Review By: Nancy Nguyen, aspiring Student Affairs professional and Masters of Arts candidate from San Diego State University's Postsecondary Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Student Affairs program.

Patrick G. Love & Sandra M. Estanek's *Rethinking Student Affairs Practice* begins with an overview of how institutions currently operate. Student affairs units work under a Newtonian paradigm; bureaucratic systems control the workplace and future forecasting is formulated under the assumption of predictability and repetition. The main goal of their book is to challenge student affairs professionals to think differently. Whether the authors' goals and suggestions remain relevant, eight years after the book's publication is what will be reviewed here.

The book is organized in three parts. In Part I, a photo of the intertwined rabbit and duck illustrate the field's current limitations and why professionals need to rethink student affairs practice. The reality of the image does not change, only what is perceived. However, the tendency to see only what is immediately relevant creates silos. The authors challenged readers to balance “the tension between holistic philosophy and divided administrative structures” (p. x). In doing so, one uses a “both-and” approach instead of “either-or.”

The four themes of “valuing dualisms, paradigm transcendence, recognizing connectedness, and embracing paradox” (p. 1) assist in “both-and” thinking. Paradigm transcendence incorporates adding on and reviewing paradigms, not completely replacing paradigms. Also, to recognize connectedness is to realize that humans are interdependent and connected by “the natural forces of the planet” (p. 19). “Individually generated relationships and actions among members throughout an organization focused on struggling together to influence and promote organizational learning and accomplish positive changes to benefit the common good” (p. 38) defines pervasive leadership. The intrapreneur is a pervasive leader who brings innovation from within an organization by successfully implementing new ideas after support is generated through relationships and
feedback. Ideas are fully explored and not diffused as obstacles or “out of bounds” for implementation (p. 72). With regards to assessment practice, pervasive leadership occurs when assessment is integrated into a wide spectrum of players across the student affairs division (as opposed to leaving it up to the “experts”) and institutionalized for organizational learning.

Part II involves the discussion of resources and technology. Love and Estanek define resourcefulness as “inventive, creative, clever, and adaptable” (p. 121). As institutions are being constricted to tighter budgets, “both-and” thinking requires awareness of availability of resources and actions for sharing and attracting resources (e.g. fundraising, grant writing, partnerships).

With regards to technology, the authors acknowledge that they are not the “experts,” but this does not to keep them for engaging in technology. Though this way of thinking about technology is encouraging for engagement, it downsizes the extent of the challenge. Keeping up with technology takes more than just having Millennials teach older staff members. Furthermore, “technology as brush, paint, and artist” (p. 153) translates to technology as a tool, a medium of work, and a mindset. Technology needs to be assessed through “single-loop” and “double-loop” levels (p. 155). “Single-loop” asks, “Is the ‘brush’ doing what it’s supposed to?” “Double-loop” levels explore whether the “artist” is fitting for the project. This can be done effectively only if professionals have sufficient knowledge of the brush, paint, and artist.

In Part III, the authors devise readers to engage in “seeing more” (p. 208) by stepping outside national boundaries to educate themselves about international education. President Clinton stated that “a coherent and coordinated international education strategy will... [prepare] our citizens for a global environment while continuing to attract and educate future leaders from abroad” (p. 175). Globalization and increased interdependency are strong rationales for broadening one’s student affairs knowledge outside the States. However, the feasibility to be pervasive leaders in international education is low. With the number of universities located in the United States and individuals’ intentions to stay local, there is little incentive for professionals to branch out.
Overall, *Rethinking Student Affairs Practice* remains relevant today as many student affairs professionals are behind in responding to the increasing needs and complexity of students. Professionals remain uncomfortable with politics, continue to apply old paradigms to new scenarios, and see assessment as additional work. The authors do an astounding job of acknowledging these current issues (still relevant eight years later) and compiling the “how to” and “why” of pervasive leadership. Pervasive leaders, dependent of rank or experience, can transcend paradigms, allowing both the Newtonian way of thinking and the new science (i.e. quantum mechanics and chaos theory) to coexist. A duck and a rabbit can both be seen and valued. Though the website intended for continued dialogue is no longer available, Love and Estanek equip readers with the knowledge to transform the field of student affairs.