Name: Kevin Lei

Speech Title: A Call for Comprehensive Education

Speech Purpose: To persuade the audience about the importance of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) in postsecondary education and advocate for a stronger core curriculum that emphasizes these disciplines.

Speech Thesis: American Public Universities should implement a stronger core curriculum with a stronger focus on the humanities, especially subjects like philosophy, psychology, and religious studies.

Introduction

1. Attention material: When is the last time you read a book?
2. Thesis: American Public Universities should implement a stronger core curriculum with a stronger focus on the humanities, especially subjects like philosophy, psychology, and religious studies.
3. Preview: Today, I will discuss the diminishing role of HSS in postsecondary education, propose the implementation of a stronger core curriculum, and showcase the positive impacts of such a curriculum, as exemplified by Columbia University.

*TRANSITION: Let's delve into how the current educational trend is affecting us.*

Body

1. The diminishing of the Humanities and Social Sciences has created a culture where the “practical” is artificially and unnecessarily separated from the “philosophical”
   1. Increasingly, people are seeing the humanities and social sciences as an obstacle rather than a complement to stem.
      1. Various politicians have called for the humanities to be defunded at the post-secondary level
      2. The state auditor of Mississippi recently released an eight-page report suggesting that the state should invest more in college degree programs that could “improve the value they provide to both taxpayers and graduates.”
   2. People don’t see the value of the humanities
      1. “We need to revive the idea that education is a lifelong pursuit. The liberal arts should not be squashed by the monotony of servile work and office life, but rather they can be the gateway to joyful and meaningful lives in this restless and despairing society.” (WSJ)
      2. Mississippi's Republican auditor, Shad White, has advocated for focusing state funding on subjects that align with workforce needs, suggesting the defunding of several social science and humanities programs, labeling them as "indoctrination factories" and "garbage fields"​ (Times Higher Education)

*TRANSITION: Now that we understand the problem, let's explore a viable solution*

1. Implementing a stronger core curriculum in American public universities would create more well-rounded graduates and better thinkers.
   1. The personal is professional, and the professional is personal.
      1. Examples from interview with educator David Mack.
      2. People make an artificial distinction between what is “practical” financially and what is “personal” to us.
   2. Sometimes people have their priorities backward.
      1. Priorities are elucidated in the introduction to the Myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus.
      2. Most people seem to have this backward.

*TRANSITION: Having seen the potential solution, let's look at a successful implementation.*

1. We have already seen what a better liberal arts education can do for society, and we can strive to make this even better as well as a reality for everyone.
   1. Columbia University’s strong core curriculum creates better graduates.
      1. “Courses such as "Contemporary Civilization" and "Masterpieces of European Literature and Philosophy" (Lit Hum) are central to this curriculum. These courses, along with others in science, writing, music, art, and creative works, encourage students to engage deeply with academic questions and foster a greater spirit of intellectual inquiry. The small class sizes facilitate close bonds among students and faculty, enhancing the educational experience​” (Columbia Core Curriculum)
      2. As a result of this curriculum, Columbia students develop strong intellectual interests, explore new areas of inquiry, and position their knowledge within the broader traditions of Western thought, while also critically reflecting on these traditions in the context of global history​
   2. The benefits of a strong liberal arts education go beyond the personal
      1. Columbia graduates are more employable and adaptable in diverse fields
      2. Not only does a better liberal arts education improve the workforce, it also creates better citizens and thinkers.

*TRANSITION: Finally, let's take a moment to reflect on the key insights from our discussion.*

Conclusion

Summary statement: Now that we've explored the issues facing our current educational landscape, envisioned the transformative power of a robust core curriculum, and witnessed the tangible benefits of such an approach through the example of Columbia University, let's take a moment to reflect on the key insights from our discussion.

Concluding remarks: As we leave today, remember that the last book you read shouldn't just be a distant memory. Let's embrace a future where education holistically nurtures our intellect, ethics, and cultural awareness, making us not just skilled professionals but also well-rounded individuals. This is not just an educational reform; it's a step towards enriching our society and our lives.

References *(in APA style)*

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