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Students Benefit from Expanded Presidential Election Cycle

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Glen Duerr, Ph.D., assistant professor of international studies at Cedarville University, and his Qualitative Methodology and Reasoning course are getting into the political polling world with recent and upcoming elections that will impact the Miami Valley. The course's focus has been learning who college students favor among the Republican candidates for president.

Of the students who responded to the poll, 49 percent favored Ben Carson and 12 percent liked Marco Rubio. The other top contenders were Ted Cruz (8 percent) and Donald Trump (2 percent). Ohio Governor John Kasich did not measure in the poll, and 15 percent of those polled were undecided.

The polling by the students is intended to teach them how to conduct surveys and in-depth interviews and how to package data using qualitative methods. The students were also prepared to conduct polling on a larger scale in anticipation of the 2016 presidential race.

Duerr plans to widen the project as the presidential election ramps up in 2016. With Ohio being a swing state that controls 18 Electoral College votes, Duerr is seeking to partner with state schools in other regions of Ohio.

"It is my intention to use research from three quadrants in Ohio — the northwest, northeast and southwest regions — and combine the data so the students can secure a glimpse at what Ohio voters are thinking," said Duerr. "We'll also be able to break out data from Greene County that will be helpful information as the political campaigns move toward the November election."

Students enrolled in Qualitative Methodology and Reasoning polled dozens of millennials to learn what candidate they were most favorable toward. Students also conducted dozens of in-depth one-on-one interviews to ask similar questions to build future questions.

"I enjoyed the experience of just walking up to a random peer and hearing their thoughts," said Jake Hibbit, sophomore class president and political science major. "I learned how students engage in political discussion as well as the diverse range of interest in the political system."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,711 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings.