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His empirical research involves questions at the intersection of evolutionary biology, cognitive science, and the scientific character, such as the evolution of altruism, complexity, and intelligence. His interdisciplinary philosophy of science work aims to help improve public understanding of science, to foster science ethics, and to advance STEM education nationally. He is a PI of Scientific Virtues Project and of BEACON, an NSF Center for the Study of Evolution in Action. A national leader in evolution education, he was an expert witness in the historic Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School Board Intelligent Design creationism case, and he develops software and curricula to help students learn about evolution and the nature of science using digital organisms.

In recognition of his science education and public outreach work, Pennock was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer, and a National Associate of the National Academies of Science, and has received numerous awards, including the National Center for Science Education’s Friend of Darwin Award, the American Institute of Biological Sciences Outstanding Service Award, and the International Society for Artificial Life Education & Outreach Award.

The author of over a hundred articles in philosophy, science, and education, his book Tower of Babel: The Evidence against the New Creationism was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. His latest book is An Instinct for Truth: Curiosity and the Moral Structure of Science. For more information, see https://msu.edu/~pennock5/.