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Analysis of A Great Social Life Guide

“Campus Cues”, a guide to a great social life for many perplexed college students. At least this was true for University of Illinois students during 1948 and 1962 when the first and third editions of “Campus Cues” were released. “Campus Cues” was written by Irene Pierson, who at the time was the social director of the Illini Union. “Campus Cues” was written for students of the University who desired extra help in regards to polite social interactions. The “Campus Cues” handbook unintentionally makes an argument about student culture and the University’s values at that time.

Although it is not directly stated, the main claim/thesis of the “Campus Cues” handbook is that the University upheld social values and expected respectful social customs between students, faculty, community members, etc. One of the main values that is extremely transparent in the handbook is the idea of courtship. The author supports this concept by listing advice on how to make an impression, how to get acquainted, and even advice on how to ask each other on a date. Furthermore, this handbook was not all about romance and the love life of students. The handbook offered information for job interviews, basic communication, travel, hospitality and even special events (Pierson). It becomes evident that the University supported positive

social interactions across the board by offering this information to its students. Similarly, the “Campus Cues” handbook is easily compared to the Career Center, Women’s Resource Center, and the Counseling Center where current University of Illinois students can go and obtain similar information to that offered in the “Campus Cues” handbook.

There are many assumptions in the “Campus Cues” handbook that are both directly and indirectly stated. Generally speaking, when considering a book about respectful social interactions it is easy to infer that the University as well as the author of the handbook valued courting, respectful/fun relationships, etiquette, and professionalism. If this was false there would not be an entire guide on what to do and what not to do in social settings. One can also imply that the writer values her students and their well being by taking this time to write such a handbook full tips and recommendations regarding social interactions.

Additionally, the “Campus Cues” handbook was written in regard to hypothetical situations. With that being said there is evidence of a qualifier. Some of the information offered was based on theoretical situations. For example, what “might” happen when you approach a girl. Because the handbook was written as a guide on what to do in certain situations there are many uses of the words like “maybe”, “perhaps”, “probably” etc. Furthermore, since the author chose to write about this sort of advice in particular one could argue that she support her values of etiquette, and professionalism by simply publishing such a guide for the University of Illinois students.

The author of “Campus Cues” does not offer a rebuttal. The author as well as the University believes that the advice stated is of importance and should be followed by students. On the other hand, if there was a counterargument arguing against this, it would tell us that friendly social interactions aren’t necessary and that proper etiquette and professionalism isn’t necessary in the real world. We all know that this information is very misleading. As a result, one can assume that a rebuttal was not included because it can only offer possibly invalid information.

When considering the author of “Campus Cues”, Irene Pierson, she first establishes credibility as Social Director at Illini Union. As a result of holding such position with the University one can assume she holds credentials that allow her to elaborate on such topic. Things that allow one to come to such conclusion is the position she holds at the University. Not everyone is qualified to hold such positions at ranked universities. It takes a renowned skill set and hard work qualify for such role. However, as a result of having these qualifications it was easy for students to trust her advice. Additionally, on the outside looking in one can see why former students trusted this guidance. Pierson’s integrity and reliability allowed students to trust her direction.

The audience for “Campus Cues” are certainly University of Illinois students. In fact, in the first few pages of the guide Pierson states how many of her students come to her in need of help with social interactions described in the guide (Pierson). As Social Director at the Illini Union she ran to their aid. The guide was very thorough which leads one to believe it was effective and had offered the help many students were looking for at the time. Not only that, there were also multiple editions of the “Campus Cues” guides

released. This tells us that the information provided was useful to the students and served a purpose in their day to day lives.

The main point of "Campus Cues" is to aid students in social interaction rather than it is for new job/internship or for a date with that special someone. The guide offers advice for nearly any possible social setting. As a result of reading the guide the author wants the students to be able to go out and prevail socially; as the author knows college is not all about books, studying and a great GPA. The Social Director of the Illini Union understood that college is about making connections and building relationships with others. The only way one is able to do this successfully is if they are able to communicate effectively.

The Campus Cues guide is a representation of social values for the University of Illinois as well as Illinois' students at the time. If students did not have the desire to communicate effectively with others then chances are there would be no Campus Cues. However the author is able to produce a guide that is very useful to many students at the time. As students and members of the University today, the guide offers us an idea about what being a student was like many years prior to our attendance.

Works Cited

Pierson, Irene. *Campus Cues*. Champaign: University of Illinois, 1948. Print