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### Does the Campus Like Our President?

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# Does the Campus Like Our President?

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Paul A. Djupe

November 2, 2021

By Paul A. Djupe

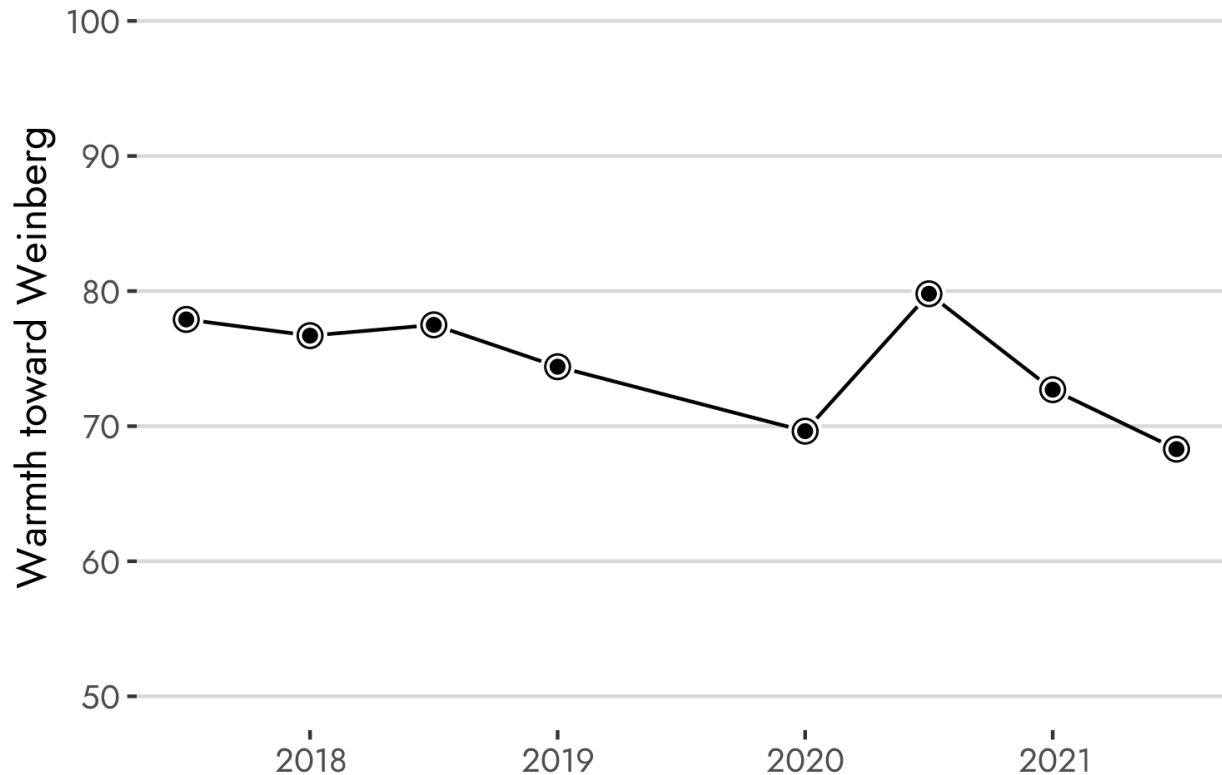
The university is likely in the best shape it has ever been in. Everything is up – student achievement, applications, admissions, flags, fundraising, you name it. That’s a remarkable achievement in and of itself, but especially considering that we are emerging from a worldwide pandemic that has disrupted higher education and much else in our societies. While he’s not to blame for everything, we can probably attribute a good deal of Denison’s forward progress to the energy and vision of President Weinberg. So, does he retain the favor of the campus?

The President has been the subject of 127 posts before. Bobby Craig analyzed writing to catalogue “Weinbergisms” and Max Dehon looked at favorable ratings in Weinberg’s “second term.” In the latter piece, Dehon compared Weinberg to George W. Bush, whose ratings were sliding in his second term, which is pretty typical of American presidents. The last rating drawn on for that post was February 2020, which begs the obvious question – what did COVID do to feelings toward President Adam Weinberg?

I’m drawing on survey data collected almost every semester since 2017 that asked, “How do you feel toward the following public figures, groups, and ideas? Use this feeling thermometer, in which 0 means you feel very cool (negative) and 100 means you feel very warm (positive) toward the person/group/concept.”

Perhaps the earlier comparison to George W. Bush was prescient because the pattern sure looks like a rally around the flag effect. Warmth toward Weinberg had been sliding – dropping just shy of 10 points from Fall 2017 to Spring 2020, but it shot back up to its highest level in Fall 2020 as the University rallied to have classes in person. But just like GWB, whose approval ratings peaked after the 9/11 attacks and the invasion of Iraq at roughly 90 percent, that was the high water mark. The return to something approaching normalcy this fall has brought cooling feelings toward Weinberg and the lowest level yet recorded at 68.3 – just 1.3 pts lower than in Spring 2020.

## Was COVID Weinberg's Gulf War?

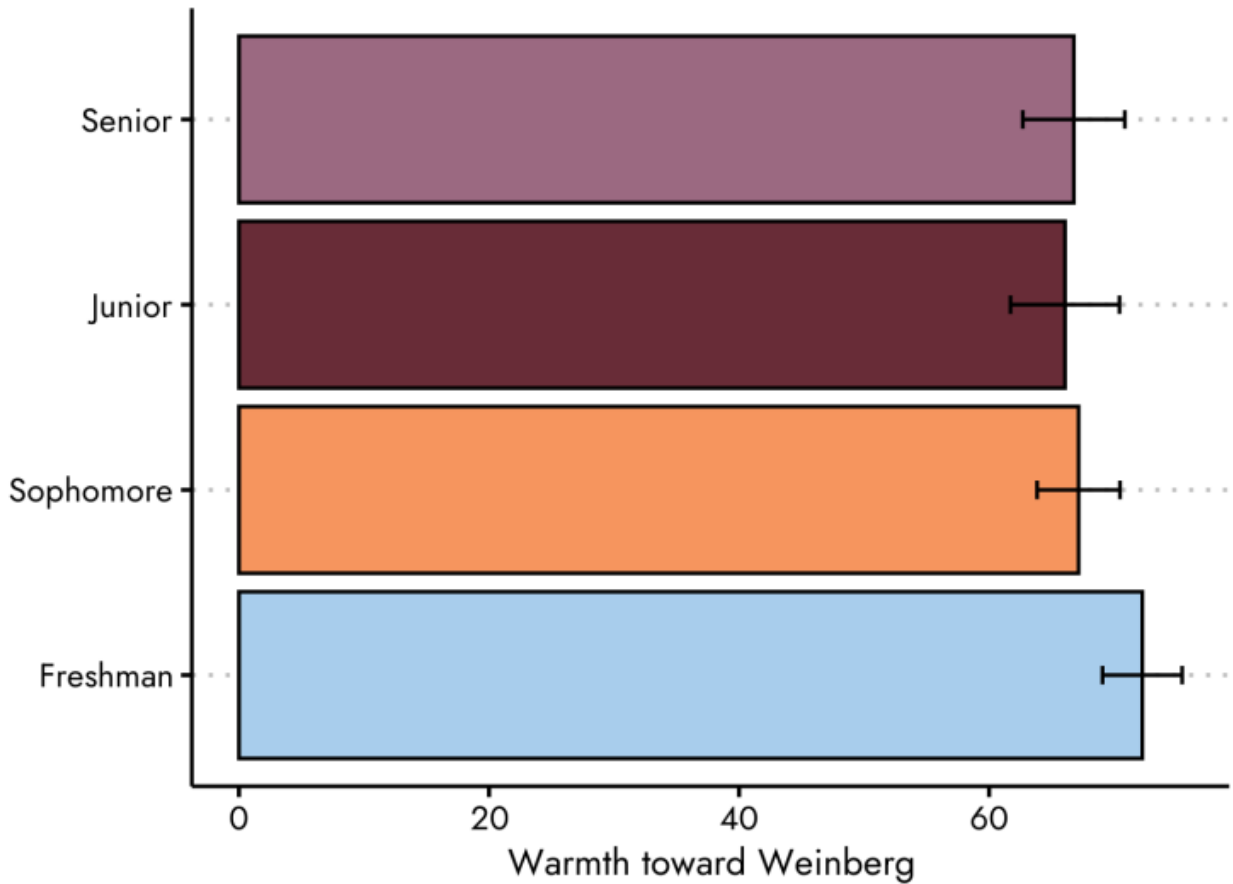


Source: 127 Semester Surveys.

We shouldn't get too alarmed, because Weinberg is still the most popular person we asked about, save for democracy (74) and Black Lives Matter (78). Warmth toward Weinberg is well above that afforded to Democrats (58), Joe Biden (46), and the United States (50).

So, whose feelings toward Weinberg are cooling off? Despite the rally around the flag in fall 2020, COVID has taken its toll and everyone just seems tired. I could imagine that those students who have been through a COVID tour of duty may report a lower degree of warmth than newbies who don't know the full force of the Campus Compact. There's some evidence for that below – everyone is in the same place except for freshmen who have slightly higher warmth scores.

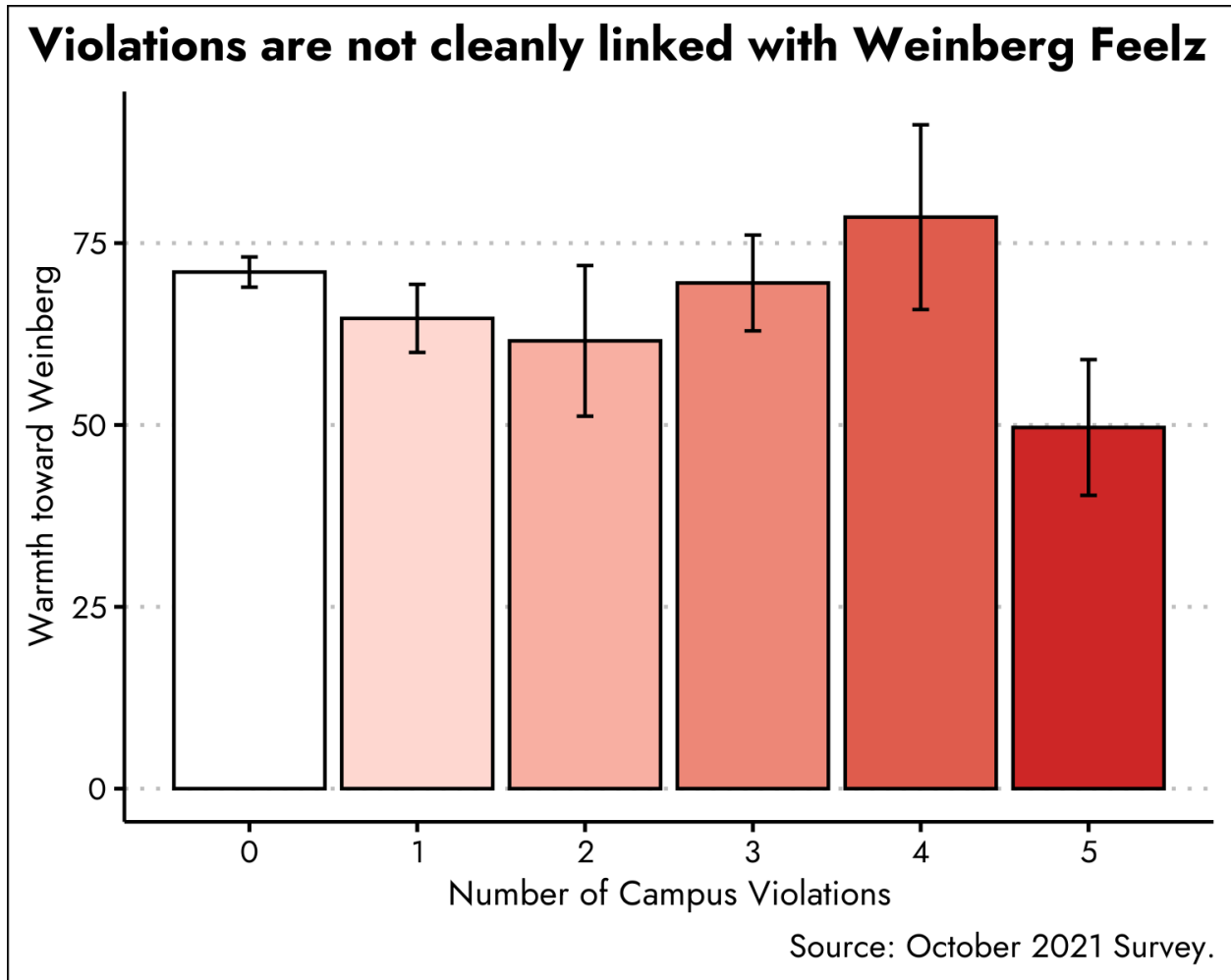
## All classes are in the same place except for FYS



Source: October 2021 Survey.

One reason why those scores may be lower is that the COVID response created so many more rules to follow from daily checkins to much more strict socializing policy. Maybe those racking up violations have lower warmth scores toward Denison's chief executive. The warmth levels bounce around a bit, but none of the levels are statistically distinguishable with the others except for those with 5 or more violations (there was one person with 28! More on this in another post, of course). There aren't a lot of people up there, but they have a tepid regard for Weinberg.

## Violations are not cleanly linked with Weinberg Feelz



Being president is hard. There are good reasons why the approval ratings of American presidents tend to slide across their terms. They get blamed for the bad times when no one wants to share credit, and may not benefit enough from the good times. But, through comparison to American presidents, our President Weinberg has clearly exceeded expectations. Warm feelings toward him have only dipped by about 10 points whereas George W. Bush saw his ratings soar to 90 percent and end up in the low 30s. I suspect that the more COVID rules and memories fade, feelings toward him will stabilize unless something drastic happens.

*Paul A. Djupe is a local cyclist who runs the [Data for Political Research](#) minor. 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](#).*