On the fence of legitimacy: a framework for understanding and assessing the legitimacy of new academic disciplines in U.S. higher education

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On The Fence of Legitimacy; A Framework for Understanding and Assessing the Legitimacy of New Academic Disciplines in U.S. Higher Education

By

Karin D. Bump

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York

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Abstract

Legitimacy is a concept frequently employed but rarely discussed in more than vague terms (Suchman 1995, Hybels 1994). Consequently, this research seeks to develop a clearer understanding of the ways new disciplines become established within a sociological framework of legitimacy. Two theoretical models are used in this study through an approach that melds key aspects of each; the presence of three levels (Suchman 1995) and six sources (Boulding 1971) of legitimacy. Unique to Boulding’s model is the purposeful inclusion of internal views of legitimacy as most discussions of legitimacy focus on external views.

A qualitative exploratory approach is employed whereby eight institutions representing four different types of undergraduate offerings in a case discipline – equine studies - were selected (Bump, 2003). Faculty and administrators served as interview subjects. Key findings include:

- Views of discipline legitimacy are linked to alignment with socially constructed norms at each institution. The extent of familiarity with the discipline as it exists at an institution impacts these views.
- Tipping Points (Gladwell 2002) exist that shift perceptions of discipline legitimacy; the most persuasive is perceptions of fiscal outcomes of a new discipline.
- Discipline outcomes are emphasized more than graduate outcomes when considering the ways outcomes align with institutional goals, values and norms.
- Isomorphic alignment to individual institution norms takes the place of isomorphic alignment, as well as hierarchy, within the discipline itself.

The theoretical models succeed as useful frameworks for analysis and the use of both models together provides more depth to legitimacy understanding than use of either model on its own. As a result, a new model for understanding and assessing new discipline legitimacy - the Fence of Legitimacy model -is developed.

Findings of this study are anticipated to be useful to those working to establish and/or build legitimacy for new undergraduate disciplines. Implications for further consideration include the finding of rising importance of the fiscal side of a discipline, the importance of faculty advocacy for a discipline, and the ways in which socialization and enculturation within an institution draw upon the form and shape of a new discipline.
Acknowledgements

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Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

Each year new subjects of academic study arise and find their way into the arena of higher education. These new subjects often come from discipline expansion resulting in specialty areas ranging from journalism to space physics. They also come in the way of new discipline proliferation as in the case of increasing interest in the entertainment industry and the development of specialty fields such as computer gaming and casino management in college settings (Wallace 2003; Gormley 2004). Consequently, there is an increase in the diverse nature of the types of academic programs students can choose to study on their way to earning a baccalaureate degree at U.S. institutions of higher education. While fundamental academic disciplines such as Mathematics, English, and Science remain; a host of new types of disciplines have risen to the surface of the academic landscape over the last several decades. Even in 1960 Rudolph found that there were 2452 different kinds of degrees offered in the United States (Rudolph 1977, 9).

Inherent in many of these new types of disciplines is a more direct connection between college education and career preparation. This connection appears to be increasing in its importance to students leading to a sense that students, by and large, appear no longer interested in just receiving a good quality general education (Grubb and Lazerson 2004). In the twentieth century the country moved to the “century of vocationalism, the century of professionalism, or (as the economists might say) the century of human capital” (Grubb and Lazerson 2004, 4). In line with this, Cohen projects that specialized “workforce preparation and recurrent training…. and programs designed to prepare and upgrade students for an ever-increasing number of occupations
[will continue to grow]” (Cohen 1998, 447). Yet, what do we know about these new fields of study? What do we know of their origins, their path to the academy and the ways in which they align or contrast with prevailing views of legitimate fields of academic study? And, what do we know about the ways in which views of legitimacy impact on new discipline formation and structure.

Several authors have discussed the transformation of higher education and the move to offering academic coursework and degrees in almost any conceivable interest area (Rudolph 1962; Clark 1983; Cohen 1998; Chen 1940). However, less is known about the struggles a new discipline encounters, particularly new disciplines in highly specialized professional fields, when trying to build an operational framework that will be viewed as legitimate. The smattering of literature to date on new discipline development and legitimacy ranges from discussion of Women’s Studies (Boxer 2002) to the emergence of Statistics as a separate field of study (Bessant 2002). These discussions provide valuable historical insight into the life of new disciplines. Yet, they do not provide empirical insight to aid in an understanding of how new disciplines come to be viewed by the academy in regard to legitimacy.

Perhaps in part this is due to the fact that legitimacy has been discussed mostly in vague terms. As Suchman points out, legitimacy is central to higher education “…however, the literature on organizational legitimacy provides surprisingly fragile conceptual moorings. Many researchers employ the term legitimacy, but few define it” (Suchman 1995, 571). Yet legitimacy appears to be a continuing, and perhaps even increasing area of concern in higher education finding its way into heated academic discussions in areas such as distance education, internet usage, experiential credit
assignment (Kinser 2001; Kinser and Levy 2006), and the privatization of higher education (Kinser and Levy 2006; Levy 2004; Levy 2005; Suspitsin 2007). However, a void currently exists in the empirical literature when exploring the underlying sociological factors that impact new discipline legitimacy. Consequently, the inquiry at hand is focused on more clearly understanding the ways in which new disciplines establish themselves within a sociological framework of legitimacy; and how this framework varies across U.S. Higher Education.

Given the nature of legitimacy and the dominant use of references to it without clear definition, particular attention has been given to proposed theories and models which are coherent in both parameters and guiding principles. Two models meeting these criteria form the primary basis of the conceptualization of legitimacy in this study. The first is a model developed by Kenneth Boulding in the early 1970’s. The model was used to examine legitimacy in a variety of organizations and settings – particularly central banks (Boulding 1971). More recently, Krapels and Arnold (1996) used the model in an academic setting by applying it to Business Communication. However, their application of the model involved reflection of their own experiences and knowledge sets and did not involve a research study. The second model is from the work of Mark Suchman (1995). This model is referred to by a number of authors, including Levy (2005) and Kinser (2007), in work reflecting upon the legitimacy of higher education. It is also used in a quantitative study by Suspitsin (2007) who utilized its tenets to examine Russian Higher Education and develop a set of legitimacy indicators. While Suspitsin did use Suchman’s model for an empirical study, by and large both Boulding’s and Suchman’s models have primarily been used in reflective writings rather than in empirical research. This
dissertation involves a new approach in using these models by melding key aspects of each and then employing them empirically in an exploratory study.

A case study discipline, equine studies, will be placed in the context of current U.S. higher education and will be used to qualitatively explore the quest for legitimacy of new types of disciplines emerging today that are highly specialized and focus directly on career tracks in unique professional fields. This will provide insight into legitimacy for those involved with new disciplines of study and will also add to the general study of institutional theory from which much of the legitimacy literature has been derived.

The remaining sections of this chapter are organized such that the reader is exposed to the background and context of the study before moving to a brief discussion of legitimacy and the two primary models drawn upon for the research. An overview of the case study discipline follows. The research question is presented and a summary of the chapter serves as closure.

The background and context for this study

In the Colonial Era a classical approach to education dominated course offerings in a single program of study reserved for the elite of the country (Rudolph 1962). Since that time, the framework of higher education has dramatically changed as it broadened both in audience access and in educational content. Most notably, the Industrial Era of 1877-1940 brought about the beginning of a revolution regarding the concept of higher education. “As the number of students increased, the curriculum trend toward vocations and variety accelerated. To state it most basically, the curriculum “simply exploded” (Cohen 1998, 134). The movement away from a focus on educating the few led toward a focus on educating the masses. New courses and programs of study were developed to
the extent that in 1960 2452 different kinds of degrees were offered in the United States (Rudolph 1977, 9).

Today new course offerings and degree programs continue to be frequently formed at college campuses across the United States. The curriculum responds to student, faculty and administrator interest and desires; and to external pressures and needs from society. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the past ten years has seen a significant shift in disciplines in the forefront of student interest as well as the attainment of bachelor degrees by field of study (NCES 2003). Enrollment in some technical fields such as computer science has increased since 1995 and disciplines such as parks, recreation, and leisure studies have also increased at a rate over 20% between 1995 and 2001 (NCES 2003). Furthermore, while there has been declining enrollment in fields such as engineering and mathematics, programs and courses targeted towards career fields in new areas such as forensic technology, video game development, and casino management are newly emerging in traditional higher education settings. While the onset of discipline proliferation began in the 19th Century, it has clearly continued. Based upon the way new disciplines have been discussed\(^1\), it appears that paths of discipline development can be categorized as occurring in three primary routes; academic routes, political routes, and market driven/student interest routes. Academic routes occur as a result of internal interest in an area while political routes occur as a result of influences external to a college. Market driven/student interest routes, however, appear to be a combination of both internal and external influences, rising from both attention to student interests and attention to changing employment trends.

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\(^1\) Discussion of new disciplines refers to newspaper articles and college press releases discussing the offerings of new disciplines of study at a particular campus. Specific references to articles and press releases is made at a later point in this paper.
Academic routes are the most common, and the most traditional, routes of new discipline formation. In line with the academic vision of a particular institution, these disciplines primarily rise from internal pathways generated from faculty interest as well as new discoveries or theories within existing disciplines. Psychology faculty might decide to subdivide their discipline to include an adult psychology degree and a child psychology degree; Literature faculty might expand their degree to include journalism and creative writing as their own disciplines. Or, faculty and academic administrators could decide to create new disciplines of study altogether as did Embry Riddle when they created two new degrees in Space Physics and Space Science because the university “wants to set the agenda for activities in space” (Hispanic Times Magazine 2002). The traditional role of the faculty as drivers of curricular design and expansion is paramount in this route of new discipline development.

Political influence occurs through a variety of external channels driven by elites including business, government, and financial supporters of a college. For example, interest and support from companies led to the development of computer gaming programs at some institutions (Wallace 2003). Recommendations from national organizations is another political route for new degree development and at Winston-Salem State University the recommendation of the U.S. Department of Education led to the formation of a B.S. degree in Rehabilitation Studies (Black Issues in Higher Education 2003). In another example, business and political connections were key when the University at Albany – SUNY developed a College of Nanoscale Science and engineering and partnered with IBM (University at Albany 2005). In 2005 the University awarded the “world’s first PhD degrees in nanoscience” (Nanotechwire 2004, 1). While
these are positive examples of political involvement in new discipline development, political influence can also have negative effects for institutions looking to expand disciplinary offerings. State certification boards along with state coordinating boards can exert political influence in order to avoid duplicating resources and establishing new missions within educational systems. And State politicians can wield pressure and even lobby against the establishment of a new discipline on a college campus. This occurred at Morrisville State College in New York when the addition of a Casino Management Program resulted in a public outcry of criticism by a New York State Senator who called the addition of the program “disgusting” (Gormely 2004). More often, however, it appears that political powers are used by elites to urge the movement towards a new degree program; if those powers are sufficiently strong they could offset some initial resistance encountered when suggesting the establishment of a new, and different, type of academic discipline of study that might be otherwise viewed with suspect legitimacy. This may suggest that there is some tipping point threshold that can be used politically in negotiating the presence of a new field onto a campus.

Market driven demands through student interest also serves as a formation route for new discipline offerings. It appears, however, that these demands rise from internal and external pathways. Women’s studies falls within this route of new disciplines as it was formed in response to “the emergence of women’s issues and the movement to resolve them” (Lauter and Howe 1978, 1). The external influence occurred through “pushes” from women who were beginning to be seen as consumers of education while at the same time there were internal “pulls” in the Academy with new developments and rising interest in feminine scholarship (Lauter and Howe1978, 1). An example of market
driven demands/student interest is also seen in a press release from Bridgewater College announcing that the addition of an Equine Studies minor in the fall of 2003 was the result of increasing student interest in this growing area of study (Bridgewater Press 2003).

All three pathways of discipline emergence appear on the landscape of higher education, and on some level all three may operate within any given new discipline. These pathways and their potential impact on legitimacy views may not be all together different now than in the past. Since the early 1900’s new kinds of disciplines emerging from any of these tracks have been viewed with suspect legitimacy particularly when they were not clearly aligned with the educational beliefs of traditional thinkers housed in classical curricula (Flexner 1930; Cohen 1998). Yet there is a distinction between past and present emergence; the new specialized disciplines of study readily emerging today align more directly with career preparation than did the traditional liberal arts and social science degrees of the past. This is a critical line of differentiation. It is not clear which came first – a shift in higher education or a shift in students’ educational interests – but clearly there has been a shift. Neave refers to this shift as a “desacralization of the university and its placing firmly in the here and now” (Neave 1996, 21). By and large, higher education today is a business and as such must, to at least some degree, align educational offerings with student interest. Consequently it is reasonable to suggest that the offering of collegiate study in a discipline, does not, on its own, appear to indicate the Academy’s acceptance of it as a legitimate area of study. The days of student interest resting primarily in education for personal and cultural enrichment have faded while education for career preparation has become more appealing to the masses (Grubb and Lazerson 2004). The increasing movement towards new types of disciplinary offerings in
career fields at traditional higher educational institutions represents a shift in positioning. This seems to signify the deepening line of differentiation between past and present approaches to disciplinary offerings in higher education. It is clear that new kinds of disciplines are emerging. It is unclear as to the ways in which legitimacy of these new disciplines are, or are not, evolving.

**Legitimacy**

The first movement to really understand legitimacy and therefore consider the usefulness of legitimacy theory came from the work of Parsons in 1960. Parsons (1960), and later Dowling and Pfeiffer (1975) and Pfeiffer and Salancik (1978), linked alignment with the goals and needs of organizations, as well as society in general, to perceptions of legitimacy. Berger and Luckmann (1967) added to an understanding of legitimacy by connecting it to the formation of predictable patterns and organizations. Meyer and Rowan (1977) recognized that views of legitimacy are more likely to be present when organizational structures and procedures aligned with cultural expectations and norms; this is a concept that has spilled over into discussions of isomorphism and its link to legitimacy. Weber (1978) also focused on the impact of legitimacy, but different than the lens used in this study, his work focused on the ways in which legitimacy impacts on establishing and maintaining power through order and structure.

Legitimacy is part of expanding theoretical discussions (Suchman 1995) even though definitions of legitimacy are often vague. Kenneth Boulding views legitimacy as a “wide range of social phenomena, all of which center around the concept of acceptance…as right, proper, and justified (Boulding 1971, 417). Mark Suchman defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are
desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995, 572). Suchman's definition presents legitimacy within the framework of institutionalized thinking by acknowledging the impact of socially constructed systems and provides an opportunity to consider that legitimacy may be found in different ways, and by different measures; thereby being more than just present or absent. Boulding’s definition of legitimacy is similar, but his conceptualization of it specifically involves an internal and external tract; an internal tract that relies on a person’s internal acceptance of her own worth and value in a particular setting and an external tract that “means acceptance of a role, a person, an identity, an organization, or an institution by those other people who constitute its significant environment” (Boulding 1974, 511). While these definitions are still somewhat broad and vague, both Suchman and Boulding have created conceptual frameworks that delineate the ways in which views of legitimacy could be influenced. Each framework is discussed briefly in the following subsections in order to present an overview of the principles of each model and how they are useful in this study. A full discussion of Suchman’s and Boulding’s work, along with discussion of other conceptualizations of legitimacy, is found in the literature review in Chapter II.

**Suchman (1995)**

According to Suchman, legitimacy should be considered within a framework consisting of three different contexts and three different forms. The three contexts he proposes are the gaining of legitimacy, the maintenance of it, and the repair of it. This thesis will explore the first context: the gaining of legitimacy. In seeking to gain legitimacy his model predicts that a discipline of study might respond in one of three
ways. First by conforming to the environment which it finds itself housed in, second by seeking out an environment which it would be better suited to live in, and finally by working to manipulate the environment it currently exists in.

The three forms of legitimacy he proposes are pragmatic, moral, and, cognitive (Table 1) all of which are considered by an organization’s audience. Given this, it is important to identify the audience, as not all audiences will view an organization the same way, or from the same point of reference. Once the audience is determined, views of the various forms of legitimacy can be considered more clearly. The pragmatic form of legitimacy involves meeting the needs of an organization’s audience and/or allowing the audience the opportunity to influence decisions such that it is more likely to meet their needs. The second form is moral legitimacy and its determination rests on whether or not an organization and its actions are viewed as right and proper. The third form, cognitive legitimacy, involves comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness. If an organization is recognizable and understandable to its audience, particularly in such a way that it is even taken for granted as simply being – and deserving of being – then it has achieved cognitive legitimacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of legitimacy</th>
<th>Key attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Audience feels its needs are met and/or that they have the ability to influence organizational decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Audience believes the organization and its actions are right and proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Audience recognizes and understands the organization, and the presence of the organization is ‘taken-for-granted’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Suchman, 1995
The forms of legitimacy connect with response strategies for gaining legitimacy such that different strategies are considered based on the forms of legitimacy that are sought. For example, if an organization seeks to “achieve pragmatic legitimacy through conformity, an organization must either meet the substantive needs of various audiences or offer decision making access, or both” (Suchman 1995, 587). In turn, a new discipline might respond by creating an internal or external advisory board in order to achieve pragmatic legitimacy through conformity. If a conformist strategy was used to gain moral legitimacy it “must conform to principled ideals, not purely instrumental demands” (Suchman 1995, 588). In this vein a new discipline within an educational setting that is devoted to general outcomes would be smart to embed these outcomes within their structure and promote them as centrally important.

The ways in which forms of legitimacy and response strategies intermingle and play out in views of new discipline legitimacy is multi-layered according to this model. Suchman proposes that any of the forms and responses could be used, and any combination could potentially be found together. He also points to a loose hierarchy within the three forms stating “as one moves from the pragmatic to the moral to the cognitive, legitimacy becomes more elusive to obtain and more difficult to manipulate, but it also becomes more subtle, more profound, and more self-sustaining, once established” (Suchman 1995, 585). Just as a fence is stronger and more likely to last when each post and rail is firmly in place, such is the framework of legitimacy in Suchman’s conceptualization. Suchman’s model, along with its implications for new disciplines of study, is discussed fully in the literature review in Chapter II. The intention here is to point to the ways in which Suchman’s model begins to present conceptual
underpinnings for a greater understanding of the ways in which views of legitimacy are
created and influenced.

**Boulding (1971, 1974)**

Boulding’s conceptualization of legitimacy revolves around the notion of
acceptance. Acceptance occurs when something is viewed as “right, proper, justified,
and acceptable” (Boulding 1971, 417) and is measured through a framework of six
possible sources of legitimacy: Positive Payoffs, Negative Payoffs, Dimensions of Time,
Mystery and Charisma, Accepted Symbols, and Alliances and Associations with Other
Legitimacies (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 339). Each source of legitimacy is considered
through internal and external audience perspectives. The internal perspective rests within
individuals inside an organization. It relies on the person internal to an entity feeling that
“his or her job is useful to society, logical in its development and process, and defensible
within the organization in which the activity is performed” (Krapels and Arnold 1996,
338). External legitimacy rests within those outside an entity under examination and is
how the external audience views the worth, use, and acceptability of an entity (Boulding
1971). In an examination of academic legitimacy, a faculty member within a new
discipline could have an internal perspective of her discipline based on ‘positive payoffs’
as a legitimacy source through the benefits derived from being part of it. An
administrator at the same campus could have an external view of the discipline based on
‘positive payoffs’ generated from the benefits they personally derive from the new
program as well as the benefits they see the organization derive from it. Placing
importance on both internal and external perspectives of legitimacy is a unique aspect of
Boulding’s conceptual framework as the bulk of the legitimacy literature focuses only on an external perspective of legitimacy as it relates to an entity under examination.

The six sources of legitimacy that Boulding’s model examines from the internal and external perspective are presented with their key attributes in Table 2. In considering these six sources, Boulding’s model assumes that few, if any, organizations seeking legitimacy would find that they are able to utilize all six sources of legitimacy, or find equal results of their analysis by both internal and external audiences. In order to be perceived as legitimate, however, an organization would need to establish legitimacy through several of these sources and do so paying attention to both internal and external views of legitimacy. This leads to a sense that, as was true in Suchman’s model, legitimacy is not viewed as an ‘all or none’ concept. Rather, Boulding infers that legitimacy might be found in any continuum from high to low and it could be high in one view/perspective while low in another view/perspective. He also states that the internal and external views impact upon each other such that a high internal view of legitimacy could result in a high external view. The reverse case could be true as well. This presents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Key attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Payoffs</td>
<td>Presence of beneficial outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Payoffs</td>
<td>Demands for personal sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Dimensions</td>
<td>Time length of discipline history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Charisma</td>
<td>Complex and compelling nature and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Symbols</td>
<td>Attributes and emblems viewed in a positive light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances &amp; Associations</td>
<td>Nearness to something already deemed legitimate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Boulding’s sources of legitimacy with their key attributes

Source: K. Boulding, 1971
the potential for legitimacy of a discipline to be considered on a scale of high to low in strength of legitimacy framework, rather than to be simply determined as present or absent.

In summary, both Boulding and Suchman provide relevant legitimacy models for this study. The theoretical nature of each has been useful to others studying higher education. Together they provide a promising framework for empirical study. Further discussion of the ways in which each model is applicable to this thesis is presented in Chapter II, the literature review. The use of each model within the specific conceptual framework for this study is presented in the methodology found in Chapter III.

The case study discipline: Equine Studies
The selection of equine studies as the case study discipline for exploration of the process of legitimization of new disciplines of study is based on its usefulness as an example of the types of disciplines that are emerging in U.S. higher education today. It is highly specialized, focused directly on a career path, and is likely to be seen by the general society as a nontraditional area of collegiate academic study. Beyond this, the researcher’s personal and professional background in the equine studies discipline will serve useful in accessing information and key players associated with the case study.

This section is intended to provide the reader with necessary background information regarding Equine studies, a discipline that was established in the academy during the 1970’s, and its usefulness as the case study discipline on legitimacy. The formation of the discipline is discussed along with information regarding insights into disciplinary paths and progress. Through this discussion, Equine Studies is positioned as
an appropriate case study to use in seeking to understand the quest for legitimacy that new disciplines of study embark upon today.

**Formation of the discipline**

It is unclear as to when the agricultural discipline of equine studies first emerged as an area of study in U.S. higher education. A dissertation by James Rudolph in 1979 found that the median years of existence of equine programs was seven, with one program reporting that it had been in existence for 53 years. What seems clearer is that degree programs in Equine Studies emerged most readily in the 1970’s during the boom of curricular additions in the U.S. and they were formed in response to increasing student interest in equine courses offered as electives within Agriculture Degree programs (Rudolph 1979).

According to Burton (1971), Equine Studies has a long history as a degree program with no clear home.

A lot of the colleges have horse programs in animal science departments, or they are in physical education departments in schools that haven’t traditionally had animal science or agriculture. My gut reaction is that a lot of animal science departments don’t really know what approach to take on this horse thing (Burton 1971, 77)

In various phases of degree development, Equine Studies has been located in different academic homes including: physical education, agriculture, science, education/teaching, and business. In addition, a variety of descriptors such as vocational, occupational, technical, professional, and even hobby have been casually used in discussing the nature of these programs. Even today, the taxonomy of postsecondary courses developed by the U.S. Department of Education provides two substantially different codes to equine programs –one under Agribusiness and Agriculture Production and the second under
Leisure and Recreational Activities (Adelman 2004). While in some instances the presence of more than one code is comparable to other new disciplines that have expanded and emerged from more established disciplines, it is also unique in that the codes are clearly in two very disparate camps.

Given this background, Equine Studies has encountered struggles that lend it to be a good example of a new discipline of study that first formed during a time of curricular explosion and subsequently has faced a number of questions regarding legitimacy despite faculty and student interest. The discipline has seen overall growth in past years. There are currently more than 160 undergraduate programs in the equine studies field (Bump 2003). In addition, informal discussions with faculty in this field have resulted in a sense that enrollment trends within the bulk of these programs are exhibiting quite positive growth both in terms of educational facilities and course offerings in recent years.

**Disciplinary paths and progress**

The study of horses began in the early 1900’s as land-grant universities incorporated horse production courses focusing on mules and draft horses into their curriculum (Rudolph 1979). This was in line with the focus of equine use at the time. As the focus changed, so did the curriculum. The study of horses moved from a small aspect of a degree in Agriculture to become a subset of Animal Science degrees as well as stand-alone vocational/technical degrees. Equine Studies appeared to emerge as a stand-alone discipline in the 1970’s. More recently graduate programs in Equine Studies have emerged as have specialized certificate programs in various aspects of equine studies.
A 1979 dissertation indicated that only two studies (Burton 1971; Parmenter 1978) addressed equine studies in postsecondary education in the United States (Rudolph, 1979). A search today reveals little additional progress in this area of study. This is despite the fact that the total number of equine related academic programs has grown since the early to mid 1970’s. A 1971 study by Burton et. al, identified 48 equine programs in U.S. colleges and universities. In 1978 Parmenter identified 86 colleges and universities in the United States and in 1979 Rudolph identified 112 with a surge of 14 programs originating in 1972. The increase in number of programs has been primarily linked to an increase in student interest (Rudolph 1979). In the late 1970’s, equine courses were located in either animal husbandry programs in departments of agriculture or in physical education departments (Parmenter 1978). In addition, equine affiliated\textsuperscript{2} academic programs were typically found in post-secondary institutions with either less than 5,000 students or more than 20,000 students (Rudolph 1979).

A more recent tabulation of programs (Bump 2003) found that undergraduate programs in the field of equine studies tend to fall into one of four classifications:

Baccalaureate Equine Degree Program – found at baccalaureate colleges and research universities;  
Associate Equine Degree Program – primarily found at junior colleges and community colleges with some housed in baccalaureate colleges;  
Minors/Concentrations/Specializations in an Equine area within an Animal Science Degree Program – primarily found at baccalaureate colleges and research universities;  
Minors/Concentrations/Specializations in an equine area within another program such as management, business, education, physical education – primarily found at baccalaureate

\textsuperscript{2} Equine affiliated academic programs is used to describe all forms of equine education including: majors, minors, concentrations, and elective courses not tied to a specific degree program.
colleges and research universities (Bump 2003). While some equine programs have been discontinued since the curricular boom in the 1970’s, others have been added. Still others are under consideration for their addition to college campuses across the country, in large part from a perceived continued increase in student interest.

Despite the apparent growth in student interest in the discipline, programs affiliated with equine studies have struggled for recognition within their academic departments. According to one author “Each year, College and University equine programs are faced with greater fiscal responsibility and justification of existence” (Gallagher and Gallagher 1993, 263). While anecdotal information forms the argument, there is consistent informal discussion that equine departments, equine courses and equine research receives less funding and less support than many other animal based disciplines, particularly at land-grant universities. In part, this encouraged the movement by the Equine Nutrition and Physiology Society (ENPS) to join ranks with American Registry of Professional Animal Scientist (ARPAS) for accreditation of equine professionals as there was desire by the ENPS membership to have an outside agency recognize the legitimacy of equine and align it with longer standing animal based disciplines such as poultry, beef, dairy, and swine. A more recent move by the ENPS has been to adopt a name change to the Equine Science Society (ESS) in order to more closely align their title with the more traditional agriculture discipline organizations such as the Animal Science Society and the Poultry Science Society (ENPS General Business Meeting minutes 2003). In addition, a 2003 study on the need for a national organization for equine affiliated academic programs showed strong interest in a national organization

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3 Conversation occurred during the Equine Nutrition and Physiology Society business meeting that the author attended in 1995
to stimulate information sharing and the development of a support network for undergraduate equine academic programs (Needel 2003).

These types of movements and activities appear indicative of the pressures that educational professionals in the equine discipline have felt in regard to legitimacy of their discipline. In part these pressures may be a result of the academy’s lack of knowledge about the field of equine studies. The concept of college level study in an applied career field such as equine studies may not be comprehensible to those outside the discipline. More traditional animal based disciplines such as cattle and hogs, along with more traditional college disciplines such as English and Mathematics have garnered legitimacy through functions of longevity and familiarity. Perceptions of legitimacy are built over time and through the interaction with various audiences. The ways in which those views have developed, and have been shaped, will be of particular interest in this study.

**Research Question**

This study seeks to understand the ways in which the academy considers the legitimacy of undergraduate disciplines of study. The discipline of equine studies is used as the case study discipline to explore the following research question: How does a new type of discipline, as represented by equine studies, come to be accepted by the academy as a legitimate offering at the undergraduate level in U.S. Higher Education?

Since empirical research on discipline legitimacy has not yet been undertaken, this study will provide new insight into the ways in which legitimacy is viewed in undergraduate U.S. higher education. Equine studies presents a compelling discipline for the case study as it is representative of new types of non-traditional academic disciplines that are positioned around occupationalism and professionalism more so than traditional
academic philosophies. In many ways these new disciplines push on the boundaries of perceptions regarding what is, and what is not, appropriate for study at the collegiate level. They tend to be narrower in scope and may be viewed with skepticism regarding their place in the academy. Even the inclusion of general education core requirements may still leave them in a position where they feel pressure to justify their place in U.S. higher education.

**Summary**

The use of Kenneth Boulding’s and Mark Suchman’s models to view new discipline legitimacy, through the case of Equine Studies, will provide the academy with something it currently lacks – empirical research on the topic of discipline legitimacy. In doing so, this study involves the use of previously developed analytical frameworks in a new way and on a particularly intriguing case. This study will therefore be useful to both the general literature on higher education as well as the literature on legitimacy. Legitimacy is positioned within an institutional perspective and therefore the approach to this research is aimed at developing a deeper understanding of what happens when a new type of discipline finds its way to the academy and how institutionalized culture and beliefs impact on the views of a new discipline’s legitimacy, and ultimately the creation of a strong framework of legitimacy.

This research will also contribute to the literature on the specific discipline of equine studies. Currently little has been written about the educational aspects of this discipline of study. While there is a substantial amount of research available on the topic of equine science and equine management per se, there is a significant void on the literature directly regarding equine studies as a discipline.
The chapters which follow are organized such that the literature review follows in Chapter II and the methodology is presented in Chapter III. The literature review discusses more fully the two legitimacy models employed in this study (Boulding 1971; Suchman 1995) as well as the broader research applicable to educational legitimacy. The conceptual themes found in the legitimacy literature are discussed along with the ways in which Boulding’s and Suchman’s models provide the basis for their consideration.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to provide the background on the theoretical and organizational principles on which this thesis will be based. The review begins with the background of legitimacy and then moves to a discussion of the ways in which legitimacy has been conceptualized in the literature. The two key legitimacy models selected for use in this study (Boulding 1971; Suchman 1995) are presented along with the rationale for their selection and a discussion of the ways they address the primary themes found in the literature. The literature which forms the basis for the framework of the study is then presented and the chapter closes with a discussion of the ways in which Boulding’s (1971) and Suchman’s (1995) legitimacy models are applicable to an analysis of legitimacy of new disciplines of study.

The Background on Legitimacy

Definitions of legitimacy arise from an understanding of the various aspects that are part of the somewhat vague concept of legitimacy. “There is no simple, abstract act or class of acts which constitute the establishment and maintenance of legitimacy” (Boulding 1974b, 239). This can make it difficult to truly understand what is meant by the term legitimacy, as well as what kinds of things can influence its presence, and its absence. While legitimacy “is a construct central to the institutional perspective on organizations... [institutional theorists have not] attempted to operationalize the legitimation construct in field research, relying instead on inferences drawn from an apparent lack of alternative explanations for particular phenomena” (Hybels 1994, 1). Yet while there has been little field research on legitimacy, the concept of legitimacy and
various theories surrounding it are present in the literature dating to the late 1970’s with new attention being paid in subsequent years.

From a historical perspective, “Max Weber was among the first great social theorists to stress the importance of legitimacy” (Rueff and Scott 1998, 1). In doing so, Weber’s work focuses on the impact of legitimacy in establishing and maintaining power through order and structure. Parsons (1960), Dowling and Pfeiffer (1975), and Pfeiffer and Salancik (1978) advance the conceptual framework of legitimacy by connecting its presence to the alignment with the goals and needs of organizations as well as society in general. Berger and Luckmann (1967) add to the understanding of legitimacy by connecting it to the formation of predictable patterns and organizations. Later, Meyer and Rowan (1977) recognized that legitimacy could occur when organizational structures and procedures align with cultural expectations and norms. This alignment results in isomorphism. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that isomorphism is a positive factor in views of legitimacy.

Definitions of legitimacy are surprisingly similar as “the multiple legitimacy literatures display remarkable consistency, and their assertions, remarkable compatibility” (Suchman 1995, 604). Legitimacy has been defined as a “wide range of social phenomena, all of which center around the concept of acceptance…as right, proper, and justified” (Boulding 1971, 417) and as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995, 574). Legitimacy has also been seen as simply a dependent function of effectiveness (Rothschild 1979) and it has been linked to “congruence between the social values
associated with or implied by activities and the norms of acceptable behavior in the larger social system” (Dowling & Pfeffer 1975). Despite the similarities within definitions, legitimacy should not be viewed as a “unitary phenomenon” (Suchman 1995, 604). Rather, legitimacy is a complex concept that on the one hand is surrounded by ambiguity, while on the other hand comes with very real implications for support and survival.

In recent years the literature on legitimacy has found its way into two different camps, a strategic camp focusing on the managerial implications of legitimacy – and an institutional camp addressing the ways in which culture, norms and embedded values interface with legitimacy (Suchman 1995). It is in the later of these camps that this study finds a home. In this vein, legitimacy is a dimension of the broader literature on institutionalism which traces to the work of Emile Durkheim in the late 1800’s and, more recently, to the work of John Meyer (1977). Meyer authored two important papers, “The Effects of Education as an Institution” (Meyer 1977) and “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony” (Meyer and Rowan 1977), that laid the foundation for the new institutional movement in which legitimacy theory has found a home. According to the new institutional literature, views of legitimacy are wrapped in “norms, values, [and] beliefs” (Suchman 1995, 574) and while these are individually held, they are derived from collected thought and, in action, create frameworks through which organizations operate. The ways in which legitimacy has been conceptualized as an institutional framework are discussed in the following section.

**Conceptualizing Legitimacy**

Legitimacy is a term that is used in a variety of contexts. One context is to consider legitimacy as a term encompassing colloquial notions and general public
opinion regarding an entity under examination. A different context involves legitimacy as a term employed in a more narrow theoretical sense with specific tenets that can be examined in some formal manner. The latter of these is the context that allows for conceptualization of legitimacy in a manner suited to empirical examination. The literature reviewed in this section provides an examination of the various ways in which legitimacy has been theoretically discussed. It is organized according to theorists in order to provide a sense of the individual approaches taken to conceptualizing legitimacy. The two conceptualizations at use in this study are presented after the broad look at conceptualizations of legitimacy. A discussion of themes found across the theoretical conceptualizations is then presented.

Weber provides an early conceptual look at legitimacy by proposing the presence of three ideological bases for legitimacy: the traditional, the charismatic, and the legal rational (Weber 1978). His work suggests that if something aligns with traditional norms and values its legitimacy will most likely not come into question. If something, or someone, is highly charismatic this too can assist in lessening the potential for legitimacy concerns. In addition, if something comes about using correct procedures and from the correct offices, therefore ensuring that questions of utilizing appropriate rules and procedures can be avoided; it too will face less probability of legitimacy concerns. In Mitchell’s interpretation of Weber’s work, legitimacy is also viewed as having a connection to timeframe as legitimacy is based “on the belief that institutions or authority are continuous with institutions which have existed for a very long time” (Mitchell 1979, 14). In this sense the tradition, charisma, and legal-rational bases of legitimacy proposed
by Weber are not solely grounded in the here and now, but rather are also linked to norms embedded in past history.

Clark conceptualizes legitimacy by focusing on the identification of forces impacting on higher education systems as well as values used by audiences in judging institutional legitimacy (Clark 1983). The forces he identifies are state coordination, market regulations, and academic oligarch. According to Neave and vanVaught (1994), state coordination can be considered to be the ways in which decisions and actions are steered by the government. Market regulations are viewed by Clark (1983) as relationships that rise from self interest and are displayed in some form of interchange. The last, academic oligarchy is used to express the kinds of ways in which power at the top of a hierarchy can be used to guide decision making and organizational behavior within higher education. Suspitsin refers to this work as “Clark’s triangle of coordination” (Suspitsin 2007, 5). Clark also identifies four values used by audiences in judging the legitimacy of an institution: justice, competence, liberty, and loyalty. In Clark’s conceptualization, the forces he identifies play a role in shaping the institution and positioning it within the context of legitimacy while the four values are what audiences consider when their views of an institutions’ legitimacy are forming.

Suspitsin conceptualizes legitimacy by building on the work of Clark and proposing several modifications to his model. The first is a modification to Clark’s ‘triangle of coordination’. Suspitsin modifies this by replacing academic oligarch with “a notion of higher education community to include and account for a critical legitimizing role of peer organizations” (Suspitsin 2007, 5). Upon review, it appears that this is less of a dramatic departure from Clark’s work, but rather a specified angle of academic
Another modification to Clark’s model is Suspitsin’s visualization of the three forces on legitimacy as “overlapping circles, rather than as a triangle, to emphasize the idea of hybrid organizational arrangement and the interaction among the legitimating entities in a higher education field” (Suspitsin 2007, 5). Again this does not appear as a dramatic departure, but rather a different perspective on the need to emphasize the importance of interaction between the three legitimacy forces. Suspitsin’s final modification is the addition of two primary players to Clark’s model and these players have the power to grant legitimacy. The first is the state and recognizes the role that conference of standards and accreditation has on legitimation along with acknowledging its link to coercive isomorphism that DiMaggio and Powell discuss in their work (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The second player is the group of university stakeholders and constituents who provide support and endorsements, financial contributions, employment for graduates, and enhance enrollment and overall college success.

Cheng and Tam (1997) propose a conceptualization of educational legitimacy within the context of their work developing seven models of quality in Hong Kong secondary school education. Their work presents quality indicators for legitimacy in competitive educational environments, thereby providing a basis for the application of their conceptualization to higher education. Public relations and marketing, accountability, public image, reputation, status in the community, and conformance to ethical and moral norms of the community are all included as quality indicators in their conceptualization. Cheng and Tam acknowledge an internal aspect of legitimacy in their discussion of the importance of a positive internal image. However, they focus on the promotion of the image to an external audience as a way increase external legitimacy in
order to develop relationships with key stakeholders, obtain resources, and advance the success of educational institutions.

Kinser (2007) calls upon a model developed by Suchman (1995) in his conceptualization of legitimacy regarding U.S. for-profit education - an area of higher education that can still be considered new and therefore particularly relevant to this thesis. In utilizing Suchman’s model, Kinser identifies three elements on which he finds that legitimacy is dependent “First legitimacy depends on what for-profit higher education does or is perceived to do; second, it depends on the socially constructed environment in which for-profits act; and third, it depends on the evaluations by others of the appropriateness of for-profit actions within the socially constructed environment” (Kinser 2007, 3). According to Kinser, the legitimacy of an organization can only be declared by an external audience. Therefore, it is important to note that the view of legitimacy he primarily considers is that which “must be granted by others” (Kinser 2007, 3) and this view is not wholly different than that which is proposed by Suchman. Kinser presents, as does Suchman, the notion that legitimacy may be found at different levels and be determined by different audiences. Kinser poses the idea that the legitimacy question is less about whether or not a discipline is legitimate, but rather whether or not it tips into the legitimacy threshold at a level that moves it to being “legitimate enough” (Kinser 2007, 14).

Slantcheva (2007) refers to Parsons (1956), Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Scott (1991) in her conceptualization of legitimacy when making reference to the importance of the relationship between an entity and its external audience in determining whether or not an organization is operating in a way in they would be viewed as legitimate.
Slantcheva identifies three aspects of legitimacy focusing, as does Kinser, on a newer area of higher education – private higher education in post-communist countries. The first aspect is the ways in which society evaluates the goals and “core values” (Slantcheva 2007, 57) of an organization. Next is the ways in which society accepts the processes and procedures necessary for an organization to achieve these goals and core values. Last is the external audience that has the ability to evaluate an organization’s legitimacy and thereby make subjective judgments. In using these aspects to reflect on private higher education in Europe, Slantcheva draws several conclusions that are useful to this thesis. She points out that it is important to try to identify “who has the right and ability to confer legitimacy on academic institutions” (Slantcheva 2007, 68). This can be posed for academic disciplines within academic institutions as well. She also identifies that a perception of lack of an overall monitoring body for an organization can add to suspect legitimacy – reinforcing the concept of governing/accrediting bodies and associated isomorphism as ways to increase legitimacy. Slantcheva also draws attention to the irony that questions of suspect legitimacy are aimed largely at things that are new, leaving aspects of organizations that have been present for some time to be notably absent from the legitimacy discussion. Private schools of education in Europe are seen as filling an important societal need. Given this, Slantcheva asks “Why do these schools remain “on the fringes of legitimacy”? (Slantcheva 2007, 56).

In Slantcheva’s work as well as others including Kinser (2007), there seems to be an implication that legitimacy is not an ‘all or none’ process. Rather there may be levels, or even layers, that exist in a framework of legitimacy and together move aspects of higher education closer to, and farther away, from a core of legitimacy. Given this, it
may be possible for something to be ‘legitimate enough’ (Kinser 2007) to be included in higher education offerings at a campus, yet not ‘legitimate enough’ to find itself free of suspicion regarding its place as a truly legitimate entity in higher education and therefore be left hanging “on the fringes of legitimacy” (Slantcheva 2007, 56).

Krapels and Arnold (1996) identify Business Communication as a discipline that is perceived to be on ‘the fringes of legitimacy’ (Slantcheva 2007) and utilize a conceptual model of legitimacy proposed by Boulding (1971) in order to reflect upon the reasons for their perception. It is a model that was developed initially for use in banking, however its tenets have a wide range of applicability. Krapels and Arnold, for example, did not propose any modifications to Boulding’s conceptualization even though it had not been utilized in an education setting. Using the tenets of Boulding’s model, Krapels and Arnold reflect upon the discipline of business communication and arrive at the conclusion that business communication faces suspect legitimacy rising both from the perspectives of those internal to the discipline, as well as perspectives of those external to the discipline. Krapels and Arnold found the use of a model which conceptualizes legitimacy as being determined by both internal perspectives and external perspectives, and the intersection between these perspectives, to be more useful than a single perspective approach. They imply that business communications is viewed with questionable legitimacy by those within the field as “business communication professionals have struggled to explain the logistics of their discipline within academia” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 332). Krapels and Arnold propose that this leads to hindering positive views of legitimacy from an external audience. They present the notion that in some ways the link between internal and external legitimacy perspectives becomes a self
feeding cycle where lack of legitimacy internally leads to lack of legitimacy externally, which leads back to increasing a lack of internal legitimacy. This is supportive of the tenets of Boulding’s conceptualization which emphasizes the interconnectedness between internal and external views of legitimacy.

Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) take a departure from the other literature in their conceptual discussion of legitimacy. Rather than focusing on the tenets of legitimacy, they focus on potential downfalls of seeking legitimacy. Their conceptual model revolves around the behavior of organizations pursing legitimacy and the potential to appear “clumsy”, “nervous” and/or “overacting” in a pursuit of legitimacy (Ashforth and Gibbs 1990, 1). They raise an important point that other authors do not directly address, active pursuit of legitimacy could result in lessened legitimacy. This is a double-edged sword as identified by the authors. Movements to espouse and promote an organizations legitimacy as well as movements to deflect criticism and/or defend legitimacy could be seen as evidence of recognition of suspect legitimacy; creating, in effect, a vicious self-feeding cycle of legitimacy downfall. Active pursuit of legitimacy can also be a double-edged sword when considering the audience that is weighing the legitimacy of an organization. It is wholly possible that in taking action to garner legitimacy from one audience, views of another audience could be altered as well – and perhaps not in a positive way. Ashforth and Gibbs do not provide possible solutions in their theoretical discussion, but they do provide important insight into another side of legitimacy that those facing legitimacy questions should consider. Their work raises a level of consciousness that efforts to gain or increase legitimacy, or respond to questions of
legitimacy, need to be carefully considered- and determining the audience most important for the survival and success of a discipline needs to be central to this consideration.

The conceptualizations of legitimacy presented thus far have been largely theoretical as the legitimacy literature is relatively silent on the subject of legitimacy research. However, there are three empirical studies on legitimacy, all of which are quantitative in nature, which will be reviewed. In line with quantitative research, these studies on legitimacy are focused on the effects and outcomes of legitimacy and provide support that legitimacy is a concept that, in action, has tangible influence.

Molm (1986) studied authority legitimacy through power-dependence theory by randomly selecting participants positions within a game, yet leading them to believe their positions were determined based on their level of competency, as a form of legitimacy, with the game. Her study concludes that views of legitimacy have a role in effecting behavior but the effect is varied as the extent and direction cannot be predicted.

Hybels (1994) thesis research employed content analysis of biotechnology articles to measure levels of legitimacy of a new organization - dedicated biotechnology firms. The research was based on ecology prediction models and emphasized the acquisition of resources as a reflection of legitimacy. Hybels determined that founding rates of new organizations is a positive function of legitimacy. The greater the legitimacy, the greater the rise of organizations – up to a certain point of density. What is particularly interesting in this work is that once the environment had a high level of density of these new organizations, legitimacy of dedicated biotechnology firms as a type of entrepreneurial organization dropped, and new foundings dropped as well. This may
suggest that there is a threshold to cross to obtain legitimacy and yet another one, that if crossed, can result in decreased legitimacy.

The last empirical study to draw from is the work of Suspitsin in evaluating legitimacy in Central and Eastern European private higher education. Suspitsin identified what he coined “legitimacy indicators” (2007) drawn from the Russian Ministry of Education and Science: accreditation, institutional rankings, presence of graduate schools and graduate students, area of physical plant per student, and number of students per Institution. From his assumption that the initial formation route of an institution plays an important role in views of legitimacy, he used founding entities to divide institutions into one of four groups: governmental agencies, state universities, private individuals, and private groups and organizations. Suspitsin then used cross-tabulated descriptive statistics to analyze the legitimacy indictors. Based on scores for these quantifiable indicators he determined that legitimacy threats are higher for institutions that are oriented solely, and even primarily, toward the marketplace.

While these quantitative studies center on outcomes and effects of legitimacy, their results are of value in considering what might be found in a qualitative study within an educational context. First, there is the implication that that views of legitimacy would be found to vary in level of support, and that there may be thresholds for both support and demise of legitimacy. Second, there is the implication that legitimacy could be affected by formation route, particularly if there is a direct link to the marketplace. These implications are useful in the development of a research protocol by presenting an empirical basis to pose questions designed to elicit responses regarding legitimacy thresholds as well as formation routes of new disciplines. In addition, the findings from
these quantitative studies can be drawn upon when considering the findings of a qualitative study in order to more fully consider legitimacy in a variety of contexts.

In reviewing the various legitimacy models found within the literature several conclusions can be drawn. First, by and large the literature is similar in its tenets. Legitimacy is important to an organization’s ability to thrive. It is important to the garnering of resources. It is predominately conferred by others in the sense that an organization cannot simply claim its own legitimacy. And, it is embedded in the norms and values of the environment in which an organization, or an entity, finds itself; leading to the presence of isomorphic tendencies. Second it appears as if the tenets of legitimacy are offered up with a general sense that applying them would result in an increase in legitimacy. “Previous work has implicitly assumed that the means [used to pursue legitimacy] indeed produce the desired effects” (Ashforth and Gibbs 1990, 177).

However, Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) suggest that organizations that engage in activities and behaviors designed to increase legitimacy may, in fact, find that their legitimacy decreases. In part this may be due to conflicting views on the importance of the various types of legitimacy and factors that contribute to them. With the exception of Ashforth and Gibbs, discussion of the down-side of actively seeking out legitimacy seems absent from the literature. Rather, the literature is focused on what is important in gaining legitimacy without being wholly prescriptive to the ways in which an organization should proceed in order to gain legitimacy. The third and final conclusion is that while conceptual models of legitimacy exist and are reflected upon in a variety of setting, these models have rarely been confirmed by empirical research. Furthermore, in the few instances in which legitimacy has been studied, it has been done so using quantitative
research. This is somewhat perplexing given that the nature of legitimacy as a seldom clearly articulated and understood phenomena, and one that is also subject to “sharp, discontinuous changes” (Boulding 1971, 417) would seem to be more suitable for qualitative inquiry.

**The two primary theories used in this study**

Kenneth Boulding (1971) and Mark Suchman (1995) present the most comprehensive conceptual discussions of legitimacy. While their theories complement one another, they also align with the bulk of the legitimacy literature giving the sense that much of the legitimacy literature is grounded in familiar conceptual moorings. However, both of these theorists contribute some unique aspects to the understanding of legitimacy. Therefore, these two models have been chosen for this thesis in light of their comprehensive nature, the fact that there is no evidence of theoretical dispute between them, and the recognition of each theories unique contribution to a conceptual model for understanding legitimacy. Together the perspectives of these two theorists on the tenets of legitimacy present an opportunity to create a new model to use in empirical research on legitimacy. Their individual conceptualizations of legitimacy are discussed here.

Mark Suchman conceptualizes legitimacy as being externally determined and proposes that it should be examined within three different contexts – the gaining of legitimacy, the maintenance of it, and the repair of it. He states that “researchers who study legitimacy either should address the full range of the phenomenon or should clearly identify which aspects(s) they have in mind” (Suchman 1995, 602). Within each of the legitimacy contexts, Suchman finds that there are three primary forms of legitimacy - “pragmatic, based on audience self interest, moral, based on normative approval, and
cognitive, based on comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness” (Suchman 1995, 571).

Each of the forms of legitimacy has several associated types of legitimacy (Table 3) and it is proposed that forms and their associated types can be granted in either an episodic or continual manner. This provides the sense that legitimacy is not an ‘all or none’ process in Suchman’s model, but rather it is obtained on some form of a sliding scale. Each form and its associated types are discussed more fully in the following paragraphs.

**Table 3: Suchman’s forms and associated types of legitimacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of legitimacy</th>
<th>Associated types of legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>exchange, influence, dispositional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>consequential, procedural, structural, personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>comprehensibility, taken-for-granted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: M. Suchman, 1995

The first form of legitimacy in Suchman’s model is Pragmatic and it is determined by the self-interests of the immediate audience for an organization. It is broken out into three types: exchange legitimacy whereby the constituents receive benefit and/or value from an organization which they support; influence legitimacy whereby constituents have the ability, and the right, to influence the actions of an organization to ensure it is operating in a way that is responsive to their needs and concerns; and dispositional legitimacy which assesses the disposition of an organization at an almost individualistic level to determine whether or not it is operating in a way that has “our best interests at heart” and is “honest, trustworthy, decent, and wise” (Suchman 1995, 578). Ultimately, Pragmatic Legitimacy rests with meeting the needs of a particular audience and/or in offering decision making access and influence.
The second form of Suchman’s legitimacy model is Moral legitimacy. Rather than relying on self interests, this form of legitimacy rests on whether or not an organization and its actions are viewed as right and proper. Do constituent groups believe that the purpose and activities are in the best interests of society and humankind? In this sense it is a much broader form of external legitimacy. Suchman describes four types of moral legitimacy: consequential, procedural, structural, and personal (1995, 579).

Consequential legitimacy, derived from the work of Meyer and Rowan (1977), assesses organizations based on their outcomes even though Suchman draws attention to the fact that not all outcomes are readily measurable. Procedural legitimacy involves the evaluation of the practices employed by an organization to meet its goals. Structural legitimacy, derived from the work of Scott (1977) and Zucker (1983), views the organization as a whole to determine whether or not it is organized in a manner that matches well with goals and activities. Where procedural legitimacy focuses more narrowly on individual practices, structural legitimacy looks at the combined practices and organizational design. Lastly, personal legitimacy is the form of moral legitimacy that revolves around an assessment of the charisma of individuals within the organization – particularly organizational leaders.

The third and final form of legitimacy in Suchman’s model is Cognitive. The two types of this form are comprehensibility and taken-for-granted (Suchman 1995, 582). In order to be viewed as comprehensibly legitimate an organization must first be recognized, understood at some level, and accepted within at least a niche market if not the whole of the academy. Whether or not its activities are acceptable is not in question, but rather the acceptance of an organization – i.e., a discipline in this case – as plausible
is of importance. The taken-for-granted type of cognitive legitimacy represents “the most subtle and the most powerful source of legitimacy identified to date” (Suchman 1995, 583), leading to a sense that there is a loose hierarchy at play in the forms of legitimacy (see Figure 1). “As one moves from the pragmatic to the moral to the cognitive, legitimacy becomes more elusive to obtain and more difficult to manipulate, but it also becomes more subtle, more profound, and more self-sustaining, once established” (Suchman 1995, 585). In Suchman’s perspective, cognitive legitimacy is the highest form of legitimacy. It represents the movement of an entity into a taken-for-granted status in the best sense of the phrase – its presence and importance is assumed rather than questioned. Cognitive legitimacy in this view is hard to garner. Yet, once gained, the purpose and existence of the legitimate entity is not questioned but rather its absence is unthinkable.

Suchman proposes that organizations seeking to gain any of these forms of legitimacy would generally respond in one of three ways. They would either conform to the environment in which they are housed, manipulate the environment in which they are housed, or seek out a new environment to be housed within. The specific manner in which each response is carried out is dependent upon the type of legitimacy sought. For example, an organization seeking moral legitimacy must respond in ways that show it to be “conform[ing] to principles, ideals, not purely instrumental demands” (Suchman 1995, 588) while pragmatic legitimacy is more often granted to organizations that can show they “have our best interests at heart, that share our values, or that are honest, trustworthy, decent and wise” (Suchman 1995, 578). In order for cognitive legitimacy to
occur, an entity would need to find itself in a position where it is generally assumed to be acceptable and necessary and it would be unthinkable to assume anything to the contrary.

Throughout Suchman’s model it would appear that the views of those inside an organization play little role in determining legitimacy. Instead, insiders are viewed more as receivers and reactionary body to external views. Kenneth Boulding (1971) has a somewhat different view. While he readily identifies the external audience as being critical to determination of legitimacy; he also places the internal audience as partners in the process. He finds that both external and internal views of legitimacy are important in creating an overall view that something is “right, proper, justified, and acceptable” (Boulding 1971, 417). Therefore Boulding’s model calls for an examination of both internal and external views of legitimacy.

Boulding’s model utilizes the concept of acceptance and applies it to six possible sources of legitimacy: Positive Payoffs, Negative Payoffs, Dimensions of Time, Mystery and Charisma, Accepted Symbols, and Alliances and Associations with Other Legitimacies (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 339). Each of these sources of legitimacy is considered through internal and external audience perspectives. Boulding’s model assumes that few, if any, organizations seeking legitimacy would find that they are able to utilize all six sources of legitimacy, or find equal results of their analysis by both internal and external audiences. In order to be perceived as legitimate, however, an organization would need to establish legitimacy through several of these sources (Table 4) and do so paying attention to both internal and external views of legitimacy. This leads to a sense that, as was true in Suchman’s model, legitimacy is not viewed as an ‘all or none’ concept, but rather that it can be considered on some form of a sliding scale.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Key attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Payoffs</td>
<td>Presence of beneficial outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Payoffs</td>
<td>Demands for personal sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Dimensions</td>
<td>Time length of discipline history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Charisma</td>
<td>Complex and compelling nature and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Symbols</td>
<td>Attributes and emblems viewed in a positive light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances &amp; Associations</td>
<td>Nearness to something already deemed legitimate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Krapels and Arnold, 1996

As stated previously, a unique feature of Boulding’s model is that it explicitly recognizes the role of both the internal and external audience, giving the sense of dual legitimacy directions for consideration. The internal direction of legitimacy rests within individuals inside an organization or, or in the case of this Thesis, a discipline of academic study. It relies on the internal person feeling that “his or her job is useful to society, logical in its development and process, and defensible within the organization in which the activity is performed” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 338). External legitimacy rests within the outside environment and is how those external to an organization view its worth, use, and acceptability (Boulding 1971). For example, when considering positive payoffs as a source of legitimacy, an individual within an organization would have an internal view of his or her organization based on the benefits they derive from being part of it. Similarly, a community member within the area the organization is housed would have an external view of the discipline based on the benefits they derive from it, as well as the benefits they see their community deriving from it.
According to Boulding’s Model, the internal and external directions are considered individually, yet their impact on each other is multifaceted and powerful. External and internal legitimacy “are related in complex ways” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 338) and a person with strong internal legitimacy regarding their organization will affect the environment and this will have a positive impact on external legitimacy (Boulding 1974). The reverse is true as well and as an organization “becomes less acceptable to the people in its environment – internal legitimacy will probably decline also” (Boulding 1971, 418). Clearly, the ways in which an organization explains itself to those in the external environment has an impact on its viewed acceptability. If there is difficulty in articulating an organization’s purpose and worth, there is a greater chance that external legitimacy will decline – even if internal legitimacy is high. In addition, dissonance between internal and external perceptions of legitimacy causes stress in the environment. “If a person’s image of himself is different from the image which he infers from the behavior of others, a strain is set up in the system” (Boulding 1971, 418). Therefore, Boulding’s model of legitimacy presents dual legitimacy directions, with the intersection of views being the place where acceptance is truly measured (Figure 2).

While many of the features of Boulding’s and Suchman’s legitimacy models are complementary, the distinction of the explicit role of internal views of legitimacy stands out as a point of distinction in Boulding’s Model. It is an even more noteworthy distinction given that the Suchman’s view of legitimacy as being externally determined aligns with the bulk of the literature on this topic (Clark 1983; Suspitsin 2004; Kinser 2006). Suchman’s points of distinctions include the division of legitimacy into three contexts– gaining legitimacy, maintaining legitimacy, repairing legitimacy; as well as his
specific discussion of response strategies – conform, seek out, manipulate. Combined, these two models provide a useful enhancement to the theoretical literature. More importantly, they provide a conceptual framework from which an empirical study can be derived.

Before leaving the literature review and moving on to the ways in which these models will be employed in this Thesis, a brief discussion of the predominant themes in the legitimacy literature is presented in order to reinforce the ways in which Boulding’s and Suchman’s models reflect, and respond, to the literature.

Themes in the legitimacy literature
Following the broad look at conceptual discussions of legitimacy, two primary themes emerge in the literature: 1) legitimacy is linked to socially constructed norms, and 2) legitimacy is linked to isomorphic tendencies. These themes are discussed below along with the ways in which each aligns with the legitimacy models proposed by Boulding (1971) and Suchman (1995).

Legitimacy is linked to socially constructed norms
The importance of socially constructed norms is a frequent theme throughout the legitimacy literature. In early discussions of legitimacy, John Meyer (1977) and Max Weber (1978) found that alignment with traditional norms and values is critical in gaining, and maintaining, legitimacy. These norms include utilization of correct procedures and appropriate rules, respect for systems, and recognition and respect for institutions and procedures that have “existed for a very long time” (Mitchell 1979, 14). Conformance to ethical and moral norms of the community, (Cheng and Tam 1997) and the values of justice, competence, liberty, and loyalty (Clark 1983) are also presented as
important to legitimacy. Beliefs, values, and norms form the culture of educational institutions and impact day to day operations as well as long term directions.

Altruism finds an interesting spot as a norm within the legitimacy literature (Flexnor 1930; Davies 1993; MacFarlane 1995) with a suggestion that legitimate organizations must be able to clearly articulate the ways in which they advance the human condition. The discussion of altruism is not all together explicit and it is not clear as to exactly what is meant by advancing the human condition, but there is a sense that things like purely advancing the financial status of an individual would not fall within the legitimacy purview.

Educational prestige is hinted at as another legitimacy norm in the academy. The presence of an advanced degree in a discipline—particularly the PhD— is seen as important to gaining discipline legitimacy in the academy (Toma 2002) while the nearness of a discipline to the general public is seen as having a negative impact on the academy’s view of a discipline’s legitimacy. As Macfarlane discusses,

The success of non-academic paperbacks with catchy titles and common-sense conclusions does little to enhance the reputation of business and management studies as a bona fide academic discipline…. [in addition] the success of “I did it my way” books, written by entrepreneurial and managerial icons, serves to celebrate and reinforce the cult of the amateur while undermining the value of academic study (Macfarlane 1995, 4). This kind of discussion places emphasis on an ivory tower perception of legitimate education. As educational disciplines, and organizations, move closer to ‘common folk’ they may very well also move away from a norm of educational prestige that is linked to academic legitimacy.

The norm of educational prestige appears to also have a link to a disciplines’ orientation to the marketplace, as there is an implication in the literature that disciplines
linked to the marketplace face suspect views of legitimacy from the academy. This is particularly found in discussions of negative views of applied disciplines (MacFarlane 1995; O’Hear 1998; Squires 1990; Krapels and Arnold 1996) as well as discussions of for-profit educational institutions (Levy 2005; Kinser 2007; Suspitsin 2004.). The linkage between the marketplace orientation of applied disciplines and suspect views of legitimacy is of particular interest in this thesis.

Aversion to applied disciplines is linked to the perception that market oriented disciplines lack value and rigor (Toma 2002) as well as the concern over an orientation that is focused more on private gain that on altruistic benefits (MacFarlane 1995) discussed earlier. Toma identifies educational professionals based in the arts and sciences as responsible for creating this view (2002) which, according to Boulding and Suchman, could be attributed to a variety of factors including lack of familiarity and comprehension with the value and rigor of disciplines under examination. In its most extreme form, aversion results in institutional isolation which in turn undermines the ability of a discipline to establish respect and garner legitimacy (Macfarlane 1995), a self reinforcing cycle. O’Hear’s criticism of business and management based schools of study (1998), matching Flexnor’s early negative views of applied career based academics (1930), reflect this kind of discipline aversion:

While there can be no objection to such schools in their proper place, it is quite unclear why they should exist in universities, or why people working in them should enjoy the specific academic freedom which involves their having tenure… Instead, all too often their very existence in a university means that, in unholy alliance with technology departments, they contrive to produce a market ethos in an institution which should by its nature be resistant to such an ethos (O’Hear, 1998, pg 14).
Students looking for jobs in career fields such as business, management, and technology arrive at colleges and universities with the intent of receiving an education with which they can secure such jobs. Universities, as educational businesses, respond to student interests and needs, as well as industry interests and needs, and create and disseminate curriculums within these applied disciplines. At the same time, it appears that educational personnel within universities may be struggling with balancing these kinds of things with norms of academic legitimacy that have risen from the traditional roots of U.S. higher education. Yet, in considering norms, “society and higher education come to accept more notions of multiple or plural legitimacy and ways of doing things – befitting certain groups and values” (Levy 2005, 2). Given this, the ways in which norms are established, accepted, and considered for certain groups, and at certain times, is just as important as the ways in which something might be antagonistic to norms present within any given environment. Both Boulding and Suchman incorporate the consideration of norms and values into their legitimacy models and provide the framework for considering variation of expectations and impact.

**Legitimacy is linked to isomorphic tendencies**

The presences of a new discipline on a campus does not, on its own, signal legitimacy (Toma, 2002). Rather, when something new appears on a given landscape it is not uncommon for questions of legitimacy to be posed (Levy, 2005). Therefore, even when a new discipline finds its way into the university it still has to work to “develop credibility within it” (Toma, 2002, 5). One way to do so is to isomorphically align with others already seen as legitimate. Organizations move towards isomorphism as a way to
demonstrate to an audience that they are “acting on collectively valued purpose in a proper and adequate manner” (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 349).

A trend towards educational isomorphism finds its initial emergence around the turn of the century when professional associations for social science disciplines were formed (Haskell 2001). Since then, “the precedent of newer disciplines having to model themselves on established disciplines to gain legitimacy within the university” has been embedded within higher education (Toma 2002, 11). Why is this so? Questions of legitimacy often arise when something new enters into the picture. “Sudden changes can provide shock and incomprehension and multiple stereotypes” (Levy 2005). Moving towards similarity, through isomorphism, is one way to lessen the shock and increase comprehension. Even a new organization, or discipline, originally designed to have a nontraditional focus and/or approach, could shift to be less so over time as alignment with well established organizations can garner legitimacy and therefore enhance success and survival (Meyer and Rowan 1977). “Conformity…has tangible consequences – in political and budgetary support, and, most important, in legitimacy” (Wolf and Zoglin 1988, 86). Failing to conform and choosing instead to hang on the periphery of a comfort zone of legitimacy is predicted to have dangerous consequences regarding support and longevity for a new discipline (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Wolf and Zoglin 1988). But this may not be wholly true; particularly given that Boulding’s and Suchman’s models provide for an opportunity to consider that legitimacy is not ‘all or none’ determination but rather a determination of being ‘legitimate enough’ to survive.

Isomorphism is also discussed in terms of the presence of some form of hierarchy and there is a sense that organizations seen as legitimate most often have some form of
hierarchical structure (Boulding 1974; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Leaders in the field are identifiable and they create, intentionally or unintentionally, the structure that others will follow. The analogy of a “snake” has been used to describe the isomorphic evolution of institutions of higher education (Riesman 1977) with prestigious colleges such as Harvard at the head and less prestigious institutions at the tail. In ‘snake tail’ fashion, the less prestigious work to fashion themselves like the more prestigious and ultimately institutions assume isomorphic behavior all the while trying to keep up with the evolving nature of those at the head. Given this, a new discipline emerging on the academic landscape might struggle with legitimacy if there are few others with which to ‘snake’. Instead, a new discipline might align, in isomorphic conformity, with another discipline viewed as legitimate within the academy, or at least at the new disciplines home campus.

There is a somewhat contradictory view that is important to point out prior to bringing the discussion of isomorphism to a close. Deephose (1999) points out that while isomorphism can bring legitimacy, it can also bring some forms of hardship to an organizations’ competitive edge. He identifies the need to “balance on the ‘competitive cusp’ between simultaneous pressures to conform and to differentiate” (1999, 147). Isomorphism by its very nature brings similarity and conformity. In higher education this can increase the level of competition for students as the factors that differentiate choices between colleges, and disciplines, would conceivable become smaller. Given this, it may be important to remember that while isomorphism is predicted to enhance legitimacy, it could arrive with a different host of struggles regarding differentiation in an increasingly competitive student enrollment market. Still, “colleges and universities are growing
more alike over time as smaller, newer, less comprehensive institutions become more like their older, more comprehensive peers” (Morphew and Houseman 2002). A tendency towards isomorphism through ‘academic drift’ (Berdahl 1985) cannot be denied, even if its lauding as a way to enhance legitimacy can be questioned for its potential to contradictorily effect quality and competition (Birnbaum 1983).

Both Boulding (1974) and Suchman (1995) imply in their legitimacy models that in order to be seen as legitimate an entity must align with accepted standards. Through the literature it is clear that isomorphism is one way in which alignment with standards has occurred. Given the delineation of forms, types, and sources of legitimacy provided for in Boulding and Suchman’s models; the role of isomorphism can be examined within these conceptual frameworks.

The framework for this study
Given the overall literature, it was theorized that a study on new discipline legitimacy would find that views of legitimacy:

1. Are linked to both internal and external stakeholders and audiences.
2. Are derived from a variety of sources.
3. Take on a variety of forms.
4. Have various thresholds and levels.
5. Are linked with socially constructed norms.
6. Have connections to isomorphism.
7. Are impacted by route of discipline formation.
8. Play a role in organizational support, including resource allocation.
The legitimacy models of Boulding (1971) and Suchman (1995) are primarily utilized in creating the framework through which the research question will be studied, and the surmised list of findings are considered in the research protocol. Each of the two legitimacy models is applied to the study of new disciplines in the following material.

**Application of Boulding’s model to new academic disciplines of study**

Boulding’s Legitimacy Model calls for the analysis of six legitimacy factors considered by audiences internal and external to a discipline of study (Figure 2.2). These six factors are: Positive Payoffs; Negative Payoffs; Dimensions of Time; Mystery and Charisma; Accepted Symbols; Alliances and Associations with other legitimacies. Krapels and Arnold (1996) operationalize each of these factors in applying them to a higher education setting during their reflection upon the discipline of Business Communication. While Krapels and Arnold did not conduct an empirical study, their operational definitions serve useful in applying the model to examine the legitimacy of new disciplines of study.

1. *Positive Payoffs* refers to “the beneficial outcomes which came to those who worked in the field” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 339). In Boulding’s Model, perceived obvious payoffs need to be present in order to easily establish legitimacy. Examples of Positive Payoffs for faculty might include salary, press coverage, and recognition (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 341).

2. *Negative Payoffs* refers to demands for personal sacrifice by those in a profession (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 340). According to Boulding’s Model, it is expected that a legitimate profession, or in this case discipline of study, call for sacrifice by the individuals associated with it. In addition, these sacrifices must be recognizable by an
external audience. Sacrifices may be present at times when “payoffs are vague, abstract, hard to perceive, or perhaps in the distant future” (Boulding 1971, 419). Examples related to higher education could include the publish or perish nature of tenure and promotion. How Negative Payoffs affect internal legitimacy is not clear. What is clear is that Negative Payoffs, through sacrifice, are expected to occur within any profession that wishes to be considered externally legitimate.

3. *Time Dimensions* refers to the “newness of the profession” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 340). Time of existence has benefits on both ends. If a discipline of study has been around for a long period of time, it might be granted legitimacy simple because it is well-established and/or because of past results of examination of legitimacy. On the other side, a brand new discipline of study might be granted initial legitimacy because of its newness and the absence of information to determine its true legitimacy. Alternatively, the new discipline might find itself under the microscope as some wait for success and others wait for failure.

4. *Mystery and Charisma* can lead to legitimacy by creating a barrier to understanding a discipline of study. If a discipline is difficult to understand, has complex or compelling theories, methods, and language, then according to Boulding’s theory it is more likely to command external legitimacy (Boulding 1971). Krapels and Arnold discuss the differences in mystery and charisma between the study of religion and the study of economics. In the case of religion, mystery and charisma were readily identified; yet this was not true for economics. While Mystery and Charisma are suggested to increase legitimacy in this Theory, it is also conceivable that too broad of a barrier to
understanding could decrease legitimacy if the external audience finds a discipline so abstract that it begins to question its value and worth.

5. Accepted Symbols are “attributes or emblems that could be respected in a positive way by the general population while being associated with the profession” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 341). In education, symbols of legitimacy in a discipline of study might include solid or growing enrollment numbers, a strong student profile, receipt of awards, success in publication, and receipt of accreditation. Boulding discusses a variety of other types of symbols including clothing, rituals, physical structures and language (Boulding 1971). While language is also a potential part of mystery and charisma, in this case it is the use of language as “an attempt to be impressive, to create legitimacy by impressing the unlearned with big words” that is under examination (Boulding 1985, 68). Boulding noted that symbols can be attacked if they do not represent the current climate of an organization or its surroundings. Therefore, while the use of impressive language might have been a source of legitimacy in the past, a current climate more in line with inclusion rather than exclusion could mean that the use of ‘big words’ would result in decreased legitimacy rather than increased legitimacy. Accepted Symbols are just that – symbols that are accepted at the time of examination. In considering the case study discipline, it is interesting to note that the primary educational organization associated with the discipline recently changed its name out of concern that the organizations name was not readily understandable by those in other disciplines (ENPS 2003). This could be viewed as an internal response to an external question of legitimacy and a move to align language as a form of an accepted symbol.
6. **Alliances and Associations with Other Legitimations** is the final source of legitimacy in Boulding’s model. The key to the success of this source of legitimacy is the alignment with another discipline that “had well-established legitimacy” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 341). In education, the alliance of a new program with an existing program that has already established its legitimacy can result in legitimacy for itself. This can occur within an educational setting or between educational settings. For example, in the case of business communications the discipline aligned itself with other disciplines such as management and communication at the home college or university (Krapels and Arnold 1996) resulting in a scenario of isomorphism through discipline drift similar to the concept of ‘academic drift’ discussed in the literature (Morphew and Huisman 2002). In other instances disciplines might align themselves with those at other institutions and establish alliances through inter-institutional discipline isomorphism. Alliances between colleges and universities can also occur through discipline specific accreditation processes. Involvement with national associations, recognized conferences, and governmental agencies are yet more examples of alliances and associations.

In each of these sources of legitimacy, the internal views of the professionals, combined with the external views of those in the environment are examined in order to understand the ways in which views of legitimacy are established. From this application, it is apparent that the delineation of Boulding’s tenets of legitimacy will be useful in teasing apart the ways in which legitimacy is viewed and by different audiences.

**Application of Suchman’s model to new academic disciplines of study**

Suchman’s model (1995) of legitimacy draws upon three forms of legitimacy: Pragmatic, Moral, and Cognitive. Each of these forms has associated types of legitimacy
as well as related response strategies that an organization might employ in order to be viewed as legitimate (Figure 2). Tenets of Suchman’s model of legitimacy are discussed below with general examples drawn from a higher education setting.

1. **Pragmatic Legitimacy** occurs when an organization meets the self interests of its immediate audience. There are three associated types of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*: *exchange, influence, dispositional*. In the *exchange* type of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* a discipline offers benefits to its audience in exchange for views of legitimacy. If a new discipline arrives on a campus and brings with it a host of new students, thereby increasing the overall enrollment of a college; the discipline could be viewed with *Pragmatic* legitimacy even if it might otherwise be suspect in nature. From Suchman’s model, it is anticipated that *Pragmatic Legitimacy* is the easiest of the legitimacies to obtain, but also the hardest to hold on to. It can easily be granted, but just as easily removed.

2. **Moral Legitimacy** moves the legitimacy threshold a step further by reaching beyond self interest and resting on the ways in which an organization and its actions are viewed. Is a discipline right and proper? Is it perceived as having purposes and activities in the best interests of society and humankind. There are four types of this form of legitimacy: *consequential, procedural, structural, personal*. The discipline of Casino Studies is an interesting new discipline to apply as an example. While this new discipline might bring with it a host of new students, thereby potentially garnering *Pragmatic exchange* Legitimacy through tuition dollars; it would more than likely face controversy in trying to cross the threshold into *Moral Legitimacy*. It might very well be seen as failing to meet the requirements of the *consequential* type of this form of legitimacy as its outcomes
might not be viewed as right and proper. On the other hand, it might cross the Moral Legitimacy threshold through the personal type of this form of legitimacy as the personal type revolves around an assessment of the charisma of individuals within the organization. If the faculty member leading the Casino Management program is particularly charismatic and compelling, the concerns about outcomes might be lessened.

3. **Cognitive Legitimacy** is the most difficult of the legitimacy forms to achieve. The two types of legitimacy associated with the Cognitive form are: comprehensibility and taken-for-granted. In order to achieve this form of legitimacy a discipline’s presence on a campus would need to be assumed rather than questioned. A step further is to say that it has achieved a taken-for-granted status where its absence on a campus would be unthinkable. Given this, a university without English or Mathematics as formal disciplines would be anticipated to be seen as lacking legitimacy at some level as their absence at a university would be unthinkable.

Beyond the types and forms of legitimacy offered in Suchman’s model, the response strategies for a discipline seeking legitimacy are considered. There are three response strategies to consider: conformity, selection, manipulation. Any of the strategies could be employed when trying to garner a form of legitimacy. Examples of these response strategies applied to disciplines of study is presented below.

1. In a **Conform** response strategy, faculty with a new discipline would seek out ways to make their discipline look more familiar to others on campus. If Pragmatic Legitimacy was sought, faculty might call upon the influence type of Pragmatic legitimacy and establish a mechanism that would allow other faculty and academic administrators to provide input into the discipline’s organization and orientation.
2. In a Selection response strategy, faculty within a new discipline would seek out a campus that would be likely to accept the discipline without the expectation of conformity. If Moral legitimacy was being sought, it would be important for faculty involved with new disciplines to consider the culture of a campus and whether or not the discipline, and its action, would be viewed as right and proper. In the case of Casino Studies, it is highly likely that some campuses would be more welcoming to this discipline than others. The Selection strategy anticipates some pro-active activities on behalf of faculty involved with new disciplines. The strategy would also be important for those championing for the creation of a new discipline on a campus as it would be helpful for faculty and administrators to determine in advance if a new discipline and a particular campus would be a good ‘fit’ for each other.

3. A Manipulate response strategy is viewed as a last resort strategy if the other strategies have been unsuccessful. Manipulation involves “promulgating new explanations of social reality” (Suchman 1995, 591) in order for a discipline to be viewed as plausible and acceptable. Active lobbying for acceptance and support, providing ongoing examples of the reasons a discipline should be viewed as legitimate, and even venturing into the courts to battle for a disciplines right to exist on a campus are all viable examples of a Manipulative response. Given this, it is doubtful that a new discipline could use such strategies to be viewed as having Cognitive Legitimacy. More than likely, the manipulative response strategy would, at best, achieve Moral Legitimacy.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides the theoretical and organizational principles on which the methodology in Chapter 3 is developed and discussed. The
background of legitimacy in institutional theory provides a conceptual backing for the
two primary themes that emerge in the literature; 1) educational legitimacy is linked to
socially constructed norms and 2) legitimacy is linked to notions and actions that are
connected to isomorphic activities and concepts.

The use of Boulding’s (1971) and Suchman’s (1995) legitimacy models are well
suited for examining the themes of socially constructed norms and isomorphism in new
discipline legitimacy. Together they provide a delineated approach to teasing apart
legitimacy in order to understand its sources, forms, and types. Their use in this study
will provide the academy with something it heretofore lacks, empirical research in new
discipline legitimacy.

![Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Boulding’s Legitimacy Model](image)

**Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Boulding’s Legitimacy Model**
Figure 2: Diagrammatic representation of Suchman’s Legitimacy model
Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction
The methodology chapter presents the processes and procedures used in this study. It begins with a review of the overall project as presented in Chapter 1, including the presentation of the research question and subquestions, and then moves to a discussion of the approach used. The subject selection procedures and the operationalization of the research plan follow. The section closes with a discussion of the researcher’s role and bias.

Project Overview
This research was designed to gain an understanding into the ways in which the academy considers legitimacy of undergraduate disciplines of study. Equine Studies is used as the case study discipline through which the issue of legitimacy is examined. This discipline was introduced into the academy in the early 1970’s and therefore has been present long enough to have some history, but yet limited enough in institutional offerings and awareness to still be considered a new discipline. Equine studies also provides a useful case to study legitimacy as there is evidence, as presented in Chapter 1, that its legitimacy has been, and is still being, questioned. However, it is important to be explicit that the selection of equine as a case study is not to understand the discipline of equine studies, but rather to understand the ways in which the legitimacy of such a new and specialized discipline is considered by the academy. In this sense the case study is more instrumental than intrinsic (Stake 1995).

The approach for this research was qualitative and was carried out as an exploratory collective case study (Stake 1995). Of primary interest were the underlying
assumptions, beliefs and common understandings regarding views of legitimacy of new
types of disciplines entering into U.S. higher education. Interview questions were
designed to elicit responses regarding how things are in the discipline, not why they are;
to seek an understanding of legitimacy rather than to determine causation for legitimacy.
In doing so, this body of work sought to provide a fresh look at U.S. higher education’s
beliefs and assumptions surrounding views of discipline legitimacy. The theoretical
legitimacy models developed by Boulding (1971) and Suchman (1995) were applied
during the analysis of interview data in order to examine their usefulness in
understanding the issue of legitimacy in empirical research.

The research question for this study has been posed in terms of the broad question
at the heart of this inquiry while the subquestions derive from the factors and trends in the
legitimacy literature.

Research Question: How does a new type of discipline, as represented by equine
studies, come to be accepted by the academy as a legitimate offering at the undergraduate
level in U.S. Higher Education?

Approach
The use of case study methodology is “especially suitable for learning more about
a little known or poorly understood situation” (Leedy and Ormrod 2001, 149). Given that
there was no empirical research on discipline legitimacy, it was particularly fitting to
utilize a qualitative approach for this study as the open-ended nature of qualitative
research allows for greater variation of responses and richness of data (Collins 1984).
However, given that empirical research had not been conducted, there were no directly
comparable research approaches to draw from. Therefore, the research approach for this
Thesis is reflective of case study approaches used to understand other issues in educational settings. Two studies (Guptill 2002; Stake 1995) are referenced here. Stake (1995) utilized a case study approach in studying student achievement and selected six schools for study - two of which were secondary schools while the remainder were elementary. Guptill (2002) utilized a case study approach in seeking to understand the longevity patterns of female high school superintendents. In her study, eight cases were selected for their representation of type of district and type of contract term. This provided her with a cross case look at a particular phenomenon and resulted in a viable and reliable research approach and sound findings. Following these approaches, eight college and university sites were utilized in this case study. The eight sites were representative of four types of equine discipline offering (Bump 2003) such that two sites were utilized for each type of discipline offering. The use of the following typology provided for balance and variety in the case study.

**Type I:** Associate Equine Degree. Associate degrees in the equine discipline are most often technically based degrees concentrating on the hands-on aspects of the equine discipline. They are most often found at junior colleges and community colleges but may also be found at baccalaureate degree institutions that offer associate degree programs.

**Type II:** Baccalaureate Equine Degree. Baccalaureate degrees in the equine discipline range from equine science degrees to equine management degrees. They are most often found at baccalaureate colleges and research universities and tend to incorporate a wide range of academic requirements while emphasizing the study of equine science and management.
**Type III:** Offerings of courses in an equine area within an Animal Science Degree Program. These equine discipline offerings are highly varied in nature and are most often found at baccalaureate colleges and research universities. They most often provide students with an opportunity to enroll in a series of courses involved with some aspect of the equine discipline but do not provide the depth of experience that would be found within a registered degree program. Housed within an Animal Science Degree, they most often align with large animal science and range from a few course to the offering of a minor.

**Type IV:** Minor/concentration/specialization in an equine area within another discipline. Similar to Type III, these equine discipline offerings are also highly varied in nature and have less depth and breadth than a degree program directly in the discipline. Housed within another discipline such as business, management, education and physical education; these offerings tend to not be aligned with any other animal based discipline on their home campus.

**Selection of Cases**

Researchers in the qualitative field make subject selection decisions based on fit for the purpose of the study. “It’s their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which [cases] to be studied are selected” (Flick 1998, 41). Stake (1995) identified the assurance that a case will “maximize what we can learn” (Stake 1995, 4) as the most important criterion for selection. Time, access, and anticipated cooperation were also important. Selecting the ‘typical’ case to study was considered as was selecting a ‘non-typical’ case. Keeping in mind the criterion of
maximizing the learning opportunity, selection was ultimately about choosing the cases of the discipline most likely to aid in the understanding of legitimacy.

In this study, the use of the four types of equine studies offerings served as the guide to ensure that the sample was appropriate in its representation of the discipline of Equine Studies. The ability to make generalizations was not the intent, but rather gaining an understanding of the ways in which faculty and key administrators consider the legitimacy of new types of disciplines was the intent. The ability to study the cases at length provided an opportunity to draw “petite generalizations” rather than grand statements of fact (Stake 1995, 7) regarding the ways in which legitimacy of new disciplines is considered.

Taken in full, the research pool for the equine discipline consisted of 163 cases (Bump 2003). From this pool, eight cases were selected such that two institutions from each of four discipline offering types were represented. Selection of cases was purposeful with the use of criteria that would maximize the learning opportunity (Stake 1995). The following criteria were considered: longevity of the discipline at interview site, size of programmatic offerings, longevity of faculty within the program, and geographical location. Accessibility was also a key consideration in sampling to ensure substantive opportunities with willing participants to learn about the issue under investigation (Stake 1995). Four individuals were selected for confidential interviews at each case site resulting in a total of 32 interviews for analysis.

**Type I – Associate Equine Degrees:** Both Case sites involved small community based colleges with a history of agricultural offerings. While both sites had offered an associate degree in the equine area for more than 15 years, one site had added a second degree
program within the last five years. It could be said that while these were geographically diverse campuses they had a number of historically similar qualities.

**Type II – Baccalaureate Equine Degrees:** Both Case sites involved large institutions (25,000-28,000 students) with a history of agricultural offerings. One site had a well established degree that had been offered for over 15 years. The other site had a newer offering of less than 5 years

**Type III – Offering of courses within an Animal Science Degree Program.** Case sites involved large institutions with populations ranging from 20,000 to just over 30,000. Both had a long history and tradition of agricultural offerings. Neither college offered more than three courses in the equine discipline. Both schools featured a horse somewhere in their publications and/or on their website.

**Type IV - Minor/Concentration/Specialization in an equine area within another discipline.** One case site involved a large institution with a population of over 15,000 and the second case site was significantly smaller with a population closer to 1,500. While both had long standing experience with offering a degree program associated with the equine discipline only one institution had a history with Agricultural offerings.

**Interview subject selection**

As previous research on this topic had not been conducted, decisions regarding selection of interview subjects was guided by general principles discussed in case study literature. According to Stake “the researcher should have a connoisseur’s appetite for the best persons, places, and occasions. “Best” usually means those that best help us understand the case” (Stake 1995, 56). Using a principle of best fit, interview subjects were identified based on 1) authority by position, and 2) authority by institutional
longevity. Consequently, the individuals identified for interview consisted of: 1) the program director or program chair for the equine discipline 2) the longest serving full time faculty member teaching within the equine program – if this was also the program director or program chair, the next longest serving faculty member teaching within the department received the request for interview 3) the head of the college’s academic area – typically identified as the Vice President of Academic Affairs or Dean of the Faculty; 4) the highest ranking administrator available as designated by the President at each institution.

Given that significant travel was involved with this research, all four interviews at each site were conducted either in one day or over the course of two days. Interviews were conducted over a 15 month period.

**Data Collection - Personal Interviews**

All interviews were conducted in person at the campus of the interview subject. In most instances interviews were conducted in the office of the interview subject with the office door closed. All interviews were audio taped using a digital audio recording device. Short hand-written notes were used to complement audio files as a way to gather concepts and meaning that would not always be fully palpable from a recording (Stake, 1995). While Stake indicated that the tape recorder was of little value for many researchers (1995), it was invaluable in this study. The tape recorded interviews provided the researcher with the ability to repeatedly revisit the actual words of the research subject to ensure that content and context were recorded accurately.

An interview protocol served as a guide to each interview insuring that all topical areas were covered during each interview (Appendix A). The protocol was modified as
appropriate for each of the three types of interview subjects (faculty, department level administrator, highest ranking college administrator) as not all interviewees were in a position to be able to respond to all questions. Given this, the list of protocol questions provided in Appendix A was a guide rather than a definitive list. Some interview subjects were clearly better able to answer some questions, and less able to respond to others. Modifications were made as appropriate.

The protocol questions were reflective of the general themes in the legitimacy literature and the specific use of Boulding’s (1971) and Suchman’s (1995) legitimacy models. The protocol served more as a guiding tool rather than a definitive process in order for the interview to exist within a conversation flow (Stake 1995; Yin, 1989). This was essential in establishing rapport with each interview subject. Background data on the interview participants (gender, age, background, time in the Academy, time at the institution) as well as background data on the equine program (year established, type of degree(s), number of students, background/history of college) was also gathered as part of establishing initial rapport.

While all interview subjects were asked the same set of questions, the questions were not asked in such a formal manner that if a response was given to one question that also answered a subsequent question on the protocol it would still be asked again at a later point. In addition, if responses were unclear, the interviewee was asked to elaborate and/or provide examples to illuminate their responses providing additional internal validity. The researcher considered vocal tone, body language, and overall demeanor of responses to questions during the survey and made notes to such for added richness in the data transcription.
Following interviews, the digital audio files were reviewed and downloaded to a computer using Digital Wave software and were stored as media player files in Microsoft Office. Given the travel involved and the time span between site visits it was critical that the richness of the full interviews was captured in audio format and then fully transcribed.

Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity

Prior to conducting the study, approval was received from the University at Albany’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix B). This research involved confidentiality of participants. Confidentiality was required over anonymity due to the nature of the use of personal interviews in a case study. To ensure confidentiality all interview subjects are referred to in the findings as being of the male gender and are identified as either a faculty or administrator at a Type I, II, III, or IV institution.

Given the uniqueness of the case study discipline and the perceived interest within the discipline regarding the results of this dissertation, further steps to ensure confidentiality have been taken as well. Some levels of analysis originally considered in the research design were later determined to be too detailed in that they could have revealed patterns in responses that would make it conceivable for someone within the discipline to make an educated guess as to which institution was represented. In addition, extraordinary care has been given to remove uniquely identifying words, phrases and contextual qualities of quotes. Characteristics of the general geographic location and the industry were also removed from quotes. These precautions have been taken due to the small number of total offerings in the case discipline and the reasonable potential for identifying interview subjects without such precautions.
Given the nature of the study, the University of Albany Institutional Review Board required that consent for research to take place at each case site had to be granted by the President of each institution prior to making any contact with potential interview subjects. In some instances this was a quick process, in other instances it was a lengthy wait.

The President at each institution was contacted by mail, e-mail or fax with a request to utilize their campus in the study. Following receipt of Presidential approval, interview subjects at the site were contacted through mail, e-mail or fax with a request to participate in the study (Appendix B). Following their consent, personal interviews were scheduled for a minimum of one hour to a maximum of two hour time blocks. The highest ranking administrators typically requested no longer than a one hour meeting. Prior to starting the tape recorder, the researcher provided each interviewee with a second consent form and verbally reviewed the material and then allowed time for the interviewee to review and sign (Appendix B). An additional copy of the consent form was provided to the interview subject.

During the research, all research materials were stored in a secured location at the researcher’s home. At the close of the dissertation all interview tapes and notes will be deleted from computer files, and hard copies of draft results and findings will be shredded, placed in a garbage bag, and taken to a local recycling center.

Data Analysis

There are a variety of approaches to the process of data analysis in qualitative research, and Creswell (1998) reflected upon them to develop a data analysis spiral which recognized that “to analyze qualitative data, the researcher engages in the process of
moving in analytical circles rather than using a fixed linear approach” (Creswell 1998, 142). Creswell (1998 142-146) discussed four key analysis loops that follow the data collection process:

1. **Data Managing**: data are converted to files which are then converted to text units for later analysis.

2. **Reading, Memoing**: Data is read in its entirety and reflected upon. The writing of reflective notes and short memos helps to sort out the major organizing ideas.

3. **Describing, Classifying, Interpreting**: This is the heart of the data analysis and is the place where category formation occurs. The qualitative information is pulled apart in seeking to uncover categories and themes. These themes are then interpreted for sense making or, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to uncover the “lessons learned”.

4. **Representing, Visualizing**: The final phase involves the presentation of data in organizing formats such as texts, tables, and/or figures. Assertions are presented along with the presentation of appropriate metaphors and ‘stories’ that are useful in the interpretation of the data.

These four analysis loops provided a framework to take a large amount of data and move through layers to find repeated themes. However, given that the credibility of qualitative reports has been criticized by some academic circles (Boeije 2002), the use of purposeful approach of the constant comparative method described by Boeije (2002) was also utilized. The goal of the constant comparative method is to develop “theory that is grounded in data” (Boeije 2002, 392)
The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to the categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns (Tesch 1990).

In constantly comparing the data, material was considered in an organic rather than static fashion, “the researcher decides what data will be gathered next… and in this way it is possible to answer questions that have arisen from the analysis of and reflection on previous data” (Boeije 2002, 303). The process of dipping in and out of the data multiple times resulted in ongoing comparative analysis of cases to the point of ‘saturation’ (Boeije 2002, 303) whereby the researcher exhausted the concepts and themes in the existing patterns to the point where no new patterns emerged.

The final steps utilized for the analysis were as follows:

1. **Data Managing**: The audio files were fully transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. Because “interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within respondents” (Gubrium & Holstein 1995, 3) it was critical that interview subjects' exact wording was captured in the transcripts along with important characteristics such as vocal tone and expressive characteristics such as laughter, long pauses and heavy sighs. Notes on mannerism during interviews were also kept and served as a source of triangulation with the written text for a source of construct validity.

2. **Reading, Memoing**: Each interview was read in its entirety, reflective notes and short memos were taken and were merged with notes from the original site visits. These formed the start of beginning patterns of themes.
3. **Describing, Classifying, Interpreting**: Following the completion of the entire population of interviews, singular interviews were read again in their entirety along with reflective notes and short memos. This was the stage of first pattern formation where the qualitative information was pulled apart to uncover categories and themes for initial “lessons learned” described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as part of the richness of qualitative data. The data was compared and contrasted with the models of Boulding (1971) and Suchman (1995) using coding schemes to reveal assertions by interview subjects regarding views of legitimacy of new undergraduate disciplines (Neuman 2000). Data was then considered in regard to the ways it aligned, or failed to align, with predictions in the literature (Yin 1994). Previous studies indicated that a case size of as small as six was sufficient to uncover replications in theoretical patterns (Yin 1994). Narrative descriptions of events provided a way to “bring out the essential character of the issue” (Stake 29, 1995) recognizing the richness of qualitative research and acknowledging that the central goal of this study was to understand the conceptualization of legitimacy rather than answer specific questions about legitimacy.

4. **Constant Comparative Process**: Following the methodology described by Boeije (2002), the analysis of interview transcripts took on the order listed below with repletion to the point of saturation:
   
   a. Comparison of themes within a single interview
   
   b. Comparisons of themes between interviews at a single case site
   
   c. Comparisons of themes between interviews from each Type
d. Comparisons of themes between interviews across each Type

e. Comparisons of themes between single interviewees of similar positions across case sites

Through the constant comparative method analysis it became clear that describing the results in the same stratified manner in which they were analyzed would have the potential to put interview subjects at risk of becoming known to the discipline audience. Therefore the results are presented in an aggregate form even though it was through stratification analysis that final pattern matching and identification of saturation occurred.

5. Representing, Visualizing: The final phase involved the presentation of data. Assertions were determined along with the presentation of appropriate metaphors and ‘stories’ that served useful for the interpretation of the data.

**Interpretation**

Credibility, reliability, and validity were all considered during this research. Credibility in qualitative research refers to the authenticity of material. Reliability refers to “dependability or consistency” (Neuman 2000, 170) and in qualitative research this primarily refers to the ability of another researcher to replicate the method of the study. Therefore, care has been taken to describe the research process in a way that would allow the method to be replicated. In addition, discrete definitions for terminology used in this study are presented to avoid confusion and increase reliability:

**Overview of Terminology used in presentation of findings**

- **Discipline** – the discipline used for this case study - equine studies.

- **Institution** – colleges and universities participating in the research.
Type (s) – typology used to classify the way the discipline occurred at institutions (Type I, II, III, IV)

Level – the levels of legitimacy discussed from the work of Suchman: Pragmatic, Moral, and Cognitive.

Forms – each level of legitimacy was found to have several forms during analysis. For example, in the Pragmatic Level three forms are found.

Components: the forms of legitimacy identified through this study often have several components for consideration.

Aspects: the components of legitimacy identified through this study often have more than one aspect for consideration.

When discussing validity, the emphasis is on authenticity of the study. According to Neuman, authenticity “means giving a fair, honest, and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it every day” (Neuman 2000, 171). This study focused on capturing an insider’s view on what was transpiring in the case study discipline in order to offer an account of events, and provide an understanding of views of legitimacy (Neuman 2000).

Triangulation is a tool used during interpretation to establish credibility and reliability of data. Triangulation is used to “convey the idea that to establish a fact you
need more than one source of information” (Bodgan and Biklen 2003, 107). Triangulation was used for verifying data and claims that were “central to ‘making the case’… to be extra sure that ‘we have it right’” (Stake 1995, 112). Three data points were utilized: 1) notes, 2) audiotapes, 3) fully transcribed files of audiotapes. The last data point serves as a method of triangulation by ensuring that the actual words, phrases, and context were captured for “accuracy and palatability” (Stake 1995, 115). Given that interviews were conducted at geographically diverse locations over an extended period of time this was a critical step to ensure that interviewees were appropriately represented in the findings. The use of multiple sources and theories also served in triangulating the data (Creswell 1998). Therefore, interviews of faculty and key administrators at different institutions served to provide corroborating evidence from various sources and perspectives. In addition, the use of two conceptual models from the legitimacy literature serves as a triangulation tool as well.

**Coding Scheme**

The coding evolved during the research process as is in line with an inductive approach. Codes were used to represent themes in responses by interview subjects and more than one code could apply to a response by a research subject. For example, a response to the question could result in the application of a code representing pragmatic legitimacy as well as a code for a response through conformity. The intention during analysis was not to narrowly apply codes so as to not allow duplication – but rather to understand the ways in which these two models were applicable in creating a clearer understanding of views of legitimacy in practice. The coding scheme used can be found in Appendix C.
Researchers Role and Bias

Creswell has noted that qualitative research uses the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection (Creswell 1998). Therefore, the beliefs and perceptions of a researcher have the ability to impact on data collection and analysis. Consequently, it is important to identify potential bias in any study in order to expose possible influence of bias on research. As a full time faculty member holding the rank of Professor of Equine Studies at a small private college in upstate New York, the researcher is an insider in the case study discipline and this had the potential to limit the ability to view the legitimacy of the case study discipline with fresh eyes. However, recognizing the bias served to heighten awareness of the care needed in both undertaking the interviews and analyzing the data. On occasion an interview subject inquired about the researcher’s interest in the discipline and subjects were made aware of the researcher’s background without providing insights into personal views on the discipline. During other interviews, the researcher interacted with interview subjects that were familiar with the researcher’s background within the case study discipline either as a result of their own work in the discipline of study or through the process of arranging the interviews.

Summary

The qualitative research process explained in this chapter combined well established research protocol with novel theories employed to understand legitimacy. At the conclusion of data gathering the researcher was able to obtain a set of meaningful data for use in analysis. The results of analysis are organized according to the Suchman and Boulding frameworks and are presented in Chapters 4-8; conclusions are presented in Chapter 9.
CHAPTER IV: Findings - Pragmatic Level of Legitimacy

*Pragmatic Legitimacy*, the first level of legitimacy in Suchman’s model, considers the ability of a discipline to meet the self interests of its audience. Three forms of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* are proposed by Suchman: *exchange, dispositional and influence*. The *exchange* form relies on the discipline being seen as beneficial to the institution. The *dispositional* form is achieved when the discipline is seen as sharing and expressing the values espoused in the Institution’s mission. The third form, *influence*, exists when a discipline is seen as responsive to groups important to the institution and incorporates them into decisions and policy making (Suchman 1995).

Evidence is found in this study of all three forms of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* proposed in Suchman’s Model. The *exchange* form is dominant and present across institutions and it is most frequently associated with the component of fiscal outcomes. The *dispositional* form is present in socially constructed beliefs resonating around the alignment of the discipline with the mission at each institution. Finally, the *influence* form is evident through the incorporation of constituent groups in decisions and policy making. In the following sections, each form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* is presented with interview excerpts indicative of the ways in which they surface in analysis.

**Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy**

Fiscal outcomes surfaces as the most influential component of *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. Two aspects of fiscal outcomes are identified: fiscal outcomes through student enrollment and fiscal outcomes through funded research. The importance of these aspects differs among institution type with Type I and Type IV placing emphasis on student enrollment and Type III focusing emphasis on funded research. In addition to fiscal outcomes, two other components of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*
emerge: student enrollment profile and external recognition. Each component of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* is discussed separately with relevant interview excerpts.

**Fiscal Outcomes**

At a time when college costs are escalating and sources of funding are declining, it is not altogether surprising to find that attention to the financial balance sheet of a discipline is part of the discussion of discipline legitimacy. However, the depth and breadth of discussions surrounding fiscal outcomes make it a central part of discipline legitimacy.

Views of fiscal outcomes of the discipline range from positive value to no consideration of value; positive value is most prevalent. For institutions that are enrollment driven, fiscal outcomes through discipline enrollment is of high value. When an institution is not enrollment driven, enrollment in the discipline is of little to no consideration. Positive values are associated with student enrollment trends in the discipline at all but Type III institutions. Type III institutions are found to be significantly different in views of fiscal outcomes compared to other institution types, particularly Type I. At a Type I institution an administrator commented “We aren’t like a large land-grant university (reflective of Type III institutions) that can rely on enrollment, we survive by enrollment”. Administrators and faculty both discussed the importance of enrollment emphasizing that there were few other disciplines that had similar draw for students at their institutions. With the exception of one Type III institution, in interviews, an aspect relating to student enrollment was always offered as the primary example of how the discipline was viewed on the campus. Two examples follow:
How do you feel the equine program is perceived on campus?
Oh they [faculty and administrators] love it. Yeah, they give us a lot of support. And talk about that a little more. In what ways do you get the indication that they’re…?
Well I mean our enrollment; equine enrollment brings a lot of money into this school… (Faculty, Type I)

I went to a meeting at [a college] when they were having a difficult time getting applicants and the President wanted to know about an equine program – why? Because her perspective was that it would draw [students] to the college. (Faculty, Type II)

The strong pattern of enrollment is also discussed as being freshman based and typically of high academic standing. When discussing the kinds of students the discipline attracted, an administrator offered the following:

We have other programs where the first symptom is that the athletes start coming into the program and then the other thing you worry about is that they tend to be all transfer students. And what does that tell you? That they come out of high school into college wanting to do something else… So those students take longer to graduate and they were often not the best students anyway so that is another one of the important distinguishing factors between a bad program and a really good program…the equine program [is a ] freshman loaded program. (Administrator, Type II)

While faculty and administrators at all but Type III institutions were found to view fiscal outcomes in enrollment as a positive benefit for the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy, there was one noteworthy anomaly. A faculty subject at one Type II site offered a different perspective on the enrollment impact of the discipline:

I think most places are starting to add equine sciences to improve their enrollment…. [and] I just think it is almost obscene that you would start a program with the idea that you would enroll more students in your department, because that is just not a reason to [start a program]. (Faculty, Type II)

While increases in enrollment are most often seen as providing a benefit with positive value to the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy, the faculty excerpt above expresses concern that focusing on this benefit alone as the reason to offer a discipline is
problematic without further institutional commitment. Suchman discusses the notion that an item considered of value to legitimacy for one group may be considered inappropriate by another group; such is the example here. The consideration of value is more than likely impacted by differences in cultural norms between institution types. The interview subject who felt enrollment should not drive the decision to initiate a new program was not at an institution that was, by nature, enrollment driven.

Type III subjects do not place emphasis on student enrollment as the fiscal outcomes of importance to their self-interests. Instead, the emphasis is placed on fiscal outcomes through funded research opportunities. At both Type III institutions subjects discuss increases in enrollment as having little value given that departmental enrollments are already capped.

If we had a horse program, we would have lots more kids but that doesn’t really matter here because there are enough kids anyway. So if the kids came into this program they would have to go out of another (Faculty, Type III).

With enrollment not in consideration, self-interests of Type III institutions are focused on research dollars and grant funding when considering the balance sheet of the discipline. This finding is despite the focus of interview questions on undergraduate discipline offerings. Both faculty and administrative interview subjects at Type III institutions consistently emphasize that graduate programs and undergraduate programs are intrinsically meshed together and while an undergraduate program can be present without a graduate program, it is much less desirable. With this understanding interview subjects stated that receipt of funding for research projects is an expected component of disciplines, and that research funding needs to extend beyond operating costs for a discipline and its research. Research subjects felt that “if you want to continue to have a
program you better pay your own way” (Faculty, Type III). Beyond covering the costs of discipline offerings the need for funds for cutting edge research is present. For example, while one institution had developed a model to offset discipline expenses, it was not able to generate funds for the kind of research most desired by the institution. The importance of being able to cover operating expenses in order to avoid a negative impact on the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy through the aspect of fiscal outcomes is seen in the following excerpt:

We had a pretty expensive program [in the case discipline] and of course we use animals for teaching, for production and teaching, so we were very nervous but we finally got into a sustainable position…. It was at a crises stage where if we didn’t start turning it around they were going to start slashing the [the program and facility], taking away horses…I really believe that if we hadn’t done this- if we hadn’t commercialized our [discipline on the campus] I think we would be toast (Faculty, Type III).

While concern of having the discipline eliminated from the institution is diminished, the ability of the discipline to generate the kind of fiscal outcomes most desired is still not viewed as a match to self-interests of Type III institutions. The importance of matching discipline fiscal outcomes to those most valued at an institution is found to be critical in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. The following administrative interview excerpt represents the view that at Type III sites funded research, not student enrollment, is the legitimacy aspect of highest value:

I look at those [case study discipline offerings at other institutions] and I am not sure I see the kind of sustainability that we are going to need for the future. They are not well funded… there is a very, very meager pool of research funds – extramural research funds regardless of the area of [discipline] research. And without that and without growth in that I think we are going to see a continuing de-emphasis of [case study discipline] research programs. Again I think [institutions] are going to find ways to make the [discipline] important in instruction and outreach but I am not optimistic about [its] future as a research
component of large universities….I do not see it as a [discipline] that meets all the necessary requirements of a good program [at this type of university].

Where most institutions see self-interest in student numbers, Type III institutions view self-interest in scholarship through funded research as having higher value. In particular “high power research, biotechnical cutting-edge stuff, stuff that pushes the boundary, they would be critical of things that might be too industry based, not seen as cutting-edge” (Faculty, Type III). The importance of funded research impacts on views of undergraduate discipline offerings. During an administrator interview a subject offered, “the big picture is that we’ve evolved to where research activities have become more important than undergraduate teaching” (Administrator, Type III) and the influence of student interest is lessened as a social norm to where it is no longer seen as the driving force on discipline offerings at these institution types. Again an administrator offered that “resource allocations are typically driven by research programs even for undergraduate programs” (Administrator, Type III).

In considering the rationale by which research funding has risen to such a priority even for an undergraduate programs, a faculty member at a Type III institution offered the following in response to a line of discussion regarding what was most valued at his institution:

The most or greatest concern is grants and external funding. Their [administrators] real interest is in public perception but as an administrator it is real easy [for them] to say that what these guys do got $4.8 million dollars in grants and I don’t know anything about what they do but somebody out there thinks they do good work, and what they do is worthwhile, because they got that funding. (Faculty, Type III)

The faculty subject’s response indicates that in the absence of other clear and broadly understandable markers of quality and excellence, fiscal outcomes in grant and research
funding is used at Type III institutions to weigh the ability of a discipline to meet self interest in the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. 

Table 5 defines the aspects important to fiscal outcomes consideration in the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. Table 6 presents a summary of ways these aspects impact on views of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. For example, in the case of Type I institutions that are highly enrollment dependent, student enrollment as an aspect of fiscal outcomes is considered a positive value while research funding, as an aspect, is not applicable (since research is not part of their institutional mission). The table indicates whether the discipline benefits from each aspect of the fiscal outcome component. Continuing with the example, Type I institutions benefit through student enrollment and again research funding is not applicable. Together the presence of both Value and Benefit for the aspect of student enrollment at Type I institutions leads to a high positive consideration of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy* for the discipline at Type I institutions in this study. The format of the summary table is carried forward in this Chapter as well as Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

**Table 5: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy: Fiscal Outcome component, aspects defined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Outcomes</td>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Fiscal Outcome component: Value and Benefit of aspects 1) Student Enrollment in Discipline, 2) Funding for Research in Discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Research Funding</th>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Value, Benefit</td>
<td>Value, Benefit</td>
<td>Exchange form High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>NA, NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Absent, Yes</td>
<td>Positive, No</td>
<td>Minimal exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>NA, NA</td>
<td>Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science.

**Student Enrollment Profile**

In addition to raw enrollment numbers, the profile of enrolled students is also a component in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. Student profile includes characteristics such as educational background, entrance exam scores, and geographic locations from which students are drawn. While all are discussed as beneficial, geographic location is most often referenced. In all but one institution Type (Type III) the discipline is presented as drawing students from a considerably larger geographic area than other disciplines; this is viewed as a positive aspect of the discipline. In trying to explain the perceived value of out-of-state enrollment, an administrator offered the following:

Kids that tend to go out-of-state, any kid that goes out-of-state from anywhere to anywhere have to be pretty prepared and pretty serious and pretty directed as opposed to the kids that stay home, so the out-of-state kids have a better rate of success. (Administrator, Type II)
Across all institutions, when discussion focuses on the presence of out-of-state students in the discipline, an emphasis is placed on these students as more serious about their studies, stronger academically and better prepared for college. The discipline gains legitimacy through association with out-of-state students. The value of student enrollment profile is of benefit to the self interest of both the discipline and the institution. This value is discussed by an administrator:

Most of our students come [from this state] and from contiguous counties with the exception of equine which brings students from out-of-state. We have students from Alaska, Maine, Florida, California and we never have that in any other program (Administrator, Type IV)

The excerpts above represent comments across institutions with significantly lesser emphasis at Type III sites. Type III sites consisted of institutions that offer only a set of courses in the discipline. For these institutions, drawing more out-of-state students is not of value, just as fiscal outcomes through enrollment is not of value. Student enrollment profile is not unimportant, but rather its weight in importance is minimal as meeting enrollment goals is not problematic at these institutions. Similar to the fiscal outcomes component, the importance of student enrollment profile to the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy is in a disciplines’ ability to provide benefit to the self interests most valued at an institution, rather than in a benefit to academia in mass.

Table 7: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Student Enrollment Profile component, aspect defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment Profile</td>
<td>Geographic Location of Student Home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Student Enrollment component: Value and Benefit of Student Enrollment Profile aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Student Enrollment Profile</th>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Value, Benefit, Positive, Yes</td>
<td>Exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Absent, Minimal</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science

External Recognition

Recognition of a discipline by individuals or organizations external to the institution is the third and final component found in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. External recognition has two aspects: awards and honors earned by students and faculty for market place/industry oriented activities (ex: horse shows, clinics, popular press articles) and honors earned from cutting edge research (ex: genomics, cellular immunology, disease modeling, etc). The value and benefit of external recognition varies based on the aspect and, most importantly, the ways in which the aspect is linked to one of the other themes in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. For example, at Type I institutions aspects of external recognition that tie to student recruitment are of most value. At Type III institutions aspects of external recognition that generate further scholarship, and fund additional research, are of most value.
Student and faculty awards and honors within the aspect of marketplace/industry orientation have moderate to high value and benefit to legitimacy at all but Type III institutions. Discussion of student award winners in marketplace/industry activities often comes with statements about the institution’s program being the ‘best’ and the institution having national presence as a result of the awards won and honors earned. A culture of belief is present across these institutions that awards and honors won by a few can be used as a measurement of the quality and value of the discipline as a whole at the institution.

It is compelling that positive value associated with outside recognition at these institutions most often resonates from extracurricular, rather than curricular, components of the undergraduate discipline; particularly at Type I and Type II institutions and, to a lesser extent at Type III institutions. While a presence of competition within colleges is discussed in the literature as beneficial for legitimacy, the literature suggests that leaders would be identifiable within the academic context (Reisman 1977). A reasonable extrapolation is to anticipate examples of a leader rising from the curricular nature of a discipline. In contrast, in this finding the identification of discipline leaders most often rises from the extracurricular nature of the discipline than the actual curriculum. This phenomenon was not lost on some faculty members with one commenting:

It is interesting that I know nothing about the educational value of their curriculum. How do you find that out? People don’t go around talking about ‘man, their stable management program is the best one I’ve ever been to’ (Faculty, Type I)

The self interest of a majority of the institutions in this study is discussed as residing in external recognition for extracurricular activities, more so than curricular activities. When present, identification of discipline leaders occurs on the basis of
student awards and honors in extracurricular activities; with little knowledge or
discussion of curricular activities of these ‘leaders’.

While perceptions of success in extracurricular activities is discussed as having
some importance for legitimacy at Type I, II, and IV institutions, such discussions rarely
surface at Type III institutions. Type III institutions see their best interests for outside
recognition focused on research-based activities; even though the inquiry emphasis for
this study is undergraduate offerings. The aspects of external recognition from research-
based activities is also important at Type II and IV sites but is expressed at relatively
equal levels with the other aspects of external recognition.

Research is found to be linked to undergraduate curricula in the conceptualization
of the discipline at Type III institutions. An administrator at a Type III discipline offered
the following as part of this conceptualization “… these two things are legitimately
recognized by other institutions as indicators of success – journal articles in top places
and external funding streams. They don’t, you know, hand out funds to everyone who
asks.” An additional excerpt is provided below:

At an academic institution [like this Type III institution], we need to say this
department is the leader in dollars generated and science publications produced.
(Administrator, Type III)

Problematic for the discipline is the finding that this aspect of the exchange form of
Pragmatic Legitimacy was viewed as limited at both Type III institutions. Faculty and
administrators both discussed difficulties in obtaining the kinds of research funding
desired, and engaging in the kind of cutting-edge research most valued at these
institutions; this creates a diminished view of the exchange form of Pragmatic
Legitimacy. Student and faculty industry involvement and receipt of awards and honors is
not discounted as an aspect of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. However an administrator stated that “national and international pre-eminence is really important to be able to look at a program and say that program or that faculty member is legitimate” and at Type III institutions, pre-eminence is found to be research based. The finding that the two aspects of external recognition are considered differently between institution types reinforces the concept that legitimacy is considered and determined within the socially constructed norms of an institution.

Table 9 defines the aspects important to the external recognition component while Table 10 provides a summary view of the value and benefit associated with this component of the *exchange* form of *Pragmatic Legitimacy*. External Recognition is separated by the aspects of Student and Faculty Awards/Honors related to the Marketplace (SFAM) and Student Faculty Awards/Honors related to cutting edge Research (SFAR).

**Table 9: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; External Recognition component, aspects defined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Recognition</td>
<td>Student and Faculty Awards and Honors; Marketplace Oriented (SFAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student and Faculty Awards and Honors; Cutting -Edge Research Oriented (SFAR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; External recognition component: Value and Benefit of Student and Faculty Awards and Honors aspect, 1) Marketplace oriented (SFAM), 2) Research oriented (SFAR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>SFAM</th>
<th>SFAR</th>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Value, Benefit</td>
<td>Value, Benefit</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>NA, NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Absent, No</td>
<td>Positive, No</td>
<td>Negative exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Positive, Yes</td>
<td>Moderate, Some</td>
<td>Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science

Summary exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy

With the exception of Type III institutions, examples of ways in which the discipline was meeting an important need or interest were identified as impacting positively on views of legitimacy. Of critical importance is the match between discipline and institution views regarding value and benefit. Fiscal outcomes is the component with the most leverage in earning legitimacy in the exchange form. However, the leverage relies on matching the aspect of most importance to institutional needs and desires. For Type I this is clearly fiscal outcomes in student enrollment while in Type II it is clearly fiscal outcomes in funded research.

Table 11: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy: summary of components and aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Aspect(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Outcomes</td>
<td>Student Enrollment (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded Research (FR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment Profile</td>
<td>Geographic Location (GL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Recognition</td>
<td>Student/Faculty Awards/Honors –Marketplace (SFAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student/Faculty Awards/Honors –Research- (SFAR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Summary chart of Value and Benefit of aspects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>SFAR</th>
<th>SFAM</th>
<th>GL</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>V,B</td>
<td>V,B</td>
<td>V,B</td>
<td>V,B</td>
<td>V,B</td>
<td>Overall High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, NA, NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>High Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>A, No</td>
<td>A, No</td>
<td>A, No</td>
<td>A, Yes</td>
<td>P, No</td>
<td>Minimal Presence of exchange form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M, Some</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>P, Yes</td>
<td>NA, NA</td>
<td>Positive exchange form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type I= Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III= courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV=Minor/concentration/specialization within area other than Animal Science; P=Positive, yes = Present, A = Absent, no= not present, M= Moderate

Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy

The dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy considers the match between institutional goals and interests and discipline goals and interests. The match is considered both through the lens of those inside the institution, and through the lens of stakeholder perceptions outside the institution. If the disciplines goals and interests are well-suited to institution’s self interests, Suchman’s model predicts the presence of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. Components of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy are identified as 1) Serving the mission of the institution, and 2) the ways in which institutional stakeholders are supportive of the discipline.

Of the two components, serving the mission is most often presented as being of higher value. The exception surfaces when stakeholders have the ability to provide, or direct, significant resources to an institution. Serving the mission is of highest value at Type III institutions where concerns are expressed that the outcomes of the discipline do not align well with intent of institutional mission.
Serving the Mission of the Institution

The mission of an institution typically sets the tone for a campus and drives the direction of disciplinary offerings. Inherent at all but one institution is the notion that equine studies is a breakout from a broader discipline that has a long history as part of the institutional mission. The case discipline, therefore, is most often seen as part of the cultural framework of educational offerings at each institution and is embedded in the framework of a discipline that already has a firm foundation institutionally. Because equine studies is seen as emerging from an established discipline with a firm foundation at the institution, a natural link to institutional mission is created. This link is important to discipline views. The literature discusses ways in which aligning with something already deemed legitimate garners legitimacy (Toma 2002) and this finding supports that concept.

Initially, subjects tend to discuss the discipline in a positive light towards serving the mission; in large part due to historic ties. However, as subjects continue their responses, discussions of the goals and intent of the discipline are not always expressed with the same confidence. Suchman uses the phrase “share our values” in discussing the ways in which organizations can consider the extent to which something has the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy (Suchman 1995, 578). Interview subjects are not always confident that the discipline shares the same values espoused in the institutional mission even if they are first inclined to respond positively. In large part the lack of confidence is found to relate to differing institutional values and perspectives toward offering a highly specialized and marketplace oriented discipline for which
confidence is moderate at best when discussing students’ abilities to find the jobs/career they desire, with the kind of pay-scales they desire.

At Type I institutions the perceived intent of the discipline is to prepare students for jobs in the marketplace. In contrast, Type III institutions report that a significant portion, 50-75% at one institution (Type III administrator), of all students intend to pursue further study in graduate or professional fields. Consequently, Type III institutions do not view preparation for careers in a marketplace industry as the intent for their discipline offering; rather their self interests are embedded in a commitment to broad education rather than career specific education. The following administrative excerpt demonstrates this finding: “Now I will tell you that getting a degree from [subject’s institution] in [a broader discipline] and there would be no [specialized case discipline] on the planet that would compete with that” (Administrator, Type III). Type II and IV institutions present a mix of intent with institutional efforts placed both on preparing students for careers upon graduation and preparing them for further study; their discipline offerings are designed in this vein.

When the intent of the discipline is seen as marketplace oriented and the institutional mission is positioned to prepare students for the marketplace (such as Type I institutions) there is no evidence of diminished views of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy. However when the intent of the discipline is viewed as marketplace oriented and the institutional mission is not positioned similarly (such as Type III institutions) there is a diminished view of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy as discipline intent is not viewed as aligning with mission intent. This theme of alignment between intent of mission and intent of discipline is one aspect that surfaces
in findings. A second aspect also surface; if the discipline intent is to prepare students for the marketplace (as in Type I and II institutions) yet information on the success of graduates in the marketplace is limited or suspect, then again views of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy diminish. In this sense, it is not only discipline intent that is important but also perceptions of discipline outcomes. A further emphasis on discipline outcome occurs in discussion of the consequential form of Moral legitimacy which appears later in this thesis.

The following interview excerpts provide examples of the ways in which intent of discipline and intent of mission are discussed. In the first excerpt the intent of discipline matches intent of institutional mission:

Well I think it makes sense once I think about it for some time [a degree in the discipline]… even something like a baccalaureate degree in journalism or speech sounded a little bit weird to me or odd to me because liberal arts colleges didn’t tend to have applied disciplines and I don’t find equine science any more strange than exercise and sport science which is the more biological and science orientation than PE so in a university that has a lot of applied specializations I think it makes sense. (Administrator, Type IV)

In the next excerpt, from an administrator interview, the intent of discipline is not viewed as matching institutional mission and the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy diminishes. The mission at this institution calls for disciplines that demonstrate “evidence of strengths that a program fulfills all the areas – teaching, research, outreach, and extension” (Administrator, Type III). As seen below, the discipline is not viewed as meeting these criteria:

I look at those [discipline offerings at other institutions] and I am not sure I see the kind of sustainability that we are going to need for the future. They are not well funded… there is a very, very meager pool of research funds – extramural research funds regardless of the area of [discipline] research. And without that and without growth in that I think we are going to see a continuing de-emphasis of [case study discipline] research programs. Again I think [institutions] are
going to find ways to make the [discipline] important in instruction and outreach but I am not optimistic about [its] future as a research component of large universities….I do not see it as a [discipline] that meets all the necessary requirements of a good program [at this type of university]. We have not had a good research program for many years (Administrator, Type III).

In the next excerpt the intent of discipline matches intent of mission, yet proof of discipline outcome is suspect. The dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy is again diminished.

I would say that they [students] are putting in a lot of hours, a lot of practical hours, a lot of classroom time, definitely I think they earn their degree…. What I do worry about, they are getting these degrees and then they are going out and saying either I can’t make a living or this is a lot more work than I thought…. (Faculty, Type 1).

In the final excerpt, discipline intent and discipline outcomes are also suspect. However, in this instance the discipline is seen as satisfying student’s interests and, as a result, questions surrounding intent of discipline and actual discipline outcome are diminished.

There’s been times over the years when I’m like what are these students going to do when they’re done? Why are they doing this and then they – you know, this person doesn’t have the capabilities to be hired in a full time enough, or high enough paying job in the equine field –and so you know, what are these students going to do? Why are they doing this? And I’m beginning to realize – well, I’ve realized for some time now – that the big thing is that they like [doing these things]… and like in [names another career based discipline] if we have 25 students, 25 of them are probably going to go on to some type [job in that discipline]. Equine, you may have 50 students and you may only have 10 that will actually end up in a full time equine position and that’s ok, because the others got what they wanted when they came here. (Administrator, Type I)

The variety of ways that the ‘Serving Institutional Mission’ component is presented across institutions is representative of socially constructed norms and values and the importance of match between discipline and institution. Importance is linked more to
values of the institution than particular characteristics of the discipline; emphasis is on
the institution more so than the discipline.

**Table 13: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Serving Institution Mission component, aspects defined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Institution Mission</td>
<td>Alignment between intent of Institutional Mission and intent of Discipline Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment between Outcome Valued in Institutional Mission and anticipated Outcome of Graduates in discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Serving Institution Mission component, presence of aspects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Mission Alignment</th>
<th>Outcome Alignment</th>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High to Moderate dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High to Moderate dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Low to Absent dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High to moderate dispositional form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science*

**Stakeholder Support**

The second component identified is stakeholder support and its impact on the
 dispositional form of Pragmatic legitimacy. Perceptions of stakeholder support as well
as the value placed on stakeholder support most often varied on the kind of stakeholder
identified. The kinds of stakeholders most often presented as having importance in
determining if the discipline is operating in ways that are “decent and wise” (Suchman,
Discipline based advisory boards, industry stakeholders, community stakeholders, and government agencies. The value of each stakeholder is impacted by the perceived benefit that comes to the institution as a result of that stakeholder’s support. Value is highest when stakeholders are linked to obtainment of resources. Examples follow of the varying ways stakeholders are considered; each is an aspect of the stakeholder support component of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy.

Advisory Boards

Discipline-based advisory boards are discussed at most institutions indicating that a socially constructed norm exists across institutions that advisory boards in the discipline are of value. This seems particularly true given that the discipline is professionally oriented and marketplace driven; therefore aiming to put students into careers within the discipline industry. Despite common discussion of advisory boards, high value of boards occurs at only one institution Type; Type II institutions with baccalaureate degrees in the discipline. Still, faculty and administrators at all institutions discuss the importance of establishing connections with the industry and typically advisory boards serve such a purpose, particularly for disciplines surrounding an industry and/or profession. Yet the general self interests of most of the institutions is presented as having a passive presence of advisory boards rather than active use of advisory boards; the exception being Type II institutions. An interview excerpt from a Type II faculty member indicates views of the value of advisory board participation:

We formed an advisory board for this program and we don’t meet that often but we talk quite often. I probably talk to someone on our advisory committee once a week if not more and they are a very strong set of people in the industry and having that strong of a set of people that we can bounce ideas off of, and that we bring in once a year for three days; they are engaged and give me legitimacy with
the administration that we are headed in the direction the industry wants. (Faculty, Type II)

Type II institutions discuss active use of advisory boards with tangible curricular decisions and changes made as a result of board input and activities. Each Type II faculty and administrator brought up the presence and activities of advisory boards during interviews and presented them as highly important to the legitimacy of programs in the discipline. In contrast, other institution Types offered limited passive commentary about advisory board presence; useful to have but not highly important to operations. Therefore, presence of an advisory board on its own is an aspect of legitimacy in the case discipline across institution Type and offers an external conduit to demonstrate the discipline is operating in ways viewed as appropriate and responsible by those in the discipline industry. However, the importance of these advisory boards to actual discipline operations appears significant solely at Type II institutions.

Industry Stakeholders

The nature of the discipline as marketplace orientated leads to a natural connection with the industry surrounding the discipline, even beyond the presence of industry based advisory boards. This is uniquely different than a discipline framed around more traditional academic studies. Perceptions of views of those in the industry toward the discipline are discussed in ways indicating that industry views are moderately to highly valued. However, while institutions identify an importance in being viewed positively by those in the industry, and ways that stakeholders in the industry can benefit the discipline, industry stakeholder involvement is low to minimal with the exception of
Type II institutions. Type III sites present the lowest levels of involvement from industry stakeholders, an excerpt from a Type III site follows:

Look at the size of the horse industry in this state and then look at the size of the horse program…. You aren’t going to change what happens up there [administration decisions about discipline] unless the industry wants to change what happens up there. (Faculty, Type III)

The lack of industry stakeholders was raised as problematic at Type III institutions by both faculty and administration. This was not raised at other institution Types. While Toma (2002) discussed the marketplace nature of an industry as a potential detriment to academic legitimacy, in this case the absence of the marketplace involvement is more of a detriment; a detriment linked to the marketplace oriented and industry focused nature of the case discipline.

**Government Stakeholders**

Stakeholder ties to funding and the ways in which funding is acquired impacts the *dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy*. When a stakeholder is part of, or relates to, government, the value is high. This is emphasized by a Type I administrator’s comments in ending a response to a question about the perceived value of a degree in the case discipline. He stated “and the legislature saw fit to put $1.7 million into the program so that says something”. At another institution an administrator echoed similar thoughts regarding the impact of government as a stakeholder:

We got the only capital project through [the State Board] and it was for the equine program. Do I think it’s a program every college should have? No, but for a small college like us in an area with horses and land and expertise it makes sense. (Administrator, Type I)
In contrast, at Type III institutions there is much discussion about lack of government funding [NIH and USDA] for research in the discipline:

One of the challenges with horses is there’s not a large fund of research dollars to support scholarship related to equine science. (Administrator, Type III)

Type I and Type III institutions represent different views of government support with Type I institutions finding the infusion of funds by state agencies as a signal that the disposition of the discipline is meeting the self interests of the state. At the same time the discipline is meeting the self interests of Type I institutions through the receipt of funds. It is possible, however, that positive value directed toward the discipline could be directed toward education in general, regardless of the discipline:

….I wonder how they [stakeholders] view getting a degree in something like equine, but I still feel that when a student goes to an employer and can show them a piece of paper whether it is in basket weaving, horse training, or in business it is still worthwhile. (Administrator, Type I)

Given this excerpt, it is a possibility that stakeholder support is considered as support for education in general rather than endorsement of the value of a specific discipline. However, at one site, meeting the needs of government stakeholders is exceedingly important as reflected in faculty and administrator comments such as “I think the only reason the program exists is because of that [government] funding” (Administrator, Type IV). The interview subject went on to discuss the rationale for the discipline offering at his institution. This included a discussion of the ways the industry-based discipline positively impacted the geographic area and provided a basis to say that the discipline was doing good things for the community. Still, however, the funding stream through government coffers is presented at the institution as the primary reason for the discipline’s existence. As long as a match exists between institutional views of value of
the stakeholder, and receipt of benefit through funding brought by the stakeholder, it appears discipline offerings will remain at this particular institution. If a time were to come when a match no longer exists, a faculty member at the institution stated “if they pulled the plug on our funding, I would be selling apples” (Faculty, Type IV).

As was the case in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy, the importance of discipline finances again plays a role in views of legitimacy. Stakeholder support through government funding has significant value in the ways Type I and Type III sites consider the legitimacy of the discipline. State government provides funds for discipline buildings for teaching at Type I institutions but provides few opportunities for funded research in the discipline which is highly important at Type III institutions. The interpretation at Type I institutions is that state government is supportive of the discipline as evidenced through the receipt of a valued benefit (building funds). The interpretation at Type III institutions is that state government is not supportive of the discipline as evidenced through the absence of opportunities for the receipt of a valued benefit (research funds). Important to note is that one Type I institution and one Type III institution reside in the same state eliminating the ability to rationalize the difference by state preferences towards discipline offerings. For that state it can be hypothesized that government agencies view the support of the discipline as career based as having a higher value than support of the discipline as research based. Each institution, however, generalizes the decision of support to be an overall indication of discipline legitimacy resulting in very different views of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy.
Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders surface as an aspect of the *dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy* when the discipline draws negative attention from the community. Two sites specifically discussed backlash, real and potential, when large financial investments were made into the discipline at the perceived loss to interests held by other stakeholders; stakeholders that felt the investment would have been better spent in other places. However, both institutions made investments into the discipline as a result of sizable funding received from state government. This raises a point of discussion regarding conflict between stakeholders with different interests. In this case state government, as one stakeholder, saw fit to invest funds into a discipline when other stakeholders felt those funds would have been better spent elsewhere. Interview subjects were cognizant of those concerns but made it clear that stakeholders with funding (government) are of more value in consideration than stakeholders without funding (community).

Table 15: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Stakeholder components, aspects defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Boards (AB)</td>
<td>Value perceived by AB presence, and benefit incurred to the discipline by their activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Stakeholders (IS)</td>
<td>Value perceived by IS involvement in the discipline, and benefit incurred to the discipline by their activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Stakeholders (CS)</td>
<td>Value perceived by CS involvement in the discipline, and benefit incurred to the discipline by their activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Stakeholders (GS)</td>
<td>Value perceived by GS involvement in the discipline, and benefit incurred to the discipline by their activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy: Stakeholder components; Value(V) and Benefit (B) to institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Pragmatic Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>M dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>L, Yes</td>
<td>M, Yes</td>
<td>L/M, some</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>L, Yes</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>L, No</td>
<td>L dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M, Yes</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>L/H, Yes</td>
<td>M/H dispositional form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), Yes (present) No (not present) Y/N – different benefit at different institutions.

Summary of dispositional Pragmatic Legitimacy

Two components of the dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy are present; serving the institution mission and stakeholder support of the discipline. Of these, serving the institution mission is presented as having a stronger ability to persuade views of legitimacy. When this component is not questioned, the second component of stakeholder support plays a role in views of discipline legitimacy. The match between discipline goals and interests and institutional self interests is most important in determining the level of perceived discipline legitimacy.

Table 17: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; summary of components and aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Aspect(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Institution Mission</td>
<td>Alignment between intent of Institution Mission and intent of Discipline Mission (AM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment between Outcome Valued in Institution Mission and Anticipated Outcome of Graduates in Discipline (AO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder support</td>
<td>Advisory Boards (AB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Stakeholders (IS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Stakeholders (CS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government Stakeholders (GS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18: Dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Summary chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>AO</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Pragmatic Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>L, Yes</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>M dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>L, Yes</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>L, No</td>
<td>L dispositional form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M, Yes</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>M, Y/N</td>
<td>L/H, Yes</td>
<td>M/H dispositional form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M(moderate), L(low), Yes(present) No(not present) Y/N – different benefit at different institutions

Influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy

In the third and final form of Pragmatic Legitimacy, legitimacy is predicted to occur when an audience feels it is able to influence a discipline in ways that cause it to respond to the audience’s needs or self interest. Three components of the influence form are found in this study: Influence of Advisory Boards, Influence of Government, and Influence of Students.

Influence of Advisory Boards

Advisory boards as a component of influence occur within one of two aspects. First is the aspect of the presence of an advisory board; an aspect that already surfaced in the previous section on the dispositional form. The second is the aspect of discipline responsiveness to the influence of an advisory board. While most institution have the first aspect, only two present the second.
The value of advisory boards as a component of the influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy arises from ways they are viewed as able to assist in discipline promotion, provide additional industry links for student internships and graduate employment, and provided input/insight into curricular offerings. The value and benefit of these activities ranges from insignificant to significant according to institution Type. Suchman’s model suggests the influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy will most often develop when “an organization incorporates constituents into its policy-making structures…” (Suchman 1995, 578). Advisory boards are often presented as designed to incorporate industry professionals into policy-making structures; this intent is, however, infrequently found to materialize. The incorporation of input from advisory boards in policy making is a finding primarily isolated to Type II institutions; institutions offering baccalaureate degrees in the discipline. These institutions present their discipline offerings as responsive to the needs of the industry with courses and curriculums created and/or altered as a direct result of influence by the industry to meet the needs of the industry.

Suchman predicts that responding to the needs and self interests of a constituent group enhances views of legitimacy and generally this holds true at Type II sites; a mutually beneficially relationship is presented between the institution and the industry as a result of advisory boards. The presence of the influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy is much higher when a valued advisory board is active and activities are perceived as beneficial. At Type II institutions such value and benefit was discussed in both faculty and administrator interviews. The nature of Type II discipline offerings as four-year degrees directly in an industry based discipline may be an important factor in the finding of significant influence of advisory boards as a component of legitimacy at these
institutions. A higher investment from the industry, and to the industry, occurs at Type II institutions. Interestingly, Type I institutions also have degree programs directly in the discipline, however these are two-year degree programs and the shorter time period of student enrollment may contribute to a lesser sense of commitment to and from the industry discipline. An example of ways advisory boards were discussed as influencing the creation, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of Type II discipline offerings follows.

We put together an advisory group of high level folks from across the industry and we said if we could design a program, what do our students need to know to work for you. They said you have never done [that] very well so we got rid of [that]. They said you are known for [this] so we added more of [this]. How important do you think it was, to the administration here as well as to the students and other stakeholders, that you brought in these top people and the changes had come from this group?

It was huge; it made all the difference in the world. It added the legitimacy to why we were making the change. It wasn’t a bunch of academicians sitting in our office thinking, oh let’s change something today. It came from the Advisory Board. (Faculty, Type II)

The above excerpt indicates real influence of mutual benefit to the self-interests of the institution and the self interests of the industry. A similar comment from another Type II institution is provided below:

Input from the industry is important because it gives you the practicality, the application side of it, and the feeling that what you are planning to do is meeting the needs of the major industry out there. We spent the first several [advisory board] meetings just talking about who we wanted the graduates to look like when we were done and the kinds of skills they need to have and then we started putting together a list of the kinds of courses the students could have. (Administrator, Type II)
Where the presence of an advisory board is discussed as important in the previous section (dispositional form), here the value is in the influence of industry members serving on advisory boards providing real impact on curriculum.

A note of concern regarding industry involvement was raised during one interview; by the same faculty member who raised concerns previously about new discipline offerings being implemented primarily as a way for institutions to increase enrollment. The concern raised follows: “The industry puts pressure on [institutions] to have programs, and they respond – is that because they think it’s [the discipline] academically legitimate – no – it’s because they are responding to the industry”. His concern here matches the concern he raised in the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; a belief that institutions are adding the discipline as a result of industry influence rather than adding it in recognition of its place as a legitimate offering in higher education.

The influence form of Pragmatic legitimacy is predicted to rely on the ways in which constituent groups and their interests are brought into organizations and organizational planning. When involvement is through the active use of advisory board and, as the note of caution above reflects, there is clear institution support, the discipline and the industry (the constituent group) are presented as benefitting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Aspects Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Advisory Boards</td>
<td>Presence of Advisory Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence of tangible responsiveness to input of Advisory Board members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20: Influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Influence of Advisory Board component, Value (V) and Benefit (B) of aspects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Presence of Advisory Board</th>
<th>Responsiveness to Advisory Board</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Pragmatic Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L/M, Some</td>
<td>L, Some/No</td>
<td>L influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H, Yes</td>
<td>H influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>L/M, No</td>
<td>L, Some/No</td>
<td>L influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>L/M, Some</td>
<td>L, Some</td>
<td>L influence form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), Y (present), N (not present) Y/N – different benefit at different institutions within Type.

Influence of Government

Influence of government surfaces as a component of the influential form of Pragmatic Legitimacy when discussion of financial support demonstrates an influence on direction of curriculum. While only rising sporadically, influence of government is of high benefit and value, and at times creates conflict between competing interests. The excerpt below demonstrates this conflict where an institution wrestles with self-interests rising from government funding compared to self-interests rising from student interest in the discipline. The ways the varying interests are valued is shown to have an impact on faculty hiring and tenure.

Would you say that it is fair to take away an idea that the determination about the kinds of academic disciplines you have and the kinds of research that you do are potentially more aligned with the kind of federal funding you get than the kinds of student and faculty you have? (This question was posed as a result of a series of responses given previously by the subject.)

Sure, it’s a significant factor and I talk of this in terms of an ethical dilemma. If I was to hire a faculty member today doing research [in the discipline] and another [names other disciplines with much more financial support for research]. Four years later, it comes promotion time and guess whose package is going to look better? So my ethical dilemma is should I hire someone knowing that I’m setting them up – not necessarily for failure but to their disadvantage. This changing piece and I think it’s one a lot of institutions that will have to grapple with is this,
as tuition becomes a larger piece of our funding I think there will be an inevitable need to give greater attention to what students here are interested in. (Administrator, Type III)

In the preceding excerpt a clash is present between self interests of one influencing body (government) and self interests of another influencing body (students). The potential benefit of self interests is weighed in regard to how responding to each provides a benefit to the institution, and which benefit is seen as having the highest positive impact. For institutions whose cultural norms and expectations are wrapped in notions of research (Type III), the benefits offered through incorporating government influence outweigh the benefits of incorporating student influence. In the interview excerpt, consideration of influence of government directing research funds has an important impact on undergraduate discipline presence, direction of faculty hiring decisions, and even tenure decisions. Benefit to the institution is high when a benefit is obtained that the institution values. When impact on the curriculum occurs as a result of the benefit (or lack of benefit) real influence occurs.

Table 21: Influence Pragmatic Legitimacy: Influence of Government component, component defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Government</td>
<td>Government agency influence incorporated into curriculum direction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22: Influence Pragmatic Legitimacy: Value (V) and Benefit (B) of Influence of Government component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Influence of Government</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Pragmatic Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>M, yes</td>
<td>M influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>H, no</td>
<td>Low influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>H/NA/NA</td>
<td>H to NA influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in Discipline, Type III= courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), Yes (present) No (not present) Y/N – different benefit at different institutions

Influence of Students

The dispositional form of Pragmatic Legitimacy is demonstrated when consideration of student self- interests is incorporated into the operations of the discipline. For example, a Type III site that demonstrated little to no inclination towards influence by students in regard to discipline offerings provided an example of student influence with discussion of a decision to open a faculty line in the discipline. The decision came as a result of substantial ongoing student interest in the discipline. In this example the discipline was acknowledged for its value to students’ self interest and the hiring of a faculty member is seen as a commitment to meeting students’ interests. However, an embrace of the discipline academically is not demonstrated. Instead a presence of submission to the influence of an audience for whom the institution saw value is demonstrated. Student interest in the discipline does, however, increase the level of the influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy and this is critical for the discipline at Type III institutions as little evidence of other forms of Pragmatic Legitimacy are present. An excerpt from an administrator interview follows.
I meet with dozens and dozens of prospective students every year with that interest [discipline]…. These are bright, highly motivated students who just happen to love horses… until recently [we had a faculty member and some course offerings] and he was able to meet that need for our students. (Administrator, Type III)

The use of the phrase ‘just happen’ seems to discount student desire to study the discipline. However, the institution considered it in its best interest to address student interest in the discipline when they otherwise may not have done so. This is particularly compelling given that this Type III institution also did not demonstrate positive views of the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy as they perceived little benefit from student enrollment. Still, more than anything else, student influence brings a component of legitimacy to the discipline at this Type III institution. Evidence that student influence could increase was presented at both Type III institutions. One administrator offered: “As tuition becomes a larger piece of our funding… I think there will be an inevitable need to give greater attention to what students here are interested in” (Administrator, Type III). In similar vein is an excerpt from another administrator at a different Type III institution:

The changing piece that the institution is going to have to start to grapple with - is that as student tuition becomes a player in this there will be an inevitable need to give greater attention to what students want and need. More attention will be given to students, numbers of students in classes, etc. – if and when that happens – student numbers in courses would make it attractive to allocate funds in a different way than they are now… Important to understand, something I have always wrestled with – the expectation that this is a place of science and scholarship of graduate study for economic development much more than a place of undergraduate teaching. (Administrator, Type III)

What is not clear in the above excerpt is whether or not the offering of a discipline in response to students, as a constituent group, would garner enough positive consideration
for a discipline to be seen as highly legitimate at Type III institutions in the future. The
extent to which the self interests of an institution are wrapped in tuition, as the interview
subject suggests, is most likely the determinant.

Table 23: Influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy: Influence of Students component, component defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Students</td>
<td>Student influence valued to extent it is incorporated into policy and/or curricular decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Influence form of Pragmatic Legitimacy; Value (V) and Benefit (V) of Influence of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Offering</th>
<th>Influence of Student</th>
<th>Legitimacy finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V, B</td>
<td>Influence form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Moderate, Yes</td>
<td>M Pragmatic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Moderate, Y/No</td>
<td>M Pragmatic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Moderate; Y/No</td>
<td>M Pragmatic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Moderate, Yes</td>
<td>M Pragmatic form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), Yes (present) No (not present) Y/N – different benefit at different institutions

Summary: Pragmatic Level of Legitimacy

Pragmatic Legitimacy is evaluated on the basis of a disciplines ability to meet the
self interests of its audience and it can be delineated to eight components and ten aspects influential in views of legitimacy (Table 25). Of these, the aspects of student enrollment and funded research are most persuasive in views. Their persuasiveness, however, is dependent on the self-interest of the audience at an institution. Institutions that view value and benefit highest in research are less inclined to embrace the discipline, and have the lowest level of discipline offerings. Institutions that view value and benefit highest in
teaching and learning, or more equally between the two, are more included to embrace the discipline and have more fully developed offerings in the discipline. Both of these aspects pertain to the financial balance sheet of a discipline and there is a finding of high importance of this balance sheet on views of Pragmatic Legitimacy. While academic disciplines are rarely discussed in the literature in ways that link financial outcomes with views of legitimacy, in this study a significant link is found. Table 25 closes this chapter; discussion then moves to Moral Legitimacy findings presented in Chapter 5.

Table 25: Summary of Pragmatic Legitimacy: forms, components and aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Pragmatic Legitimacy</th>
<th>Component (s) of each forms</th>
<th>aspect(s) of each component</th>
<th>Highest Importance to Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exchange form</td>
<td>1. Fiscal Outcome</td>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
<td>Fiscal outcome component with aspect of most importance varying between institution Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Student Enrollment Profile</td>
<td>Geographic home of enrolled students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. External Recognition</td>
<td>Awards and Honors: Marketplace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Awards and Honors: Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment: Outcome valued/Anticipated Discipline Outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Stakeholder Support of Discipline</td>
<td>Advisory Boards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Influential form</td>
<td>1. Influence of Advisory Board</td>
<td>Presence of Advisory Board</td>
<td>Varied among institution Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsiveness to influence of Advisory Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Influence of Government</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Influence of Students</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V: Findings - Moral Level of Legitimacy

*Moral Legitimacy* is the second level of legitimacy proposed in Suchman’s model. Rather than relying on self interests as was the case in *Pragmatic Legitimacy*, *Moral Legitimacy* examines whether or not an organization and its actions are viewed as right and proper. This second level takes a broader view of an organization and examines whether or not it is acting in the best interests of those engaged in it, and impacted by it. Promoting social welfare and behaving in ways that benefit the “good of society” (Suchman 1995, 579) is also considered at this level of legitimacy. Four forms of *Moral Legitimacy* are proposed by Suchman and evidence of all four is found in this study: 1) consequential, 2) personal, 3) procedural and 4) structural. Each form is considered separately and a summary of findings closes the section. The writing then turns to the third and final level of legitimacy in Suchman’s model, *Cognitive Legitimacy*, with findings presented in Chapter 6.

The Consequential form of Moral legitimacy

The *consequential* form of *Moral Legitimacy* considers the outcomes of the discipline and the ways in which these outcomes align with beliefs about what should be occurring. When faculty and administrators discuss the ways in which they feel the discipline offerings are right for their institutions, the tone of responses is more positive than when they discuss their views about how the discipline is right and proper for the academy overall. Responses are linked to discussion of differences between intended discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes. It is not uncommon to find that interview subjects express one set of beliefs regarding the outcomes of the discipline (the kinds of things student are prepared to do at the close of study in discipline) and then
discuss a different set of beliefs regarding the anticipated graduate outcomes (what students will do at the close of their studies). The gap between intended discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes negatively impacts views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy. As a result, two components of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy are presented here: Discipline Outcomes and Anticipated Graduate Outcomes.

Discipline Outcomes

Discipline outcomes as a component of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy refers to beliefs regarding what a student is prepared to do at the end of their program of study in the case discipline at individual sites. The ways in which beliefs in discipline outcomes match the kinds of outcomes most valued by an institution is highly influential in views of legitimacy. When interview subjects believe that students will be prepared for careers in the industry discipline, and this is an outcome valued by the institution (such as in Type I and II institutions), then positive views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy exist. On the other hand, if the belief is the same, students will be prepared for a career in the industry discipline, but the kinds of discipline outcomes valued are oriented differently – for example broader education rather than specialized education (as in Type III institutions), views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy are diminished.

Interestingly, institutions have different views of their own discipline offering than they do of the discipline across the academy. Within institutions there is little finding of conflict regarding outcomes of the discipline offering at an institution and outcomes valued at an institution. However between institutions type there is conflict.
As a trend, institutions comment negatively on perceptions of discipline outcomes at other institutions, particularly institutions in a different typology. As an example, Type III institutions present a belief that degrees in the discipline are designed for narrow career preparation and such an outcome is not desirable at Type III institutions; rather, more altruistic outcomes of broader education are valued (and a degree in the discipline is not offered at Type III institutions). In contrast, Type I, II and IV institutions present a belief that career preparation fits within desired institutional outcomes (and more developed discipline offerings are found here). The consideration of outcomes and outcome alignment across institution types demonstrates the socially constructed nature of legitimacy. A series of interview excerpts follows with the first excerpt from a Type II administrator who presents the differing beliefs in the outcome orientation of the discipline.

Our objective is to provide them with a sound education, not to train them for a job because that’s an argument out there – are we training them for a job or are we giving them a good education. My philosophy is give them a good education, teach them to be a good communicator, a team player as well as having a sound knowledge and the good students you turn out will get jobs. (Administrator, Type II)

The value placed first on a ‘good’ overall education, and then job obtainment, aligns with the notion of legitimacy tied to broader concepts of altruistic benefits of education; education for the person rather than education for the marketplace. Altruistic benefit is identified as a path toward legitimacy (Rudolph 1962) and the first excerpt is indicative of this. Another administrator shares a different perception of the ‘right’ focus for academic disciplines which is less about altruism and more about practicality.

I think right now the strong push is ROI – Return On Investment. What do you get for all this tuition that you are charging us?... I would have to go back to a long time ago when an elite education was not seen as anything professional but
was seen as a personal elevation in some magical way and that is fairly out
mooted in the minds of society these days even if not in the minds of most, if not
all, arts and science professors. (Administrator, Type IV)

Evaluation of the legitimacy of a discipline is presented by this administrator as being
considered differently now than in the past. He expresses that interest in outcomes today
is focused first on what education will produce rather than the altruistic benefits it will
provide. A financial thread of discussion that began at the Pragmatic level of legitimacy
continues at the Moral level. Both on the input and output side, discipline legitimacy
encounters more valuation based on economics than the literature predicts.

The next excerpt demonstrates an administrator’s alignment of views regarding
anticipated graduate outcomes in the discipline and what he views as right and proper for
higher education. It also draws attention to the contrast in views regarding appropriate
outcomes held by faculty in different discipline areas.

I think the fact that it [the equine industry] is such a powerful economic turbine
suggests that there will be economic and job opportunities for these people
(graduates in the discipline). Is that enough for a discipline to have value to
society, that it provides jobs? Well I don’t know, this is the liberal arts college vs.
the agriculture college in many ways. Our faculty in the arts and science often
think their job is to create good citizens or good thinkers while faculty in our
college often think exclusively about finding students who will succeed in the
professional sense and as your question suggests there are elements of both. I
have never been, although I have an arts and science degree, I have felt that
knowing how to handle a horse is in some ways just as important as speaking a
different language; that skills and understanding how a pasture works to purify
water is in some ways more revealing than the study of classical literature. But I
think you can make good citizens and good thinkers in a program such as this
[discipline]. (Administrator, Type IV)

According to the administrator, both education for employment in a discipline field and
broader areas of education are of similar value, yet his perception is that faculty members
are inclined to see things differently depending upon their backgrounds. At each
institution Type, a set of beliefs is present regarding the ways in which discipline outcomes should be directed in order to operate in ways that are in the best interest of society and therefore ways that positively impact views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy. For some this means having a discipline with a direct route to the marketplace while for others it is a broader focus on education first and marketplace second. For yet a third group, Type III institutions, marketplace orientation for education is not seen as appropriate while a focus on advance study is predominant. In this last scenario, jobs or careers are something students are anticipated to seek after graduation but doing so is not the focus of consideration for high positive views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy.

Table 26: Consequential form of Moral Legitimacy; Discipline Outcome component defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Outcome</td>
<td>Alignment between beliefs in what a student is prepared to do after studying the discipline at an institution, and the outcomes valued at the institution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27: Consequential form of Moral Legitimacy; Discipline Outcome component, finding of alignment of discipline outcomes with outcomes valued at the institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Discipline Outcome</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding</th>
<th>Moral Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H consequential form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H consequential form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M consequential form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H consequential form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. H (high), M (moderate), L (low), Yes (present) No (not present).
Anticipated Graduate Outcomes

Of importance in this component of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy is what a student is likely to do at the end of their course of study at the interview subject’s institution.

Only one institution provided consistent discussion of reliable methods for collecting and tracking graduate outcomes. All other institutions discussed scattered records and anecdotal information on graduates; a finding that subjects express as not unique to the case discipline. Opinions on known and anticipated graduate outcomes were discussed at all institutions, with most of the emphasis on anticipated graduate outcomes as data on actual graduate outcomes was lacking.

Anticipated graduate outcomes are viewed positively when they align with beliefs regarding intended discipline outcomes. Such alignment, however, is not always present. At all but one institution, concerns surface regarding career opportunities, salary scale, and students not pursuing discipline based careers after graduation. Interview subjects express moral concerns and/or justifications regarding the discrepancies. With only one exception, discipline faculty indicate that students receive appropriate to excellent education, and that discipline outcomes align with those valued at their institution. There are, however, far fewer faculty that express confidence that following graduation students will pursue work suitable to their skills, find work in their field of interest, or pursue work in the specific discipline area. Suchman’s model proposes that “organizations should be judged by what they accomplish” (Suchman 1995, 580) and the discrepancy in views of discipline outcomes compared to graduate outcomes raises a question as to the timing of when ‘what they accomplish’ is best measured. Responses to ‘what they accomplish’ are found to be different depending on the point at which it is
considered and measured (for example, at the moment of graduation or some time thereafter). Interview excerpts follow.

In the first excerpt, a subject identifies a lack of alignment between intended discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes and presents a way in which he personally tries to compensate for the difference.

I look at the number of students that would like to be directly involved with horses, hands on with horses on a day-to-day basis, the opportunities just aren’t there, so that’s the challenge. I kind of guide those students to the auxiliary professions that are out there. (Faculty, Type III)

Concern that students complete study in the discipline and then are no longer interested in pursuing work in the field is present among both faculty and administrators. In the next excerpt an administrator diminishes concern over outcome questions by rationalizing that the investment of time and cost in an associate degree program (Type I) is not an unwieldy expense to incur if the student is passionate about the subject.

… It’s like look, if you’ve got a son or daughter and it’s going to be more [female], I think our enrollment is 90% female. So we have a daughter who’s had a horse growing up. They love horses. Geez, it’s a community college, its low cost tuition, it’s not that big of an investment. There are worse things your kid could do to find out if this is something they want to do or not. (Administrator, Type 1)

Similarly, in the next excerpt a rationalization is made using strong interest in the discipline:

About the only criticism that I have really heard about the program, and, well I guess there is some merit to it, is that while we have just about 100% job placement out of the program [as opposed to having follow up data after leaving] they are not high wage jobs…. but they do it because they love it and want to work in the industry, I think that’s as valid as anything. (Administrator, Type I)
Lastly, a faculty member internalizes a concern regarding graduate outcomes. In this instance a rationalization is not present but rather a call to action is presented to ‘do the right thing’.

I do worry [I don’t think we really know] what they are doing once they really get out. I called [named two other colleges in the discipline] and a lot of people aren’t staying in the industry. They are getting these degrees and then they are going out and saying either I can’t make a living or this is a lot more work than I thought… So we can get them through their degree but there needs to be an honesty level with the degree too. (Faculty, Type I)

Again, with only one exception, belief was present that organizational actions are right and proper in regard to discipline outcome. Yet, as seen in the excerpts above, concerns are present about the extent to which anticipated graduate outcomes align with intended discipline outcomes. Interview subjects are inclined to place more weight on what students are prepared to do rather than what they do or are anticipated to do. As noted earlier, only one institution provided discussion of a developed system for tracking discipline graduates. Faculty at that institution provide outcome data to administrators and stakeholders annually and feel it has a positive impact on their legitimacy (administrators concur in interviews):

We put out a[bulletin] every year that talks about the [program] and what they [administrators] like best is that they go to the back of that bulletin and they can see every student that has graduated from the program and what they are doing now. (Faculty, Type II)

Other institutions identify that tracking graduates is something they need to ‘do a better job with’, ‘work on’, yet provide no indication that the lack of such information is viewed negatively. Therefore its absence is not seen as having a diminishing impact on views of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy. A positive impact with presence, but little
to no effect in absence, may relate to the finding that across institution Type, faculty comment on a changing pattern of student background, interests and aspirations. The current student population is most often described in interviews as less motivated, less dedicated, and less likely to be interested in pursuing a job/career right out of college; even if a career based curriculum is chosen. These identified cultural changes within the student population present a detrimental effect on the alignment of intended discipline outcomes with anticipated graduate outcomes. An excerpt from a representative faculty interview is provided below:

…the type of student [we are] getting has changed dramatically. In the early days our primary customer was from a farm, was rural oriented and had a lot of direction... they came here with a plan, they got an education. They went either directly to the industry and stayed there, or they went to a four-year school and then went to the industry… and they were willing to ‘cowboy up’, ‘cowgirl up’, ‘suck it up’. They had a lot of ‘I’m willing to pay my dues and I’m willing to go through a period of time to sacrifice to get what I want’. More recently I’ve seen our clientele change where we’re not only getting rural students, but a lot of students from towns that have always had a dream of being employed in the horse industry. They’re not as serious about their future. They are not as willing to sacrifice. (Faculty, Type I)

A perceived lack of student motivation and dedication coupled with a sense of students with idealistic notions provides a rationalization for the gap between discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes. The discipline is presented as preparing them well, but whether or not students follow through upon graduation is most often viewed as ‘out-of-our hands’. This may explain, in part, a bent toward discipline outcomes rather than anticipated graduate outcomes as the legitimacy component of greater importance for consideration of the consequential form of Moral Legitimacy. While one faculty member at a Type I institution felt that the discipline (as a marketplace/technical program) has a higher responsibility for graduate outcomes, the remainder of interview subjects were
inclined to state that while there was more pressure placed on the discipline for responsibility for graduate outcomes, such pressure should be no more heavily placed on the case disciplines’ shoulders than any other discipline in the academy.

Table 28: Consequential form of Moral Legitimacy; Anticipated Graduate Outcome component defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy component</th>
<th>Defined Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Graduate Outcome</td>
<td>Alignment between intended discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes – the beliefs regarding what a student is likely to do at the end of their course of study in the discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29: Consequential form of Moral Legitimacy: Anticipated graduate outcome component; alignment between discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Outcome Alignment</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Moral Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L to M consequential form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M to H consequential form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L consequential form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L to M consequential form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in Discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), L/M, M/H, L/M indicates different findings at institutions of same Type.

The procedural form of Moral legitimacy

The procedural form of Moral Legitimacy assesses the extent to which individual practices used to achieve discipline goals are considered right and proper. Such consideration is found in this study to be linked to the ability of the discipline, and its procedures, to be understood by others. This finding aligns with Suchman’s model which predicts that an organization with unfamiliar or difficult to understand procedures
will struggle with the procedural form of *Moral Legitimacy*. Some aspect of struggle with the procedural form of *Moral legitimacy* is identified at all institutions in this study.

The nature of the discipline as highly specialized within a niche market meant that institutions were most often not widely familiar, and at times not comfortable with, procedures in the discipline as they exist either at an institution or across the academy. By and large administrators interviewed in this study had not encountered the case discipline prior to their work at the institution and they came to understand the discipline and its procedures through enculturation at their institution. In addition, faculty in the discipline are found to have discipline curriculum experience that is limited; in some instances with curricular exposure to only the institution they are employed at and to the institution they received their degree. When asked how they came to understand the undergraduate discipline, the invariable response was through what they experienced as a student and then as a faculty member at their current institution. Perhaps as a result, only two faculty members in this study refrain from expressing concern with procedures carried out at other institutions in ways that differ from their own procedures.

Faculty and administrators most often came to know the discipline and consider its procedures based on an exposure of convenience. Across discipline types little attention and consideration is given to how the discipline is organized, and how it operates, at other institutions. Instead, more attention is directed toward extracurricular activities as well as research in the discipline. On its own such a finding predicts diminished views of the procedural form of *Moral Legitimacy* as isomorphic tendencies are discussed in the literature as a precursor to legitimacy (Toma 2002), and it is difficult to establish isomorphism without consideration of others in the discipline. However, a
lack of isomorphism is not presented as diminishing to the *procedural* form of *Moral Legitimacy*. Rather, at the institutional level, the presence of independence from others in the discipline is presented as valued over isomorphism in the *procedural* form of *Moral Legitimacy*.

With few exceptions, faculty and administrators at Type I, II and IV sites state that they have one of the best, if not the best, offerings in the discipline. These comments came in tandem with acknowledgements of little experience with, or real knowledge of, discipline offerings at other institutions. This finding reinforces the role of enculturation of views and exposes an assumption that procedures and practices at an institution can be evaluated for legitimacy without comparison to procedures at other institutions. When directly asked about procedures that would expose an institution to information about the discipline outside of the walls of their institution, such as benchmarking, activities of this nature are rarely found or even considered in the equine discipline although they occur in broader areas such as the larger departments in which the discipline is housed.

Further examination of the views regarding the *procedural* form of *Moral Legitimacy* is considered by two components. The first component is views of discipline procedures as right and proper for an institution from those directly associated with the discipline (faculty). The second component is views of those not directly associated with the discipline (administrators). The separation reflects the earlier finding that the ways procedures are considered is influenced by familiarity and understanding.

Views of Discipline Procedures by Those Directly Associated with the Discipline

As a trend, interview subjects are highly complementary of procedures at their own institution while tending to be relatively uncomplimentary of procedures at
institution Types different than their own. This is not to say that across the board there is
criticism of all who are different; rather it is difficult for subjects to identify more than a
few institutions they feel are procedurally sound in their offerings. It is important to note
again that most interview subjects indicate limited knowledge of curricular offerings
outside their own institution, making statements such as “I can’t make a blanket
statement about equine programs” (Faculty, Type III) and “I am a little ignorant to tell
the truth – I don’t know who else has a program [named two]. I am really not that
familiar” (Faculty, Type IV). Despite this lack of familiarity, interview subjects still are
most likely to say their discipline offering is ‘the best’ based on perceptions of rigor and
discipline outcomes.

Two aspects of procedural concern most often surface regarding discipline
offerings at other institutions. The first aspect links to a sense that students are not being
educated in a way that will produce the intended graduate outcomes. More than half of
the faculty at Type I institutions express concern that faculty teaching at Type II, III, and
IV Type sites do not always have the hands-on training to teach some of the courses
offered at these institutions. In the second aspect, there is concern over rigor where half
of the combined faculty at Type II, III, and IV institutions raise concern with hands-on
courses as a credit bearing part of college level curriculum.

There is a tendency to link procedural concerns to institution Types. As an
example, a faculty member at a Type II institution was critical of hands-on curricular
procedures, procedures he primarily associates with Type I and II institutions. His
concern was that such courses do not provide students with important life skills such as
“communication and problem solving” stating that students “need to have a basis for
how to solve problems rather than just ride horses around an arena all day” (Faculty, Type III). Later in the interview he discussed a teaching procedure he had recently implemented; a hands-on procedure likely to be found at a Type I or Type II institution.

One of the things that has changed most dramatically is that I have incorporated a lot more hands-on work in my management class. We spend about ½ of the class in hands-on. That’s the part they like the best and they learn the most. They don’t have a clue what I am talking about in a lecture and then they put it into practice and they get it. We’ve gotten some students hurt, yep, but they have learned a lot more even about themselves about how to be the boss. Some of the students are so touchy-feely and I tell them they will fall apart in the real world; they have to take charge, be a leader, be consistent, be firm, and they really learn! (Faculty, Type III)

While the faculty member previously discounted hands-on procedures such as this when they were associated with institution Types different than his own; he embraces the procedure when linking it directly to his institution Type. The finding here and elsewhere in analysis of the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy is that legitimacy occurs through association. The extent to which procedures are viewed as right and proper by those in the discipline are linked to the extent to which subjects have personal experience with them.

A linked finding is that when faculty become part of an institution it appears that the process of joining signals an investment in the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy. Across institutions, faculty discuss the extent to which they had made improvements in the discipline that enhanced rigor and/or outcomes after they joined an institution. The simultaneous acts of join and invest became a procedural path to enhance personal views of the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy at an institution. It could be considered elitist for an interview subject to suggest that procedures prior to arrival were not acceptable. However, it could also be viewed as protectionist and in the best interests of
an institution. A faculty member committed to increasing standards and viewing their discipline offerings as the best, with procedures of the highest caliber, could be viewed as essential for continuing to build the case for Moral Legitimacy. Repeatedly, there was discussion of joining an institution and finding the need to alter or enhance discipline offerings, or place more emphasis on procedures in the discipline. The following is an example of a faculty interview excerpt:

When I came to [this institution] there was a reputation of you just pay your money and ride horses and you know that’s ok, but if you are going to hire me I am notorious for having very hard courses, I am notorious for not being very predictable on my tests, whether that is good or bad my students are successful…. And we have had several students that have come and said this is not what I expected, I expected to just come and ride horses and I mean, you know, then find something else to do or find a way to do that in different way. There needed to be a change, the program was there, the structure was there. The program had a great history but we didn’t have the streamlining of that program... (Faculty, Type IV)

In the prior discussion, the extent to which procedures are viewed as right and proper is found to be linked with personal views of discipline rigor and outcomes at an institution. Here the process of joining and investing alters perceptions of rigor and outcomes. Suchman, referring to the work of Scott (1992), states that “procedural legitimacy becomes most significant in the absence of clear outcomes measures” (Suchman 1995, 580). Given a finding of lack of congruence between discipline outcome and graduate outcomes, the actions of joining and investing that increase faculty perceptions of rigor and outcomes may be all the more important for faculty views of the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy in the discipline.
Table 30: Procedural form of Moral Legitimacy; Internal View of Discipline Procedures component, aspects defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal views of Discipline Procedures</td>
<td>Discipline Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline Rigor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31: Procedural form of Moral Legitimacy; Internal Views of Discipline Procedures, Views of Discipline Outcome and Discipline Rigor of self (home institution) and of others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Discipline Outcome</th>
<th>Discipline Rigor</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Moral Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>H Self, S of Others</td>
<td>M/H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>Procedural views of internal audience H Self, M/L of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H Self, M/L of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H of Self, M/L of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H of Self, S of Others</td>
<td>H of Self, M/L of Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. H (high), M (moderate), L (low), (S) suspect.*

Views of Discipline Procedures by Those Not Directly Associated with the Discipline

Interview subjects outside the discipline focus on highly visible extracurricular aspects of the discipline when considering the appropriateness of procedures at their institution. External views of the *procedural* form of *Moral legitimacy* in the discipline are not always positive although they are often couched with reference to lack of familiarity with the discipline and/or preferences toward traditional approaches to academic procedures. Negative views surface with two aspects of importance. The first
aspect is general concern about pedagogical procedures that to some signal a lack of rigor. Second is a more specific aspect regarding moderate to extensive use of out-of-classroom teaching/learning activities that again, to some, signal a surface concern of lack of rigor as well as a deeper concern of lack of respect for other disciplines. One administrator stated, “seems like they are always taking the students off-campus to do something and having to miss other classes at the same time”. While on the surface this appears as a petite concern; the underlying concerns that surface are considered more substantial. Rather than the issue of missing time in classes, concerns resonate around lack of respect for other disciplines, impinging on limited financial resources, impinging on other discipline areas; and a sense of inconveniences imposed on faculty teaching and learning plans. The general aspect of discipline rigor is presented first. This is followed by discussion of the second aspect which is presented as extensive use of out-of-classroom activities.

**Discipline Rigor**

Across institutions discipline rigor was discussed by subjects and, with one institution exception, discipline rigor is viewed primarily as academic rigor. At the exception, rigor is viewed primarily through extensive hours of work. While value and importance of rigor is uniformly high across institutions, differences in perceptions of rigor are present within and between institutions. Distinct differences of opinion are found within the discipline’s home departments; more so than even outside of the home departments. Most frequently this finding is linked with a home department represented as traditional by nature and consisting of long-standing faculty whose educational foundation is unfamiliar with the case discipline.
With one exception, faculty present the rigor of the discipline at their own institution as high. Administrators present the rigor of the discipline at their own institution as moderate to high. However, the perception of both faculty and administrators is that there are faculty in other discipline areas at these institutions that do not view the rigor as even moderate. Three interview excerpts are provided. The first, from a Type II faculty member, presents the finding that faculty in the department of a discipline, but outside the discipline, are suspect of discipline rigor:

Well I don’t know but I am guessing that they would be skeptical of our rigor…[thinking] ‘they are nice enough guys but they probably aren’t rigorous’. Why do you think they would say you aren’t rigorous?

Because there is no discipline, you know. I think they would feel the same way if we had a department of leadership. I think they would just see it as a niche that is strictly applied, no real theoretical issues, no real mathematical issues… (Faculty, Type IV)

Lack of familiarity with the discipline coupled with a perception of lack of theory and outcome components in the discipline leads to a suspicion of the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy. The next excerpt presents a scenario in which a faculty member attempted to create links to another department area; links not accepted by the other department.

We have also had some run-ins when we came in with a background in science. We wanted to develop an undergraduate research program and we had resistance from the biology department because they had always had the undergraduate research program… So we have had a bit of a territorial issue and we also get it with curriculum issues with the equine science track focusing it on being an equine veterinarian track and again the biology faculty got upset because the biology faculty were always the place where students went if they were interested in going to veterinary school and now we were entrenching on their territory. … [in both instances] we were the horse people coming in and they didn’t feel we had the background and knowledge to be doing these things. (Faculty, Type IV)
Suspect rigor rises again in this excerpt and is once more linked to lack of familiarity and newness of the discipline. However, efforts of faculty in the discipline to increase procedural familiarity were later discussed as having beneficial effects for legitimacy at this institution.

The last excerpt presents another example of concerns of rigor from within a discipline’s home department. Here, however, a discussion of recent changes in views surfaces:

One of the [department] faculty was gone for a while and he asked me to cover some of his stuff.  
*So before that wouldn’t have happened?*
Yep, before it was more of just a horse thing and now we have proven to them that it is really about science and that the horse is the model rather than horses as just a pet. We are animal scientists and we can teach it. And maybe your comment about the cowboy thing is true, and maybe it’s also about the riding. If it’s not put in the right perspective it is looked at in the wrong way. Certainly the breaking and training and the cowboy kind of thing would be hard to get treated as an animal scientist or an academician certainly. Certainly just reading the title and knowing what is typically in there doesn’t stand up. People judge the book by the cover and if you don’t put some academics to it, I don’t think you can fault people for looking at it that way. And I don’t think we should have to defend what we do or what others are doing. And certainly when I left my last place to come here, I was really tired of defending my job and what I was doing. (Faculty, Type II)

Views of the *procedural form of Moral Legitimacy* increase through a process of ‘proving’ that procedures are right and proper. The notion of placing procedures in the ‘right perspective’ so that those who are unfamiliar with a discipline have an opportunity to view it in the best light surfaces as a particularly salient point that supports Suchman’s predictions.

*Out-of-classroom activities*

At Type I institutions discussion of extensive use of out-of-classroom activities surface with a negative impact on the *procedural form of Moral Legitimacy*. These kinds
of activities are periodically discussed at other institutions but the finding of negative impact is primarily at Type I institutions. Two deeper concerns are important aspects of this component; impact of the activities on limited financial resources, and the ways in which the activities are perceived as expressing lack of respect for other disciplines. An interview excerpt of the latter concern follows.

Implication of lack of respect for other disciplines:

….but what that means is students are missing class and that causes confrontation as you can imagine…. If you ask a student who’s [involved with the discipline] ‘why are you here’, [it’s for the discipline activities]. Class is secondary. People teach English, History; they don’t want to hear that. And I understand that and they work with it in the whole and it’s not that they’re not receptive to it, it’s a matter of they don’t want to feel they’re being taken advantage of and taken-for-granted… (Administrator, Type 1)

Administrators at Type I institutions discuss their knowledge of out-of-classroom activity concerns yet with one exception express little to no personal concern regarding discipline procedures. Instead they tend to indicate that these activities are inherent in the discipline and important to its success at their institution; in student enrollment and retention. The administrator interview excerpt below is representative of this view of out-of-classroom activities:

And what I’ve said for [many years] these activities [in the discipline] are just like an athletic program. You’ve got coaches, they’re recruiting, they’re competing, students are missing class and we have the constant struggle with why are the students here? And if you ask a student athlete who’s playing in intercollegiate basketball ‘why are you going to college’ it’s to play basketball. (Administrator, Type 1)

The comparison of the discipline to an athletic team draws attention to the extracurricular, rather than the curricular, activities of the discipline. Extracurricular activities valued by students, discipline faculty and administrators at Type I institutions
are not always valued by faculty in other disciplines at Type I institutions. Tradition is presented as a hindrance to the process of understanding the use of these kinds of procedures as well as an inability, or lack of desire, to recognize the importance of these activities to student recruitment and retention. Such a notion that faculty lean toward familiar procedures, and are reticent to accept procedures that break away, is in line with the literature regarding legitimacy. At times the familiar and therefore ‘right’ procedures are even linked with “a positive moral value” (Berger, Berger, & Keller 1973, 53) giving rise to the notion that new disciplines procedures may not only be hard to understand but may also be potentially offensive to others in the Academy.

Table 32: Procedural form of Moral Legitimacy: External View of Discipline Procedures component, aspects of discipline rigor and out-of-class activities defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Aspects</th>
<th>Defined Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Rigor (positive value)</td>
<td>Level of academic work required to achieve desired outcomes or amount of hours put into hands-on work required to achieve desired outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of out-of-classroom activities (negative value)</td>
<td>Activities that impact on other classrooms and faculty, draw on limited finances, are questioned pedagogically by other faculty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 33: Procedural form of Moral Legitimacy; External Views of Discipline Procedures, Views of the aspects of Discipline Rigor and Out-of-Classroom Activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Discipline Rigor</th>
<th>Out-of-Classroom Activities</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rigor</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>L/M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>Procedural views of external audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), M/H (different views within institution Type)

The structural form of Moral Legitimacy

The structural form of Moral Legitimacy goes beyond assessment of the discipline at individual sites and examines views of the structure and organization of the discipline as it operates throughout the academy. Across institutions, the discipline is discussed as having little organizational structure and conformity in the academy. Interview subjects are critical of this lack of structure, yet value difference over conformity in the discipline. The literature predicts that a lack of organization and conformity will result in decreased views of legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Wolf and Zoglin 1988). This held true in regard to views of the discipline across the academy. While in all but two interviews the discipline garners moderate to high legitimacy in the procedural form at an institution, the discipline as viewed structurally across the academy garners an opposite point of view with only two interview subjects positively discussing the structural form of Moral Legitimacy. In this sense the discipline was more likely to be seen as procedurally sound at an institution, but structurally suspect in the
academy. Conformity and presence of identifiable leaders are the components discussed in this section.

**Conformity**

Early in interviews a lack of conformity and even commonality in the discipline was a consideration in the extent to which the discipline was considered by subjects as right and proper for the Academy. An administrator at a Type II institution commented that “I think there are questions are about how it [the discipline] is all held together and how it is organized”. A faculty member at a Type II institution was comfortable defining the discipline and talking about its organizational structure at his campus, but had difficulty doing the same across the academy. “That is a much more difficult question. I don’t think you can answer it for anybody else, I think each successful program has their own definition”. Suchman states that “rightness has more to do with emblems of organizational identity than with demonstrations of organizational competence” (Suchman 1995, 581) and the case discipline struggles to present a clear organizational identity even to those inside the discipline. Views of lack of clear identity are linked to lack of conformity.

The discipline most often is discussed as aligning with another discipline; its identity rarely appears on its own. The alignment with another discipline makes the case discipline easier to identify and manage at the institutional level but stratifies the discipline throughout the academy. The discipline can be grouped organizational into three broad curricular areas based on content of offerings found in this study; organization of the discipline to study science, organization of the discipline to study management, and organization of the discipline to directly study the discipline. This adds
delineation to the discipline beyond the Typology used to organize the study. Such delineation makes the discipline easier to identify and manage at the institutional level and appears as an asset to other forms and components of legitimacy. Yet the additional delineation fractionalizes the discipline across the academy causing a hindrance to the structural form of Moral Legitimacy. Interview excerpts follow to demonstrate the variety of ways the case discipline was fractionalized.

**Organization of the Case Discipline to Study Science:**

To me it is still all about the science and the specific difference is with the given species and so having one [discipline] that is just equine certainly narrows it down if you put the emphasis on equine. If you put the emphasis on science then it doesn’t – equine is just another species, the model, that gives you an example and if it is taught the way it is here, it is always – the horse does this but the cow does this and the human does this. The horse is the model. I don’t want our students to think that just because they have a degree in equine science they have to have a horse job because they are qualified for anything – an education is an education.

(Faculty, Type II).

Another interview subject stated “We have really come to see ourselves as a biological sciences department – and one that happens to focus on animal sciences and livestock…” (Administrator, Type III).

**Organization of the Case Discipline to Study Management**

Similar to the positioning of the discipline to study science, the horse is used in these examples as a model to study another discipline. At a Type IV site a faculty member presents the discipline as studying management, “all we are doing is taking a business major and using the horse as a model to make him or her ready and confident and capable to go out into an industry”. Another interview subject refers to the discipline as being in the area of ‘trade and business’ rather than a discipline about the study of horses.
Organization of the Case Discipline to Study the Discipline

Two lines of this organization are present. First is the study of the discipline for the benefit of the discipline subject (horses). Second is the study of the discipline for the ways it can benefit humans.

For the Benefit of Horses:

Animal scientists have always struggled with where we fit into their picture of beef, cattle, hogs and sheep because they didn’t take a course in it… but we no longer take animal nutrition and animal production here,[rather]we take equine nutrition and equine reproduction… they [traditional animal scientists] have no idea that there are as many jobs in our discipline as there are. (Faculty, Type II)

For the Benefit of Humans:

I would like to see [equine discipline] do more cross over degrees; psychology, criminal justice, equine-assisted learning. Horses are not just livestock and not just companion animals they are ultimate cross over species. Because of this we can do some amazing things with horses that can increase awareness and can lead to enhanced legitimacy of the program. (Faculty, Type IV)

Structure in an organization is a measure of legitimacy with stability, replicability, and consistency identified as being valued in that structure (March & Simon 1958, Scott 1977; Suchman1995). However, the finding in this discipline is discussion of wide variety with little consistency of structure. A faculty member discusses his concern with such variety in the following excerpt:

What worries me more to a degree is that I worry we are giving a bad name to post-secondary education because of it [so many different kinds of degrees in the discipline]. But we are also putting together some programs that students are getting a false sense of what they are going to be able to do when they leave. *So you are worried about the outcome?*

Part of it is the perception that it is equine science and we are all the same and we aren’t and maybe that is being somewhat arrogant to a degree but those programs that are well-founded in teaching concepts in one area may not be well-founded in teaching other things. And again this may sound arrogant, but I don’t think colleges should be teaching students to be riding instructors. That does worry me as to what they should be able to do. I really don’t see teaching a student to be a
riding instructor as college level instruction or a minor in hunt seat equitation. (Faculty, Type II)

While individuality within the discipline is valued at the institutional level; layers of differentiation and fractionalization are problematic at the structural level. Concern over lack of discipline structure exists and, as a result, views of structural discipline legitimacy are diminished.

Table 34: Structural form of Moral Legitimacy; Conformity component defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>The existence of a common definition and understanding of the discipline as it exists in the academy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 35: Structural form of Moral Legitimacy; Conformity component findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Conformity</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Moral Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structural Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low)

Readily Identifiable Leaders

The presence of a hierarchy with readily identifiable leaders is not found in the discipline, yet the absence of leaders does not appear as a diminishing effect on legitimacy. This is in contrast to the legitimacy literature that predicts such a finding would have a negative impact (Boulding 1974; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Faculty could name some other institutions that offer the discipline but struggle to identify
benchmark institutions they view as leaders in the discipline; when asked to do so faculty typically indicate a lack of familiarity with the discipline at other institutions. The dominant belief offered across interviews is that each institution feels it has one of the leading, if not the leading, offering in the undergraduate discipline despite little concrete knowledge of the academic offerings and structure of others in the discipline. A series of interview excerpts provides examples of the ways faculty talk about this subject.

Well, my vision is, well I don’t see as my peers, I don’t see any peers out there in the equine industry… What I see as peers are niche programs in other industries. (Faculty, Type IV)

This may sound arrogant but we couldn’t think of anyone who was better than us So you consider yourselves the leader – who would you consider next down the line? You would have to divide into disciplines…[referring to fractionalization within the discipline] (Faculty, Type IV)

Where do you think you are in terms of prestige? Well we think we’re good, we still get voted number one [but unable to identify organization/mechanism of ‘voting’]. If you were going to benchmark with two or three other colleges, who would those be? It’s very difficult…. (Faculty, Type III)

Who would you benchmark yourself against? I don’t know. (Faculty, Type I)

Benchmarking can provide a mechanism for identifying with, and comparing to, leaders in systems. It can also assist in a process Suchman describes as “locating the organization within a larger institutional ecology and thereby determining with whom it will compete and from whom it will draw support” (Suchman 1995, 581). In most instances leaders are not identified and benchmarking does not exist within the discipline. In contrast, benchmarking as well as the identification of leaders through ranking systems are discussed for more established, as well as broader based, disciplines. Lack of a
structure for identifying leaders in the discipline and drawing comparison within the
discipline is an outward expression of limitations for the consideration of the \textit{structural}
form of \textit{Moral Legitimacy}.

\textbf{Table 36: Structural form of Moral Legitimacy; Readily Identifiable Leaders component defined}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Readily Identifiable Leaders</td>
<td>The presence of identifiable leaders in the discipline that others aspires to be similar to in form or status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Table 37: Structural form of Moral Legitimacy; Readily Identifiable Leaders component findings}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
Discipline Type & Identifiable leaders & Legitimacy Finding \textit{Moral Legitimacy} Structural Form \hline
Type I & Self as leader & L \hline
Type II & Self as leader & L \hline
Type III & Self as leader & L \hline
Type IV & Self as leader & L \hline
\end{tabular}

\textit{Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. H(high), M (moderate), L (low).}

\textbf{The personal form of Moral Legitimacy}

As predicted by Suchman, the person involved with the discipline has a powerful
effect on views of the discipline. Two components emerge as important in garnering the
\textit{personal} form of \textit{Moral Legitimacy} for the discipline: credibility and personal dedication.

The power of the \textit{personal} form of \textit{Moral Legitimacy} is even found to sway diminished
perceptions of legitimacy at institutions with limited discipline offerings (Type III) as
administrative subjects discussed interest in increasing offerings if the ‘right’ person,
determined by credibility and personal dedication, could be hired. Across institutions
credibility is highest on a benefit and value to an institution scale with personal dedication following closely, particularly for the ways in which personal dedication is linked with credibility in the minds of subjects.

**Credibility**

Credibility is belief that a person is ‘good’ and doing good things (Suchman, 1995). Credibility is part of the charisma of a person and overflows to views of the discipline they are associated with. Personal credibility is found to impact on formation of the discipline at an institution, generation of support of the discipline, and level of investment in the discipline. The importance of credibility to discipline formation is discussed in the following excerpt:

> Whether or not it [proposal for discipline] gets to me may depend upon the credibility and the case making of the individual who had the idea within the department… (Administrator, Type II).

The association between credibility and charisma of a faculty member and success or failure of a discipline initiative supports Suchman’s statement that “charismatic individuals can transcend and reorder established routines” (Suchman, 1995, 582).

The nature of the discipline as niche and marketplace oriented is found to create an elevated sense of essentialness of credibility. One faculty subject stated “you have to be accepted by the industry and do the academic piece” (Faculty, Type II) and discussed the difficulties of having credibility simultaneously in both cultures. Importance was placed on faculty members at all but Type III institutions for credibility in both cultures; credibility was evaluated by those at institutions according to the extent to which faculty in the discipline fit into the culture of the institution and the academy, the extent to which they establish and maintain contacts in the industry valued by the institution, and the
extent to which they play a role in the achievement of fiscal outcomes most important to
the institution (in the form of either student recruitment or funded research). Credibility
of faculty is found to flow into the image of the discipline at each institution:

The way we think about the program and who we are will have an impact on other
people – people take the cue from those in charge. A person has to take
themselves seriously and has to present it [their program] as a viable program and
the person has to work at understanding how others are seeing it as what it is, and
should not be; and find ways to demonstrate that it is a legitimate program.
(Administrator, Type IV)

Similarly, another administrator emphasized the importance of faculty cues and
credibility. He was disappointed with the response a candidate for a faculty position gave
to a question regarding future success of the discipline at his institution:

And here’s what he [a particular candidate] said, and obviously we didn’t hire
him, he said ‘Well your program has such momentum that it will be successful
regardless of what I do.’ True statement … So there is that momentum, but
Karin, I would say it’s like this with this situation: yeah we could’ve hired that
guy, but how long? So long-term success I think is kind of a – yeah the
momentum will carry you a few years, but the thing of it is, it takes a long time to
develop a reputation and it takes a long time to diminish that, but once you lose it
it’s going to take you longer to gain it back. That’s our perspective.
(Administrator, Type I)

The nature of a passive response by the faculty candidate did not demonstrate credibility
and charisma and lessened the personal form of Moral Legitimacy. The importance of
active, proactive faculty continues to be voiced with an administrator’s statement about
what he had been told by a state educational representative, that “programs of this nature
[highly specialized] succeed or fail depending on who you hire” (Administrator, Type I).
Faculty were found to matter in views of discipline legitimacy and beyond hiring the
‘right’ person the importance of retention surfaces as well in discussions with faculty:
I think the really big difference between [us] and them is there was a quicker turnover in their faculty and there were new people coming in… they [prospective students, people in industry] relate to people that they see and know and the other colleges had turnover and new people came in and there’s no continuity to these programs. (Faculty, Type I)

Given this excerpt and other references to length of time key faculty had been associated with the discipline, the personal form of Moral Legitimacy was not only found linked to faculty credibility but also the length of time the credible faculty member was retained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Ability to speak the language valued by the institution, have the contacts in the industry valued by the institution, and achieve fiscal outcomes of most importance to the institution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 39: Personal form of Moral Legitimacy; Credibility component finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Moral Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>L/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Personal Dedication**

Personal dedication has value across institutions; its highest benefit found during administrator interviews when personal dedication serves to balance out, or overcome, suspect areas of both Pragmatic Legitimacy and Moral Legitimacy. The excerpt below demonstrated this scenario:
In response to a question about what had helped in overcoming previous suspect views of the discipline at an institution, the following response was provided:

Well I think the equine faculty do a good job of selling their program to the remainder of the college. I think they’ve had a solid reputation throughout the state… and I think the work experience has been the real heart of the – has been a real strength of what we do and what - the leg work that [a faculty member] did over the years finding places for students to work and his ability to [be involved in the industry of the discipline] and become recognized has helped us be who we are in the equine area. And you know his willingness to go to drive 100 miles for a [discipline/industry] meeting for no money just to talk about [the discipline/industry] – that’s what has made the difference I believe. And I would say that’s one difference between some of the older faculty and the younger is you recognize those opportunities as an honor and you do them just because you know it’s the right thing to do versus ‘well I’m not going to go down there if I’m not getting paid’, and that’s probably just a generational thing. But that may be what has, I guess, what has some impact on what has gotten us here… (Administrator, Type I)

Faculty also consider personal dedication as important in the personal form of Moral Legitimacy, and they appear to value it more highly than administrators. The nature of the discipline as specialized and niche marketplace oriented is presented as requiring more personal dedication and sacrifice than might otherwise be found in more traditional disciplines.

I mean we work hard here, its Spring Break and everyone is here. They are out there unloading trailers, advising students, we are committed to this and I have never worked with a faculty that is as excited and committed as the faculty are here. (Faculty, Type II)

Across institution Type, faculty identify an unstated expectation of high personal dedication as part of the nature of the discipline. Those who do not rise to an expected level of dedication are presented as providing less value and benefit to the discipline, and therefore the institution. Interestingly this finding is primarily isolated to faculty interviews; faculty impose a high level of dedication within their own ranks:
Our program has been successful because we expect more from each other… it is pretty easy to say I come to work at 6am and leave work at 9pm and I don’t feel badly about that. I just expect that.

*How did you come to expect that?*

I just thought it was part of the job

*When you looked around is it what you saw others doing?*

Yep.

*If someone came in and didn’t do that…*

They wouldn’t last very long. (Faculty, Type II)

With the exception of one Type III institution, administrators typically state that faculty in the discipline put in additional time compared to other faculty (particularly those outside an animal-based discipline) and they are, in varying ways, compensated for this. With two exceptions, faculty typically state that administrators are unaware of the additional time and energy components of the discipline and they most often feel uncompensated. However, little resentment is found from faculty. Across institutions faculty indicate an entering awareness of a high level of personal dedication required in the discipline. They are aware of this by enculturation; observing the patterns of those already in the discipline. Borrowing Zucker’s words the “acts performed by actors exercising personal influence” (Zucker 1991, 86) creates an image of the *personal* form of Moral Legitimacy in the minds of faculty members in this study. When actions match expectations, views of the *personal* form of Moral Legitimacy are increased both in the minds of faculty and administrators; even more so in the minds of faculty.

*Table 40: Personal form of Moral Legitimacy; Personal Dedication component defined*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Dedication</td>
<td>Sense that a person is a ‘good person doing good things’; willing and eager to go above and beyond generalized institutional expectations of faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 41: Personal form of Moral Legitimacy: Personal Dedication component findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Personal Dedication</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in Discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Value and Benefit codes = H(high), M (moderate), L (low), M/H indicates different findings within institution Type.

Summary: Moral Level of Legitimacy

*Moral Legitimacy* is evaluated on whether or not an organization and its actions are viewed as right and proper. The framework of this level of legitimacy is built on consideration of eight components of four forms of *Moral Legitimacy*, and one component delineates to four aspects (Table 42). Credibility and personal dedication (components of the *consequential* form) are the most influential components in persuading views of discipline legitimacy toward the positive end of a *Moral Legitimacy* scale. Therefore, credibility and personal dedication are most important in building a strong framework of *Moral Legitimacy*. In contrast, discipline outcomes and anticipated graduate outcomes (components of the *personal* form) have the highest potential for negative impact on views. These two components are then found important in building a strong framework – but more so for their potential in diminishing, rather than increasing, its strength. As was the case in *Pragmatic Legitimacy*, finding a match between views of discipline actions and views of the institution as to what is appropriate for the best interests of those engaged in, and impacted by, the discipline is of utmost importance.
The importance of familiarity with, and understanding of the discipline becomes increasingly important in these findings and a pattern emerges that the procedures a subject is exposed to are the ones subsequently viewed as legitimate. A summary overview of Moral Legitimacy is provided in Table 42, discussion then moves to the next chapter and findings regarding Cognitive Legitimacy.

Table 42: Overview of Moral Level of Legitimacy: Forms, Components, Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Level of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Component(s) of each form</th>
<th>aspect(s) of each component</th>
<th>Highest Importance to legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Consequential form</td>
<td>1. Discipline outcomes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Consequential highest potential for negative impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Anticipated graduate outcomes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Procedural form</td>
<td>1. Views of those directly associated</td>
<td>Discipline outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline rigor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Views of those external</td>
<td>Discipline rigor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of out-of-class activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Presence of identifiable leaders</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal form</td>
<td>1. Credibility</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Personal highest potential for positive impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Personal dedication</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI: Findings - Cognitive Level of Legitimacy

*Cognitive Legitimacy* is proposed as the highest level of legitimacy where the thought of not offering a discipline at a campus is inconceivable. Suchman proposes that this is the most difficult of the legitimacies to obtain, but once obtained, the legitimacy is firmly embedded in an institution’s framework. Two forms of *Cognitive Legitimacy* are proposed by Suchman; a *comprehensibility* form where a niche discipline is understood and recognized as belonging at an institution, if not the whole of the academy, and a *taken-for-granted* form where the absence of a discipline at an institution, if not the whole of the academy, would be unthinkable. According to Suchman’s model:

this kind of taken-for-grantedness represents the most subtle and the most powerful source of legitimacy identified to date. If alternatives become unthinkable, challenges become impossible, and the legitimated entity becomes unassailable by construction (Suchman, 1995, 583).

Few organizations or entities are imagined by Suchman to achieve the *taken-for-granted* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy*.

Both forms of *Cognitive Legitimacy* are referenced in this study although only the *comprehensibility* form is identified at institutions. The ways in which the *comprehensibility* form surface are presented first. Discussion of the *taken-for-granted* form follows. This Chapter closes with a summary of *Cognitive Legitimacy* findings and discussion then turns to Chapter 7 where findings regarding Suchman’s proposed response strategies for legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) are covered.

**Comprehensibility form of the Cognitive Legitimacy**

Suchman’s model predicts that the *comprehensibility* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy* occurs when a discipline is understood at some level and is accepted within at least a niche market. In this study the *comprehensibility* form is present across institutions
but in different fashions; present similarly within an institution Type, but varying between institution Types. Institutions with the least amount of discipline offerings (Type III) have lower levels of the *comprehensibility* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy* while those with the most developed discipline offerings (Type I and II) have the highest levels.

Findings indicate that the *comprehensibility* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy* relies on the ability of others to grasp and embrace the nature and tenets of a discipline; Suchman offers that when organizations are understandable their “activity will prove predictable, meaningful, and inviting” (Suchman 1995, 582). Of key importance are the linked components of understandability and acceptance. In order to have high *comprehensibility*, both components have to be present for the interview subject – the discipline has to be both understandable and acceptable in discipline conceptualization.

**Understandability and Acceptance**

All institutions present some level of understanding and acceptance of the discipline particularly as a niche market in higher education. Not a single subject offered doubt or suspicion towards the discipline as having a place in higher education. Of primary consideration in this view are: student interest in discipline, fiscal outcomes from student enrollment, geographic profile of enrolling students, economic impact of the discipline industry, and interest from external groups such as media and stakeholders (particularly those tied to funding). One third of the interview subjects also discuss an educational value of the discipline to society in general, however this occupies a place of lesser importance in their understanding and acceptance of the discipline. The dominant components of consideration for understanding and acceptance of the discipline across
institution type are student interest/enrollment in the discipline, geographic profile of
students enrolled in the discipline, and economic impact of the discipline industry.

Interview subjects understand the niche appeal of the discipline and comprehend
its limited presence at institutions in the academy. With the exception of one institution,
interview subjects do not feel it is in their conceivable future to stop offering the
discipline, in some form, at their institution. The institution in exception has a discipline
rising from and supported by, external funding. Examples of the ways in which interview
subjects discuss the comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy follows.

Equine is historically part of the institution, it is very much part of the western
culture and self image and when folks think about it, I would guess they think it
just makes sense [here] given where we are, the history, region and culture.
(Administrator, Type II)

I look at it the same as an automotive program in Detroit or a wine program in
Napa so, as opposed to a strict discipline in an area, it is an industry so I thought
[when I arrived at the institution] Oh, that’s an industry. But I never thought a lot
about it. (Administrator, Type IV)

My background is in education and it is one that people have looked down their
noses at and I believe that there is a distinct body of knowledge. And while it
may not have been built with the physics, chemistry, and math, things of that
nature, it is still a body of knowledge. And as a teacher I would challenge some
of the chemists to go into a classroom and teach. Do I have more respect for the
chemist than the teacher? No, I have more respect for the teacher because of all
the things the teacher has to do and the chemist only has to manage his chemicals
and that is fairly cut and dried unless you are researching something. So I do not
have an elitist concept of what makes a discipline or a degree. (Administrator,
Type IV)

Tradition and/or longevity also play a role in the comprehensibility form of
Cognitive Legitimacy across institutions. This was particularly salient at Type III
institutions where prior levels of legitimacy were found to be low. Both Type III
institutions have a long tradition with the broader discipline of Agriculture, and both have
historically offered courses in the discipline; at various points offering more, other times less. Much of the comprehensible nature of the discipline at Type III institutions is tied to campus history.

At Type I sites where understandability and acceptance are generally high, some administrative interviews reflect dissonance over an unbalanced pull of the discipline on the campus. One administrator stated “because of the success of the program, it makes the newspaper so there is a sense of we want to be…. known for more than just [the discipline]” (Administrator, Type I). At a different site an administrator commented more directly on this theme, “We had a president that didn’t want to be referred to as a horse college – just didn’t like it… he was more of an academic person and wanted programs that he thought were more academic” (Administrator, Type I). While the discipline at Type I institutions is mostly discussed in ways representative of high comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy, the pull of the discipline to detract from other parts of the campus indicates a potential to negatively impact otherwise positive views of the comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy.

Administrators tend to discuss the understandability and acceptance of the discipline in more positive terms than faculty in the discipline. Faculty (those closest to the discipline) are more likely to struggle with notions of comprehensibility of their own discipline than administrators (those farthest from the discipline), even in their choice of the discipline for their own career:

My mother is a perfect example, she was so happy when I [took an administrative position for a while] because she didn’t have to tell people that I worked with horses. She never believed or understood that I could actually make a living doing what I am doing. (Faculty, Type II)
The interview excerpt below presents further struggles of discipline acceptance and understandability expressed by faculty:

*Do you think it makes sense to society that students can get a degree in equine studies?*

No, not specifically.

*Do you think it makes sense to society that students can get a degree in animal science? [the broader discipline]*

Yes I think it is an easier sell to be able to say that at the end of the day what did you have for dinner – I had a steak – you can make that connection. I think they are starting to make that connection to equine more though.

*Why more now than before?*

Because quality of life is being discussed more than before. The horse adds to it and so I think they talk about it more now.

*Do you feel like people are saying – yes we need to have this discipline because this is the way to go because 70% of our students want this – or are they saying we need have this discipline because it’s a great thing to have this discipline at this institution?*

More the former. They [traditional agriculturalists] are not willing to give up the traditional areas. (Faculty, Type III)

The questions of understandability and acceptance that faculty present resonate from their perceptions of views of those outside the discipline; perhaps in large part because of their expressions of a sense of constant battle with their home departments. Such a finding aligns with Suchman’s discussion of “active versus passive support” of an organization and the potential for Cognitive Legitimacy to be viewed as “mere acceptance of the organization” (Suchman 1995, 582). Having achieved Cognitive Legitimacy status may not be ideal for a discipline if support is viewed as passive rather than active. Still, there is a gap in findings between how administrators talk about the comprehensibility of the discipline as ‘outsiders’ and how faculty talk about the comprehensibility of the discipline as ‘insiders’. Interestingly, faculty speak less highly of the discipline’s legitimacy in this sense than do administrators.
Table 43: Comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy; Understandability and Acceptance components defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Component</th>
<th>Component Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understandability</td>
<td>Belief in the concept of the discipline resulting from any or all of the following: student interest in discipline, positive fiscal outcomes from student enrollment, geographic profile of students enrolling, educational value of the discipline, societal value of the discipline, longevity of the discipline at institution, geographic or historical institutional ties to the discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Belief of a person that the discipline has a place at his/her institution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 44: Comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy: findings of Understandability and Acceptance components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Understandability</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Cognitive Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>L/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III= courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science; H(high), M (moderate), L (low) L/H or M/H – differences within Type

**Taken-for-granted form of Cognitive Legitimacy**

Suchman states that when the taken-for-granted form of Cognitive Legitimacy is present ‘for things to be otherwise is literally unthinkable’ (Suchman 1995, 583). This second form of Cognitive Legitimacy was not present at any of the institutions. While undesirable, across institutions there is room to imagine the elimination of the discipline. However, only one institution was able to conceptualize removal of discipline offerings in the conceivable future. Student interest, discipline history at an institution, and
conceptualization of institution mission are important in cementing the discipline, from small offerings to significant presence, at institutions in this study.

Fiscal outcomes most often derail the presence of the taken-for-granted form of Cognitive Legitimacy in the discipline. Student interest and enrollment are frequently essential to views of the discipline and while both are identified as highly positive there is ongoing pressure to keep enrollment high in order for the discipline to remain at institutions. In this sense, the discipline is not taken-for-granted in its existence. Across Type I, II, and IV institutions, faculty, and to a certain extent administrators, express the need for discipline faculty to be more heavily involved in recruitment and retention of students than faculty in other disciplines. Such involvement is discussed as essential; if the discipline were to be left alone, existence taken-for-granted, success is anticipated to decline. Examples of the ways this is presented follows.

But I don’t think they [the administration and other faculty] really realize the pressure that is put on us for numbers of students. Getting them and retaining them…to some extent [our jobs are dependent on it] – I am hustling for numbers and stressing about it. (Faculty, Type I)

Faculty had difficulty imagining disciplines beyond highly specialized niche market disciplines for which similar enrollment pressures would exist. Both faculty and administrators identified that the discipline required ongoing enrollment attention, as well as attention to fiscal outcomes in the form of research dollars, and such attention was linked to discipline survival.

…I keep telling people – and I hope they realize how serious I am – that we don’t have the luxury of taking anything for granted. You know I’m probably an outlier and I’m probably, for lack of a better word, a rebel so to speak with regard to some of our administration and some of our other folks that live inside this [larger department] and they don’t understand everything that goes on outside and the
contacts you have to have outside [to be successful in the case discipline]. (Administrator, Type I)

…there came a point for a considerable number of years where the equine program was pretty much taken-for-granted and left alone and that’s when things started to fall apart a bit ... (Administrator, Type I)

For a very long time [this institution] was sort of the only game in town and that gave them a sort of uniqueness and maybe a little bit of complacency… but now everybody has an equine program, they really are everywhere. (Faculty, Type IV)

Suchman states that “admittedly, individual organizations do enjoy some ability to foster comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness merely by persisting” (Suchman 1995, 593). This statement holds true for Type III institutions for which the Cognitive level of Legitimacy is present through historical ties to the discipline even when little existence is present of other components, forms, and aspects anticipated as necessary to build earlier levels of legitimacy. Still, Suchman conceptualizes the taken-for-granted form as the form to strive for, yet findings here suggest otherwise. The taken-for-granted form is referenced in these excerpts as the start of a downward slope of existence for a discipline whereby a framework supporting discipline existence may be solid, but as attention to its presence diminishes, and success of the discipline deteriorates.

Table 45: Taken-for-Granted form of Cognitive Legitimacy: Taken-For-Granted form defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy Form</th>
<th>Form Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taken-for-granted</td>
<td>A belief that the discipline would always have a place at the institution; its absence is unthinkable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 46: Taken-for-Granted form of Cognitive Legitimacy; findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Type</th>
<th>Taken-for-granted</th>
<th>Legitimacy Finding Cognitive Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>M/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology: Type I = Associate Degrees in discipline, Type II = Baccalaureate Degrees in discipline, Type III = courses offered within an Animal Science Degree, Type IV = Minor/ Concentration/Specialization within area other than Animal Science. Absent = form not identified, H(high), M (moderate), L (low) L/H or M/H – differences within institution Type.

Summary: Cognitive Level of Legitimacy

*Cognitive Legitimacy* is found as the highest level of legitimacy, and the most elusive. All institutions presented evidence of the *comprehensibility* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy* while none of the institutions were found to exist in the *taken-for-granted* form. Two components of the *comprehensibility* form served as the smallest delineation of *Cognitive Legitimacy*; understandability and acceptance. Their importance in persuading views of legitimacy toward the positive scale of *Cognitive Legitimacy* were found to be equal with the presence of both necessary for reaching high positive values on the scale of *Cognitive Legitimacy*. Table 47 closes this chapter with a summary overview of *Cognitive Legitimacy*. Chapter 7 follows with discussion of findings regarding response strategies for gaining legitimacy (Suchman 1995).

Table 47: Summary Overview of Cognitive Legitimacy: Forms, Components, and aspects identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Level of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Component(s) of each forms</th>
<th>aspect(s) of each component</th>
<th>Highest Importance to Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensibility</td>
<td>Understandability</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptability</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken-for-granted</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VII: Findings - Response Strategies for Gaining Legitimacy

As discussed in Chapters IV, V, and VI, all three levels of Suchman’s proposed model of legitimacy are present in the case discipline. However the ways in which each level is considered varies across institutional Type with Type III institutions demonstrating the farthest dissonance from the others. Therefore, as each institution builds its views of legitimacy, the norms and values found to be of key importance are those held specifically by the institution rather than those held generally by the academy.

Suchman proposes that each level of legitimacy can be strengthened through the use of three different response strategies to address the norms and values important to institutions (Suchman 1995). Since new types of disciplines by nature have a “liability of newness” (Freeman, Carroll, & Hannan 1983, 692) they are anticipated to require additional effort in building positive views of legitimacy. Therefore Suchman’s theorized response strategies were anticipated to be particularly useful in building a positive case for legitimacy of new, and new kinds of, disciplines. All three response strategies were found in this case. Suchman’s response strategies are defined below; a discussion of the ways they appear in the case follows.

- **Conform** response strategy, individuals seek out ways to make their discipline look more familiar and/or acceptable to others at an institution.

- **Selection** response strategy, individuals seek out an institution (or different home at an institution) more likely to accept the discipline without the expectation of conformity.
• *Manipulate* response strategy involves “promulgating new explanations of social reality” (Suchman 1995, 591) in order for a discipline to be viewed as plausible and acceptable (Suchman 1995, 592).

**Conform Response Strategy**

Based on Suchman’s model, the *conform* response strategy is employed when faculty or administrators involved with a discipline seek out ways to make it appear more familiar and/or acceptable to those at their institution. The positioning of a new discipline to be similar to something currently in existence and already viewed as legitimate provides “allegiance to the cultural order” (Suchman, 1995, 588) and this is found thematically throughout the study. Examples of *conform* response strategy are found at all institutions and align with Suchman’s predictions. Examples include: altering research approaches and processes in order to gain research funding (Type III and IV); implementing outcomes assessment work embraced by other areas of an institution (Type I), reducing media coverage of extracurricular activities (Type I), and ensuring that curricula in the discipline meets or exceeds educational standards expected at an institution as well as the academic community (Type II): An excerpt representing the last example follows.

> You do it by excellence. You make sure your tenure track faculty are able to get tenure, you make sure your research answers questions the industry needs, and you do the outreach activities that bring in leaders of the industry. (Faculty, Type II)

Suchman suggests that the *conform* response strategy is the first line of defense for a discipline seeking legitimacy. In this study, *conform* response strategies are used both defensively and pro-actively to establish familiarity and similarity with an
institution, in the process conform response strategies show allegiance to valued cultural norms and expectations.

**Selection Response Strategy**

Suchman proposes that the selection response strategy be used if the conform strategy is unsuccessful or undesirable. In this strategy faculty seek out an institution (or different home at an institution) more likely to accept the discipline without the expectation of conformity. This is viewed as a more dramatic strategy in the sense that it “moves beyond conformity, to other more pro-active” actions (Suchman 1995, 590). One example of selection response strategy is found in this case. Faculty at a Type II institution stepped outside their home department and joined forces with another department to create a graduate program branching off the discipline. The creation of such a program was conceivable in their home department but the faculty chose to seek out a different department. An interview excerpt follows:

*So why did you go outside [your department] and not stay inside [your department]?*

Well because we had been begging them for years to take us seriously and they weren’t. They were very set in their tradition. To them agriculture was row crops and red meat and so we went to [the other department] and said here is this business and here is what they bring in and they saw it as a business proposition and saw value in it and said these kids need [this program], they could benefit from us and we can benefit from them and so it was done. (Faculty, Type II)

While disenchantment initially existed within the home department as a result of the action, increased discipline legitimacy occurred within and outside the home department as a result of the selection response strategy. Consequently, other disciplines in the home department began to create similar partnerships for graduate study with the department that joined forces with the case discipline.
**Manipulate Response Strategy**

The *manipulate* response strategy is the third and final strategy proposed by Suchman. This strategy involves “promulgating new explanations of social reality” (Suchman 1995, 591) in order for to be viewed as plausible and acceptable. While the *manipulate* response strategy was proposed as the last course of action, and the one with the least chance of success, examples are found across institution Type. Examples align with Suchman’s statement that “promulgating novel legitimacy claims is less a matter of management than of evangelism” (Suchman 1995, 592).

Examples of the way the *manipulate* response strategy presents in interviews ranges from informal interaction with faculty in other disciplines to defensive and proactive college governance activities; talking about, and lobbying for, what they do in the discipline and why these things are legitimate. Most often, *manipulate* response strategies are presented by faculty and administrators as positive and productive for creating new ways for the discipline to be considered. An administrator offered the following:

I would say that those guys did a very good job politically of going to the meetings, saying the right things to not only the campus, but to the [larger community].”

*What was the right thing?*

“I think the right thing was just making sure they felt like they were part of the college. …you know – lots of field trips, tremendous extra-curricular activities – it could come across as well that’s more important than the classroom and they have to miss a class for an evening activity or they would have to go on a trip or whatever, and the [faculty in other areas], you know, they’re really disciplined and they want their classes to mean something to them [students and faculty in the case discipline] which they do… (Administrator, Type I)

An example of an unsuccessful attempt at use of the *manipulation* response strategy was offered at a Type III institution in a last attempt to gather support for the
discipline. In an effort to create a “new explanation of social reality” (Suchman 1995, 591) regarding the discipline the interview subject was “going to even go down the road of horse slaughter and human consumption to try to convince them [others in the home department] that we were food and fiber but decided it wasn’t worth it.” In this instance neither faculty nor administrators felt a strong case had been made for greater investment into the discipline and the manipulate response strategy was presented as more of a defensive measure to sway an audience that the case discipline was just as worthy an area of study as other animal based disciplines at the institution.

In a very different scenario, a faculty member at a Type II institution also discusses actively creating a new sense of reality for the discipline. The set of activities described in the excerpt below aligns with the ‘evangelical’ nature of manipulate response strategies that Suchman describes but is more pro-active in nature.

We never expect them to find out what we are doing. Every [magazine article] gets copied and sent to the Provost, Vice Provost, Dean and Dept Chair. I send everything that route to all the colleges and they also get invitations to everything we do… I don’t expect them to be there but I want them to know it is going on…. I even put a little note in there – we were featured in this magazine and it has these kinds of subscriptions and is targeted to this kind of audience and the circulation is this and I know that the research folks here do the same thing. We do press releases on everything as well, our students’ competitions we send press releases and photographs, and we put it up on our website. (Faculty, Type II)

Faculty who discuss these kinds of activities point out that others in the discipline are not always comfortable ‘tooting their own horn’; that faculty do not always feel it is their place to do so, or feel they should not be in a position to have to do so. However interview subjects represented in these excerpts feel strongly that ‘evangelical’ pro-active activities are essential in creating a positive discipline image.
Suchman proposes that the manipulate response strategy is the most drastic of strategies to employ. However, the variety of ways in which the manipulate response strategy surfaces provides an opportunity to consider it more broadly, not just as a drastic, last-attempt strategy but also as a proactive strategy of educating a community on a new way to consider the reality of a discipline, and the kinds of things involved with its legitimacy.

**Summary: Response Strategies**

All three response strategies proposed by Suchman are found in this study and all three are useful in the process of gaining legitimacy. The suggestion of a hierarchy with manipulation residing as the ‘last-resort’ strategy is not found. Rather, the findings of this study suggest a revision to the original model in order to represent that any of the strategies could be used at any time in the cycle of seeking legitimacy. Discussion now moves to Chapter VIII covering findings regarding sources of legitimacy proposed by Kenneth Boulding (1971).
CHAPTER VIII: Findings - Sources of Legitimacy

Discussion in this Chapter involves findings from the secondary model used in analysis of findings; a model proposed by Kenneth Boulding (1971). Boulding conceptualizes the building of legitimacy through the employ of six sources of legitimacy: Positive Payoffs; Negative Payoffs; Dimensions of Time; Mystery and Charisma; Accepted Symbols; Alliances and Associations with other legitimacies.

Boulding proposes that one or more of these sources need to be present for an organization to be viewed as legitimate; and views of legitimacy are gained through both internal and external audiences. The incorporation of internal audiences in Boulding’s model lacks alignment with much of the legitimacy literature which considers legitimacy to be examined and conferred by others.

Each of Boulding’s proposed sources of legitimacy surface in the case discipline with the source of accepted symbols occurring most frequently across institutions. The intensity by which sources of legitimacy surface varies by institution and, as predicted by Boulding, those inside a discipline are found to impact external views of legitimacy in powerful ways. Boulding’s six sources of legitimacy are described below with references to the work of Krapels and Arnold (1996) who utilized Boulding’s model in a reflective discussion of the Business Communication discipline.

- *Positive Payoffs* refers to receiving “beneficial outcomes” as a result of working in the field (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 339).

- *Negative Payoffs* refers to demands for personal sacrifice by those in a profession (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 340).
• *Time Dimensions* refers to the “newness of the profession” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 340).

• *Mystery and Charisma* is related to the nature and language of a discipline; its ability to be understood, and the nature of its theories, methods, and language.

• *Accepted Symbols* are “attributes or emblems that could be respected in a positive way by the general population while being associated with the profession” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 341).

• *Alliances and Associations with Other Legitimacies* is the alignment with another discipline or entity that has “well-established legitimacy” (Krapels and Arnold 1996, 341).

**Internal Legitimacy and External Legitimacy**

Boulding proposes that internal views of legitimacy be considered along with external views of legitimacy. He conceptualizes that perceptions of legitimacy held by those internal to an organization have a powerful influence on the perception of those external to an organization; and ultimately to the positive or negative presence of each of the six sources of legitimacy. Internal (faculty) and external (administrator) views of legitimacy are compared in this study and found to most often align in positive discipline views. When high levels of internal legitimacy are found with faculty, high levels of external legitimacy are found within administration. Further cementing the connection between internal and external views of legitimacy, in the two instances of low sense of internal legitimacy a low sense of external legitimacy was also present. While it is not possible to tease out which comes first, internal or external views, it is possible to state that both findings validate Boulding’s conceptualization that internal and external
legitimacy are linked together in powerful ways. Internal and external legitimacy are discussed next; the ways in which the six sources of legitimacy surface in internal and external views follows.

**Internal Legitimacy**

All faculty in this study encountered incidents where they had to explain or defend the discipline. The ways they help others understand the discipline and how/why the discipline has a place in higher education follows.

*Have you been in a position at all where you met someone and explained to them what you do and they didn’t get it?*

“Oh yeah, it happens all the time.”

*Do you think it [the discipline] makes sense to the public?*

I would think not, generally no not at all.

*Why?*

Why not? Oh gosh, I think I even remember when I wanted to do equine you know people said what are you going to do with that.

*So why do you think it seems so odd to people?*

Because they think it must be a degree where you are just playing with horses. They don’t put it into perspective with the feed nutritionists, the barn designer, the track manager; they don’t realize there are so many different kinds of jobs around the horse industry.

*Have you developed a standard sort of thing you use to help explain what it is that you do and the value behind it?*

Absolutely, I rely on the American Horse Council data – people get the statistics

*And does that make the difference?*

Oh yes – that dollar impact of how much the horse industry brings in really makes a difference. (Faculty, Type I)

We start out by saying that we are no different than any other animal-based industry, we happen to be based around recreation but we can quote the numbers on how much money is invested in it and so we talk about the fact that – what our kids do, they don’t get out of here and ride horses; they work in nutrition sales, pharmaceutical sales, they work as real-estate developers, they work for banks, breed association, magazines. (Faculty, Type II)

An altruistic explanation was offered by two faculty members at different Type III institutions. The first explained that he “uses animals as a model for human issues” and
further commented that ‘human medical needs allow us to use animals that we also use for animal production issues….I think most of society would say well, you’re helping to solve my medical problems and that’s important” (Faculty, Type III). The second faculty discussed internal views of altruism in the discipline as a rationale for the discipline’s place in higher education:

Some say they don’t produce food or fiber so why should you study it? I think most people realize that horses have a tremendous influence and that they promote the health of a lot of people from exercise, psychological health, mental health, and I think we are legitimate for that reason. So we have to look at a different reason why we’re studying horses. (Faculty, Type III)

Reference to positive payoffs (such as job satisfaction), negative payoffs (such as high level of time commitment), accepted symbols (including student enrollment and funded research), and alliances and associations (most frequently with Animal Science, Biology, and Management) are the most common legitimacy sources that faculty use to discuss their internal views of legitimacy. In a contrast of findings, while only two interview subjects use altruistic benefits of horses as examples of their internal views of the legitimacy of the discipline, when asked why they chose to study the discipline, and pursue a career in the discipline, the most frequent theme in comments was the altruistic benefits of working with horses. It is found that internal views of discipline legitimacy are most often presented with an orientation towards accepted symbols having a marketplace orientation for faculty (fiscal outcomes) however, the altruistic benefits of working with horses are most often referenced as the reason for career choice in the discipline.
External Legitimacy

Those external to the discipline are most likely to comment that they have not found themselves in a position to defend or justify the discipline and its place in higher education. Their responses indicate more curiosity and intrigue as points of question generation regarding the discipline.

No I don’t think I do [find myself in a position to defend or explain the discipline/its place in higher education]. Although people might think it’s unique I have never felt the need to defend it as worthwhile as I have no doubt that its worthwhile, they have a job and they are doing what they want to do. Maintaining students, the cost of the program, the relatively low wage, out-of-state student cost compared to expected rate of salary, those are things we wrestle with. (Administrator, Type I)

I think it is more on the odd side. I think the equine industry is becoming more nationally visible and that probably helps it more. How does it work, what do the students do, what do they learn, what kinds of jobs, more curious. I have never had anyone imply that it isn’t worthwhile or a waste of money; just more curious about how it works and what the students do. (Administrator, Type IV)

I have not had anyone ask me whether or not it makes sense to offer the degree… I think the questions are about how it is all held together and organized. (Administrator, Type II)

Those outside the discipline are, therefore, inclined to dismiss a notion of needing to defend or justify the discipline. Instead, external views of legitimacy are found to be moderate to highly strong and most commonly linked to accepted symbols (such as fiscal outcomes from student enrollment and funded research) as well as alliances and associations (including other disciplines, stakeholders, and government agencies).

Discussion of internal and external legitimacy now turns to each source of legitimacy proposed by Boulding. Each source is discussed separately with excerpts indicative of the ways they are considered by internal and external audiences. This chapter closes with summary comments on the importance of the sources of legitimacy.
and their role in understanding how legitimacy is considered for new disciplines in higher education.

Positive Payoffs

In Boulding’s Model, *positive payoffs* are anticipated to occur when an individual receives some benefit as a result of their work. This can be a tangible benefit such as financial gain or the winning of an award, or an intangible benefit such as feeling good about the work accomplished. *Positive payoffs* are predicted to assist in gaining legitimacy because they signal, to those inside and outside the discipline, that the discipline meets a set of self interests, is doing good things, is valued, and is worthwhile.

Internal Views

Evidence of *positive payoffs* for discipline faculty is present at all institutions and, as seen below in the interview excerpts, this resonates most frequently from intrinsic and intangible rewards.

I love horses and it’s what I have done my whole life… I think the thing that keeps us all going is that we believe we are the number one program in the country, now who knows if we are or not, but we believe we have the best program and we are excited about keeping it there and we are excited about helping students and we have a set of students that make it fun. (Faculty, Type II)

Repeatedly, faculty discuss the reward of working in a field with passionate students and colleagues.

I have been gratified by their [the students] enthusiasm for the horse industry and learning, their candor about what they don’t and do know and they have kind of made it worthwhile… I am really gratified that they care and like the courses and like being part of the industry. (Faculty, Type II)

Across institutions the result is moderate to high levels of internal legitimacy with high levels found most frequently. There are some instances of external rewards (most
frequently media attention) but interview subjects primarily focus on internal rewards; intangible rewards that come from working in a personally satisfying discipline with animals they are passionate about, and with students and colleagues they truly enjoy.

**External Views**

External audiences recognize the internal rewards that come as a positive payoff from work in the discipline. Some administrators comment that faculty in other disciplines are also aware of these positive payoffs and at times seem jealous of these ‘perks’:

Their students are a bit more motivated, they have their own facilities, sort of a more personable group, and it’s viewed as a perk… I think other faculty view it [the discipline] almost as an ‘I wish I was in it’ way. (Administrator, Type IV)

Administrators also tend to comment on the positive payoffs of the discipline, focusing on the internal, intangible rewards they view inherent in the field:

…they enjoy it [working in the discipline], it’s a lot of personal satisfaction. (Administrator, Type III)

….they get to ride horses all day long. (Administrator, Type I)

….they get to spend a lot of time doing what they love. (Administrator, Type I)

The notion of these types of positive payoffs works against the discipline by providing administrators with a basis to discount the longer hours and extra commitments found in the case discipline.

**Internal and External Positive Payoff Findings**

Overall, positive payoffs in the discipline are primarily internal and intangible. These payoffs signal to both internal and external audiences that the discipline meets or
exceeds institutional needs through working with students, recruiting students, retaining students, and providing students with satisfying experiences. Through these *positive payoffs* the discipline gains legitimacy. There is, however, some discrepancy in the focus between internal and external audiences; internal audiences focus more on meaningful educational interactions with students while external audiences focus more on the faculty member’s ability to be surrounded by motivated students and do what they enjoy every day.

**Negative Payoffs**

*Negative payoffs* refers to demands for personal sacrifice by those in a profession. The presence of *negative payoffs* is proposed as a mechanism to demonstrate that entry and success is not easy, rather hurdles and challenges are present. Signals of hard work and sacrifice in a discipline are proposed to raise views of legitimacy. The presence of *negative payoffs* also serves to balance an abundance of *positive payoffs*; if a discipline has only *positive payoffs*, questions of structure and rigor may surface. Discussion of *negative payoffs* was present across institutions with more rising from those internal to the discipline (faculty) than those external to the discipline (administrators). The least amount of discussion occurred at Type III sites. Two prominent themes emerge in these discussions: time/energy devoted to student recruitment and retention, and hours spent at the job in comparison to other discipline faculty.

**Internal views**

Faculty are likely to indicate a view that the discipline calls for more personal sacrifice than other disciplines.

As we so often compare ourselves to the faculty [in other areas], the other faculty come the day before school starts, pick up their roster. Everyone’s required to
take an English class and they’ve got a full class. [We] need to go find students and assist the recruiter in doing that. (Faculty, Type I)

However, there is little expression of resentment in this finding. More often it is presented as an expectation that the nature of the discipline requires more time and energy than anticipated in other disciplines. An expectation of high level of time and energy dedication as a cultural performance norm can be seen in the following excerpt:

Our program has been successful because we expect more from each other… it is pretty easy to say I come to work at 6am and leave work at 9pm and I don’t feel badly about that. I just expect that.

How did you come to expect that?
I just thought it was part of the job.

When you looked around is it what you saw others doing?
Yep.

If someone came in and didn’t do that…?
They wouldn’t last very long. (Faculty, Type II)

Later on the same faculty member shared that while he was not opposed to the long hours, his personal life had suffered. Other faculty members also comment on the discipline having a negative impact on personal lives, including end results of divorce.

While the discipline demonstrates positive payoffs that build legitimacy, it also has ‘sacrifices’ of negative payoffs on balance and provide the sense of hurdles and challenges. Importantly, however, negative payoffs are discussed in ways more likely to be primarily visible to those internal to the discipline creating a pathway for disparate views between internal and external views.

External views

Faculty are likely to indicate that those external to the discipline are not aware of time and energy cost differences between disciplines; a view not all together correct as administrators tend to acknowledge that faculty in the discipline seem to be around more
and spend more time with students. However, across institutions administrators indicate that this is part of the nature of the discipline. One administrator offered the following:

I think in many ways they [faculty in the discipline] think yeah it takes more time but frankly they enjoy it, it’s a lot of personal satisfaction. (Administrator, Type III)

there is a great deal of contact with students so teaching in that program is very different than teaching in other programs – it is very intense, very direct, five days a week so I don’t know, you try to balance it, I don’t know, is it balanced? They get to ride horses all day long (laughs). (Administrator, Type I)

Externally, the discipline is viewed as having a demand of time sacrifice. However, the extent to which it serves as a tool for legitimacy in external views is not as clear as it is with internal views. In most instances discussion of negative payoffs does not rise to a sense of rigor and sacrifice that would be anticipated to be of high benefit to views of legitimacy.

Internal and External Negative Payoff Findings

Boulding hypothesizes that the presence of hurdles and challenges in a discipline will demonstrate that hard work and sacrifice are required and, as a result, legitimacy will rise. This seems particularly useful when positive payoffs in a discipline are seen as high; such as the scenario with the case discipline. Negative payoffs in this study are found to be recognized by both internal and external audiences, but those internal to the discipline place significantly more weight on views of sacrifice and hurdle. This raises questions as to the extent that negative payoffs assist in views of legitimacy for those external to the case discipline.

Time Dimensions

Time dimensions is proposed as a third source of legitimacy and it surfaces two ways in this case. The first way is the length of time the discipline has been present at an
institution, and this aligns with Boulding’s predictions of *time dimensions* in organizations. With only one exception, the *time dimensions* of a discipline at an institution is linked to discussion of legitimacy. The discipline becomes more familiar and more comprehensible the longer it is present at an institution; and the longer the discipline offerings are in place, the greater the likelihood they will continue. This is particularly important at Type III institutions where history with offerings in the discipline ties to the bulk of legitimacy findings.

The second way *time dimensions* surfaces is not anticipated through Building’s model; the length of time a faculty member has been associated with the discipline at an institution. Institutions with faculty longevity are viewed more positively through *time dimensions* while moderate to high faculty turnover represents a diminishing effect on discipline legitimacy. Related interview excerpts are provided below:

**Internal Views**

I think the really big difference between [us] and them is there was a quicker turnover in their faculty and there were new people coming in and I shake my head today, but just like this gentleman who said that his son was coming for [faculty member’s name] program, people think [our College] is [that faculty member] that is the person they saw [in the industry] – they relate to people that they see and know and the other colleges had turnover and new people came in and there’s no continuity to these programs. (Faculty, Type I)

I think that now that we have been here for a while things have gotten better and they have figured out we are legitimate….. [before] other faculty were in and out so I am not sure how much people really saw of the program. (Faculty, Type IV)

The emphasis on faculty as making the discipline credible is thematic and the length of time the person remains at an institution is seen as a stamp of approval by that faculty member. In similar vein, when an institution lost a highly regarded faculty member they
had retained for some time, a faculty member commented that from an internal perspective:

There was a ‘gnashing of teeth’, how will it affect our standing with our peers… but as I said, for the most part beyond a few faculty members in the department it was a blip in the radar screen and they [administrators] didn’t think about it. (Faculty, Type III).

This point of distinction between faculty views (internal) and administrative views (external) was noteworthy in that time dimensions relating to faculty longevity was more often raised by faculty than administrators.

External views

For those internal to the discipline, faculty turnover signals a diminished sense of legitimacy; this does not appear in administrative interviews. For administrators it appears that the time dimension rises to importance only when it is viewed as a positive signal of legitimacy.

When an institution had a ‘prized’ faculty member leave for another institution those internal to the discipline felt that limited concern was raised by administrators. When the faculty member’s departure was discussed in administrative interviews the discussion of the departure was not discussed in a negative manner on discipline legitimacy, yet the faculty member’s presence was viewed as a positive signal of legitimacy. At a point after the faculty member’s departure, the broader department had access to additional funds and attempted to recruit the person back:

the first phone call I made was to [the faculty member], and he came back to talk and we had lots of conversations. We talked together about what we called the new research program. I think the department today – if there was another opportunity to recruit this person, we would [they were unsuccessful in recruiting the faculty member]. (Administrator, Type III)
The time dimensions associated with this person’s history and longevity at the institution, and in the discipline, had gained a sense of positive legitimacy however their absence was not seen by administrators as a negative mark on the institution.

When time dimensions was raised by administrators it was most often linked to a very long dimension of time; iconic figures, historic role models. However, little attention was paid to the ways in which the absence of, or departure of, such a figure would, or could, impact on views of legitimacy.

Internal and External Time Dimensions Findings

Time dimensions rises in both internal and external views as a source of legitimacy with two themes: time of discipline presence at an institution, and length of time of retention of discipline faculty at an institution. Different perceptions about the nature of time dimensions exist; in particular only those internal to the discipline discuss the negative impact of lack of the time dimensions source.

Mystery and Charisma

Mystery and charisma as a legitimacy source in Boulding’s model walks a thin line between assisting and hindering legitimacy. Legitimacy is proposed to increase for a discipline that is complex and not easily understood; however if unease is present with the lack of ability to understand language, methods and procedures, then legitimacy can just as easily diminish (Boulding 1971). This is anticipated to be particularly true if it seems that things are contrary to accepted norms and values. In this sense, a bit of mystery and charisma are proposed to aid in legitimacy but taken too far diminishes legitimacy. In this study mystery and charisma is most often viewed both internally and externally as a hindrance, rather than an aid, to legitimacy in the discipline.
Internal views

Most often, mystery and charisma are discussed by faculty as culturally ingrained in perceptions of those external to the discipline. Faculty anticipate that external views of the discipline include an image of ‘cowboy’ and ‘horse whispering’ with memories of childhood trail riders. However, a faculty member at a Type IV institution stated that he felt an intentional effort had been made by a prior faculty member at his institution to have the discipline maintain, and even intensify, an air of mystery:

My predecessor had basically made a real effort to make it real obscure and difficult to understand what we did over here. So if a faculty member in another area would come up and say hey I was reading about [something with horses] he would say well there are so many details and unique aspects of this industry I wouldn’t know where to begin to explain it to you. It’s something that our people can discuss but you know you couldn’t really understand the language. You know there was a real effort to make it sound like there was such a difference in this industry that a normal [academic person] couldn’t understand what we do and they shouldn’t even dare to be stepping in. And that’s plain bunk. It might take a little bit to understand the nuances and the language but with a little bit of time they could pick it right up. So part of the lack of communication and understanding was the lore of us being so different that others couldn’t begin to understand it. (Faculty, Type IV)

In this scenario, an air of mystery that serves to benefit the internal legitimacy of the faculty member is viewed as being harmful to the external legitimacy of the discipline.

The excerpt above is, however, unique in faculty findings. Most often, faculty talk of the similarities of the discipline to other academic areas and point out commonalities rather than draw attention or make references to areas of mystery or charisma with the discipline.

External Views

Mystery and charisma does surface in views of those external to the discipline. Charisma of the discipline is typically linked with negative views of rigor by those external to the discipline. Examples include discussion of how much ‘fun’ it would be to
‘ride horses all day’, play ‘cowboy’, ‘talk horses’. Mystery is most often identified as a struggle to figure out the nature of the discipline. In both instances mystery and charisma are most often a source for diminished views of legitimacy by external audiences.

There are, however, acknowledgements by those external to the discipline that the mystery and charisma of the discipline is a benefit in drawing students and this aids in gaining some discipline legitimacy. Most notably are views of the charisma of the discipline to draw students who are often identified as out-of-state, strong academically, and from households with moderate to strong financial incomes.

Internal and External Mystery and Charisma Findings

Mystery and charisma is most often found to neither assist nor hinder internal views of discipline legitimacy. However, externally, mystery and charisma is most often found as a hindrance even though mystery and charisma is seen as a tool that assists in attracting students to the discipline. Internally faculty appear to recognize the hindering effects of mystery and charisma on an external audience as they provide evidence of desire to diminish discussion and attention to this aspect of the discipline. Their anticipation of external views proves correct as external discussion of mystery and charisma is not a positive source of legitimacy.

Accepted Symbols

Accepted symbols are identified as attributes persuasive in signaling legitimacy (Krapels and Arnold, 1996). Accepted symbols is the most frequently occurring source of legitimacy identified in this study with four kinds of accepted symbols emerging thematically. The most frequently discussed is fiscal outcomes either through student enrollment or funded research. Next in line are geographic draw of students, and
economic impact of the discipline on the US economy. Interestingly all three of these accepted symbols have a financial and/or marketplace oriented theme. This finding is in contrast to legitimacy literature that predicts an absence of marketplace orientation as an accepted symbol (Toma 2002). Faculty and student awards and honors is the final accepted symbol. Examples of the ways in which each accepted symbol surfaces in interviews is presented next in order of emphasis found in interviews: fiscal outcomes, geographic enrollment draw, economic impact of the discipline industry, honors and awards earned by faculty and students.

Fiscal Outcomes

Two delineations of fiscal outcomes are discussed in interviews; fiscal outcomes from student enrollment and fiscal outcomes from funded research. The extent to which each is valued reflects the cultural norms at an institution. Institutions that are enrollment driven emphasize fiscal outcomes from student enrollment, those that are not enrollment driven emphasize fiscal outcomes through funded research. Student enrollment patterns in the discipline are identified as strong, resulting in this delineation of fiscal outcomes as a positive influence on views of legitimacy. However, funded research patterns in the discipline are identified as limited resulting in a negative influence from this second delineation of fiscal outcomes.

Internal Views

The first two excerpts are from Type I institutions and the finding is that Type I institutions are the most enrollment driven in this study. Type IV and II institutions also include discussion of importance of enrollment, but not to the extent of Type I institutions.
Do you feel like you are supported here?
Oh yeah… Well, I mean our enrollment, equine enrollment brings a lot of money into this school…. I can pretty much get what I need unless it’s insanely expensive.  (Faculty, Type I)

Here [in this discipline] you are the one responsible for numbers – recruit – I don’t think they really realize the pressure that is put on us for numbers of students. Getting them and retaining them…. I am hustling for numbers and stressing about it. (Faculty, Type I)

Type III faculty indicate that while student interest in the discipline is high, resource allocations are typically “driven by research programs” (Faculty, Type III) and as a result fiscal outcomes from research is more important than fiscal outcomes from student enrollment.

You always follow the money so we’ve always done research and put the emphasis on research [at this institution]. Faculty salary and recognition has always been based you know, the strongest researchers would be recognized as the most important…and while publications and research dollars have both been important, recently money has been clearly most important for legitimacy. (Faculty, Type III)

In similar fashion another faculty member offered “If you bring in a lot of the research dollars, you pay a lot of the bills… and so you’re considered a hero” (Faculty, Type III).

External views

External views mirror internal views. An emphasis on fiscal outcomes through student enrollment is seen in the following excerpt from a Type I institution:

I think you could poll everyone on this campus and you would find folks that say yes we should be in this business. What you would find is that we are small and historically finances are a challenge, always a challenge and funding is always difficult. In fact, there were times we weren’t sure we would even continue to operate. So my sense is that unlike some campuses where on some campuses they might say ‘why do we want to have horse jocks?’, on this campus they would say ‘what can we do to continue to have them come in?’. To be able to recognize that is important, it is a revenue stream for us and important. So my general sense isn’t a ‘no we shouldn’t be doing’ that but ‘what can we do to make sure it stays and is going well’. (Administrator, Type I)
Institutions that are not enrollment driven and/or whose discipline offering do not thrive or fail on the basis of student enrollment are less likely to discuss student enrollment and more likely to discuss funded research. An administrator commented that “the easiest answer [to why research is so important to legitimacy here] is probably that national recognition is more research centered than teaching….” (Administrator, Type III). However, this same administrator did offer the following:

Well, the truth is that when all is said and done and we get to the end of the day if we had to start turning lights off around here the last switch we would throw would be on the undergraduate program, ultimately that is why we are here. (Administrator, Type III).

So while the emphasis and attention is paid to research as the priority, the importance of undergraduate students and their interests is not dismissed. Still as the following excerpts indicate, funded research is the fiscal outcome of most importance at Type III institutions.

One of the challenges with horses is there’s not a large fund of research dollars to support scholarship related to equine science. (Administrator, Type III)

They (equine research) are not well-funded; there is a very, very meager pool of research funds – extramural research funds – regardless of the area of equine research. (Administrator, Type III)

Together the interview excerpts in this section represent one of the most significant differences in cultural norms found between institutions regarding legitimacy determination in this study. For the accepted symbol of fiscal outcomes, enrollment patterns is only a positive source for legitimacy when institutions view increasing enrollment as of value and benefit which is, for the most part, all but Type III institutions. In contrast, the accepted symbol of fiscal outcomes from funded research is the overriding area of importance at Type III institutions. While funded research also has
value at Type II and IV institutions; the most significance by far is found at Type III institutions. Furthermore, fiscal outcomes has an over-riding influence on perceptions of other sources of legitimacy.

Geographic Diversity

With the exception of Type III institutions, geographic diversity of students enrolled in the discipline is an *accepted symbol* of legitimacy both internally and externally. The heaviest emphasis on geographic diversity occurs at Type I institutions for which the discipline is unique in drawing students outside a local area let alone out-of-state. This is part of both internal and external views of legitimacy with greater emphasis in external views.

Internal Views

*What do you think have been the kind of things that have raised the program to be at a place where it has this ‘landmark’ status?*

It amazes the administration that students come from across the US, Canada and Mexico for the program. The program is viewed positively by everyone – the campus, …. [the state governing board] given enrollment and where the students come from – all across the country. (Faculty, Type I)

External views

…and for a small college it is definitely a national program – we have some kids from Canada, Mexico, so unlike a lot of community colleges and community college programs, we really attract a national audience. It really is a niche program. (Administrator, Type I)

We graduate kids from all over (names a bunch of states across US) they came from all over just for [the discipline]…. A lot of out-of-state kids tends to mean good kids, kids that tend to go out-of-state from anywhere to anywhere tend to be pretty prepared and pretty serious and pretty directed as opposed to the kids that stay home, so the out-of-state kids have a better rate of success. (Administrator, Type II)
Both internally and externally, the discipline’s draw for out-of-state students is viewed as an *accepted symbol* of legitimacy. However, external audiences emphasize the point more frequently as an example of quality in the discipline at their institution.

**Economic Impact of the Discipline on US Economy**

When faculty are asked about the kinds of things they offer to help others understand the discipline and its place in higher education, the theme offered by all but one faculty respondent focuses on the economic impact of the discipline industry.

Economic impact is also a strong theme in administrator responses, but to a lesser extent. Economic impact is an *accepted symbol* used by those inside and outside the discipline when explaining, or justifying, the discipline.

**Internal Views**

*So why do you think it (the discipline) seems so odd to people?*
Because they think it must be a degree where you are just playing with horses. They don’t put it into perspective with the feed nutritionists, the barn designer, the track manager; they don’t realize there are so many different kinds of jobs around the horse industry.

*Have you developed a standard sort of thing you use to help explain what it is that you do and the value behind it?*
Absolutely, I rely on the American Horse Council data – people get the statistics. *And does that make the difference?*
Oh yes – that dollar impact of how much the horse industry brings in really makes a difference. (Faculty, Type I)

**External Views**

Similar to internal views, the economic impact of the industry of the discipline rises to an accepted symbol of legitimacy in external views. It is not, however, discussed as frequently or with as much emphasis with the exception of administrative subjects at Type II institutions.

…horses are an important business, equine enterprises are [big business] and there is a huge amount of money and economic impact and lots of opportunities to raise funds and attract students [with this program]. (Administrator, Type II.)
Even though discussion of economic impact occurs less frequently within interviews, it surfaces at some point in every administrative interview. For administrators it is one of the ways the presence of the discipline is justified.

Awards and Honors won by Students and Faculty

The final *accepted symbol* that surfaces in interviews is the extent to which awards and honors are valued in considering discipline legitimacy. Awards and honors are primarily discussed in terms of student awards won in extracurricular activities yet they are used as examples of curricular legitimacy. Little discussion occurs of awards and honors won by faculty, but when it does occur the discussions are primarily faculty driven and resonate with internal views of legitimacy.

**Internal views**

Faculty most commonly comment on awards and honors won by students in extracurricular activities. The second, and less frequent, theme in faculty comments is discussion of teaching awards. An example of each theme is provided below:

> [colleges with the discipline] are talked about more from their activities, i.e. judging teams and riding competition than necessarily ‘oh they have a great nutrition class’…. It is interesting that I know nothing about the educational value of their curriculum. How do you find that out? People don’t go around talking about ‘man, their stable management program is the best one I’ve ever been to’. (Faculty, Type I)

So now I have gotten all the teaching awards possible…I think most of the faculty when they see that, they see that it’s something… I think it does make people see you as legitimate. (Faculty, Type IV)

Even if the university doesn’t recognize it [quality teaching and advising] we do in the department and we nominate each other for advising and teaching awards because we do more of that than some other departments. (Faculty, Type III)
External Views

Awards and honors serve as *accepted symbols* of legitimacy for external audiences, however the emphasis is different than found in internal audiences. Administrators most commonly comment on awards and honors earned by students, and similar to faculty comments, they most often discuss awards in extracurricular activities. Little discussion occurs in administrative interviews, across Type, regarding faculty awards and honors for teaching.

At Type II institutions student and faculty awards and honors for research activities are discussed in a positive fashion. However, at Type III institutions they are rarely discussed and when the topic does surface it is not favorable to the discipline and therefore does not advance positive views of legitimacy. At Type III institutions, the *accepted symbol* of student and faculty awards and honors is important to the extent that they are tied to cutting-edge research; even if what matters most to internal views is excellence in teaching and learning. This finding reinforces that sources of legitimacy only serve a positive role when they align with that which is of value to the audience who matters most in determining legitimacy.

But 50% of what we do is extension and research and we had to explain to our [other] stakeholders that we don’t just teach students - we also do research. I don’t want to be insulting but there are others that just teach and they can pack a few more students into the classroom….But in respect to applied research you can’t cut corners. (Administrator, Type III)

The implication above is that research should have greater attention to resources than would be allocated to classroom teaching. Such a view cements the notion that awards and honors for research are more highly valued than awards and honors for teaching.
Summary of Accepted Symbols

Accepted symbols serve to increase legitimacy when they align with that which is of value to the audience determining legitimacy. When accepted symbols are recognized, understood, and valued in similar fashion by both internal and external audiences, legitimacy has a base to be built. Disconnect and dissatisfaction occurs when distinct differences in interpretation and valuation are present. Such was the case at one Type III institution in this study where internal audiences emphasized the importance of fiscal outcomes based on student enrollment as the accepted symbol of legitimacy, while external audiences emphasized the importance of fiscal outcomes based on funded research as the accepted symbol of legitimacy.

In this study, the most powerful of the accepted symbols is fiscal outcomes which has the ability to sway audience perceptions of legitimacy more than any of the other six sources of legitimacy. Following fiscal outcomes, the geographic diversity of the student body in the discipline is valued; and even more so by the external audience. Finally, the economic impact of the discipline industry is important to both audiences although it is called upon more frequently in conversations with faculty than with administrators.

Alliances and Associations with Other Legitimacies

The sixth and final source of legitimacy in Boulding’s model is alignment with an organization or entity already viewed as legitimate. Beyond the natural alliance with the home institution, two key examples are found in the study; the most prevalent being an alliance and association with another discipline. Alliance and association with a government funding body is the second.
Alliances and associations with other disciplines

With the exception of Type I institutions, there was ongoing use of the phraseology, by both internal and external audiences, that the horse is simply a ‘model’ used to teach about another discipline. In this manner there is a de-emphasis on the case discipline and emphasis on another discipline (most frequently animal science, then biology, finally management). The other disciplines referenced are broader, more traditional discipline; and more likely to be understood by the general public. While alliance with another discipline is a finding predicted by the literature, the use of language to dissociate from the case discipline is not.

Internal views:

Interview subjects discount association with the discipline and focus on alliances and associations with another discipline as part of their framework of internal legitimacy. The following excerpt represents this phenomenon: “We have really come to see ourselves as a biological sciences department – and one that happens to focus on animal sciences and livestock…” (Faculty, Type III).

External views

External views of the discipline also draw similarly upon alliances and associations with other disciplines as a source of legitimacy, although administrators were less likely to bring them up in discussion. On three occasions a reference was made to the disassociation from recreation disciplines and/or disciplines with human benefits. These interview subjects stated their perceptions that such associations would be appropriate and were unsure as to why the discipline seemed intent on disassociation.

And they get so worked up about it. I mean, bottom line is they are; it is recreation. And there are places where they are used in work, but they are more
of a companion animal than a production animal and there’s nothing wrong with that thinking, that’s not a negative connotation. I think some horse people feel that it is, but to me it’s not. If anything I think it’s more of a complement.

(Administrator, Type I)

Internally, presenting alliances and associations with other departments (animal science, biology, and management) is most often of high importance to internal views of legitimacy and of lesser importance to external views. When discussed, external views most often mirror internal views with most emphasis on science and industry and also the size and scope of the industry of the discipline.

Alliances and Associations with government funding sources:

A second, lesser, alliance and association was discussed with government funding agencies. This source of legitimacy is most notable at Type I and Type III institutions as well as one Type IV institution that has direct ties to government funding. When the discipline has an alliance with government, or a government agency, and the alliance results in financial support, external views of legitimacy increase however, there is little impact on internal views of legitimacy. When funding is expected to occur, and it does not, a negative impact occurs on external views of legitimacy; a lesser negative impact occurs on internal views. A negative impact from lack of funding is most significant at Type III institutions where lack of external research funds was thematic even though the emphasis of discussion was on undergraduate education.

Summary: Sources of Legitimacy

Each of the sources of legitimacy proposed by Boulding (1971, 1974) are found in this study and the presence of more than one source at an institution strengthens views of legitimacy; a finding anticipated from Boulding’s model. Also in line with Boulding’s
model is the importance of both internal and external views and the ways in which they impact on each other to create an overall framework in support of discipline legitimacy. Different from the proposed model, however, is a finding of greater weight of importance on one source of legitimacy compared to others. In this study alignment with accepted symbols of legitimacy at an institution plays the most important role in building positive views of discipline legitimacy, both internally and externally. Table 48 provides a summary of the findings from application of Boulding’s model to the case discipline. Following the Table, the final chapter draws this body of work together through conclusions derived from findings presented in Chapters IV, V, VI, & VII.

Table 48: Summary of Findings from use of Boulding’s legitimacy model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Definition: ( I = \text{Internal, } E = \text{External} )</th>
<th>Impact of Source of Legitimacy on Internal Views of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Impact of Source of Legitimacy on External Views of Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Payoff</td>
<td>( I: ) Satisfying work, enjoy students &amp; colleagues ( E: ) Fun work, enjoyment of being employed in an area of passion</td>
<td>Positive Impact; faculty feel they are making a real difference in lives of students</td>
<td>Some Positive Impact; particularly in administrators views of meeting the needs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Payoff</td>
<td>( I: ) Personal sacrifice in time and energy, negative impact on person life ( E: ) More time, but spent doing things ‘they’ enjoy</td>
<td>Positive Impact; faculty sacrifices represent hard work as a threshold in the discipline that not all can achieve</td>
<td>No Impact; ‘Sacrifice’ not recognized externally as it is internally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Dimensions</td>
<td>( I&amp;E: ) 1) time discipline has been at institution, 2) length of faculty retention at institution</td>
<td>Positive Impact; length of discipline at institution, length of faculty retention</td>
<td>Positive Impact from length of discipline, Positive Impact from faculty retention only if faculty is seen as iconic/heroic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Charisma</td>
<td>( I&amp;E: ) complex discipline, not easily understood</td>
<td>No Impact; presence of M/C is thought to be in minds of external audience</td>
<td>Negative Impact; images of ‘cowboy’, ‘horse whispering’, ‘fun in the saddle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Symbol</td>
<td>I&amp;E: Attributes persuasive in signaling legitimacy</td>
<td>Fiscal Outcomes: N/A to Positive Impact; Positive from student enrollment; N/A to moderate from funded research</td>
<td>Fiscal Outcomes: Negative to Positive Impact; N/A to Positive for student enrollment; N/A to Negative for funded research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Diversity of Students</td>
<td>Moderate Positive Impact</td>
<td>Geographic Diversity of Students: No Impact to High Positive Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Impact of Discipline Industry</td>
<td>High Positive Impact</td>
<td>Economic Impact of Discipline Industry: Positive Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards and Honors Earned</td>
<td>Moderate to High Positive Impact from marketplace or teaching oriented awards; Moderate Positive to Negative Impact from research oriented awards (Negative from absence of research oriented awards).</td>
<td>Awards and Honors Earned: Low to Moderate Positive Impact from marketplace or teaching oriented awards; Moderate Positive to Highly Negative (Negative from absence of research oriented awards).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances and Associations</td>
<td>I &amp; E: Aligned with something already viewed as highly legitimate</td>
<td>Little impact to High Impact; highest impact at Type II institutions with active industry-based Advisory Boards</td>
<td>Little impact to High Impact; Highest impact from government associations that provide support, and involvement of active industry-based Advisory Boards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IX: Conclusions

Introduction

The legitimacy literature reveals that legitimacy is a term often used, but rarely defined (Suchman 1995, 571) However, a common thread of theoretical discussion is present around the general notion of legitimacy. Commonalities involve the importance of aligning with goals and needs of an organization (Parsons 1960; Dowling and Pfeiffer 1975; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) as well as cultural expectations and norms (Meyer and Rowan 1977), and the importance of predictable patterns (Berger and Luckman 1967). These combine to create something that is seen as ‘right, proper, and justified (Boulding 1971, 572).

In large part, the bulk of the literature on legitimacy is supported by findings in this study. Legitimacy is found to involve alignment of goals, needs, cultural expectations and norms in a way that creates an aura around a discipline signifying it as appropriate and acceptable to its audience. In a few ways, however, findings contradict the literature. The appropriateness and acceptability of the case discipline is found to rely more on the institution than the academy in mass. Secondly, a link between isomorphism and legitimacy is not found in the ways anticipated from the literature; isomorphism within each institution plays a far greater role in shaping the discipline than does isomorphism across the case discipline. Lastly, Suchman’s notion of a taken-for-granted status as the pinnacle of legitimacy (Suchman 1995) is contrary to findings whereby interview subjects felt that achieving a taken-for-granted status would result in a decrease in the kind of attention viewed as important to the health of a discipline, or at least to these new kinds of disciplines.
The reference to inherent distinctions between new kinds of disciplines and older more established disciplines is important to note as this body of work is aimed at developing an understanding of legitimacy in the former. It is unclear whether the findings from this study will hold true for other disciplines, particularly those in more established academic areas. What is clear is that these new kinds of specialized marketplace oriented disciplines have appeared on the landscape more so in the recent history of higher education than in the early foundational years when education was reserved for the elite rather than accessible to the masses. The new specialized disciplines appearing today are more directly aligned with career preparation than the traditional liberal arts and science degrees of the past and this creates an important distinction in patterns of emergence. Whether these new kinds of disciplines are viewed positively as progress towards the wants and needs of society, or instead viewed as ‘desacralization’ of the university (Neave 1996), they now dot the landscape of US higher education. More in line with the former view, all but one individual in this study presented the notion that if students were interested, and jobs were available, any conceivable area of interest could find a place somewhere in US higher education as a legitimate venture for undergraduate education. It is for these new types of specialized disciplines, market-driven and industry-based, that the conclusions are anticipated to be most directly useful.

Overview of Key Findings

Seven key findings are identified and discussed in this concluding chapter. A listing of finds is below, discussion of each follows.
1. Suchman and Boulding’s models succeed as useful frameworks for analysis when applied against a new type of academic discipline.

2. Views of discipline legitimacy are linked to the ways a discipline is seen by its audience as aligning with socially constructed norms at a particular institution. The extent of familiarity with the discipline as it exists at an institution impacts these views.

3. Tipping Points (Gladwell 2002) that play a pivotal role in shifting perceptions of discipline legitimacy are found in this study. The most important of these is perception of the fiscal outcomes of a new discipline.

4. When considering the ways outcomes align with institutional goals, values and norms, discipline outcomes are emphasized more than graduate outcomes in the case discipline. In other words, discipline legitimacy is wrapped more in the views of what a student is prepared to do at graduation than what a student actually does after graduation.

5. Internal and External views of legitimacy combine in a powerful feedback loop; high internal views align with high external views; low internal views align with low external views.

6. A value of isomorphism to discipline legitimacy is identified, however not in the ways anticipated in the literature.

7. Given the findings in the case discipline, tools emerge that are anticipated to be useful in building and strengthening the legitimacy of new kinds of disciplines in US higher education.
Key Finding 1

*Suchman and Boulding’s models succeed as useful frameworks for analysis when applied against a new type of academic discipline.*

The models developed by Suchman (1995) and Boulding (1971) provide a mechanism to move discussions of legitimacy beyond theory and into practice. In doing so, these models advance the understanding of views of new discipline legitimacy. Furthermore, the combination of the models creates a framework for analyzing and understanding legitimacy that provides clearer insight into the gaining of legitimacy than would be found with either model on its own.

The fundamental structures of Suchman and Boulding’s models involve three levels (Suchman 1995) and six sources (Boulding 1971) of legitimacy. Suchman suggests that an order is present within the levels of legitimacy whereby a lower level of legitimacy is obtained before moving to a higher level. Boulding proposes six possible sources of legitimacy hypothesizing that at least one source needs to be present in internal and external views of an organization in order for that organization to be viewed as legitimate; the presence of multiple sources providing more strength to positive views. Evidence of hierarchy in legitimacy levels as well as evidence of each of the sources of legitimacy are found in this study.

While levels and sources of legitimacy are identified through the use of these models, a single answer does not surface to the question of what makes a discipline legitimate. Rather, a combination of answers mold together to reflect an amended question that poses: ‘What makes a discipline legitimate enough to be offered at a given institution at a given time?’ ‘Legitimate enough’ signals a framework built on layers of
norms, values and beliefs; layers strengthened by sources of legitimacy. The development of such a framework is much like the building of a fence. Both involve levels or tiers coupled with support to stand. Given this, a new conceptualization of discipline legitimacy rises from the findings in this study; a conceptualization that merges Boulding’s and Suchman’s legitimacy models. Represented by the structure of a fence (Figure 4), new discipline legitimacy is found to be dependent upon the framework from which it is built. Three levels of legitimacy (Suchman 1995) exist as rails while internal and external views of six sources of legitimacy (Boulding 1971) form the posts that support the rails. This new framework is elaborated on in the remaining discussion of Key Point 1. Conclusions regarding building levels of legitimacy are provided next followed by discussion of conclusions regarding Sources of legitimacy. Key Finding 1 closes with application of the ‘Fence of Legitimacy’ framework to the institution Types in this study. The application is provided in order to demonstrate the ways in which this

Figure 4: On the Fence of Legitimacy. Drawing by Risa Kent.
new model is useful in uncovering and understanding varying perceptions of new discipline legitimacy.

Levels of Legitimacy

Discipline legitimacy is built on three levels; Pragmatic, Moral, and Cognitive. Findings indicate that building each level is accomplished by aligning with the forms, components and aspects important at an institution (Figure 5). As an example, the forms, components, and aspects, important in the case discipline are provided in Table 49.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic Legitimacy Level</th>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Self Interests of Immediate Audience; three forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Exchange form: benefit received by having the discipline</td>
<td>1. Fiscal Outcome</td>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funded Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Student Enrollment Profile</td>
<td>Geographic home of student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. External Recognition</td>
<td>Awards and Honors: Marketplace Oriented Awards and Honors: Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dispositional form: discipline operates in ways that ‘has our best interest at heart’; is honest, decent, wise” (Suchman, 1995, 578)</td>
<td>1. Serve Institutional Mission</td>
<td>Alignment: Mission Intent/Discipline Intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment: Outcome Valued/ Anticipated Discipline Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Stakeholder Support of Discipline</td>
<td>Advisory Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Influential form: constituents have ability to influence actions to ensure it is responsive to their needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Influence of Advisory Board</th>
<th>Presence of Advisory Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Influence of Government</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Influence of Students</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Moral Legitimacy Level: Viewed as being, and operating in ways that are, right and proper; four forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Consequential form: evaluation of outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Anticipated Graduate Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Views of those internal to discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Views of those external to discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Procedural form: evaluation of case discipline procedures at the institutional level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Views of those internal to discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Views of those external to discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Structural form: evaluation of organizational practices in the case discipline across the academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conformity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Presence of Identifiable Leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Personal form: assessment of charisma of individuals in organization; legitimacy of those in charge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Credibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Personal Dedication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cognitive Legitimacy Level Viewed as a natural part of the organization; impossible to imagine its absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component(s) of Each Form</th>
<th>Aspect(s) of Each Component, if applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understandability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When aspects, components and forms of legitimacy are uncovered, such as they are in Table 49, the social norms and beliefs most valued at an institution clarify to allow each level of legitimacy to be built in a way that fully realizes discipline legitimacy. In Suchman’s prediction of full legitimacy, the *taken-for-granted* form of *Cognitive Legitimacy* would be realized. However, in the case discipline the *taken-for-granted* form was not realized, nor was it seen as a positive form to obtain. Instead, if the case discipline was “taken-for-granted, left alone, its existence, its success would decline”
(Administrator, Type I) concluding that active cultivation of a new discipline, rather than arriving at a taken-for-granted status, is seen as necessary for building and maintaining the highest level of discipline legitimacy.

Consideration of the taken-for-granted status of disciplines is raised by this finding. Suchman suggests that when the taken-for-granted status is achieved a disciplines’ absence would be unthinkable. However, if absence is unthinkable, presence may rarely be considered. Consider the fate of a discipline such as English on many a campus; a discipline whose absence is likely to be viewed as unthinkable. Yet, a forty-year English Scholar writes about the “decline of the English department” (Chace 2009) indicating with dismay that:

> at the root is the failure of departments of English across the country to champion, with passion, the books they teach and to make a strong case to undergraduates that the knowledge of those books and the tradition in which they exist is a human good in and of itself. (Chace 2009)

Chace’s writing provides support to the finding in this study that the highest form of legitimacy to strive for is not the taken-for-granted form but rather the comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy; a form that requires ongoing shepherding and cultivating. The comprehensibility form, built from components of understandability and acceptance, rises as the highest level of desired discipline legitimacy. While it might be assumed that arriving at a Cognitive level of Legitimacy precludes any questions of legitimacy in the earlier levels, the strength of Cognitive Legitimacy still relies on the presence of the earlier levels. This points to a notion that the levels of discipline legitimacy are not static but rather exist in a state of “punctuated equilibrium” (Williams 2009, 42); a term originating in evolutionary biology and subsequently used in management to reflect the
cycle of an organization existing in relative stability and then entering a marked fundamental change before returning again to stability. It’s use in understanding discipline legitimacy reflects the notion that a discipline with strong legitimacy would exist in periods of Cognitive stability and then enter a cycle of dynamic complexity where Pragmatic and/or Moral Legitimacy is challenged before moving back to another period of stability at a particular spot on the Fence of Legitimacy; either the same spot or higher or lower than originally obtained.

While aspects, components, and forms of legitimacy are essential to building levels of legitimacy, sources of legitimacy aid in the strength of the framework. The role of the six sources of legitimacy is covered next.

Sources of Legitimacy

As found in this study, discipline legitimacy involves both levels and sources of legitimacy. Six sources of legitimacy provide the support for each level of legitimacy with internal and external views of these sources providing pressure to hold together the Fence of Legitimacy (Figure 4). If positive views exist, then positive pressure is placed on the framework. If positive pressure does not exist, the rails of legitimacy are held less firm, more open to shift and collapse. Moreover, if the views of sources of legitimacy on one side (internal or external) are stronger than those on the other side, an unevenness is created; the fence may still stand but with a propensity toward weakness. If views of sources of legitimacy are weak on both sides, the fence of legitimacy faces jeopardy of collapse or, in the case of attempt of entry for a new discipline, struggles to be built. However, just as a carpenter can reach for different tools, so can those in a discipline shape and form an academic offering. In this manner, the case discipline twists and turns
to shape a form best suited to the environment in which it is housed; Type I, II, III or IV institutions. Of the six sources of legitimacy (Table 50) aligning with, and building on to, accepted symbols at an institution appears the most useful tool to develop strong views of discipline legitimacy at any of the levels on the Fence of Legitimacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Examples from Case Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Payoffs</td>
<td>Benefits derived from working in the discipline: Daily work in a discipline for which there is great passion, high level of enjoyable student interaction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Payoffs</td>
<td>Demands and personal sacrifice by those in the discipline Exorbitant time commitment required, higher demand for student interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Dimensions</td>
<td>Length of time discipline, and faculty in the discipline, have been with institutions. Newness lends more toward a liability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Charisma</td>
<td>Ability of others to understand the discipline, its nature, methods, language. Ability to draw students from a large geographic area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Symbols</td>
<td>Attributes of the discipline that are valued by the institution as markers of legitimacy. Examples include student enrollment, enrollment of out-of-state students, research funding, cutting edge research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances and Associations</td>
<td>Aligning with another discipline or organization seen as legitimate. Examples include disciplines such as Biology, Animal Science, Management, Psychology and organizations such as funding agencies, including the Government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With knowledge in-hand regarding the tools most useful in building and strengthening legitimacy, those working with new disciplines are best equipped to create strong frameworks for discipline legitimacy. Discussion now turns to the ways in which the new analytical framework, the Fence of Legitimacy, is useful in depicting the varying ways the legitimacy of a new discipline is considered across institution Types.
The Fence of Legitimacy: a new framework analyzing and understanding discipline legitimacy

Analyzing where a discipline lands on the Fence of Legitimacy provides insight into the structure and strength of a discipline’s legitimacy. From the findings in this study, a new discipline is anticipated to find more emphasis placed on building the first level of Pragmatic Legitimacy, and in conjunction find internal and external views of two sources of legitimacy centrally important: positive payoffs and accepted symbols. In contrast, newer disciplines that align with established academic offerings at an institution are anticipated to find the Pragmatic level of legitimacy less important while finding the Moral and Cognitive levels to require more attention. In addition, the internal and external views toward the legitimacy sources of time dimensions, mystery & charisma, and alliances & associations appear more centrally important.

While all three levels and each of the six sources of legitimacy are represented in the findings, the ways in which each is found varies across institutions with Type III institutions, those with limited discipline offerings yet offerings tied to a previously established academic discipline, presenting the farthest dissonance from the others. The Fence of Legitimacy framework is applied next to illustrate its usefulness in examining the ways in which new discipline legitimacy is considered at the Institution Types utilized in this study.

On the Fence of Legitimacy - Type I institutions

Type I institutions, offering associate degrees in the case discipline, demonstrate components of all three levels of legitimacy (Figure 6) with the Pragmatic level representing the most developed rail. At this first rail it is the component of fiscal outcomes through the aspect of student enrollment that drives determination of
Pragmatic Legitimacy. An emphasis on fiscal outcomes becomes firmly embedded in legitimacy views when coupled with views of student enrollment as an important accepted symbol of legitimacy. Branching off from student enrollment is a focus on the draw of out-of-state students to the case discipline. The mystery and charisma source of legitimacy surfaces with a draw of students to the case discipline from a larger geographic base than found in almost any other discipline at these institutions. In combination, fiscal outcomes in Pragmatic Legitimacy along with accepted symbols and mystery and charisma, place focus on the importance of Pragmatic Legitimacy at Type I institutions.

Figure 6: On the Fence of Legitimacy: Type I institutions

The Moral and Cognitive levels of legitimacy are not as strong at Type I institutions in this study and neither level is found to be as important as the Pragmatic level. Still, views here play a role in overall views of the legitimacy of the case discipline. At the Moral level, views of discipline outcomes, anticipated graduate outcomes, and discipline procedures do not significantly impact on views of legitimacy. However, positive views of the credibility of those working inside the discipline aid in building legitimacy. Personal credibility, along with personal charisma, provided strength
to legitimacy at the Moral level and at times has the ability to offset weaknesses in other aspects and components of Moral Legitimacy. The presence and strength of the top rail, Cognitive Legitimacy, at Type I institutions is built on understandability and acceptance of a discipline for which students demonstrate a strong desire; and enroll in ways that bring positive fiscal outcomes to the institution. A challenge at the Cognitive level is the acceptability of the academic community to the attention placed on the case discipline and the ways in which this pulls attention away from other areas of the institution. While the discipline is understandable as a niche market, draw of media attention to the case discipline detracts from other parts of the campus and this has a diminishing effect on otherwise positive views of the comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy at Type I sites.

On the Fence of Legitimacy - Type II institutions

Type II institutions, with baccalaureate degree offerings in the case discipline, demonstrate strongly developed rails at all three levels of legitimacy (Figure 7). Similar to Type I institutions, the Pragmatic level develops from a firm foundation in the exchange form built from fiscal outcomes. However at Type II institutions, fiscal outcomes develop from the positive impact of two accepted symbols; student enrollment and opportunities for funded research. Further, the dispositional and influential forms of Pragmatic Legitimacy are also developed in ways not realized at Type I institutions.

The dispositional form strengthens Pragmatic Legitimacy from the presence of alignment of the discipline with the mission of the institution. In addition, alignment occurs between discipline outcomes and outcomes valued at the institution. Support of stakeholders builds further on Pragmatic Legitimacy by active engagement of discipline
The presence of, and responsiveness to, advisory boards is more important to legitimacy at Type II institutions than to any other Type in this study.

The second level of legitimacy, **Moral Legitimacy** also gains strength from discipline based advisory boards. While advisory boards provide an opportunity for influence from the industry to strengthen **Pragmatic Legitimacy**, they also develop a real sense that the discipline is operating appropriately both to the institution and to the industry it serves; a sense that builds **Moral Legitimacy** through **alliances and associations**. An emphasis on advisory boards at Type II institutions may well be a reflection of the nature of the case discipline as professionally based and industry focused, as well as a reflection of Type II discipline offerings as baccalaureate degrees directly in the case discipline.

The case discipline is positioned differently than traditional academic disciplines that do not reside in an industry per se. As such, the role of an advisory board in the case discipline, particularly full degree offerings directly in the discipline, is more important and more vital to both its success and its legitimacy. The offering of a baccalaureate
degree directly in the discipline combined with an elevated emphasis on advisory boards may also help explain why Type II institutions were most inclined to anticipate that graduate outcomes would align with discipline outcomes. Here, more than anywhere, is a belief that students will find desirable employment directly in their chosen career field. All institution Types present an importance of students finding and pursuing careers, yet it is at Type II institutions that views of legitimacy are linked most directly to success in this area.

Finally, Cognitive Legitimacy of the discipline is well developed at Type II institutions with understandability and acceptance equally strong resulting in a powerful and resilient Fence of Legitimacy. One weakness does, however, surface regarding the case discipline at Type II institutions; the perception of the discipline as it is presented, and represented, across the academy. Questions of the strength of overall legitimacy of the discipline across the academy are raised by both faculty and administrators. This is not unique to Type II institutions as questions of the strength of the discipline’s legitimacy across the academy occur at all institution Types. While the finding is not unique, such a finding within even the most developed offerings in the discipline runs contrary to an otherwise strong legitimacy framework. If the institutions with the strongest overall legitimacy in the case discipline still view legitimacy of the discipline across the academy as weak, then how does that position the discipline for overall academic legitimacy? A challenge facing this new discipline, and likely transferable to other new types of disciplines, is creating more structural legitimacy across the academy while retaining procedural legitimacy at individual institutions.
On the Fence of Legitimacy - Type III institutions

Type III institutions present the greatest degree of dissonance from all other Types. While Pragmatic Legitimacy is strong at Type I, II, and IV institutions, it is weak in Type III institutions; a weaknesses that continues at the Moral level of Legitimacy. Contrary to other findings in this study that suggest a progressive building from Pragmatic to Moral and finally Cognitive Legitimacy, Type III institutions present a framework of legitimacy consisting primarily of the top rail of Cognitive Legitimacy (Figure 8).

Figure 8: On the Fence of Legitimacy: Type III institutions

Offerings in the discipline at Type III institutions are minimal consisting of a limited smattering of opportunities to study the discipline. Views of fiscal outcomes that could be derived from offering more opportunities in the discipline are not positive. These views are not the result of lack of student interest but rather they are formed from perceptions of lack of external research funding. At Type III institutions the accepted symbol of legitimacy is externally funded research, particularly cutting edge research, rather than student interest in studying the discipline.
Type III institutions in this study are already at maximum enrollment and, therefore, raising enrollment in one area means decreasing enrollment in another. While both faculty and administrators at Type III institutions discuss abundance of student interest in the discipline, little to no interest exists in expanding discipline offerings. With fiscal outcomes from student enrollment of little interest to Pragmatic Legitimacy, the focus of interest is on opportunities for external funding for cutting edge research. This focus dictates the ways in which investment is made in the academic curriculum of the discipline; even at the undergraduate level. Type III institutions present the case discipline as having a dearth of research funding opportunities. In contract, Type II institutions in this study indicate that research funding exists, albeit not as well-funded as found in some other discipline areas. Consequently, perceptions of research opportunities are weighed quite differently between the two institution Types.

Differences between Type III institutions and other institution Types arise primarily from the ways in which accepted symbols of legitimacy are considered; at Type III institutions funded research is the accepted symbol. On one hand this is a perplexing phenomenon particularly for an undergraduate program, on the other hand it is reasonable given that significantly more benefit is seen as coming to the institution from funded research than student enrollment. Subsequently, Type III institutions indicate that the kinds of academic disciplines in place and the kind of research undertaken is more aligned with external funding, in many cases government funding, than student interests. This creates a clash between two different stakeholders; students and funders of research. However, subjects at both institutions identify that this clash may shift in the not-too-distant future:
The changing piece and I think it’s one that a lot of institutions will have to grapple with is this, as tuition becomes a larger piece of our funding I think there will be an inevitable need to give greater attention to what students here are interested in. (Administrator, Type III)

While this excerpt forecasts a potentially different focus on the development and understanding of discipline legitimacy in the future, for now the Fence of Legitimacy at Type III institutions is built on the accepted symbol of externally funded research.

In the absence of the accepted symbol of externally funded research, the discipline at Type III institutions exists primarily as a result of time dimensions and alliance & associations with other disciplines. Both internally and externally, time dimensions provide the discipline with the comprehensibility form of Cognitive Legitimacy at Type III institutions. A tie to an older, more established discipline coupled with a notion that the case discipline has been part of the institution, if even minimally, since the discipline first emerged in US higher education creates a home for it at these institutions. This provides the discipline with its minimal strength in Cognitive Legitimacy.

The notion of a discipline existing in a framework of legitimacy with the upper rail, Cognitive Legitimacy, more fully present than any of the lower rails runs contrary to Suchman’s predictions (Suchman 1995) and presents an atypical legitimacy framework. These findings indicated that it is possible for a discipline to exist with a top rail of Cognitive Legitimacy while lacking a strong foundation from the first two rails of Pragmatic and Moral Legitimacy. Fences have been known to stand for significant time with only a skeleton of their framework; such is the case at Type III institutions.
On the Fence of Legitimacy - Type IV institutions

Type IV institutions represent academic offerings of minors or specializations in the discipline with connections to a baccalaureate degree ancillary to the discipline (examples include Management, Education, and Psychology). The variety of directions minors and specializations can take their educational offerings is most likely representative of the finding that while Type IV institutions present a set of similarities in norms and values relating to legitimacy, they also present more differences between them than is found in other institution Types. Regardless, Type IV institutions present findings consistent with the tools necessary to build all three levels of legitimacy (Figure 9).

![Figure 9: On the Fence of Legitimacy; Type IV institutions](image)

The Pragmatic Level of Legitimacy at Type IV institutions is built from the exchange form with emphasis on fiscal outcomes from student enrollment more than fiscal outcomes from funded research. Branching off from student enrollment, Pragmatic Legitimacy is strengthened by a strong pattern of out-of-state students; a pattern that is found as an accepted symbol of legitimacy at both Type IV institutions.
A difference in approach for building legitimacy is identified in the ways in which serving institution mission and gaining stakeholder support is considered. At one institution, *alliance and association* with a government funding body, as well as the industry of the discipline, is critical to building legitimacy. These alliances are viewed as supporting and advancing the mission of the institution. At the other institution, *time dimensions* from historical ties to the discipline plays an important role and the discipline is seen as advancing institution mission primarily by serving students who have an interest in working in the industry of the discipline.

Similarities and differences continue at the *Moral Level of Legitimacy*. Within both institutions, discipline outcomes and rigor are discussed as internally important to faculty more so than to administrators (the external view). However, both faculty and administrators discuss the diminished effect on legitimacy that rises from views of faculty outside the discipline who are suspect of both discipline rigor and outcomes. This may be related to the presence of the discipline as a minor or specialization and, in tandem, the struggles of the case discipline to build legitimacy at an institution that does not have a strong presence of another animal based discipline. Perhaps, on balance, this lends each institution to align with another discipline that has already built a solid framework of legitimacy; through association the discipline seeks to strengthen its own legitimacy. The benefit of *alliance and association* to building *Moral Legitimacy* is most directly felt at the institution that has financial support of the discipline through a government agency. For this institution, the *alliance and association* with government, as well as the discipline industry, is of greater importance than any other form, component, aspect, or source of legitimacy.
The presence of Cognitive Legitimacy is found at both Type II institutions. Yet, even though *comprehensibility* of the discipline as a niche market exists at both institutions, different tools are used to build and maintain Cognitive legitimacy at each. *Time dimensions* along with *accepted symbols* such as student enrollment and geographic diversity of enrollment is paramount to acceptance as a niche market at one institution. For the other, there is a sense that neither of these legitimacy builders matters to the extent that financial support from government does. Government support at this institution provides the basis for *comprehensibility* of discipline and there is a view from both faculty and administrators that without government support the discipline would no longer have a home at the institution, despite solid student enrollment trends and varied geographic profile of enrolled students.

The similarities and differences found within Type IV institutions reinforce the notion that legitimacy is built on socially constructed norms. Different institutions, even with the same Typology, are found to have different areas of emphasis in determining the presence, and strength, of levels and sources of legitimacy.

**Summary Comments**

Application of the Fence of Legitimacy framework, and the resulting differences in views of legitimacy between institution Types, reinforces the notion that the critical point of importance in determining and building legitimacy is uncovering that which is of most value and benefit at an institution. Beyond the case discipline application, those working with other disciplines in higher education are anticipated to find the Fence of Legitimacy framework, derived from the application of Boulding (1995) and Suchman’s (1971) models, to be a useful tool to uncover and understand the norms, and beliefs of
highest value and benefit. In doing so, the critical sources, aspects and components of legitimacy can be used to build resilient frameworks for new discipline legitimacy.

**Key Finding 2**

*Views of a discipline’s legitimacy are linked to the ways a discipline is seen by its audience as aligning with socially constructed norms at a particular institution.*

*The extent of familiarity with the discipline as it exists at an institution impacts these views.*

The importance of a discipline aligning with the norms viewed as important by its audience is touched on in discussion of the first Key Finding. This importance of aligning with goals, objectives and norms at an institution is discussed further here and is combined with discussion of the ways in which familiarity with the discipline impacts these views.

A finding of importance in socially constructed norms is in line with the literature on legitimacy (Meyer 1977; Weber 1978). However, the literature has not pointed so directly to beliefs at an institution as it has to broader beliefs subsisting across the academy. Perhaps the more recent proliferation of discipline offerings across US higher education, coupled with an increasingly competitive marketplace, position institutions to brand their own institutionalized culture of norms rather than align in cultural symmetry with others across the academy. A conclusion such as this is warranted in the case study where the ability to differentiate from competing institutions is valued more in legitimacy than any sense of conformity of the discipline across institutions. A step further, legitimacy of the case discipline at an institution frequently contrasts with views of the discipline’s legitimacy across the academy with the legitimacy of the discipline across the
academy viewed less positive than views of the discipline at an institution. This leads to a conclusion that, for this discipline, socially constructed norms of legitimacy are more institutionally driven than discipline derived.

In practice, institutions construct an opinion that their offering in the discipline has strong legitimacy while raising suspicions about the extent of legitimacy of other offerings in the discipline as presented across the academy. This occurs even more so by those internal to the discipline than those in the external audience. Two issues factor into this conclusion, lack of familiarity with discipline offerings across the academy, and socially constructed beliefs that the offering at a subject’s home institution has more procedural soundness than discipline offerings elsewhere, particularly if the ‘elsewhere’ involves an institution of a different Type.

It is not altogether surprising that administrators report little prior exposure and/or familiarity with the case discipline beyond the walls of their home institution. Given this, administrators’ determinations of legitimacy are based on what they know of the discipline as it exists at ‘their’ institution and, again not surprisingly, what is familiar becomes most acceptable through a process of socialization and enculturation (Schein, 1968). It is an unanticipated finding that faculty in the discipline also report limited familiarity with the undergraduate discipline offerings across the academy. While familiarity is reported with extracurricular activities (riding teams, horse judging teams), knowledge of undergraduate curriculum is low with few examples of concerted efforts, despite the presence of interest, to learn more about others in the discipline. The knowledge that does exist is constructed on the basis of convenience familiarity whereby faculty experiences with the undergraduate discipline are limited to places they
personally attended and/or previously taught. The discipline offerings faculty have been part of, have joined with in some way, are the ones they view as having stronger legitimacy.

Faculty construct their norms of how the discipline should operate based on what they have been directly exposed to and this lends to a tendency for faculty, more than administrators, to discount and/or view with suspicion those that are perceived as different. The lack of familiarity with others in the discipline and movements to create alliances and association with other disciplines already viewed as legitimate provides substantially different formations of the discipline across the academy. In turn this results in limited strength of views of the structural form of Moral Legitimacy in the discipline.

Despite the problematic area of diminished structural form of Moral Legitimacy in the case discipline, the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy is moderate to strong. The distinction is the extent of familiarity with procedures at an institution, compared to procedures of the discipline across the academy. An essential part of building the procedural form, particularly to offset concerns in the structural form, is the motivation of faculty in the discipline to educate their audience about the discipline and promote it in ways that align with the socially constructed norms viewed most important at a given institution.
Key Finding 3

_Tipping Points_ (Gladwell 2002) that play a pivotal role in shifting perceptions of discipline legitimacy are found in this study. The most important of these is perception of the fiscal outcomes of a new discipline.

Included in a new conceptualization of legitimacy is the finding that certain components of discipline legitimacy rise to a level of importance whereby they positively sway views of legitimacy, even when low levels of legitimacy may otherwise be considered. In essence, these components have a ‘Tipping Point’ effect (Gladwell 2002) and can shift perceptions of a discipline’s legitimacy. Other components of discipline legitimacy are still important but they are considered more along the lines of what is referred to in management theory as “Hygiene Factors” (Herzberg, 1959). Hygiene Factors represent components of discipline legitimacy important for keeping at bay thoughts of lack of legitimacy, but are not important enough to ‘tip’ views of legitimacy either positively or negatively.

Perceptions of fiscal outcomes of a new discipline (a component of the exchange form of Pragmatic Legitimacy) heavily sway views of legitimacy. Fiscal outcomes, therefore, appear as a Tipping Point with student enrollment and funded research the defining legitimacy aspects, and accepted symbols, considered by an audience. Institutions that place their highest value on fiscal outcomes from research are less inclined to embrace the discipline as a result of a perceived dearth of research funding opportunities in the discipline. This conclusion is realized at Type III institutions which have the least interest in the discipline and the most limited undergraduate offerings. Institutions that place their highest value on fiscal outcomes from student enrollment, or more equally between student enrollment and funded research, are more inclined to
embrace the discipline as a result of the perceived abundance of student interest. Type I, II and IV institutions align with these views and have more fully developed offerings in the discipline.

Academic disciplines are rarely discussed in the literature in ways that link financial outcomes with views of legitimacy, yet in this study there is a significant link. This may well be part of a hidden nature of legitimacy consideration for these new types of disciplines; cognizantly recognized but not openly discussed. Hidden perhaps as a result of the implications a focus on financial outcomes has to moving academia closer to a marketplace orientation, an orientation that has been seen as less than desirable (Toma, 2002). Still, fiscal outcomes surfaces as important internally and externally at the Pragmatic level and its importance continues to the Moral level. If a discipline draws fiscal support to an institution it not only meets the institutions self interests (Pragmatic Legitimacy) but also is seen as being viewed by those on the ‘outside’ as operating in ways that are right and proper (Moral Legitimacy). This is particularly evident when government agencies provide funding for buildings and/or research. The movement of a financial thread to Moral Legitimacy points out that views of legitimacy in the case discipline cycle back to fiscal outcomes at the Pragmatic level. It is anticipated that even disciplines that are perched at the top rail of Cognitive Legitimacy may face questions about fiscal outcomes at some future point.

A financial focus that begins at the Pragmatic Level of legitimacy continues at the Moral Level and views of the new discipline’s legitimacy are weighed more on economics than the literature predicts. A focus on fiscal outcomes does not cast aside the value of other forms, components, aspects and sources of legitimacy. Rather, the
implication here is that if fiscal outcomes exists in the manner viewed as an accepted symbol of legitimacy by those in its audience, then the first level of legitimacy, Pragmatic Legitimacy, will be strong even if other forms, components, sources, and aspects are absent. On the other hand, if fiscal outcomes do not exist in a way that matches accepted symbols of legitimacy held by those internal and external to the discipline, yet other forms, components, aspects and sources of legitimacy do exist, views of legitimacy would not be as strong. Therefore, sources and aspects of Pragmatic Legitimacy such as geographic profile of entering students, outside recognition of the discipline and honors and awards earned are important as Hygiene Factors, but none on their own would stand as a Tipping Point such as fiscal outcomes.

Two other Tipping Points surface in this study; neither of which are as strong or widespread as fiscal outcomes. The first is the influence form of legitimacy at the Pragmatic Level, with influence of discipline industry and government agencies (both part of important alliances and associations) of highest value and benefit. This rises to a Tipping Point when influence is high and supported with substantial funds and therefore links to the Tipping Point of fiscal outcomes. The second Tipping Point does not have a fiscal basis but rather an emotional basis. The credibility and charisma of a person associated with the discipline can enhance views of Moral Legitimacy and can also offset views of weakness in other areas of discipline legitimacy.

Tipping Points were found in this study in ways that indicate that views of a discipline’s legitimacy are able to be swayed by the singular influence of each. Given this, fiscal outcomes, influence of industry and government, and personal credibility and
charisma are considered pivotal tools in building a strong Fence of Legitimacy framework.

**Key Finding 4**

*When considering the ways outcomes align with institutional goals, values and norms, discipline outcomes are emphasized more than graduate outcomes in the case discipline. In other words, discipline legitimacy is wrapped more in the views of what a student is prepared to do at graduation than what a student actually does after graduation.*

The nature of the case discipline as highly specialized, marketplace oriented, and directly associated with an industry leads to an anticipation that students pursuing education in the discipline intend to work in that field of study. This does not eliminate the possibility of further study or transference of knowledge to other areas of employment. However, the curriculum is organized in such a way that career preparation in the discipline field is a projected outcome at all but Type III institutions. This is inherently different than a student studying a discipline such as history or philosophy tied less to a career field and more towards the liberal arts. Given a career field focus it seems appropriate to anticipate that tracking the success of students in obtaining jobs and successful careers in the discipline industry would be of considerable importance in measuring discipline outcomes. While identifying and tracking student success in the discipline after graduation was discussed as worthwhile and something ‘to do’, rarely was it systematically accomplished.

This finding impacts on the second level of legitimacy; *Moral Legitimacy*. More specifically, the impact is on the *consequential* form of *Moral legitimacy* which is built
from the components of discipline outcomes while a student is at an institution and anticipated graduate outcomes once a student leaves an institution. In the case discipline, the former receives more attention by institutions leading to a conclusion it is viewed with more importance as an accepted symbol of legitimacy, than graduate outcomes. Certainly such a conclusion was not explicitly stated by any of the subjects. However, the theme of limited tracking of graduates in the case discipline was present at all but one institution. A subtle yet influential belief surfaces across institution Types that once students leave a campus they are out of the direct path of institutional guidance and influence. Perhaps a lack of influence over the path of a student after graduation leads to a lack of ownership over data that would track what a student does after graduation. Neither faculty nor administrators in this study stated that discipline outcomes were more important than graduate outcomes. However, the information subjects provided about the ways in which outcomes are tracked and measured points to deliberate and systematic attention to outcomes while the student is studying the case discipline, and, at all but one institution, an absence of deliberate and systematic tracking once they leave the institution. Across institutions this discrepancy in outcomes tracking is viewed as common across many different kinds of academic disciplines and, with only two exceptions, subjects in this study state that the case discipline should not be held to a higher standard of graduate outcomes tracking.

This finding rises in contrast to the socioeconomic environment in the US that has students and their families placing more interest on Return On Investment (ROI). The notion of “What do you get for all this tuition you are charging us” (Administrator, Type III). While an orientation towards the marketplace drew legitimacy skepticism in the past
(Toma 2002), the marketplace characteristic of ROI enters discussions today as a valued component of discipline legitimacy for students and their families. This may, however, be a characteristic specific to disciplines focused in a professional or career field area and may not, therefore, be transferable to disciplines in more traditional academic fields.

Sources such as the US Census Bureau track data that includes earning rates of college graduates compared to those without a degree (www.census.gov). However, a more specific kind of tracking accomplished by academic disciplines would provide greater insight into graduate outcomes. While institutions in this study identified that alumni offices gather data, with varying levels of success, the kinds of graduate outcome data collected relates more to an institution in general than to creating an accurate profile of graduates within specific disciplines. So while the link between graduate outcomes and discipline legitimacy is presented as important by interview subjects, in this case systematic tracking of graduates in the discipline is not present and the discrepancy is explained as a commonality across disciplines rather than unique to the case discipline.

The finding relates to a TIME Magazine article titled “Ranking Your Alma Matter on How Much You Make” (TIME 2009) that states:

for all the college rankings floating around there’s still one area students and parents can’t find much concrete info about: how much an undergraduate degree will pay off. (TIME 2009)

The article profiles PayScale.com which provides information on salary scales and in the process ranks colleges according to how much their alumni make (TIME 2009). The notion of such a ranking system is “drawing fire for its methodology” (TIME 2009) and for suggesting that the quality of an education is measured on salary earned post-degree. On the other hand, one of the most common challenges to legitimacy identified in the
case discipline was perceptions of employment opportunities and salaries after graduation. However, hard data on students’ career trajectories was lacking across institution Types making it difficult for subjects to draw any real conclusions on ROI in the case discipline.

The question of a college’s responsibility to ROI is brought to question in the case of a lawsuit filed by a graduate of New York’s Monroe College unable to find a job (Kessler 2009). In the suit, an alumna who graduated with “a bachelor of business administration degree in information technology” claims that the college did not provide enough support and guidance to aid her in a successful career search and she is therefore entitled to “$70,000 in reimbursement for her tuition” (Kessler 2009). The reasonableness of such a lawsuit can be debated, but the expectations of college graduates today appear more firmly centered in job obtainment than ever before. Given this, it is within the realm of reason for disciplines, particularly those that are industry based and career oriented, to find benefit in regularly and systematically tracking the outcomes of their graduates. Failing to do so could send any, or all, of the following messages to external audience: 1) lack of commitment to post-graduation outcomes, 2) lack of desire to identify real facts and figures regarding post-graduation outcomes, 3) unwillingness to place a discipline more firmly in the line of calculating a ROI over and above the general returns anticipated by receiving a college degree.

The interest of students in the case discipline is pivotal in building strength in Pragmatic Legitimacy and institutions are inclined to add the case discipline in anticipation of increases in student enrollment. Yet taking such an action without demonstrated commitment to the next level of legitimacy, the Moral level, places a
discipline in a position of strong *Pragmatic Legitimacy* yet suspect *Moral Legitimacy* resulting from a lack of attention to the outcomes derived from studying in the discipline. Based on results in this study and changes in socioeconomic views of education it appears that an *accepted symbol* of legitimacy for external audiences is moving towards embracing ROI while internal audience views are embedded in more traditional *accepted symbols* of legitimacy. With this emerging disparity, new kinds of specialized disciplines with a market place orientation are anticipated to be best positioned for building legitimacy by paying more equal attention to discipline outcomes and graduate outcomes; thereby building legitimacy at both *Pragmatic* and *Moral* levels.

**Key Finding 5**

*Internal and External views of legitimacy combine in a powerful feedback loop; high internal views align with high external views; low internal views align with low external views.*

Assertions are made in the literature regarding the power that a person can have on views of an organization’s legitimacy. In Suchman’s model, a person’s charisma, the sense that he or she is a ‘good person’ doing ‘good things’, and operating with the institutions best interest at heart are all important in building *Moral Legitimacy* (Suchman1995). It is Boulding, however, that points to the inter-relatedness of legitimacy views of those external to the discipline and views of those internal to the discipline (Boulding 1971). While the bulk of the literature reflects the notion that legitimacy is conferred externally, Boulding suggests determination of legitimacy has much to do with those on the inside. This study finds both views realized in the case discipline with a further finding that new discipline legitimacy is determined through an
interaction of internal and external views that feed off one another to increase, or decrease, discipline legitimacy.

Faculty involved with the discipline at institutions where considerable support was provided, both financially and emotionally, were most likely to present high levels of internal legitimacy regarding the discipline. Similarly, institutions that had faculty with considerable internal legitimacy regarding the discipline were most likely to have an administrative structure supportive of the discipline. It is hard to tease apart which comes first, an administration inclined to be supportive of the discipline or a faculty member that embodies high levels of discipline legitimacy. However, it is apparent, from the findings in this study that the advocacy of a faculty member with strong internal legitimacy has significant power in building legitimacy; as long as faculty advocacy abides by Key Finding 2 and aligns with accepted symbols of legitimacy at the institution. The usefulness of advocacy is most powerfully demonstrated in the finding that faculty who appear self-motivated to actively engage administrators, as well as faculty in other disciplines, in ways that promote the case disciplines as aligning with goals, objectives, and norms at their institution, receive more financial and emotional support from their institution and indicate more satisfaction in their work environment.

Response strategies (Suchman 1995) are useful advocacy tools for building external legitimacy and faculty that successfully engage in response strategies demonstrate the highest levels of internal legitimacy. Of the three response strategies proposed by Suchman (1995), the manipulate response strategy was referenced as the most radical and least likely to be successful. However, in this study it was presented as the most successful strategy for increasing views of legitimacy. This finding may relate
to use of manipulate response strategies in pro-active ways rather than defensive ways originally positioned in Suchman’s model. Used in a pro-active manner, the manipulate strategy finds a more evangelical role in educating and exciting an audience on new ways to consider the legitimacy of a new discipline.

The nature of the case discipline as specialized and marketplace oriented seems to elevate the importance a faculty member with high internal legitimacy that can be an advocate for the discipline. Faculty who seek out ways to leverage their internal legitimacy in order to positively influence external views of legitimacy are found to be in a better position to build and/or strengthen discipline legitimacy. This is particularly true when faculty combine high internal legitimacy with personal charisma.

**Key Finding 6**

* A value of isomorphism to discipline legitimacy is identified, however not in the ways anticipated in the literature.

When something new appears on the landscape of higher education it is not uncommon to find questions of legitimacy posed (Levy 2005) and a need to build credibility (Toma 2002). The case discipline responds by isomorphically aligning with other disciplines already viewed as legitimate and in the process bolsters predictions from literature such Meyer and Rowan (1977). However, isomorphic alignment with another discipline at the home institution develops, rather than isomorphic alignment within the discipline. Therefore, the “snake tail” theory proposed as a feature of legitimacy, whereby institutions fashion themselves like those they view as more prestigious (Riesman 1977), does not transfer to the level of a discipline in this case study. A step further, hierarchy within the discipline is all but absent. This finding flies in the face of
legitimacy literature that predicts that organizations seen as legitimate most often have some form of hierarchical structure (Boulding 1974; DiMaggio and Powel 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977). In the absence of hierarchy is a trend of self-proclaimed prestige, resulting from uniqueness and individuality, which places each institution in a position of viewing itself as ‘best’.

While lack of both hierarchy and isomorphism within the discipline does not diminish legitimacy views of a discipline at its home institution, and in fact appears to enhance it instead, it does diminish views of the discipline’s legitimacy across the academy. When isomorphic alignment transpires outside of the discipline, with another discipline rather than within the discipline, an unintended consequence of dissociation with the original discipline occurs and this, in effect, weakens views of the discipline’s legitimacy across the academy. In addition, alignment with another discipline fractionalizes the original discipline making it difficult to clearly understand what exactly the discipline ‘is’; resulting in a legitimacy quandary rising from an identity dilemma.

Another legitimacy deterrent rises from lack of isomorphism within the discipline and is in line with Meyer and Rowan’s prediction that isomorphism demonstrates that an entity is “acting on collectively valued purpose in a proper and adequate manner” (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 349). Choosing to align with a different discipline, rather than aligning within the discipline, could signal that those in the discipline do not share a “collectively valued purpose” (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 349) and this may be one reason for diminished views of discipline legitimacy across the academy. Yet while legitimacy across the academy is diminished, legitimacy within the discipline is strengthened. This finding aligns with the views of Deephose (1999) who hypothesizes that while benefits to
legitimacy are derived from conformity and isomorphism they also create hardship to an organization’s competitive edge. In part, alignment with other disciplines is found to occur as a result of desire for a competitive edge.

Differentiation from others and staking a claim as unique among offerings in the case discipline advances views of discipline legitimacy at the individual institutions in this study, particularly when there is alignment with another entity already viewed as legitimate (another discipline, external industry groups, government funding). An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* adds another layer to consideration of this finding by claiming that the educational system in the US has remained remarkably unchanged even as some new niche market disciplines appear in higher education; “The basic constellation of college majors has been highly stable” (Glenn & Fisher 2009). A pull towards stability rather than change can be one explanation as to why a new type of niche market discipline would move to align with a well-established discipline rather than seeking alignment with others in the discipline who are also facing “a liability of newness” (Freeman, Carroll, & Hannan 1983, 692). Still, the lack of isomorphism within the discipline diminishes views of the discipline’s legitimacy across the academy making it more difficult to determine “with whom [the discipline] will compete and from whom it will draw its support” (Suchman 1995, 581). When the case discipline draws support from another discipline, it sends a message of lack of support within the discipline. However, drawing support from a different discipline aids in competition within the discipline; a scenario that supports a sense of uniqueness and individuality and is seen as increasing student enrollment; therefore strengthening Pragmatic Legitimacy. However, elements of Moral Legitimacy suffer as a result. This is seen as an unintended
consequence of placing a significantly stronger emphasis on individuality in the discipline with little emphasis on developing isomorphism within the discipline across the academy.

The stronger emphasis on individuality could occur from the purposeful focus on developing unique approaches to preparing students for careers in a professional marketplace field; a field described by interview subjects as having multiple directions for job opportunities. For a traditional discipline without an industry base, multiple career trajectories may not be so highly anticipated. Or, if they are, the pressure of an industry in need of such diversity in education and training may not be present. There is an allegiance to an industry in the case discipline and part of the forming and shaping of the discipline at each institution is presented as meeting the needs of the industry, in the process some elements of Moral Legitimacy are strengthened. On the other hand, the focus of those internal to the discipline to view the industry and the home institution as stakeholders and then place the discipline itself on the boundaries of stakeholder consideration weakens some elements of Moral Legitimacy.

Findings in this study suggest that new disciplines may be best served by considering whether or not high levels of individuality for competitiveness are worth the potential challenges that rise from lack of isomorphism across the academy. A balanced approach that provides an isomorphic structure across the academy while providing for individuality and uniqueness within discipline offerings is anticipated to present greater opportunities for advancing the legitimacy of a new discipline.
Key Finding 7

*Given the findings in the case discipline, tools emerge that are anticipated to be useful in building and strengthening the legitimacy of new kinds of disciplines in US higher education.*

Although differences exist in ways to build a strong and resilient Fence of Legitimacy for a new discipline, this study surfaces tools for building legitimacy in the case discipline that may well benefit other new disciplines in the academy. Each tool has been discussed throughout this concluding chapter. They are combined together in this final Key Finding for ease of consideration for those looking to build, or enhance, legitimacy in new kinds of undergraduate disciplines in US higher education.

- **Uncover the socially constructed values and norms that are most important to an institution.** The form and shape that a new discipline takes, and the path pursued in its development, is best navigated on the understanding of what will be viewed as legitimate, and then ensuring that those views are reflected in the mission, goals, objectives, and procedures of the new discipline. Following this first step develops a base upon which to build a strong and resilient Fence of Legitimacy.

- **Determine the fiscal outcome of most importance at the institution.** Views of fiscal outcomes are pivotal to building *Pragmatic Legitimacy* in the case discipline. For faculty at an institution where student enrollment is the highly valued *accepted symbol* of legitimacy, efforts are best targeted toward student enrollment even if the desire of faculty is in the area of research. Similarly, for those at an institution where funded research is the *accepted symbol* of legitimacy, efforts are best targeted toward funded research, again even if the desire of faculty
is to focus on student enrollment. At institutions where both student enrollment and funded research are important, focusing effort on both outcomes are important; again even if interests lie more in one area than the other. In this sense, it is the perceptions of those external to the discipline that confer legitimacy and failing to align with the expectations of the external audience results in diminished views of legitimacy.

• Recognize and capitalize on the influential power of faculty to develop, and alter, external perceptions of discipline legitimacy. While legitimacy is conferred by those on the outside, those on the inside play an essential role in that conferral. Those internal to a discipline (most often faculty) are challenged to ensure that sources, aspects, forms and components of discipline legitimacy align with those most valued at an institution. A discipline is best served by making alignment transparent to stakeholders, as extent of familiarity with a discipline is found to be a major determinant of views at the second level of legitimacy, Moral Legitimacy. Importance in espousing qualities of a discipline in order to create familiarity and demonstrate allegiance to accepted symbols of legitimacy at an institution is not altogether surprising. However, placing importance in espousing a new discipline comes with an anticipation of frustration for those internal to a discipline as the idea of needing to advocate the qualities of the discipline is most often viewed, in this study, as having to defend the discipline and its legitimacy. However, those external to the case discipline in this study view this much differently, not as defending but rather explaining a different kind of discipline to an unfamiliar audience. In order to gain the highest level of legitimacy, the Cognitive level,
understandability and acceptance are essential, and for a new discipline facing “a liability of newness” (Freeman, Caroll & Hannan 1983, 692) there is a greater need to espouse the discipline to gain understanding and acceptance from an external audience.

- **Develop and encourage the use of pro-active response strategies by faculty to build and/or strengthen positive views at each level of legitimacy.** Taken on as an opportunity to educate and excite an audience, the *manipulate* response strategy (Suchman 1995) serves as a particularly powerful tool for gaining and strengthening legitimacy in this study. The importance of using response strategies to advance discipline legitimacy increases in importance “as the focus of legitimization moves from pragmatism to morality to cognition” (Suchman 1995, 591). Therefore, the stronger the Fence of Legitimacy to be built, the more necessary a pro-active approach becomes to ‘prove’ legitimacy.

- **Create and cultivate alliances and associations with others already viewed as legitimate.** This mechanism for strengthening internal and external legitimacy is found to be useful at both the *Pragmatic* and *Moral* levels of legitimacy. Alliances and associations can include stakeholder groups such as government agencies, the industry within which the discipline resides (if applicable), the active and influential use of advisory boards, and other disciplines that have already garnered strong positive views of legitimacy.

- **Implement systematic mechanisms to track both discipline outcomes and graduate outcomes, with results made public to the institution and external stakeholders.** Outcome tracking plays an influential role in views of *Moral* and *Cognitive*
Legitimacy. Focusing solely on discipline outcomes, without attention to outcomes of those who graduate in the discipline can leave a new discipline open for greater suspicion. Tracking both sets of outcomes also provides the ability to address increasing societal concerns regarding Return On Investment.

- **Seek a balance in building both procedural and structural forms of Moral Legitimacy.** Focusing primarily on procedures of the discipline at the home institution may well increase the procedural form of Moral Legitimacy at the institution, but does little to advance the structural form of Moral Legitimacy across the academy. On the other hand, focusing primarily on developing the structural form, using tools such as isomorphic alignment in discipline across the academy, may result in a loss of individuality within the discipline. Striking a balance in building both the procedural and structural form provides the basis for a more developed rail of Moral Legitimacy and therefore a more resilient Fence of Legitimacy.

- **Seek positive alignment of both internal and external views of legitimacy.** In this study a new discipline is best positioned for strong views of legitimacy when both internal (faculty) and external (administrative) views align in high positive views. While faculty are perceived in this study to bear the weight of espousing a disciplines’ worth and value, administrators are found to play a critical role in the ways in which they support, or dismiss, a discipline and/or its faculty. When administrative support is high, internal legitimacy of the faculty gains strength and a discipline develops a stronger base for the highest level of legitimacy—Cognitive Legitimacy; when administrative support is low; internal legitimacy of
the faculty can become diminished and the base on which to build *Cognitive Legitimacy* is lessened.

**Final Concluding Remarks**

This study began with questions regarding the underlying sociological factors that impact on the views of a new discipline’s legitimacy. In final analysis, the results of this study indicate that the evaluation of new discipline legitimacy is weighed more heavily by alignment to socially constructed norms at an institution than socially constructed norms across the academy. Does this mean that there is a place in the academy for any and every conceivable kind of new discipline? This study indicates that there may well be, if faculty and administrators involved with new disciplines pay attention to the socially constructed norms important to building each of the three levels of legitimacy (Suchman 1995) and capitalize on the six sources of legitimacy (Boulding 1971). The interview excerpt below sums up the majority view, held by both faculty and administrators, regarding the capacity for new discipline legitimacy in US higher education:

> I think that different categories of colleges have different missions. Some offer things…I would say offer just about almost any vocational training that is very localized for an area, and the jobs that it needs. I guess I believe that kind of thing is taken care of by the customers. If they (an institution) are right they will have a flood of students, if not they will fail. (Administrator, Type III)

What makes a discipline legitimate enough to be offered at an institution, at a given time? As the excerpt above indicates, positive fiscal outcomes rising from student interest in a discipline is pivotal in importance but this, on its own, only builds the beginning framework for legitimacy. A myriad of other things, discussed throughout this
body of work, are also taken into consideration in determining the strength of legitimacy and where a discipline lands on the Fence of Legitimacy. While positive fiscal outcomes appear as most critical to building a discipline that will be in a strong position for legitimacy at the \textit{Pragmatic} level, the determination of moving higher on the Fence of Legitimacy, to the \textit{Moral} and \textit{Cognitive} levels, balances on understanding and working with socially constructed norms held within the culture of each institution.
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Appendices
Appendix A – Interview protocol
Interview question guide

I. Background of case

1. Please share what you know of the ways in which the degree program came to be offered on this campus. How has it been viewed over the course of its life span on the campus?
2. People often ask – “what is equine studies”; how would you reply to this question? If someone were to ask, “what is equine studies on this campus” what is your reply?
3. How is this program positioned on your campus in regard to things like– longevity, internal rank and prestige.
4. Why did you choose to work in this discipline? What do you see as the positive aspects of working in this discipline and in holding your current position? Can you provide some examples?
5. What are the struggles associated with working in this discipline? What do you see as the negative aspects of working in this discipline and in holding your current position? Can you provide some examples?
6. What kinds of things have a positive and negative impact on the way your discipline’s academic prestige is viewed on your home campus – things like enrollment, student profile, receipt of awards, publication, accreditation, etc.?

II. Socially Constructed Norms

1. How do you feel the equine discipline is viewed by the Academy overall? How is this similar and different to the way it is viewed on this campus?
2. In what ways are expectation for this academic department and faculty similar and different when compared to those held for other academic departments and faculty at this institution? Can you provide examples?
3. How do you feel the equine program is viewed on this campus(value)? In what ways have your views changed over time? How do you think others on the campus view its value/worth? In what ways do you think the campus view has changed over time?
4. How do you view the value of the equine program on your campus? In what ways have your views changed over time? How do you think others on the campus view its value? In what ways do you think the campus view has changed over time?
5. How useful do you think animal studies disciplines are to society? In what ways do you think it is (or is not) useful?
6. How useful do you think the equine studies discipline is to society? In what ways do you think it is (or is not) useful?
7. How defensible do you think animal studies disciplines are as college degree programs?
8. How defensible do you think equine studies is as a college degree program?
9. Should there be a doctorate degree specifically in equine studies?
10. Do you ever doubt the usefulness of this program and/or this college level discipline of study?
11. Do you ever struggle to defend the value of this discipline, and this program, to yourself? To others? Can you provide some examples?
12. Do you think this discipline is viewed by others as defensible? Do you think others on this campus doubt the usefulness of this program and/or this college level discipline of study? Can you provide some examples?
13. Do you think the general academic population doubts the usefulness of this program and/or this college discipline of study? If yes, in what ways do you think there is doubt?
14. Do you think the general public outside of academia doubts the usefulness of this program and/or college discipline of study? If yes, in what ways do you think there is doubt?
15. What are your perceptions of the equine discipline at other college campuses?
16. Are there any debates about what to call equine studies – for example, equine sciences verses studies verses management? If there are, what do you see as the effects of the debate?

III. Isomorphism

1. When you think about various undergraduate equine degree programs found across the U.S., do certain institutions come to mind as having leading programs in this discipline? Why do you feel that these programs are the leaders OR Why do you think none come to mind?
2. Have you ever modified your language – the way you discuss and describe your equine program- in order to have the program “fit” better with the campus? How about to “fit” better with other programs or departments on your campus? If so – how and why?
3. Have you ever modified the structure of your program in order to have the program align with other programs or departments on your campus? If so – how and why (example – through format, course titles, subject area offerings, etc.) What other department on campus do you most closely align with? Have you ever modified the structure of your program in order to have the program align with other equine programs? If so – how and why
4. How do you explain the logistics (how it is structured, what students do, what students learn) of this discipline to others? Has this ever been difficult to do? Can you provide an example?
5. How do you explain the value and worth of this discipline to others. Has this ever been difficult to get across? Can you provide an example?

IV. General Legitimacy questions

1. In what ways do you think about the legitimacy of the discipline?
2. In what ways do you think other think about it on this campus?
3. In what ways is legitimacy viewed as being important for consideration?
4. Do you feel that some disciplines are more legitimate than others – in general? On this campus?
5. Who determines legitimacy on this campus?
6. Are there consequences or benefits to being seen as legitimate on this campus?
7. Is there anything you think the equine discipline needs to do to be seen as ‘more’ legitimate – on this campus? And in general?
Appendix B: IRB Approval material, Interview request letters
IRB approved materials

Letter for Request to Participate

Ms. Karin Bump
4029 Stonebridge Road
Cazenovia, New York 13035
(315) 655-7186
kbump@cazenovia.edu

Dear __________,

My purpose in writing is to request your assistance in the completion of my doctoral study at the State University of New York at Albany. I am completing my dissertation on The Quest for Legitimacy for New Disciplines in Higher Education: The Case of Equine Studies.

I will be conducting personal interviews with selected college administrators and faculty members that voluntarily agree to participate in an interview. Questions will focus on the ways in which the legitimacy of new disciplines of study is considered on college campuses, and the ways that views of legitimacy impact on new discipline presence and growth. The interviews are anticipated to range in length from one to two hours.

Personal interviews will be audio taped so I have an accurate transcript to refer to when writing my dissertation. The final dissertation will refer to each interviewee by a fictitious surname. Fictitious names will also be used when referring to each college and university used in my study. I anticipate that within three years from the date of the last interview, all audio tapes and notes will be shredded and disposed of.

Should you agree to participate, please know that your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. Your identity will be known only to the researcher. Your identity in any written documents (the actual dissertation, articles, etc.) will remain anonymous to everyone but the researcher. Your identity will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone. You may withdraw at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not want to. There is no payment involved and no anticipated risks associated with participation.

The Chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Kevin Kinser, can be reached at 518-442-5092 if you have questions about the nature of this study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the office of Research Compliance at (518) 437-4569 (toll free 800-365-9139) or orc@uamail.albany.edu. My contact information appears above if you have any other questions regarding this study. I will be contacting you by phone within the next two weeks to further discuss the project and request your written consent to participate in this study. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely, Karin D. Bump
Written Consent Form:

Ms. Karin Bump  
4029 Stonebridge Road  
Cazenovia, New York 13035  
(315) 655-7186  
kbump@cazenovia.edu

Dear Interview Subject,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview for the purpose of completing my doctoral study at the State University of New York at Albany. The topic of my dissertation is the legitimacy of new disciplines in higher education. For the purposes of the investigation, the research utilizes equine studies as the case study discipline. This research is being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Kevin Kinser who serves as the Chair of my dissertation committee. He can be reached at 518-442-5092.

As I have previously shared, I will be conducting personal interviews with selected college administrators and faculty members that voluntarily agree to participate in an interview. Questions will focus on the ways in which the legitimacy of new disciplines of study is considered on college campuses, and the ways that views of legitimacy impact on new discipline presence and growth. Interviews are anticipated to range from one to two hours in length.

Personal interviews will be audio taped so I have an accurate transcript to refer to when writing my dissertation. The final dissertation will refer to each interviewee by a fictitious surname. Fictitious names will also be used when referring to each college and university used in my study. I anticipate that within three years from the date of the last interview, all audio tapes and notes will be shredded and disposed of.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. Your identity will be known only to the researcher. Your identity in any written documents (the actual dissertation, articles, etc.) will be anonymous to everyone but the researcher. As a result, your identity will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone. You may withdraw at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not want to. There is no payment involved and no anticipated risks associated with participation.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at (518) 437-4569 (toll free 800-365-9139) or orc@uamail.albany.edu. My contact information appears above if you have any other questions regarding this study.

Please fill in the requested information below and fax this form back to me at 315-655-2190. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Name ______________________________ (please print)
Signature ______________________________
Date ______________________________
TO: Karin Bump  
4016 East Road  
Cazenovia, New York 13035

FROM: Cheryl Savini, ClIOs  
Research Compliance Administrator

DATE: January 30, 2004

SUBJECT: Certification of Completion “The Protection of Human Participants in Research”

This is to certify that you have successfully completed the training course on “The Protection of Human Participants Research.” Certification is valid for two years and is effective January 27, 2004, through January 27, 2006.

Completion of this course fulfills the Federal training requirement for investigators and key personnel who are involved in the conduct or administration of research that involves human participants. “Key personnel” is defined as anyone who has access to human participants and/or identifiable data. Course completion is required of all investigators conducting research involving human participants, whether their research is funded or unfunded.

One month prior to the expiration date of your certification, please refer to The University at Albany Compliance Web page for instructions on re-certification (http://www.albany.edu/research/osp/humansubjects_page.html).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Compliance Office at 437-4569 or csavini@uamail.albany.edu.
Appendix C – Coding Scheme

Coding Scheme

**Pragmatic Type of Legitimacy** – meets self interest of its immediate audience (rests with needs of the audience)

- **Pe** – Pragmatic Exchange – offers a benefit in exchange for legitimacy – increased student recruitment, expanded student profile, honors/awards, outside recognition, etc.

- **Pd** – Pragmatic Dispositional – is the discipline operating in a way that has ‘our best interests at heart’. Is it honest in its goals, does it align with the mission, will our stakeholders find it a discipline in line with the mission, etc.

- **Pi** – Pragmatic Influence – legitimacy through offering the ability of the audience to exert influence on the discipline to ensure that it is operating in a way that is responsive to their needs and concerns

**Moral Type of Legitimacy** – whether or not the actions of a discipline are viewed as right and proper within the academy

- **Mc** – Moral Consequential - are the intended/actual outcomes of the discipline right and proper for the academy – and/or for a particular campus

- **Mpc** – Moral Procedural – are the practices used with the discipline to achieve its goals right and proper for the academy – and/or for a particular campus

- **Mper** – Moral Personal – at the personal level, is there charisma of individuals – particularly of leaders - and is there the sense that they are right and proper for leading the discipline at a campus

- **Ms** – Moral Structural – is the discipline (not just at the campus but perhaps even beyond) organized well to achieve goals and activities (or is there a sense that the structure necessary to be seen as right and proper does not exist in the larger context)

**Cognitive Type of Legitimacy**

- **Cc** – Cognitive Comprehensible – the discipline is recognized, understood at some level, and accepted within at least a niche market if not the whole of the academy. It is plausible to have this in the academy – and/or at this campus

- **Ctg** – Cognitive taken-for-grantedness – the presence and importance is assumed rather than questioned, it almost seems impossible to conceive that this discipline would not be offered in the academy/at a campus.

**Internal aspect of Legitimacy**

- **IPP** – Positive Payoffs – beneficial outcomes from being in the field – salary, press, recognition

- **INP** – Negative Payoffs – demands for personal sacrifice in a profession recognized by an external audience (provides the ‘payoff’ piece)

- **IDT** – Dimensions of Time – newness of the profession

- **IMC** – Mystery and Charisma – a barrier to understanding a discipline
IAS – Accepted Symbols – attributes or emblems that could be respected in a positive way - enrollment, student profile, receipt of awards, success in publication, accreditation, etc.
IAS – Accepted Symbols – attributes or emblems that could be respected in a positive way - enrollment, student profile, receipt of awards, success in publication, accreditation, etc.

IAA – Alliances and Associations - alignment with something else that has well-established legitimacy

**External Aspect of Legitimacy**
- EPP – Positive Payoffs – presence of beneficial outcomes
- ENP – Negative Payoffs – demands for personal sacrifice
- EDT – Dimensions of Time – time length
- EMC – Mystery and Charisma – complex and compelling nature and language
- EAS – Accepted Symbols – attributes and emblems viewed in a positive light
- EAA – Alliances and Associations – nearness to something already deemed as legitimate.

**Response Strategies for gaining legitimacy**
- Rc – Response Conform – conform to the campus and/or department they are on (in) /the expectations or constraints in place
- Rs – Response Select – seek out a new environment to be housed – maybe a high turnover of faculty could indicate this? Move to select other departments to associate with on campus, etc.
- Rm – Response Manipulate – manipulate the campus and/or department in order to operate as desired.