The following is an argumentative essay submitted by student writer Mitchell Hardaway in response to a prompt regarding the corporate sponsorship of schools. Read it carefully and then identify the different parts of the Rogerian Argument (Introduction, Opponent’s Position, Writer’s Position, and Conclusion) and evaluate how effectively the essay fulfills each part.

**Corporate Sponsorship in Schools: Finding Common Ground**

Mitchell Hardaway

Long has the topic of corporate sponsorship in schools been at the forefront of debate among parents, educators, and civic leaders. In recent years corporations have increased their role in schools by advertising in the cafeteria, sports field, and various other locations in exchange for a specific amount of money. The question becomes whether private enterprise warrants a place in the education domain; and countless interested parties have attempted to develop an answer. To be clear, the people waging this debate are acting on what they believe is in the best interest of the younger generation. Therein lies the problem. Some people glorify the boost in program funding that sponsorship provided, while others focus on the sometimes negatively influential effect advertising has on youth.

Corporate sponsorship generates much angst among those people who idealize the innocent, undeveloped minds of students; however, financial conditions mandate that some schools resort to sponsorship in order to continue to provide adequate programming for their students. But there are certainly some people who would disagree with this position. Many people see how young people can be easily influenced and quickly point out that advertising at school might prompt students to value certain ideas or items over others. Some would claim that schools that allow sponsorship are eliminating free choice, one of the great ideals of American individualism. Students have no choice in the advertising they are exposed to. Others might worry that if corporations are giving money to schools, that they will gain control over what is happening in those schools, perhaps even being able to censor teachers who are teaching concepts that oppose that corporation’s philosophy.

In an ideal world, schools are places free from any influences besides the positive pressures of education, social responsibility, and the like; however, the harsh conditions of the economy force schools to adopt alternative methods for generating operating funds, particularly corporate sponsorship. In the realistic best interest of today’s students, the benefits of sponsorship outweigh any chance of negative impact. Sponsorship provides a means of revenue that is necessary but would otherwise be unavailable to the school, and costs only the space on the wall or a few seconds in the announcements. The school can gain an income that sustains important extracurricular programs by simply advertising for a specific company or product. As opposed to looking at the argument from a statistical viewpoint, consider the personal side of the debate. The student who is fascinated with drama, journalism, or golf is able to explore that interest because of corporate sponsorship, or possibly unable to due to a lack of sponsorship. To the aspiring journalist, viewing an advertisement at school every day is nothing compared to the fire that is fanned because a journalism class is being offered from funds generated by the marketing of a corporate sponsor. Young people have become accustomed to advertising through the mass-marketing tools employed on televising during every broadcast, so a small amount of advertising media at school has relatively no effect. Claims that sponsorship has virtually no influence on students because they are immune to the vast amounts of media they are exposed to would immediately be met with resistance by those who emphasize the easily impressionable minds of youth that are guided by media, especially marketing media directed at them. Whereas those who are against sponsorships believe that advertising has a negative impact on young people, the pro-sponsorship side notes that students consume such a large amount of marketing they have built up a tolerance for it.

The ultimate goal of both sides of the debate has always been to provide for the well-being of our students. This patch of common ground is so substantial that all differences of opinion become insignificant. Everyone must acknowledge the revenue creation that corporate sponsorship provides, even if some of those people disagree with the trade-off for that money. And no one can deny the benefit of quality extracurricular programs, so to this point everyone is on the same page. Ultimately, each side agreed that schools need money to provide programs that enhance the education of students; however, the debate varies as to how best to generate those funds.

In today’s ever-changing society, schools are called upon to give each child a complete education, and to do so with very limited resources; therefore, corporate sponsorship within schools provides the best avenue through which necessary funds become available. People who have a deep interest in the education of young people have long debated the ethics of sponsorship, but in the end finances always win out. The money that comes from sponsorship is vital to continuing that sports team that gives Johnny a reason to come to school every day or the school newspaper that allows Jennifer to express her complicated emotions. Without corporate sponsorship many schools would be forced to do without, and that is what would be unfair to the students. Adults making decisions based on what they believe and affecting programs that students are actively involved in is dangerous territory that must be tread upon carefully. Everyone values a rich education, and corporate sponsorship is just a means to accomplish that shared goal.

Source: Jolliffe, David A., and Hephzibah Roskelly. *Writing America: Language and Composition in Context*. Boston: Pearson Education, 2014. 120-123. Print.