



Don't Confuse Exhaustion With Impact

From the Associate Editor

Dr. Andrew Pearl is director of Academic Engagement and assistant professor at the University of North Georgia

I'm an avid podcast consumer. While a lot of my queue is populated with various comedy shows, and the occasional sports radio program, I also try to listen to a show from which I can learn something new and which will challenge the way I think. One of the shows that has found its way into my regular rotation is "Pod Save the People." The podcast focuses on issues related to culture, social justice, and politics, structured through a news segment followed by an in-depth interview. The hosts are passionate and insightful, and they never fail to expose me to a new idea, point of view, or way of thinking about critically important issues. The show often starts with a short introductory monologue from one of the hosts. A couple of months ago, the host said something that has been rolling around in my head ever since: "Don't confuse exhaustion with impact."

Even if not in those exact words, I'm sure it's a sentiment I've heard before, but for whatever reason, the context and timing of the advice really stuck with me. I often find myself, like I'm sure many of us do, spinning my wheels some days, coming home at the end of a long day thinking that I checked off a lot of boxes on my to-do list, but with the feeling that I didn't actually make a lot of progress on things. Sure, I'm exhausted because I've done so many things, but I sometimes still question what I actually did in any sort of meaningful way.

Entering into community/university partnerships requires a great deal of careful planning, relationship building, and hands-on work. At times, this can feel like we're progressing for the sake of progress. The beauty of community engagement, however, is the tremendous collective impact that can result from these mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnerships.

It's important for us to remember the why behind the work we do, and not get caught up in the minutiae to the point that we forget that we're ultimately looking to address, as Ernest T. Boyer stated, "...our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems ..." as we seek to fulfill our promise of intellectual and civic progress. One benefit of a journal like *JCES* is that it serves as a further incentive to purposefully and thoughtfully consider our impact, as well as how that impact is measured and documented, from the inception of the project, all while giving voice to all stakeholders. The articles in this issue do exactly that, and are excellent examples of why I am proud to continue to be affiliated with this fine publication.

"Don't confuse exhaustion with impact." This has definitely found its way to a sticky note on my computer monitor. I need the constant reminder.