

## COMMITTING TO INTENTIONAL PRACTICE: USING THE PRACTITIONER SCHOLARSHIP OF ADAM PECK TO DEMONSTRATE AN INNOVATIVE PATH FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

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On the morning of September 30th, 2022, Dr. Adam Peck died from injuries sustained in a pedestrian accident. He was 49 years old. His name may not be well recognized in higher education, but he was not one for fanfare or the spotlight. Yet, he did his best to help students succeed. As we expound upon below, to those who knew Dr. Peck, we understood him as a storyteller. He told and enacted stories of caring, curiosity, compassion, scholarship, and intellectualism - a life lived well. This article is his story as well as the story of how the campus activities profession must continue his work.

The Advisory Board of the *Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship* sought to honor Adam's legacy by using his published works as data that amplify his essential perspectives for the campus activities profession, student affairs, and higher education. *Who was Adam Peck, and why should campus activities professionals pay attention to his scholarship?* At the time of his death, Dr. Peck served as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Illinois State University. During his 25 years in student affairs, he served in a variety of other roles, including assistant vice president and dean of students at Stephen F. Austin State University and director of student life at Saint Louis University. Adam was unique in that he was a student affairs professional who met the criteria of being a practitioner-scholar, an administrator in which research, contributing to it and consuming it, plays a significant role (Jablonski et al., 2006; Sriram & Oster, 2012). Dr. Peck not only wanted to engage in scholarly pursuits, he needed to because he believed writing clarified his thinking about complex issues and guided his practice. The act of writing advanced his professional practice in that what he wrote set a trail, so he would not get lost and forced to double back on his efforts. He refused to work for a president who did not support his scholarly pursuits, and he worked tirelessly to prompt other campus activities professionals to see the benefit of scholarship to innovative practice. A co-author wrote,

He was a visionary who knew how to make the vision come to fruition... Working with Adam taught me the importance of utilizing writing as a technique for building enthusiasm for an idea or product. He had a way of articulating concepts that showed people the value of his ideas and, more importantly, how they could benefit from them... I could feel Adam's enthusiasm for the topic when writing with him. He wasn't just writing the article as a way to add to his resume; he was passionate about the topic. That passion came through in every conversation we had about the article and in every word he wrote. I felt as if writing this article made me a part of a grand movement that he was championing and made me feel honored that he wanted to write with me. (T. Davis, personal communication, December 29, 2022)

Because Dr. Peck sought to move the field forward in innovative and purposeful ways, paying attention to his scholarship demonstrates a path forward in increasing the professionalization of campus activities.

We used Dr. Peck's scholarship as data that reveal the themes of a professional life dedicated to practitioner scholarship. We integrated these themes with the experiences of some of Dr. Peck's co-authors. More specifically,

we conducted a phenomenological content analysis of Dr. Peck's scholarship and the experiences of those who wrote with him.

### Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

According to White and Marsh (2006), content analysis is a research methodology that “makes inferences from texts” from which “conclusions can be drawn about the communicator, the message or text, and the situation surrounding its creation” (p. 27). In this case, we drew conclusions about Adam's passions and perspectives by looking holistically at his body of scholarship. The content analysis process requires that researchers select relevant texts for analysis and connected to the research question, offer context to the selected text, connect the texts to specific research questions, and analyze the text using research memos that identify emerging concepts and their distinctions. For this study, we used 29 articles and book chapters written or co-authored by Dr. Peck to address the phenomenologically inspired question, what is the essence of Dr. Peck's scholarly legacy to which those professionals he left behind should pay attention and respond? These 29 sources are listed in the reference section and span Dr. Peck's scholarly writing career from 2007 to 2022. Our first source for his scholarship was Ebsco, which led us to 13 articles and book chapters. The references in these sources led us to additional sources, and because Dr. Peck's edited *Engagement and Employability* book was on our bookshelves, we also included the chapters that he authored and co-authored.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified three types of content analysis: conventional, directed, and summative. We selected the summative method that uses text to illuminate context and explore how messages are communicated while interpreting and discovering underlying meanings. The interpretive aspect of this summative type is referred to as latent content analysis and often uses a polar opposite approach to frame the interpretive work. For example, Harris and Patton (2019) used the summative type of content analysis to explore how some texts “un/do” intersectionality work. In other words, they sought to give evidence into how some research does intersectionality work well while others claiming to do this work actually do not; they instead undo it. Another example would be a study on language in palliative care. In what instances and who uses the direct language of death and dying versus in what instances and who uses euphemisms (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In this study, we highlight Dr. Peck's emphasis on intentional practice rather than relying on serendipity.

We also used van Manen's (2016) pedagogical hermeneutic Heideggerian-influenced phenomenology to guide our analysis. Grounded in interpretive epistemology and ontology, hermeneutic phenomenology both points to a phenomenon and points out something unknown or hidden (van Manen, 2016). Unlike other phenomenological processes, we sought to look anew at Dr. Peck's scholarship by acknowledging and wondering rather than suspending our previous knowledge. We sought to “unearth” themes (van Manen, 2016, p. 88) that reveal the structure of the essence of Dr. Peck's scholarship. A theme is “an element that occurs frequently in the text” (p. 78). To be clear, we had two data sources: texts written or co-authored by Dr. Adam Peck and experiences from his co-authors.

### Texts

Jan read and studied the 29 sources, using the selective approach to identifying essential themes (van Manen, 2016) and the summative approach to content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), listing 30 pages of topics. These topics included advisor, adding value, assessment, creating something together, involvement, learning, leadership education, passion, questions, resources, scholarship, soft skills, theories, well-being, and working, among others. Next, similar topics were combined to reveal themes. van Manen does not consider themes as generalizations but rather “knots in the web” of the text (p. 90). To identify these knots, the list of topics was read and reread, rearranged, and rearranged again, going back and forth from draft themes to Dr. Peck's texts to align the themes as close to his writing as possible. We intend that presenting Dr. Peck's scholarship in such a way can amplify his already published voice to bring us more understanding about his work and, importantly, offer us more guidance about how campus activities professionals should be doing our work. The themes of this study were *Thoughtful Assessment Leads to Intentional Learning and Scholarship*, *Intentional Practice and Scholarship is Guided by Theory*, and *Intentional Practice Can Bring Joy and Meaningful Connections*.

## Co-author Data Collection

In the texts we analyzed, Dr. Peck wrote with 21 co-authors. We were able to find contact information for 13, and seven responded to the questions below.

What compelled you to write with Adam? What compelled Adam to write?

What surprised you about writing with Adam?

What did you gain from writing with Adam?

What did you feel when writing with Adam?

Relate a story that exemplifies your experiences writing with Adam.

We also analyzed this data using the selective approach to identifying essential phenomenological themes (van Manen, 2016) and the summative approach to content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). While co-author data collection occurred simultaneously with the text analysis, co-author data were not analyzed until after the themes of Dr. Peck's texts had been drafted. Doing so served as a source of credibility for the text themes.

Below after describing general findings, we explore the intentional practice versus practice by serendipity that was a thread throughout the fabric of Adam's work. We integrate the co-author responses with the general findings and identified themes. Then we discuss how he wrote and how practitioner scholars can continue his work.

## GENERAL FINDINGS: THE EVOLUTION OF DR. PECK'S SCHOLARSHIP

Suggesting specific innovative programs, Dr. Peck's early articles promoted ethical advising that he referred to as coaching, a week of students focusing on their learning using a structured reflection guide, involvement centers that use peers to guide students to involvement opportunities that meet individual goals, assessment as a daily practice, and a conversation framework for mentoring students into the student affairs profession. As I (Michael) wrote about co-authoring with Adam:

He started slow enough, writing for [National Association for Campus Activities] NACA's *Campus Activities Programming* magazine, willing to add to university newsletters, presenting as much as possible. He would then try to level these opportunities up over time, looking for more peer-reviewed opportunities and selective conferences. He would work at writing NASPA proposals and would practice them, send them to me, and I would comment and offer edits. I often thought of him as a stunt man dropped into the ocean with chains all over him, and he had to set himself free. He seemed to be able to figure out the best order to unlock the locks and free certain parts of his work and then move to the logical next stage so he would not drown or fail. (personal communication, October 28, 2022)

Later, Dr. Peck began thinking and writing more broadly about higher education and student affairs. For example, he was convinced that career readiness skills desired by potential employers (i.e., communication skills, workflow planning, teamwork, information processing, decision-making and problem-solving, quantitative analysis, selling and influencing, computing skills) were consistent with involvement outcomes. A co-author wrote, "Adam was becoming a thought leader associated with this emphasis on employability skills" (T. Davis, personal communication, December 29, 2022). Dr. Peck wrote that campus activities, leadership education, and other student affairs functional areas could and should better prepare students to learn these skills, demonstrate them, and articulate how they gained them. This thesis arose from tracking hundreds of students' stories and career paths with whom he worked. He discovered that engaged students make engaged employees. The work informed the scholarship (i.e., practitioner-scholar), not the other way around. About this work, a co-author wrote,

He and I had several really engaging meetings about what I could contribute and what was needed for the [*Engagement and Employability*] book. He had a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish, and he was right - that there was a great need for this topic. Years later - he was certainly right, as the topic of employability has become one of the most important topics in higher education. He was *way* ahead of his time. (K. Kruger, personal communication, November 11, 2022)

Most, if not all, of Dr. Peck's works were grounded in theory, demonstrating his strong belief in the crucial role theory plays in promoting best practices and advancing scholarship.

More recently, Adam moved from concentrating on his own scholarship to making an avenue available for other campus activities professionals to share their perspectives on improving practice through scholarship by assisting in creating this journal, *The Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship* (JCAPS). He served on its editorial and advisory boards and participated in a writing cohort to provide a pipeline for prospective authors.

### **Being Intentional**

It is common in hermeneutic phenomenological studies to consider the etymology of words used in texts (van Manen, 2016). Dr. Peck's emphasis on "intentional practice" is worth dissecting. Being intentional means having purpose, understanding, and meaning (Hoad, 1986). To assume learning occurs by serendipity is to make happy discoveries by accident and to keep with one's inborn character (<https://etymonline.com>). Though Dr. Peck believed that serendipity and natural learning had a place in campus activities, he urged practitioners to be intentional about their work. Regarding one's nature, one of his co-authors spoke about Adam's natural inclination to write.

I always thought his understanding about the connection between career learning and cocurricular experiences was ahead of his time. He really had done some innovative programs at Stephen F. Austin State University, and it seemed almost natural that his understanding of this and many other topics should be shared with others. I think Adam was a learner and innovator; and always was thinking about what was ahead. (G. Spencer, personal communication, November 28, 2022)

Nonetheless, he quoted Kuh, et al.'s belief that "educationally enriching opportunities are too often products of serendipity" (2010, p. 12). Peck and Preston (2016) warned against assuming student learning would happen "naturally," evoking the *Field of Dreams* fallacy that "if you build it, they will learn" (p. 81). Instead, Dr. Peck called for planned and assessed interventions to ensure leadership development, student learning of employer-desired skills, regular professional development, and scholarship to improve practice. These interventions should be based on interactions between professionals and students. Another co-author wrote, "As we see in other parts of Adam's work, he had a really clear call to action in mind for universities to see their campus activities programs as an opportunity for more intentional career-ready skill development with students" (C. Kane, personal communication, December 7, 2022).

Unintentional work sustains continual marginalization of students less likely to feel they belong at their institution, it leaves students less likely to be willing to articulate the skills they gained and how they gained them, it perpetuates practice in which students are less likely to gain career readiness skills, and hinders professionals from considering student employment as essential opportunities for learning potential. He and Preston wrote, "colleges and universities who want to improve their ability to close the gap between the skills naturally produced in college and the needs of employers [requires] students being involved" (2017a, para. 26) - all students. Moreover, "There is a natural connection" between students being employed and the development of skills employers' desire. Yet, "It is clear this could be further enhanced by greater intentionality" (Peck & Callahan, 2019, p. 16). What strategies did Dr. Peck propose that are exemplars of this intentionality of practice and scholarship?

### **Thoughtful Assessment Leads to Intentional Learning and Scholarship**

Assessment, how it could point the way to student and practitioner learning gains, more effective practice, and modern scholarship was a frequent thread in Dr. Peck's scholarship. His early work encouraged campus activities professionals to engage in assessment and served as a source of assessment basics. He and Horne wrote, "Assessment does not have to be difficult to be rigorous, and it doesn't need to be overly complex to help student activities professionals do their jobs more effectively" (2012, p. 12). He defined important assessment terms such as direct and indirect evidence, formative and summative data, benchmarking, artifacts of learning, outputs versus inputs, and curricular mapping, offering valuable assessment resources that included the American Association of Colleges and Universities' values rubrics (AAC&U), NACA Next and digital library, and the Eisenhower Matrix. He instructed how to use case studies, focus groups, one-minute self-reflections, rubrics, mapping,

tracking, and inventories. He detailed what made appropriate learning outcomes as “specific, concrete, realistic, and measurable” (Peck et al., 2015, p. 5). He felt that intentional and thoughtful assessment could alter the reputation of campus activities professionals as simply being the campus fun and games folks. Instead, he and Horne wrote, “Having evidence has encouraged us to submit our programs for awards and has given us ammunition we need to brag about our programs to colleagues here at our institution” (2012, p. 16). Notably, at its most basic, the work of campus activities professionals is to promote learning. Preston and he wrote, “Practitioners...have the responsibilities of creator and measurer of student learning, which compels them to affect the change they intend to measure. They also have the responsibility of making learning outcomes salient and recognizable to students” (2016, p. 82). Encouraging campus activities professionals to enact assessment as a daily practice, he, Kane, and Davis wrote,

Assessment methods are most effective when they can be easily integrated into the profession’s daily work, when they produce meaningful learning experiences for the student, and when they provide data that helps the student and advisor track the student’s development over time. (2016, p. 35)

### **Scholarship as Storytelling**

Yet, engaging in assessment has implications not only within a practitioner’s department and institution, such work impacts the profession as a whole. Dr. Peck felt strongly and repeated the notion that “assessment is the scholarship of the modern practitioner...we must share with each other” (Peck, 2017, p. 407). Student activities units should be “tracking, gathering, or disseminating data intentionally that connects practice to research” (Rosch et al., 2021, p. 62). The profession is advanced by translating practice to a scholarly article that is shared across the profession, “sharing information in a scholarly article is a way to intentionally advance the campus activities profession” (DeSawal et al., 2021, p. 66). Campus activities must commit to an “intentional focus on improving our ability to interpret and conduct research” (Rosch, 2021, et al., p. 64). This intentional focus must be student-centered and in the context of their environment. Interactions with students “are inherent to the discovery process” (McCullar et al., 2020, p. 6). Moreover, “We must become experts at using the data we collect to tell our story” (Peck, 2017, p. 401) and how our campus activities story benefits students (Peck & Cummings, 2017).

Dr. Peck and his co-authors were not without critique of the assessment movement, particularly if assessments were not student-centered and not based on desired outcomes. Student-centeredness and assessment based on desired outcomes determine the assessment method. The assessment method should not determine student-desired outcomes (Preston & Peck, 2016). Too often, assessment findings are not shared beyond the institution and simply become “an exercise in institutional compliance [rather] than a sincere attempt to improve outcome for students” (McCullar et al., 2020, p. 8). Rather than writing a report that is used once, campus activities professionals “have the opportunity to be intentional in the data we are collecting and how we are using it to inform the field more broadly” (McCullar, 2020, p. 10).

Dr. Peck saw scholarship and other professional development opportunities as a means to tell the campus activities story to those outside the profession, as well as those across the profession. This is a “communal practice” (DeSawal, 2021, p. 63). To story is to take account; to present a recital of events (Hoad, 1986). The role of intentional scholarship is to “tell the story behind the numbers” (DeSawal, 2021, p. 9), to take account of the numbers. Sharing these stories is the best way to challenge assumptions and create a common language. Specifically, Dr. Peck advocated for campus activities professionals to see grounded theory as a means to make more credible their informal theories. He believed qualitative methodologies are more intuitive to student activity and student affairs professionals because of our practiced skill set of listening to students. Taking advantage of this intuitive skill allows for intentionally telling scholarly stories (DeSawal, 2020). Dr. Peck also used storytelling as a lens for students to practice interviewing skills. By telling stories of their leadership experiences, students could include the skills they gained and how they gained them (Peck & Preston, 2017b).

### **Questions Prompt Storytelling**

Gadamer wrote that “the path of all knowledge leads through the question... A question presses itself upon us; we can no longer avoid it and persist in our accustomed opinion” (1960/1992, pp. 365-366). Adam understood

the crucial role of questions in learning. He, with his colleagues, created several poignant programs and articles in which questions were central to learning and storytelling. For example, he wrote about a student involvement center staffed by peers in which new students were guided to involvement opportunities by first being asked, “What do you want to learn?” (Peck et al., 2010, p. 34). The Week of Reflection program initiated at St. Louis University that he took with him to Steven F. Austin University intended to prompt students to be more mindful of their own learning by asking questions such as “What have you learned about yourself and others this year?,” “How have you used what you have learned to make a difference?,” and “How has what you’ve learned changed you?” (Peck, 2009, p. 23). In another initiative using the NACA *Competency Guide for Student Leaders*, he used reflection questions to gauge student learning. He asked students, “What do you think it means to be a positive change agent?” and “In what ways are you using your understanding of the skills of your members to delegate more effectively to your members?” (Peck, 2012, p. 7). These questions prompted students to learn more about their learning while serving as an avenue of scholarly storytelling.

Those who worked with Adam knew that he, indeed, was a storyteller. He wrote, “When I worked in student activities, I got to plan all sorts of exciting events. I’ve met world leaders, US Presidents, musicians, comedians, and movie stars. I have many great stories from years working with outstanding student leaders” (Peck & Dotson, 2015, p. 4). It was a privilege to be part of his storytelling audience.

### **Intentional Practice and Scholarship is Guided by Theory**

Every text we studied was grounded in either a theory created empirically (e.g., organizational development, reflective judgment, grounded theory, critical race theory, involvement, engagement, career readiness) or informally as frameworks (also referred to as personal theory) (e.g., PREPARE framework for scholarship, C3 leadership model, five imperatives for campus activities to lead the modern university, three-phase solution in improving student career readiness). Indeed, “Engaging in a more intentional process of theory-building through your campus activities work, and then sharing your information with the field through a publication... will strengthen our programs” (McCullar et al., 2020, p. 11). Some of these frameworks Dr. Peck created himself or with co-authors, and some he borrowed from other scholars. For example, along with Dotson, he created a framework of four conversations student affairs mentors should have with undergraduates interested in entering the student affairs profession. The first should be about values, the second allows the student to ask questions, the third involves practical considerations, and the last is keeping in touch with the student (Peck & Dotson, 2015). He used King and Kitchener’s 1994 theory of reflective judgment to demonstrate how to teach students about what he called “the digital dilemma,” differentiating opinion from evidence (Peck, 2014). The *how* depended on a student’s pre-reflective, quasi-reflective, or reflective thinking stage.

He often took more than one theory or framework and laid one over the other to explore connections of complex phenomena. For example, he and co-authors took the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion, defined them as a Venn diagram in which their intersection is a sense of belonging and overlaid that with the lens of critical race theory (Peck et al., 2022) to argue that diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are central to the mission of campus activities. The profession must “confront inequitable and unjust systems, and foster a sense of inclusion within our teams and the people that they serve...[if we don’t] we are not preparing students for the diverse world in which they will live and work” (Peck et al., 2022, p. 10). Campus activities professionals must build a connection with all students, “not just those who have been traditionally well served” (p. 8). On connection and in my (Michael) writing with Adam, I wrote,

I was...surprised at how he was able to connect higher education problems with other contexts to assist novice readers in understanding the issue. He always felt that folks needed to be well-read to read his work, but they did not have to know higher ed to get it. I also think he wanted to solve big problems and help others find solutions. He felt many of the ills of our field were not unsolvable, and often the solutions were simple; they just needed to be jotted down and considered. (personal communication, October 13, 2022)

I (Jan) remember reading about the work of the remarkable novelist and editor Toni Morrison, in that her work could not simply be read; it had to be studied. Though some of Adam’s work was humbly written in a conversational

tone, like two colleagues sharing a drink at a conference, other work was meant to be studied and contemplated.

### **Career Readiness**

Dr. Peck is probably most noted for how he and his co-authors promoted the notion of paying attention to, improving students' gains in, and making students aware of, and being able to articulate their career readiness skills. Though he "bemoaned consumerist notions of education that relegate student learning to mere vocational training" (Peck, 2009, p. 21), he also recognized that the NACA *Next* research is "beginning to make institutional stakeholders see involvement as filling an essential role in higher education's mission – to help students get jobs after graduation" (Peck et al., 2016, p. 36). The career readiness literature is based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) annual *Job Outlook Survey* which asks employers to rank the skills they find most desirable in new hires. These are the ability to work in a team structure; make decisions and solve problems; communicate verbally; plan, organize, and prioritize work; obtain and make meaning of information; analyze data; use technical knowledge related to the job; use computer software programs; create and edit written reports; and sell or influence others (Peck et al. 2015). Dr. Peck dedicated many years to offering examples of how student affairs work aligns with promoting those skills in recreation, campus activities, college unions, student organizations, student government, identity development programs, leadership education, service and community engagement, and student employment. It is noteworthy that Dr. Peck coined the phrase, "Engaged students make engaged employees" (Peck & Preston, 2017a, para. 14). Similar to K. Kruger's comment above, a co-author wrote, "I always thought Adam's understanding about the connection between career learning and cocurricular experiences was ahead of his time" (G. Spencer, personal communication, November 28, 2022).

### **Intentional Practice Can Bring Joy and Meaningful Connections**

Adam was "Less about getting credit – more about doing good work. I admired that about him and made it so easy to work with him and so enjoyable" (K. Kruger, personal communication).

When writing about the "many joys" of working as a student affairs professional, it is obvious to those who knew Adam that he was speaking about his own joy (Preston & Peck, 2016, p. 80). Joy is to be in possession of glad-  
den (Hoad, 1986), and Adam possessed it. Because it is not a typical term to read in student affairs scholarship, it caught my (Jan's) attention, but it is not surprising to find the experience of joy in Dr. Peck's scholarship. A co-author wrote, "He was joy embodied. He just had a sunshine presence and always made me smile. So blessed to have known him and worked with him" (K. Callahan, personal communication, October 10, 2022). When writing with Adam, "[I felt] joy. I knew he was so committed to this project; that he was going to make sure we got this book done. It felt like a major accomplishment when done. (G. Spencer, personal communication, November 28, 2022). When Dr. Peck and co-authors wrote that professionals attracted to the profession "often find their joy in helping to create conditions for students to develop holistically" (DeSawal et al., 2022, p. 7), and in particular, there is joy in finding emerging "patterns" as one gains experience in the profession (Preston & Peck, 2016, p. 80), we know that Dr. Peck was indeed including himself.

I think his theater background added to his persona. Hearing him sing, especially the videos of him singing with his family, give me such joy. That joy that Adam radiated was contagious and came through in every interaction. He may not have been singing on a JCAPS editorial board call, but every word on the pages that he wrote was a melody. (S. Russell Krebs, personal communication, November 30, 2022)

Dr. Peck experienced joy when students approached him about their interest in entering the student affairs profession. It is not surprising that the following quote from a student was included in an article about mentoring undergraduate students who want to enter the profession, also a reference to joy, "I was enjoying my work in student activities more than my major. I wasn't exactly sure how to respond to this realization" (Peck & Dotson, 2015; p. 6). In working to counter burnout in a profession he loved, he and co-authors wrote, "We acknowledge that campus activities professionals often find joy and satisfaction working directly with students who frequently share their appreciation with them" (DeSawal, 2022, p. 10). During COVID and its aftermath, such sharing became particularly difficult. To address burnout would take intentional professional development programming, including cross-training across units, creating healthy social networks in and outside of the institution, prioritiz-

ing compassionate care, giving up responsibilities not related to priorities, sharing the load of compassionately supporting students, and making a space for professionals to ask for support (DeSawal et al., 2022). Not surprisingly, “Adam was so great at adding energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of optimism to a project that may not have had a clear path or was assured of success” (D. Rosch, personal communication). Adam was willing to take risks and did so with a sense of adventure and determination.

Dr. Peck rarely engaged in any program development or scholarly endeavor in isolation. He partnered and consulted with a variety of student and faculty groups at the institutions where he worked, (e.g., academic departments, center for teaching excellence, counseling center, student councils, and programming boards), a variety of professionals associations (e.g., NACA, NACE, NASPA), other institutions, and asked colleagues and students to write with him. This partnering allowed for “transcending the typical role of student affairs” (Peck et al., (2011, p. 10).

Adam did not see himself as the creator of content but as a contributor to a much wider book of knowledge. He always figured what he was thinking about was not novel or new but a way to make sense of complex ideas. That was why he was so quick to add others to his projects. Editing the *Engagement and Employability* book and working on the Co-Curricular Connections, he was always on the lookout for talent that complemented his skill. (M. Preston, personal communication, October 13, 2022)

The importance Adam placed on connecting with others, including former students, is evident in his and Dotson’s statement, “When we send students into our profession with a promise of nurturing them in the future, we give them a resource that many lack” (2015, p. 9).

### **How Adam Wrote**

To honor Adam and amplify his work, we are obliged to discuss what he wrote and how he wrote. He co-authored several articles about scholarship. In his writing, he “practiced what he preached” in that scholarship “demands succinctness but must be readable, interesting, and brief, focus on implications for practice, and strike a balance between describing complex constructs and processes in ways as simple and clear as possible” (Rosch et al., 2021, p.7-8). Such writing takes “forethought patience, and sustained effort” (DeSawal et al., 2021, p. 65). Perspectives from his co-authors offer credibility to his “walking the talk.”

### **Adam Wrote Everywhere**

When we came up with the idea of the higher ed logical fallacies, we did so in Boston. It was cold as all get out. We took the train to Harvard Square because he said, “If inspiration does not hit you there, then where will it hit you?”... So we got to Harvard Square, walked around the campus, had lunch in a bistro, and then drank beers in a pub all afternoon and carefully crafted these fallacies. We developed the idea behind them, the story, the ideas, and then we looked up relevant research and data to support our thesis. We did all of this as it snowed and people shuffled by. We then went to dinner, had a steak, and crafted our writing plan. That was what it was like with Adam. Writing happened everywhere. (M. Preston, personal communication, October 13, 2022)

To write everywhere is to observe the coalescing of the world (Hoad, 1986). Indeed, Adam was an astute observer of the higher education world around him.

Often conversations prompted the opportunity for such coalescing. Dr. Peck often began his scholarly conversations with stories, metaphors, quips, or thoughts from philosophers. Of conversations, Gadamer wrote, “The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led” (1960/1992, p. 385). The topic led Adam’s conversations.

I first started writing with Adam as a result of our connections through the *Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship*. Over the course of “typical” conversations, ideas that generated comments like, “That would be a great article to write” came up somewhat frequently. I think Adam was always thinking about ways that our work in higher education could be made more effective, current, and comprehensive. From that frame of mind, simply wanting to tell people about good ideas is just a natural outgrowth

of that type of thinking. (D. Rosch, personal communication, December 4, 2022)

Conversations turned into ideas that turned into writing projects that would promote improved intentional practice.

How effortless writing came to him. He could take a conversation and turn it into an academic journal article in no time. [Because of Adam] I am less intimidated by academic writing. I am also more passionate about encouraging others to join the scholarship/research bandwagon. (S. Russell Krebs, personal communication, November 30, 2022)

Writing for Adam was ubiquitous, not only writing everywhere but also on a wide range of important issues.

### **Adam was an Artist Writing about Almost Everything**

Dr. Peck wrote on ethics, assessment, dubious online information, prompting learning through reflection, career readiness skills, sense of belonging, theory building in campus activities, student involvement centers, the benefits of engagement, mentoring undergraduates into student affairs, and practitioner scholarship.

Adam was interested in so many topics! I know lots of people who write a lot but are very focused on a particular topic, concept, or goal. Adam was a prototypical generalist. If he felt a topic was significant to improving our collective work, he wanted to write about it. (D. Rosch, personal communication, December 4, 2022)

Yet, it was not the quantity of topics that concerned him. He demanded quality of himself.

He would write something that I thought was amazing, and he would bristle and think it needed, like, five more revisions. He was not a perfectionist. He was an artist. And he never felt his art was ever done. I think what compelled Adam to write is he wanted to explore academic ideas and be taken seriously as a researcher. He often struggled when faculty would dismiss student affairs pros as the B team and wanted to stand toe to toe and compete for ideas and research. He also really enjoyed the process of writing. He would often write late into the night and on weekends. (M. Preston, personal communication, October 13, 2022)

To be an artist is to join and fit intentionally together human experiences that are typically considered disconnected (Hoad, 1986). This was a skill Adam mastered.

### **Adam's Writing had "Movement"**

To have movement is to instigate and pass from one place to the next (<https://etymonline.com>). Dr. Peck was committed to not just starting writing projects, but also finishing them. Because he gained inspiration from partnering with others, finishing projects often required encouraging others. The editor of *JCAPS* shared, "We were definitely moving forward. Writing with Adam was not something that was done simply to check a box or feel good about yourself – there was a sense of movement to it" (D. Rosch, personal communication, December 4, 2022)

Even when difficult, Dr. Peck's writing projects evolved.

His ability to forge on and keep things moving forward. This project, which I believe was his biggest project to date, was a lot more work than he expected. But that never stopped him, and he just kept guiding us all along. It may have been more like herding cats. (G. Spencer, personal communication, November 28, 2022)

Adam was self-motivated to write. It was a passion, hobby, professional obligation, and a means to contemplate complex issues and seek their solution.

### **Adam Sought Honest Feedback**

Bouncing ideas off others was a crucial component of Adam's writing. He identified a topic through professional development opportunities, sketched and shared ideas with others, drafted and refined, and sought feedback from those who would offer honest perspectives.

I am a much better scholar and thinker because of my time with him. I am also much better at self-editing, which has served me well now that I edit papers and dissertations as a part-time faculty member. He also helped me explore my own passions when it came to writing. I have been working on a project where I review old (like 1930s and 40s) *Journal of Higher Education* articles, and I compare them to contemporary higher ed issues to see the changes but almost always the similarities. I also kind of became [Adam's] foil. He would have an idea, and I would go find some journal article from 1938 and let him know he ain't all that original; some dean at Purdue has been banging that drum since before Pearl Harbor. (M. Preston, personal communication, October 13, 2022)

Adam saw soliciting honest reviews from others as imperative to the writing and thinking and rewriting process. To be honest is to be marked by decency (Hoad, 1986). Adam offered that and expected it.

### **Parting Words: How Do We Continue Adam's Work?**

To leave a legacy is to offer a bequest (Hoad, 1986). Adam bequeathed confidence and inspiration about engaging in scholarship to his co-authors.

I enjoyed writing with Adam because I was in awe of him. Research and scholarly writing came so very easy to him, and I think for most practitioners, that isn't the case. I'm always a person who wants to do things with people that are better than me. I run with faster runners; I spend time with smarter people. I felt writing with Adam would make me a better scholarly writer. (S. Russell Krebs, personal communication, November 30, 2022)

Adam paid forward the compulsion to write, but more so the compulsion to be intentional. So it is with intentionality that we must continue his work. First, at the individual professional level, campus activities professionals must be intentional about providing interventions that prompt students to recognize their learning and be able to tell their learning story. Dr. Peck's scholarship offers numerous examples of possible interventions. Also, as individual professionals, campus activities professionals must intentionally find or create theories and frameworks that ground practice; otherwise, it is not intentional practice but rather practice grounded by hope and a prayer. Individual professionals must be intentional about sharing what we have learned regarding our own practices in promoting learning across our own institution, to others at other institutions, and to the profession; either following Dr. Peck's lead by taking on the identity of a practitioner-scholar ourselves, and/or encouraging others to engage in the life of a practitioner-scholar. Fortunately, there are now numerous outlets for this sharing.

At our institutions and as a profession, we must commit to continuing his work in the area of "engaged students become engaged employees" by assuring students feel a sense of belonging at their institutions. The diversity, equity, and inclusion special edition of *JCAPS* scheduled for publication in spring 2023 aligns with this commitment, as does the NACA updated research agenda (Rosch et al., 2021), but efforts must be bolder and broader. We suggest future regional and national conferences invite speakers and members to contemplate how we achieve 100% student engagement and overcome the mindset that having unengaged students is to be expected. Remember, Dr. Peck saw employed students as potentially engaged students. Such a goal will take an intentional mapping of cocurricular learning experiences and of the students who attend them at institutions and even across the profession (Peck, 2017). Perhaps these efforts could be initiated by an Adam Peck institute at which campus activities professionals begin to contemplate what 100% student engagement would look like and how we achieve that.

We end this story of Adam with the poignant words of a colleague, "I always felt so good about our profession knowing Adam was in it" (S. Russell Krebs, personal communication, November 30, 2022). Let us allow ourselves to feel good about our profession by continuing Adam's call to intentional practice.

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