The Effect of a Symbolically Isomorphic Name Label in Implementing a Creative Campus Initiative: A Comparative Case Study Analysis

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

Kristi Wilcox, J.D.

Graduate Program in Arts Policy & Administration

The Ohio State University

2011

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Margaret J. Wyszomirski, Advisor

Dr. Wayne P. Lawson
Copyright by
Kristi Marie Wilcox
2011
Abstract

The arts’ place in the university is changing in response to the demands of the creative economy. Universities will be responsible for producing creative human capital in their graduates. The 2004 American Assembly provided campus-based practitioners with new language to pursue these goals when it introduced the “Creative Campus” terminology. This comparative case study explores the value of this naming language during policy formulation and implementation of two Creative Campus projects. Qualitative interviews, document analysis, and autoethnography are used to assess the value of a common naming strategy. A critical framework that crosses semiotics and the policy cycle is used to analyze the data from each of the cases.

The findings suggest that a symbolically isomorphic naming strategy can be very effective in formulating and implementing a Creative Campus program because the name label provides cultural entrepreneurs with a tool to contextualize their work, frame the issue on the institutional agenda, define their work in juxtaposition to a prototypical schema, and gain legitimacy, understanding, consensus, and control of resources. This thesis concludes by suggesting that the shared signifier
also offers an opportunity for a more formalized network of Creative Campus practitioners to learn from and engage in the labeling contests that shape the sign.
This thesis is dedicated to all of those people who are working hard to make the Creative Campus movement truly meaningful, in all of its various iterations.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to my family, especially to Mom, Dad, and Kacie, for your support and encouragement over the years. I would never have been able to write a master’s thesis while going to law school if you hadn’t bought me Amy and Zack’s Great Alphabet Adventure when I was four, even when you couldn’t afford it; if you hadn’t helped me move across country (twice); if you had not taught me to have faith in God; and if you hadn’t told me daily that you love me (and/or posted crazy things on my Facebook wall that made me laugh).

I am incredibly grateful to my advisor, Dr. Margaret J. Wyszomirski. Her guidance, support, keen intelligence, ability to help me think in different ways, and passion for ideas enabled me to finish this work of authorship.

I am also very thankful to Dr. Wayne P. Lawson, my reader, for his thoughts, feedback, enthusiasm, and willingness to be flexible as I pursued a unique dual degree program.

I am deeply indebted to Ms. Erin J. Hoppe, a trusted colleague and an even better friend. As someone who had gone through the thesis process ahead of me, she was always willing to share her insights, lend examples of her work, offer editing
services, give encouragement, or just have a glass of wine and listen to complaints.

Thank you to the Department of Art Education for giving me a platform to pursue my love for arts policy and for letting me hang around for four years. The faculty of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs added a depth and texture to my education that I will appreciate for years to come.

Thanks especially to Kirsten Thomas. I always knew I could go to her with all manner of procedural questions and quandaries and be sure to receive prompt, professional responses. She truly keeps everyone on target.

A special thanks goes to Dean Monte Smith, Marc Nawrocki, and all those at the Ohio State Moritz College of Law, who were so professional and kind in constantly helping me navigate the red tape of a dual degree program.

This research would not have materialized without all of the founders of the Creative Campus at both Alabama and Vanderbilt allowing me into their world. I’d like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Scott Bridges, Ms. Erica C. Mossholder, Dr. Hank Lazer, and Mrs. Alexis Clark at the University of Alabama for their time in interviewing and reviewing data. Likewise, I’d like to sincerely thank the participants at Vanderbilt University, including: Dr. Steven Tepper, who met with me on multiple occasions; Dr. Bill Ivey; Dr. Elizabeth Long Lingo; Dr. Mel Ziegler; JoEl Logiudice; and Garrett Morgan.

I must extend a very heartfelt thanks to Dr. Scott Bridges, who has been a wonderful mentor to me, not just throughout college but to this day. He has always had a keen ability to ask questions that required my brain to think in different ways.

vi
His passion, his drive, and his belief in me were the turning point in my decision to pursue arts policy at the graduate level. The mentorship and the friendship he has shared with me over the years cannot be stated enough. The Creative Campus at the University of Alabama truly would not have happened without him, and I certainly would never have gained an academic interest in it were it not for his influence.

Thanks to Erica Crabtree Mossholder, who not only served as a research participant, but has been a steadfast colleague and friend. Your passion and spark in founding the Creative Campus at Alabama contributed in large part to my ability to be a Creative Campus practitioner and have the interest and zeal to still be studying it today.

Thanks to Katie Eckenrod, who sat up many late nights in college listening to me ramble about the implementation of Creative Campus and had “solve the problems of the world” lunches with me every Thursday.

Thanks to all my friends in the Ohio State Arts Policy program. You all have been wonderful colleagues and companions these past four years and given me insight into the depth and breadth of arts policy, art education, and art-making!

Thanks as well to all my friends at the Ohio State Moritz College of Law. Your friendship and support for the past three years has been invaluable.
Vita

December 8, 1984 ........................................... Born – Tuscaloosa, AL, USA

May 2007 ......................................................... B.A., English
                                            University of Alabama
                                            Tuscaloosa, AL

2005-2007 .................................................... Founding Intern, Creative Campus
                                            University of Alabama
                                            Tuscaloosa, AL

2007 ............................................................... International Affairs Intern,
                                            Ohio Arts Council
                                            Columbus, OH

2007 ............................................................... Intern, Urban Arts Space
                                            Ohio State University
                                            Columbus, OH

2008 ............................................................... Research Assistant, Prof. Ed Lee
                                            Ohio State Moritz College of Law
                                            Columbus, OH

2009-Present .................................................. Graduate Teaching Assistant
                                            Department of Art Education
                                            Ohio State University
                                            Columbus, OH

2010 ............................................................... Extern, Hon. Jeffrey Sutton
                                            U.S. 6th Cir. Court of Appeals
                                            Columbus, OH
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields of Study: Arts Policy & Administration, Law
Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication .................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgments ....................................................................................................... v
Vita ............................................................................................................................... viii
List of Figures ............................................................................................................. xvii

Chapters:

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1
   I. Background Information ...................................................................................... 1
   II. Brief Overview of the Cases ............................................................................. 3
   III. Research Significance, Purpose and Objectives ............................................ 5
   IV. Interview Guide ............................................................................................... 6
   V. Scope and Limitations ....................................................................................... 8
   VI. Researcher Interest ........................................................................................... 11
   VII. Chapter Overview .......................................................................................... 13

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: Part One, The Creative Campus Movement in the Arts Ecology & the Four Driving Inquiries ............................................. 17
   I. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 17
   II. Contextualizing the Creative Campus Movement—Why Now? 19
      A. The Historical Movement of the Arts onto Campus .................................. 20
      B. The Historical Next-Step of the Arts into Academe—
         The Creative Campus Brand ........................................................................ 24
      C. The Many Roles of Higher Education in the Arts Milieu .......................... 28
         1. The University as an Arts Patron ........................................................... 28
         2. The University as a Provider of Research and Development ............. 29
         3. The University as Producer of Creative Capital ................................. 30
         4. The University as a Preventer of Brain Drain .................................... 32
   III. Justifying the Creative Campus Movement—
       Why Should We Do It? .................................................................................... 33
A. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Preparation for the Creative Economy ................................................................. 34
B. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Path to Civic Engagement ................................................................. 35
C. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Legitimization of the Arts ................................................................. 36

IV. Defining the Creative Campus—What is It? ....................... 37
A. Encouragement of Risk Taking & The Tolerance for Failure ......................................................... 38
B. The Campus-Community Connection: Bridging Town and Gown ......................................................... 39
C. An Inclusive Definition of Creativity (with an Emphasis on Arts Presenting) ......................................................... 39
D. Intra-Campus Collaborations ......................................................... 41
E. Student Participation & Empowerment ......................................................... 42

V. Building the Creative Campus—How Do We Do It? ................................. 44

3. LITERATURE REVIEW: Part Two, A Linguistic Lens: Analyzing the Usage of the Creative Campus Signifier in Practice ......................... 46
I. Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 46
II. How the Signifier is Deployed During Policy Formulation ........................................................................... 48
A. Capturing Limited Public Attention ........................................................................................................... 48
   1. Focusing Events ................................................................................................................................. 49
   2. Social Identification ............................................................................................................................ 50
      a. Cognitive Segmentation ................................................................................................................. 51
      b. Structural Similarity ........................................................................................................................ 51
   3. Recombination ........................................................................................................................................ 52
B. Framing the Issue ......................................................................................................................................... 53
   1. Policy Leaders/Symbol Manipulators (the Who) ................................................................................. 53
   2. Linking Issue Frames to Worldviews and Public Purposes (the How) .................................................. 54
III. How the Signifier is Deployed During Policy Implementation ......................................................................... 56
A. What Language is Doing: The Initial Choice of an Organizational Signifier/Label/Name ............................................ 57
   1. Optimal Distinctiveness ..................................................................................................................... 58
   2. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice ............................................................................................. 59
   3. Politics and Strategies of Naming ...................................................................................................... 61
B. What Language is Saying: Categorization and the Imposition of Categorical Content/Creating a “Signified” ................................................................................................................. 63
   1. Categorization ...................................................................................................................................... 63
   2. Social Construction of Meaning ......................................................................................................... 66
C. What Language is Doing (Again): The Consequences of Label Choice ......................................................... 68
   1. Enhancing Understandability .............................................................................................................. 68
2. Consensus Building ................................................................. 69
3. Control ................................................................................. 70
IV. Conclusion & Visual Summary .................................................. 73

4. METHODOLOGY ...................................................................... 79
   I. Guiding Question .................................................................. 79
   II. Qualitative Case Study Research .............................................. 79
       A. Selection of the Cases .......................................................... 82
       B. Literature Review .................................................................. 84
       C. Qualitative Interviews ............................................................. 85
       D. Document Analysis ................................................................. 89
       E. Autoethnography ................................................................. 90
       F. Role of the Researcher and Reflexivity ...................................... 91
       G. Analyzing the Data ................................................................. 92
       H. Presentation of Findings ......................................................... 94
   III. Validity and Generalizability ................................................. 95
   IV. Ethics .................................................................................. 97
   V. Conclusion ........................................................................... 97

5. THE CREATIVE CAMPUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ............ 99
   I. Introduction to the Case .......................................................... 99
   II. Policy Formulation at the University of Alabama ................. 101
       A. The Sign Contextualizing: What the Language is Saying ... 101
          1. The Context of the Modern Arts Ecology .................... 101
          2. Other Contexts: Political & Economic ....................... 104
       B. The Sign Justifying: What Language is Doing ................. 107
          1. Issue Framers/Symbol Manipulators ......................... 108
             a. Students and Support Staff as Local Line Leaders 108
             b. Administrators and Bureaucrats as Executive Leaders 111
             c. Academics as Internal Networkers ..................... 113
          2. Framing Issues by Capturing Public Attention and Linking to Public Purposes ................ 115
             a. Framing Issues by Capturing Public Attention ..... 115
                i. Capturing Attention Through Focusing Events .................. 116
                ii. Capturing Attention Through Social Identification .......... 118
                   1. Social Identification Via Cognitive Segmentation .... 118
                   2. Social Identification Via Structural Similarity .......... 119
             b. Capturing Attention by Linking Issues to Public Purposes .......... 120
i. Linking Creative Campus to Preparation for the Creative Economy .................................121
ii. Linking Creative Campus to Civic Engagement .........................................................122
iii. Legitimization of the Arts ..........................................................123
iv. An Emergent Institutional Purpose: Student Recruitment ........................................123

III. Policy Implementation at the University of Alabama ..........126
A. The Sign Defining: What Language is Saying .........................126
   1. Inputs into the Signified Content ........................................126
      a. Founders’ Visions .......................................................126
         i. Vision of Founder Dr. Scott Bridges, Internal Networker and Original Director of the Creative Campus ........................................127
         ii. Vision of Founders Kristi Wilcox & Erica Crabtree Mossholder, Local Line Leaders and Student Co-Founders .........................127
         iii. Vision of Founder Judy Bonner, Executive Leader and University Provost ................128
         iv. Vision of Founder Hank Lazer, Executive Leader, Associate Provost and Executive Director 129
         v. Vision of Founder Alexis Clark, Local Line Leader, Creative Campus Coordinator ......130
      b. Labeling Contests as a Source of Signified Content ........................................131
   2. The Local Categorical Schema for “Creative Campus” at the University of Alabama .........................133
      a. Arts Presenting ............................................................134
      b. Tolerance of Failure .......................................................134
      c. Civic Engagement ..........................................................135
      d. Connectivity/Interdisciplinarity/Collaboration ...136
      e. Student Empowerment ....................................................137
      f. An Inherently Local Factor: The Creative Campus “Twist” ....................................138
   3. Comparison to Other Schemas .................................................139
      a. Comparison to Other Local Schemas ......................................140
B. The Sign Building: What Language is Doing .........................141
   1. Choosing the Signifier .......................................................142
      a. Optimal Distinctiveness ....................................................142
         i. Symbolic Isomorphism .................................................143
            1. Symbolic Isomorphism Increases Legitimacy .......................144
2. Symbolic Isomorphism Enhances Understandability .................................................. 144
   ii. Competitive Differentiation ................................................................. 145
b. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice ......................................................... 146
c. Political and Strategic Influences on Name Choice ........................................ 147
   i. Agency ........................................................................................................ 147
   ii. Competitive Dynamics ............................................................................. 149
   iii. Strategic Persistence .................................................................................. 150
2. Consequences of the Label Choice .................................................................... 151
   a. Enhancing Understandability ................................................................. 152
      i. Labels Enhance Understandability by Distilling Complexities .............. 152
      ii. Labels Enhance Understandability by the Lexicality Effect ................. 153
   b. Building Consensus ...................................................................................... 154
      i. Labels Build Consensus Via Ambiguity .................................................. 154
      ii. Labels Build Consensus by Expanding Mindshare .............................. 155
   c. Gaining Control ............................................................................................ 156
      i. Labels Help Control by Becoming Self-Fulfilling Prophecies ............... 157
      ii. Labels Help Control by Projecting a Desired Image ............................ 157
      iii. Labels Help Control by Garnering Resources ..................................... 159
      iv. Labels Help Control by Providing Access to a Network ...................... 159
         1. Networks Provide a Place to Learn ................................................... 160
         2. Networks Provide a Place to Impose Meaning ..................................... 161
IV. Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 164

6. THE CREATIVE CAMPUS AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY .............................. 166
   I. Introduction to the Case ............................................................................... 166
   II. Policy Formulation at Vanderbilt University ............................................. 168
      A. The Sign Contextualizing ....................................................................... 168
         1. Arts Research and Development ......................................................... 168
         2. Producer of Creative Capital ............................................................... 169
      B. The Sign Justifying ................................................................................. 170
         1. Issue Framers/Symbol Manipulators .................................................... 171
            a. Students and Staff as Local Line Leaders ............................................ 171
            b. Donors & Administrators as Executive Line Leaders ........................ 174
c. Academics as Internal Networkers .............................. 175
2. Frame Issues .......................................................... 177
   a. By Capturing Public Attention ................................. 177
      i. Focusing Events ............................................. 177
      ii. Social Identification ....................................... 178
      1. Via Cognitive Segmentation ............................... 178
      2. Via Structural Similarity .................................... 179
   b. Linking Issues to Trending
      Institutional Purposes .......................................... 181
      i. Preparation for the Creative Economy:
         Changing the Educational Paradigm ...................... 182
      ii. Civic Engagement ........................................... 183
      iii. Legitimization of the Arts ............................... 184
      iv. The “Ivy Itch” ................................................ 185

III. Policy Implementation at Vanderbilt University .......... 187
A. The Sign Defining: What Language is Saying ............ 187
   1. Inputs into the Signified Content ......................... 187
      a. Founders’ Visions ........................................... 188
         i. Vision of the Founding
            Upper Administration ....................................... 188
         ii. Visions of the Founding Donor, Mike Curb, &
             The Curb Center Director, Bill Ivey ........... 188
         iii. Visions of Steven Tepper and
             Elizabeth Long Lingo .................................... 190
         iv. Vision of JoEl Logiudice ............................... 190
         v. Vision of Mel Ziegler ...................................... 191
      b. Labeling Contests .............................................. 192
   2. The Local Categorical Schema for the Term
      “Creative Campus” at Vanderbilt University .......... 195
      a. Curricular Development ..................................... 196
      b. Campus-Community Connection Through
         Entrepreneurial Service ....................................... 198
      c. Arts-Enabling Instead of Arts Presenting ............... 199
      d. Student Participation/Empowerment ...................... 201
      e. Tolerance of Failure ......................................... 201
      f. Inclusive Definition of Creativity ....................... 202
      g. The Creative Campus “Twist” ............................. 203
   3. Comparison to Other Schemas ................................. 203
      a. Comparison to the Prototypical Schema ................. 204
      b. Comparison to Other Local Schemas ...................... 204
B. The Sign Building: What Language is Doing
   1. Choosing the Signifier ......................................... 206
      a. Optimal Distinctiveness ..................................... 207
         i. Symbolic Isomorphism ..................................... 207
ii. Competitive Differentiation ..............................208
b. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice ..............209
c. The Effects of Politics and Strategy on
   Signifier Choice .................................................................210
   i. Agency .....................................................................211
   ii. Competitive Dynamics ..........................................213
   iii. Strategic Persistence ............................................213

2. Consequences of Label Choice .............................215
a. Enhancing Understandability ...............................215
   i. Distillation of Complexities .................................215
   ii. Lexicality Effect .......................................................215
b. Building Consensus ...................................................216
   i. Via Ambiguity .........................................................216
   ii. Via Expanding Mindshare ....................................217
c. Gaining Control .........................................................217
   i. Labels Become Self-Fulfilling Prophecies ....218
   ii. Labels Project a Desired Image ...........................218
   iii. Labels Help Garner Resources ............................219
   iv. Institutionalization Crystallizes Control by
       Entering Organizations into a Network ....220

1. Networks Provide a Place to Learn ..............220
2. Networks Provide a Place to
   Impose Content .............................................................221

IV. Conclusion .................................................................222

7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION ...................225
I. Findings ....................................................................226
   A. Policy Formulation: The Name Contextualizing ......228
   B. Policy Formulation: The Sign Justifying ...............231
   C. Policy Implementation: The Sign Defining ..............239
   D. Policy Implementation: The Sign Building ..............243
II. Implications for the Field .........................................252
III. Suggestions for Future Research .......................255
IV. Closing Moments .....................................................258

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Application
   Approval Letters ..........................................................260
Appendix B: Consent for Participation in Research ....264
References .................................................................269
List of Figures

Figure 1. Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview ........................................... 18
Figure 2. Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview ........................................... 74
Figure 3. Policy/Semiotics Framework Linear Overview ................................. 74
Figure 4. The Sign Contextualizing ................................................................. 75
Figure 5. The Sign Justifying ......................................................................... 76
Figure 6. The Sign Defining ........................................................................... 77
Figure 7. The Sign Building ........................................................................... 78
Figure 8. Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview ........................................... 226
Figure 9. Policy/Semiotics Framework Linear Overview ................................. 227
Figure 10. The Framework Applied: The Sign Contextualizing ....................... 228
Figure 11. The Framework Applied: The Sign Justifying, The Who................. 232
Figure 12. The Framework Applied: The Sign Justifying, The How............... 234
Figure 13. The Framework Applied: The Sign Defining .................................. 240
Figure 14. The Framework Applied: The Sign Building,
  Choosing a Signifier ..................................................................................... 243
Figure 15. The Framework Applied: The Sign Building, Consequences
  of Signifier Choice ...................................................................................... 248
Chapter One:

INTRODUCTION

I. Background Information

In March 2004, the evolving relationship between the arts and the university was formally explored by a noted group of scholars and arts practitioners in the 104th American Assembly at Columbia University entitled “The Creative Campus: The Training, Sustaining, and Presenting of the Performing Arts in American Higher Education.” The American Assembly saw the university and the arts serving parallel roles, such as: “to make discoveries that change lives and to prepare better citizens,” “[to] nurture a vital and thriving modern culture,” and “to open experience-oriented imaginative space” (American Assembly, 2004, p. 4). This thesis is an exploration of the Creative Campus phenomenon as a possible evolution of the arts in the university.

Both the arts and the university are time-honored institutions that have been part of our daily life for centuries. However, the arts in the university do not have such an impressive genealogy. While charismatic scholars and personages have attempted to incorporate the arts into the university for ages, real progress began to be made only in the mid-20th century as higher education became more prevalent in
society. Scholars mark World War II as a significant tipping point in solidifying the arts’ place on the modern campus (Morrison, 1973). The steady stream of returning veterans and subsequent flow of baby boomers nourished and sustained the university system at higher capacities than had ever before occurred. The university was called to take on new roles in the arts milieu from that of a provider of material security to that of an arts patron. The changes that have occurred in the innovation/creative economy (Pink 2005, Florida 2003) and those that have occurred in society at large, such as an increased interest in civic engagement (Putnam, 1995), have created new demands of university graduates in terms of skill sets and ways of thinking. These new demands have, in turn, pressured universities to take on more and more roles with regards to the arts, such as that of trainer and creativity broker.

Since the pivotal 2004 Assembly, scholars have adopted the language of the “Creative Campus” as a discrete new university phenomenon and theorized about its elements, its roles in bridging university and community life, as well as, its potential capacities to prepare students for the new challenges created by social, economic and technological changes of the modern era. The Creative Campus movement generated by the initial American Assembly has spawned at least two subsequent conferences dedicated to the idea, various scholarly articles, public speeches, its own granting program through the Doris Duke Foundation, as well as, a number of operationalized Creative Campus programs at various institutions of higher education including: Syracuse, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill,
the University of Kansas, the University of Florida, the Ohio State University, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Alabama, among others. This thesis will explore the important crossing from theory to practice embodied in these operationalized Creative Campus programs. To learn more about this, my research will compare and contrast the formulation and implementation of the Creative Campus programs at two different institutions—The University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University—paying special attention to how the founders at each locale are utilizing the name label “Creative Campus.”

II. Brief Overview of the Cases

The University of Alabama is the flagship university of the state of Alabama located in Tuscaloosa. The school is a land-grant institution founded in 1831 that serves approximately 25,000 students. Seventy-three percent of those students come from within the state of Alabama. The largest percentage of the student body at Alabama (30%) majors in arts and sciences. (http://quickfacts.ua.edu/demographics.html last captured on June 15, 2011). Alabama’s Creative Campus Initiative began as a student project in the spring of 2005. From this grassroots beginning, the Creative Campus initiative has since become institutionalized with a permanent leader, a building, and a full staff of student interns. The hallmark of Alabama’s Creative Campus initiative is its student internship program, which seeks to provide student interns with an “experience that enhances curriculum, leadership, and creative thinking, allowing students to become the best possible individuals” (http://www.uacreativecampus.org/aboutus)
When this research was conducted in 2009, the Creative Campus initiative was in its fourth-year of existence.

Vanderbilt University is a private institution founded in 1873 and located in Nashville, TN. In its earliest days, Vanderbilt was run “under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal church” (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/history.html last captured on June 15, 2011). It serves a student body of approximately 11,800.

Vanderbilt University has played a significant leadership role in the research being done on the Creative Campus concept. The Creative Campus program at Vanderbilt was created in April 2008 through a major donation and is housed within Vanderbilt’s Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy. The focus of Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus project is “the implementation of the first national research program on creativity, the arts and higher education” (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcreativecampus/about.html last captured on June 15, 2011). When this research was conducted, the Creative Campus initiative was in its first year of existence, largely a planning and design year.

These two cases will bring out important nuances in the transition from the scholarly dialogue about the Creative Campus to the practical application of that theory in real-world contexts on actual campuses. The cases include important contrasts, such as the differences between a public university context and a private university context; a grassroots approach and a top-down, institutional approach; an events-presenting approach and a curricular-research approach; as well as some other latent differences, which will emerge in the data.
III. Research Significance, Purpose and Objectives

This research will begin to fill a gap in the literature that exists on the transition from the scholarly and theoretical discussions of the Creative Campus phenomenon to the practical application of this theory in actual programs and initiatives. No study has, as of yet, attempted to analyze the development and content of Creative Campus programs in practice. This study is also significant because it develops a critical linguistic framework that will provide theorists and practitioners a way to think and talk about how the linguistic sign, “Creative Campus” is functioning in practice to take on new meanings.

The purpose of this research is to ascertain why Creative Campus practitioners have chosen to utilize the “Creative Campus” name brand to label their initiatives and determine how this identity has functioned in the implementation of those initiatives dubbed “Creative Campus” on university campuses. I will attempt to ascertain these stories through an extensive literature review, narrative interviews with the practitioners who founded the Creative Campus initiatives and made use of that language, analysis of the documents produced by these initiatives, and autoethnographic reflections of my experience as a practitioner. These origin stories will provide answers to the four driving inquiries of this study— Why are these initiatives taking root now and in these university spaces? (Contextualizing); What is the purpose of spending time and resources on these initiatives? Why should we do it at all? (Justification); What comprises a Creative Campus Initiative?
(Defining); and How do practitioners translate the movement’s theory into practice to establish a concrete initiative? (Building).

IV. Interview Guide

The following is the interview guide that was used in the semi-structured qualitative interviews of Creative Campus practitioners at each site:

Participant Information
1. What is your name, title, and affiliation with the Creative Campus Initiative?

Program Information-Defining Inquiry
2. Describe your Creative Campus project.
   a. Sample Prompts:
      i. What is the mission statement?
      ii. What part of the university bureaucracy is your project housed in?
      iii. Where does your funding come from?
      iv. Who works there, and what do they do?
      v. Who does this work benefit? Who are your primary constituents?
      vi. What are the signature projects or products that the initiative produces?
      vii. What is the ideal Creative Campus initiative to you? What would you change about your program if there were no financial or institutional barriers?

3. Determining Fit with the Emergent Elements.
   a. Sample Prompts
      i. If CC initiatives are to be the engines or drivers in achieving the state of a creative campus, then how do these entities promote or encourage risk taking and tolerate failure within their own projects? How do they advocate for those things across the larger campus culture?
      ii. How do CC initiatives avoid promoting only a “safe” version of creativity?
      iii. What is your program’s definition of creativity?
      iv. What was the role of students during the start-up phase of your program?

Origin Story Information—Building Inquiry
4. How did your Creative Campus Initiative get off the ground? What is your origin story?
5. What were the “triggers” for starting this project?
6. Why is the idea of Creative Campus so appealing? Why do you think your campus has embraced it?
7. You are using a program name that is shared by initiatives at several other campuses across the nation. How is your program unique? How is it similar?
8. Who were your authorizers? Who did you have to sell the idea to? How did you have to frame the idea to sell it to them?
   a. Did using the CC brand help you to project a sense of incremental instead of wholesale change?
9. Why did you choose to name your program “Creative Campus”?
   a. How did this signifier function in the implementation stage of your project—when you were moving things off the drawing board and into practice?
   b. In setting up your program under the name “Creative Campus,” what sorts of people did that name connect you with?
10. What have been some of your big obstacles in establishing and running the CC? How have you navigated them?
11. Who comprised your leadership team to get the project started? How did the team members function together? What were their respective roles?
12. In what ways have you connected your efforts to the university’s mission?
13. How have you institutionalized your initiative?

Rationale Information—Justification Inquiry

14. What does running a CC initiative do for your campus?
15. What is the public purpose of your Creative Campus initiative? Why do it at all?
16. Did using the CC moniker help you situate your advocacy for the project in certain discourses? Which ones?

Contextual Information—Contextualizing Inquiry

17. Describe the role of the arts in your Creative Campus program.
   a. How is your program affecting the arts on campus?
18. What do you see as this university’s responsibility to its students?
   a. How does your CC project fit with that?
19. What are the university's expectations of your initiative?
20. What do you see as this university's responsibility/role to the arts?
   a. How does your CC project fit with that?
21. When you use the words “Creative Campus” on your literature, on your website, as your signifier, what do you hope that conveys to people?
   a. What should people know when they see that title?
b. What should they think about?
c. What should they ask about?

22. As a practitioner, why did the present moment present itself as the time to go forward with this project/initiative?

V. Scope and Limitations

I will explore the topic of the Creative Campus through investigation of organizational iterations of that concept making use of that exact signifier. My governing assumption is that a “creative campus” expressed with lowercase c’s represents an idealized state for colleges and universities to strive for, a state of higher education which provides a climate conducive to the creative process. Furthermore, it is my assumption that “Creative Campus” expressed as a proper name with uppercase C’s are organizational initiatives instituted by colleges and universities to be the mechanisms or the engines which serve as drivers for reaching such a creative milieu. It is this uppercase, organizational brand that is the main subject of this study. The end-product of an ultimate creative campus milieu is bracketed off for future researchers to take up if this research is extended into the policy evaluation phase. Instead, this thesis project focuses on the use of the name label during policy formulation and policy implementation in each case.

While many campuses have programs that are similar to Creative Campus-style projects, this study concerns itself only with those programs that have chosen to be identified by that name label. Examples of such other programs may include Ball State University’s Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry or Stanford’s the “D” School. While these programs are interesting case studies for examining how the importance of creativity is coming to be embraced by universities and operationally
expressed, they do not shed light on how these practical iterations are furthering the Creative Campus movement as a cohesive and discrete entity.

It is important to study these Creative Campus organizational iterations because organizations can be used as “indicators of the policy cycle” (Peters & Hogwood, 1985, p. 241). These organizations make better subjects for study because “organizations have the advantage of being ‘real’; that is, they have laws which establish them, they employ real people, they have budgets, etc.” (Ibid, p. 241). Peters and Hogwood state that “organizational change, because of its threshold nature and because it requires explicit administrative action, is more useful as an indicator of political attention than other indicators such as budgets and personnel” (Ibid, p. 242). Because the “Creative Campus” concept is so new, arising out of the American Assembly only in 2004, the study of these Creative Campus organizations can be relevant to discovering the amount of attention policy makers in their local contexts are giving to the idea.

This thesis employs narrative interviews to research the formulation and implementation stories of Creative Campus organizations at the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University. However, other cases would also provide interesting research fodder for this important investigation of theory-to-practice models. A case study of the Creative Campus project at Syracuse University could shed light on the importance of an executive champion such as Syracuse’s Chancellor Nancy Cantor who has spearheaded the development of the Creative Campus concept at that university. A case study of the Creative Campus project at
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill would be revelatory of the role that foundations such as the Doris Duke Foundation play in operationalizing the Creative Campus concept. UNC Chapel Hill was one of eight schools chosen as a recipient of the foundation’s Creative Campus Innovations Grant program. A case study of the University of Florida could reveal the role strategic planning has in operationalizing the concept.

All of these potential sources for data are valid and should not be ignored by the research community. However, due to time and resource limitations, not all of these cases could feasibly be explored in this study. Instead, this research project will focus on one of the earliest cases—the University of Alabama—which highlights a bottom-up advocacy approach in a public institutional context with a special focus on student leadership and empowerment. This case will be compared and contrasted to Vanderbilt University, which highlights a top-down approach in a private institutional context with a specialty in research.

Limiting the subject of study to the foundational period of these Creative Campus initiatives will allow a more precise focus on the important transition from theory to practice and on the function that the “Creative Campus” brand has had on that implementation. Limiting the number of cases studied will also allow a greater depth of coverage to provide more fodder for comparison and contrast. The limitations imposed on this study will yield more usable results for future researchers who may wish to explore the operations of the “Creative Campus” signifier at other sites or at other stages of the policy process such as evaluation.
VI. Researcher Interest

Usually research is conceived of as an arms’ length endeavor. It evokes the austerity of the laboratory where scientist is clearly distinguished from subject. However, in actual practice researchers are drawn to study a phenomenon usually out of a deeply personal interest, which has the potential to influence their perspective. I am no different. My interests in studying the Creative Campus phenomenon are not random. Instead, they are the result of a deeply personal commitment I have to the theory and to the practice, which was brought about by my involvement as a Creative Campus practitioner and co-founder at the University of Alabama (Alabama).

When I was a sophomore at Alabama during the spring of 2005, I participated in an honors class entitled “Art and the Public Purpose.” The final for this class challenged my peers and I to collaboratively write an arts policy for the university. We presented our final product, which we called “The Creative Campus” to a host of university administrators. The Provost was engaged by the presentation and created two student jobs in response. I was one of the two members of my class who were hired to bring our policy suggestions to fruition. During the first year, I conceptualized and orchestrated six pilot projects, which ranged from an arts critiquing and awards program to a cultural e-zine (on-line magazine). These pilots were so successful and warmly received that the university administration decided to expand and institutionalize the Creative Campus Initiative. By the time I graduated in the spring of 2007, the Creative Campus Initiative employed three
permanent staff including a director and approximately ten student interns, was housed in an historic campus building, and collaborated on projects with entities across the university including the business school, engineering department, and arts disciplines, among others.

My role as one of the co-founders required me to engage in networking—creating contacts and relationships from which the initiative could develop projects and partners, win the support of authorizers, and advocate for resources and recognition. It required me to engage in administrative tasks like intern management and the creation of team retreats as the initiative entered the University bureaucracy. It required me to collaborate with videographers and web designers to develop the public image of the initiative. These enumerated tasks represent a sample of the work in which my role as a Creative Campus founder/practitioner led me to engage. It was an intensely hands-on experience that impacted all aspects of my life. I answered phone calls about Creative Campus events at 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. I thought about the wording of the Creative Campus mission statement in the shower. My work with the Creative Campus Initiative is what distinguished me in various awards competition. To me, Creative Campus was more than a job or a challenge; it became something akin to a legacy that I could leave behind once I left the University of Alabama.

All that is to say, I am not a disinterested researcher. As a former practitioner, I bring my memories and prejudices and preconceptions of how the Creative Campus concept can be operationalized. These ideas are bound to differ
from the experience of founders at other institutions like Vanderbilt. They will even differ from my fellow co-founders at the University of Alabama. Through autoethnography and transparent representation, I will attempt to make clear my own preconceptions and opinions and plainly show how my input diverges or converges, as the case may be, with the information provided by other participants in the study. I will insulate the study from any invalidating bias through triangulating data sources and research methods.

VII. Chapter Overview

Chapter One introduces the Creative Campus as a unique concept and movement that had its start with the American Assembly. It also presents my unique history as a Creative Campus practitioner and my interests in studying this subject and developing scholarship on the topic. This chapter briefly introduces the two cases that will comprise the largest portion of this research, the Creative Campus initiatives at the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University. Furthermore, it limits the scope of the research to the foundation of these initiatives and to the people who brought theory into practice. This first chapter also highlights the significance of this research as a first step into studying the practical application of a scholarly dialogue and as a first step toward filling the present gap that exists with respect to these operationalized initiatives. Finally, it presents my research objective—to ascertain how the name label and signifier “Creative Campus” is functioning in practice to affect implementation of Creative Campus programs. These two objectives will be fulfilled by attending to four driving inquiries:
Definition—*What is a Creative Campus?* Building—*How do we do it?* Justification—*Why should we do it?* and Contextualizing—*Why now?*

Chapter Two, Literature Review, Part One, presents an extensive literature review. This literature review is tailored to the four driving inquiries. It attends to the context question by situating the Creative Campus phenomenon in a historical context, which includes an understanding of the evolving town-gown (campus-community) interface, an exploration of the changing roles of higher education in the arts milieu, an investigation of the historical embedding of the arts on campus and the rise of the Creative Campus as a possible next-step of the arts into academe.

The literature review attends to the justification inquiry by offering rationales for situating such efforts in the university context. It also presents some of the emergent dialogues within which theorists have placed the Creative Campus movement to justify political attention. Such dialogues include justifying the Creative Campus as preparation for the creative economy, as a path to civic engagement, and as a legitimization of the arts. The literature review attends to the definition inquiry by identifying the emerging elements that seem to make up the linguistic content of the “Creative Campus” signifier according to the leading theorists on the subject. Such elements include: an encouragement of risk taking and a tolerance for failure, a campus-community connection, an inclusive definition of creativity, a focus on intra-campus collaborations, student participation and empowerment, and the creation of a climate conducive to creativity. Finally, the literature review attends to the building inquiry by identifying some potential issues
practitioners may face during the agenda setting phase, as well as, the beginning of the implementation phase.

Chapter Three, Literature Review, Part Two, sets up the critical linguistic framework that is applied in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. It provides a detailed predictive model based on semiotics, labeling theory, social identification theory, and public policy theories. This model is also presented in a visual way by a series of logic models at the end of the Chapter.

Chapter Four, Methodology, outlines the research strategies used to accomplish this thesis project. It articulates a guiding question as well as a research methodology based heavily upon theorists in the field of qualitative research. It outlines a qualitative, comparative case study methodology that seeks to generate grounded theory. It articulates method of data collection and analysis including qualitative interviews, document analysis and autoethnography. It also outlines how this project dealt with researcher subjectivity and triangulated data to increase validity. Finally, the chapter provides proof of approval of this human subjects research by Ohio State’s Institutional Review Board process.

Chapter Five, The Creative Campus at the University of Alabama, presents the data collected from the founders at this site. It provides this data in a narrative format tagged to the critical framework outlined earlier.

Chapter Six, The Creative Campus at Vanderbilt University, presents the data collected from the founders at this site. It provides this data in a narrative format tagged to the critical framework outlined earlier.
Chapter Seven, Comparative Analysis and Conclusion, presents a comparative analysis of the two cases in relation to the framework outlined earlier. It presents findings and draws conclusions based on the empirical evidence of emergent trends and patterns in the data in order to generate grounded, explanatory theory. It concludes with potential implications these findings might have on various fields and suggestions for extensions of this research in the future.
Chapter Two:

LITERATURE REVIEW: Part One,

The Creative Campus Movement in the Arts Ecology of Universities & the Four Driving Inquiries

I. Introduction

The Creative Campus movement is not a wholesale departure from the trends that have driven the affiliation between the arts and higher education. Instead, it could represent the next evolution in a relationship that, while established and permanent, has been tenuous. This two-part literature review will first attempt to articulate the historical and conceptual situation of the Creative Campus movement by exploring the literature behind four driving inquiries—*Why now?* (Context) *Why should we?* (Justification) *What is it?* (Definition) and *How do we do it?* (Building). This historical and conceptual situation, in turn, will set the scene for a linguistic analysis of the policy process that this study undertakes.

The four inquiries can be roughly subdivided under two phases of the policy process: policy formulation (*Why now? Why should we?*) and policy implementation (*What is it? How do we do it?*). They can also be subdivided under the two main aspects of the semiotic process of naming: what is the naming language doing?
(Justifying—*Why should we?*) (Building—*How do we?) and what is the naming language *saying?* (Contextualizing—*Why now?) (Defining—*What is it*?), such that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMIOTICS</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the name SAYING?</strong></td>
<td>Contextualizing Inquiry: <em>Why now?</em> (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the name DOING?</strong></td>
<td>Justifying Inquiry: <em>Why should we?</em> (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview

The Creative Campus movement has evolved at the intersection of both a historical and conceptual context concerning the role of universities in their communities and the role of the arts in higher education. The historical and conceptual trends have merged to create a policy window of opportunity for the Creative Campus movement to flourish. (*Contextualization—Why now?*). Theorists and practitioners have attempted to capitalize on this opportunity by implementing operational programs under the “Creative Campus” signifier. To do so, these “symbol manipulators” have had to frame the policy issue, justifying the devotion of resources to it, by placing it in several resonant discourses. (*Justification—Why Should We?*). During implementation, advocates have had to climb the hurdle of defining what a Creative Campus is or should be—often with competing definitions that lead to labeling contests. Both the literature and the competing practices have
provided several emergent elements that may make up the categorical content—the signified meanings—behind the signifier “Creative Campus.” (*Definition—What is it?*). This contextualizing, justifying, and defining allow advocates to build their own versions of the Creative Campus by employing that label to enhance understandability, build consensus and affect control. (*Building—How do we do it?*).

The first part of this literature review will take each of these inquiries by turn: contextualizing, justifying, defining, and building the Creative Campus.

**II. Contextualizing the Creative Campus Movement—Why Now?**

Why ideas become salient at one time or another is always a compilation of multiple contexts, both historical and conceptual. The historical evolution of the arts’ presence on the college campus has set the stage, priming university players, in a way, to the salience of a Creative Campus. The Creative Campus brand may be occupying the next space on the timeline of the arts on campus. The new roles required of the modern university mean developing new competencies, to function in new ways and with different purposes. Thus the important contexts to explore are (A) the historic context of the arts on campus, (B) the history of the brand, and (C) the evolution of the roles of universities in creative ecosystems. This study will explore the use of the name “Creative Campus” to determine if practitioners are using this language to say something about where they see the university fitting in these historic and conceptual contexts.
A. The Historical Movement of the Arts onto Campus

“It is curious that the arts in American higher education, after some 300 years of waiting in the wings to get into the act—caroling outside the president’s house waiting to be invited in for punch and cookies—are only now seriously recognized as a key, as a prime mover, in education and society” (Morrison, 1973, p. 6).

The Creative Campus movement comes on the end of a long movement of the arts onto the American college campus. As scholar Douglas Dempster has maintained, “there was no singular, watershed event in educational history when the arts entered American higher education” (Dempster, 2004). Rather, the arts have fought their way onto the campuses of American colleges and universities by incremental achievements over time. John Urice notes that:

“with the expansion of universal higher education in the mid-twentieth century, students from all strata of society were exposed to the arts, and, as members of society, they have influenced our national culture. Although formal postsecondary education in the fine arts dates back to the nineteenth century, it was in the 1920s that the ‘arts attained a solid place in university curricula.’ By 1930, virtually every university offered such courses” (Urice 2000, p. 160).

While the introduction of arts coursework may have dated to the 1930s, a more solid presence on campus would be achieved over time. A significant turning point occurred after World War II when the arts entered an expansionist era wherein arts coursework, arts majors, and arts degrees skyrocketed (Morrison, 1973).

Mass exposure to the arts thus coincided with widespread higher education. After this, the next-step of the arts entrance onto campus was via artist-in-residence programs. Ackerman, et. al., (1970) describe these first residence programs as uneasy affiliations while noting the solid entrenchment of the arts on campus today, saying, “rare are the institutions of higher learning . . . which do not consider a
steady stream of local or visiting arts activities . . . as normal and necessary components of university life. By all visible tokens, the arts have come to the campus to stay” (p. 40).

Along with artist-in-residence programs, a second strategy for moving the arts onto campus was by calling attention to the artistic process as a process. Author Thea Petchler maintains, “Seen as a process, artists’ creativity could be relevant. This move was strategic: artistic experimentation, like technical invention, would deserve protected space in colleges and universities” (Petchler, 2004, p. 3).

Both artist-in-residence programs and re-conceptualizing art professors’ work were strategic methods employed to affect the incremental changes that Jack Morrison tracks in his study on the evolution of the arts in the university setting. Morrison asserts that as the arts came to campus from a purely studio mentality and merged with the liberal arts methods of the college campus, the mixture of studio and general studies became a forceful combination. He notes that “to dwell on this transition from purely studio-centered instruction [in visual art] to a mixture of studio and general studies is only a way of emphasizing how ... potent the combination of studio and classroom was” (Morrison, 1973, p. 28). Steven Tepper (2006a) echoed the need for this meshing of the arts with other parts of the university experience to continue, arguing, “stronger bridges need to be built between campus presenters, faculty and student affairs so that the performing arts are transformed from grace notes to an integral part of the core melody of campus life” (p. 2).
This enmeshment really hit its stride after World War II, which served as a significant turning point for the maturing of the arts into the university. Morrison writes of this “expansionist era”:

“Between the two world wars, the arts became clearly established in the curriculum, but they were a relatively weak force in campus affairs. They were interesting, occasionally diverting or entertaining, nice appurtenances which could be embarrassing, but which were, in any case, not substantial and rarely serious. After World War II, however, there was a sharp acceleration in growth which became substantial. . . Some administrators feel that the rate of growth of the last 15 years reflects not a fad or a phase of interest that will level off but a trend that will continue and increase” (Morrison, 1973, pp. 160-61).

This increasing trend is supported by statistical data. In his work, Morrison analyzed several important statistical studies on the subject of arts in higher education. The general conclusion that he draws is that in each and every study “growth is generally indicated in all these data” (Morrison, 1985, p. 39). He particularly notes the rise in the number of arts degrees being conferred.

The growth statistics noted by Morrison confirm the “arts boom” phenomenon noticed by Douglas Dempster (2004). However, the statistics are just a reflection of how deeply embedded the arts are becoming in institutions of higher education. Ackerman, et. al., (1970) notes, “beyond the statistical increase in activity is the far more fundamental fact it reflects: The arts have become necessary” (p. 46).

Along with these cultural changes, the arts boom was also fueled by political happenings such as the Cold War and the foundation of the National Endowment for the Arts. In The Maturing of the Arts on Campus, Morrison draws attention to these political phenomena. He writes:
“In 1957, Sputnik was launched and the United States went into competition with Russia on all fronts. Suddenly, our universities were charged with advancing science and technology to an almost unreasonable degree. At approximately that same period, the NEA was established and we began building cultural centers and, after years of appeal, brought these centers into the universities. It was, in a way, demonstrating that we, too, have a culture, while we were demonstrating our concern with high technology” (Morrison, 1985, p. 71).

The participants at the Creative Campus conference at Vanderbilt University in the Fall of 2006 saw this new language operating as the newest phase of the arts’ expansionist era on campus. They contended that the meeting at Vanderbilt on November 9-11, 2006 was aimed at “addressing the new movement of the arts and the academy toward each other” (Vanderbilt, 2006, pp. 2-3). In actuality, as Morrison’s history and others’ show, this “movement of the arts and the academy toward each other” is not “new.” The conference report tags it this way because the Creative Campus dialogue is the newest iteration of this movement.

Morrison warns, “the arts on campus will continue to bloom or fade not depending on the economic weather but on the extent to which leaders in the arts and their colleagues achieve and demonstrate their maturity” (Morrison, 1985, p. 1). The Creative Campus movement has arisen at this most recent juncture as the arts on campus are attempting to show this maturity. This study will investigate how practitioners have attempted to utilize the Creative Campus brand, possibly, to showcase the maturity of the arts on their individual campuses.
B. The Historical Next-Step of the Arts into Academe?—The Creative Campus Brand

As Steven Tepper (2006b) notes, “the creative campus is not just a fashionable alliteration” (p. 7). Instead, he sees the Creative Campus movement as creating a “sustained conversation” about the evolution of the arts in higher education (Tepper, 2006a, p. 1). In acknowledgement of the extensive efforts of advocates for decades to bring the arts to campus he writes, “in spite of the deep connection between these two worlds and the many points of contact, there had never been a sustained conversation about the role of the arts in university and college life” (Ibid). His article marks the American Assembly in March 2004, entitled “The Creative Campus: The Training, Sustaining and Presenting of the Performing Arts in American Higher Education,” as the starting point of this “sustained conversation” (Ibid).

The 2004 American Assembly birthed the Creative Campus movement. Following on two other American Assemblies addressing the arts in the nonprofit sector, this assembly started with the idea that “the arts are not capitalizing on or forming key, strategic alliances with complementary institutions, such as colleges and universities” (American Assembly, 2004). Some of the key players involved in putting on this assembly were:

Alberta Arthurs, former Director of Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation and Principal, Arthurs.US, and Sandra Gibson, President, Association of Performing Arts Presenters. The chairs [were] Lee C. Bollinger, President, Columbia University and Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who have been at the forefront in advancing the role of colleges and universities in creating, sustaining and encouraging the performing arts and artists
The Assembly not only laid out the theoretical foundations of the Creative Campus movement through its background readings and report, it also set up an informal peer network of people with whom the “Creative Campus” terminology was salient as well as creating “spin-off” conferences and funding sources.

One such spin-off was a second Creative Campus conference hosted at Vanderbilt University in the Fall of 2006 entitled “The Creative Campus: Higher Education and the Arts.” The conference report noted that “the situation does seem to be changing. Within the last half dozen years, higher education leaders and cultural professionals have begun to converse, as they did at the American Assembly” (Vanderbilt, 2006). The Vanderbilt conference hoped to “develop a set of questions and methodologies that might serve as the basis of an expanded national research effort” (Vanderbilt, 2006). The conference divided participants into five working groups around the topics: “Assessing the Creative Campus”; “Artistic Expression, Social Capital and Cosmopolitanism”; “The Creative Campus Dividend: The Economic Consequences of Sustaining, Training and Presenting the Arts at Universities and Colleges”; “Cultural Participation, Learning, and Campus Engagement”; and “Mapping the Creative Campus: Understanding Connections and Networks Inside and Outside the Academy” (Vanderbilt, 2006).

A second conference called the Creative Campus Caucus was co-hosted by the Mellon Foundation in the Spring of 2008 in New York. This conference also
consisted of five sessions ranging from “Beyond the Campus: Connections, Community, and Collaborations” and “Student Learning, Engagement and Development” to “Strategic Initiatives and New Institutional Structures.”

While such spin-off conferences have furthered the theoretical development of the movement, other spin-off efforts by non-profits such as the Association of Performing Arts Presenters have furthered the practical development of Creative Campus efforts. Author of “The Creative Campus: Sharing the Scene” Robert J. Smith notes:

[A] principal steward of the Creative Campus initiative, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), has commenced an ‘Act Two’—taking things a step further—by building an unprecedented network of arts managers and campus officials. Sandra Gibson, executive director and CEO of APAP, reports other positive developments, including several new consortia, a multiyear performing arts research initiative incorporating new domains, documentation of campus-based arts activities, and a new website. The Creative Campus Innovations Grant Project, requiring connections between curricula and new works by artists, has completed its first cycle of awards, and grant recipients will gather to share their projects (Smith, 2007, p. 23).

With its own grant program and a substantial non-profit backer, the Creative Campus movement has been able to fund pilot projects on campuses across the country from Kansas University to UNC Chapel Hill, from Dartmouth to Stanford. The purpose of the grant program is to “strengthen the growing interest in the academy and the arts with a set of innovative performing arts projects on American campuses that will exhibit the foundational importance of the arts to the educational, service and scholarly missions of the academy”

Given both the conceptual and practical extensions of the generative American Assembly, the Creative Campus movement has been launched. As Tepper announced in his follow-up article, “Riding the Train,” “the ‘creativity’ train has left the station. Universities and colleges are taking the idea of the creative campus seriously and beginning to realign university priorities to take better advantage of the powerful role of the arts” (Tepper, 2006a, p. 1). He explains the unique needs of the arts, saying, “the arts—for the most part—need attention, connection and recognition more than they need money” (Ibid, p. 4). This project will investigate how appropriating the “Creative Campus” signifier has helped or hindered practitioners in getting such needed attention, connection and recognition.

The Creative Campus dialogue is very new, dating its birth from the American Assembly in 2004. However, it has taken root quickly with scholars and practitioners. Tepper asks, “Why is the idea of the creative campus so appealing? Why have so many embraced the idea?” (Ibid, p. 3). These questions reveal the gap in the current research. While scholars have written about the theoretical foundations of what a Creative Campus could, or should, be and the historical roots of the arts in the context of higher education, no one has studied the practical application of Creative Campus initiatives that have spun-off of this scholarly dialogue and put that name into practice. This research project attempts to step into that void.
C. The Many Roles of Higher Education in the Arts Milieu

The arts have fought a battle to integrate into the life of university campuses because universities serve many different roles in the arts ecology. In its earlier iterations, the university role in relation to the arts was as a material support, then as a primary patron, which scholars have likened unto a “Modern Medici” (Ibid, p. 4). The roles a university now plays in the arts ecology are many, including: (1) patron of artists and artworks, (2) provider of research and development in the arts, (3) producer of creative capital, and (4) preventer of brain drain.

1. The University as an Arts Patron

The university is capable of being the quintessential arts patron because it can provide basic support, training, and benefaction. In *The Arts on Campus: The Necessity for Change*, Ackerman identified several things that have traditionally drawn artists to academia. Among the more important were, “the lure of economic security” and “the promise of suorceas ... from those anxieties over mere physical survival” (Ackerman, et. al., 1970, p. 43). In effect, universities were able to satisfy the foundational levels of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs so that artists were freer to pursue their artistry and self-actualization (http://www.abraham-maslow.com/m_motivation/Hierarchy_of_Needs.asp captured January 28, 2009).

A second basic function that universities fulfill as an arts patron is that of trainer. Douglas Dempster notes, that “American universities train [the] professional and amateur artists, in large numbers, who have to a large extent fueled the ‘arts boom’ evident in communities everywhere” (Dempster, 2004).
Increasingly, universities have expanded from just training art-makers to training other arts professionals as well. As John K. Urice (2000) contends, “American universities both employ and train artists and, increasingly, arts administrators” (p. 160).

Apart from this educational role, perhaps universities’ biggest function as an arts patron is its simple benefaction. Author Douglas Dempster proposes that “the great, unheralded art patron of the 20th century is the American university” (Dempster, 2004). Orchard connects the importance of the patronage role to changes in the National Endowment for the Art’s policy toward giving to individual artists. He notes, “individual artists have been disenfranchised by a most important funding source, the National Endowment for the Arts” (Orchard, 2000, p. 86). While universities have supported individual artists such as composers, writers, and choreographers for many decades, with the loss of this important source of federal funding, university patronage has become even more crucial and significant to individual artists. Creative Campus theorist Steven Tepper (2006a) writes that “American universities and colleges, taken together, are likely the biggest single arts patrons in America. . . . As such, university leaders need to recognize their defining role in the arts ecology and take responsibility for that role more deliberately and assertively” (p. 2).

2. The University as a Provider of Research and Development

While the patronage role is crucial to the arts, the university has been called on to play more proactive roles in the arts ecology than simply the provision of
security and space. The university also serves as a sort of research and development laboratory. As Richard Florida (2006) notes in “The University and the Creative Economy,” “there has been a movement in the U.S. and around the world to make universities ‘engines of innovation’” (p. 1). Dempster contends that the “university may increasingly serve the same basic research role in the arts that it has traditionally played in the natural sciences” (Dempster, 2004).

3. The University as Producer of Creative Capital

A newer, proactive role for universities is as a producer of creative capital. In The Search for Relevance, the authors focus on the university’s role in shaping its graduates as a product. Axelrod, et. al. (1969) pose the question, “are these graduates or alumni independent, creative, and responsible individuals?” (p. 28). Instead of merely providing provisions and places for already-skilled artists to work, the university is called on to produce new creative capital. Florida (2006) contends, “Students represent the core production of universities.”

Universities are capable of producing such creative capital because new research shows that creative behavior can be learned. George Land distributed a creativity test used by NASA to select innovative engineers and scientists among 1,600 five-year-olds. He re-tested the same children at ten years of age, and again at fifteen years of age. The results were as follows:

Test results amongst 5 year olds: 98% creative

Test results amongst 10 year olds: 30% creative

Test results amongst 15 years olds: 12% creative
Same test given to 280,000 adults: 2% creative (Naiman, 2006).

“What we have concluded,” wrote Land, “is that non-creative behavior is learned” (Ibid). Instead of being a random gift visited upon select geniuses, creativity is now seen more as a process that students can learn and refine. This contextualizing of the creative process as a subject for learning has cultivated an intellectual climate that is open to movements such as the Creative Campus movement, which operate within the context of educational institutions.

Universities are capable of producing creative capital by teaching new skill sets to students. Daniel Pink (2006) points out the skill sets that will be demanded of new graduates in his book *A Whole New Mind*. Pink writes, “today, the defining skills of the previous era—the ‘left brain’ capabilities that powered the Information age—are necessary but no longer sufficient. And the capabilities we once disdained or thought frivolous . . . increasingly will determine who flourishes and who flounders” (p. 3). Other scholars have linked this shift towards an equal emphasis on “right brain” skills to what they dub “the creative imperative” (Johnson Carey, 2006). Shelley Johnson Carey notes that the creative imperative has manifested itself in both educational, as well as, economic discourses. She writes, “this call for recognizing and capitalizing on creative resources was issued not only at the Association of American Colleges and Universities meeting, but concurrently at the 36th World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland” which “convened under the title ‘The Creative Imperative’ (Johnson Carey, 2006).
4. The University as a Preventer of Brain Drain

In addition to producing it, the university has also been newly charged with the responsibility of keeping artistic and creative talent from leaving the communities in which the university is situated, that is, for preventing so-called brain drain. In their study, Florida, et. al. created the Brain Drain/Gain Index (BDGI) to measure the university’s effect in attracting and retaining talent. The authors note that “the correlation results for the BDGI reflect a ‘virtuous circle’ where higher levels of talent ... [are] leading over time to higher rates of economic growth, more job generation, and in turn to higher rates of talent production, retention, and attraction” (Florida, 2006). The retention of the creative capital, which universities are also taking a role in producing, is adding to the creative class milieu that is integral to the life of the arts in any community.

The university's role in the arts ecology has shown changes from one concerned with simply the passive provision of materials to a more active role in producing creative professionals in a creative milieu. The Creative Campus conference held at Vanderbilt in 2006 found the university’s roles to include that of patrons, suppliers of creative labor, and markets for artistic production. While still an important patron and source of security, universities are increasingly being asked to step into the role of creative capital producer, researcher, and preventer of brain drain away from creative centers, as well. These new roles in the arts world require new approaches on the part of universities. With these new responsibilities have come new opportunities. The Creative Campus movement is occurring when
the university institution is expected to take on an ever more expansive role in the arts milieu. This context will largely define what a Creative Campus initiative is expected to contribute to the university setting, and correlatively, what the signifier “Creative Campus” should be expected to signify.

The American Assembly’s report describes both higher education and the arts as two “endlessly re-invented sectors in American life” (American Assembly, 2004, p. 5). I believe the Creative Campus movement is one way that higher education and the arts are currently intersecting and reinventing themselves, and I feel it is crucial to explore this latest evolution. The Creative Campus movement comes at the juncture of a historical motion of the arts onto the American campus and a conceptual movement towards a broader understanding of the university’s role in the creative milieu. This context set the stage for the entrance and growth of the Creative Campus movement as a possible next iteration of the arts in academe. In order to know what the “Creative Campus” language is saying today, it is imperative that we understand this historical backdrop for the use of such terminology.

**III. Justifying the Creative Campus Movement—Why Should We Do It?**

Practitioners and scholars, in pushing for this new policy idea, have had to situate the Creative Campus movement in several different discourses as justifications for pursuing it, including: (A) the creative economy (workforce
preparation and competitive advantage), (B) civic engagement, and (C) legitimizing the arts.

A. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Preparation for the Creative Economy

Two general and related arguments are commonly made regarding the creative economy—that today’s university must prepare a creative workforce and that this preparation for creativity is what will keep America competitive. In The Engrossed Entrepreneurial Campus, Stevenson, et. al. (2008) insist that “we must excite today’s modern, multi-tasking students, or we will lose valuable, untapped intellectual capital” (p. 40). Without capturing the excitement of the modern student, there is no hope for teaching him or her the creative process, which ultimately damages the human capital of tomorrow’s workforce and, as such, America’s competitive edge on the world stage.

The Creative Campus dialogue has been situated within the creative economy discourse by viewing the Creative Campus phenomenon as one way of helping universities prepare tomorrow’s workforce. The creative economy demands creative professionals with creative skill sets. As Stevenson writes, “an engrossed undergraduate education should not only provide the fundamental foundation for maximizing higher order cognitive ability, but also provide the rudimentary substratum for optimizing wider order creative agility” (Stevenson, 2008, p. 11). Tepper links this preparation directly to the Creative Campus dialogue in his article “Riding the Train” where he contends, “university leaders are also beginning to recognize that fostering a lively creative campus is essential to attract and retain the
best students and to prepare those students to thrive in an economy increasingly reliant on intellectual property and creative content” (Tepper, 2006a, p. 4).

The second prong of the creative economy justification for a Creative Campus movement is that such movements will help America maintain a competitive edge. Deborah Wince-Smith (2006) takes up this argument stating, “our colleges and universities must rise to the task of fostering creativity .... Creativity may be about fun and games, but it is also America’s single greatest comparative advantage in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.”

In furthering the Creative Campus agenda, some theorists have used the new needs and demands of the creative economy as one justification for pursuing Creative Campus applications at institutions of higher education. By couching their arguments in terms of workforce preparation and competitive advantage, these theorists have been able to link the purposes and capacities of a Creative Campus to a real need that they can help to fill.

B. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Path to Civic Engagement

Another justification for pushing the Creative Campus forward is the linkages of creative capacities to civic engagement. In The Maturing of the Arts on Campus, Jack Morrison (1985) noted a sense that students and the arts were becoming more engaged with their communities. He writes, “this sense of becoming more engaged with one’s environment—artistic, social, economic and political—tracks along with an emerging view that ‘art for art’s sake’ is dead. Art for the community’s sake is coming alive” (p. 93). Not only is a Creative Campus initiative poised to help parlay
the arts into a more proactive societal role, such dedication to civic engagement is a characteristic of the students who are making up the emerging creative class. Florida (2002) notes, “people . . . want to be involved in their communities. Numerous Creative Class people I have spoken with . . . seek direct involvement on their own terms, in part because it is part of their creative identity” (p. 96).

By drawing from the inherent strengths of the modern student—the desire for community involvement and this desire to promote art for community’s sake—Creative Campus advocates may be able to situate their advocacy in terms of a philanthropic dialogue that is resonant with community leaders and today’s student alike.

C. Justifying the Creative Campus as a Legitimization of the Arts

A final justification for the Creative Campus is that it is a new form of legitimization for the arts, a way of shifting how arts practitioners portray themselves to the larger university community. The long and contested struggle of the arts onto campus engendered an embattled persona, which has been hard to shake. However, this defensive posture is now doing a disservice to the arts. Morrison (1985) recognized the need for change in his follow-up book, *The Maturing of the Arts on the American Campus*. He argues that “faculty and administrators in the arts on campus can no longer afford the comfort of a paranoidal view that they are still in a persona non grata status in academe” (Ibid, p. 90). Dempster (2004) agrees that this paranoidal view is predominant and damaging. He notes that “persistent Chicken Little arts advocacy reinforces a
popular impression of perpetual crisis in the arts” (p. 8V). Creative Campus initiatives may be attempts to repackage the persona of the arts on campus, to shift away from the “Chicken Little” approach to arts advocacy, and instead portray the arts community as an established “player” in the university’s milieu.

In implementing their initiatives, Creative Campus practitioners will deploy that sign in an effort to persuade that their efforts are justified and worth supporting. By exploring what name language is doing during policy formulation, we should be able to see the emergent justifications for the Creative Campus phenomenon in action. The literature seems to suggest that preparation for the creative economy, a path to civic engagement, and a legitimization of the arts are some of the justifications we may see at work in the deployment of the “Creative Campus” signifier.

IV. Defining the Creative Campus—What is It?

No scholars have yet written about the content of the sign “Creative Campus” in practice. However, scholars have written extensively, though not exhaustively, about what the characteristics, or signified content, that the ideal or prototypical “Creative Campus” would have. Used this way, these theorists have attempted to guess what signified content the category, “creative campus,” will have. As practitioners pick up the language “Creative Campus” as the name for their operations, they produce meaning for this linguistic construct. One objective of this
thesis will be to see how the constructed meanings differ from the content suggested by the literature.

The literature has revealed five different emergent elements of a “Creative Campus,” including: (A) a tolerance for failure/risk taking; (B) campus-community connections; (C) an inclusive notion of creativity (with an emphasis on arts presenting); (D) intra-campus collaborations; and (E) student participation and empowerment.

A. Encouragement of Risk Taking & The Tolerance for Failure

One of the key assertions of the American Assembly (2004) was that “the support of new work, of creativity, is a hallmark of higher education. . . . In the arts, as in many other disciplines, such work involves risk-taking and requires a tolerance for failure” (p. 10). A tolerance for failure is one of the core elements of a Creative Campus that has been supported by many theorists. Stevenson (2008) writes that the success of the modern university will depend “on our placing a high value on freedom and on our taking risks” (p. 50). The importance given to a culture that allows for risk-taking directly links to Steven Tepper’s structural “pre-conditions” for a Creative Campus (Tepper, 2004). Likewise, Tori Haring-Smith (2006) admonishes that “those wishing to create a supportive environment for creativity, then, would want to encourage risk taking, independence, and flexibility” (p. 24). This idea, first linked explicitly to the Creative Campus idea by the American Assembly and supported by Assembly participants like Haring-Smith, is re-echoed by author Steven J. Tepper in his article “The Creative Campus: Who’s No. 1?”

38
(Tepper, 2004). Tepper asserted “creativity requires an environment that tolerates and even encourages failure” (Ibid, p. 4). So, one of the emergent meanings behind the sign “Creative Campus” could be that it signifies structures that tolerate failures.

B. The Campus-Community Connection: Bridging Town and Gown

A second core element of a creative campus emergent in the literature is a bridging between town and gown, a connection between the community and the campus. The American Assembly (2004) articulated this position by saying that “the arts provide natural reach and outreach” (p. 13). Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Syracuse University, expresses this same notion as “scholarship in action” (Cantor, 2005). To achieve such “scholarship in action,” Cantor supports a “parallel investment strategy” wherein she envisions creating a “city as campus” and “campus as city” paradigm in Syracuse, NY (Ibid, p. 10). The centrality of this element to Creative Campus efforts is evidenced by its inclusion as a seminar topic in the latest Creative Campus caucus in 2008—“Session 2: Beyond the Campus: Connections, Community and Collaboration” (Caucus, 2008). The reach of programs in Creative Campus operations may be indicative as to whether or not this “bridging” function is one of the emergent meanings behind the “Creative Campus” signifier.

C. An Inclusive Definition of Creativity (with an Emphasis on Arts Presenting)

The seedling of a third core element of a creative campus—an inclusive notion of creativity—can also be found in the seminal American Assembly report as well. The Assembly (2004), in their final report on the Creative Campus discussions, contended, “training is insufficiently expansive in defining what a life in the arts
involves; most careers in the arts require flexibility and resourcefulness and entrepreneurial approaches that are not often cultivated within professional [arts] curricula” (pp. 15-16). The American Assembly report sets up a very narrow notion of the Creative Campus, delimiting it to the arts world, and only to a fraction of the arts world at that—the performing arts. However, other commentators feel that the “Creative Campus” terminology can be expanded and used for careers in all disciplines, across the university.

Tepper (2004) was the first author to offer up a precise definition of creativity in conjunction with creative campus as a concept:

Creativity reflects those activities that involve the application of intellectual energies to the production of new ways of solving problems (as in science and mathematics) or of expressing ideas (as in art). Creativity is not simply about self-expression. It is about producing something new (or combining old elements in new ways) to advance a particular field or add to the storehouse of knowledge” (p. 2).

By continually linking art, science, and technology in his definition of creativity and in his conception of “creative outbursts throughout history” (Ibid, p. 5), Tepper expanded on the American Assembly’s more narrow construction of the Creative Campus as being the province of performing arts presenters, solely, to a wider notion of what a Creative Campus might fully encompass.

Steven Tepper acknowledges this paradigm shift when he writes about the future of the Creative Campus idea saying, “the creative campus is as much about fostering connections as it is about excellence in the performing arts. If the creative campus is to become an agenda-setting new idea, it must embrace a broad view of creativity, with the arts squarely at the center” (Tepper, 2006a, p. 5).
Vanderbilt conference report (2006) regularly uses the phraseology “creativity and the arts,” denoting a bundling function (p. 5). This word usage highlights how inextricable the arts are from any understanding of creativity without delimiting the understanding of creativity to arts alone. It keeps the arts central to any conception of the Creative Campus while acknowledging that the responsibility of universities today is to creativity in a larger sense. So, it is likely that Creative Campus practitioners will attempt to enact programs that give the signifier “Creative Campus” a broader meaning of creativity than just arts alone while still using the “Creative Campus” to promote an arts agenda.

D. Intra-Campus Collaborations

Campus-wide integration of creativity requires the intra-campus collaborations that form a fourth hallmark of a creative campus. One way to accomplish the concept of “educating for creativity” (Jeffrey, 2005) is to move the arts from existing on the fringe of campus to being “deeply situated” (American Assembly, 2004, p. 24) at the center of campus. As Morrison (1973) phrased it, universities must move arts from the “periphery” to the “heart” of campus (p. 7). As the American Assembly (2004) acknowledged, “when presenting is incorporated into the whole life of colleges and universities, it is essential to the vitality of the creative campus” (p. 20). Tepper contextualizes this collaboration in terms of an element of the Creative Campus in his article “Taking the Measure of the Creative Campus,” where he writes, “creativity thrives on those campuses where there is abundant cross-cultural exchange and a great deal of ‘border’ activity between
disciplines, where collaborative work is commonplace, ... and the creative arts are pervasive and integrated into campus life” (Tepper, 2006b, p. 4). So, typical programs enacting the meaning behind the “Creative Campus” sign will likely focus on collaborating with unusual or diverse partners.

**E. Student Participation & Empowerment**

A fifth core element of a Creative Campus is student participation and empowerment. The American Assembly (2004) noted that one of the biggest problems for performing arts presenting in institutions of higher education is student participation. The participants stated “traditional students, even those in the arts, often represent a small presence at public performance events on campuses. The participants grappled with the question of how to energize and capture student participation” (p. 21). Creative Campus theorist Steven Tepper articulates the centrality of student empowerment and participation to Creative Campus efforts by outlining some of the pitfalls to be avoided by practitioners. Tepper (2006a) states, “the first [pitfall] is to avoid using the growing enthusiasm as an opportunity to simply advocate for more money for professional arts presentations on campuses.... Students have to be the primary constituent for creative campus work” (p. 4). Tepper’s work shows a shift in the theorized content from the American Assembly’s conception of “Creative Campus” as a highly professionalized body presenting professionalized arts to the more recent conception of “Creative Campus” as a teaching tool for aspiring artists and audiences and a forum of participation for students.
The focus on students and inclusion of students in establishing Creative Campus initiatives also has strategic significance. As Stevenson notes, “schools, colleges and universities are very conservative institutions. They do not change easily or quickly. In fact, purposeful social change in the educational system often is the result of student-led initiatives. This is especially the case in colleges and universities” (Stevenson, 2008, p. 78). The centering of students and the inclusion of student leadership in Creative Campus efforts may be a strategy for practitioners seeking to change the agenda within an institution that is resistant to such change. The centering of students as an element of the creative campus linguistic category is attested to by its inclusion as one of the seminar topics in the most recent Creative Campus caucus in 2008—“Session 3: Student Learning, Engagement and Development.”

When defining what a “Creative Campus” is, it is imperative to look at what that language means. The literature has suggested at least five different emergent characteristics for what a prototypical “Creative Campus” category might include: a tolerance for failure/risk taking; campus-community connections; an inclusive notion of creativity; intra-campus collaborations; and student participation and empowerment.
V. Building the Creative Campus—How Do We Do It?

This study is primarily interested in looking at schools that have adopted the “Creative Campus” signifier to name some portion of their programmatic efforts. The building inquiry is concerned with how usage of the name affects practice.

This “how” inquiry is likely to yield the most variable results with each campus particularizing their building strategies to the resources and social mores available to them. As Orchard (2000) notes, “it is also true that each potential alliance between the arts and the university must be tailored to local circumstances. What works for Connecticut College or Ohio State is not necessarily a model for elsewhere” (p. 88). The similar yet different outcomes arising from such individualization should provide texture for the developing signifier, “Creative Campus.”

Because the Creative Campus movement is so new, each, individual iteration of a Creative Campus initiative represents an experiment. This type of experimentation is in tune with what advocates for the arts on campus have called for, and it is the locus of labeling contests. Peter Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning, makes a bold statement about the necessity of such organizational experimentation in his book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). Senge writes, “without serious practical experiments aimed at connecting new learning capabilities to business results, there is no way to assess whether enhancing learning capabilities is just an intellectually appealing idea or really makes a difference” (p. 47). Senge’s statement is important for two reasons.
First, it establishes that the experimental implementation of new ideas is the only way to know if the idea is a legitimate tour de force or just an intellectually stimulating thought exercise. With all the excitement surrounding the idea of the Creative Campus, the practical and programmatic applications of this idea are telling as to whether or not this concept may truly be the next iteration of the arts on campus or if the idea is just rhetorically inviting.

Second, Senge’s statement is also important because it highlights the fact that such experimentation with the term “Creative Campus” requires “a significant commitment of time and energy” (Ibid). Until more research—such as the two cases studies being undertaken in this research—is completed on the practical application of Creative Campus initiatives, practitioners may be expending such time and energy blindly.

By focusing on how naming is operating in both the agenda setting and implementation stages however, it may be possible to provide a “heads up” with regard to some common implementation issues and strategies. This study will investigate the building inquiry by looking at how naming is operating in both the formulation and implementation stages of the policy cycle.
Chapter Three:

LITERATURE REVIEW: Part Two,

A Linguistic Lens: Analyzing the Usage of the Creative Campus Signifier in Practice

I. Introduction

“(O)rganizational names ‘are for the masses.’ ... After all, organizations can have complex and multifaceted identities, but only one name” (Glynn and Abzug 2002, 276).

This thesis will approach two cases of Creative Campus programs from a linguistic perspective, focusing on how the language of the name “Creative Campus” is functioning both during policy formulation then implementation. As scholar, Wendy B. Sharer (2001) notes, “[t]racing the evolution of an organization’s name and the contests that surrounded that evolution sheds light on how discursive strategies help create collective identity as a basis for political action” (p. 235).

Name development in the academic context differs from much of the literature on organizational naming because of the non-commercial context. For the most part, the study of naming applied to business ventures only deals with instances of “common naming” as related to chains, wherein a parent company imparts a given name on similar subsidiaries. Here, while several programs share the name “Creative Campus,” there is no governing parent company. This naming language is capable of being appropriated by so

Without trademarks and the concomitant ability of making the language proprietary, we are left with a situation where multiple actors are appropriating and making use of the term to different ends. This thesis will explore such a phenomenon by analyzing qualitative interview data through a linguistic lens. It will “employ a semiotic approach to naming …. [which] enables an analysis not only of what language is saying (its content, its signifieds) but also what it is doing (the social effects of its signifiers)” (Sharer, 2001, p. 235).

Sharer asserts, “the names of organizations provide important sites for examining how language intervenes between division and cooperation” (Ibid, p. 247). The two Creative Campus organizations under examination in this thesis project are important sites for exploring such language development and usage because “organizations are speech communities sharing socially constructed systems of meaning that allow members to make sense of their immediate, and perhaps not so immediate, environment” (Barley, 1983, p. 393).

By combining semiotics, labeling theory and social identity theory, I will explore how the name “Creative Campus” is working in both the policy formulation and the policy implementation stages of the policy cycle. This thesis takes the literature on policy formulation and policy implementation and applies it in a different context. Whereas many of the articles and theories on the policy cycle focus on agenda setting and implementation in the arena of the federal government, this thesis takes some of those
ideas and applies them to a different institutional setting—the university. However, many of the ideas are structurally similar and make for appropriate parallels.

II. How the Signifier is Deployed During Policy Formulation

The policy formulation phase of the policy cycle is concerned with how different publics become interested enough in a particular problem and proposed solution such that mobilization and action are possible. Because one of the central ways humans communicate and attempt to rhetorically influence each other is through speech, this thesis project focuses on the deployment of a specific speech term, “Creative Campus,” during policy formulation. It examines how the “Creative Campus” signifier is used during policy development to (A) capture the limited attention of relevant publics and (B) frame the issue.

A. Capturing Limited Public Attention

In order to develop policy, a critical mass of public concern is required. Garnering such a critical mass is often difficult because “the attention capacities of both the general public and government are constrained” (Jones and Baumgartner, 2004, p. 2). That concept is also true in universities wherein the attention of administrators, students, and other key constituents is limited. However, there are several mechanisms by which the public’s limited attention may be captured: (1) focusing events, (2) social identification, and (3) recombination. This thesis project explores how language overlies each of these attention-grabbing mechanisms.
1. Focusing Events

According to policy theorist John Kingdon (2002), policy development typically happens when a “policy window of opportunity” opens. Windows open at the intersection of a policy problem, policy politics, and proposed policy solution. Kingdon (2002) theorizes that “[w]indows are opened by events in either the problems or political streams. Thus there are problems windows and political windows.” Focusing events draw public attention and can spark activity during a policy window. The language tied to any such event is bound to be an object of focus.

Focusing events provide a jump-start for activity during a policy window. The opening of a policy window alone is not enough to develop policy if the attention of the relevant public is not sufficiently focused. To this end, Kingdon theorizes that “a focusing event … draws attention to some conditions more than to others” (Ibid). While a natural disaster, war, election, etc. may be a focusing event in the national legislative arena, the contours of a focusing event take on a different shape in the academic context. Here, it is possible that a focusing event can be an influential article or national conference, such as the annual American Assembly at Columbia University. This thesis will explore how the 2004 American Assembly served as a focusing event by bringing together a mass of scholars and introducing the language of “Creative Campus,” which has subsequently been implemented as policy at several university sites.

This study will also attempt to elicit what the focusing events or “triggers” were on each campus under study. In Michael Friedman’s book, *The World is Flat*, he provides
a vignette of the story of Georgia Tech’s president G. Wayne Clough, who changed the highly tech-focused school’s admission policies to include musicianship. This inclusion of art into the strategic practices of the university’s life resulted mainly from what Clough describes as a chance trigger. President Clough mentions the opportunity to buy musical equipment at half-price as “one of the triggers that got us started” (Friedman, 2005). While these “triggers” will certainly be different at different institutions, such trigger opportunities may be among the “focusing events” or opportunities that enable the Creative Campus to be catapulted onto the university’s agenda (Birkland, 1998).

2. Social Identification

   Social identification theory articulates another way in which the public’s limited attention may be captured. According to this theory, “[s]ocial identification is a perception of oneness with a group of persons … [which] stems from the categorization of individuals” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 20). Because social identification stems from categorization and humans often categorize things by name/signifier, the analysis of how the name of an organization may garner the attention of relevant publics is necessary to understand policy development. Social identification is an important mechanism of policy development because “social identification leads to activities that are congruent with the identity [and] support for institutions that embody the identity” (Ibid). Social identification may take place through a couple of processes, including: cognitive segmentation and structural similarity.
a. Cognitive Segmentation

Social identification may take place through cognitive segmentation wherein individuals identify with an organization that is categorized in an appealing way. Ashforth notes that one function of social classification is that it “cognitively segments and orders the social environment … enabl[ing] the individual to locate or define him- or herself in the social environment” (Ibid, pp. 20-21). Because individuals cognitively segment and order their social environments through categorization/classification, it is important to analyze the ways in which language categorizes, and thus cognitively segments, the social environment, allowing individuals to identify with certain social structures like parties, issues, or organizations.

b. Structural Similarity

Social identification with a policy position may be achieved through structural similarity wherein a member of the public perceives structural similarities between the policy position and his or her own identity. Zott and Huy (2007) offered the following anecdote to show structural similarity at work: “Another investor confirmed, ‘I like to think of myself as a little entrepreneur, so I’m naturally interested in other people who call themselves entrepreneurs’” (pp. 36-37). Similarly, it makes sense that individuals who personally identify as creative might socially identify with Creative Campus policies via structural similarities. Zott writes that “[s]tructural similarity can help speed cognitive appraisal and mitigate possible doubts” (Ibid, p. 36). Because structural similarities are embodied traits that are often communicated via language, analyzing how language
captures public attention in this way will be important to the analysis of policy formulation.

3. Recombination

A third mechanism through which the limited attention of the relevant public might be captured is the process of recombination. Kingdon (2002) writes that “[i]n the process of policy development, recombination (the coupling of already-familiar elements) is more important than mutation (the appearance of wholly new forms)” (p. 210). Because ideas are so often expressed through language, analyzing whether old ideas are being recombined in new ways will often relate to how these recombinations are expressed linguistically. Analyzing what old ideas, if any, are being recombined in the signifier “Creative Campus” will shed some light on how policy advocates are formulating new policy programs.

A prerequisite to policy formulation is the ability to capture the attention of relevant publics, which is often limited. This limited attention may be focused on the policy issue at hand through focusing events like important papers or conferences; through social identification, wherein cognitive segmentation and structural similarity allow members of the public to feel mentally connected to the policy idea; and through recombination of psychologically-familiar elements in new policy combinations.
B. Framing the Issue

The second major area of the policy formulation process is framing the relevant issue. Framing the issue requires policy leaders who manipulate language symbols (the who) and link them to dominant worldviews and predominant public purposes (the how).

1. Policy Leaders/Symbol Manipulators (the Who)

The framers who articulate the general issue are generally the leaders behind a specific policy solution. Cobb and Ross (1997) call these leaders identification and attention groups (p. 8). They define the key characteristics of such leadership groups as being “the legitimacy of the group and its visible leaders [with] … a second important component [being] prior success” (Ibid). Since much legitimacy comes from employing symbols that purchase legitimacy through association with previously successful models, the study of the language used by the identification and attention group will provide some indication of what policy advocates feel were legitimate or successful ventures.

Morrison (1985) showcases the need for strong leadership in any new arts initiative on campus with the flippant rhetorical question, “Who wants to be in an airplane piloted by a committee?” (p. 110). The successful Creative Campus venture will require a successful leadership nexus capable of framing the issue in a salient way. Organizational guru Peter Senge (1996) outlines the types and mix of entrepreneurial leaders he feels are necessary to have a successful learning organization:

1. **Local Line Leaders**—“undertake meaningful organizational experiments to test whether new learning capabilities lead to improved business results.”
2. **Executive Leaders**—“provide support for line leaders, develop learning infrastructures, and lead by example in the gradual process of evolving the norms and behaviors of a learning culture.”
3. **Internal Networkers** or **Community Builders**, the ‘seed carriers’ of the new culture—“move freely about the organization to find those who are predisposed to bring about changes, help out in organizational experiments, and aid in the diffusion of new learnings” (p. 46).

This mix of leaders and leadership styles may prove to be a fruitful combination in moving the Creative Campus from the agenda-setting stage into actual practice because each of these different types leaders will employ and manipulate the name/signifier in a variety of ways to frame the issue for various audiences.

2. **Linking Issue Frames to Worldviews and Public Purposes (the How)**

The mechanisms by which framers articulate their issue are often linguistic. As Cobb and Ross write, “[a] key to a successful issue campaign, whether promoting or deflating a cause, is the use of words and images that summarize a point of view” (p. 15). Framers may use words to link their issues to relevant worldviews of the times. Cobb and Ross note that “if a particular worldview or theme dominates the political climate, issue initiators would be wise to link their grievance to it.” (Ibid, p. 10). In an academic environment, the dominant worldview is often enacted through scholarly discourse, so the textual media and associated language becomes that much more relevant to a study of policy formulation for Creative Campus projects.

In his book *The Arts on Campus: The Necessity for Change*, Ackerman highlights this agenda-setting technique of linking issue frames to public purposes or rationales. He tells the story of upper administrators in the university setting who felt incapable of getting the arts onto the agenda without such an articulated rationale:

> The deans who talked to me about their concerns expressed frustration with faculty who could not give any understandable rationale for including the arts in the undergraduate curriculum, a statement that the deans felt they needed if they
were to support faculty requests for additional funds and for more courses” (Ackerman, 1970, p. 20).

The Creative Campus movement may represent a packaging function with rationales built-in to the content of that signifier, which can help university arts advocates articulate their rationale to constituents.

Framers may manipulate words to align their issue and proffered solutions with the historical environment and with newly trending public purposes, or, as the case may be here, newly trending institutional purposes. The alignment of Creative Campus programs with the historical situation and modern justifications for the arts in universities was outlined in Chapter Two. These trending public purposes may include the new roles for the university, including those of arts patron, provider of research and development, producer of creative capital, and preventer of brain drain. They may also include policy justifications such as the need to prepare for the creative economy, the creation of a path for civic engagement, and the legitimization of the arts.

The linguistic constructs the framers use to accomplish this dualistic framing task is worthy of attention because “ambiguous constructs provide a semblance of order and continuity at the same time they promote novelty and change” (Glynn & Abzug, 1998, p. 112).

In using language to link the issue to both historic and modern trends in public purposes, identification and attention group leaders manipulate symbols to gain a platform for the next stage of the policy cycle: Policy Implementation. As Glynn (2000) notes, “claim-making is a rhetorical activity, typically conducted by a group of social
actors to persuade an audience to accept their construction of a problem as legitimate and, thus, their proffered solution” (p. 286). The proffered solutions articulated by policy advocates are put into motion during policy implementation where the use of language becomes even more critical.

III. How the Signifier is Deployed During Policy Implementation

When policy action is actually taken and Creative Campus programs enacted, the process of naming and deploying that name during the establishment of the nascent organization becomes laden with linguistic import. As Glynn and Abzug (1998) note, “changing an organization’s name is not simply a cosmetic event, but, by its impact on organizational identity, an organizational name change may affect organizational actions and adaptation” (p. 108). Perhaps even more so than changing the name, choosing the initial name for an organization affects implementation by influencing organizational action.

This thesis will analyze the doing/saying dichotomy of the “Creative Campus” label. This name, being adopted to name so many different operations at disparate sites invites investigation into both how the linguistic construct is functioning in practice—what it is doing—and what that construct has come to mean—what it is saying. Ashforth and Humphrey (1997) lays out the governing construct for analyzing how language is used during policy implementation. They write “[e]xpressions symbolize or signify the contents, and so are referred to as ‘signifiers.’ The contents, as the thing symbolized, are referred to as the ‘signified.’ … A signifier gains meaning through its association with the signified…” (Ibid, p. 45).
Taking this semiotic and labeling approach to naming, this thesis will (A) explore what language is doing when leaders choose to adopt the signifier, “Creative Campus,” as a label for organizational activities. Second, this thesis will (B) analyze what that language is saying as the implementation of various Creative Campus projects imparts content and meaning to that expression. Finally, this thesis will (C) return to a second discussion of what the label is doing, this time with an eye toward the consequences of the earlier choice of the “Creative Campus” label had.

A. What Language is Doing: The Initial Choice of an Organizational Signifier/Label/Name

Labels are not static expressions. Instead, they are a “critical vehicle for interpreting, organizing, and communicating experience within organizations and, in turn, for guiding experience” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 43). This means name choice is a critical factor during the policy’s formulation and implementation processes. Ashforth and Humphrey explain that a “label is a signifier of a given object, and typically activates a set of cognitions (and related affect) about the object. Thus, to the extent that specific labels and cognitions are shared, labels constitute a parsimonious means of understanding and communicating about an object” (Ibid). So, a common naming scheme has certain benefits for policy entrepreneurs and will be chosen for a variety of reasons.

There are three main influences on the choice of an organizational signifier. First, leaders will be influenced by the drive for optimal distinctiveness, which is a balance between symbolic isomorphism and competitive differentiation. Second, leaders will be influenced by bandwagon pressures. Finally, political and strategic influences will sway the choice of an organizational name.
1. Optimal Distinctiveness

Optimal distinctiveness is the balance between symbolic isomorphism and competitive differentiation. Symbolic isomorphism is “the resemblance of an organization’s symbolic attributes to those of others within its institutional field” (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 267). The symbolic attribute of concern here is the organizational name. So, symbolic isomorphism is the drive to adopt the same expression “Creative Campus” as the organizational name.

The drive to linguistically conform is strong because symbolic isomorphism does two main things for a young organization: increases legitimacy and enhances understandability. Glynn and Abzug argue that “symbolic isomorphism…increases organizational legitimacy” by associating it with other successful models that have already attained legitimacy in the public eye (Ibid). Likewise, the choice of the name “Creative Campus” may be a symbolically isomorphic attempt to borrow legitimacy from other models.

Second, symbolic isomorphism may enhance understandability. Glynn and Abzug propose that “symbolic isomorphism measured as organizational conformity to institutionalized naming practices, should increase understandability” (Ibid, p. 272). By linguistically relating the young organization to an older, more visible one, audiences may be able to more efficiently process what the new organization is about, even if the new model is slightly different.
These two pressures to adopt a name that is symbolically isomorphic to similar or identical monikers already in practice are balanced against the competing pressure of competitive differentiation. Competitive differentiation is the drive to choose a label that is different from those employed by competitors and thus offering the chance to stand apart from the crowd.

The “seemingly contradictory forces of institutional isomorphism and competitive differentiation on nomenclature” create a situation where “organizations often seek ‘optimal distinctiveness’” (Glynn & Abzug, 1998, p. 109). Where organizations see it as more important or advantageous for their purpose to use symbolically isomorphic terms for purposes of legitimacy or understandability, we should expect the organization to use the exact “Creative Campus” name. Where an organization sees it as a priority to differentiate themselves, a different expression may be chosen to name the organization. The battleground for “optimal distinctiveness” may take place within the choice of organizational name or it may take place in that second half of the semiotic coupling—the signified.

2. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice

As more and more adopt “Creative Campus” to name some aspect of its operation or programming, “bandwagon pressure” (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 278) mounts wherein “organizations may well ‘follow the leader’ in playing the ‘name game’” (Glynn & Marquis, 2007, p. 30). Bandwagon pressures may arise from spillover or from the threat of lost legitimacy.
The temptation to adopt the “Creative Campus” expression may be one iteration of a policy phenomenon noticed by John Kingdon (2002) called “spillover.” Kingdon writes that “spillovers … occur because politicians sense the payoff in repeating a successful formula in a similar area, because the winning coalition can be transferred, and because advocates can argue from successful precedent” (p. 212). If organizational leaders perceive that the “creative campus” expression was a “successful formula,” they may be tempted to repeat it.

Bandwagon pressures also come from a threat of lost legitimacy. Glynn and Marquis note how bandwagon pressures produce the phenomenon of common naming. They write that “through … the ‘contagion of legitimacy’ (internal citations omitted) mimetic isomorphism occurs and homogeneity in practices and symbols results” (Glynn & Marquis, 2007, p. 20). The fear of lost legitimacy may even create the legitimacy. As Ashforth and Mael (1989) notice, “[i]ndividuals often cognitively (if not publicly) identify themselves with a winner. This accounts in part for the bandwagon effect often witnessed in organizations, where popular support for an individual or idea suddenly gains momentum and escalates, thus creating a rising star. Desires for positive identifications effectively create champions” (p. 25). Champions then enjoy reputation benefits—benefits other organizations may wish to borrow. Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) comment upon this cycle, saying, “establishing credibility by ‘borrowing’ reputations can be understood as an attempt to define an organization relative to a social structure, network of relationships, and/or elite ties” (p. 555). Because the threat of lost legitimacy is high and the ability to “borrow” such legitimacy from other sources is easy from a
linguistic sense, bandwagon pressures may partially explain the proliferation of programs adopting the “Creative Campus” signifier.

3. Politics and Strategies of Naming

The act of naming is a political and strategic act. As Albert and Whetten (1985) articulate, “the formulation of a statement of identity is more of a political-strategic act than an intentional construction of a scientific taxonomy” (p. 268). The idea that a name may be chosen for political or strategic reasons coincides with the lessons of semiotics that the signifier/signified coupling is arbitrary. Politico-strategic reasons for choosing a common name may stem from concerns about agency, from competitive dynamics, or from strategic persistence.

The act of naming is one of power. As Sharer (2001) notices regarding women’s peace organizations, women “‘enacted their textual autonomy’ by controlling their organizational names” (p. 235). This “textual autonomy” theoretically can be employed by different practitioners to different ends; however, patterns may emerge. As Glynn and Abzug (2002) note, “[t]he organizational act of naming introduces agency into the processes of institutionalization and reveals how organizational meanings can become fixed so that the symbolic actions of individual organizations produce and reproduce patterns in the aggregate” (p. 267). As Tepper (2006a) notes, “for university leaders, the creative campus is appealing because it inexpensively boosts the reputation and excellence of their institutions” (p. 3). Thus, university leaders may see this label choice as a source of agency, a way to give the university a plus-factor of some sort. This thesis
explores how the selection of the “Creative Campus” name was an act of agency and what patterns, if any, such an exercise of agency produced.

The act of naming may also be fueled by competitive strategy. In investigating the phenomenon of common naming among chains and their components, Chuang and Baum (2003) noticed that often practitioners “view others’ difficulties as a chance to gain a competitive advantage. … [T]he strategy adoption process may thus also be driven by competitive dynamics” (p. 53). This thesis analyzes whether the adoption of the “Creative Campus” expression was fueled by competitive dynamics.

Finally, the act of naming may be influenced by strategic persistence. Chuang and Baum explain that “[t]his bias toward strategic persistence creates organizational momentum, the tendency to maintain the direction and emphasis of prior choices and actions in current behavior” (Ibid, p. 40). If the naming strategy of Creative Campus has already been adopted as a strategy, it may be likely that practitioners will persist in this naming strategy just because the naming strategy has already gained enough steam to make switching mid-stride difficult.

Naming, or choosing a signified, is an arbitrary act of coupling a linguistic expression to the content of an operational program. This act is often influenced by politico-strategic concerns such as agency, competition and persistence. The next aspect for linguistic analysis is to ask what content practitioners are giving to the chosen signifier.
Choosing a signifier for a new operation is influenced by multiple considerations. The drive for optimal distinctiveness will cause practitioners to weigh the pros and cons between symbolic isomorphism and competitive differentiation. Bandwagon pressures may influence practitioners to go along with current naming fashions. Furthermore, politico-strategic concerns like agency, competition, and strategic persistence may influence the choice of this first-half of the linguistic coupling.

B. What Language is Saying: Categorization and the Imposition of Categorical Content/Creating a “Signified”

After a signifier has been selected to name a program or organization, the semiotic perspective asks ‘What does it mean?’ Signifiers create categories of meaning, which are socially constructed signifieds.

1. Categorization

Categories aid in definition because they activate a schema of abstracted and widely shared attributes created by a prototype and its variants. Ashforth and Humphrey (1997) explain, “categorization theory focuses on how the act of definition facilitates comprehension” (p. 46). Names help people understand what an entity is and does.

Comprehension of a category is possible because categorizing terms activates schemas. Ashforth and Humphrey write:

The categories to which social objects are assigned are presumed by the perceiver to provide reliable and valid information about an object. This is because categorization activates a schema or set of cognitions about the members of the category… A schema is based on a prototype (i.e., an abstraction of the most widely shared attributes of category members) and/or exemplars (i.e., specific members who exemplify the category) (Ibid, p. 45).
This thesis project attempts to elicit what the widely shared attributes of category members are based on the literature and what exemplary attributes are based on the two individual case studies.

Labeling theory cautions that these widely shared attributes, while typical, are not universal. Ashforth and Humphrey warn, “even where a schema is accurate at the aggregate level…, it may not be accurate for a given individual” (Ibid, p. 48). So, it is possible that the data will elicit attributes at the individual level not represented in the broad category attributes and vice-versa.

Instead, labeling theory allows the signified category to have prototype characteristics that permit variants. Lakoff (1987) notes that while these variants or “noncentral members are not predictable from the central member, they are ‘motivated’ by it, in the sense that they bear family resemblances to it” (pp. 64-65). This model “suggests that it is a mistake to try to find a single cognitive model for all instances of a concept. … instead, they are variants on a prototypical model” (Ibid, p. 405). This thesis project, explores and identifies the essential characteristics of a prototypical member of the category “Creative Campus,” while accounting for the various family resemblances that allow different operations to vary from this model.

The literature, as discussed in Chapter Two, Part II(A-E) suggests that the traits that might make up the prototypical schema include: a tolerance for failure/risk taking; campus-community connections; an inclusive notion of creativity; intra-campus collaborations; and student participation and empowerment. Of course, there will
be variants on this prototypical model suggested by the American Assembly in any localized endeavor.

One example of a variant from this prototypical model would be the Association of Performing Arts Presenter’s (APAP) notion of the Creative Campus. APAP articulated, “The purpose of the Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program is to identify, support, and document cross-campus interdisciplinary collaborations that integrate the work of performing arts presenters in the academy and the surrounding community.”

[http://www.apap365.org/KNOWLEDGE/GrantPrograms/Pages/creative-campus.aspx](http://www.apap365.org/KNOWLEDGE/GrantPrograms/Pages/creative-campus.aspx) (last captured on Feb. 6, 2011). Furthermore, APAP acknowledges that they judge grant applications based on:

- a number of criteria, including campus and community engagement, organizational capacity, the artistic merit and quality of the project idea, and the potential for the idea to be successfully integrated across a variety of disciplines and into the institution’s priorities in education, research and community service.


From these descriptions, we can see that APAP’s categorical schema of the Creative Campus shares some of the principle characteristics from the prototypical model, including the campus-community connection and intra-campus collaboration through interdisciplinary work. However, APAP’s model varies from the prototypical model most especially with regards to the definition of creativity. Where the prototypical model acknowledges an inclusive definition of creativity, APAP’s program is delimited to creativity in the performing arts realm alone.
The APAP program illustrates how the prototype/variant model works. Interestingly, it is also likely that each of APAP’s grantees are socially constructing what “Creative Campus” means at the local level through their own programs. Grantees include: The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH), the University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS), the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC), Hostos Community College (Bronx, NY), and Dartmouth (Hanover, NH), among others. These models are probably variants off of APAP’s central schema, which is a variant off the American Assembly’s prototype, thus creating a family of categorizations around the meaning of “Creative Campus.”

This thesis explores how two other Creative Campus programs—the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, AL) and Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN)—are socially constructing meaning at their own local levels, implementing some of the essential characteristics articulated by the prototype, while at the same time, varying from this model to add or change the definition of the sign.

2. Social Construction of Meaning

The content of the category makes up the “signified,” but this content is all “socially constructed and symbolically mediated” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 43). Because meaning is “socially mediated,” labeling theory holds that “the perceived clarity and certainty of meaning is a function of consensus more so than the properties of the social object in question” (Ibid, p. 48). Such consensus on meaning is achieved via at least two mechanisms: labeling contests and the influence of the founder’s vision.
Labeling contests “occur when two or more stakeholders attempt to define divergent realities for a given audience” (Ibid, p. 54). By trying to ensure that the content they are imparting prevails, different stakeholders engage each other in a race to flesh out the signified. Thus, “[s]ense-making can be viewed at times as a labeling contest” (Ibid, p. 53). Labeling contests are only possible because “meaning is inherently ambiguous and thus must be imposed on stimuli” (Ibid, p. 46). Labeling contests may be seen as competitions to see whose meaning sticks. This thesis project attempts to identify when labeling contests are taking place and what content the different actors are seeking to associate with the signified.

A second source of imposed content comes from the vision of charismatic founders. In describing how the content of women’s pacifist groups emerged, Wendy B. Sharer (2001) notes that one of the founder’s idea of “cosmic patriotism” influenced the content of the word “international” in the name (pp. 243-44). Likewise, this thesis project seeks out where the founder’s vision is influencing the content that he or she is hoping to impart to the signifier.

Because meaning is socially constructed through processes like labeling contests and the founder’s articulation of goals, it should be possible to look at operations of various Creative Campus programming to understand what content that signifier is holding, at least at the local level.

The choice of a signifier cues a linguistic categorization. In this category, a prototype of the term and its associated variants flesh out the various meanings that can
be coupled to the terminology. This prototypical content is socially constructed by actors attempting to influence the use of such language.

C. What Language is Doing (Again): The Consequences of Label Choice

In Part A, I articulated why practitioners might choose the “Creative Campus” expression as the label with which to name their organization. In this section, I will examine the consequences of that choice—the benefits and the power that labels can have. There are three major outcomes of labeling: “understanding, consensus, and control” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 43).

1. Enhancing Understandability

Labels can enhance understandability and public cognition in two ways: distillation of complexities and the lexicality effect. Ashforth and Humphrey note the ability of labels to simplify, “Labels distill a complex and perhaps contradictory array of data into concise and coherent packages, and thus provide a potent means of interpreting, representing, and conveying organizational experience and cuing action” (Ibid, p. 43). Because labels can crystallize an idea into a concise package, the language acts to enhance understandability. This thesis seeks to understand how language is functioning to enhance understandability through distillation.

Second, labels enhance understandability of a new venture through the lexicality effect. Glynn and Marquis (2007) explain that “by leveraging the cultural understandings encoded in real words, organizational names can get a cognitive boost by easing mental processing due to the well-documented ‘lexicality effect,’ that is, ‘the finding that (real) words are processed faster and more accurately than nonwords’” (p. 18). By imparting
new meanings on a term and drawing from popular notions connoted by the language, practitioners can use this lexicality effect to great advantage. Glynn and Marquis hold that “organizational names with real words are carriers of well-established socio-cultural meanings … Thus, they can offer ready-made expressions of identity” (Ibid). To give an example, Sharer (2001) provides that “[w]omen … engaged in this deconstructive/reconstructive project by upholding the caring, nurturing traits traditionally linked to the name woman, while also associating those traits with a privileged position in official, international discourse” (p. 248). By using the popular conceptions of “creative” and “campus,” practitioners might be able to enhance understandability of their new ventures operating under that label.

2. Consensus Building

Labels may also operate to build consensus for implementation of programs. Naming and consensus building go hand-in-hand because “names dramatize or narrate the organization’s identity by giving it a ceremonial face … Affixing the right labels to activities can change them into valuable services and mobilize the commitments of internal participants and external constituencies” (Ibid, p. 20). Because naming can have such an effect on consensus building, it is important to choose a label that can have a broad sweep. Labels aid consensus building by providing an ambiguous hook and by increasing mindshare.

One way that labels can have the broadest sweep in terms of consensus building is by incorporating ambiguous terms. Ambiguity “is functional to the extent that it permits social actors with divergent perspectives to perceive sufficient convergence for joint
action while preserving sufficient divergence for loose coupling and the capacity for adaptability” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 53). Sharer (2001) notices this phenomenon operating in the names of women’s pacifist organizations. She writes that “[t]he terms peace and freedom are examples of . . . ambiguous notions,’ . . . The ambiguity surrounding the terms peace and freedom allowed for the coexistence of substantially different opinions about appropriate tactics and goals” (p. 245). If constituents perceive ambiguity in the signs “creative” or “campus,” it may allow the room necessary to build consensus over divergent actors.

Another way that labels may help to build consensus is through their ability to increase “mindshare.” Symbolic actions facilitate implementation because they help capture mindshare. Zott (2007) found that “entrepreneurs made conscious efforts to be noticed or remembered. By doing so, they maintained and expanded their ‘mindshare’ to generate repeat business or be introduced to other companies” (p. 33).

3. Control

In assessing what language is doing, it is necessary to look at a label as one mechanism of control. Labeling theory “generally contend[s] that a primary motive for labeling is social control. The very ambiguity of stimuli raises the question of whose definition should prevail” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 46). This struggle of whose definition should prevail is what cues the labeling contests that drive the social construction of meaning. Labels, then, “are an outcome of attempts to understand and to control, not an empirical truth awaiting discovery” (Ibid, p. 48).
While labeling cues a contest to see who will control, another form of control a label facilitates is the control over the process and content of implementation. Ashforth and Humphrey note “the imposition of a label sets in motion forces that validate the label” (Ibid, p. 48). So even if a campus is not “creative,” it may be the goal of the founders that the imposition of such a label cues actions in a way that the term becomes a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. An example of this phenomenon was noted by Thomas and Gioia (1996) who describe the outcome of labeling a university as a “Top 10 Public University”:

This label helped galvanize interest in—and focused attention on—radical change efforts to upgrade the institution. Further, by cueing the prototypical attributes ascribed to top universities, the label provided a framework for formulating strategic plans to attain these attributes (Ibid, p. 53).

Likewise, it is possible that the usage of the label “Creative Campus” may cue the prototypical attributes ascribed to the category, thus providing practitioners a platform to work toward those attributes.

Labels may also allow for control of perception by projecting a desired image. Symbolic manipulation may help entrepreneurs take short cuts to a desired result. Ashforth and Humphrey (1997) write that “[b]y projecting desirable labels, an organization stakes a claim to a status that might be difficult to establish by other means” (p. 54).

Finally, labels may help cultural entrepreneurs gain control by garnering resources. Symbolic actions are linguistic acts that facilitate policy implementation because “entrepreneurs are more likely to acquire resources for new ventures if they perform symbolic actions” (Zott, 2007).
Institutionalization is one potential outcome of unleashing forces that validate the label, project a desired image, and garner resources. In *The Maturing of the Arts on Campus*, Morrison (1985) points to a trend toward institutionalizing. He notes, “to keep an operation going . . . you make it into an ‘institution’” (p. 96). Despite the associated problems of bureaucracy with institutionalizing a Creative Campus effort, it is clear that a good portion of new Creative Campus practitioners are choosing to use this implementation strategy. This trend toward new institutions is evidenced by the subject of one of the seminars at the latest Creative Campus caucus—“Session 4: Strategic Initiatives and New Institutional Structures” (Caucus, 2008).

Once chosen and deployed in practice, signifiers can enhance understandability both by conjuring up traditional meanings associated with the words and providing territory to impart new meanings upon them. Labels can also help build consensus by employing terms that are just ambiguous or flexible enough to allow participants to assign their own most-preferred meanings onto it, which can increase a cultural entrepreneur’s mindshare. Finally, name labels may provide a chance to control the signified meanings associated with the sign by projecting the image an organization wants to convey and garnering resources. This capacity influences the programmatic outcomes that follow as a natural consequence of the categorization. Thus, while organizational name is an inexpensive symbol available to most cultural entrepreneurs, it is also one of the more potent symbols. Glynn and Abzug (1998)
IV. Conclusion & Visual Summary

The formulation and implementation of various Creative Campus programs can, and should, be investigated through a linguistic lens. Language is operative in both the policy formulation and policy implementation stages of the policy cycle. By assessing both what language is doing (the signifier) and what language is saying (the signified), it is possible to understand the initial choice to adopt this signifier, what this signifier has come to mean, and how this signifier might be used in practice. In understanding what the language is saying, it is possible to answer the Defining Inquiry of “What is it?” both on a global and a local level. It is also possible to answer the Contextualizing Inquiry of “Why now?” and understand if usage of the “Creative Campus” signifier is allowing space for the arts to occupy a new space on the historical timeline of the arts’ march onto campus. In understanding what the language is doing, it is possible to answer the Justifying Inquiry of “Why should we?” as well as the Building Inquiry of “How do we?”

The critical framework set up in this chapter, which will be applied to both cases in Chapter 5 and 6 and then reviewed comparatively in Chapter 7, can be represented visually in the following ways:
The critical lens is a cross between semiotics and the policy cycle:

Figure 2 Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview

This framework can also be represented linearly:

Figure 3 Policy/Semiotics Framework Linear Overview
This linear model presents the four driving inquiries as separate logic models. If those separate inquiries are broken out into their own, individual models, they look like the following:

Inquiry #1: The Sign Contextualizing, What Language is Saying During Policy Formulation

**The Sign CONTEXTUALIZING**

The Roles of the University in the Modern Arts Ecology

- The University as Arts Patron
- The University as Provider of Arts R&D
- The University as Producer of Creative Capital
- The University as Preventer of Brain Drain

Figure 4 The Sign Contextualizing
Inquiry #2: The Sign Justifying, What Language is Doing During Policy Formulation

Inquiry

**The Sign JUSTIFYING**

**Issue Framers/Symbol Manipulators (The Who)**
- Local Line Leaders
- Executive Line Leaders
- Internal Networkers

**Frame Issues (The How)**

- **By Capturing Public Attention**
  - Through Focusing Events
  - Through Social Identification
    - Via Cognitive Segmentation & Structural Similarity
  - Through Recombination

- **By Linking Issues to Public Purposes**
  - Preparation for the Creative Economy
  - Civic Engagement
  - Legitimization of the Arts

Figure 5 The Sign Justifying
Inquiry #3: The Sign Defining, What Language is Saying During Policy Implementation

The Sign DEFINING

PROTOTYPICAL CATEGORY TRAITS:
1. Encouragement of Risk Taking/Tolerance of Failure
2. Campus-Community Connection
3. Inclusive Definition of Creativity
4. Intra-Campus Collaborations
5. Student Participation & Empowerment

Figure 6 The Sign Defining
Inquiry #4: The Sign Building, What Language is Doing During Policy Implementation

The Sign BUILDING

Figure 7 The Sign Building

Chapters Five and Six verbally analyze the two cases in accordance to the framework set out in this Chapter. The visual logic models are reintroduced with content from each specific case in the comparative analysis appearing in Chapter Seven.
Chapter Four:

METHODOLOGY

“Qualitative researchers have open minds, but not empty minds.” (Janesick 2003, p.54)

I. Guiding Question

Janesick (2003) writes, “as a researcher, I always start any given research project with a question” (p. 53). This research project is governed by the following guiding question—What effect has the name had on the implementation of Creative Campus projects? The importance of naming shows up in several sub-questions, including: Why is it happening now? (Contextualizing); Why have one? (Justifying); What is it? (Defining); and How did you build it? (Building). I answer these guiding questions through a comparative case study methodology.

II. Qualitative Case Study Research

Because there has not been much research, if any, on the practical application of the Creative Campus theory in actual programs at institutions of higher education, there are presently more questions than hypotheses, more uncertainty about the phenomenon than clarity. Given this state of knowledge on the Creative Campus and the threshold need for a deeper understanding of the trend, a case
study methodology is particularly appropriate. Merriam (1988) acknowledges that depending on the current state of the art, case study designs can be employed in different ways. She writes, “Thus, depending on the state of knowledge and amount of theory, a case study might test theory, clarify, refine or extend theory, or, in qualitative case studies, develop new theory” (Ibid, pp. 57-58).

Taking into consideration the newness of the phenomenon itself and, subsequently, the nascent level of research and writing on it, the objective of this research project is to craft tentative explanatory models, to build, rather than test, theory. Janesick (2003) writes, “qualitative design . . . begins with a search for understanding of the whole. Qualitative research is not constructed to prove something or to control people” (p. 57). George (1979) further explains this potential of case study research:

the case study is regarded as an opportunity to learn more about the complexity of the problem studied, to develop further the existing explanatory framework, and to refine and elaborate the initially available theory employed by the investigator in order to provide an explanation of the particular case examined (pp. 51-52).

Since the current research needs are to understand and generate new theories about the Creative Campus, both in its local iterations and their connections to the broader movement, qualitative case research methods will be particularly appropriate. Robert Stake (1995) notes that, “two strategic ways that researchers reach new meanings about cases are through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class. Case study relies on both of these methods” (p. 74).
I attempt to begin this “aggregation of instances” by researching two cases—The Creative Campus Initiative at the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University’s Creative Campus Initiative. This multi-case design has several advantages. George (1979) notes the ability of such a design to aid in the crafting of new theories (pp. 51-52). He writes that, “a series of heuristic case studies or a simultaneous comparison of two or more cases, if each comprises an instance of the same class of events, can be an excellent research strategy for the cumulative development of theory” (Ibid). A second advantage is the evidentiary weight of a comparative case design. Yin (2009) remarks, “the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983)” (p. 53).

Not only will the juxtaposition of the two cases in this qualitative case study methodology be helpful in the development of theory and in securing the robustness of findings, but this design is also well-suited for studying educational phenomena. Merriam (1988) writes, “case study research, and in particular qualitative case study, is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (p. 2). This fit between methodology and subject of research arises from the applied and practical nature of educational work. Merriam explains, “applied areas such as education, counseling, administration, social work, and medicine also value research as a means of understanding, informing, and improving practice” (Ibid, p. 6). This comparative case study should be beneficial not only to Creative Campus theorists, but also to arts and creative practitioners on
college campuses. Apart from its practical and applied nature and situation within the field of education, a case study methodology is also appropriate given the innovative nature of the Creative Campus programs. Merriam writes, “case study has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Ibid, pp. 32-33)

Qualitative case study methodologies are especially appropriate for this research project given the nascent nature of research on the topic and subsequent need for theoretical explanation and theoretical development in relation to the Creative Campus phenomenon. The comparative case study design is useful for aggregating instances of the phenomenon to aid theory development and robustness of findings. Finally, this research design is especially fitting for the substantive area of educational innovations given the applied nature of the field.

A. Selection of the Cases

A case is a living something. Because qualitative research is focused more on depth than breadth, choosing which cases to spend time researching is an important step in the research process. Stake (1995) provides his definition of a case as:

a special something to be studied, a student, a classroom, a committee, a program, perhaps, but not a problem, relationship, or a theme. The case to be studied probably has problems and relationships, and the report of the case is likely to have a theme, but the case is an entity. The case, in some ways, has a unique life. It is something that we do not sufficiently understand and want to—therefore, we do a case study (p. 133).

The two cases under scrutiny in this thesis are organizational innovations implementing an iteration of the Creative Campus idea. They provide bounded,
programmatic cases or instances of the Creative Campus phenomenon that researchers do not fully understand, but want to.

These two cases were chosen from a class of programs on university campuses across the nation operating under the “Creative Campus” label. George (1979) stresses the importance of defining “adequately the ‘class’ of events/phenomena for which [a researcher] is attempting to develop explanatory theory. This is essential in order to select appropriate cases for intensive analysis” (p. 50). Here, the class included all program on university and college campuses operating under the moniker “Creative Campus.”

After defining the class, there must be some sampling method to choose which members of the class will be studied. The cases in this study were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy. Merriam (1988) explains why a statistical sampling method was not chosen when she notes that, “since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable in qualitative research” (pp. 47-48). She continues:

Thus the most appropriate sampling strategy is called purposive (Chein, 1981) or purposeful (Patton, 1980). Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most (Ibid, p.48).

In deciding which cases one can learn the most from, Merriam suggests some purposive sampling strategies such as choosing extreme or deviant cases, typical cases, cases with maximum variation, critical cases, politically important or sensitive cases, or cases that provide convenience (Ibid). The two cases chosen are both politically important for different reasons. The University of Alabama has the
historical advantage of being one of the very first such programs in the country to be founded. Vanderbilt University’s project is important because Vanderbilt has been at the forefront of the academic dialogue on Creative Campus by hosting or co-hosting at least two follow-up conferences on the Creative Campus. The two cases also provide a large degree of variation. With Alabama’s program being founded from a bottom-up, grassroots perspective, it contrasts sharply with Vanderbilt’s top-down, administrative implementation strategy. At Alabama, institutionalization of the project came much later than institutionalization at Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt’s project boasts much more curricular integration than Alabama’s events-presenting task allows. These differences will provide critical theoretical fodder and are important for the comparative case study design. George (1979) notes:

in a controlled comparison study, the investigator is interested as much in the differences among the cases as he is in their similarities. (In fact, it is one of the criteria employed in selecting cases for controlled comparison that they should differ in one or a few of the variable of theoretical interest.) (pp. 58-59).

Furthermore, both cases were accessible to the researcher from a geographic and political perspective.

**B. Literature Review**

As part of my research design, I also conduct a thorough literature review on the Creative Campus phenomenon itself, its situation within the movement of the arts into academe, as well as, the linguistic background to naming phenomena. Merriam (1988) writes, “the thrust of an independent literature review is to present the state of the art with regard to a certain topic” (p. 62). She also advocates for a
literature review by touting its latent abilities, “‘Besides providing a foundation for
the problem to be investigated, the literature review can demonstrate how the
present study “advances, refines or revises what is already known’ (Merriam &
Simpson, 1984, 30)” (Ibid).

The literature review presented in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis
reveals that a gap exists in the current literature on Creative Campus regarding the
operational and programmatic applications of the theory. The literature both
contextualizes the Creative Campus movement as a possible platform for further
arts advocacy in the context of the academy and outlines what theorists see as its
defining features. The literature also provides a critical linguistic framework within
which to situate the data taken from qualitative interviews, document analysis, and
autoethnography, while also serving as another source of data.

C. Qualitative Interviews

I conducted extensive qualitative interviews with those people considered to
be “the founders” of each Creative Campus project in order to capture the
implementation story of the program in their words and ascertain how these
leaders had employed the “Creative Campus” signifier and to what ends. These
respondents were selected mostly through snowball sampling from informants with
whom I already had personal contacts. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) write that, “the
easiest way to build a pool of informants is ‘snowballing’: getting to know some
informants and having them introduce you to others” (p. 83). Due to the close-knit
nature of the groups of founders at each site, it was possible to interview most, though not all, of them.

This qualitative interviewing method allows me to gain deep insight into the implementation process at each site and the way those practitioners were employing the “Creative Campus” signifier in an efficient manner. Taylor and Bogdan write:

> Qualitative interviewing is intended to yield a broad picture of a range of settings, situations, or people (1984). Interviewing is used to study a relatively large number of people in a relatively short period of time compared to what would be required in participant observation research (Ibid, p.79).

The interview process was semi-structured but left open-ended. Taylor and Bogdan describe this research process thusly, “qualitative interviewing has been referred to as nondirective, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing. We use the phrase ‘in-depth interviewing’ to refer to this qualitative research method” (Ibid, p. 77).

In order to use this looser form of research, I had to set a tone for the interview that established rapport and trust. As Merriam (1988) notes, “a good communicator empathizes with respondents, establishes rapport, asks good questions, and listens intently” (pp. 36-37). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) recognize the importance of tone and rapport for reaping fruitful data from interview situations noting, “There is no simple formula for successful interviewing, but the following points set the tone for the atmosphere the interviewer should try to create: Being nonjudgmental, Letting people talk, Paying attention, Being sensitive” (p. 94).
I used an interview guide that corresponded to the four driving inquiries—contextualizing the initiative, justifying the initiative, defining the initiative, and building the initiative—that fit within both the policy and semiotic frameworks. See Chapter One for this guide. These questions were just what the name implies—a guide. The order of the questions was not prescribed and not every single participant was asked to elaborate on every single sub-question I originally generated in the guide. However, the guide allowed me to generate answers to similar topics from each participant while remaining flexible.

George (1988) notes the importance of this semi-structured nature of questioning in a comparative case study when he writes, “using a standardized set of questions in the controlled comparison is necessary to assure acquisition of comparable data from the several cases” (p. 62). Merriam (1988) further highlights the advantages of the interview guide:

in the semi-structured interview, certain information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (p. 74).

The interviews generally started off with descriptive questions about the respondents' roles in the implementation process and their version of how it came to be. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) agree that “probably the best way to start off interviewing informants is to ask them to describe, list or outline key events, experiences, places, or people in their lives” (p. 89). These questions are both easy for the respondent to answer and provide a lot of concrete detail about their
experience, opening up the interview process before they were asked to elaborate on theoretical choices and decisions made during their implementation process. I often asked respondents to explain what they meant by certain word usages or responses. Taylor and Bogdan refer to this as “probing” (Ibid, p. 96). They note, “in contrast to natural conversation, interviewers cannot assume that they understand exactly what people mean. The interviewer cannot take for granted common sense assumptions and understandings other people share” (Ibid). I used the data collected from these “founder-informants” to “focus further data collection, which [was] use[d] in turn to inform and refine [my] developing theoretical analyses” (Charmaz, 2003, pp. 249-50).

I tape recorded all of the qualitative interview sessions and transcribed them to provide a body of textual data from which to craft emerging theories. While some theorists fear that tape recording dilutes or dangerously alters participant responses, Taylor and Bogdan (1984) feel this pitfall is negated in the interview situation:

although tape recording can alter what people say in the early stages of the research, interviewers can usually get by with taping interviews. In interviewing informants are acutely aware that the interviewer’s agenda is to conduct research. Since they already know that their words are being weighed, they are less likely to be alarmed by the presence of a tape recorder (p. 102).

They then expound on the great advantage to using recording devices, noting that, “a tape recorder allows the interviewer to capture so much more than he or she could relying on memory. The interviewer’s data consist almost entirely of words” (Ibid, p. 103).
Because I am using a grounded theory perspective to create hypotheses and explanatory models about the Creative Campus having this textual data bank was imperative. The stories and language provided by respondents are likely to have emergent patterns that would not be immediately recognizable during the interview process itself. While I was able to record a few important phrases and ideas in an interview journal, this data pales in comparison with that available through my transcriptions.

While the advantages of the qualitative interviewing method are numerous, including efficiency and depth, the generation of comparable data across participants, and the accumulation of a textual databank for further analysis, there are also pitfalls:

as a form of conversation, interviews are subject to the same fabrications, deceptions, exaggerations, and distortions that characterize talk between any persons. Although people’s verbal accounts may lend insight into how they think about the world and how they act, there can be a great discrepancy between what they say and what they actually do (Deutscher, 1973) (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 81).

Given this danger of inaccurate recall, the haziness of memory, and the natural tendency of participants to gloss their version of a story, I am also triangulating this interview data with document analysis and autoethnography.

D. Document Analysis

I examined documents produced by the Creative Campus projects including website presentation, program fliers, PowerPoint presentations used by founders, etc. Merriam (1988) sees document analysis as one way to mitigate the pitfalls inherent in interviews:
in interviews and observations, the researcher gathers data for the purpose of his or her investigation. In so doing, both techniques ‘intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe, they create as well as measure attitudes, they elicit atypical roles and responses, they are limited to those who are accessible and will cooperate’ (Webb and others, 1981, p.1). Documents, on the other hand, are usually produced for reasons other than research and therefore are not subject to the same limitations. They are, in fact, a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator (p. 104).

I used a coding system that was a correlative of that used over the interview data to analyze the content of these documents. Merriam notes that “in qualitative case studies, a form of content analysis is used to analyze documents. Essentially content analysis is a systematic procedure for describing the content of communications” (Ibid, p. 116). This documentary evidence serves as an important way to back up the findings from the interview and autoethnographic data. Yin (2009) touts this ability of documents in case studies “to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p. 81).

E. Autoethnography

Since my research interest in this topic area sprung from my own involvement as a Creative Campus practitioner at the University of Alabama between 2005-2007, I used my own experience as another source of data for this project. To do so, I wrote an autoethnographic account of my experience as a Creative Campus founder/intern. It is my version of the origin story that I sought to elicit from other participants in the study. It is my own account of the implementation of a Creative Campus project. Davies (1999) notes that “the uses of autobiography in ethnographic research are various. The most common is inclusion
of autobiography, both in terms of past experiences and experiences during fieldwork, in the analysis of data and reporting of findings” (p. 189). Since my autoethnography took the form of a narrative text, I was able to use the coding system that emerged from the qualitative interviews to analyze it.

F. Role of the Researcher and Reflexivity

Qualitative research requires the researcher to take on an incredibly active and responsive role in the research process. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) write that, “far from being a robot-like data collector, the interviewer, not an interview schedule or protocol, is the research tool. The role entails not merely obtaining answers, but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them” (p. 77). Given this role as not only a data analyzer but a data co-producer, qualitative research requires the researcher to pay special attention to reflexivity. Davies (1999) defines reflexivity broadly as a “turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference” (p. 4).

The role of reflexivity in my study is further complicated by the fact that I have been involved in the phenomenon I am studying. As a former practitioner and current researcher, I “cannot simply take [my] insider’s knowledge to be either unquestionably complete or true” (Ibid, p. 183). Alan Peshkin (1988) advocates “systematically identify[ing]” one’s own subjectivity throughout the research process in order to attune oneself to “where self and subject are intertwined.” Peshkin writes, “I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. I do rather, enable myself to manage it—to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome” (Ibid). The autoethnographic process not only allowed me to recapitulate my own origin story
of the Creative Campus creation, it also allowed me to systematically identify and monitor my own subjectivity as I responded to different participants.

**G. Analyzing the Data**

“The goal of data analysis ... is ‘to come up with reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on a preponderance of the data’” (Merriam, 1988, p. 130).

My project seeks to create initial explanatory theory around implementation strategies for the Creative Campus phenomenon. George (1979) writes that “good explanatory theory regarding phenomena such as deterrence, coercion, and so on is a precondition for the development of prescriptive theory covering these activities” (p. 48). The type of theory this thesis forwards is also a middle-range substantive theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain:

comparative analysis can be used to generate two basic kinds of theory: substantive and formal. By substantive theory, we mean that developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations. . . . Both types of theory may be considered as ‘middle-range.’ That is, they fall between the ‘minor working hypotheses’ of everyday life and the ‘all-inclusive’ grand theories (pp. 32-33).

This project seeks to create theory using a grounded theory approach where the patterns, variables and categories used in constructing theoretical models were emergent in the data. After transcription, journaling, and content analysis had created a textual databank, I coded this data. Janesick (2003) explains this process as using, “inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data. The categories that emerge from field notes, documents, and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection” (p. 63). Auerbach (2003) advises an initial sorting whereby only “that is related to your specific research
concerns” or “relevant text” is kept and all non-relevant text is discarded (p. 37). Weiss (1995) further advises not trying “to make sense of every ‘meaning unit’,” but rather to code in an effort “to capture the interview material” (p. 155). Merriam (1988) insists that the emergent categories be reflective of the purpose of the research, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, independent, and derivative from a single classification principle (p. 136).

After this initial coding and categorization, the grounded theory approach calls for the categories to be organized or integrated into more conceptual themes. Auerbach (2003) defines a theme as “an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas” (p. 38). Weiss (1995) refers to this process as sorting and contends that “producing a case study begins with sorting. Material that deals with the same issue must be brought together no matter where the material originally appeared in the interview transcripts. The material is then organized into a story of that issue” (p. 168). Auerbach (2003) encourages this aggregation process by looking for similar verbiage (p. 37). He writes, “having selected the relevant text, we noticed that different research participants often used the same or similar words and phrases to express the same idea. These ideas are called repeating ideas, and they shed light on our research concerns” (Ibid).

The final two imperatives for crafting a grounded theory from data are to “develop theoretical constructs by grouping themes into more abstract concepts consistent with your theoretical framework” and to “create a theoretical narrative by retelling the participant’s story in terms of the theoretical constructs” (Ibid, p.
This process represents more sorting into ever more abstract and theoretical constructs. The theoretical narrative is the summation of “what we ha[ve] learned about our research concerns” (Ibid, p. 40).

**H. Presentation of Findings**

After analyzing the data, I will present my findings in a written report along with commentary. Janesick (2003) coaches, “following the fieldwork, ... the researcher must make empirical assertions supported by direct quotations from notes and interviews. The researcher also needs to provide some interpretive commentary framing the key findings in the study” (p. 62). In the write-up, I will select participant commentary that provides rich description in support of the theoretical constructs. Weiss (1995) counsels, “our interest is much more likely to be attracted by the concrete and particular than by the abstract and general.... [W]e can identify with actual people and immediately grasp real situations whereas the abstract and general requires us to understand in a more secondary way” (p. 167).

This rich description serves yet another purpose—persuasion. Merriam (1988) cites Firestone for the proposition that in quantitative and qualitative studies “different strategies are used to persuade the reader of the authenticity of the findings” where “the quantitative study must convince the reader that procedures have been followed faithfully because very little concrete description of what anyone does is provided. The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion ‘makes sense’” (p. 120). I will also include in the presentation visual depictions of the explanatory
models constructed from the data. In doing so, I follow Merriam’s calls to, “keep the display simple, including only the information that is necessary to understanding the presentation; keep the number of displays to a minimum; and mention the display in the text, keeping the display as close to its discussion as possible” (Ibid, p. 198).

III. Validity and Generalizability

Although Weiss (1995) states that “case studies regularly imply generalizations, although without assurance of their validity,” the literature does provide some ways that qualitative researchers can enhance the validity and generalizability of their research (p. 168). Merriam (1988) suggests “there are six basic strategies an investigator can use to ensure internal validity” including: triangulation, member checks, long term observation, peer examination, participatory modes of research, and articulation of researcher bias (pp. 169-70). This research project seeks to enhance validity by triangulation, member checks, and articulation of researcher bias (discussed earlier in “Role of the Researcher”).

Yin (2009) cites Patton (1987) for the proposition that there are four types of triangulation—data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation (p. 92). This study employs triangulation of data by collecting data from multiple sources including: interviews with multiple founder-participants, program literature such as fliers and websites, and an autoethnographic account. This study also employs triangulation of methods by
employing qualitative interviewing, content analysis of documents, autoethnographic narration, and reviewing the literature.

This study also employs the technique of member checking. Stake (1995) encourages member checking as a way to “help triangulate the researcher's observations and interpretations” (p. 115). He defines member checking as a process wherein the participant “is requested to examine rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured” (Ibid). Participants were sent copies of their case's data analysis so that they could clarify and/or add to anything they brought up during the qualitative interviewing sessions. I made changes consistent with the feedback obtained during member checks where such changes were supported by the weight of the other evidence gathered in the study.

Apart from ensuring validity, researchers should also strive to increase the generalizability, and hence usability, of their studies. Merriam (1988) suggests that a qualitative researcher “can improve the generalizability” of his or her study by:

Providing a rich, thick description ‘so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgment’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 124-125); establishing the typicality or modal category of the case—that is, describing how typical the program, event, or individual is compared with others in the same class, so that users can make comparisons with their own situations (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984); and conducting a cross-site or cross-case analysis.

This research project seeks to enhance generalizability by providing rich and thick description and using a multi-case design. The multi-case design was chosen for this research project for many reasons but also for the notion that it could help improve the generalizability of the research findings herein. Merriam writes, “in multicase or
cross-case analysis, the use of sampling, predetermined questions, and specific procedures for coding and analysis enhances the generalizability of findings in the traditional sense (Firestone and Herriott, 1984; James, 1981; Burlingame and Geske, 1979; Yin, 1984)” (Ibid, p. 174).

IV. Ethics

This research project has complied with the guidelines of The Ohio State University’s Office of Responsible Research Practices. I have completed the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) course for research in Social and Behavioral Sciences. I have also submitted the appropriate paperwork including an application, research protocol, interview guides, interest letters and telephone scripts, signed consent forms, as well as, signed letters of agreement with non-OSU controlled research sites for both the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University to The Ohio State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). This body initially approved the research project as an ethical research exercise on June 9, 2009 under an expedited review procedure. Permission to continue this research, along with slight modifications to allow for a follow up interview process, has been subsequently granted on an annual basis and approved by the IRB.

V. Conclusion

This thesis project employs a comparative case study design and uses qualitative methodologies. Data was collected through qualitative interviews, document analysis, and authethnographic reflections. After transcription into a textual databank, this data was coded according to emergent categories. Those
categories were subsequently grouped and organized into higher order theoretical constructs in order to generate explanatory models and narratives. Those findings are presented in a series of data chapters along with thick description and a few diagrams. I sought to enhance the validity of the research by triangulation of data and methods, member checks, and a clear articulation of the role of the researcher’s own subjectivity. I sought to enhance the generalizability of the research through rich description and a multi-case design. Throughout the project, the highest ethical standards were attended to and approved by the Institutional Review Board of The Ohio State University’s Office of Responsible Research Practices.
Chapter Five:
CREATIVE CAMPUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

I. Introduction to the Case

Chapter One introduced you to the University of Alabama (Alabama), a public land grant school that is the State of Alabama’s flagship university. The University of Alabama was one of the first schools to utilize the language of “Creative Campus” in actual practice. The program using the moniker “Creative Campus” at this school got its start as a grassroots program with little outside funding.

The founders all noted the energy that the Creative Campus generated in a place more known for staid tradition. I always thought that, “We had the energy of a small startup company—relying on each other, supporting each other's crazy ideas and brainstorming. It was fun” (Wilcox, 2009). The original Director, Dr. Scott Bridges juxtaposed that remarkable energy with the context of a conservative school, “I think we’re a status quo school. We’re an old Southern traditional school ... all of these [Creative Campus] things flew in the face of that” (Bridges, 2009).

The traditional setting dictated one of the most central and enduring features of the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama—the importance of the student internship program. The grassroots nature of their efforts, which were necessary in
getting the Creative Campus off the ground at Alabama, created an understanding of Creative Campus as a discrete, events-focused entity. One student founder commented, “At the outset, it was very much an event-planning situation ... but I think the events were important to bring people together, and get the ideas moving, and the buy in, and the, ‘Ah ha! moments’” (Mossholder, 2009).

The importance of this student internship program has, in turn, imbued the Creative Campus terminology at Alabama with a connection to project-based work and events. As one founder put it, there “are not long-standing things that are kept up ... Every year with Creative Campus and with the internship program, the projects are complete apple-basket turnover. ... [H]ere are twenty new interns, twenty new projects” (Clark, 2009).

The smaller-scale nature of the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama allows it to operate in a unique way and craft distinctive associations to the signifier “Creative Campus.” As the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Dr. Hank Lazer (2009), summarized:

We are still profoundly a learning organization, but there are no grades. We’re not a department. We’re not a discipline. We’re not even a college. All of which I think is wonderful—it allows breadth of working relationships that oftentimes just don’t occur anywhere else on campus.

While this small-scale, student-centered operation of the Creative Campus provides a distinctive platform for deploying the language, correlatively, it may also mean a more marginalized dissemination of their constructed meaning.

The way the signifier “Creative Campus” is being used during (I) policy formulation to (A) contextualize and (B) justify the program, and the way it is being
used during (II) policy implementation to (A) define and (B) build the program at the University of Alabama is explored in the next four major subsections.

II. Policy Formulation at the University of Alabama

A. The Sign Contextualizing: What the Language is Saying

The literature suggests that the rise in usage of the signifier “Creative Campus” is timely owing to the new roles that universities are taking on in the modern arts ecology. In trying to understand why the Creative Campus Initiative happened when it did at the University of Alabama, the founders there confirmed this arts-based context, but they also identified other types of contexts—political and economic—that made the usage of such terminology opportune. The way the sign “Creative Campus” is contextualized by the arts milieu at Alabama is explored in Subsection (1), while the way the sign is contextualized by the political and economic climate at Alabama is explored in Subsection (2).

1. The Context of the Modern Arts Ecology

The literature identifies several roles of the modern university that provide an important context for the emergence of the sign “Creative Campus,” including: the university as arts patron, the university as provider of arts research and development, the university as producer of creative capital, and the university as preventer of brain drain. The founders at the University of Alabama’s Creative Campus initiative focused most on the contextual factors of creative capital production and the prevention of brain drain. They were less adamant about the
Creative Campus’s rise due to the University’s role as an arts patron or an arts R&D laboratory, though some of those undercurrents were present.

The founders at the University of Alabama’s Creative Campus confirmed that the latest iteration of the arts’ march onto college campuses has assumed the guise of the creative economy’s rhetoric. The Creative Campus Coordinator, Alexis Clark (2009), emphatically articulated this particular contextual factor:

The reason to do it is to really ... allow people to explore the things that they’re passionate about through creative outlets ... because, really, why are we at the university? We’re here to develop people into the future humans they are going to become, to make them ready for the workforce.

One of the student founders, Erica Crabtree Mosholder (2009), recognized that the university’s typical task—to better educate a work force—has taken on new meanings with the rise of the creative economy. She remarked:

It doesn’t have to be job training, but I do think there is some responsibility of the University to not just give out thousands and thousands of degrees every year without really preparing students and really educating them to be functioning members of society.

She added, “I think hopefully some of the motivation for the interns is to actually work in the creative sector” (Ibid).

This new call to educate for the creative sector also necessitates a second role of the university in the modern arts ecology and one echoed by the founders at Alabama—to prevent brain drain, that is, to prevent that newly-generated creative capital from leaving the physical area of the University. The founders at Alabama emphasized this role of retention in creating context for their Creative Campus program. As the original Director mentioned, “We’ve certainly got a lot of people
here, but we don’t have many people that want to stay here” (Bridges, 2009). This problem of brain drain away from Tuscaloosa, the city housing the University of Alabama, was seen as one of the contextual factors that gave the Creative Campus a berth there.

While these “creative economy factors”—the production of creative capital and the prevention of brain drain—were the most heavily-cited contextual factors for founders at the University of Alabama, more arts-focused contextual factors were also important in the creation of the Creative Campus there. As I noticed, “The arts were central to every event because they were a gateway to achieving some theoretical objective” (Wilcox, 2009).

While the arts context became theoretically important to the new initiative there, the arts context also provided a practical way to demonstrate a continuing need for developing a Creative Campus. In effect, pointing to the arts context became a way to concretize the “problem stream” mentioned by policy theorist John Kingdon (2002). As the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, acknowledged, “One of the greatest collections of twentieth century art with an emphasis on African-American art has just been donated, and the University doesn’t have a place to house it” (Lazer, 2009). The original Director, Bridges (2009), situated the University similarly, saying:

It seems to me that the university’s responsibility is to help us understand the role of the arts relative to their ability to offer us reflection, a connection with reflectors, if you will, of the past—what you might call culture.
This idea of the university as an arts patron—providing money and space with which to support the arts and reflection—was a less-employed, though still tactically important point of advocacy for the founders, as they situated what the language of “Creative Campus” might be saying to the University of Alabama at that moment in the spring of 2005.

2. Other Contexts: Political & Economic

In considering why the Creative Campus became salient at the University of Alabama at this particular juncture in time as opposed to another, the founders identified both political and economic opportunities that added to the fertile context at Alabama.

The political opportunity to establish a Creative Campus program arose partially from the desire to craft a new image. This desire to refresh the University’s image arose in part from the state of Alabama’s historical situation as a slave state. The Chancellor of the University of Alabama system recognized the need to evolve the image of the University and recognized the potential power of the “Creative Campus” language to do just that. Dr. Scott Bridges recounted, “the Chancellor said, ‘You know, Scott, I would really like to see this Creative Campus thing not in Birmingham. I want it here. ... We need it here’” (Bridges, 2009). This political context and the potential of the Creative Campus to be a new “face” for the University was reiterated by the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer (2009):

It's a little bit the Alabama story. As you know, we’re still in our development as an institution, always in that position where, when we bring in a noted
outsider, we’re trying to show them how good we are because we assume (usually correctly) that they have an image of the Deep South that’s been frozen in the 1960s ... And so they see that we wear shoes and speak in polysyllables and have thoughts and have read books. It isn’t just NASCAR and Coach Bryant. ... [Creative Campus] assist[s] in erasing the stigma of ... cultural isolation that we have at times.

With their university attempting to be responsive to a colorful past, there was a political context at Alabama open to language and to programs that could generate a fresh face and perhaps even help the university attain prominence of a non-notorious nature.

The founders recognized that utilizing the “Creative Campus” signifier in conjunction with actual practice would be a novel concept and would provide the University, as one of the first such users, the chance to distinguish itself. The Creative Campus Coordinator, Alexis Clark (2009), explained the context at that time thusly, “[F]or me it felt like opportunities to go down the path of exploring the Creative Campus as was explained in Steven Tepper’s article, thinking about differentiating the University of Alabama in that capacity.”

Even though people recognized this unique opportunity for the University to distinguish itself, the political context at Alabama was still fraught with doubts. The original Director, Bridges (2009), remembers how one of the earlier models of a Creative Campus never made it off the drawing board, recounting, “The Chancellor walks in, and he doesn’t look really very happy, ... and he said, ‘I don’t think, quote, we’re ready to do this.’” This “pull” of institutional shame and feelings of under-preparedness played against the “push” of the alluring chance to generate a new face for the University of Alabama. This inherent tension explains the smaller scale
the program took on and also emphasizes the importance of the tenuous confluence of contextual factors that made the birth of the Creative Campus even possible at Alabama.

Not only did the contexts of the creative economy, the evolution of the university in the arts ecology, and the political sphere coalesce to create the opportunity for a practical application of the “Creative Campus” wording, so did economic forces. The Creative Campus at Alabama was founded in May 2005, riding the wave of a few “boom” years. The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, was very matter-of-fact about how important that economic context was in enabling the creation of such a new and potentially controversial program. He said, “The economic milieu is the determining factor, K? What I mean by that is Creative Campus arose here at a time of affluence, arose at a time when faculty and staff were getting big raises, when our budget was expanding” (Lazer, 2009). He quickly juxtaposed this actual context with a hypothetical one, “If I were ... making a proposal this year [2009] to establish Creative Campus, it wouldn’t happen” (Ibid).

Not only was the economic context generally favorable, establishing a Creative Campus from a grassroots perspective was not particularly economically taxing either. Alexis Clark (2009) recounted, “We didn’t need a whole lot of money. ... [B]eing as zero-budget savvy as [Kristi] and Erica were, we were able to do some pretty fantastic things with nothing.” If the ambivalent political context, wherein the University needed a new direction while being afraid of pushing the status quo too far, dictated a smaller scale undertaking, then the booming economic context
guaranteed that such a scaled-back enterprise was definitely feasible. And if the economic context made the Creative Campus Initiative feasible, then the arts context made it salient.

Even with this confluence of political and economic contexts that made the Creative Campus Initiative possible in the spring of 2005, there was still resistance. The pushback hailed, perhaps surprisingly, from some of the more established arts practitioners that saw an arts-based Creative Campus project as somewhat of an encroachment. As one student founder related it:

The arts on campus ranged from wild acceptance to staunch resistance. And, I think there was just a lot of hesitation because they didn't know what we were going to try to do. ... [T]hey've been here forever. And they fought for their funds, and they've fought for their departments. And they have a certain, you know, regimen that they follow, and so, us coming in and wanting to attach on an event, I think they were fairly afraid ... What grounds does she have to butt in?' (Mossholder, 2009).

Indeed, “What grounds does she have to butt in?” would be the controlling question. Even though the context was ripe for the introduction of and utilization of the “Creative Campus” signifier, the founders still had to grapple with how to justify such an initiative. While the context supported, even if hesitantly, what the language of “Creative Campus” could potentially say, the founders had to manipulate that language in order to find out exactly what the name “Creative Campus” could do.

B. The Sign Justifying: What Language is Doing

During the policy formulation phase of the policy cycle, cultural entrepreneurs have to find a way to justify their policy goals. This thesis explores the linguistic ways that these Creative Campus practitioners (1) as symbol
manipulators (2) framed the issue by using the language to capture public attention and link the Creative Campus to trending institutional purposes.

1. Issue Framers/Symbol Manipulators

Language is a tool used by human beings to create meaning. In order to understand the operation of the “Creative Campus” signifier in any location, it is imperative, then, to look at the primary people who are using that language. These symbol manipulators are what the policy literature refers to as issue framers or “identification and attention groups” (Cobb & Ross, 1997, p. 8). It is their manipulation and utilization of salient language that moves items onto and off of the institution’s agenda.

Peter Senge (1996) identifies three types of leaders he feels are necessary in order to have entrepreneurial success: local line leaders, executive leaders, internal networkers or community builders (p. 46). In order to understand who the leaders of the Creative Campus Initiative were, and therefore understand who were manipulating that symbol, this thesis will analyze the “leadership nexus” of the program at Alabama in the next three subparts (a-c).

a. Students and Support Staff as Local Line Leaders

Senge (1996) explains that local line leaders, “undertake meaningful organizational experiments to test whether new learning capabilities lead to improved business results” (Ibid). The founders at Alabama all seemed to converge on the fact that the student founders and administrative personnel took on this leadership position within the organization. The student co-founders who could be considered the “local line
leaders” were Erica Crabtree Mossholder and Kristi Wilcox. Later on, other student interns were added to the organizations structure. These students focused on more discrete, self-contained projects that filled out the content of the signifier early on. Of these other student interns, the first and one of the most important was Latoya Scott, who put together the organization’s first African-American arts event. The initial Creative Campus Coordinator, Alexis Clark, also emerged as a local line leader.

The student founders spearheaded the projects that, at least initially, were the only things “on the ground” giving the Creative Campus any form. As Erica Crabtree Mossholder (2009) related, “[H]onestly, I felt like [the student founders] were the life of Creative Campus. We had the energy, and we had the drive, and we had the will—sheer will sometimes—to take the ideas and take the path and go.” As the original Director, Bridges (2009), remembers it, the students told him, “‘Oh, Dr. Bridges, why don’t you just sit down over there and relax?!’”

The student founders engaged in the organizational experiments that became the first fruits of the Creative Campus. They organized a “date night series” that integrated social events with previously existing artistic exhibits (Promotional “Quickie”). They founded and ran an arts and cultural e-zine dubbed The Missing Ink (Ibid.). They started an arts critiquing and awards program, among many other things (The Al’s Playbill/Program). The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer (2009), recognized the experimental value and learning potential in these projects, saying that the students were “[t]o be most trusted in terms of explaining
to us what would and would not work as for student roles in the development of Creative Campus. Really, doing, everything. Seriously.”

These types of leaders are indispensible in the formation of a Creative Campus because their organizational experiments are what give initial content to the signifier. They are the initial symbol manipulators. As the Coordinator put the importance of these types of leaders in shaping meaning:

I felt like you two were the leaders and that it was really whatever y’all wanted to do was what we were going to do. ... [T]here were many times when I would go to [Kristi] or Erica for the definitive, ‘What do I do next?’ And, even if I had heard it from Scott or Hank, but then heard an answer from [Kristi] and Erica, I learned over time, my default, ‘Who do I listen to?’ was y’all (Clark, 2009).

The importance of good local line leaders in the setting at the University of Alabama was even more pronounced given the political context outlined in Part IIA above. With a political context that both yearned for a new face to the University and one that was simultaneously risk-averse, the Creative Campus needed powerful, yet non-threatening symbol manipulators. Students seemed to fit the bill perfectly. One student leader, Wilcox, compared it to being on “the front line protecting” or, alternatively, a “safety net” (Mossholder, 2009). Erica Crabtree Mossholder, agreed, pointing out that the University’s view of students in this type of leadership position was “If they fail, it’s their failure, not the oldest institution in Alabama” (Ibid).

In addition to the student founders who occupied the local line leader positions, Alexis Clark also served as a local line leader in her capacity as the Creative Campus Coordinator. As she put it, “I ... helped make these things happen” (Clark, 2009). She also undertook discrete organizational experiments like creating
a unified ticketing system for all of the arts–based departments at the University (Goals Statement)\(^1\). Erica Crabtree Mossholder recognized Clark's on-the-ground positioning, saying, “[S]he helped us ... with kind of the administrative tasks” (Mossholder, 2009).

At Alabama, the student founders and original personnel founder occupied the role of local line leaders because they were the ones who undertook the original organizational experiments. It was through their ability to bring events and programs off the drawing board and into reality that first introduced constituents to the sign “Creative Campus.”

b. **Administrators and Bureaucrats as Executive Leaders**

Senge (1996) explains that executive leaders “provide support for line leaders, develop learning infrastructures, and lead by example in the gradual process of evolving the norms and behaviors of a learning culture” (p. 46). In the founding of the Creative Campus at Alabama, three executive leaders were integral: Kellee Reinhart, Vice Chancellor for System Relations; Hank Lazer, the Associate Provost; and Judy Bonner, the Provost of the University of Alabama.

Kellee Reinhart was involved in the Creative Campus efforts when the Chancellor’s Office was still considering involvement with the Initiative. However, eventually the Chancellor’s office dropped out of the mix and work on the Creative Campus became strictly a University of Alabama undertaking, instead of a system-wide

---

\(^1\) This document, like all of the documents cited in this study, was produced by and obtained from the founders in each respective case. The documents will also remain on file with the author for a reasonable period of time.
program, and more specifically, it became a student-focused undertaking. When the shape of the Creative Campus policy formulation took this turn, Kellee Reinhart’s involvement as an executive line leader changed to a more advisory and networking capacity.

Dr. Hank Lazer played an important role in facilitating the cooperation of upper administrators like Dr. Judy Bonner. He was strategically placed in the Rose Administration building in the beginning, in close proximity to such upper administrators. The original Director, Bridges, thought that this “accommodation with Rose [wa]s important. [Hank] kn[e]w what [wa]s going on over [t]here” (Bridges, 2009). Lazer (2009) described his role as “a midwife role ... being an advocate for the possibility of a Creative Campus.” He was able to lead in this executive capacity because he was “a fairly high up administrative insider who already ha[d] some trust established and connections within that institution” (Ibid).

Lazer's proximity to the Provost allowed him to make arguments about “dollars and cents and what’s needed,” which afforded the local line leaders with a source of income that made their experimentation possible (Ibid). Lazer also acted as a navigator of sorts through the university’s administrative bureaucracy. As one student intern put it, “[H]e was kind of the tour guide, or the instructor, or the person who helped us navigate our ideas and get them to other people” (Mossholder, 2009).

Finally, Dr. Judy Bonner, the University Provost, was the last important executive leader in designing a Creative Campus at the University of Alabama. She is
“the governing person of the institution, truly .... And [holds] the purse strings. Dr. Bonner is basically, [the] thumbs up or thumbs down” (Lazer, 2009). With this gatekeeper-type function, some of the local line leaders saw her as more of a “silent” partner, from their perspective (Clark, 2009). But her approval was absolutely vital in obtaining any resources to get the Creative Campus up and running.

These executive leaders ended up using the “Creative Campus” language in a very practical, programmatic sense. To them, it was the title used to discuss a potential new endeavor for the University that they were charged with running.

c. Academics as Internal Networkers

Senge identifies the last important type of leader as the internal networker or seed carrier (Senge, 1996, p. 46). He explains that these types of leaders are the “seed carriers” of the new culture—they “move freely about the organization to find those who are predisposed to bringing about changes, help out in organizational experiments, and aid in the diffusion of new learnings” (Ibid). All of the participants acknowledged the original Director, Dr. Scott Bridges, as this internal networker character, seeing him as the torchbearer for the new research on the Creative Campus.

Bridges taught the honors seminar entitled “Arts and the Public Purpose” (UH 300 Final). The students’ final presentation in his course is widely recognized to have birthed the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama. So, it logically follows that he was the teacher-leader who was helping people learn how to use new language and the one diffusing those new learnings. He organized learning opportunities for both the local line leaders and the executive leaders. When the
executive leaders began asking, “So, where’s this Creative Campus place? Where could we go that would help us understand what ... you’re talking about?’” he organized a trip to Arizona State University to let them experience a peer-to-peer shadowing excursion in arts administration (Bridges, 2009).

His tireless thirst for knowledge and establishing a solid theoretical core was indispensable in the beginning of the Creative Campus. As one student founder said, laughing:

[A]t the very core there was Dr. Bridges, and he was the mentor and visionary and leader of new information that we needed, new ideas that we wanted to talk about, and, of course, he always had the books that we should read, and the papers, and [the], ‘They’re doing it this way.’ He was just a wealth of information. ... He always had the pertinent goals and research to back it up (Mossholder, 2009).

Apart from being the person who “was most, and probably still is, the most knowledgeable in terms of the kind of research and writing in the field,” he was the person who could “offer several possible blueprints and thoughts for direction. ... [C]all it seed thinking” (Lazer, 2009). As the Coordinator put it:

He seemed to be the person who was lighting the fire under the other people involved. ... He was the one who went outside of the University of Alabama, identified these not particularly new ways of thinking, but new ways of thinking for Alabama and presented them in a way that inspired people (Clark, 2009).

That ability to network and inspire is indicative of the internal networker. Bridges was able to take the language “Creative Campus” out of the academic dialogue and make it seem like a real possibility for other practitioners.
Together, this mix of local line leaders, executive leaders, and internal networkers made up the synergistic team of founders who established one of the first programs to use the terminology “Creative Campus.” Even though each leader was working from a different perspective, they each were becoming proficient with using the signifier “Creative Campus” and manipulating that terminology to their specific ends.

One of the threshold ways these leaders had to utilize the symbol was in using it to frame the issue of a Creative Campus on the agenda of institutional consciousness.

2. Framing Issues by Capturing Public Attention and Linking to Public Purposes

The policy literature acknowledges the two ways these symbol manipulators used the language to frame and press the issue: (a) by capturing public attention and (b) by linking the issue to public purposes.

a. Framing Issues By Capturing Public Attention

The policy and social identification literature acknowledge at least three possible ways of capturing the limited attention of relevant publics to focus them on the policy idea at hand—here the establishment of a Creative Campus. The three main ways of capturing attention include: focusing events, social identification through cognitive segmentation and structural similarity, and recombination. The founders at Alabama used the Creative Campus language (i) during focusing events and linguistically manipulated the term (ii) to create social identification through cognitive segmentation and structural similarity. However, there was no evidence
from this case that the founders emphasized the ability of the name to capture
attention through recombination.

i. Capturing Attention Though Focusing Events

The primary focusing event in the founding of the Creative Campus at
Alabama came in the form of a student honors presentation for Dr. Bridges’ class
“The Arts and the Public Purpose” (UH 300 Final). The student honors presentation
was the universally-recognized focusing event at Alabama among the founders. The
presentation came after a long behind-the-scenes struggle on the part of Dr. Bridges
to move a Creative Campus-like project onto the administration’s agenda. He had
personally lobbied, disseminated reading materials, organized presentations for the
Board of Trustees that never came to fruition, among other tasks, but nothing had
seemed to gain any traction (Bridges, 2009). The Chancellor’s office was chiefly
interested in the idea when the primary plan was to procure one large, private
donor and build an arts center downtown with the proceeds of the gift. When the
potential donors disappeared, at least for the present time, that “also meant that
there was no money there anymore, and so the interest had paled” (Ibid). In 2004,
Dr. Bridges participated in the American Assembly that birthed the Creative Campus
language, which renewed his zeal for pursuing an arts policy for the University and
gave him new language to use in his quest to do so.

Dr. Bridges characterized the student presentation as the one last card he
had left to play. He said, “This is it. ... I can’t do it anymore. ... It’s a long shot... and it
would appear Creative Campus is in the toilet” (Ibid). So, the new policy formulation
game plan became, “Alright. We’re just going to dump this into this room and see what happens” (Ibid).

The student presentation took place in May 2005 and was entitled “The Creative Campus Initiative,” introducing that language once again into the university parlance (UH 300 Final). The students had been asked to present their “thoughts on what [the] best policy option was at Alabama for integrating the arts more distinctly into the campus culture” (Wilcox, 2009). The initial policy document called for the establishment of a Vice President for Cultural Affairs within the university bureaucracy (UH 300 Final). However, it also included an “idea pad” full of ideas to put into practice on a graduated scale ranging from the immediately feasible to the pie-in-the-sky goals (Ibid). There were many various administrators gathered to hear this policy presentation ranging from the Vice President for Community Affairs, to the Provost, from the Assistant Provost, to the Dean of the School of Music.

While the Creative Campus would eventually take a much more grassroots shape than this initial policy suggested, the presentation proved to be a focusing event for the founders. Dr. Bridges said, “So, at that point ... there was an enthusiasm by the people that were there. And to the best of my knowledge, what I heard that day was the Provost standing up and saying, ‘I want you to move this forward’” (Bridges, 2009). The Coordinator acknowledged the gravity of this focusing event saying, “[T]he real thing, I think, that happened was the student presentation. ... That’s when the organizational buy in from the university perspective took place. Up
until then, I don’t think people had really pieced it together as a solid anything” (Clark, 2009).

ii. Capturing Attention Through Social Identification

In addition to using this signifier at the pivotal focusing event, the founders also manipulated the term to generate social identification with “Creative Campus” through (1) cognitive segmentation and (2) structural similarity.

1. Social Identification Via Cognitive Segmentation

According to the literature, social identification via cognitive segmentation helps capture limited public attention because it allows people to categorize and order their social environment and then locate themselves in relation to such classifications (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 20). At Alabama, founders aided this social identification process by segmenting or breaking down the large ideas behind Creative Campus into manageable portions. One student founder recounted, “I always used the research—a lot from Richard Florida and Steven Tepper. ... We had all these tid-bits and these sound bytes. I definitely used that to drive the point home” (Mossholder, 2009).

Using the name, “Creative Campus,” in the policy formulation process when they were trying to gain buy-in from constituents was one method of cognitive segmentation. As the coordinator acknowledged, “I do think that [putting a name on it] made a difference. For some ... it did make it more identifiable as a practice” (Clark, 2009). By using a name that created an identifiable category of practice and
linked it back cognitively to credible research, the founders manipulated the “Creative Campus” signifier to capture attention.

2. **Social Identification Via Structural Similarity**

The social identification literature recognizes that identification is also created by perceived similarities between a policy position and an individual constituent’s personal identity (Zott & Huy, 2007, pp. 36-37). In this case, the founders used the moniker “Creative Campus” to capture the attention of constituents who perceived themselves as having creative identities. In figuring out how to make the new initiative appealing to people, the founders honed in on the “creative” part of the “Creative Campus” terminology, which both arts and non-arts students alike could socially identify with. As one student founder explained:

I think the first people that [the name] connected us with were, of course, probably theater and dance and the art department and the English department. ... But then I think it also appealed... to anyone who considered themselves creative and independent. ... And I just tried to connect it to experiences that they may have had or that they would like to have (Mossholder, 2009).

On a larger scale, the original Director, Bridges, thought that the University at large felt a desire to self-identify as creative. As he put it, there was a driving sense of, “We would like to be creative. We would like to be a Creative Campus” (Bridges, 2009). The founders used the terminology “Creative Campus” to emphasize the common identity trait of creativity between their initiative, the individual students, and the university at large. This structural similarity allowed them to gain the attention of several relevant publics during their policy formulation period.
While the literature identifies a third method of capturing public attention—recombination—that tactic was not present in the University of Alabama case. Recombination, or the idea of coupling already familiar elements in new combinations, is one way to create a sense of incremental as opposed to wholesale change (Kingdon, 2002, p. 210). It is feasible that a name like “Creative Campus” could combine two already familiar elements—the arts/creativity and the university setting—in a new combination. However, this capacity of the signifier was not one that the founders at the University of Alabama seemed to exploit.

b. Capturing Attention by Linking Issues to Public Purposes

The policy literature indicates that issue framers can successfully frame an issue to get it onto the institutional agenda by linking their cause to the worldviews or themes that “dominate[] the political climate” at the time (Cobb & Ross, 1997, p. 15). At Alabama, the themes dominating the political climate at the time of the founding were less focused on arts and culture, and more focused on economic, community, and institutional development. As the original Director, Bridges, acknowledged:

There was no one to talk to about the value of Western Civilization, if you will, or arts learning, here at the University of Alabama—there was no one to talk to. So, the tactic was to approach it from an economic standpoint and a community enhancement standpoint (Bridges, 2009).

So, instead, the founders attempted to frame the issue by linking the language of “Creative Campus” to four predominant trending institutional purposes: (i) preparation for the creative economy, (ii) civic engagement, (iii) legitimization of
the arts, albeit to a lesser extent, and (iv) the emergent discourse of student recruitment.

i. Linking Creative Campus to Preparation for the Creative Economy

Because economic concerns were already present on the public agenda in Tuscaloosa, Alabama at the time of the founding, the Creative Campus practitioners found it necessary to link their program with such goals. The original Director, Bridges, acknowledged the peril of taking a purely arts-tactic in framing the issue of a Creative Campus when he said, “[T]he obstacle[] I felt I was encountering was, ‘Why would we invest in creativity and the arts?’ And ... my navigation tool was, to consider that from an economic standpoint” (Ibid).

This “navigation tool” was a highly linguistic one, because most of the advocacy came through oral conversation or the sharing of written texts like industry magazines and reports. In the second year of operations, the Creative Campus Initiative dedicated a whole branch to Creative Economy work (2006 Branch Map). Naming the initiative “Creative Campus” provided the founders with previously-made links between the Creative Campus and the creative economy. One student founder explained the importance of this linguistic connection to issue framing at Alabama, “I think it was a good word, a good name, because using all of that literature—it felt like there was a subset of the economy. There was a place that this fit in, and I guess, naturally, it just said, ‘There’s a creative class, there’s a Creative Campus”’ (Mossholder, 2009).
ii. Linking Creative Campus to Civic Engagement

The founders next expressed the notion that community-enhancement was also already on the public consciousness at the time, so it was easy to frame the issue by linking Creative Campus advocacy to advocacy for civic engagement. As I explained to newer interns at the Creative Campus, “So, there is that piece that the campus shouldn’t be isolated, that it should be integrated into the community life of whatever community houses that institution. And I think Creative Campus can help set up some of those dialogues” (Wilcox, 2009b).

By focusing less on arts rhetoric and more on civic engagement, the founders were able to promote the arts while recasting the argument to focus public attention on the utilitarian benefits a Creative Campus might have to offer. The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Dr. Lazer, recognized this framing tactic by providing this analysis:

So, that what you’re saying to people is not, ‘Well, dammit, you ought to go to this Mozart quartet because it’s really good. You don’t have culture if you don’t like this kind of stuff, so buy a ticket.’ And instead, what you’re saying is, ‘It’s important for us, as a community, to have a culturally-rich base that we’ve branded carefully (Lazer, 2009).

Promoting the formation of a Creative Campus “brand” was one way that these founders were able to gain buy-in. By explaining how their Creative Campus initiative could help galvanize community enrichment and participation, founders at the Alabama case were able to capture the attention of a wider public than just the arts community.
iii. Legitimization of the Arts

The dominant political climate at the University of Alabama did not have the legitimization of the arts as a priority or a trending topic. However, because the arts are central to the operations of the Creative Campus program at Alabama, this dialogue could not be ignored. As one student founder put it, “[W]e talked a lot about that—how ... as the arts chronology at large, there was this crisis moment” (Mossholder, 2009).

While the founders wanted the arts to be part of the public dialogue that helped move the Creative Campus forward, the relation between Creative Campus practitioners and the arts on campus was sometimes tenuous. The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer (2009), views the predicament like this, “Well, as in families, oftentimes siblings or cousins that are in some ways most similar most often rub each other the wrong way. And that is often our case as well.” But even with this inherent tension, the founders linked their work, at least partially, to the legitimization of the arts because they “did see the Creative Campus as helping provide the arts with a certain sense of credibility—of making them accessible to all students at the university and therefore more widely supported by those who would one day be future alumni” (Wilcox, 2009a).

iv. An Emergent Institutional Purpose: Student Recruitment

The interviews revealed another public purpose that dominated the political landscape at Alabama at the time—a push to recruit more students to the University. The President and Provost at the University of Alabama were “deeply
committed to—in terms of their mantra—recruiting “The Best and Brightest” (Lazer, 2009). The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, saw the linkage between Creative Campus and this institutional public purpose as vital, saying:

[T]hat seems to me the kind of tidal wave that has swept us along in terms of Creative Campus and local politics linked to a time when we’re increasing recruitment of honors students, upping the number of scholarships, increasing out of state recruitment, trying to go head-to-head and recruit against more prestigious and selective institutions. And so, we need to be able to demonstrate ... what I think of as sort of boutique or specialized programs that would appeal to interesting students.

Not all of the founders appreciated having to recast the issue frame to coincide with this trending public purpose. The original Director, Bridges, lamented the advocacy shift, saying, “[T]he very idea of, of interdisciplinary, extradisciplinary activity, I think, was abandoned in favor of, ‘How can we recruit more middle class folks from Texas and Arkansas?’” (Bridges, 2009). But this “hook” has proven very fruitful for the founders of the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama, nonetheless.

In response to this purpose of recruitment, the founders have deployed the “Creative Campus” language to integrate it as much as possible to the University’s admissions efforts. The Associate Provost and Executive Director related, “the key integration ... is the admissions office, and making sure that our story is known and told as part of recruitment of students. .... And that’s happened. We’re now a routine stop for the recruitment of University Fellows,” a top-tier scholarship program for the University’s most promising undergraduates (Lazer, 2009). Because the founders were well aware that “the university was actively recruiting more people
from larger metropolitan areas, especially some of these areas listed in the creative cities,” they situated their justifications for starting a Creative Campus in that dialogue (Clark, 2009). The founders said, “[I]t was an easy selling point in that fact” (Ibid).

The University of Alabama’s usage of the sign “Creative Campus” throughout the first phase of the policy cycle, policy formulation, can be characterized by practicality.

In terms of what that sign was “saying” at Alabama to create the context for the initiative, “Creative Campus” arose there more in response to practical political and economic issues than to arts-specific causes. At Alabama, Creative Campus was a way to give the University a new image in a non-threatening way. The economic boom and small-scale initial operation made it practical and feasible.

In terms of what that sign was “doing” at Alabama to allow the founders to create justifications for moving Creative Campus onto the institutional agenda, it was effective at supporting the most prominent trending institutional purposes, which were all practical concerns for University leadership, such as preparation for the creative economy, a pathway to civic engagement and a vehicle to enhance student recruitment. The leadership nexus deployed the sign at the local, executive and internal levels in order to make these linkages by capturing attention of several different publics. The student honor’s presentation was the pivotal focusing event
that introduced the language and created a window of opportunity to move Creative
Campus onto Alabama’s institutional agenda.

Once it found a place on the agenda, the founders had to move on to the
second phase of the policy cycle—policy implementation. How the sign was utilized
during that phase is explored in Section III below.

III. Policy Implementation at the University of Alabama

A. The Sign Defining: What Language is Saying

In order to understand what kind of content the signifier “Creative
Campus” is communicating at the University of Alabama, this thesis will (1) assess
the various inputs into the category; (2) look at what the local categorical schema
contains; and (3) briefly compare that local schema to see how it differs from the
prototypical category of a “Creative Campus.”

1. Inputs into the Signified Content

There are two main sources of inputs into the signified content: (a) the
founders’ visions and (b) the ensuing labeling contests. A main source of input into
the signified content of the sign is the influence of the various founders’ individual
visions. Divergences between these visions may lead to labeling contests, which also
influence the signified content.

a. Founders’ Visions

Every member of the leadership nexus is going to have a vision of what the
“Creative Campus” should mean, of what that language should say. The
implementation process, then, in one sense, is a vying to see whose vision “sticks.”
Implementation allows those visions to interact with one another to create a unique signified content at each site. This thesis will analyze the visions of significant members of the leadership nexus to understand the input of each founder’s vision into the signified content in subparts (i-v).

i. **Vision of Founder Dr. Scott Bridges, Internal Networker and Original Director of the Creative Campus**

The original Director, Dr. Scott Bridges, was vying for a Creative Campus that signified a professional arts presenting situation. He had been the one lobbying to get a major donor to build a professional arts center downtown. He had been the one reading about how a Creative Campus could be a pervasive, university-wide change maker, influencing curriculum, professor tenure systems, student evaluation, etc.

The content he sought to impose was a broad, sweeping vision of “creative problem solving models” (Bridges, 2009). He saw Creative Campus operations accomplishing three main tangible objectives: “One was to develop the Creative Campus concept, ... [to build] an arts institute, ... and the third thing was [to host] a Southern Assembly for the Arts that would be a Southeastern vision” (Ibid).

ii. **Vision of Founders Kristi Wilcox & Erica Crabtree Mossholder, Local Line Leaders and Student Co-Founders**

The student co-founders saw the Creative Campus signifying a unique internship program, centered on the arts, that had the potential to distinguish the University of Alabama and to offer a deep learning experience to students. They
generally were unaware of the conversations surrounding what a professional
presenting version of Creative Campus could signify at Alabama. As I noted about
those early days:

While there may have been conversations going on, which we were not privy
to, they were just that—conversations. Alabama never did hire a staff of
professionals to fulfill our original policy goal of having a Vice President of
Cultural Affairs. It did not move on its partnership with Arizona State. It did
not build an arts center downtown. The tangible things that the Creative
Campus at the University of Alabama produced, the things that were visible
to other people and real to the students, were the things Erica and [Kristi]
did. For all their no-budget, humbly homemade style, they made up the
content of the Creative Campus for a good while (Wilcox, 2009a).

The students chose six pilot projects during the initial year of Creative Campus
operations, which they “designed to be ‘signature project series’ wherein the theme
of the program remained constant from year to year while new interns would be
free to change the content” (Ibid). Their vision of a student-led institution that
broadened and deepened arts experiences for other students led to one of the more
emphasized aspects of the signified content at Alabama—the student-centered
internship program.

iii. Vision of Founder Judy Bonner, Executive Leader
and University Provost

Dr. Judy Bonner’s personal vision of what “Creative Campus” could signify
also focused, to a large degree, on students. Her vision for Creative Campus was one
of a laboratory for bright, capable students. Having worked in her office for a few
years, the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, commented upon her
passions, saying, “Dr. Bonner is very much a student-centered, student-oriented
person. And to hear the impetus and ideas come from students really energized her”
The Coordinator also noticed the influence of her vision from an early stage, "I think from the beginning, I had an understanding that the only reason the Provost even cared about the Creative Campus Initiative was because it was something that came from the students. And, I knew we answered to the Provost" (Clark, 2009).

Dr. Bonner's vision of a student-empowering version of the term, "Creative Campus," is reflected throughout the organization at Alabama. One local line leader pointed out:

I mean, we say it in all of our documents—we are a student-centered organization, student-driven, and we put our students up there. We’re not telling the story when we go and give our end of year report, the students are telling the story. ... [A]nd I think that [Dr. Bonner] loves that, loves that she’s hearing from the students (Ibid).

The student-centered content, then, was coming from more than one founder at the University of Alabama case.

iv. Vision of Founder Hank Lazer, Executive Leader, Associate Provost and Executive Director

Dr. Lazer's preferred content is for the "Creative Campus" to signify a boutique program with a student component that is powerful but answerable to the University administration and that focuses more on contemporary art forms. He sees Creative Campus having a boutique shape—"boutique in the sense [that] it's somewhat specialized in scope ... You have communities with a specially-identified funding source and certain limitations to scope and dimensions that have a special kind of calling or mission" (Lazer, 2009). He also is afraid that "[a]t a certain point, at a certain scale, one would lose the sort of intimacy and sense of crusade
that’s involved in what we do” (Ibid).

He prefers this definition of “Creative Campus” because he personally feels that “increasingly, sort of interdisciplinary organizations, shadow organizations, boutique organizations, are the hot places for learning right now on a lot of campuses” (Ibid). Plus, Dr. Lazer sees a need for learning that the boutique, more marginalized version of a Creative Campus can offer. He thinks, “there’s a profound need to educate the student populace about contemporary art, rather than sort of nostalgic, comfortable art” (Ibid). Lazer’s input into the signified content has largely shaped the outer shell of the program at Alabama—that is the “boutique” mission of the program, as opposed to the original Director’s vision of a more widely-integrated and influential mission. This boutique nature has not prevented growth under his leadership, with the scope of the program growing from an initial two interns to a size of sixty interns supported by the program today.

v. Vision of Founder Alexis Clark, Local Line Leader, Creative Campus Coordinator

Alexis, as opposed to all of the other founders, would have the Creative Campus take a much stricter arts tack. She says, “It’s always kind of been about the arts for me. ... I have trouble with broadening it so much so that the arts aren’t as central” (Clark, 2009). This arts-preferred content makes sense coming from Clark because her personal educational background and prior career was in arts administration and management. Her work within the Creative Campus, as a local line leader, has also been very much “on the ground” where most events have involved some sort of arts component. As the person who now works most closely
with all of the student interns, her vision of a heavily arts-centered content has
shaped the signifier there.

b. Labeling Contests as a Source of Signified Content

Not only do all of these visions mesh together to fill out the signified content
coupled with the signifier, “Creative Campus,” they also compete with each other to
do so. The literature tells us that labeling contests “occur when two or more
stakeholders attempt to define divergent realities for a given audience” (Ashforth &
Humphrey, 1997, p. 54). While it is perhaps easiest to think of labeling contests being
conducted between different schools, each of which is using the terminology “Creative
Campus” to define divergent realities, what was discovered in the Alabama case is that
labeling contests can and do take place among different founders within the same
Creative Campus program. Given all of the different visions among the founders
articulated above, it is quite logical that labeling contests would naturally take place.

The results of the labeling contests are the most important thing for
assessing what the definition behind the signifier is at any one location. The results
of these labeling contests at Alabama seemed to come from two factors—who had
power and who was the first mover.

The power factor is important in determining whose vision for the signified
content “sticks.” Power can come from many sources—financial power, political
power, prestige power, etc. As the original Director, Bridges, acknowledged about
his less-powerful position as an internal networker in the original leadership nexus,
“the problem was ... you, kind of, had two different visions of what was going on.
And this person has money, and this person doesn’t. And this person is talking to the Provost, and this person is talking to nobody” (Bridges, 2009). So, the Associate Provost and Executive Director Lazer’s vision of a boutique, more manageable program started to win out. At that point, the labeling contest became even more heated because Lazer entertained a change not only of the signified content, but also of the signifier itself, arguing for a complete name change to “Crimson Arts.” This branding debate came up in the course of planning sessions with professionals from the University’s marketing team who introduced this alternative language to possibly re-label the Creative Campus efforts, or to re-label some portion of those efforts, such that the two labels would be in simultaneous usage.

These contemplated name changes never came to fruition largely because of the other factor—the influence of the first mover. The student co-founders, who were the first to produce something tangible under that name, adamantly opposed the name change (Intern Email). I argued:

At least the Creative Campus was doing something. My central argument was that we had already built up a lot of grassroots support under the nomenclature ‘Creative Campus.’ Everyone we had talked to knew that brand. The projects we had already completed were completed and marketed under that brand (Wilcox, 2009a).

Another student founder reflected on the labeling contests going on at that time, “I think Dr. Bridges would have liked to have seen it start the way it did at Vanderbilt. [But] that wasn’t working, so we said, ‘Well, let us do what we can do.’ And what we could do were events” (Mossholder, 2009). Because the students were the first-movers, their student-based content gained a strong connection to the label that
was able to withstand an attempted name change but was not flexible enough to accommodate the vision of a less-powerful co-founder in the label contest process.

The labeling contests that occur among founders have a profound effect on what shape the programmatic content behind the signifier “Creative Campus” takes on at any one locale. At Alabama, the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, acknowledged the import that such intra-group labeling contests can have during the early policy implementation process, “Navigating ... extreme personality and philosophical differences among key personnel ... was something that had to be addressed” (Lazer, 2009).

2. The Local Categorical Schema for “Creative Campus” at the University of Alabama

The results of the input mechanisms of founders’ visions and the labeling contests that ensue then result in the creation of a local categorical schema. This linguistic construct will overlap with the prototypical definition of the sign “Creative Campus” but also diverge in important ways. This section explores the content that the signifier “Creative Campus” has come to define at the University of Alabama.

The naming literature teaches that categorization aids comprehension because the category or signifier—“Creative Campus”—activates a schema of abstracted and shared attributes between a prototypical version of that term and its local variants (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 45). The local variant of “Creative Campus” put into practical usage at the University of Alabama has several traits shared with the prototypical category—arts presenting, tolerance of failure, civic engagement, connectivity/collaboration, and student participation—but it also has
an emergent trait—the Creative Campus “twist”—that has become part of the local schema there. Even where there is significant overlap between a prototypical and local trait, the way it is expressed can also differ.

The main characteristics that make up the local schema attached to the signifier “Creative Campus,” and making up its signified content at Alabama, are discussed below in subsections (a-f).

a. **Arts Presenting**

Promoting arts presenting is a central trait of the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama. As the original Director mentioned, the place where the Initiative first began was with the question, ““How could we do a better job of presenting the arts more effectively?” (Bridges, 2009). The initial policy presented at the students’ honors presentation was an arts policy for the university. The initial directive to the student interns on their first day of work was, ““To increase student participation in the arts by some percentage”’ (Wilcox, 2009a). In line with the usage of the word “creative” in the name, an arts focus seemed to flow naturally. As one student founder commented, “The arts were the most identifiable creative activities” (Mossholder, 2009). The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, stated, the arts are “the platform or the subject matter or the performance matter for most of what we do” (Lazer, 2009).

b. **Tolerance of Failure**

Another trait in the local categorical schema at the University of Alabama is a
tolerance of failure. In explaining this feature of the program, Dr. Bridges related, “Creative Campus to me was, ‘Can we have that place here?’ Where we can take some chances? Where we can take some chances and fail? Where, in fact, we can fall flat on our face?” (Bridges, 2009). The internship program at the Creative Campus is built on a project-based model that allows students to move ideas off the drawing board and into reality. The Initiative churns out dozens of projects each year. By allowing students to try multiple, discrete projects, it gives them the freedom to attempt and the room to fail. As one founding student intern put it, “I guess when doing the programs and the events, the way that it relates to the whole pinnacle and idea is it’s a part of the process. It’s getting students to participate and ... possibly ... fail” (Mossholder, 2009).

c. Civic Engagement

Another trait important to the category “Creative Campus” at the University of Alabama, and one consistent with what the literature deems to be in the prototypical schema, is civic engagement. The importance of the connection between the campus and the community is reflected in the earliest name of the initiative at Alabama, which was originally the “Creative Campus, Creative Community Initiative” (Intern Email).

Eventually, this name was shortened to just “Creative Campus” for convenience and because a lot of the projects took place primarily on campus. This name change called into question, briefly, whether civic engagement would remain a part of the categorical schema “when we boil it back down” to just “Creative
Campus” alone (Clark, 2009). But the importance of creating civic engagement through its work remained. In the second year of the Initiative, the work began to venture off-campus with projects like the 100 Lenses photography project in the Alabama Blackbelt communities (Press Release, [http://crossroads.ua.edu/blackbelt.html](http://crossroads.ua.edu/blackbelt.html) last captured on June 14, 2011) and a physical education through dance program in an underfunded elementary school (“Children Get Dance Lessons in Schools,” [http://www.tuscaloosanews.com/article/20070422/NEWS/704220354](http://www.tuscaloosanews.com/article/20070422/NEWS/704220354) last captured on June 14, 2011). One of the founding interns expressed the importance of this feature of the categorical schema as part of her desires for the Creative Campus, saying, “I would hope that it creates students who are engaged in the community they live in, even if they’re living somewhere for a short amount of time” (Mossholder, 2009).

d. Connectivity/Interdisciplinarity/Collaboration

In alignment with what the literature identifies as typical traits for prototypical “Creative Campus” definitional schema, the local schema at Alabama also has, as a central feature, interdisciplinary collaboration and connectivity. One student co-founder identified this trait explicitly, saying, “I think a Creative Campus is one that is definitely interdisciplinary—different disciplines respect each other and work together to do things that connect ... parts of your life to other parts” (Ibid). The importance of creating collaborations as an enduring feature of their work was also echoed by the Associate Provost and Executive Director, who wants
“to make sure that what we do is not done in, ‘Oh, they’re that little isolated group in Maxwell [Hall] with the picket fence around it.’ We don’t want to be that” (Lazer, 2009).

e. Student Empowerment

Another central trait of the “Creative Campus” schema at the University of Alabama that is also found in the literature is student empowerment. The initial implementation of the policy at Alabama was student-led (Global Creative Economy Conference Proposal). As the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, noted, that sense of being student-led is no longer accurate, but describing the Creative Campus as student-centered is absolutely on par. As he put it, “our distinctive feature remains the student-centered nature of what we're doing” (Ibid). The initiative has, at all times, been housed in and answerable to the Academic Affairs office, where the Provost has given the student interns a wide latitude for intellectual freedom and organizational experimentation.

For most of the founders, this student-centered trait is the most cherished part of their definition of a Creative Campus. One student founder analyzed it this way, “I think being student-led really gave us the edge in the fact that it was something people were proud of and wanted to hear, whether it was our peers or our superiors or community members” (Mossholder, 2009).

The student-centered trait of Alabama’s local schema is also a motivating factor. When the Coordinator suffers from burnout, this feature is her touchstone. She said this trait influences her actual operation in her job:
As long as I go back to the idea of students being the heart of what we do, and offering students opportunities to ... turn their own ideas into a reality, then it brings me back to thinking that it’s important and that it matters and this time is the right time. When it becomes that, you know, bigger thing of arts policy ... then it starts to get muddy again. But as long as I go back to that—we’re serving the students, we’re giving them the opportunity — that’s how I kind of stay straight (Clark, 2009).

This feature, while shared with the prototypical schema, is more pronounced in the local categorization of “Creative Campus” than it is in the central member.

f. An Inherently Local Factor: The Creative Campus “Twist”

One emergent categorical trait that was not identified in the literature is what many of the founders dubbed “the Creative Campus twist” (Wilcox, 2009a). With all of the projects, the interns sought to produce “something with a twist ... kind of that value-added Creative Campus thing” (Wilcox, 2009b). The Coordinator explained this value-added twist as something the University expects from the Creative Campus, “They expect that we are going to offer that student who comes here for the engineering degree that opportunity outside of their degree to pursue something they love” (Clark, 2009). One student intern explained that the modus operandi of the internship program is to take “already excellent programs at the university and augment[] them—whether it be through adding a social aspect or adding a participation aspect. We took already great things going on and didn’t try to re-do them” (Mossholder, 2009). Instead, when the “Creative Campus” label was applied to an event or project, Erica Crabtree Mossholder wanted people to think, “Well, that is something that’s going to be more—more than just an event. It’s going to be interesting, exciting, important, relevant” (Ibid).
The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, provided a concrete example of what this “twist” or “something more” might be when he articulated a recent event propounded by the Creative Campus initiative. The Initiative built-up value-added “twists” surrounding the visit of a Buddhist monk and poet named Norman Fisher. The visit was exemplary of the Creative Campus twist to Lazer because it “was so multi-faceted. It included a meditation morning. It included a poetry reading at the Bama Theater downtown. It included a reading discussion from his book—*A Buddhist Reading of the Odyssey*” (Lazer, 2009).

### 3. **Comparison to Other Schemas**

Linguistically, the term “Creative Campus” comes to have meaning based on the interplay between the content of the (a) prototypical schema and the content of the (b) various other local schemas.

**a. Comparison to the Prototypical Schema**

As analyzed in Parts III(A)(2)(i-vi) above, the local schema at the University of Alabama has most of the traits that the prototypical category does, signifying a significant overlap there with traits like: tolerance of failure, civic engagement, collaboration, and student participation.

However, at Alabama the student participation and empowerment trait was very pronounced, taking prominence over some of the other prototypical traits. This emphasis on the student empowerment trait is likely a function of the conservative context of this traditional Southern school. Stevenson notes that significant change in conservative institutions is often the result of student-led initiatives (Stevenson,
The risk-averse context identified by several founders in the Alabama case likely led to the enlargement of this trait in the local schema as compared to the prototypical schema.

Because the language of “Creative Campus” had never been put into physical practice before, the prototypical schema was largely derived from scholarly writings on the idea. The Creative Campus initiative at the University of Alabama, as it is today, largely resulted from an honors class that read a lot of these scholarly texts in order to formulate an arts policy. So, it is unsurprising to find a high incidence of convergence between the prototypical and local schemas.

b. Comparison to Other Local Schemas

Differences between local schemas can also have import to the policy implementation process. While the local schema at Alabama emphasizes arts presenting as one of its traits, the prototypical schema shies away from a purely arts-based definition of creativity. However, another local schema—that of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP)—emphasizes arts presenting as the only definition of creativity. The local schema at Alabama falls somewhere in between these two extremes.

The variation among schemas has practical repercussions. The APAP’s emphasis on performing arts, and professional performing arts at that, has led them to screen grant applications for applicants who have a professional arts presenter associated with the university (Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program 2010 FAQs). Even though the Creative Campus initiative at the University of Alabama
shares the signifier “Creative Campus” with APAP’s Creative Campus Innovations
grant program, they are unable to qualify for funds easily because “there still is no
official arts presenter for the University of Alabama campus” (Lazer, 2009). Such
variations among local schemas can also lead to frustrations with common naming.
The Creative Campus Coordinator and grant writer, exclaimed, “[I]t’s not even so
much, ’if’ we can get it. It’s, ‘We’re the Creative Campus. Why shouldn’t we be
eligible?’” (Clark, 2009).

And a professional arts presenter is not on the public agenda for Alabama
right now because they emphasize this categorical trait to a different degree than
APAP’s local schema does. Alabama’s “Creative Campus,” while attentive to the arts
and to presenting them, does not seek to do so in a professional capacity, owing
largely to its overemphasis of the student empowerment trait and a lack of funding.

The interplay of content among local schemas also helps to shape the
contours of the signifier in practice. The interaction between Alabama’s definitional
schema and APAP’s is just one example of this. An exhaustive analysis here is
impractical.

**B. The Sign Building: What Language is Doing**

While analyzing the content of the definitional schemas behind a signifier
can reveal what the language is saying at any particular locale, cultural
entrepreneurs should also be interested in what the language can *do* during the
policy implementation process. The functionality of the terminology “Creative
Campus” during implementation is especially poignant (1) when choosing a signifier
with which to label the cultural entrepreneur’s endeavor, and (2) when that label choice provides practical consequences for implementation.

1. Choosing the Signifier

Choosing a signifier that is already being used—the decision to engage in common naming—can result from several different factors: (a) the search for optimal distinctiveness, (b) bandwagon pressures on naming, and (c) political and strategic motivations.

a. Optimal Distinctiveness

Optimal distinctiveness is the result of the push-pull tension in a naming decision between the built-in legitimacy offered by (i) symbolic isomorphism and the distinctive novelty offered by (ii) competitive differentiation (Glynn & Abzug, 1998, p. 109). Cultural entrepreneurs who are seeking to establish innovative new programs have to grapple with these contending forces when deciding what to name their new institutions.

The founders of the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama faced this same struggle. Ultimately, it is clear that symbolic isomorphism won out because the moniker “Creative Campus” still identifies that program. But the name debate was a central struggle during policy implementation at the University of Alabama. The Coordinator remarked on the debates the founders engaged in over this name choice. She said, “I think we spent a lot of time trying to not name it Creative Campus. ... [and] I think that if we could have named it anything else, we would have tried really hard to do it, but it just seemed like the only thing that fit” (Clark, 2009).
In order to understand why it seemed to be the only thing to fit, to understand why it offered the highest degree of optimal distinctiveness, this thesis will look at the founders’ reasons for choosing symbolic isomorphism.

i. Symbolic Isomorphism

Symbolic isomorphism is the tendency to choose a signifier that is the same one being used by another practitioner or institution that came before you in order to cash in on the legitimacy and understandability that is part of that prior practice (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 267). While the University of Alabama was one of the first schools to put that terminology into actual practice, it chose that signifier because it was symbolically isomorphic with the academic literature. The first founder to become aware of this terminology and disseminate it was the internal networker, or “seed carrier,” Dr. Bridges who first saw the “Creative Campus” language used on the Bolz Center’s website in Wisconsin (Bridges, 2009). He followed up on the academic dialogue surrounding that language and disseminated it to his students, who began using the term when formulating their arts policy for the University of Alabama. As I admitted, “We lifted that nomenclature straight out of the literature” (Wilcox, 2009a).

The symbolic isomorphism with the terminology in the literature was one of the main reasons the founders at the University of Alabama choose it to christen their initiative. The Associate Provost and Executive Director remarked on this choice:

I think that from the beginning it felt like a term that had some currency already, and I didn’t realize the full roots and extent of it, and probably still
Choosing a symbolically isomorphic term has two central benefits according to the literature, both of which seemed to be present in the Alabama case, (1) increasing legitimacy and (2) enhancing understandability.

1. **Symbolic Isomorphism Increases Legitimacy**

The founders at Alabama chose the name “Creative Campus” in part because the shared symbolism with the academic literature afforded them an instant legitimacy that would have been hard to attain otherwise. As the student co-founders agreed, “there was this ... academic heritage behind the idea of Creative Campus that lent a sort of credibility to what we were saying” (Mossholder, 2009). It was the student founders who first recognized this legitimating potential of a symbolically isomorphic name choice. The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, acknowledged the name choice being a function of the fact that “for your class and your presentation it was the nomenclature that had currency” (Lazer, 2009).

2. **Symbolic Isomorphism Enhances Understandability**

Another significant benefit to choosing a term that is already in common parlance, rather than inventing a wholly new one, is that the prior usages speeds up the public’s understanding of the new endeavor. In choosing the signifier “Creative Campus,” which was already in usage in the academic parlance, the transition to actual practice was made more understandable. One of the student founders
confirmed this aspect of the name choice, saying, “I think, why we so often used Steven Tepper’s [terminology] was that it was short, and that it was easy [and] encapsulated for people—to get [them] on board” (Mossholder, 2009).

While symbolic isomorphism may enhance understandability if the new endeavor relates enough to the prior usage, it may also have the opposite effect if the new endeavor wants to impose significantly different content. This was a concern of the Coordinator, Alexis Clark, who saw Alabama’s Creative Campus being much more arts-centric than the academic usage of that term called for. She said, “[O]ur organization is definitely still focused on the arts, but it’s a hard sell ... it’s hard to explain to students that we are an Initiative that focuses primarily on arts and creative activity with just ‘Creative Campus’ as our name” (Clark, 2009). This fear of symbolic isomorphism actually causing misunderstanding was not a fear that any of the other founders at Alabama echoed but may be a viable concern for future practitioners to consider.

ii. Competitive Differentiation

The converse of symbolic isomorphism is to choose a name that is different than any that have come before so as to competitively differentiate the new endeavor. Given that Alabama utilizes the name “Creative Campus,” it is clear that symbolic isomorphism won out over competitive differentiation but, as the interviews revealed, not without some struggle.

As mentioned previously, the intra-group labeling contests also manifested in an attempt to change the name of the initiative, or at least a portion thereof, to
“Crimson Arts.” Supporting symbolic isomorphism over competitive differentiation, I referred to these name change discussions as a mere “political dalliance” (Wilcox, 2009a).

In considering the name choice that offered them optimal distinctiveness, the founders at Alabama weighed in on the side of symbolic isomorphism. The isolated nature of Alabama’s Creative Campus program from the rest of the programs using that moniker might suggest that competitive differentiation in name choice would have been appropriate. As the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, mentioned, Alabama’s Creative Campus does not follow the recent academic discourse on the Creative Campus, participate in Creative Campus conferences, or dialogue with other Creative Campus practitioners. In contrast, they are “by intent, more responsive to local circumstance” (Lazer, 2009). This focus on responsiveness to local circumstances would seem to suggest that a competitively differentiated name could have worked for Alabama, but that choice did not ultimately win out because of the strong benefits offered by symbolic isomorphism such as legitimacy and understandability.

b. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice

While the literature theorizes that another influence on similar naming choices may be bandwagon pressure, evidence of that factor on the naming decision was not present in the Alabama case. Bandwagon pressure results in a same-naming phenomenon because multiple other entities have chosen that name, creating a
“follow the leader” allure (Glynn & Marquis, 2007, p. 30). Bandwagon pressures are often caused by a carrot (the appeal of the political spillover phenomenon, wherein people seek to repeat successful formulas), as well as, from a stick (the threat of lost legitimacy).

It is perhaps unsurprising that Alabama’s signifier choice did not depend heavily on bandwagon pressures because it was one of the first institutions to utilize this naming device in practice, as opposed to, in academic dialogue. While they chose a signifier that was symbolically isomorphic to the academic dialogue, borrowing that heritage, there was no evidence yet about whether this formula actually worked in practice—explaining the lack of spillover effects. Plus, there was no actual legitimacy to fear losing—explaining the lack of force of the “stick” on name choice at Alabama.

c. Political and Strategic Influences on Name Choice

The literature predicts three main types of political and strategic influences on name choice: (i) the force of agency, (ii) the force of competitive dynamics, and (iii) the force of strategic persistence. Each of these phenomenon were manifested in the Alabama case.

i. Agency

Choosing an organizational name is an act of agency that can be enacted to promote a strategic end (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 267). In the Alabama case, the choice of the signifier “Creative Campus” seemed to arise due to both a sense of personal agency and a sense of strategic agency.
Choosing the signifier “Creative Campus” was one way to capitalize on the sense of personal agency that came with being one of the early users of the term.

The founders at the University of Alabama felt very enthusiastic about being one of the first implementers of a tangible “Creative Campus” program (Involvement Flier).

As I readily admitted:

To be honest, there was also a sense of ownership that I felt deeply. We had been in the class that had read the articles on Creative Campus. We had crafted the arts policy named “Creative Campus.” We had spent the time on the ground pushing the Creative Campus agenda. The Creative Campus was ours. We didn’t want to let that go, even in name (Wilcox, 2009a).

In addition to this sense of personal agency, the founders all seemed to be aware that choosing “Creative Campus” as the signifier allowed them to strategically pursue an arts agenda in a less risky way. It was a strategic choice in the simplest sense because of the energy behind the terminology, “it just had a ring to it, ... ‘creative’ was a good buzzword at the time” (Mossholder, 2009). The founders thought this “buzzword” of “creative” was a strategic choice also because of the breadth built into it. I recognized and acknowledged this breadth potential of the language:

“Creativity” was a much, much broader world than the arts. From our hours of networking, I knew that some of the arts professors were some of the more temperamental, cranky, and resistant to our ideas. With “creativity” as the mantle, we could include them without having to rely on them exclusively (Wilcox, 2009a).

Breadth was important to the University of Alabama founders owing to the beleaguered position of the arts community there at the time. The original Director, Bridges, admitted to this strategic choice, “The other thing I thought at the time was
that taking an arts stance was a disaster” (Bridges, 2009). The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, regretfully seconded this position. Commenting on the choice of the “creative” nomenclature over an “arts” or “culture” nomenclature, Lazer (2009) said:

Personally, as an artist ... I kind of do wish it were otherwise. I wish that “art” and “culture” terms were more favorably received, but they’re seen as nice, but beggar, terms. And “creativity” has a different ring to it, or enters different conversations.

This ability for the term “Creative Campus” to enter into different conversations was one of the strategic factors that went behind choosing it as the name for the Initiative at the University of Alabama.

ii. Competitive Dynamics

A common naming choice suddenly groups an enterprise with other similarly-named enterprises. Once grouped, natural in-group comparisons follow. Once you join the league, so to speak, you are allowed to compete at the game. In the Alabama case, it was mostly the local line leaders who discussed the competitive dynamics underlying the name choice of “Creative Campus.”

For them, utilizing the name “Creative Campus” gave them the opportunity to gain distinction as a practical application of that term. One local line leader commented, “I felt like we were, again, one of the first to put it into action, and so, I felt like everybody was taking a little bit of interest in us and wanting to see where we went and how we did it” (Mossholder, 2009). Another added:

A final reason I wanted [the name] to remain “Creative Campus” was the glory! ... By using the name “Creative Campus,” we had the chance to be pioneers in a forum that could allow us to present our model and influence
others. If we were ‘Crimson Arts,’ no one from the American Assembly, no personage like Steven Tepper would be interested. But with “Creative Campus” we were connected and primed to be a leader (Wilcox, 2009).

The third local line leader saw this potential for distinction among “Creative Campus” practitioners stemming from the University of Alabama’s focus on student leadership within the Creative Campus initiative. She said, “we are different ... it’s the students... that ... sets us apart from the others” (Clark, 2009).

Local line leaders may very well be the ones to most fully appreciate the influence of competitive dynamics on name choice because they are the ones on the ground running the organizational “experiments,” upon which competitive comparisons are likely to be made between programs. That is not to say that competitive dynamics may not be appreciated by other founders in the leadership nexus, but in the Alabama case, it was the local line leaders who were most vocal about this pressure on name choice.

iii. Strategic Persistence

Strategic persistence in naming choice is just the “tendency to maintain the direction and emphasis of prior choices and actions in current behavior” (Chuang & Baum, 2003, p. 53). The effect of strategic persistence is one of the most clear explanations for the result of the labeling contest at the University of Alabama and the reason it continues to operate under that moniker today. The Initiative under the name “Creative Campus,” “had already built up a lot of grassroots support under th[at] nomenclature” (Wilcox, 2009a). So, it persisted strategically even when some founders felt like “‘Crimson Arts’ makes more sense for that [original policy]...
now” (Clark, 2009). However, “after we identified ‘Creative Campus’ as what was going to hold that policy that was presented from the class and was going to become what this Initiative is—once that decision was made—‘Crimson Arts’ was there” as just a dangling label with nothing to name. The momentum that had built up under the name “Creative Campus” helped it to endure even when the content that began to fill up that signifier, in some opinions, better “matched” with the term “Crimson Arts.”

After the influences of the search for optimal distinctiveness weighed in favor of symbolic isomorphism, and after the influence of personal and strategic agency weighed in favor of symbolic isomorphism, and after the influence of competitive dynamics weighed in favor of common naming, and after the influence of strategic persistence demanded that the founders stay that initial course, the name “Creative Campus” was chosen as the signifier with which they would identify their new enterprise.

2. Consequences of the Label Choice

The reason a label choice is so weighty is that there are practical consequences that come along with this linguistic decision. Some of the common consequences of a label choice identified in the literature and present in the Alabama case study are: (a) understandability, (b) consensus, and (c) control.
a. Enhancing Understandability

The literature reveals that labels can enhance understandability in two major ways: (i) by distilling complexities and (ii) through the lexicality effect. The case study at Alabama revealed both of these mechanisms at work, though not always in the ways predicted by the literature.

i. Labels Enhance Understandability by Distilling Complexities

The founders at Alabama do not regard their chosen name, “Creative Campus” as particularly simple. Instead of distilling complexities in a single name, the founders thought that this name introduced an element of confusion, but, at the same time, they thought it was concise enough to cue a productive confusion.

Labels “distill a complex and perhaps contradictory array of data into concise and coherent packages” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 43). The founders at Alabama saw the “Creative Campus” signifier performing this packaging function. The original director argued that the “Creative Campus” label “was the package, if you will” (Bridges, 2009).

But instead of distilling a bundle of complexities, for the founders at Alabama, this “package” did something else. It cued a productive curiosity among constituents who encountered the label. This curiosity was necessary since the label was not explicit. The Creative Campus Coordinator acknowledged this vagueness saying, “It [the name] was confusing, too, I think” (Clark, 2009). This confusion required the constituent to process and digest what the label could mean. As the Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, mentioned, “it posed a kind of question, simply, with two words, ‘Creative
Campus,’ that immediately asked one to think, ‘So what does that mean?’ It was concise” (Lazer, 2009). That concision was one of the greatest boons to choosing the signifier “Creative Campus” and one of the reasons the founders ended up shortening the original label, “Creative Campus, Creative Community Initiative.”

ii. **Labels Enhance Understandability by the Lexicality Effect**

The lexicality effect is the effect on cognitive processing caused by the use of a signifier with real words that already contain cultural meanings (Glynn & Marquis, 2007, p. 18). The lexicality effect should be noticed with the usage of the signifier “Creative Campus” because both “creative” and “campus” are real words with cultural meanings already attached to them. These previous cultural meanings help to speed up understanding of the new endeavor.

The lexicality effect was observed in the University of Alabama case study. The founders noticed that previous sociocultural meanings attaching to the individual words in their chosen signifier functioned as a way for people to understand their Initiative. The original Director, Bridges, said, “[I]t was also obvious that this word ‘creative’ was terribly important” (Bridges, 2009). One reason that it was important was because people had heard and dealt with the term “creative” before. In one sense, they knew what it meant. They could get on board with it. As one student founder noticed, “[The name] was just vague enough to be intriguing, and just concrete enough to be like, ‘creative,’ and ‘campus,’ ‘Okay, I follow you’” (Mossholder, 2009).
b. Building Consensus

The language of a label can function to build consensus for the new endeavor. The literature instructs that a label can build consensus in at least two ways: (i) by being ambiguous and (ii) by expanding mindshare. Both of these phenomena were present in the Alabama case.

i. Labels Build Consensus Via Ambiguity

While on the one hand, labels enhance understanding, on the other, they can build consensus because, while understandable, they are also ambiguous to a degree, allowing multiple constituencies to support the program operating under that construct. The ability for the name “Creative Campus” to be ambiguous was one of the most important consequences for choosing that label at Alabama.

The Associate Provost and Executive Director sees the usage of the word “creative” in the label being important because “it is a malleable term” (Lazer, 2009). He felt this virtue of the terminology outweighed its liabilities (Ibid). That virtuous malleability allows it to be ambiguous enough to “fit” multiple constituents, which was an important consequence in the early stages of policy implementation. As the original Director, Bridges, noted, the word “‘creative’ ... [i]t’s all over the place. ... [But] if you had used ‘arts’ or ‘culture campus,’ you would have probably left out a lot of people” (Bridges, 2009). It was important to Alabama, as may be expected of many programs in the early implementation phase of development, to not leave out a lot of people. So, using a name like “Creative Campus” that could be ambiguous enough to cast a wide
net was important. One founding intern explained the significance of the ambiguity in the term “creative” to building the necessary consensus like this, “Something can be creative and not overtly artistic, and ‘creative’ can reach into the realms of science, and sports, more so than [when] you say ‘art,’ ... [T]he word ‘creative’ just felt bigger and more encompassing” (Mossholder, 2009).

The ambiguity of the term “Creative Campus” at Alabama, though broad enough to capture the arts and more, was not always successful in building consensus. The original Director, in reflecting on some of the obstacles that came along during implementation noted, “There was, over here in the arts areas, all of those folks [who] felt that what Creative Campus was doing was, to some extent, pointing a finger at them and saying, ‘You're not doing good enough” (Bridges, 2009). Where a term is ambiguous enough to point to, activate, or gain constituents from a neighboring practice area (in this instance, the arts), practitioners should recognize that there is a potential for the ambiguity to garner consensus at the same time that there is a potential for that same ambiguity to foster dissension.

ii. Labels Build Consensus by Expanding Mindshare

A second way that a signifier, or label, may help to build consensus is by expanding mindshare—that is taking up brain and memory space in the minds of constituents (Zott, 2007, p. 33). The “Creative Campus” moniker was able to have that “sticking power,” to remain in the public consciousness. As one student founder noted, “The fact that it had a name—and a catchy name at that—was paramount. It was something that stuck in people’s mind” (Mossholder, 2009).
This consequence of the “Creative Campus” label is especially important during the early stages of policy implementation. The label had the ability to “lay stakes” in several different areas, taking up mindshare in all of them. The Creative Campus Coordinator noted this capability of the name, when she said, “in a generic way, [it] hit the arts, hit policy, hit creativity, hit the fact that it’s a campus entity” (Clark, 2009). By reaching all of these different cognitive spaces, the label’s reach was able to help the founders gain mindshare.

The founders took full advantage of this capability both in choosing the label but also in putting it to use. Not only did they label the central initiative the “Creative Campus,” they also used that language to brand several peripheral support structures, thereby expanding the mindshare even further. The founders lobbied the new student government president to create “a new committee dubbed ‘Creative Campus’” (Wilcox, 2009a). The founders also created a new “student organization called the ‘Creative Campus’” (Ibid). They also started a subgroup within the Freshman Forum, a freshman leadership extracurricular, called the “Creative Campus.” By leveraging both the ambiguity in the term and its inherent catchiness to expand their mindshare, the founders were able to build the necessary consensus to move policy implementation forward.

c. Gaining Control

Labels can help cultural entrepreneurs gain control in several ways according to the literature: (i) by becoming self-fulfilling prophecies, (ii) by projecting a desired image, (iii) by helping entrepreneurs garner resources, and all
of these processes may lead toward institutionalization. In the Alabama case, most of these processes helped move the Initiative toward a rapid institutionalization within the University's bureaucracy. In addition, a fourth mechanism for gaining control became emergent. The research revealed that a label can also help cultural entrepreneurs gain control (iv) by entering them into a network where they can both learn from others using the term and impose their signified meanings on the term.

i. **Labels Help Control by Becoming Self-Fulfilling Prophecies**

Ashforth and Humphrey write, “the imposition of a label sets in motion forces that validate the label” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 46). Even though the literature predicts that labels may create a self-fulfilling prophecy, that phenomenon was not emergent in the Alabama data. This lack of data may be due to the focus of this research, which was on the formulation and implementation stages of the policy cycle. Knowing for sure whether or not the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon came to fruition would require an inquiry into the final, policy evaluation stage of the policy cycle.

ii. **Labels Help Control by Projecting a Desired Image**

Labels can help cultural entrepreneurs lay claim to “a status that might be difficult to establish by other means” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 54). The “Creative Campus” label allowed the founders and the University of Alabama at large to lay claim to a status of being “creative” that otherwise would have been hard to come by. Especially in the face of failed attempts to get a large donor to build a
professional performing arts center or to get a system wide go-ahead from the Chancellor, the founders were left with little to work with in terms of building an image of creativity and innovation. Hence, the power of the language and of the label to set up a mirage that would hopefully actually lead to water became ever more important to them. One local line leader and student co-founder commented upon the desired image the University of Alabama sought, saying, “I think they wanted to see a lot of students be on board ... I think they wanted to see events that attracted the recognition of the community and the recognition of other academic institutions” (Mossholder, 2009).

That desire for quick recognition among other academic institutions is likely due to the big push for recruitment against these other institutions that was taking place around the time of the founding. The University needed ways to distinguish itself, and the “Creative Campus” label was able to instantly project an image that was desirable. As the original Director recognized, “we want to see ourselves as being quote ‘competitive with other major schools and [able to] say, ‘Well, we’re creative.’ ‘Cause it doesn’t cost anything to say it” (Bridges, 2009).

The research revealed that manipulating labels to this end—to project a desired image as a shortcut before actually getting there—can be frustrating to some Creative Campus practitioners. This was especially true of the original Director, Bridges, who expressed regret that the “Creative Campus” signifier became “a billboard,” or a way to “say we’re doing this ... because it sounds good. ... [But] it’s
like a pamphlet deal—we want to say it, but we don’t necessarily want to do it” (Ibid).

iii. Labels Help Control by Garnering Resources

Symbolic actions, like deploying a name, help cultural entrepreneurs acquire resources (Zott, 2007). By employing a label that had an academic heritage behind it and a culturally relevant term ("creative" as opposed to “arts”) in it, the founders discovered that the “Creative Campus” signifier made “a really big difference in terms of what conversations it enables and does not” (Lazer, 2009).

The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, pointed to a paradigm shift in the way he could advocate for resources under the new label. He said:

[B]y ... foregrounding the concept of creativity, in the Florida/Pink era, one is immediately immersed in an argument that ... has economic consequences. [A]nd ... th[at] paradigm shift ... allowed me, for example, to begin to work with the Chamber of Commerce and city leaders and people like that. ... [T]he old paradigm of an arts-based initiative would be, as an artist or someone working with an arts organization, I would go to someone and ask them for money, so that I could do the next thing I wanted to do (Ibid).

However, under the new paradigm, which was instantly signified to potential resource-holders by the name “Creative Campus,” Lazer felt like the timbre of his relationship with resource-holders had changed to one where the footing was more equal and felt more like a partnership.

iv. Labels Help Control by Providing Access to a Network

The Alabama case revealed a fourth potential way that a label such as “Creative Campus” can help founders gain control—by providing them with access to a network. Networks are important in two ways: (1) They provide practitioners
with a place to learn, but (2) they also provide practitioners with a place to impose
their own signified content—in essence, becoming a location for out-group labeling
contests.

1. Networks Provide a Place to Learn

While labels do provide the potential to join a learning network, the founders
at Alabama have not taken advantage of the learning network that the label
“Creative Campus” opens to it. The original Director emphasized the potential
available to the Creative Campus at Alabama to be a learning partner, saying:

[N]obody’s got the answer, but we can be learning partners. ...[T]hat’s what I
really saw as the potential benefit ... [D]oes the campus want to learn what
other campuses know? Or what can we share? Or can we potentially do some
research here together? ... Can we learn from each other? Can we help each
other?” ... I guess to me ... the evolved concept of the “Creative Campus” was
not that we were going to beat each other, but that we would be able to share
(Bridges, 2009).

As Dr. Bridges expressed, this notion of a learning network created by the common
naming of various Creative Campus programs is an “evolved concept of the Creative
Campus” idea. It is not a consequence of the label choice that the practitioners of the
Creative Campus at the University have taken full advantage of.

The two founders that currently still remain at the Creative Campus both
admitted to a less than robust participation in this amorphous network. The
Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, stated, “It ‘s not like I sit and read
Richard Florida’s work and Steven Tepper’s work and think, ‘Okay, now how can we
do something consistent with what this research is showing us?’” (Lazer, 2009). To
him, the work was much more local than that, at this point. Lazer pointed out that
the University of Alabama is still involved as a member of the Imagining America consortium, and has even presented at their conferences, but not much else by way of Creative Campus-specific engagement. The Coordinator admitted that a falling off from the rich theoretical founding had taken place, saying, “I don’t know that I could recall much out of [Tepper’s] article anymore” (Clark, 2009). She did mention that incoming interns still get introduced to some of the academic ideas from this network of scholars and schools, but admitted that such an introduction “probably is the [only] thing that connects us to the other schools that do it” (Ibid).

2. Networks Provide a Place to Impose Meaning

Networks also provide another locus in which labeling contests can take place and practitioners can impose their signified content onto the signifier. The label itself provides a platform from which to operate to influence the language. The original Director, Bridges, who no longer works for the Creative Campus at the University of Alabama, noted that he is no longer able to have the same types of conversations once he was out from under the mantle of the “Creative Campus” signifier. He said, “once I moved out of there, then I also moved out of relationship with the people outside” (Bridges, 2009). So, labels create a place for practitioners to have relationships as well as contests.

While the founders at the University of Alabama expressed a desire to have their local schema influence the content of other expressions of “Creative Campus,” they have not taken affirmative steps to enter that network just yet. This lack of apparent momentum to be active in a larger community of Creative Campus practice
frustrates some of the founders. The original Director, Bridges, recognized the potential to impose meaning in a significant way, saying, “what I was selling them at the time, what I would still be selling them, is [that] we have a capacity here, in terms of relationships with other schools, to be a leader” (Bridges, 2009).

The Associate Provost and Executive Director, Lazer, acknowledged the potential for Alabama to impose its signified content on the term “Creative Campus” in regards to its student internship model. He said, “Actually, if it’s a decent model, it shouldn’t be unique over time” (Lazer, 2009). It would not be unique over time because, in that network, there is a potential to impose content, and content that works would get replicated by other people deploying the language of “Creative Campus.”

However, Alabama has not pursued entrance into the network very vigorously, even for purposes of imposing its signified meaning. As the Coordinator admitted, “I think that we have missed a couple of opportunities” (Clark, 2009). She expressed frustration with using a common naming strategy while not actively pursuing this networking. She lamented:

I feel like if we’re going to call ourselves the ‘Creative Campus,’ then we should be at every stinkin’ Creative Campus conference in the United States, and we should be applying for every Creative Campus grant that exists. And if it has anything to do with being a Creative Campus, then, by golly, we should at least be learning about it. That’s how I personally feel (Ibid).

Having a unique content associated with the signifier may not mean much as far as influencing the language if a program stays out of the network provided by common naming. As the coordinator recognized about the innovative student internship
model, “I don’t know that it really gives us a major step up because we’re not at the table ... [W]e’re not involved in those big Creative Campus conventions” (Ibid).

The University of Alabama’s usage of the sign “Creative Campus” throughout the second phase of the policy cycle, policy implementation, can be seen as intensely local in an effort to create a “niche” content.

In terms of what that sign was “saying” at Alabama in providing signified content behind the phraseology, “Creative Campus” can be seen as having significant overlap with the prototypical model while hyper-emphasizing the student participation and empowerment trait in order to create a unique content for the term. The student-centered, arts-based, events-focused schema that makes up the categorical content of “Creative Campus” at Alabama is a product of the labeling contests that took place between various founders’ visions. The influence of the Provost’s passion for student leaders and the influence of students as first-movers resulted in a highly changeable, student-influenced model, while the influence of the Assistant Provost and now Associate Provost and Executive Director as a well-resourced, powerful mover resulted in a discrete, boutique-style events focus.

In terms of what the sign was doing during policy implementation, the terminology “Creative Campus” was manipulated to help the founders establish a nascent organization as one of the first-movers but has not been exploited past the local level. The common naming strategy was chosen initially for the legitimacy offered by the academic heritage and has remained in place due to the breadth of
agency it affords and the strategic momentum that had built up under that label. For the founders at Alabama, the consequences on implementation of choosing the “Creative Campus” signifier include its ability to enhance understandability, not by distilling complexities necessarily, but by inviting a productive curiosity that invited constituents to ponder the pre-learned lexical meanings of the phrase “Creative Campus.” The name also built consensus through the virtuous malleability of the ambiguous label and that label’s ability to expand mindshare by “sticking” in people’s heads. It enabled the founders to project a desired image for their organization and the university at large, without necessarily having to have that image come to fruition. Such perceptions, even where unfulfilled, enabled the founders to gain resources by using a label that allowed them to come to the table from a different position—as players instead of beggars. While the name label offers the opportunity to enter into a network for learning and labeling contests, the founders at Alabama have not capitalized on this consequence of choosing a signifier in a common naming scheme.

IV. Conclusion

The Creative Campus practitioners at the University of Alabama have deployed that name label as some of the first users to put it into actual practice. The local context at Alabama has dictated an implementation of the term that remains boutique and intensely local, a way to provide new imagery for the University in a largely non-threatening way. The founders justified their endeavors by using the term at a significant focusing event and linking the term to practical institutional
purposes like student recruitment. The various founders’ visions resulted in a symbolically isomorphic name choice with a content that emphasizes the student empowerment and participation trait, has significant overlap with the prototypical schema owing to the Initiative’s academic roots, and deemphasizes professional presenting. This label and its imposed content have had a significant effect on implementation by helping the founders to gain understanding, consensus, and control of resources. However, the founders at Alabama have not utilized the potential of the name label to enter them into a network of other Creative Campus practitioners, lessening their ability to impose their signified content on the term and to promote their model/schema on a more influential level.
Chapter Six:

CREATIVE CAMPUS AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

I. Introduction to the Case

Vanderbilt University is a private school located in the capital of Nashville, Tennessee. Vanderbilt has an exceptional reputation and an image that exudes tradition. The campus is quiet and pristine, “there aren’t bands playing on alumni hall .... There is not a lot of guerilla art” (Long Lingo, 2009). It has a social atmosphere that is “heavily concentrated on Greek life” (Long Lingo, 2009).

At Vanderbilt, the Creative Campus program is housed in the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy, a think tank and policy laboratory for “the character of expressive life in America.”

[http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter/signature-programs/]. The Creative Campus at Vanderbilt is particularly well located and well resourced. As one of the founders, Steven Tepper (2009), notes, “the Initiative is centered in a policy program that has respect nationally and locally. It’s got faculty involved who are well-known. The Dean has carved out a place for it in Arts & Sciences.... We have a donor.”
Students known as “Curb Scholars” are the main constituent of Creative Campus activity for now, but the vision is “to broaden it out ... kind of like concentric circles, with those students at the middle” (Long Lingo, 2009). However, the main founders have been faculty members thus far because their program is so new. Tepper notes, “I would say we have not wrested down the brand yet” (Tepper, 2010).

Vanderbilt has been a leader in shaping the academic dialogue and theory behind the Creative Campus with Dr. Steven Tepper’s article “The Creative Campus: Who’s No. 1?” and subsequent writings. It has also furthered the academic discussion on the Creative Campus phenomenon through hosting a conference on the Creative Campus in conjunction with the Mellon Foundation. With the institution of its own operative Creative Campus program, Vanderbilt is seeking to put some of the academic theories into practices and to change some of the dialogue about what a Creative Campus is or could be. The institution of an operative Creative Campus program was in its infancy when this research was conducted, with the majority of the qualitative interviews taking place during the design and planning year.

The way the founders of the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt University are using that language in (I) policy formulation to (A) contextualize, (B) justify, and in (II) policy implementation to (A) define, and (B) build their program are the objects of the next four major subsections.
I. Policy Formulation at Vanderbilt University

A. The Sign Contextualizing

While the literature suggests the moniker “Creative Campus” is gaining in popularity owing to some new roles for universities in the modern arts ecology, the Creative Campus program at Vanderbilt has shied away from an over-identification with arts advocacy, focusing on the university’s role in student learning and development instead. No evidence was found from the Vanderbilt case that one of the contexts for their Creative Campus program was the role of the university in providing arts patronage or that the Creative Campus program there was seen as filling a need to prevent brain drain away from Vanderbilt. Instead the contexts that emerged as being significant for the foundation of a Creative Campus program at Vanderbilt was the university’s role as an arts research engine and a producer of creative human capital.

1. Arts Research and Development

The Creative Campus model at Vanderbilt emphasizes creativity research over arts presenting. The founders at Vanderbilt think that the arts patronage context for founding Creative Campuses is an already antiquated model, and, as such, they have been leery about using the language to say that “Creative Campus” is about patronizing the arts or arts advocacy. Bill Ivey, the current director of the Curb Center and former chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts explained:

I also think that ... [if] you just say, ‘Well, we’ve got a lot of performing arts on campus, we’d like more. Hey here’s this Creative Campus thing ... with a Creative Campus we can expand our offerings by 30%. It’s a new way for us to talk about what we do,’ I think it misses the key link of being able to do
enough research and measure outcomes long enough to see that this is really making something happen. So, I have a feeling that over time, those things will start to run out of gas (Ivey, 2009).

Viewing the long-term goal as research and seeing the arts presenting context as “hotbeds of backbiting competition and scrambling for scarce resources,” the Vanderbilt founders have focused on the research and development context for Creative Campus over the arts patronage model (Ivey, 2009).

2. Producer of Creative Human Capital

The founders at Vanderbilt also see one of the university’s modern roles being the production of creative human capital. They see the Creative Campus program as one way to demonstrate Vanderbilt University's ability to fulfill this role, especially when the trend in American society is to move toward cyber learning, forcing parents to ask, “Why am I not sending my kid to the University of Phoenix?” (Ivey, 2009). The Curb Director explained their focus on this creative human capital context over the arts context, saying, “I think colleges have done a very poor job of bundling up and articulating what that value really is, and I think this can be one of the central vehicles for that. ...[U]ltimately we may have more to say to the high-, the community of higher education, than we do to the arts community” (Ivey, 2009). Another founder sees this contextual focus being a result of societal shifts that have impacted what we expect from universities today. She said, “[T]oday’s societal problems require students who can be creative thinkers. So, it’s not the creative workforce anymore, it’s kind of a broader definition” (Long Lingo 2009).
The founders at Vanderbilt see the role of producing creative human capital to be especially meaningful in today's economic recession. In a world where satisfaction will have to come more from creativity than consumption, training people on how to be creative will directly impact the quality of life that they and others can have. Ivey explained:

[If you really do start to talk about a society where a bunch of people can’t buy the big new car, can’t buy the bigger house, can’t take the longer vacation, where do people go in life to have a high quality of life? ... Our argument is that ... art-making is one of the great vehicles to a high quality of life that doesn't demand a lot of money, and the Creative Campus is a part of that, because what you are talking about is training a cohort of really bright, well-educated citizens who see creative practice, curatorial work, deep engagement with these things as being of value (Ivey, 2009).

Linking the practice of a Creative Campus to producing creative human capital—for the creative workforce, for creative problem solving, as well as, for creative quality of life in a new economic environment, the founders at Vanderbilt have emphasized this role of the modern university as the backdrop for their Creative Campus work.

**B. The Sign Justifying**

During the policy formulation phase of the policy cycle, cultural entrepreneurs have to find a way to justify their policy goals. This thesis explores the linguistic ways that Vanderbilt's Creative Campus practitioners, (1) as symbol manipulators, (2) framed the issue by using the language to capture public attention and link the Creative Campus agenda to trending institutional purposes.
1. Issue Framers/Symbol Manipulators

In Peter Senge’s theories on leadership teams, three types of leaders were identified as being important: (a) local line leaders, (b) executive leaders, and (c) internal networkers/community builders.

a. Students and Staff as Local Line Leaders

Local line leaders, “undertake meaningful organizational experiments to test whether new learning capabilities lead to improved business results” (Senge, 1996, p. 46). These are the people in the entrepreneurial endeavor trying out actual programming, hosting groups, and putting on events to see what works and what does not. Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus is still very new, so many of the organizational experiments have taken the form of pilot programs. Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus program has instituted a “salon series” in which they bring in creative industry moguls to perform, present, and offer students a “behind-the-scenes” look at the creative process, among a few other types of local experiments [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter/signature-programs/curb-programs-in-creative-enterprise-public-leadership/curb-scholars-program](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter/signature-programs/curb-programs-in-creative-enterprise-public-leadership/curb-scholars-program) (last captured on June 14, 2011).

One type of local line leader in Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus system is the student leader. The students who are most involved in the Creative Campus project at Vanderbilt are the Curb Scholars. Another set of students involved is the cohort that lives in the Creative Campus residence hall. The founders at Vanderbilt eventually see these groups of students being the ones to create the organizational content and experiments that shape what Creative Campus looks like content-wise.
As the Creative Campus residence director, JoEl Logiudice related, “[T]his is our first group [of students], and so we’ve told them, we’ve said, ‘You are the trailblazers.’ ... They’re going to be in the trenches with us, kind of helping formulate and move this forward” (Logiudice, 2009). The director of the Creative Campus taskforce reechoed this intended empowerment saying, “We’ll give them the opportunity to sort of voice their opinions so they can form the direction they’d like to take” (Ziegler 2009). However, students have not been in a place to influence the shape of the Creative Campus program structurally with this job being allocated to the internal networkers.

One student, Garrett Morgan, has served as a researcher at the Curb Center and did some of the initial comparative research on college-level creative integration during the policy formulation phase at Vanderbilt. He explained the vital, if peripheral, role that student line leaders are serving in the formulation of Creative Campus at Vanderbilt, “[M]y role has kind of shifted more to advising on ... like how students would react to certain products” (Morgan, 2009).

Another local line leader in the Vanderbilt Creative Campus leadership system is JoEl Logiudice, the director of the Creative Campus residence hall and the liaison to Creative Campus’s interface with Vanderbilt’s extracurricular community. She has been employing the “Creative Campus” language to attempt to circumscribe Creative Campus’s place in the extracurricular environment even though at Vanderbilt the heart of the Creative Campus is really curricular. Tepper states, “JoEl was using ‘Creative Campus,’ but then she was using it too broadly, and I think she
pulled back from that. ... We were worried that the brand was getting used too loosely” (Tepper, 2009).

The way local line leaders deploy the moniker in their experiments and programs is very important during policy formulation because it gives immediate content to the name, so the leadership team has to be careful about where that name is attaching in practice. The fear that Creative Campus was becoming overly-associated with the extra-curricular environment and also losing meaning because of the breadth of that use is found in Tepper’s concern and Logjudice’s judicious decision to pull back on the use of the language initially until the founders were more certain of the ways in which they wanted to deploy that language on the ground.

A final local line leader in Vanderbilt’s leadership nexus is Mel Ziegler, the chair of Vanderbilt’s Art Department and a co-chair of the Creative Campus taskforce there. Ziegler sees his studio-based, practice-based background as one reason he is capable of playing the local line leader role. He said, “[T]he Curb Center perhaps is more policy-oriented, sociology-oriented, and I feel like I’m coming at it from another point of view of just the practitioner” (Ziegler, 2009). He sees himself catalyzing the students to undertake meaningful organizational experiments and being the one to reflect on the outcomes with them. He said, “I feel like the Creative Campus [Residential] Community ... can actually be interesting because it can be experimental, and if we fail, then we look at that failure and we start over” (Ziegler, 2009).
b. Donors & Administrators as Executive Line Leaders

In Senge’s model, it is the executive line leaders that “provide support for line leaders, develop learning infrastructures, and lead by example in the gradual process of evolving the norms and behaviors of a learning culture” (Senge, 1996, p. 46). At Vanderbilt, the founding of the Creative Campus program has involved the leadership of a few important executives including Mike Curb, the foundational donor; Carolyn Dever, the Dean of Arts & Sciences; and Bill Ivey, the Director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy.

Mike Curb is the primary donor of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy. He had donated $3.5 million dollars to endow the Curb Center, which was running smoothly. However, Mr. Curb’s family has eight Vanderbilt degrees between all of them, and he “wanted to do more” (Ivey, 2009). Tepper describes the whirlwind implementation of a Creative Campus program at Vanderbilt to arise largely because of Mike Curb (Tepper, 2009). He said, “[T]he urgency of putting together a program comes from, in part, the opportunity of a funder who was extremely committed to the idea” (Tepper, 2009). By providing such significant “seed” money to put Creative Campus theory into practice, Mike Curb provided support for the line leaders to institute programmatic content that gives the term “Creative Campus” a real shape at Vanderbilt.

Carolyn Dever serves as the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. She has been the one to take responsibility for “charg[ing] the taskforce” (Long Lingo, 2009). By providing such an opportunity, possibly even a mandate, from the Dean, Dever
has signaled to the faculty members of the taskforce and the staff of the Curb Center that the Creative Campus Initiative is important. With these symbolic signals she has, like a true executive line leader, “lead by example” to signal the possibility of change for Vanderbilt (Senge, 1996, p. 46).

Finally, Bill Ivey, the Director of the Curb Center and former NEA Chairman has provided the Creative Campus program with a place to develop infrastructure. He has also provided it with leadership by his example in navigating institutional change at the National Endowment of the Arts where he instituted the Challenging America program.

c. Academics as Internal Networkers

The final important type of leader is the internal networker or seed carrier who “move[s] freely about the organization to find those who are predisposed to bringing about changes, help[s] out in organizational experiments, and aid[s] in the diffusion of new learnings” (Senge, 1996, p. 46). At Vanderbilt, the two people who have come to the fore as important internal networkers are Steven Tepper, the Associate Director of the Curb Center and a prodigious professor of sociology who has written a lot on the Creative Campus phenomenon, and Elizabeth Long Lingo, the Director the Curb Scholars Program and Creativity Initiative.

Dr. Steven Tepper wrote the foundational article on the Creative Campus movement, “Creative Campus: Who’s No. 1?” as well as “Taking the Measure of the Creative Campus” among others. Apart from being a fruitful scholar on the subject, another way that Tepper has functioned as an internal networker, diffusing new learnings,
is in his capacity as a strategic planner for the Creative Campus program at Vanderbilt. He serves as the other co-chair of the Creative Campus faculty taskforce that solicits feedback and buy-in among selected faculty members at Vanderbilt for Creative Campus work. He has also been thinking about how to compose the infrastructure to make the Creative Campus program work. He calls the key components of infrastructure his “evergreen process[es]” (Tepper, 2010). He sees these processes as being the infrastructure that makes Creative Campus “sustainable and integrated” at Vanderbilt, so that the Creative Campus can function even when he and Elizabeth Long Lingo are not around anymore. More than that, these evergreen processes will ensure that the tenets of the Creative Campus philosophy and the programming can endure beyond a single funding cycle or a single funding source in contrast to many of the Creative Campus iterations that have been dependent on the Doris Duke Creative Campus Innovations grants.

Dr. Elizabeth Long Lingo takes care of “the day-to-day activity” of the Creative Campus Initiative. She has co-authored an article with Tepper entitled “The Creative Campus: Time for a ‘C’ Change” [http://chronicle.com/article/The-Creative-Campus-Time-for/124860/](http://chronicle.com/article/The-Creative-Campus-Time-for/124860/) (last captured on June 14, 2011). As the Director, she has been thinking hard about how to develop the four-year developmental and curricular track they hope to put their Creative Campus cohorts through.

By employing local line leaders, executive leaders, and internal networkers, Vanderbilt has built an entrepreneurial team capable of implementing their Creative
Campus policy vision. One of the key tools that such entrepreneurial teams have in their work is linguistic symbolism. These leaders have utilized the “Creative Campus” language to frame the issue and push it onto the agenda of institutional consciousness.

2. Frame Issues

The policy literature suggests that there are at least two key ways these symbol manipulators use language to frame and press an issue: (a) by capturing public attention and (b) by linking the issue to public purposes.

a. By Capturing Public Attention

The policy and social identification literature acknowledge at least three possible ways of capturing the limited attention of relevant publics to focus them on the cultural entrepreneurship. The three main ways of capturing attention include: focusing events, social identification through cognitive segmentation and structural similarity, and recombination. The founders at Vanderbilt (i) did not have to use the “Creative Campus” language during focusing events, owing to their top-down approach; they (ii) did employ the term to create social identification through cognitive segmentation and structural similarity. And similar to the University of Alabama case, there was no evidence here that the Vanderbilt founders used the mechanism of recombination as a method to capture attention.

i. Focusing Events

The research did not suggest that Vanderbilt made use of the language during focusing events as a mechanism to get Creative Campus onto the agenda largely because the Creative Campus implementation process at Vanderbilt had a
much more top-down than grassroots focus. Instead of a major presentation, crisis, or arts event “kick-starting” the desire for and focus on a Creative Campus, Vanderbilt’s project got started because of interest from a large and important donor and the consequent support of the upper administration. As one founder explained this top-down method of getting Creative Campus onto the agenda, “any time you introduce anything new ... when it’s recognized at the top as a university-wide initiative, that just makes it so much easier for folks to come on board, to be part of it, and not be left out of it” (Logiudice, 2009).

The focusing event mechanism did not fit for Vanderbilt’s project when the Creative Campus concept already appealed to an important donor. As the founding team acknowledged, Vanderbilt had the luxury of not having to stage a focusing event (or take advantage of existing ones) because “we just had a particularly fortunate set of circumstances here, where the notion of the Creative Campus became a really good opportunity for the University to develop a strong relationship with an important Philanthropist in Nashville” (Tepper, 2009).

**ii. Social Identification**

In lieu of using the terminology at a significant focusing event, the founders manipulated the term to generate social identification with “Creative Campus” through (1) cognitive segmentation and (2) structural similarity.

**1. Via Cognitive Segmentation**

Cognitive segmentation is effective at capturing public attention for an issue because it allows people to categorize and order their social environment and then
locate themselves in relation to such classifications (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 20). Even though Vanderbilt hopes to add new content to the term eventually, the founders recognize the ability of that wording to create a neat category in people’s minds that will allow them to “hang their hat” on the idea. As one Vanderbilt student admitted, “[Vanderbilt] won’t need to tie in to that larger Creative Campus dialogue because we’ll have [our own thing here. And if it takes labeling it a ‘Creative Campus’ right now, to get people to pay attention to it, then that’s fine” (Morgan, 2009). The ability of the label to get people to pay attention to it is indicative of its ability to break down a complex cultural venture into a neat category—a creative, campus.

2. Structural Similarity

Social identification with an issue or cause is created by perceived similarities between a policy position and an individual constituent’s personal identity (Zott & Huy, 2007, pp. 36-37). Because people operate on a cohesive basis—we are drawn to that which is like us—using the language to create structural similarity is a very useful strategy for Creative Campus practitioners.

The practitioners at Vanderbilt used the “Creative Campus” language to highlight structural similarities between their cause and their major donor—Mike Curb. As the Director of the Curb Center explained, “Mike Curb [is] somebody who is a songwriter. He’s been a performer. He understands creativity” (Ivey, 2009). The Curb Center Director was able to contrast donors who have a strong structural similarity to the Initiative with other major philanthropists who might not be as drawn to the idea because of a lack in those structural similarities. By employing the “Creative
Campus” language strategically, the Vanderbilt founders were able to appeal to the artistic and entrepreneurial impulses that resonated with a major donor. As Tepper (2009) acknowledged:

I think Bill was particularly good at helping Mike see how the program represented sort of the tent poles of Mike’s own life.... he’s been interested in sort of public leadership and creative enterprise. So, I think the Creative Campus offered this opportunity, I mean if it was the ‘Arts Campus,’ ...

Creating structural similarity with important constituents be it donors, audiences, or other authorizers is one key way symbol manipulators can deploy the “Creative Campus” terminology to their desired effects.

Not only have the Vanderbilt founders used structural similarity to frame the issue for big donors, they have also used it to capture the attention of other important authorizers like the Board of Trustees. During one Creative Campus presentation, the founders conducted the following experiment:

[We] broke the trustees into three groups and ... had them interact with us around different aspects of creativity ... to ask, ‘What are the attributes of a creative person?’ And ... you know, ... this group of people just snapped out really a good list of what they considered to be the attributes of a creative person (Ivey, 2009).

By appealing to the trustee’s inner creative spirits, the founding team was able to generate the structural similarity capable of capturing their attention and focusing their energies on the Creative Campus Initiative there.

The ability to create structural similarity is imperative in capturing the attention of the student public, too. As one student acknowledged the value of the policy formulation work at Vanderbilt, “[I]nitially I thought—honestly, I’m not gonna lie—I was like, ‘Oh this is just policy talk; it's not gonna resonate with me. I’ve
been out in the trenches.’ I don’t know why I thought that” (Morgan, 2009). The ability of the “Creative Campus” language to generate such “resonance” with donors, administrators, and students alike is one reason the Creative Campus practitioners consistently use it to justify their work during the policy formulation phase.

The literature does identify recombination as a third method of capturing public attention, but this mechanism was not utilized in the Vanderbilt University case. Recombination, the idea of coupling already familiar elements in new combinations, is one way to create a sense of incremental as opposed to wholesale change (Kingdon, 2002, p. 210). While a name like “Creative Campus” could combine two already familiar elements—the arts/creativity and the university setting—in a new combination, painting a picture of incremental change was not as necessary at Vanderbilt since their top-down implementation already had the support of a major donor and the upper administration.

**b. Linking Issues to Trending Institutional Purposes**

A second way to get an issue onto the institutional agenda is to link the cause to the worldviews or themes that “dominate[,] the political climate” at the time (Cobb & Ross, 1997, p. 15). At Vanderbilt the public policy issues that were salient to the institution at the time of the Initiative’s founding were: (i) preparation for the creative economy and the consequent need to change the educational paradigm, (ii) civic engagement, (iii) to a lesser extent, the legitimization of the arts, and (iv) the
emergent policy concern with pushing Vanderbilt into the upper echelon of universities.

i. Preparation for the Creative Economy: Changing the Educational Paradigm

At Vanderbilt, the dominant institutional concern is the need for a new educational and curricular standard in light of the emergent creative economy. Tepper acknowledged that their use of the language of “Creative Campus” is in part a response to this institutional drive because “it fits with the growing rhetoric and interest in the creative economy” (Tepper, 2009). The Creative Campus is seen by the founders as “a kind of antidote to some of the big challenges that higher education is dealing with right now—an antivenom” (Ivey, 2009). The “Creative Campus” language then is a linguistic symbol that the educational paradigm at Vanderbilt is going to be different. You are not going to get a traditional university “campus” experience; instead, the language signals that you will get something newer and better: a “creative campus” education.

The Vanderbilt founders also used this language to frame their policy formulation as a way to distance it from the arts and focus it on curricular concerns. The Director of the Curb Center maintained, “[I]t’s so un-about art learning and arts education” (Ivey 2009). Instead, the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt is about “mak[ing] their undergraduate experience operate for them” (Ibid). Ivey acknowledged that one of the underlying public purposes to which they linked this name label is preparation for the creative economy. He noted, “[T]o the extent that there is a public purpose, it would be that undergraduates who can temper arts and
sciences knowledge with some measure of creative practice skills will be better citizens” (Ibid).

However, using the language “Creative Campus” leaves room for others to associate it with the arts, which is also a framing strategy. As one student acknowledged, “[E]ven though it means different things at different places, it’s kind of like ’Oh, there’s a return to the arts and a return to exploration, which is necessary now because you can’t major in one thing and expect to have a job in it’” (Morgan, 2009). So the language, while capable of not being tied down to arts education, is also available to capture the attention of students who may want to educate their creative and creative/artistic selves.

ii. Civic Engagement

Linking the Creative Campus Initiative to civic engagement is an especially important framing strategy because town-gown relations (or the interaction between academics located on campus and citizens located in the community housing the university) is an area in need of improvement for Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt’s Greek life has proven to be one hindrance to more significant town-gown interactions because it keeps students out of Nashville proper. As one upperclassman acknowledged, “[W]e’re really trying to get the kids out into Nashville. ... I think the problem at most schools ... [is that] the bubble that is around college campuses and everything is so self-contained, especially here because of the fraternity scene, which is massive” (Morgan, 2009).
The need to heal the traditional town-gown divide, exacerbated by the Greek scene at Vanderbilt, was already on the institutional agenda at Vanderbilt. So, linking the Creative Campus Initiative to this particular public policy made a lot of local sense. The former Chancellor Gordon Gee “was really working very hard to repair that town and gown. We had been, for many years, cloistered within our fences and didn’t have a lot of outreach into the community” (Logiudice, 2009).

iii. Legitimization of the Arts

Even though the founders at Vanderbilt have been vociferous about how their Creative Campus Initiative is not about arts presenting, if legitimatization of the arts happens to be a side effect of their work, then they are not discounting that potential public purpose as one of the justifying factors for Creative Campus. Notes from one of Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus Faculty Taskforce meetings acknowledges this sort of side-effect linkage:

Several TF [taskforce] members noted the importance of clarifying that this was ‘not about the arts.’ Others felt that the arts have historically been neglected at Vanderbilt and that the initiative, while perhaps not only about the arts, should place the arts at the center of its plans (Taskforce Minutes, Sept. 14, 2009).

This particular linkage with the arts’ legitimacy is especially salient for the local line leaders at Vanderbilt, who are arts practitioners by trade. Mel Ziegler acknowledged, “[W]hat I’m interested in is how the arts can be taken seriously. ... [E]ven though I don’t think, again, it’s just about the arts, but I do think it enables us to sort of be recognized as an equal” (Ziegler, 2009). Another local line leader, JoEl Logiudice sees the linkage between Creative Campus and the public purpose of
legitimizing the arts coming from the program’s institutional capacity to be a research site. She explained:

\[\text{W}h\text{e}n \text{y}ou \text{look} \text{at} \text{the} \text{sciences,} \text{and} \text{you} \text{look} \text{at} \text{the} \text{arts,} \text{the} \text{lack} \text{of} \text{research} \text{in} \text{terms} \text{of} \text{five} \text{years} \text{from} \text{now,} \text{ten} \text{years} \text{from} \text{now} \ldots \text{I} \text{think} \text{there} \text{needs} \text{to} \text{be} \text{more} \text{research} \text{into} \text{the} \text{impact} \text{that} \text{it} \text{has} \text{on} \text{us,} \text{not} \text{just} \text{as} \text{performers} \text{but} \text{as} \ldots \text{critical} \text{thinkers.} \text{S}o \ldots \text{we’ve} \text{set} \text{up} \text{a} \text{system} \text{for} \text{someone} \text{now} \text{to} \text{come} \text{in} \text{and} \text{really} \text{do} \text{the} \text{research,} \text{to} \text{really} \text{study} \text{the} \text{impact} \text{that} \text{it’s} \text{had} \text{on} \text{these} \text{students} \text{(Logiudice,} \text{2009).}\]

Even though this public purpose is not at the forefront of the founder’s consciousness, it is still an institutionally-relevant public purpose for the Creative Campus and one which the language allows it to link to.

While the local line leaders have been the ones to recognize the importance of linking to this sort of second-order institutional purpose, an internal networker also recognizes Creative Campus’s ability to legitimize the arts, but not in the traditional way emphasized by the local line leaders. Instead, Tepper sees the Creative Campus Initiative “provid[ing] a platform for our arts leaders on campus to become central to an effort to reform education at Vanderbilt, which I think is more exciting for them than just getting enough money to bring in one other act or to improve the facilities” (Tepper, 2009). In this sense, the founders see Creative Campus providing a new way for arts leaders to talk about the public value of the arts on campus.

iv. The “Ivy Itch”

The Vanderbilt data revealed an emergent institutional purpose, inherent to the local context—a push to catapult Vanderbilt into the upper echelon of colleges and universities—a desire I’ve termed “the Ivy itch.” The founders recognize that
Vanderbilt is in a striving phase, in which it is attempting to make the jump into this upper echelon of universities. Tepper commented, “Vanderbilt is in this really interesting time in its own growth where we are an aspiring campus, right? We’re moving up in the ranks” (Tepper, 2009). This sense of growth creates a unique framing opportunity for Creative Campus work. He continued, “[S]o, it’s a dynamic place, as opposed to institutions that are in the top ten, who... feel like they kind of already know what they are as a campus. We are still kind of becoming. Our campus is still becoming a national leader” (Tepper, 2009). The founders have framed the Creative Campus as one way to enable Vanderbilt to “find itself.”

The founders see the Creative Campus as “one way to really set themselves apart” (Logiudice, 2009). One of the internal networkers acknowledged this potential to move into this upper echelon of schools by distinguishing itself in some way, saying:

[T]here’s the Harvards and Stanfords, and there’s kind of this movement afoot by some of the top ten schools that Vanderbilt is now considered part of that top—not necessarily top ten, but the students that we’re recruiting now are students who are also applying to Harvard, Stanford, Duke (Long Lingo, 2009).

In order to keep public attention focused on their work, the founding team has tried to link the Creative Campus to this institutional push. Long Lingo announced, “So, now part of the story that we weave is ... if we want to be a top tier institution how can we differentiate Vanderbilt? It’s by really taking this creativity piece to the forefront and integrating it very deeply” (Long Lingo, 2009).
By hitching the “Creative Campus” language to trending institutional purposes like student preparedness for the creative economy, civic engagement, and the “Ivy Itch,” the Creative Campus founders at Vanderbilt have been able to successfully frame the policy issue for important constituents. A downplayed, though welcome, byproduct of this framing effort is the potential of the “Creative Campus” language to simultaneously legitimize the arts further while attending to these institutional purposes.

III. Policy Implementation at Vanderbilt University

A. The Sign Defining: What Language is Saying

In order to understand what kind of content the signifier “Creative Campus” is communicating at Vanderbilt University, this thesis will (1) assess the various inputs into the category; (2) look at what the local categorical schema contains; and (3) briefly compare that local schema to see how it differs from the prototypical category of a Creative Campus. Even though, as one founder put it, “the brand is clearer than the content,” this tripartite analysis will begin to help us understand the parameters of meaning for that term at Vanderbilt (BI).

1. Inputs into the Signified Content

There are two main sources of inputs into the signified content: (a) the founders’ visions and (b) the ensuing labeling contests. During the policy implementation phase, when cultural entrepreneurs are forming a nascent organization, the influence of each of the founder’s visions on the shape and content of the new venture is especially formative. As one founder recognized, “[I]t's
definitely personality driven in that there are strong players running this machine, and hopefully we all put into place a strong enough structure that lives on after we’ve moved on” (Logiudice, 2009). Divergences between the visions of charismatic founders can lead to in-group labeling contests, and the resulting organizational structure can lead to out-group labeling contests with other practitioners.

a. Founders’ Visions

As Peter Senge (1996) observed, there are multiple types of founders in a New cultural endeavor (p. 46). Each individual leader will have a vision for the organization based out of the role they are playing in the foundation of it.

i. Vision of the Founding Upper Administration

The upper administration at Vanderbilt University has backed the Creative Campus idea in an effort to differentiate Vanderbilt and give it a niche in the upper echelon of Ivy League schools. The leadership from the former Chancellor, Gordon Gee, dictated a vision for Creative Campus that concentrated on bringing an alternative breed of student to Vanderbilt. According to one founder, “When [Gee] arrived on campus, he said, ‘My goal is to see more students with pink hair and tattoos and nose rings’” (Logiudice, 2009).

ii. Visions of the Founding Donor, Mike Curb, & The Curb Center Director, Bill Ivey

Mike Curb is the primary donor of the Creative Campus Initiative at Vanderbilt University, who sees the “Creative Campus” terminology signifying a life in creative entrepreneurship. Mike “has had a career partly in what I would call creative entrepreneurship. He has a record company, beginning when he was 17 or
18 years old. ... and then also in government ... having served as lieutenant
governor of California” (Ivey, 2009). The founders sought to give content to the
“Creative Campus” signifier by taking organizational cues from the vision of the
founding donor. Bill Ivey explained that potential content, saying, “we could use the
Creative Campus as an umbrella and, under that, position a track for
undergraduates in creative entrepreneurship and public service—kind of combine
the tent poles of Mike’s career” (Ibid).

Bill Ivey’s vision overlaps with Mike Curb’s because Ivey, as the Director of
the Curb Center, was interested in expanding the work that the Curb Center could
do in this area. To do so, he was interested in finding a “fit” between the content
they would give to a Creative Campus Initiative and the vision that the enabling
donor would have for it.

Tepper sees Vanderbilt’s focus on curricular content being directly derivative
of Mike Curb’s initial interest, which was “How can I be part of a master’s program
that is preparing students to work in the music business?” (Tepper, 2009). Tepper
explained that Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus, in reaction to this vision, is “centering
creativity as the organizing principle for how students learn and prepare
themselves for a workforce which will require them to be creative” (Ibid).

Mr. Curb’s vision also lent content to the term by providing it with meaning
in the sense that Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus is meant to be an institutional
model/example, a way to influence and link to creative work on campuses other
than Vanderbilt’s own. Ivey explained that Curb “saw [Creative Campus] as a way of
iii. Visions of Steven Tepper and Elizabeth Long Lingo

In addition to the curricular/entrepreneurial content offered by Mike Curb’s and Bill Ivey’s visions, the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt has also been shaped by the vision of scholars Steven Tepper and Elizabeth Long Lingo. Their personal visions, too, are ones focused on “the possibilities of the Creative Campus concept to reshape how teaching and learning happens on college campuses” (Tepper, 2009). As a sociologist, this shift in educational paradigms is something that Tepper could very much take an academic approach to. As someone who was integral to spreading the initial usage of the signifier through his work, concentrating on teaching and learning, which is something not many Creative Campus programs are doing, also seems to be offering Tepper a way to reclaim the language. In their positions as internal networkers, concerned with diffusing new learnings, it makes sense that both of their visions for the organization would be ones that are set up to generate a lot of new data to study.

iv. Vision of JoEl Logiudice

The vision that JoEl Logiudice, as the Director of the Arts and Creative Engagement at Vanderbilt, brings to the terminology is one very much rooted in the co-curricular perspective. Her vision includes giving the Creative Campus content that embraces a “support system” for students. She explained, “I mean, we can’t recruit them and then throw them on campus and think, ‘Okay, they’re going to
thrive. ... There has to be the faculty in place, the curriculum in place, the co-curricular end in place” (Logiudice, 2009). This concern with having something “in place” for students could explain why the earliest content behind the “Creative Campus” signifier came in the form of the Creative Campus residence hall that she helped to spearhead.

v. Vision of Mel Ziegler

The vision of Mel Ziegler, similar to JoEl Logiudice, is rooted in the experience of students on campus. Mr. Ziegler’s vision for a Creative Campus is composed mostly of “happenings,” which are staged events, gatherings, etc. “that cause people to kind of pause and pull themselves out of their routines and challenge assumptions and challenge dominant norms on campus and so forth” (Tepper, 2010).

Even though Ziegler is also the chair of studio arts, arts advocacy is not included at the forefront of his vision for the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt. As Tepper relates about Ziegler, “he is more ‘pro-creativity, downplay the arts,’ than I am” (Tepper, 2009). Instead, his practice-based content for the signifier comes as a function of Mr. Ziegler’s personal expertise. As Tepper notes, “[Ziegler] is the world’s expert on happenings. It is his public art. I mean, literally, he’s internationally famous for making things happen” (Tepper, 2010). So the content that Mr. Ziegler is adding to the terminology at Vanderbilt is one very much concentrated on causing people, especially students, to think in a non-routine way. While this content is complementary to the curricular vision of some of the other
founders, it does not completely overlap because it is more concerned with experience rather than curriculum.

**b. Labeling Contests**

The various visions of the founding team members can lead to in-group labeling contests for Creative Campus practitioners. However, such in-group labeling contests were not very prevalent in the Vanderbilt case study. Instead, the various visions tended to complement one another and give shape to a fairly cohesive version of what the signified content of the term “Creative Campus” should be at Vanderbilt. Of course, since this resulting content has ended up being very different than that among other Creative Campus practitioners at other schools, Vanderbilt has experienced out-group labeling contests.

The visions of executive leaders like Mike Curb and Bill Ivey create a program that will be focused on educating students for jobs in creative entrepreneurship. The visions of internal networkers like Steven Tepper and Elizabeth Long Lingo indicate that the Creative Campus will be focused on curricular change that fosters such preparation for the creative economy, simultaneously providing fodder for further research. The visions of local line leaders like JoEl Logiudice and Mel Ziegler are more focused on practice-based methods, but these local experiments like a Creative Campus residence hall and Creative Campus happenings complement the curricular focus with an experiential education that helps to achieve the same ends. Because the visions of the founding team members at Vanderbilt were different but not
pulling in different directions, the phenomenon of in-group labeling contests was not observed.

Several of the founders at Vanderbilt have acknowledged the presence of out-group labeling contests though—the struggle to impose Vanderbilt’s signified content on the signifier “Creative Campus” over other campuses’ content, such as the University of Alabama, Syracuse University, or any number of APAP-funded Creative Campus schools like UNC Chapel Hill or the Ohio State University. Bill Ivey sees these out-group labeling contests being among at least three “fairly distinct” factions (Ivey, 2009). He explains that the first set of Creative Campus practitioners, talks about Creative Campus in terms of ...expanding that kind of [arts presenting] work on campus, and to an extent, making it more meaningful” (Ibid). This faction comes largely out of the funding stream of APAP, whose organizational focus is professional arts presenting.

A second faction identified by Ivey is “a thread that grows out of something called Imagining America,” which is focused on the public humanities, where Creative Campus “is really about connecting campuses with the communities that surround them” (Ibid). This linguistic schema is most noticeable in the content of Syracuse University’s Creative Campus where Chancellor Nancy Cantor has been instrumental in founding the Imagining America Initiative.

Vanderbilt’s founders see Vanderbilt University as setting up a third faction of Creative Campus practitioners whose imposed content is more about “serious work in curriculum and undergraduate student development around integrating
creativity with main stream undergraduate—primarily arts & sciences—education” (Ibid). The founders see this curricular-focused content being a way “we distinguish ourselves from some of the other threads ... that are operating under the ‘Creative Campus’ brand” (Ibid). In juxtaposing their local schema against others', Vanderbilt’s founders thought that using the signifier solely in terms of arts advocacy seemed to include “an element of opportunism” whereas, “I tend to think of our approach as being a little more serious. We may not be successful in the end, but I think it’s a little more serious” (Ibid). The comparative language used by these founders shows that they recognize the out-group labeling contests happening as various Creative Campus practitioners work to make their signified content be what “sticks” to the terminology.

Vanderbilt’s ultimate success in this out-group labeling contest may depend on their ability to get more significant funders on board. Tepper explains their work with the Mellon Foundation on the topic initially resulting in content that, like the first faction, was more heavily weighted toward the arts presenting version of Creative Campus. He said, “As long as Mellon was supporting it, it was tilted toward the arts because it was coming from their arts programming officers” (Tepper, 2010).

Funding and other resources often proves influential in the outcome of labeling contests. Vanderbilt, of course, wants to change the arts policy direction influenced by the Mellon Foundation’s resources by offering up a different signified content, but getting other people on board has proven difficult. Tepper said, “We
tried to get Mellon to shift [Creative Campus] over as a cross-disciplinary project with their education folks, who weren’t interested” (Ibid). Vanderbilt’s attempted content—focused on revamping curricular practice—bucks the trend not only among other Creative Campus practitioners but also among higher education traditionalists, which may make their fight in these out-group labeling contests even harder. As Tepper acknowledged, “I think they saw Creative Campus as a fad [that] didn’t fit with how Mellon thinks about their selves as protecting tradition and higher education. So, you know we haven’t been able to get it out of the gilded ghetto from any funders’ perspective” (Ibid).

2. The Local Categorical Schema for the Term “Creative Campus” at Vanderbilt University

The results of the input mechanisms, consisting of the founders’ visions and the in-group identity resulting from their out-group labeling contests, create a local categorical schema for the signifier “Creative Campus.” The local schema both borrows from and diverges from the prototypical linguistic schema for that word construct. The naming literature holds that the use of a signifier like “Creative Campus” activates a schema of abstracted and shared attributes between the prototypical version of that term and its local variants (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 45). The main attributes comprising the local schema at Vanderbilt include: curricular development, campus-community connection through entrepreneurial service, arts enabling instead of arts presenting, a tolerance of failure, and a Creative Campus “twist.” These main attributes of their local schema allow them to fulfill their mission statement, which is “to ignite, illuminate and nurture creative practice
on campus” (Draft Strategy, April 2010). The main attributes of the local schema are discussed by turn in subsections (a-g) below.

**a. Curricular Development**

Curricular development is an emergent trait unique to the local schema of Vanderbilt’s usage. It is not found in the literature setting out the prototypical attributes of a Creative Campus. Even though it is a divergent aspect of Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus practice, it is the one they have emphasized over all the other attributes in their local schema. As Director of the Creative Campus Initiative, Dr. Long Lingo, asserts, “a growing cohort of campus leaders is viewing the ‘creative campus’ as the key to higher-ed reform” (Long Lingo, Draft Article, 2010). Curricular development to teach creativity to undergraduates is the hallmark of Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus Initiative. To them, “Creative Campus” means a “broader critique of higher education” (Long Lingo, 2009).

Their curricular content is comprised of four overarching themes: creative problem solving, creative happenings, creative conversations, and creative lives (Tepper, PowerPoint, 2010). The founders have devised coursework and extracurricular activities to coordinate with each of these four themes for their Curb Scholars. Long Lingo elaborated on some of the possible content for this largely extracurricular, four-year scholarship track, saying:

[O]ver the 4 year arc, I’m trying to create intentionality. ... The students are always getting people from different genres, or disciplines and different kind of spheres of influence. It could be a mayor or it could be Al Gore. ... So that, at the end of four years, they'll have this sense of the broad set of decision points and all these de facto policymakers who are shaping our cultural system (Long Lingo, 2009).
These scholars get the most intense, immersive Creative Campus experience at Vanderbilt, but non-Scholars students can participate in the Creative Campus in a variety of ways. Some participate in the Creative Campus residence hall. Others participate as a Creative Campus Catalyst, a group consisting of anyone seeking out a place to live that expressive life at Vanderbilt, be it students, faculty, or staff.

The curricular component is integral to implementation of the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt because it is one of the “evergreen” infrastructures that the founders have set up to perpetuate Creative Campus activity there. Tepper explains, “it seems to us that if you get a core group of faculty willing to teach these courses. ... We get students enrolled—if we do nothing else, that will continuously seed activity for the rest of the campus” (Tepper, 2010).

This curricular focus defines the Creative Campus practice all across Vanderbilt, even in the Creative Campus residence hall, which is totally co-curricular. The Creative Campus residence director, JoEl Logiudice admitted this influence, saying, “we’re really using the Curb Center scholarship—that four year plan—[to] help model our plan” (Logiudice, 2009).

The founders have even created infrastructure that will effectively keep this attribute as the dominant attribute in Vanderbilt’s local schema by fashioning the Creative Campus faculty taskforce, which is tasked, “in part, ... [with] helping us think about the curriculum” (Ibid.). This infrastructure has affected the order of implementation, which also imparts content on the signifier. At Vanderbilt, implementation is “starting with the scholar and curriculum issue. We’re going to
move to programming next” (Tepper, 2009). This order of operations shapes the content behind a name label, giving most emphasis to curricular development.

b. Campus-Community Connection Through Entrepreneurial Service

A second characteristic notable in the Vanderbilt schema is an emphasis on campus-community connections through entrepreneurial service. This service component is a function of the Creative Campus’s location in the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, which has, as one of its core principles, a strong emphasis on creative enterprise. Long Lingo explained this aspect of the Creative Campus Initiative at Vanderbilt when she described Creative Campus as something that would “give you insight into leadership, entrepreneurship in some kind of creative domain, but with a public service component of it or public service element to that” (Long Lingo, 2009).

This sense of Creative Campus bridging into the community is important to the student body at Vanderbilt as well. One rising senior said of the newly emerging Creative Campus, “I see it as a way of like getting community members on campus or Curb Scholars off campus” (Morgan, 2009). The founders see this bridging happening primarily through service and are even instituting a Creative Campus service requirement into the Curb Scholars program (Curb Scholar Program Description).

Apart from the service requirement, another structural mechanism through which the founders have emphasized this categorical trait is the institution of “an internship between the third and fourth year. We know that it will have something
to do with either government service ... or [the] arts industry” (Ivey 2009). The internship will require Creative Campus participants to put their knowledge and passion into action in an actual community.

c. Arts-Enabling Instead of Arts Presenting

While the founders at Vanderbilt have universally maintained that arts presenting is not one of the central characteristics in their local schema, the arts cannot be separated out from the Creative Campus endeavor entirely. Tepper asserts, “This is not an arts initiative. ... This is not about getting more kids to the arts. Period” (Tepper, 2009). However, he tempered that statement with a belief that “the arts are ... handmaidens or catalysts for the work we are trying to do” (Tepper, 2009). While the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt does not signify an arts content directly, the fact the arts play this “handmaiden” or “catalyst” role guarantees that signified content of the “Creative Campus” term there will at least enable the arts.

If the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt is successful in bringing attention and resources to the arts, then that is a welcome side-effect but is not a central feature of what the linguistic category contains at Vanderbilt. Tepper explained why the arts content has been pushed to the periphery of the term there:

Providing [students] with ... interesting arts experiences is a secondary benefit—valuable—but that is not what provosts and deans are waking up, saying, “You know, if our students don't get to see a Broadway show in their four years, then we have failed them.” But they are saying, “If our students are not educated for the 21st century, then we've failed them” (Tepper, 2009).
Even though a lot of the ground-level programming has included arts-based events like a night with violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain, one of the local line leaders, clarified, “if it’s all about sort of entertainment, I mean I think we’ve missed the point” (Ziegler, 2009).

However, Vanderbilt’s insistence that Creative Campus is not about arts advocacy or arts presenting does not mean that the Creative Campus’s essential features do not include an arts-enabling aspect. Ziegler recognizes this natural side effect of Creative Campus work, saying that when you see that “Creative Campus” signifier, “immediately you think of [art], and I would hope that we can get out of that. That’s not to say that it doesn’t involve those things” (Ziegler, 2009).

The founders see this characteristic of the category being strategic as far as garnering resources. They see arts presenting as “the default assumption about” Creative Campus among most people (Ivey, 2009). They want to “tamp that down because,” as one founder put it, “I know from my experience with the NEA that a traditional arts model is very squishy from an educational policy perspective. In other words—arts are seen as an amenity” (Ivey, 2009).

Perhaps one of the reasons Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus is able to deemphasize arts presenting in its categorical schema is that Vanderbilt University already had the Arts at Vanderbilt, a professional presenting program on campus. Thus this need was not as great for them, leaving room for the founders to downplay arts presenting, while still keeping an arts-enabling function on the table, in their local schema.
d. Student Participation/Empowerment

Student participation and empowerment is a feature of the Vanderbilt categorical schema in the objective, more so than in the subjective, sense. Vanderbilt’s formulation phase involved very few student leaders who were making policy decisions about how the Creative Campus would be structured and perform. Instead, the Creative Campus was conceived more of a beneficent force that would act upon them, reforming their educational experience, and teaching them creative skills. During implementation, the founders have expressed a desire to give students a bit more agency within the Creative Campus structure. Tepper acknowledged this desire, saying, “But we also want the students to help us build this, right? So, we want to remain reasonably flexible and not try and envision what they want. .... What we’re hoping is that all of those kids see themselves as curating the Creative Campus” (Tepper, 2009). Students will be empowered as “curators” at Vanderbilt, charged with fleshing out the body of Creative Campus work even if they had no part in constructing its skeleton.

e. Tolerance of Failure

In line with the idea of students “curating” the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt is another feature of their categorical schema—a tolerance of failure. One student described Creative Campus as a space where students can go to “explore things and learn how to start artistic enterprises without worrying that failure means you are not going to have a job, you are not going to support your family, ... [or] pay your
bills” (Morgan, 2009). Tepper has dubbed it an “unsafe haven ... a haven of risk and
reward” (Tepper, 2009).

The portion of Creative Campus programming located in residential life is
especially able to emphasize this facet of Creative Campus’s schema. As one local
line leader, JoEl Logiudice said, we’re “in an ideal setting in that we're co-curricular.
So, we can really push the risk taking” (Logiudice, 2009).

f. Inclusive Definition of Creativity

Because Vanderbilt’s categorical schema has de-emphasized the arts
presenting trait, it has had to incorporate a broader, more inclusive definition of
what creativity is. As one local line leader commented, “to me, creativity crosses all
disciplines” (Ziegler, 2009). One way the founders have tried to capture this
inclusive definitional trait is in the way they implemented the recruitment of their
initial cohort of Curb Scholars and residents. Logiudice commented on the diversity
in the students’ backgrounds being one factor that has helped their local categorical
schema reflect an inclusive definition of creativity. She said, “we have a very broad
[cohort], from pre-med to engineering, to religion, psychology. So, right there, you’re
going to have that intersection of the sciences and arts. So, the first initial step was
this pool of students” (Logiudice, 2009). Another structural piece of Vanderbilt’s
implementation has contributed to this categorical trait’s prominence. Logiudice
explains, “The second step was to put into place faculty members who also
represented that diversity. So, our faculty associates will be mentors to these
students” (Ibid).
g. The Creative Campus “Twist”

A local trait inherent at Vanderbilt is the idea of a “twist.” The founders say that the label should signify to the Vanderbilt community “that it’s not going to be quite your standard ... ‘sit in your seat and be static’” kind of event or program (Ibid). In attempting to describe this differentiating quality, one of the internal networkers kept using the term “cool” to define the content of the Creative Campus label. Tepper related, “I think what we’re committed to is making all of these experiences that have the ‘Creative Campus’ cache as cool and as engaging as they can be. We do not want this to be just a buffet” (Tepper, 2009).

Perhaps one way to achieve this twist or “cool factor” is through intracampus collaboration. One of the local line leaders said that the “Creative Campus” label would “implies that ... we’re approaching this from various disciplines” (Logiudice, 2009). While the founders at Vanderbilt did not heavily emphasize intracampus collaborations or interdisciplinarity as a separate feature that they were being particularly mindful of during implementation, it did come up as a way to create this certain image of the term “Creative Campus” when that name was used to label events and programs on campus.

3. Comparison to Other Schemas

Linguistically, the term “Creative Campus” comes to have meaning based on the interplay between the content of the (a) prototypical schema and the content of the (b) various other local schemas.
a. Comparison to the Prototypical Schema

As analyzed in Parts III(A)(2)(i-vi) above, the local schema at Vanderbilt University has most of the traits that the prototypical category does, signifying a significant overlap there with traits like: campus-community connection, tolerance of failure, and an inclusive definition of creativity. However, the Vanderbilt schema also diverges from this prototypical core in important ways as well.

The most critical way that it diverges is with its emphasis on curricular change. Vanderbilt’s formulation and implementation has made this characteristic the most significant trait in their local schema, and it is a trait missing from the prototypical schema. This important divergence makes the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt somewhat of an outlier in terms of the “family” of schemas giving content to that signifier.

Secondly, while Vanderbilt emphasizes campus-community connections to foster civic engagement, just like the prototypical model does, the founders envision this connection happening through a service component. The prototypical model envisions campus-community connections being fostered as a result of arts participation. So, while this local trait is not a divergence in end, it is a divergence in means.

b. Comparison to Other Local Schemas

The interplay between Creative Campus practitioners and the out-group labeling contests that ensue result in a generative tension. This pulling and pushing
between and among local schemas against each other and the prototypical schema gives content to the signifier “Creative Campus” at large.

One of Vanderbilt’s major divergences is the de-emphasis of arts presenting. A group of local schemas has grown up out of the APAP Creative Campus Innovations Grants program, which gives grant money to Creative Campus projects that have, as the central feature of their schema, arts presenting. A practical repercussion of Vanderbilt’s shift away from arts presenting is that this stream of money is unavailable to it. Of course, with a major donor like Mike Curb, Vanderbilt has had the freedom to create this new categorical content. Vanderbilt also has some leeway in terms of infrastructure to be able to focus their Creative Campus activity on creative learning instead of arts presenting because Vanderbilt already had a professional presenter. This divergence, however, does result in a significant labeling contest between Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus and the many Creative Campus programs that have been seeded through APAP and the Doris Duke Foundation.

A dissonance also exists between the local schema at Vanderbilt and the local schema at Alabama in terms of the student participation trait. The founding of the Creative Campus at Alabama generated a local schema that gave students a lot more agency and subjectivity as far as shaping what the Creative Campus would look like there. Vanderbilt’s form of student participation through curating takes a lot of this power out of the student experience.
Vanderbilt’s founders are in a unique situation as some of the first users of the name in terms of the academic dialogue and their late entrance as some of the newer users of the name in terms of actual practice. This situation, first, gives them a high degree of ownership in the language, and, second, provides them a lot of prior examples to strategize against. So, it is unsurprising, given this situation, that Vanderbilt’s local schema demonstrates a higher degree of divergence from the prototypical model than the local schema at the University of Alabama does.

B. The Sign Building: What Language is Doing

Analyzing the content of the definitional schemas behind a signifier can reveal what the language is saying at any particular locale, but cultural entrepreneurs should also be interested in how the language can actively function during the policy implementation process. The functionality of the terminology “Creative Campus” during implementation is especially poignant (1) when choosing a signifier with which to label the organizational endeavor, and (2) when that label choice results in practical consequences for implementation.

Implementation takes time, during the length of which cultural entrepreneurs utilize the naming language for a variety of purposes. As one founder at Vanderbilt noted, “I’m wanting to see things move at a much quicker pace, but that’s been my biggest obstacle—is recognizing we’re not going to implement this in a month. It’s going to take six months. It’s going to take a year” (Logiudice, 2009).
1. Choosing the Signifier

Choosing a common naming strategy—that is, labeling one's organization with a signifier that is already being used by others—can result from several different factors: (a) the search for optimal distinctiveness, (b) bandwagon pressures on naming, and (c) political and strategic motivations.

a. Optimal Distinctiveness

Optimal distinctiveness is that push-pull tension between the built-in legitimacy offered by a (i) symbolically isomorphic name and the distinctive novelty offered by a (ii) competitively differentiated name (Glynn & Abzug, 1998, p. 109). Cultural entrepreneurs who are seeking to establish innovative new programs have to weigh both of these contending forces, striving for optimal distinctiveness, when deciding what to name their new enterprises.

At Vanderbilt, the founding team decided to go with a symbolically isomorphic strategy—that is, they chose to use a common naming strategy with other Creative Campus practitioners. This section explores why the founders went with that signifier choice.

i. Symbolic Isomorphism

Symbolic isomorphism is the tendency to choose a signifier that is already being used by another practitioner or institution that came before you in order to cash in on the legitimacy and understandability that they have built up (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 267). Vanderbilt’s name choice was symbolically isomorphic both with
the literature the founders’ helped to spawn and with the programmatic Creative Campus organizations that had popped up at various universities in the meantime.

The two central benefits of symbolic isomorphism—increased legitimacy and enhanced understandability—were not motivating factors for the founders in choosing a name label.

There was no evidence among the Vanderbilt founders that a need for instant legitimacy was part of the motivation behind choosing a symbolically isomorphic name for their program. Having upper administration support and a committed donor lessened the need to use a naming strategy to gain quick legitimacy. So the fact that symbolic isomorphism legitimates was not a particularly poignant decision point in choosing a label for them.

Secondly, there was no evidence in the Vanderbilt case study that the benefit of enhanced understandability was something that made the symbolically isomorphic name attractive. Instead, Vanderbilt’s founders really were pushing against the understanding of what “Creative Campus” meant according to other schools’ local schemas.

ii. Competitive Differentiation

These benefits, which were clearly not influential to the Vanderbilt founding team, had to be weighed against the allure of choosing a competitively differentiated name. Competitive differentiation leads cultural entrepreneurs to choose signifiers that are completely different than any in current usage. However, the Vanderbilt
founders clearly did not choose a competitive differentiation strategy because they picked up the common naming language of “Creative Campus.”

The Vanderbilt founders felt that they had their best chance at optimal distinctiveness in choosing a signifier that was already being put into usage by practitioners. Even though the main benefits, according to the literature, of symbolic isomorphism were not heavy decision factors for the founders at Vanderbilt, they still chose symbolic isomorphism over competitive differentiation in their naming strategy. The literature identifies at least two other possible explanations for why this name choice occurred: bandwagon pressure or political/strategic pressure.

b. Bandwagon Pressures on Name Choice

Even though the literature theorizes another potential explanation for a common naming choices—bandwagon pressures—evidence of that factor on label choice was not present in the Vanderbilt case either. The individual “bandwagon pressures” are the spillover effect—the appeal of repeating proven, successful formulas—and the threat of lost legitimacy.

Vanderbilt’s name choice cannot be readily explained because of spillover. The Vanderbilt founders spent a lot of time talking about how they wanted to create a new model for Creative Campus. They spent a lot of time distinguishing their vision, one focused on curricular change, from a lot of the other Creative Campus programs focused on arts presenting, arts integration and arts advocacy. It was very
clear that Vanderbilt was not looking to repeat a successful formula mostly because they saw prior formulations of Creative Campus as unsuccessful.

Secondly, as discussed previously, the Vanderbilt founders did not fear the threat of lost legitimacy. Since they did not view other iterations of Creative Campus as successful models, they were not threatened by a potential lost reputation for failing to linguistically associate with those prior operations. Instead, the Vanderbilt founders were afraid that the brand itself would lose legitimacy if they did not take it up and graft their own content onto it. Thus, they have been working to “develop the Creative Campus branding strategy and website” (Draft Strategy for the Creative Campus Discovery Process, 3, April 2010).

Thus, bandwagon pressures cannot adequately explain the choice of the signifier “Creative Campus” to name the institutional program at large. However, the literature provides a few more theories that explain the strategies of signifier choice that are applicable to the founding team members at Vanderbilt.

c. The Effects of Politics and Strategy on Signifier Choice

The literature suggests that politico-strategic forces can also affect the choice of a name label and explain a common naming choice. The literature predicts three main types of political and strategic influences on name choice: (i) the force of agency, (ii) the force of competitive dynamics, and (iii) the force of strategic persistence. Each of these phenomena is manifested in the Vanderbilt case and successfully explains its adoption of the “Creative Campus” name label where optimal distinctiveness and bandwagon pressures could not.
i. Agency

Choosing an organizational name is an act of agency that is used to promote a strategic end (Glynn & Abzug, 2002, p. 267). In the Vanderbilt case, the choice of the signifier “Creative Campus” arose due to both strategic agency concerns and personal agency concerns.

Vanderbilt chose the name label, “Creative Campus,” as a strategic decision because people respond positively to the name. It did not matter to the founders that other universities were using it differently. The fact that “Creative Campus,” as a linguistic turn of phrase, could draw positive press was the telling factor. The Vanderbilt founders took it up because it was a politically sound decision to do so.

Bill Ivey explained the sense of agency that a strategic choice of title can provide by comparing it to the choice of name label for an initiative he instituted at the National Endowment for the Arts, the Challenge America program. Ivey (2009) said:

Partly you pick things [labels] because they sound like they mean something. I mean when I was the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, I came up with an initiative called Challenge America, which became very popular with Congress, and it stayed in the appropriations bill for the agency four or five years after I left. It’s a meaningless phrase. But … it’s political language.

“Creative Campus,” likewise, is political language that people respond to and that founders can employ to gain a sense of strategic agency from that response. So, even though the Vanderbilt founders were not concerned with losing legitimacy from symbolic isomorphic practice, they were concerned with losing the sense of agency that such good political language can carry.
A sense of personal agency on the part of founder, Steven Tepper, also explains the choice of signifier at Vanderbilt. Human beings feel ownership over things, be they real or intellectual property, and have strong impulses to assert control over those things. Tepper explains his sense of ownership over the “Creative Campus” language, saying, “I didn’t come up with it, but I sort of popularized it in my writing” (Tepper, 2010). His propertied kinship to the academic heritage of the Creative Campus movement provided him with a “stake” in how that language comes to function in the culture of higher education. He related, “I feel like ... people associate me with it. So, for me, it just seems like a no-brainer that whatever we did here would have that nomenclature” (Tepper, 2009). So, the cult of academic celebrity, in its way, made the sense of personal agency so strong that it made the choice of the “Creative Campus” signifier an inevitable eventuality. The sense of personal agency is not just personal to Tepper either, but other founders at Vanderbilt recognize the influence of personal agency on that name choice. Long Lingo said, “It’s just natural that we use the Creative Campus term, ... I would say primarily just because that’s been the term that Steven brought to life” (Long Lingo, 2009). Given this strong sense of personal agency and ownership over the language, this politico-personal drive is one of the stronger explanations for the signifier choice at Vanderbilt.
ii. **Competitive Dynamics**

The personal agency concern, driven by a sense of ownership over the language, which leads to a common naming choice also drives competitive dynamics because it groups an organization with other similarly-named enterprises wherein natural comparisons and tensions follow. It follows naturally that a sense of personal agency would lead Tepper to choose “Creative Campus” to name the operational program at Vanderbilt because that program would give him entrée to the labeling contests for that language. Vanderbilt’s Creative Campus program provides him, and the other founders, a platform to try and make their content stick. Plus, Vanderbilt’s founders also felt that they had a slight advantage in this competition. Ivey explains that Tepper’s “coordinating work with the American Assembly, and then the piece that he wrote that was published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ... gave us a bit of a leg up on the entire movement, just a little bit ahead of other people who were working on it” (Ivey, 2009). The feeling of personal ownership coupled with the competitive drive to enter into labeling contests over that language heavily influenced a common naming decision.

iii. **Strategic Persistence**

Strategic persistence as it relates to a name choice is just the “tendency to maintain the direction and emphasis of prior choices and actions in current behavior” (Chuang & Baum, 2003, p. 53). Changing the language is something the founders have grappled with and ultimately decided not to do, largely owing to this
sense of strategic persistence. They noted the impetus to change terminology, saying:

In thinking about the word “creative,” there was some concern that this term might not appeal to everyone. Perhaps we should think about “innovation” and “problem solving” as complements—for some students, like pre-med students, innovation might be more appealing and more inviting than “creativity” as a core concept (Sept. 14, 2009 Meeting Minutes).

However, the founders have not strayed away from using “Creative Campus” as the labeling language because they have already made prior choices to use it.

The strategic persistence started at Vanderbilt dating back to Steven Tepper’s original article in the *Chronicle*. Ever since that name came into usage, there has been an impetus at Vanderbilt to stay the course. This impetus has only been heightened since the organizational embodiment of that idea has been forming. During implementation, the founders at Vanderbilt have used that terminology to christen several different bodies, including: the main Creative Campus Initiative, housed in the Curb Center; the Creative Campus faculty taskforce, which has been integral to the curricular component that is so emphasized in their local schema; the Creative Campus residential hall, that has been central in integrating Creative Campus into the extracurricular life of Vanderbilt students; and the Creative Campus Corps, a more loose association of potentially interested players at Vanderbilt and the body through which the founders have been able to keep the arts constituencies such as the professional presenters inside the Creative Campus “loop.”
2. Consequences of Label Choice

Label choices matter because there are practical consequences that come along with this linguistic decision. Some of the common consequences of a label choice identified in the literature and present in the Vanderbilt case study are: (a) understandability, (b) consensus, and (c) control.

a. Enhancing Understandability

The literature instructs that labels can enhance understandability in two major ways: (i) by distilling complexities and (ii) through the lexicality effect. The case study at Vanderbilt revealed both of these mechanisms at work, though not always in the ways predicted by the literature.

i. Distillation of Complexities

Effective labels “distill a complex and perhaps contradictory array of data into concise and coherent packages” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 43). Tepper asserts that “Creative Campus” is “a strong brand. I think people will respond to it” (Tepper, 2010). Part of what makes “Creative Campus” a strong brand that people respond to is its ability to distill complex policy ideas—on education, on arts—into something familiar and cognizable. It is “political language,” as Ivey noted, because it simplifies issues in a way that can motivate action around a cause.

ii. Lexicality Effect

The lexicality effect enhances understanding because it is the effect on cognitive processing caused by the use of a signifier composed of real words that already contain cultural definitions (Glynn & Marquis, 2007, p. 18). This lexicality
effect was even noticed in the planning stages of the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt, among the faculty taskforce. The task force “began by questioning the two terms that make up the creative campus ("creative" and “campus.”)” (Notes from Task Force Meeting, Sept. 14, 2009). Because both of these words are words already familiar to the English language and imbued with cultural content, the lexicality effect allows those parties involved in implementation at Vanderbilt to better understand their work.

b. Building Consensus

Another consequence of label choice is that the language of a label can function to build consensus for the new endeavor. The literature instructs that a label can build consensus in at least two ways: (i) by being ambiguous and (ii) by expanding mindshare. Both of these phenomena were present in the Vanderbilt case.

i. Via ambiguity

While on the one hand, labels enhance understanding, on the other, they can build consensus because, while understandable, they are also ambiguous and allow for multiple types of people to get on board. The ability for the name “Creative Campus” to be slightly ambiguous was one of the most important consequences for choosing that label at Vanderbilt. The Director of the Creative Campus Initiative commented, “I think ‘creativity’ is ... a wonderful term because lots of people can hang their hats on it” (Long Lingo, 2009). Tepper acknowledged the ability for this ambiguity to be engaging to multiple audiences and authorizers, saying, “a lot of
people can associate that [terminology] with whatever they want to. ... ‘[C]reativity’ means a lot of different things, but it’s an inclusive term. It doesn’t have the same baggage as the word ‘art’ does or the word ‘culture’” (Tepper, 2009).

**ii. Via Expanding Mindshare**

A second way that a signifier builds consensus is by its ability to expand mindshare—that is taking up brain and memory space in the minds of constituents (Zott, 2007, p. 33). At Vanderbilt, the ability of the “Creative Campus” name label to expand mindshare was one of the most important consequences of label choice. As Bill Ivey commented, “It trips off the tongue” (Ivey, 2009). One student noted the label’s ability to generate mindshare, saying, “if you say, ‘Creative Campus,’ I think ... it’s like a buzzword almost” (Morgan, 2009). The label’s ability to generate “that buzz ... that energy” was a consequence of the label choice that the founders at Vanderbilt hoped for (Logiudice, 2009). Language is a big part of cultural entrepreneurs’ arsenals as far as expanding their portion of mindshare, and the founders at Vanderbilt knew that “Creative Campus” as a term had the sticking power to do that for them. Tepper related, “it was kind of a brilliant brand. ... [Y]ou can't underestimate the power of language to diffuse an idea. ... If they had called the American Assembly, “The Arts for the 21st Century Initiative,’ it wouldn’t have gone anywhere” (Tepper, 2009).

**c. Gaining Control**

Perhaps the most important consequence of label choice is the ability of a label to help cultural entrepreneurs gain control of resources, imagery, etc. Name
labels help to control implementation via four mechanisms: (i) by becoming self-fulfilling prophecies, (ii) by projecting a desired image, (iii) by helping entrepreneurs garner resources, and all of these processes may lead toward institutionalization, (iv) by entering organizations into a network where they can learn from others while also imposing their content onto the terminology.

i. **Labels Become Self-Fulfilling Prophecies**

Ashforth and Humphrey note the self-fulfilling tendency of labels when they write, “the imposition of a label sets in motion forces that validate the label” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1997, p. 46). For some locales, the notion that the label has the potential to actually precipitate what it claims to name, is a big draw. However, the tendency for a label to become a self-fulfilling prophecy was not one of the consequences that the founders at Vanderbilt emphasized very much.

ii. **Labels Project a Desired Image**

The ability of a label to project a desired image is one of the most important consequences of label choice for Vanderbilt, given their institutional push to become a top echelon university. As one student close to the Creative Campus Initiative noted about Vanderbilt’s image:

> Vandy is top tier, so it’s already got an established history, but what takes it higher? ... I think that by adding this Creative Campus Initiative there’s a different part of Vandy—because most people when they hear ‘Vandy’ everybody has their own assumptions, like ‘Pretty girls in pearls,’ like, ‘bad football’ (Morgan, 2009).

However, well-chosen labels are able to counteract these staid assumptions by projecting a desirable image for the university, as the student noted, "but there’s
this whole other aspect ... it’s like ‘I’ll go to Vandy, and I’ll go there because there’s this creative environment’” (Ibid). So the “Creative Campus” label acts “like a branding thing for the university as well. Here’s a way to differentiate yourself with these other top tier institutions” (Long Lingo, 2009).

Projecting a desired image has practical consequences for implementation. As Tepper notes, “I think there’s a number of kids who are coming ... [that] made a decision to come here as opposed to some of their top choices because of this program” (Tepper, 2009). Another practical consequence of projecting a desired image is that imagery does not cost a lot of money. It is “an easy, low-hanging fruit ... and I think it’s a good brand for an institution more broadly just to signal to prospective students and faculty that this is a place where things happen ... I think it fits the times” (Ibid). The ease with which the “Creative Campus” signifier can help Vanderbilt to project a desired image is one of the most important consequences on implementation that the signifier choice has had at Vanderbilt.

iii. Labels Help Garner Resources

Naming, among other symbolic actions, helps cultural entrepreneurs acquire resources (Zott, 2007). Tepper describes the ability of the “Creative Campus” name label to capture the imagination of potential donors and university leaders alike. The intriguing qualities of the linguistic signifier are what enabled the founders at Vanderbilt access to a large donation stream to fund their work.
iv. Institutionalization Crystallizes Control by Entering Organizations into a Network

An emergent consequence observed in the Alabama case that was also found in the Vanderbilt case is that the label “Creative Campus” can help founders gain control by entering them into a network. There is no formalized infrastructure for such a network. Tepper relates, “[T]here is no there there at the national level” (Tepper, 2010). Implementing such a structure has been of interest to Vanderbilt in the past, as is evidenced by their hosting of one of the early Creative Campus follow-up conferences. Ivey noted, “[W]e were able to do a few things when it was still being formed and nobody knew what shape or shapes it was going to take. So, we were able to host a conference here” (Ivey, 2009). Despite not being formalized into a conference or professional list serve just yet, an informal network of Creative Campus practitioners and theorists has two important benefits: (1) it provides a place to learn and (2) it provides a place where practitioners can vie to impose their own preferred signified content—that is, it is a locale for out-group labeling contests.

1. Networks Provide a Place to Learn

The founders at Vanderbilt have taken advantage of the learning opportunities that come from other scholars deploying the “Creative Campus” language and other practitioners’ local schemas for that term. As one local line leader related, the network has provided learning opportunities from an academic perspective, such that “when I pull my department together ... every time a new article comes out, that’s part of the required reading because it helps them see the
big picture” (Logiudice, 2009). The network also provides learning opportunities from a practical perspective in response to other practitioners. As Mel Ziegler, one of Vanderbilt’s local line leaders commented, “I feel like there could be a lot that we could learn from you all [at Alabama]. You know what I mean? Since you’ve been through this” (Ziegler, 2009).

Not only does the network provide an opportunity to learn from others, but it also presents an opportunity to diffuse that new knowledge as academic actors. As one of Vanderbilt’s internal networkers commented, “I think the intellectual ideas gain stature from exemplar program[s] ... So, as a scholar, and as someone who has been intellectually engaged in this concept, I think the chance to do something at Vanderbilt also allows me to write about it more” (Tepper, 2009).

2. Networks Provide a Place to Impose Content

Networks of Creative Campus practitioners employing that label also provide an important locus for out-group labeling contests. This consequence of the labeling strategy is at the forefront of the founders’ collective consciousness at Vanderbilt.

The founders at Vanderbilt are eager to enter these labeling contests. One of the main reasons they decided to move forward with a practical application of Creative Campus theory was to introduce some content behind the signifier that focused attention away from just arts advocacy and focused attention on how to change universities into places capable of teaching creative capacity. One founder boldly stated that a huge motivator for building a Creative Campus Initiative Vanderbilt is to be able to demonstrate that their version of the Creative Campus
brand is one of the more meaningful versions. He stated, “one of our goals is to show that we’re right and they’re wrong. You know? I’ll just put it that way” (Purposefully Anonymized, 2009). As one of Vanderbilt’s internal networkers related, “[T]his kind of unique opportunity presents itself to actually make Vandy a lab for putting these things in practice” (Long Lingo, 2009).

Entering into this network and being a leader of it is on Vanderbilt’s institutional agenda. The founders related that “The [Curb] Center leads a national ‘Creative Campus’ movement focused on placing creativity at the center of academic and campus life and maintains an extensive network of scholars who specialize in creative outcomes, process, and practice” (Minor Program Description). They seek to “make the task force a national model—... in terms of offering an innovative model for the creative campus” (Oct. 2009 Meeting Notes).

IV. Conclusion

Vanderbilt University’s Creative Campus Initiative was born out of a context that focused heavily on student learning and development over arts advocacy, which has influenced a heavily-curricular content for the name label there. The founders saw the university’s roles as an R&D lab for creativity and a producer of creative human capital to be the primary values shaping the context for Creative Campus work.

The top-down implementation structure allowed by a secure major donor and the support of upper administration had significant repercussions as to how the language was deployed during policy formulation and implementation at Vanderbilt.
For example, deploying the language focusing events was not necessary in the Vanderbilt case because the attention of relevant stakeholders was already secured through social identification practices. The symbol manipulators at Vanderbilt framed the issue mainly through social identification practices with the language—cognitive segmentation and structural similarity—relating the language to people's own self-identities. Top-down implementation also made recombination strategies moot because there was no need to paint a picture of incremental change as opposed to wholesale change with the language.

One of the main trending institutional purposes with which the founders have linked their cause is the “Ivy itch” or the push for Vanderbilt to enter the top echelon of colleges and universities by distinguishing itself in important ways to both potential students and the higher education community. Other trending institutional purposes like the push to educate for the creative economy have influenced policy implementation.

The founders’ individual visions for the Creative Campus while not carbon copies of one another do function as complements to one another—all focused on student learning, be that through curricular change or learning experiences. This unity of vision has allowed Vanderbilt to focus on the out-group labeling contests that the common naming label allows them to partake in. In these out-group labeling contests, Vanderbilt has attempted to make its local schema predominate. That local schema is one characterized by a very significant divergence from the prototypical schema—namely in its central characteristic, which is focused on deep-
seated curricular change for the purpose of teaching creativity to co-eds. Another significant divergence is Vanderbilt’s downplaying of arts presenting as a characteristic of its local schema, which varies from both the prototypical schema and other local schemas, causing it to be an outlier. This renunciation of tradition in terms of their categorical schema is possible owing to the security of having a large donor and significant support from top executives.

Vanderbilt chose their common naming scheme for very different reasons than most organizations do. Whereas most organizations choose symbolically isomorphic titles to cash in on pre-built legitimacy or momentum, Vanderbilt chose the moniker “Creative Campus” because it felt like prior models were unsuccessful and felt a duty—arising from a sense of ownership over that language—to reclaim it. The consequences of choosing that label on Vanderbilt’s implementation have been many, including helping the founders to enhance understandability of their endeavor, gain consensus, gain control of a desired image for Vanderbilt, and gain resources. Vanderbilt has been a big player in creating the informal learning network made possible by symbolically isomorphic language adoption, and it has a strong desire to impose its content on members of that network; however, it has not made efforts to reconvene a more formalized application of any such network as of yet.

A comparison of both the Alabama and Vanderbilt cases in relation to the semiotic/policy framework is undertaken in Chapter Seven.
Chapter Seven:
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis analyzed the usage of the language “Creative Campus” among the founders of two separate Creative Campus programs during the formulation and early implementation stages of their founding. It began with an articulation of my interest in this work, highlighting my own unique insights and biases as a former Creative Campus practitioner. It outlined the literature on the arts in academia, the Creative Campus movement from its inception to current practice, the policy cycle, and the use of name labels in entrepreneurial enterprises. It described my research methods of qualitative interviewing techniques in a comparative case study format. It also laid out a predictive framework that conjoined semiotics and the policy cycle. Then it applied this framework to the data in both cases in order to pick out the patterns, conflicts, and variances that would generate good grounded, explanatory theory. This chapter analyses the case studies comparatively, using the linguistic lens developed in Chapters Two and Three and applied in Chapters Five and Six. Finally, this chapter discusses the implications this research has for various fields.
and offers suggestions for future research that could build off of the model offered here.

I. Findings

The following comparative analysis should allow for a determination of what portions of the linguistic framework have been most pertinent to Creative Campus practitioners in their journey from theory to practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMIOTICS</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the language SAYING?</td>
<td>Policy Formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the language DOING?</td>
<td>Justifying Inquiry: Why should we? 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8 Policy/Semiotics Framework Overview

This framework consists of four main inquiries: 1) How the name label is used to contextualize the Creative Campus; 2) How the name label is used to justify the Creative Campus; 3) How the name label is used to define the Creative Campus; and 4) How the name label is used to build the Creative Campus. It is important to understand that the individual components in this framework make up an iterative process that propagates our understanding and usage of language. Therefore, when viewed linearly, a name label’s ability to propound meaning looks like:
This thesis looked at two iterations on this linear timeline—policy formulation and implementation—to assess how the content of the “Creative Campus” sign influences its operational clout. It then considered how usage of that clout in operation, in turn, affects what that language’s new signified content is. As practitioners go on to use the terminology further, during policy evaluation and evolution, this saying/doing dichotomy can be expected to further evolve.
A. Policy Formulation: The Name Contextualizing

*What is the name language saying to answer, “Why now?”*

The data suggests that the name label “Creative Campus” has come into vogue now for a variety of contextual reasons both theoretical and practical that all speak to the new form of interaction between higher education and art. The main shift that has precipitated the Creative Campus movement is perhaps best described as a shift from arts advocacy to a focus on the teaching of creativity in response to the demands of the creative economy era.

![The Sign CONTEXTUALIZING](image)

**The Roles of the University in the Modern Arts Ecology & Other Emergent Contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vanderbilt University</th>
<th>Framework Predictions</th>
<th>University of Alabama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University as Arts Patron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Provider of Arts &amp; R&amp;D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Producer of Creative Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Preventer of Brain Drain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University as Arts Patron - N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Provider of Arts &amp; R&amp;D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Producer of Creative Capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University as Preventer of Brain Drain - N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Recession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10 The Framework Applied: The Sign Contextualizing
Initial research predicted that some of the contextual factors important to the birth of Creative Campus were the new roles of the university in the modern arts ecology. However, the founders in both cases recognized a shift away from a purely arts-based advocacy strategy. While these new roles may still be valid, the “Creative Campus” language signals that modern practitioners are going to talk about the arts in different ways now. Neither case study identified the importance of universities as a new arts patron as an important context for founding their Creative Campus. The founders at Alabama recognized the potential for the University to do better in this role when they mentioned Alabama’s lack of space for a new African-American art donation. While this was one piece of “evidence” that it was time for a Creative Campus, but they did not see this as a driving factor for the current Creative Campus program. The founders at Vanderbilt ignored this contextual factor completely, focusing instead on the university’s role as a provider of creative research and development.

As the arts seek new ways to communicate their value, Creative Campus projects may offer an important source of data. The idea of utilizing Creative Campus operations to build up a body of data for future research about the intersection of arts/creativity and university life was one of the most important contextual factors for the Vanderbilt founders.

Where the two cases overlap with each other and with the predictive model, thus demonstrating the highest degree of convergence, was on the contextual factor of creative capital production. The founders in both cases saw this new
“responsibility” of modern universities as one of the things that most-enabled the development of a Creative Campus in each locale. The United States has experienced a sea change in its economic foundations. Today, “intellectual property-based industries account for more than $5 trillion of the U.S. GDP” (Executive Office of the President 2010). Universities sense the need to respond to these cultural and economic trends by producing students capable of functioning in an economy so heavily based in creative, intellectual products. The “Creative Campus” language allows universities to communicate that new direction.

Concomitant with the production of creative capital is the retention of it. Alabama recognized an institutional drive to prevent brain drain as one contextual factor opening a policy space for the Creative Campus to thrive. Vanderbilt’s founders did not focus on this context. The difference in locations for Creative Campus operations may explain this phenomenon. The University of Alabama is located in the small town of Tuscaloosa, AL, where the main industries are medical, mechanical, and educational, Vanderbilt University is located in Nashville, TN, home to one of the country’s largest creative industries, the music business. The data thus suggests that retention of the creative capital produced by the university is going to be a more salient contextual factor in locations that do not already have such a thriving creative scene.

Both case studies also brought up emergent contextual factors. These focused on some of the practical contexts the predictive model did not address. For both cases, economic conditions were a big practical driver of the “Creative Campus”
naming device. However, in each case, opposite economic conditions proved to be relevant. At Alabama, an economic boom time enabled the growth of the Creative Campus because it minimized the financial risk of using the new language. At Vanderbilt, the founders felt an economic recession was fertile soil for the growth of Creative Campus work because it meant people would be looking for satisfaction from creativity rather than consumption. These polarities tend to suggest that the “Creative Campus” signifier is strong enough to grow in a variety of practical contexts. It is responsive to a central, overarching trend: a move toward an educational model that is complementary to the needs and concerns of the creative economy.

The Creative Campus is happening now because universities’ roles in the modern arts ecology are changing from arts patrons to creativity brokers. Universities fulfill their responsibilities to prepare students for the new realities of the creative economy by teaching creative skills. At the same time, they provide a new platform for the arts to demonstrate their value.

B. Policy Formulation: The Sign Justifying

*What is the name language doing to answer, "Why should we?"*

The founders all manipulated the sign “Creative Campus” in various ways to justify their endeavor to different audiences and authorizers. For the most part, the founders argued that “Creative Campus” was worth pursuing because it prepared students for that important creative economy context, because it can help bridge town-gown divides, and because it can support local institutional endeavors. To get to such an
answer, this thesis explored the make-up of the leadership nexus that first engaged in deployment of the symbol at each site and also explored how they used it in practice.

The leadership nexus at each site mirrored each other with similarly-situated founders falling into similar roles. In both cases, the local line leaders tended to be composed of students and staff who were deploying the sign “Creative Campus” in a very practical way. These were the people actually bringing some thing—be it an event or residential community—into being that then got labeled with the sign “Creative Campus.” It was their work that first propagated the sign in ways visible to the larger campus community. At Vanderbilt, these local line leaders were initially
staffers who ran the Creative Campus residence community, the Creative Campus taskforce, etc. While the founders expressed the intent for students to become the ones actually “populating” these events and “happenings,” on the ground floor, they had not yet implemented these aspirations yet. At Alabama, the local line leaders were primarily composed of the student internship team who ran a series of events from an arts and cultural e-zine to student government association groups, from a hip-hop night to a theatrical critiquing programming.

The executive line leaders in each case were primarily composed of administrators and bureaucrats within the upper administration. These founders deployed the sign in a very pragmatic way. They used the symbolism to justify appointing resources—be that in the form of salaries, operating budgets, facilities, etc.—to the local line leaders in their Creative Campus work.

The internal networkers, or “seed carriers,” at both sites were academics who had initially gotten invested in the idea of the “Creative Campus” through a very intellectual curiosity. These individuals deployed the sign in a very prophetic way. They “lit the fire” under the other founders and stayed abreast of new research and theory on the intersection of art, creativity and the academy in order to guide the direction of the Creative Campus as the sign began to take on meaning.

These symbol manipulators all utilized the sign “Creative Campus” in different yet complementary ways to move the idea of the Creative Campus from theory to practice. In order to begin operations, these symbol manipulators had to
frame the issue for their campus community by capturing and focusing public attention on the idea of “Creative Campus” and by linking that signifier to trending institutional purposes, which differed depending on local context.

The data showed that how the symbol manipulators utilized the sign to capture attention depended largely on implementation style. The case using a top-down implementation strategy, Vanderbilt University, used fewer methods to capture public attention. Vanderbilt did not utilize the signifier in conjunction with a
focusing event; Alabama did. At Alabama, the single most influential focusing event was a student honors presentation to many University officials wherein a student honors class presented a case for the University to implement an arts policy. According to the original Director of the Creative Campus, this was a last ditch – and effective – effort to reengage interest and support from the upper administration. Vanderbilt, by contrast, had already secured a major donor and the support of upper administrators. Therefore, it was unnecessary to deploy the language in conjunction with a focusing event in order to open a window of opportunity for their work.

In the highest degree of convergence with the predictive model, both cases made use of the language to capture attention by creating structural similarities with important constituencies. Vanderbilt used “Creative Campus” to engage a major donor, Mike Curb, who could see the language as encompassing both major “tent poles” of his career. They also used it to engage important authorizers like the Board of Trustees. Similarly, Alabama used the language to engage individual students who, while not arts majors, yearned to self-identify as creative. They also used it to fulfill a desire of the University at large to identify itself as a creative institution. Both cases also demonstrated the use of the language to create cognitive segmentation with their public because the notion of a “creative” place, a “campus,” was so easy for people to comprehend.

Neither case demonstrated use of the language for purposes of recombination. At Vanderbilt, this lack of recombination can again be viewed as a function of their top-down implementation strategy. Recombination is more
effective at painting a picture of incremental as opposed to wholesale change because it simply recombines elements that are already familiar to people in their own right. Such a need to mitigate fears of change was less pressing at Vanderbilt where a major donor and the backing of top administrators were already present. At Alabama, which took a grassroots implementation approach, the lack of the recombination phenomena must be explained another way. While recombination could very well have been at play at Alabama, it may have been so natural and obvious that the founders did not notice it as a particular function of the name label. This latency factor would make the recombination phenomenon very hard to capture through the qualitative interviewing methods employed in this research strategy.

The data shows that using the name label to create social identifications in important authorizers and audiences is the most fruitful way to capture public attention, but cultural entrepreneurs can also frame the issue by linking it to important and trending institutional purposes. Both cases showed significant overlap with the predictive model but also each evidenced an emergent institutional purpose that was a significant “hook” for Creative Campus implementation activities.

Both cases showed evidence that preparation for the creative economy was a primary justification at each institution. The language lent itself to this linkage because it signified a “creative” education (“campus”) that could prepare students for work in a creative economy. At Vanderbilt this language was particularly salient
because the heart of their Creative Campus initiative is curricular change. It was easy to make the case for a Creative Campus when the institution already recognized the need to make an educational shift.

Both cases also evidenced a linkage of the “Creative Campus” language to the institutional purpose of civic engagement, or bridging the town-gown divide. At Vanderbilt, the former Chancellor, Gordon Gee, had identified this need early on, and the Creative Campus founders linked their cause to it. Vanderbilt identified civic engagement as a particular area of concern owing to Vanderbilt’s significant Greek social scene, which keeps a large number of co-eds isolated from the greater Nashville community. At Alabama the founders linked the inherent ability of Creative Campus to accomplish bridging with this institutional purpose to such an extent that it was originally part of the name label: “the Creative Campus Creative Community Initiative.” Even with the pared down title, civic engagement was a justification strategy for the founders to prove the utility of having a Creative Campus.

Both cases diverged from the predictive model by not linking the “Creative Campus” label to the purpose of legitimizing the arts. Neither case totally discounted this discourse as a potential purpose of the Creative Campus. Vanderbilt viewed it as a positive by-product that could be effectuated through their programming and generation of a body of data. The Alabama founders desired to link the “Creative Campus” label to this purpose but felt it was not salient. Neither group of founders used legitimizing the arts as a framing strategy because that purpose was not a
current priority for either institution. These symbolic justification strategies reveal
an important quality of the “Creative Campus” name label. The label can carry with it some arts advocacy significance even when the founders are not using it in that way for strategic reasons during implementation.

Both cases also diverged slightly from the predictive model by identifying another trending purpose local to their institution on which they placed much emphasis on when justifying a Creative Campus program. At Vanderbilt, that local institutional purpose was what this thesis has dubbed the “Ivy itch,” or Vanderbilt’s attempts to ingrain itself in the upper echelon of colleges and universities. The Vanderbilt founders recognized the capability of the “Creative Campus” label to provide Vanderbilt a distinctive edge in comparison to other top tier institutions and linked their operations with this purpose. Similarly, at Alabama, a local institutional purpose was the University’s big push for student recruitment. The Alabama founders recognized the capability of the “Creative Campus” label to be a “draw” for many different types of students that the University was seeking to recruit and linked their efforts to this trending institutional purpose. They got Creative Campus connected to the admissions office and the University ambassadors who give tours of campus, etc. Creative Campus practitioners will be able to effectively justify their cultural entrepreneurial efforts by finding a way to link the “Creative Campus” signifier to an institution’s most pressing concerns.
The efforts of the founding team, by working together to deploy the signifier in different yet complementary ways, allowed the founders to capture public attention by using the signifier to create social identifications in important people and to tailor their advocacy efforts to the salient and trending institutional purposes in their locale. Once they have justified the usage of the signifier, the founders are ready to move on to policy implementation.

C. Policy Implementation: The Sign Defining

*What is the name language saying to answer, “What is it?”*

The data showed that as the founders began operations, their work lent content to the signifier. This content overlapped in some ways with the categorical traits outlined by the academic literature, but it also diverged in important ways dependent on local practice. This thesis explored the main inputs into the local schema behind the language at each site to determine the contours of the category there.
Both cases evidenced the high degree of importance that individual founder’s visions and the interplay between them can have. At Vanderbilt, the founders had slightly different but complementary visions. The executive line leaders desired a deep-seated curricular model that could be transferred between schools. Likewise, the academic internal networkers, likewise, envisioned a curricular model that could be of theoretical value. The local line leaders supported this vision with one that encouraged learning in an extra-curricular atmosphere. This synergistic vision enabled Vanderbilt’s local schema to disengage from the prototypical model in an
important way. Vanderbilt’s highly-curricular focus is a divergence from the prototypical model and also from all the other local schemas associated with the family of Creative Campuses. Vanderbilt also differs from the prototypical category by downplaying the role of arts presenting as a significant trait in the category. This feature, too, is different from the prototypical model and many of the other local schemas. Imposing such bold new content for the signifier would be difficult if not impossible had Vanderbilt experienced more intra-group labeling contests.

The Alabama case evidenced more overlap with the prototypical schema and more significant labeling contests between founders. There, the vision of the local line leaders was one of an events-based, arts-focused model that highly emphasized student autonomy and empowerment. This student empowerment and participation feature was further undergirded by the vision of an important executive line leader, Provost Judy Bonner. This feature remained one of the most salient features of the “Creative Campus” label at Alabama because the student interns were the first movers to populate the category with actual operations. This first-mover power was offset by the fiscal and positional power of another executive line leader who envisioned a more restrained student empowerment trait and a more boutique-style structure for the initiative. This boutique vision played against the founding director’s vision for a more professional arts presenting model with widespread curricular influence. Since internal networkers oftentimes have limited enforcement power, the vision of the better-resourced founders overshadowed the director’s vision.
The degree of labeling contests identified in both cases may be a function of chronology. It is possible that the founders at the University of Alabama experienced more labeling contests than those at Vanderbilt because of their status as early implementers of the brand. The Creative Campus at Alabama started roughly four years before actual implementation of the Creative Campus at Vanderbilt. As one of the first users of the term, the Alabama founders had to struggle to settle a vastly untrodden territory. Vanderbilt’s founders were in a much different position as early-researchers of the brand but late-users. They had the advantage of looking at several different modular schemas to learn vicariously what they thought would and would not work for their enactment of the phrase “Creative Campus.”

As a result of various founders’ visions, the interplay between them via intra-group labeling contests, and the interplay among the various local schemas via out-group labeling contests, the signifier “Creative Campus” begins to take on signified meaning. These meanings, taken together, begin to generate family resemblances among the various schemas such that the name label “Creative Campus,” while never exactly the same, takes on several broadly-recognized attributes. At the same time, the language is malleable enough to allow those users who are more powerful or who have higher quality signifieds to impose their content on the brand and slowly influence the defined meaning of the words. So, while there is no universal definition, the interaction of the various schemas suggests that the trend for the name label “Creative Campus” can be defined as an innovative direction for modern universities that generally employs art to activate and teach the creative process in
order to empower students to take their learning off campus and into their communities.

D. Policy Implementation: The Sign Building

*What is the name language doing to answer, “How do we?”*

The data showed that the signifier “Creative Campus” was an important part of the implementation of the project at both locales. The founders encountered utility in both the signifier choice and the consequences it carried. The data suggests that building is accomplished by choosing a symbolically isomorphic signifier to label one’s practice then exploiting that signifier to build consensus and garner resources. As such a practitioner, you can sway the content of the word’s linguistic schema and increase the influence of your operations.
The data showed that the founders in both locations chose to use the signifier “Creative Campus” in ways predicted by the framework but not directly identical to it. Both cases ultimately elected a symbolically isomorphic naming choice over a competitively differentiating one—that is, both cases engaged in the common naming strategy of labeling their venture “Creative Campus” as opposed to choosing a unique sign exclusive to their location only. The reasons for this choice were more numerous at Alabama than they were at Vanderbilt.
The framework suggested that a school might choose a symbolically isomorphic name because of the benefits symbolic isomorphism has to offer, namely, increased legitimacy and enhanced understandability. At Alabama, both of these explanations for symbolically isomorphic decision-making were present. As some of the first-users of the name label attempting to build from a grassroots perspective, the founders perceived a need for legitimacy. They found this legitimacy in the name label through its association with related academic articles. The legitimacy and understanding Alabama borrowed was academic rather than from someone else’s prior practice.

Vanderbilt’s founders did not identify the increased legitimacy or enhanced understandability stemming from symbolically isomorphic practice as being important determinants in their name choice. This divergence from the predictive model can be explained through their top-down implementation practices. With funding and an administrative mandate in place, the founders did not need to borrow reputational effects like legitimacy or understanding from prior practice as an important element in their ability to build a Creative Campus initiative at Vanderbilt.

The predictive framework suggested that bandwagon pressures may influence symbolic isomorphism, but this pressure was not identified in either case. This divergence away from the hypothetical model can be explained by different reasons in each case. For the University of Alabama, bandwagon pressures were not salient because the founders were first users. There was no “bandwagon” to jump
on. They were part of building that wagon. For Vanderbilt, bandwagon pressures were not salient because those pressures encourage a follow-the-leader phenomenon. Vanderbilt was attempting to forge a much different usage for the terminology. The two main bandwagon pressures—spillover of previously successful models and the threat of lost legitimacy—were not meaningful to the founders at Vanderbilt because they did not view prior models as successful for their goals. So, the data indicates that bandwagon pressures may be a better explanatory model for later users who are attempting to repeat formulas for the sign “Creative Campus” that are already in use.

The data indicated that the best explanatory theory for symbolic isomorphic name choice is the influence of political and strategic reasons behind the signifier. For both cases, the influence of agency derived as a function of felt ownership in the language played a large part in choosing the signifier. For Alabama, the founders felt ownership in the language as first-users. Vanderbilt founders felt ownership in the language as authors or first-propounders of the name. Both sets of founders felt that the word enabled a sense of organizational agency because it was such good “political language,” a “brilliant brand” that could generate a “buzz.”

The data also indicated that competitive dynamics was a good explanatory factor in symbolically isomorphic name choice because it provided entrée to out-group labeling contests. Without a common naming strategy there would be few grounds for comparison among models. It would feel more like comparing apples to oranges. Instead, the common naming language allows founders to
attempt to make their signified content "stick" as the most centrally accepted meaning of the common terminology.

Finally, the data indicated that sheer strategic persistence is a good explanation for signifier choice. This mechanism can be stated another way: the more a signifier is used, the more it will be used. Both cases revealed a tendency toward strategic persistence. After picking up the language initially, the founders used it to label a plethora of bodies: taskforces, student groups, student government subcommittees, residence hall cohorts, internships, etc. This usage generated a productive momentum that kept the name in ever-growing usage.

The data as applied to the predictive framework revealed that political and strategic rationales might best explain why any one group of founding practitioners opts for a common naming choice by choosing the signifier “Creative Campus.” Once adopted, this name language also carried implications for implementation by the consequences that came along with the label choice.
The data suggested that the founders exploited most of the predicted beneficial consequences of using the name label “Creative Campus,” but it also suggested that an emergent network may be one other potential benefit. Both sets of founders have yet to fully exploit that network. The framework predicted that enhancing understandability, through distilling complex ideas and by using words already in common parlance, was one beneficial consequence of the label choice. Both cases confirmed this prediction. However, in the Alabama case, enhanced
understandability was achieved by the name label cuing a productive curiosity rather than by offering a clear, upfront meaning. People were able to understand the operations once their curiosity was piqued because the label employed words they already understood and had used before: “creative” and “campus.”

Both cases touted the ability of the label to help them gain consensus by being a “malleable” term with which many different people could identify. All of the founders, in both cases, thought the brand was a catching one that generated a desired buzz around their implementation activities.

This needed attention and buzz helped the founders utilize the label to gain control. The model predicts various ways the label may operate to gain control, and both cases showed a high degree of correlation with this model. One area both cases diverged from the predictive model was in relation to a label’s ability to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The founders at both cases mentioned the label’s ability to provide an image of creativity. This ability relates to the next benefit: the label’s ability to project a desired image. However, there was no evidence in either case that the label functioned as a self-fulfilling prophecy, setting in motion activities that helped the university actually become a creative place.

This lack of data on the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon could be a function of the scope of the research project. This thesis explored the first two phases of the policy cycle: policy formulation and implementation. Whether or not the “Creative Campus” label actually became a self-fulfilling prophecy may be more
a function of the third phase of the policy cycle, policy evaluation, and would need to be addressed in further research.

The data indicated that both sets of founders exploited the ability of the language to project a desired image towards local institutional ends. At Vanderbilt, the founders saw the “Creative Campus” as a signal of distinction to help Vanderbilt as an institution demonstrate its elite status as a potential upper echelon school. Similarly, an institutional trend at Alabama was to increase student recruitment, and the label was exploited to signal to potential undergraduates the breadth of Alabama’s offerings as a university. This data suggests that the name label “Creative Campus,” with its ability to project a desired image, may be one way for practitioners to promote local ends while using a name that gives them access to a more global network.

The data also confirmed that the founders were using the name label as a way to garner resources for their practical work. At Vanderbilt, this language was very salient with a prominent donor. At Alabama, it was very salient with the University Provost. The founders at Alabama also noted that the name label was so adept at providing this consequence because it was a way to shift the traditional power dynamic in the arts. The “Creative Campus” label allowed former arts administrators to change the discussion about their public value and come to the table as players instead of beggars.

Finally, the data showed an unfulfilled tendency of the language to create an informal network of practitioners in which Creative Campus workers can learn from
other local schemas as well as engage in the out-group labeling contests where they can impose their own content. Both sets of founders recognized the potential of the language to set up this platform; but, as of yet, this potential is underutilized. The founders at Vanderbilt, given their academic/curricular emphasis have paid more attention to the learning potential within the network of people. They use the signifier as a way to judge what elements to replicate or exclude in their own model. Some founders at Alabama have expressed a desire to pursue connections in the network such as an APAP grant but have run into frustrations in attempting to do so. Both sets of founders expressed a desire to have their model influences other local schemas but have not yet pursued opportunities to present their models to other Creative Campus practitioners.

At this juncture, I’d like to return to the initial guiding question for this thesis project: *What effect has the name had on the implementation of Creative Campus projects?* The data suggests that the name label has been very influential on implementation because it provides a way to: contextualize practice efforts, justify the demand on time and resources involved in building a Creative Campus, define for people what the scope and contents of this new practice are, and guide the building of a new operation by building consensus and garnering resources for it.

In summary, the semiotic/policy framework provides a way to answer four very important inquiries regarding Creative Campus practice: Why now? Why should we? What is it? And, How do we? The data suggests that the framework is a
good predictive model and the variances from it serve as the basis for developing the grounded, explanatory theories that were articulated above.

II. Implications for the Field

Where existing literature explores the “Creative Campus” as a theoretical construct, this study begins to fill in a gap in the research on actual Creative Campus operations. I approached this project through a semiotic and policy lens. I have made a case for using a common naming strategy in Creative Campus work and called attention to why Creative Campus practitioners should be more fully conscious of the effect that language has on the formulation and implementation of their entrepreneurial enterprises.

This project’s scope allowed me to be in contact with the founding team at all levels in two sites, the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University. Findings from the literature and these two research sites have allowed me to identify a non-exhaustive list of potential implications for several fields.

For the arts administration field, arts administrators should use the “Creative Campus” language as a new way to talk about the public value of the arts. The data demonstrates that, while the “Creative Campus” construct was not promoted as a way to advance the arts, it is a construct that does so implicitly because of the content it signifies and the discourses that schema activates. This change in strategy may generate friction with traditional arts stakeholders who perceive the “Creative Campus” to be an admonishment that they are not good enough.
For the higher education administration field, university and college administrators should implement Creative Campus projects when they want to support local institutional purposes and simultaneously develop an exchange with other schools. The name language is flexible enough to support trending institutional purposes (like the desire to recast itself as an Ivy League-level institution or the desire to recruit more students), while also possessing an inherent linking potential through its symbolic isomorphism. Additionally, academics in the higher education community should write more articles on the practical operation of Creative Campus programs. The data indicates that this active practice gives content to the signifier. The only way to figure out what a Creative Campus “is” now is to read more about what various Creative Campus practitioners are doing.

City officials should seek out Creative Campus models as a way to reengage the campus-community connection. The data indicates that the Creative Campus is contextualized by factors that are important to municipal bodies like Chambers of Commerce, such as the prevention of brain drain away from city centers and the preparation of the workforce for a highly conceptual and competitive economy. The data also shows that civic engagement, or the campus-community connection, is an important fundamental characteristic in most “Creative Campus” definitional schemas.

For those engaged in Creative Campus practice, this framework provides a metacognitive way to think about their work. Critical thinking about how to deploy the signifier to both justify and implement their programs should enable them to see
missed opportunities. For example, practitioners may realize that they are situating their advocacy in the pre-packaged dialogues typically associated with the “Creative Campus” such as civic engagement but are missing an opportunity to link it to a trending institutional purpose.

This model will also help those schools who are thinking about implementing Creative Campus programs to be purposive in their process. The framework provides a way to think through the cost/benefit analysis of choosing a symbolically isomorphic name label as opposed to a competitively differentiating one. It can help practitioners consider whether they need the built-in legitimacy of a common naming strategy, the momentum of bandwagon pressures, or if they are well-positioned enough to choose a differentiated path. The data also suggests a formula for a successful leadership nexus to potential practitioners. The data showed that a leadership team consisting of students and staffers as local line leaders, administrators and bureaucrats as executive line leaders, and academics as internal networkers has been a winning combination in at least two very different cases.

Potential and current practitioners alike can use this research as a way to plan the content of their definitional schema. It can help practitioners think about how their practical operations provide signified meanings. By comparing and contrasting these operationalized meanings to other local schemas, they can decide what characteristics they would like to add or subtract from their practice. The data indicates that thoughtful practice surrounding the signifier has important effects on implementation. The framework provides practitioners a way to think about how
their enacted schema will affect access to resources. For example, if Creative
Campus practitioners choose to incorporate a focus on arts presenting in their
definitional schema, that inclusion will create access to a potential pool of resources
through the APAP Creative Campus Innovations grant program because it meshes
with APAP’s definitional schema.

Finally, Creative Campus practitioners should employ a more formalized
network of practice. The data suggests that there remains a large, untapped
potential for this critical mass of practitioners utilizing the signifier “Creative
Campus” to network in a more productive and formalized fashion. Such a network,
be it in the form of a conference, journal, or even a newsletter, would provide
practitioners a portal to reap the two main benefits of a network based on a
common linguistic practice: the opportunity to learn from other schemas and the
opportunity to influence other schemas with their own categorical content.

III. Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis project contributes to the field by outlining a linguistic framework
to help practitioners think through their decisions to found a Creative Campus and
be more purposeful about their usage of the language in their daily practice. In this
way it begins to fill the gap on the movement from theory to practice that the
“Creative Campus” sign has recently undergone. It does not, however, cover usage of
the sign throughout the entirety of the policy cycle, or provide a broad analysis of
multiple types of “Creative Campus” schemas, or discuss how other types of symbols
besides name language may be operative and fit with the framework. To those ends,
this section suggests four future research projects that could fruitfully build off of this master’s thesis.

First, it would be useful for future researchers to study the usage of the name label during policy evaluation. This study concerns itself with the establishment of Creative Campus initiatives on campus. To that end, it focuses on the first two phases of the policy cycle: policy formulation and policy implementation. It brackets the later phase of the policy cycle—policy evaluation—for future researchers to take up. It would be useful to have future researchers extend the semiotic framework to determine what language is both saying and doing during this latter phase of the policy cycle.

The literature does briefly mention a few evaluation tools that could be a starting point for measuring the effectiveness of Creative Campus initiatives in fostering a creative campus milieu. Tepper's (2006) article “Taking the Measure of the Creative Campus” identifies several instruments that may be useful in assessing whether these practical applications of the Creative Campus movement have been successful in generating a creative campus. These include the “curiosity index” developed by James Madison University's Center for Assessment and Research Studies, led by T. Dary Erwin, and flow diaries, KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity, developed by Theresa Amabile of Harvard (Tepper Spring 2006). Other suggested evaluation methods include: case studies, telephone interviews, network analysis, and Tepper's curiosity index explained in *Taking the Measure* (2006).
Second, it would also be useful for future researchers to apply the framework to other local schemas, particularly the family of “Creative Campus” schemas growing up around the central APAP schema. The weight of this extra empirical evidence could help confirm or discount which parts of the theoretical framework are truly salient factors for founders. In addition to the practical academic benefits of applying the model to more schemas, studying a set of schemas that are influenced by a grant program could also present more insight into the role of resources on influencing categorical content. The heavy influence of APAP’s Doris Duke Foundation Creative Campus Innovations grant money is certain to be one large driver in the way that founders choose and use the “Creative Campus” signifier.

A third useful future research tack would be to study the interactions of the name label with other meaning symbols that give content to the name. For instance, a future researcher could investigate how a “Creative Campus” logo is influencing the name usage at a particular locale. Participants at Alabama thought this type of investigation would be really meaningful to flesh out how their symbolic practice is affecting implementation.

A fourth future research project could include studying name “tags” that are added onto the “Creative Campus” signifier. For example, in both cases in this study, the founding team added “initiative” to the signifier in describing their work a lot, making it the “Creative Campus Initiative.” At Alabama, at least one founder has mentioned a deliberate move away from using the “Initiative” tag because he feels
like the program has “grown out” of the usage of that tag as the program has matured at the University of Alabama. Whether it is “program” or “initiative” or “project,” these name tags may serve important roles in policy implementation as they operate alongside the central signifier, “Creative Campus.”

IV. Closing Moments

Researching the Creative Campus movement, and two local instances in that movement, has been a challenging and rewarding experience. Having been a practitioner, it excites me to think that in some small way this research could enable more Creative Campus practice. Being a practitioner is also what made part of this research difficult because I lived the minor dramas and personality conflicts that give texture to any entrepreneurial venture.

This research provided an opportunity to pursue two of my personal intellectual interests: Creative Campus and linguistics. Coming from the perspective of a former Creative Campus practitioner and a die-hard English major, this research kept me in touch with those parts of myself while I was simultaneously studying law. It enabled me to feel like a well-rounded human being. Writing a master’s thesis while attending law school has been a demanding fait accompli, but it has taught me so much. On a practical level, it has taught me the value of time management. This process has also taught me how to balance a demanding work schedule with the relationships that mean the most to me, and a sense of personal balance is a treasure. On a theoretical level, it has taught me the value of being able
to combine multiple theoretical perspectives into one, coherent critical framework, among other things.

It is my sincere belief that this thesis has something to offer the academic and the practitioner, whether he or she is interested in Creative Campus theory, practice, or both. It is my earnest hope that people will use this thesis in a very practical way, to think consciously about their use of language in the foundation and operation of Creative Campus projects. We use speech every day in so many ways. But like oxygen, we often do not fully appreciate it until it is either taken away or called to our attention by someone like a great yogi. My hope with this thesis is to call attention to the importance of language usage in our practice, for it is the very breath of our endeavors.
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION APPROVAL LETTERS
June 9, 2009

Protocol Number: 2009B0140
Protocol Title: THE CREATIVE CAMPUS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF CREATIVITY INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION. Margaret Wyszomirski, Kristi Wilcox, Art Education
Type of Review: Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Jacob R. Stoddard
Phone: 614-292-0526
Email: stoddard.13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Wyszomirski,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research presents minimal risk to subjects and qualifies under the expedited review category(s) listed below.

Date of IRB Approval: June 9, 2009
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: May 12, 2010
Expedited Review Category: 7

Note: Submit the signed letter of agreement from the University of Alabama prior to beginning research at that site.

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Shari R. Spoor, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board

261
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board

Office of Responsible Research Practices
300 Research Foundation
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1063

Phone (614) 688-8457
Fax (614) 688-0356
www.orrp.osu.edu

April 20, 2010

Protocol Number: 2009B0140
Protocol Title: THE CREATIVE CAMPUS: A COMPARITIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF CREATIVITY INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION, Margaret Wysomirski, Kristi Wilcox, Art Education
Type of Review: Continuing Review & Appendices Q & T Amendments - Expedited
Approval Date: April 19, 2010
IRB Staff Contact: Jacob R. Stoddard
Phone: 614-292-0526
Email: stoddard.13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Wysomirski,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED the Continuing Review of the above referenced research.

Date of IRB Approval: April 19, 2010
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: April 19, 2011
Expedited Review Category: 7

In addition, the IRB APPROVED the amendment request to amend the protocol dated 02/10/10—Add 4 participants (n=16); add additional qualitative data from round table discussion.

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Jeanne A. Clement, EdD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board

hs-017-07 Exp Approval CR/AM
Version 0/06/09

262
April 4, 2011

Protocol Number: 2009B0140
Protocol Title: THE CREATIVE CAMPUS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF CREATIVITY INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION, Margaret Wyszomirski, Kristi Wilcox, Art Education
Type of Review: Continuing Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Jacob R. Stoddard
Phone: 614-292-0526
Email: stoddard13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Wyszomirski,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

Date of IRB Approval: March 30, 2011
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: March 30, 2012
Expedited Review Category: 7

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the ORSP website – www.orsp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Sari R. Speer, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: The Creative Campus: A Comparative Case Study Analysis of Creativity Integration in Higher Education

Researcher: Kristi M. Wilcox

Sponsor: Margaret J. Wyszomirski

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:

This research will begin to fill a gap in the literature that exists on the transition from the scholarly and theoretical discussions of the Creative Campus phenomenon to the practical application of this theory in actual programs and initiatives. The purpose of this research is to ascertain why Creative Campus practitioners have chosen to utilize the “Creative Campus” brand to label their initiatives and determine how this identity has functioned in the implementation of arts initiatives on university campuses. My objective is to capture the “origin story” of how the Creative Campus initiative got started on these campuses and how these operationalized initiatives relate to the larger Creative Campus movement.

Procedures/Tasks:

Participants will be asked to participate in a private, qualitative interview for approximately two hours. This interview will be held in a private location convenient to the participant. Each participant will respond to prompts and guiding questions posed by the researcher. The interviews will be voice-recorded for later transcription by the researcher. The interviewee will later be given the transcripts for review and comment.
Duration of Participation:

The initial interview is estimated to take approximately two hours for each participant. Time committed to answering follow-up questions and reviewing interview drafts could vary but should not take more than a few hours (3-5) from each participant for each review. There will be approximately 2-3 expected contacts back and forth between an individual participant and the researcher. You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Risks and Benefits:

Risks associated with this study are minimal. The interview procedure should subject participants to no more psychological or physical harm than ordinary conversations about your work as a Creative Campus practitioner. Personal viewpoints on the establishment of these initiatives may draw out private information that could potentially lead to reputational harm and harm to interprofessional relationships depending on the type of information the participant chooses to reveal during the interview.

Benefits associated with this study are both academic and practical. This study may reveal information which could help others to establish Creative Campus programs or to increase the visibility and understanding of such programs. These advantages of the study will indirectly benefit participants as current or former Creative Campus practitioners themselves. Participants may also benefit from the satisfaction of contributing to the store of knowledge on the Creative Campus phenomenon.

Confidentiality:

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.
Identifiable Nature of the Data

Participants should be aware that, due to the small sample size of this study and the public nature of their jobs, their information and comments will remain individually identifiable. Participants may request pseudonyms to be used in the final reports but should be aware that industrious individuals may be able to trace information back to their sources given your unique position or characteristics in the Creative Campus endeavor.

Storage and Transportation of Data

All data will be stored on the personal computer of the researcher and on an external hard drive. When transcripts are sent to participants for review and comment, participants will have the choice of using electronic or regular mail depending upon the individual participant’s security preference.

Incentives:

There are no monetary or material incentives associated with your participation in this study. Participants may receive benefits incidental to the interviewing process (i.e. coffee or water).

Participant Rights:

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Contacts and Questions:

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact Kristi M. Wilcox at 1-205-310-1159.
For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

If you are injured as a result of participating in this study or for questions about a study-related injury, you may contact Kristi M. Wilcox at 1-205-310-1159.

**Signing the consent form**

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

---

**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

---
REFERENCES


269


272


---(2006a). Riding the train. *Inside Arts*. (July/August).


University of Alabama. Demographics. Retrieved from the University of Alabama Web site: [http://quickfacts.ua.edu/demographics.html](http://quickfacts.ua.edu/demographics.html)

University of Alabama. Creative Campus. Retrieved from the Creative Campus Web site: [http://creativecampus.ua.edu/about.htm](http://creativecampus.ua.edu/about.htm)


Vanderbilt University. History. Retrieved from Vanderbilt University’s Web site: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/history.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/history.html)


*Interviews*


\[274\]