

Results of a Survey of North Dakota College Students on Their Experiences and Choices in the 2016 Election, Part 2

A 2016 survey of undergraduate and graduate students across North Dakota found considerable differences between student preferences and the full statewide results. College voters were more likely to support Hillary Clinton or a third-party candidate over Donald Trump. However, student support for each candidate varied by institution. The survey was underwritten by the Upper Midwest Regional Center on Public Policy at North Dakota State University (NDSU). The Center invited students at the eleven North Dakota System colleges and universities to participate shortly after the 2016 presidential election. Students completed their surveys between November 9 and December 17. Of the 45,359 students invited to participate, 4,810 completed the survey for a response rate of 10.6 percent. Some 3,560 respondents stated that they voted in 2016. Of those, 3,254 respondents answered questions regarding their vote for president. The University of North Dakota had the greatest number of respondents on this last question at 1,228 followed by North Dakota State University with 1,200.

The survey results provided here are not based upon a random sample. Thus, the responses may not reflect the experiences of the general population.

Students who indicated they voted in the 2016 election were asked, 'Who did you vote for?' with three possible response: 'Hillary Clinton,' 'Donald Trump,' and 'Other.' Those who selected the third option were then asked to describe their selection.

Figure 1 presents the 2016 presidential election results statewide and by student responses. The North Dakota Secretary of State reported that almost 63 percent of state voters supported Donald Trump while just over 27.2 percent voted for Hillary Clinton and 9.8 percent chose someone else.ⁱ In contrast, 45.5 percent of survey respondents supported Trump while 37.4 percent chose Clinton and 17.1 percent selected 'Other.' In terms of 'Other,' 7.64 percent supported Gary Johnson and the Libertarian Party and 1.56 percent supported Jill Stein and the Green Party.

Figure 1 about here.

Figure 2 shows survey responses by campus. As can be seen, University of North Dakota (UND) respondents preferred Clinton, providing her with a 43.2 percent plurality, while 40.1 percent supported Trump and 16.7 percent selected 'Other.' Some 42.9 North Dakota State University (NDSU) respondents chose Trump while 40.2 percent supported Clinton and 16.9 percent selected 'Other.' However, this level of support for Clinton was not universal: students from the other nine institutions backed Trump with 57.3 percent, Clinton with 24.5 percent, and 'Other' with 18.2 percent. Thus, student preferences varied considerably by campus with respondents from NDSU and UND more likely to vote for the Democrat nominee than respondents from the other nine institutions.

Figure 2 about here.

Figure 3 compares campus responses to the immediate county vote. This provides some sense as to whether student voter preferences differ from those of other local voters. Cass County voters supported Trump over Clinton by a 49.3 percent to

38.8 percent marginⁱⁱⁱ while Grand Forks voters supported Trump 53.8 percent to 35.7 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ Thus, college student support for Clinton was greater than that of other voters in Grand Forks County. In Cass County, NDSU students supported Clinton at about the same rate as all Cass County voters, though NDSU students were less supportive of Trump than Cass County voters.

Figure 3 about here.

Figure 4 presents partisan identification by college institution. Some 43.8 percent of NDSU respondents identified themselves as Republican, 29.6 percent as Democratic, 19.9 percent as Independent, and 6.3 percent as Other Party. Nearly 36.5 of UND respondents identified as Republican, 31.8 percent as Democratic, 24.6 as Independent, and 7.0 percent as Other Party. Finally, some 48.1 percent of respondents from the other nine campuses identified as Republican, 18.1 percent as Democratic, 25.5 percent as Independent, and 8.3 percent as 'Other Party.' These findings indicate that NDSU and UND respondents differ from college students reporting from the other campuses as well.

Figure 4 about here.

Conclusion

College student support for Hillary Clinton and third party candidates in 2016 was much greater than that found across North Dakota. Whether based upon their reported vote or partisan identification, college students as a group were more likely back the Democratic Party than the rest of the state's population. However, college student support differed by whether respondents attended NDSU, UND, or one of the other

campuses. Students from the other campuses were more like to have voted for Trump or identified as Republican than students from NDSU or UND.

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Figure #1: 2016 President Election Results Statewide and for All Students

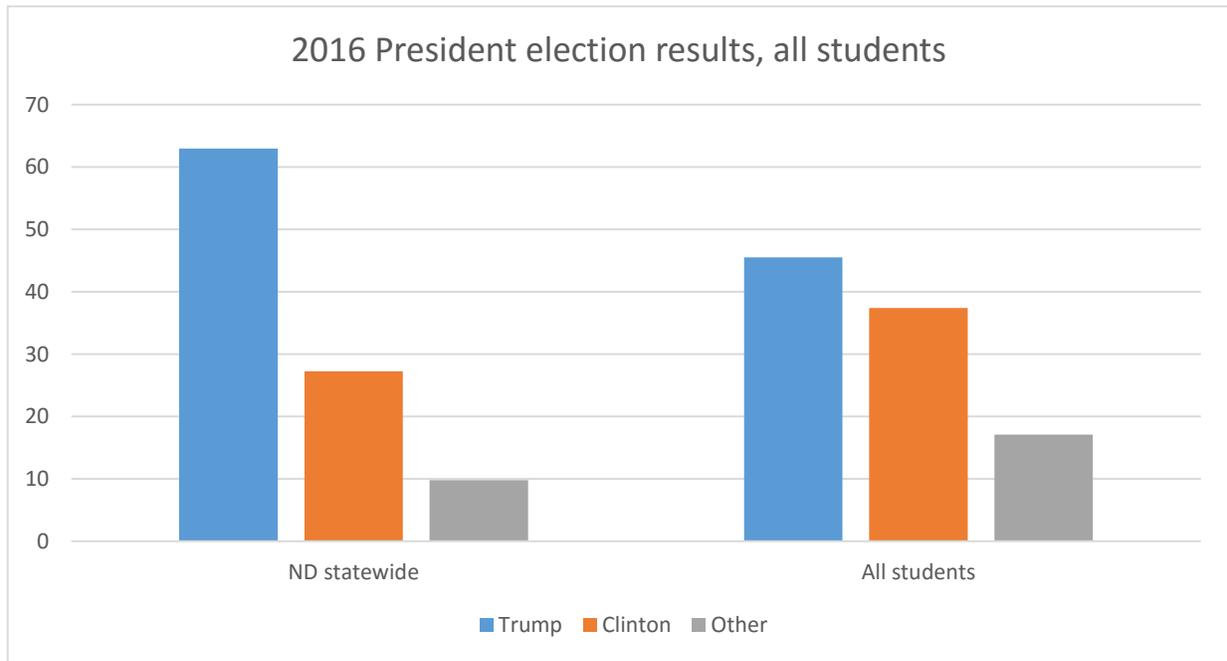


Figure #2: 2016 President Election Results by Institution

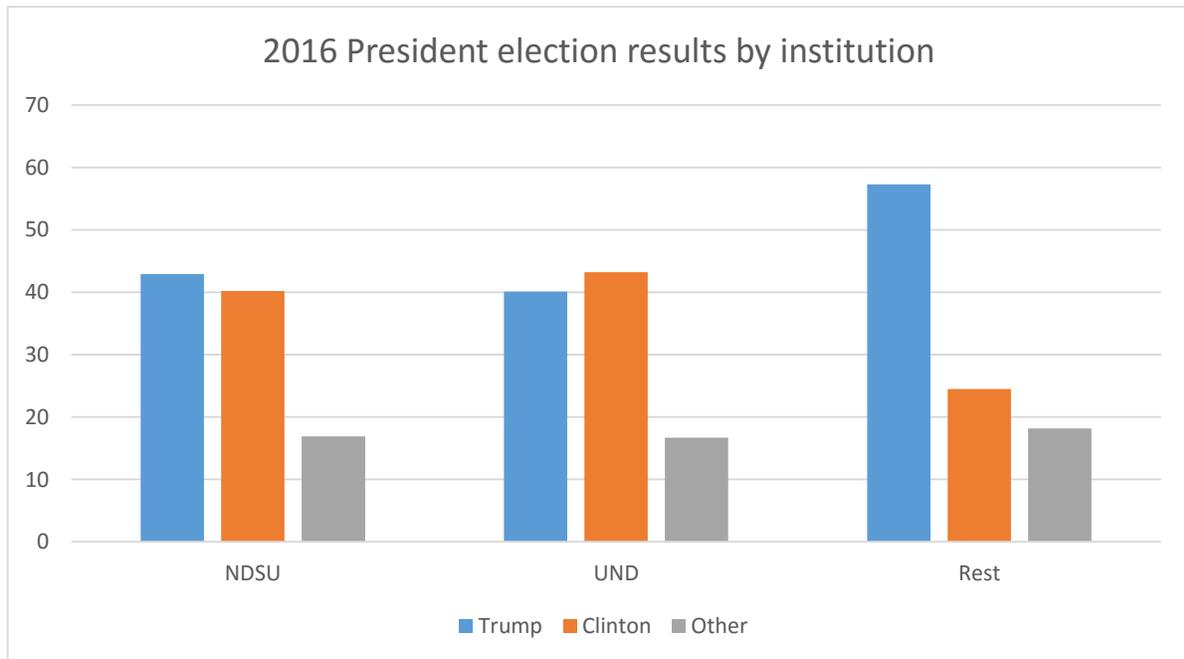


Figure #3: 2016 President Election Results by Institution and County

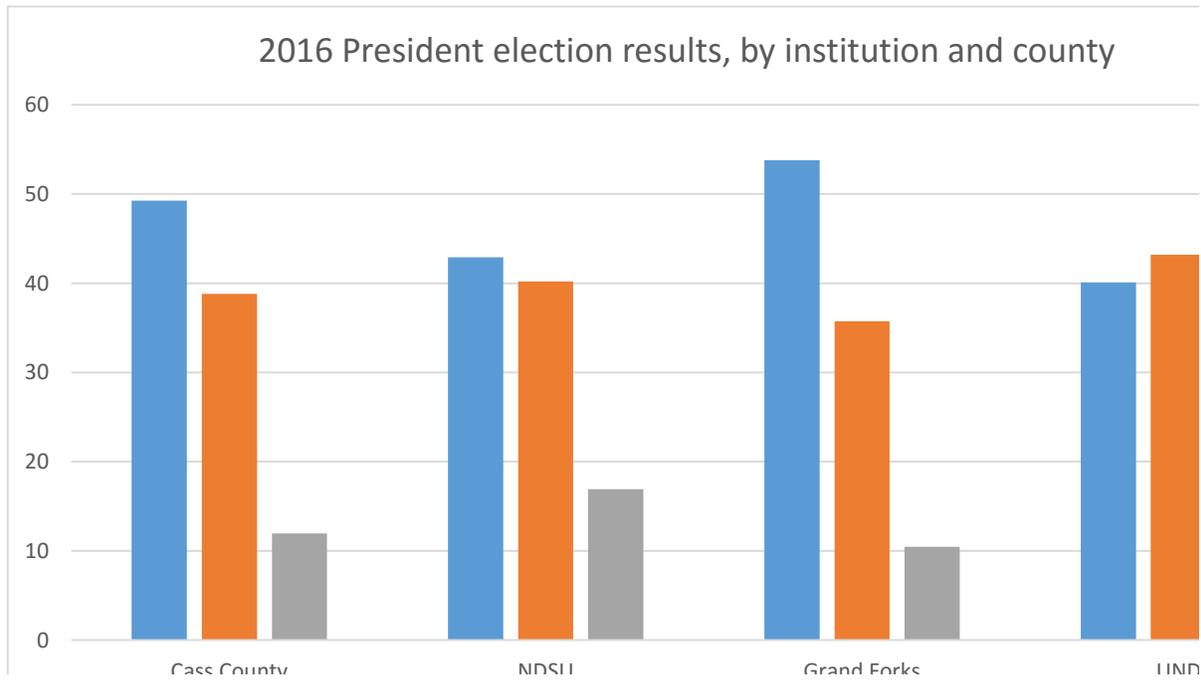
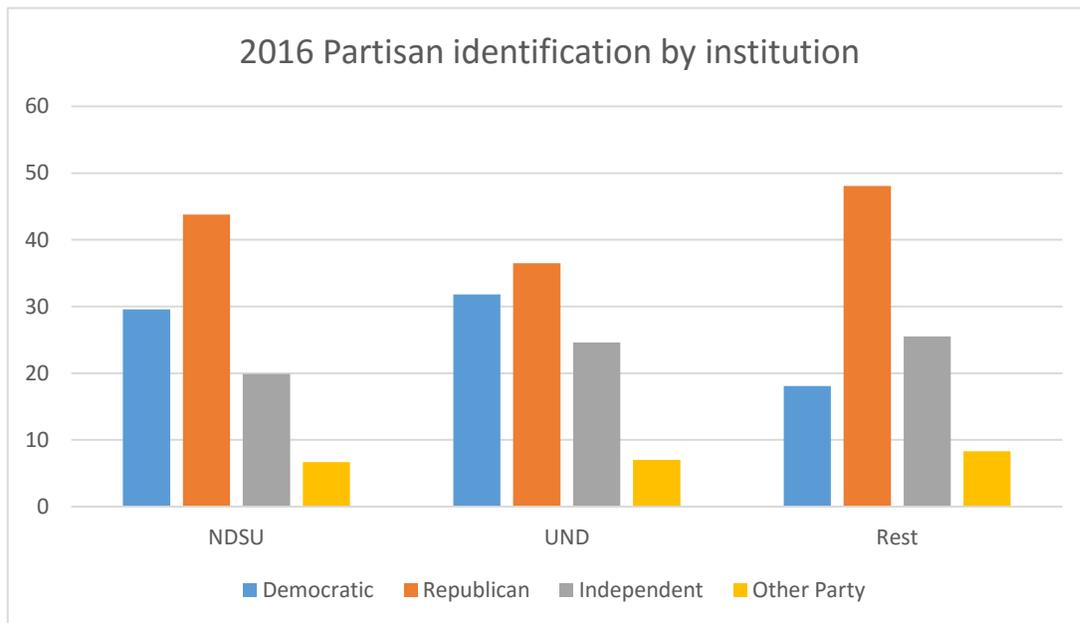


Figure #4: 2016 Partisan Identification by Higher Education Institution



i See: <http://results.sos.nd.gov/resultsSW.aspx?text=Race&type=SW&map=CTY>

ii See: <http://results.sos.nd.gov/resultsSW.aspx?type=CTYALL&map=CTY&cty=09&name=Cass>

iii See: <http://results.sos.nd.gov/resultsSW.aspx?type=CTYALL&map=CTY&cty=18&name=Grand%20Forks>