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RHET 105

September 21, 2015

Providing for The Welfare of Students

The primary source *Your First Year at Illinois* is a student manual created by University of Illinois in 1944. The student manual was manufactured to help incoming freshman and returning undergraduates assimilate with the scholarly community within the University of Illinois. The contents of the manual demonstrate the three main characteristics of an argument and refer to rhetorical triangle frequently. The application of the aforementioned fundamentals led to the creation of a handbook read by countless campus students.

Crucial to every argument, the claim must express the overall thesis of the handbook. Exemplifying a proper claim, the claim was promptly stated within the student manual. Found on the seventh page, the handbook established that the handbook was prepared by “the University Committee on Freshman Week and the Dean of Students” to provide students with a program to help them assimilate from freshman year to graduation (University 7). Though expressed without qualifiers, the authors of the text chose to provide exceptions within their claim. As a handbook catered towards the undergraduate class, graduate students and faculty members were not encouraged to review the handbook for information. Therefore, there was no mention of graduate programs and faculty organizations within the handbook. Instead, the handbook focused on programs that undergraduates could participate in: fraternities and sororities, military, research and physical education (University 24, 26, 27, 38).

The second crucial component of an argument is the basis of the claim. The basis of the claim contains facts, data and evidence. The aforementioned characteristics help prove the authenticity of the claim. The authors of the handbook provided informative and helpful programs for undergraduates as the grounds of their argument. A large portion of the handbook is dedicated towards the colleges available at the University of Illinois (University 16-23). A short description of the curriculum, related activities, and specializations are given for each college. The handbook also provides information about Greek Life. Students can be informed on the number of fraternities and sororities, where to obtain rush dates, and how the bid and pledge system operated within this section (University 38). The required physical education program is also mentioned within the handbook. This sections described the semesters of physical education required for men and women. A short outline of the curriculum of the physical education course is also provided in this section (University 27). Any student in need of academic or social guidance would definitely resort to the use of such an informative handbook.

The warrant of an argument contains implicit values that both the reader and authors hold. As the final crucial element of an argument, the authors believed that being informed and involved in a community will ease the difficulty of graduating. The evidence mentioned previously strongly reflects this warrant. By reading the aforementioned sections, student can assimilate in various ways. Students looking to switch majors will seek the college description section for guidance. Students in search of a social or academic community may turn to the fraternity and sorority section. Students curious about graduation requirements may find the

physical education section extremely informative. These articles demonstrated the wealth of knowledge dedicated towards undergraduates use.

The backing provides additional support to the warrant. The handbook provided backing through information about financial aid and the library. Both of these topics are dedicated towards the assistance of incoming undergraduate students. Information regarding financial aid is aimed towards helping students attend the University. In this section, information regarding scholarships is given to students under financial need (University 14). Information regarding the library is intended to inform students about the resources available on campus and how to access them (University 28). Overall, these two sections indirectly assist undergraduates while they attend the University of Illinois.

All arguments contain at least three common characteristics, but the handbook's argument contained five of the six characteristics of an argument. The argument of this handbook has not provided a rebuttal. Valid anticipated objections that the handbook could have included fit within a large spectrum. The handbook could have acknowledged that there are other sources for campus information. A proper rebuttal would claim that the student handbook is the most centralized source of information. Although many more possibilities of rebuttals exist, the necessity of a rebuttal for such an informative composition is insignificant.

As the basis of rhetoric, the rhetorical triangle is utilized throughout the handbook. The rhetorical triangle is composed of three values: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos emphasizes the importance of the credibility. The handbook employed strong ethos by its branding and citations. The use of the university's name as a brand created strong credibility. Readers are more inclined to trust a well-known academic organization. By using the university's name, the

handbook became an endorsement of the University of Illinois. The handbook also cites that it is written by the University Committee on Freshman Week and the Dean of Students (University 7). These citations demonstrated that the authors of this composition were extremely qualified. Without these two details, students will be much less inclined to read the handbook.

Pathos is a corner of the rhetorical triangle which appeals to the emotions of the reader. The pathos of this handbook is established through writing and photographs. To inspire the students to accept the war time policies, the handbook chose to quote President Roosevelt (University 3). When Roosevelt claimed that America needed to win the war, Roosevelt established a strong sense of patriotism within all citizens. By appealing to student's patriotism, they are more likely to sacrifice their selfish concerns. The university also provides photographs of enthusiastic students engaged in activities (University 27, 33, 35). These photographs inspire readers to participate in the mentioned clubs by displaying the amount of satisfaction achieved. By appealing to pathos, the readers are subconsciously more interested in the handbook.

The final corner of the rhetorical triangle is logos. Logos appeals to the use reasoning within the handbook. Logo is primarily established in the handbook through logic. The descriptions of the colleges followed closely to the expectations of a college description. The College of Engineering description discussed a curriculum that revolved around engineering classes and mentioned specializations that were branches of engineering (University 18). This type of description is expected for the College of Engineering. Through this consistency, readers are more willing to trust all the information that the handbook states.

Ultimately, by utilizing the five of the six components of an argument and the rhetorical triangle, the University of Illinois was able to produce a handbook that most undergraduates read. The five present components were able to harmoniously reinforce the the composition, creating a proper argument. As the foundation of rhetoric, the proper utilization of rhetorical triangle refined complexity of this writing. As a result, variations of this artifact can be seen surviving throughout the existence of the University of Illinois.

Works Cited

University Committee on Freshman Week, and Dean of Students. *Your First Year at Illinois*.

Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois, 1944. *University of Illinois Archives*. Web. 10

September 2015.