

Geoffrey R. Stone's Argument in "Free Speech on Campus"

In a speech titled "Free Speech on Campus," Geoffrey R. Stone claims that academic freedom is, "...a hard-bought acquisition in a lengthy struggle for academic integrity" (86). He starts off by explaining the complex history of the term academic freedom. From the very beginning, he tries to gain an emotional response from his audience. Many examples of the unfair treatment students and faculty had to go through are brought up. This evidence is stated in a unique style that continuously profits from the organization of the speech. Stone concludes this history lesson with the problem he thinks is now stopping academic freedom from thriving. That

describing. It is then that Stone jumps to the present day and claims that, "...students themselves demand censorship, and colleges and universities...to often surrender academic freedom to charges of offense" (87). He uses many different anecdotes as examples to paint a picture for the audience. Some of these examples include students rejecting invited speakers, students wanting "All Lives Matter" posters to be taken down, and other moments that students felt unsafe. Stone also provides quantitative evidence, stating that, "A recent survey revealed that 72% of current college students support disciplinary action against any student or faculty member who expresses

“...enable them to be effective citizens of the world” (88). Stone states his argument and then assigns a corrective to that statement, just in time for him to state his counterargument. In this he states that maybe current college students are not weak and that, “...they have the courage to demand respect, equality, and safety” (88). After the counterargument, he makes sure to formally state what side of the argument he agrees with, being the former. Even this small detail helps avoid confusion and contributes to the speech. The section flows incredibly well as it hits all the necessary points needed for an argument. The organization is then complemented by the style Stone achieves. Using the previous examples stated, Stone tends to use multiple words to emphasize his meaning. When he described the student's mindset, he used a group of three words. He also used three words during his counterclaim. It gives these statements the sense that they are important and asks the audience to pay attention. It is a great way to highlight specific phrases.

Along with great organization, Stone manages to include small segments that boost his credibility significantly. During this segment, Stone speaks of a committee that he chaired in hopes of fixing this ongoing problem present on college campuses. Stone states that, “The Committee consisted of seven very distinguished faculty members from across the University” (89). From the report that this committee wrote, Stone lists key excerpts. During this, he is able to restate his argument with more detail and remind the audience. His credibility increases even more when he states that the report has gained national attention, being adopted by universities such as, “...Princeton, Purdue, Johns Hopkins, American University, the University of Wisconsin, and Louisiana State University” (90). Stone then ends this section by bringing the audience's attention back to the comparison of previous generations and now. He briefly explains the impact of social media, stating that, “...65% of all college students now say that it is



Works Cited

Stone, Geoffrey. "Free Speech on Campus." *READ, REASON, WRITE: AN ARGUMENT TEXT AND READER*. 12th ed., McGraw-Hill Education, 2019, pp. 86-92.