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ATG Interviews Peter Berkery, Executive Director, AAUP

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From the University Presses — An Interview with Peter Berkery, Executive Director, AAUP

Column Editor: **Alex Holzman** (Director, Temple University Press; Phone: 215-926-2145)
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Column Editor's Note: On March 1, 2013, **Peter Berkery** became the Executive Director for the **AAUP (Association of American University Presses)**. He comes to the **AAUP** from **Oxford University Press**, where he served for the last four years as Vice President and Publisher for the U.S. Law Division. Prior to that he worked for **Wolters Kluwer** for 11 years in a series of positions, publishing works on securities licensing examination training, securities law, taxation, and financial planning.

Berkery has extensive experience in government affairs and association management. He has been Director of Government Affairs for the **National Society of Accountants** and Government Relations Counsel for the **National Paint and Coatings Association**, and has served as Assistant Executive Director and Staff Counsel for a division of the **American Trucking Associations**. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Accreditation Counsel for Accountancy and Taxation, and as its President.

Berkery has a BA in Classical Studies from **Boston College**, and both an MA and

a JD from **The American University**, as well as a Master of Laws in Taxation from **George Washington University**. He has been admitted to practice in Maryland, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and the United States Tax Court.

We spoke on March 22, 2013. — **AH**

AH: Congratulations on the new job. What interested you about it?

PB: Thanks. That's a great question. I've had an interest in the **AAUP** even before joining **Oxford** and this position seems to draw on every strand of my background, ranging from my own scholarship to my previous experience in associations to my many years in publishing. It seems like an elegant way to bring my CV full circle while giving me the opportunity to serve an association and a set of activities that matter.

AH: Could you describe some of your initial undertakings?

PB: I've been talking with as many people as I can, both within the university press com-

munity and outside it. It's an amazingly diverse organization, with presses of widely differing size and focus. Relationships with home institutions, list sizes, and staff organizations vary widely. The **AAUP** Board reflects this diversity and I am working with them to ensure that we do a good job of representing all our members. One thing I am discovering — and agree with — is that many presses do regard themselves first as units of their home university and second as members of the publishing community.

AH: In recent years, there's been tension between the library community and university presses. Any thoughts on that?

PB: Yes, I've found that in some cases there's almost a knee-jerk hostility, which is surprising, not productive, and not necessary. But the divide doesn't really seem to be a divide. As I've been talking with many in both communities, I've found that as individuals, people on both sides are reasonable. But in a group or institutional setting, a "dome of orthodoxy" sets in.

AH: Any thoughts on how we address this divide?

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PB: Everyone needs to acknowledge that extreme positions aren't helpful. There's a great deal more nuance than is sometimes acknowledged. The university press agenda isn't fully aligned with commercial publishers. What differentiates us from them — our mission to disseminate scholarship as widely as we can — can align us with libraries.

AH: *How can the AAUP work to repair the gaps between libraries and presses?*

PB: First, we need to talk with each other. On the association level, I've met recently with the new Executive Director of the ARL, **Elliott Shore**, and with AAU chief **John Vaughan**. Our dialogue with them and with other associations, whether publisher, library, or otherwise, must become a regular thing. In addition, AAUP can try to facilitate more conversation among the various constituencies in scholarly publishing. The more we talk the more we can see nuance in each other's positions and the more we can recognize that we're in this together.

AH: *Individual libraries and presses have various formal and informal relationships on different campuses. Some presses report to libraries. Do you feel any particular model for a press-library relationship stands out from the rest?*

PB: No one size fits all. As the Ithaka report noted several years ago, there's no single model for organizing scholarly publishing at a given university. Currently, about 20% of presses report into the library. Many believe it's positive and constructive, some report that historical tensions do rear their heads and can create a struggle. The really important thing is to establish the comparative strengths of each unit and analyze how they can be leveraged to better disseminate scholarship. In most cases, presses can reach broader audiences than can libraries alone.

AH: *How should library publishing programs and university press publishing differ?*

PB: A provost might ask, "Why do we have two different publishing programs?" There's little scale to begin with at most university presses, so when you distribute publishing activity among several parts of the university, it just makes achieving scale that much harder. I don't know enough yet to say what it is libraries are publishing, so I can't really offer any further thought on this right now.

AH: *Let's move to some specific issues. What are your thoughts on open access?*

PB: First, it isn't always clear what people mean when they say open access. There are a wide variety of flavors, from varying methods of cost recovery for both author and publisher to embargoes on new materials to differences in copyright restrictions. So when any individuals begin to talk about open access, exactly what they mean isn't clear. And if everyone is reduced to being for it or against it, all those necessary distinctions get lost in the rhetoric. There's much common ground among university presses and the other constituents in the university. We need

against the grain people profile

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BORN AND LIVED: Born in London to South African parents (who had left apartheid South Africa for political reasons). Spent most of my childhood in the beautiful Cotswolds and also spent three years in Cape Town. Now live in Cheltenham.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I've been with **Adam Matthew** for over 11 years and so most of my career has been developed here! After graduating and a brief stint in film / television production in the UK and South Africa I worked in Sales and Marketing for a publishing company in Cape Town and then a software solutions company in London. At **Adam Matthew** sales and marketing has dominated but I have been involved in all aspects of the business since 2002 and have been privileged to benefit from the knowledge and unique experiences gained from growing (and selling) a business.

FAMILY: Married to **Zoë**. Two children: **Verity** (8) and **Zach** (6).

IN MY SPARE TIME: Quality time with the family, music and film, football (watching and playing), good food and wine!

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Catch-22*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Fever Pitch*.

PET PEEVES: FaceTiming in airport lounges and cutting in line!

PHILOSOPHY: Life is far too brief and special to waste judging others: Live, Laugh, Accept.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Helping to grow **Adam Matthew** into an award winning digital publisher.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Have **Adam Matthew** flourishing as an independent subsidiary of **SAGE** with many more students and scholars benefitting from access to our unique content.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Lots of publishers are currently trying to add archival collections to their product line and I think in five years' time many will have tried and failed in this very specialist market!

I believe **Adam Matthew** will be one of a select few publishers producing quality primary source collections, with others having learnt the hard way about the many issues and high costs associated with producing these large, complex products.

I don't think the challenges facing **Adam Matthew** will have fundamentally changed:

- Academic libraries will still want and demand quality primary source content at a competitive price.
- Archives will still be looking for commercial projects with publishers they can trust with their special collections.
- Users will demand ever more powerful search results and feature-rich resources and publishers will continue to grapple with answering these demands while still making a profit.

I believe that the technology available will make these collections ever more visible to the students and faculty with more powerful discovery services and better platforms — this should make the librarians difficult job of alerting users to new content much easier.

I think many users will be accessing our content using handheld devices and our products will have increasingly large data demands. The speed of the downloads will be key and by then we will be in a cloud environment through our dedicated hosting partners, ensuring smoother, faster, more efficient content delivery. 🐼

to keep the ideology out of our conversations and focus on the common goal of disseminating scholarship as widely as possible while noting the financial constraints on all the parties involved — publishers, librarians, faculty, students.

AH: *Any opinions on the free rider issue in university press publishing?*

PB: I know that this problem — which is that those universities sponsoring presses are absorbing costs those colleges and universities

without presses do not bear — is beginning to show up on the radar of administrators and librarians. AAUP would be interested in any initiatives that address the question and look forward to participating in conversations within the broader academic community to resolve it in a way that allows the community to discuss fairer ways to share and perhaps even reduce some of the costs of scholarly communication.

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AH: *Do you think it's a good idea for university presses to get involved in initiatives to create open access and/or less expensive textbooks for undergraduates?*

PB: Again, I don't think one size fits all. Some presses have been publishing textbooks for a very long time and almost every press publishes books that are used as concurrent reading in undergraduate course. Florida and others have been involved in open access textbooks. Setting up the infrastructure to publish textbooks may or may not be productive depending on the individual situation, but university presses have always provided materials to students at reasonable prices and no doubt will continue to do so in varied ways.

AH: *Thanks. One last question — how will you define success as AAUP's Executive Director?*

PB: Great question. The answer is I'm not sure yet. But revitalized relations with other constituencies in the university would be one way. We also need to help AAUP members better promote themselves and the value they bring to the university ecosystem, especially within their own community. We need to get to the point where a situation like the one that occurred at the **University of Missouri Press** last year would never occur again and where it would never occur to an administrator that closing a press would be a good idea. Instead, presses should be regarded as central to the university's efforts to engage successfully with the revolution in scholarly communication. 🌱

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Reports of Meetings — 32nd Annual Charleston Conference

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, "Accentuate the Positive," Francis Marion Hotel, Courtyard Marriott Historic District, Addlestone Library, and School of Science and Mathematics Building, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, November 7-10, 2012

Charleston Conference Reports compiled by: **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Collection Development / Special Projects Librarian, Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *Thank you to all of the Charleston Conference attendees who agreed to write short reports that highlight sessions they attended at the 2012 conference. All attempts were made to provide a broad coverage of sessions, and notes are included in the reports to reflect known changes in the session titles or presenters highlighting those that were not printed in the conference's final program (though some may have been reflected in the online program). Please visit the Conference Website, <http://www.katina.info/conference>, for the online conference schedule from which there are links to many presentations, handouts, plenary session videos, and plenary session reports by the 2012 Charleston Conference blogger, Don Hawkins. Visit the conference blog at <http://www.against-the-grain.com/category/blog-posts/charleston2012/>. The 2012 Charleston Conference Proceedings will be published in partnership with Purdue University Press in 2013.*

In this issue of ATG you will find the second installment of 2012 conference reports. The first installment can be found in ATG v.25#1, February 2013. We will continue to publish all of the reports received in upcoming print issues throughout the year. — RKK

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2012
CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1**

A Conversation with Technical Services Librarians and Publishers: A Workshop on Process Enhancement — Presented by **Jane Bethel** (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency); **Margaret Hogarth** (Claremont University Consortium); **Beth Hoskins** (Duke University Press); **Mark Johnson** (Moderator-High Wire); **Alexis Manheim** (Stanford University); **Audrey Powers** (University of South Florida); **Albert Sciamann** (SAGE Publications); **Anneliese Taylor** (University of California, San Francisco); **Barbara Walker** (Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology)

Reported by: **Caryl Ward** (Binghamton University Libraries (SUNY)) <cward@binghamton.edu>

What are your pain points? **Johnson's** provocative question opened the panel's discussion. Librarians from five different types of institutions outlined major concerns in their interactions with vendors and publishers. Insufficient communication, lack of product knowledge, and the availability of accurate statistics topped the list.

Publisher representatives **Hoskins**, **Sciamann**, and **Walker** graciously responded with their suggestions for best practices in problem resolution. They stressed that two-way communication is essential for

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