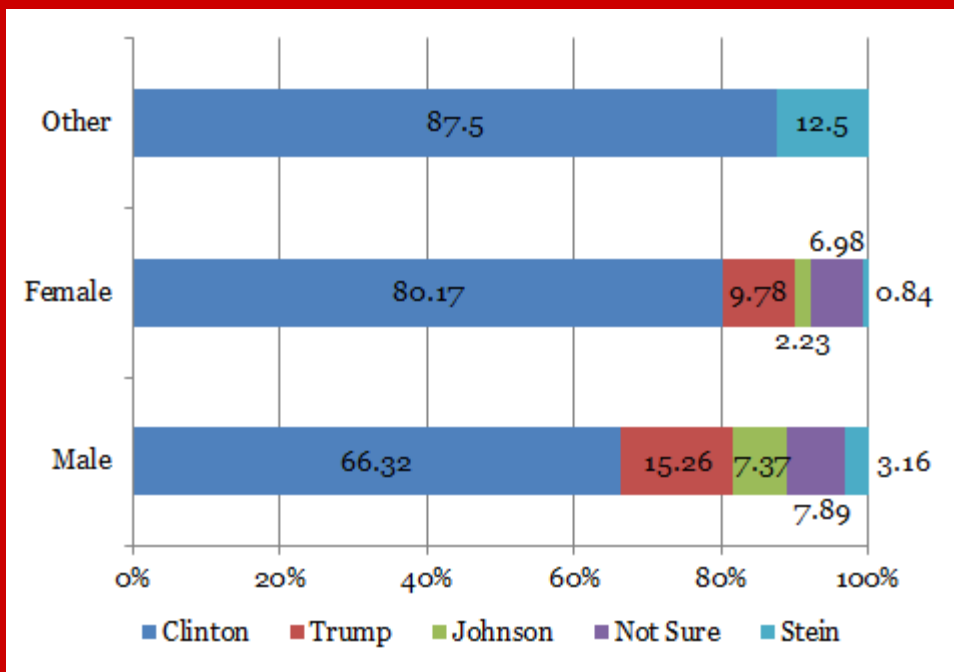


Based on our sample, the campus broke decisively for Hillary Clinton. Fully 76% of students said they voted for or were about to vote for Clinton. Trump earned the support of 11.5% of students, while Johnson and Stein were in single digits (4 and 2%, respectively).

Turnout was very high – 94% of the sample said they were about to (55%) or had already voted (39%). And support for Clinton was equally high among early (78%) and election day (76%) voters.

The gender gap in support for Democratic candidates has been a fixture of modern American politics since 1980. This election was no different. In national exit polls, the gender gap (not adjusting for race or anything else) was 12% (54-42 in favor of Clinton among women and 53-41 in favor of Trump among men). At Denison the gap was somewhat larger. Among women, 80% favored Clinton compared to 66% of men, while 88 percent of those identifying with another gender supported Clinton. The equivalent comparison to the national exit polls is 80-9 among women (favoring Clinton) and 66-15 among men (also favoring Clinton).

Figure 2 – The Denison Gender Gap in Candidate Support



Obviously Denisonians are drastically different in their vote choice compared to the nation (though it appears that Clinton may yet win the popular vote while losing the electoral college, which is a rare event). Denison is even more in support for Clinton than millennials (18-29 year olds), who broke for Clinton 55-37. What is perhaps most interesting about this election is that it is the first since before WWII that the Republican Party has not won a majority of college-educated voters (who broke for Clinton 49-45). Take those three things together – gender, age, and education – and the Denison vote makes sense.

For many on this campus, the results of yesterday are disheartening or worse. There is a great call to remain vigilant in the time to come and to learn to utilize the democratic tools available to us. It is my sincere hope that the conversation remain high (not low) – focused on the future and on the content of ideas and not the group identity of the person making the argument. Only in this way will we, regardless of party, continue to make strides toward a more perfect union.

Paul Djupe is a local cyclist who happens to have taught political science at Denison since before the Harry Potter series. You can learn more about his work at pauldjupe.com.