

An Assessment of Publisher Quality by Political Science Librarians

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Publisher quality is one criterion used by collection development librarians in making book selection decisions. Few studies have assessed the perceptions subject specialist librarians have about the quality of academic publishers' output in specific disciplines. The author surveyed a sample of members of the Association of College and Research Libraries Law & Political Science Section, asking them to assess the overall quality of political science books published by sixty-two academic presses and imprints. The results are reported, analyzed, and compared to a similar survey of members of the American Political Science Association. Many similarities are seen in the rankings, although, on the whole, librarians ranked university presses higher and commercial publishers lower than did political scientists.

n 1997, more than seventy thousand books were published for the academic library market. More than two thousand political science titles, with an average cost of \$51.76, were included in this total.¹ Choosing wisely from among these titles is a challenge for even experienced collection development librarians; for the novice, it can seem overwhelming. Making the task even more daunting is the fact that many college and university libraries have seen their budgets for books remain stagnant or even shrink, as serials and electronic resources consume a growing proportion of their budgets.

Generally, acquisition decisions in academic libraries are accomplished through both approval plans and individual orders. Approval plans define in advance the subjects, level of coverage, audience, treatment, language, price range, and

publishers of books that the library wants to have shipped automatically to it. Although most approval plans provide for the return of books deemed inappropriate upon physical examination by library staff, actual return rates are usually low. Shelf-ready cataloging programs may make the likelihood of return even less.

As a supplement to approval plans, selectors at academic libraries make purchasing decisions for individual titles. Most individual purchasing decisions are based on an evaluation of a surrogate for the actual book, rather than an examination of the book itself. Sometimes the surrogate is an evaluative book review, but more often it is a listing in a publisher's catalog or a slip from the library's approval plan vendor that contains only minimal bibliographic and cataloging information. In this case, the selector must rely on his or her knowledge of the au-

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thor, the publisher, any useful information imparted by the title, the described physical characteristics of the book, the price, the fit between the subject matter and the university's curricular and research needs, and any information given about the book's intended audience, format, and type.

Nearly all of these factors are specific to the individual title and provide little true insight into the comparative quality of two titles that, on the surface, may seem similar. In some cases, selectors may have some preexisting knowledge about an author; however, they can be expected to be familiar with only a small percentage of the hundreds of names they will see over the course of a year. The universe of publishers is relatively small compared with the number of authors, so over time, selectors may develop familiarity with publishers and make judgments about the quality of their output. A helpful aid to new selectors (and a useful basis for comparison and perhaps reinforcement or reconsideration for experienced selectors) would be studies that assess other selectors' perceptions of publisher quality in a particular discipline. Such studies also would be helpful when libraries set up or revise approval plan profiles and make decisions concerning which publishers to include.

Review of the Literature

Very few studies of publisher quality are available. In 1983, a study by John Calhoun and James K. Bracken, published in *College & Research Libraries*, reported the number of titles, number of outstanding book awards, and the ratio of awards to titles for the sixty publishers most often winning *Choice* Outstanding Academic Book awards for the years 1977-1981. In this study, Oxford and Cambridge each had an awards-to-total-titles-published ratio of 1:22 to 7. Because most selectors know and respect these two academic publishers, this ratio was assigned an indexing value of 1.0 and all other publishers were ranked in relationship to it. The publishers with the ten highest indexing

values were Harvard, Princeton, Temple, Yale, Indiana University, Cornell, Basic Books, Free Press, University of Chicago, and Thames & Hudson. Those with the lowest values included large trade publishers such as Doubleday, Harper & Row, McGraw-Hill, Prentice-Hall, and Random House.²

In 1993, Edward A. Goedeken published a partial replication of the Calhoun and Bracken study, based on *Choice* data for the years 1988-1992. University presses increased their dominance of the Outstanding Academic Book awards during these years. These presses constituted twenty (33 1/3%) of the top sixty publishers listed in 1983 and twenty-seven (45%) in 1993. They accounted for 33 percent of the awards for 1977-1981 and 48 percent for 1988-1992. The publishers with the highest indexing values included Yale, Harvard, Princeton, University of California, University of North Carolina, Rutgers, Duke, Free Press, Indiana University, Cornell, and Abrams. Again, large trade publishers had the lowest indexing values. Goedeken noted that the design of the Calhoun-Bracken study made comparisons between university and commercial presses difficult because the commercial publishers' total output figures, which were used to calculate the award-to-title ratio and consequently the indexing value, included children's books, reprints, and other titles that were not aimed at the academic market.³

In 1996, Paul Metz and John Stemmer conducted a reputational survey of academic publishers. The authors acknowledged that attributing quality to a specific publisher's books represents an inherently subjective judgment. Accordingly, they attempted to assess as directly as possible the perceptions and opinions of their target group of "informed observers": the chief collection development officers at all ARL member institutions and at the seventy-two U. S. liberal arts colleges that constitute the Oberlin (Obergroup) institutions. Metz and Stemmer ranked sixty-four publishers according to the respondents' familiarity

with the publisher, their perception of the relevance of the publisher's book titles to the academic community, and the overall intellectual and editorial quality of the publisher's monographic offerings. The top four rankings for both quality and relevance were claimed by university presses: Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford, and Stanford. For all publishers, perceptions of academic relevance were positively correlated with familiarity. Nearly all correlations between familiarity and quality were positive.

The authors found a large positive correlation between relevance and quality for most publishers. Nonetheless, a number of publishers showed a significant difference in perceptions of relevance and quality. One grouping consisted of publishers whose rankings for relevance were at least fifteen places greater than for quality. These publishers targeted the academic library marketplace, giving their titles a relevant scope almost by definition. This group included Greenwood, M. E. Sharpe, University Press of America, and Westview. The second grouping was composed of publishers whose rankings were fifteen or more places higher for quality than for relevance. These publishers, including Atlantic Monthly Press, Alfred Knopf, Norton, Penguin, and Random House, were described as targeting the intellectual lay reader.⁴

In 1999, Larry P. Goodson, Bradford Dillman, and Anil Hira evaluated the quality of academic book publishers in political science. They surveyed a sample of American Political Science Association (APSA) members, asking them to assess the overall quality of political science books published by sixty-five presses and imprints. The publishers were taken from several sources, including two lists published in *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Criteria for inclusion in these lists were attendance and exhibits at major academic meetings and advertising in publications such as *American Political Science Review*. The authors added publishers that had exhibits at APSA meetings between 1995 and 1997, as well as publishers sug-

gested by their university acquisitions librarians. This resulted in a list of more than 130 publishers, primarily located in the United States and Great Britain. They then eliminated small publishers (less than ten new political science books in 1997), "niche" publishers, and publishers whose primary products were not books and monographs. The final list contained twenty-nine university presses, thirty-four commercial presses and imprints, and two others. Respondents were asked to evaluate the overall quality of each publisher's political science books by scoring them on a scale of zero to four (zero = poor, one = below average, two = average, three = above average, four = excellent). Respondents were instructed to evaluate only those presses/imprints with which they were familiar. The survey was conducted via e-mail and was sent to 1,313 addresses; 347 usable responses were received.

Goodson, Dillman, and Hira found, as expected, that major university presses enjoyed the highest level of prestige as well as the greatest familiarity. In terms of quality, the top twelve publishers were major university presses; each also ranked within the top fiftieth percentile for familiarity. Commercial publishers claimed nine of the next ten highest rankings for quality. The remaining university and commercial publishers were interspersed throughout the ranking, with the bottom four places held by commercial presses.

The authors found that quality and familiarity are correlated strongly but do not always track together. Two university presses (North Carolina and Wisconsin), for example, ranked high on quality (twenty-two and twenty-three) but were known by less than half of the respondents. On the other hand, several presses that ranked low on quality were well known. McGraw-Hill and Greenwood, for example, were ranked twenty-two and twenty-eight, respectively, for familiarity but were forty-two and fifty-eight for quality.

The primary purpose of the APSA study was to identify the political science

presses that members of the discipline viewed as publishing the highest-quality books so that association members could make more informed publishing choices. Because APSA members write textbooks as well as research titles, textbook publishers were included in the survey along with other commercial publishers and a large number of university presses. Comments from a number of survey respondents indicated that they felt it was not feasible to compare all these types of publishers on the same scale because the gap in quality was so great. However, the authors found that after the top dozen presses were set aside, the gap between different types of publishers was not great. For example, their results indicated that publishing with Routledge (nineteen quality, eighteen familiarity) or Sage (twenty quality, seven familiarity) should be more career enhancing than publishing with Temple (forty-seven quality, forty-seven familiarity) or Louisiana State (fifty-four quality, tied for fifty-five familiarity).⁵

Members of ACRL's Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) were identified as an appropriate audience for the survey.

Goodson, Dillman, and Hira concluded that "there is reputational capital in publishing" and that "with whom one publishes does matter." Political scientists attribute "a certain (and different) value, quality, and/or market niche" to books published by specific publishers. The value of these "trademarks" represents capital for authors, who assume some of the reputation of the houses with which they publish.⁶

The present article applies the methodology used in the APSA study to a targeted group of academic librarians who make collection development decisions for the discipline of political science. Together with the APSA study, it can provide useful information, albeit subjective, for librarians who need to evaluate publishers of political science books. In addition,

to the extent that some of the same publishers were included in the Metz and Stemmer study, the results can be compared to see what, if any, differences are seen in the surveyed librarians' perceptions of academic publishers in general and the perceptions of the quality of the publisher's output within the discipline of political science.

Methodology

Members of ACRL's Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) were identified as an appropriate audience for the survey. LPSS's purpose is to represent librarians in the fields of law and political science and to act for ACRL in cooperation with other professional groups in regard to those aspects of library service that require special knowledge of law and political science.⁷ A review of the membership roster for LPSS indicates that, in actuality, many of its members join because they are interested in the subject matter, even though their job responsibilities may encompass very different areas. To the extent that job titles were included on the LPSS membership roster, these were used to identify law librarians and other persons whose job responsibilities did not appear to include selection for the discipline of political science. Surveys were sent to persons whose listing on the roster identified them as social sciences, political science, public administration, or government documents librarians and to a sampling of those whose job responsibilities were not indicated on the roster or were very broad in scope (e.g., reference librarian or bibliographer). Three hundred surveys were mailed in October 1999. An e-mail reminder was posted to the LPSS listserv on November 17, 1999. Fifty-six persons returned surveys, of which forty-seven provided usable data, for a response rate of 18.66 percent.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the general quality of the political science books published by sixty-two major publishers by scoring them on a five-point scale. The publishers were taken from the APSA survey and thus were a variety of

TABLE 1
Size of Acquisitions Budgets at Respondents' Libraries

Budget Range	No. of Respondents
< \$500,000	9
\$500,000–\$999,999	11
\$1,000,000–\$3,000,000	10
\$3,000,000–\$5,000,000	6
\$5,000,000–\$7,000,000	3
Over \$7,000,000	7
No response	1

large university and commercial presses whose primary products were books and monographs and which had exhibited at major political science academic meetings, advertised in publications such as *American Political Science Review*, or been suggested by acquisitions librarians at academic libraries.⁸ The zero to four rating scale was the same as that used in the APSA survey (zero = poor, one = below average, two = average, three = above average, four = excellent). Respondents were instructed to evaluate only the publishers they were familiar with and to leave the space next to a publisher's name blank if they were not familiar with it. Space was provided for respondents to list other presses or imprints. If the recipient was not the appropriate person at the library to complete the questionnaire, he or she was asked to forward it to the person who was.

The survey included several questions on the background of the respondents and their institutions. Respondents were asked how many years they had been in their current position, in the library profession, and a member of LPSS. They also were asked to list their job title. In addition, they were asked to identify the approximate size of their library's acquisitions budget and the highest degree offered at the institution in the field of political science or public administration.

Those who answered the survey had been in their current position an average of 10.67 years, with a range of less than one year to thirty-seven years. They had

been in the library profession an average of 18.5 years, with a range of less than one year to thirty-eight years. Several respondents were not members of LPSS, and others did not know how long they had been members. The most common job titles were bibliographer, government documents librarian, reference librarian, and social sciences librarian.

Table 1 shows the estimated acquisitions budget at respondents' institutions, and table 2 indicates the highest relevant degree offered at the institution.

Results

University presses had the highest rankings for quality, with the top twelve spots, and they claimed twenty-four of the top twenty-seven spots. Oxford topped the list with a mean of 3.81. It also had the lowest standard deviation, indicating that it was uniformly respected. The other highest-ranked university presses—Cambridge, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Yale, University of Chicago, Columbia, and Cornell—each had mean quality rankings that exceeded 3.50. Congressional Quarterly, the highest ranking nonuniversity press, at number thirteen, was also the best-known publisher, with 96 percent of respondents indicating that they were familiar with it.⁹

At the top of the rankings, quality and familiarity tended to go hand in hand. However, five university presses that ranked in the top twenty for quality (New York University, University of North Carolina, University of Wisconsin, Penn

TABLE 2
Highest Academic Degree Offered in Political Science or Public Administration

Highest Degree	No. of Respondents
Associate	1
Bachelor's	8
Master's	17
Doctorate	19
No response	2

TABLE 3
Perceptions of Academic Publisher Quality and Familiarity with Publisher

Rank	Publisher	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Familiarity
1	Oxford University Press	3.81	.39	4	91%
2	Cambridge University Press	3.71	.45	4	87%
3	Harvard University Press	3.68	.47	4	85%
4	Johns Hopkins University Press	3.64	.48	4	83%
5	Yale University Press	3.63	.53	4	85%
6	University of Chicago Press	3.58	.59	4	85%
7	Columbia University Press	3.55	.63	4	85%
8	Cornell University Press	3.54	.60	4	74%
9	Princeton University Press	3.50	.55	4	77%
10	MIT Press	3.49	.65	4	74%
11	New York University Press	3.47	.66	4	68%
12	Stanford University Press	3.45	.68	4	81%
13	Congressional Quarterly Press	3.44	.68	4	96%
14	University of North Carolina Press	3.42	.61	3	66%
15	University of California Press	3.37	.62	3	81%
16	University of Wisconsin Press	3.33	.67	3	57%
t17	Duke University Press	3.30	.67	3	70%
t17	University Press of Virginia	3.30	.62	3	49%
19	Penn State Press	3.29	.63	3	45%
20	Westview Press	3.24	.82	3	70%
t21	Routledge	3.23	.80	3	83%
t21	University of Michigan Press	3.23	.72	3	74%
23	Indiana University Press	3.21	.69	3	70%
t24	Temple University Press	3.15	.85	3	57%
t24	University of Illinois Press	3.15	.66	3	70%
t24	University of Pittsburgh Press	3.15	.52	3	57%
27	State University of New York Press	3.13	.72	3	64%
28	West Publishing Company	3.09	.72	3	68%
29	Blackwell Publishers	3.03	.70	3	74%
30	M.E. Sharpe, Inc.	3.00	.75	3	68%
31	St. Martin's Press	2.97	.75	3	72%
32	Louisiana State University Press	2.93	.72	3	57%
33	Lynne Rienner Publishers	2.89	.82	3	60%
34	Rowman & Littlefield	2.86	.79	3	60%
35	MacMillan	2.85	.78	3	70%
36	University of Missouri Press	2.83	.75	3	51%
37	University Press of Florida	2.81	.79	3	45%
t38	Sage Publications, Inc.	2.80	.82	3	74%
t38	Transaction Press	2.80	.91	3	64%
40	Greenwood Publishing Group	2.78	.78	3	79%
t41	University of South Carolina Press	2.75	.70	3	43%
t41	Markus Weiner Publishers	2.75	.66	3	17%
43	Longman Publishing Group	2.64	.89	3	53%
44	W.W. Norton and Company	2.62	.77	3	72%
45	Basic Books	2.56	.79	3	68%
46	Humanities Press	2.53	.82	3	40%

TABLE 3 (CONT.)
Perceptions of Academic Publisher Quality and Familiarity with Publisher

Rank	Publisher	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Familiarity
47	Penguin Putnam Inc.	2.52	.62	2	62%
48	Simon and Schuster	2.47	.78	2	72%
49	Prentice Hall	2.45	.72	2	62%
50	Chatham House Publishers	2.43	.90	2	45%
51	McGraw-Hill, Inc.	2.42	.82	2	70%
52	Houghton-Mifflin Company	2.40	.84	2	64%
53	Ashgate Publishing Company	2.38	.84	2	45%
54	Frank Cass Publishers	2.37	.67	2	40%
55	Wadsworth Publishing Company	2.36	.64	2	47%
56	Random House, Inc.	2.31	.71	2	74%
57	Allyn & Bacon	2.30	.71	2	57%
58	University Press of America	2.23	.94	2	66%
59	Nelson-Hall, Inc.	2.21	.56	2	30%
60	HarperCollins College Publishers	2.17	.73	2	64%
61	Harcourt Brace College Publishers	2.14	.63	2	62%
62	D.C. Heath	1.94	.78	2	38%

State, and University Press of Virginia) were in the middle of the pack in terms of familiarity. Likewise, several well-known commercial presses ranked relatively low on quality. Random House, for example, was familiar to 74 percent of respondents but was ranked fifty-sixth for quality.

Because textbook purchases are generally not a priority, librarians' perceptions of the quality of textbook publishers are likely to suffer as well.

Respondents' familiarity with surveyed publishers ranged from 96 percent for Congressional Quarterly to 17 percent for Markus Weiner Publishers. Just over one-half of the publishers were familiar to at least two-thirds of the respondents. Eighty percent of the publishers were familiar to at least one-half of the respondents. Table 3 shows the rank, mean, standard deviation, median, and percentage of respondents familiar with each publisher.

University presses, and particularly Canadian university presses not repre-

sented in the study, received the most "write-in" votes. Two respondents ranked University of Toronto as "excellent." University of Kansas, University of Iowa, University of Washington, McGill-Queen's University, University of New Mexico, University of Oklahoma, and the Council on Foreign Relations Press each was ranked "excellent" by one respondent. Kluwer Academic Publishers, University of Alberta, and Foundation Press received one ranking each as "above average," while one respondent listed University of Calgary as "average."

Table 4 compares publishers' rankings by APSA members and LPSS members. The last column shows the differential in numerical rank between the two groups. Overall, university presses fared even better in terms of quality rankings in this study than in the APSA study. Not only are more of the top spots claimed by university presses, all of them fall into the top two-thirds of the quality ranking. The bottom third of the APSA quality-ranking list included seven university presses. Not surprisingly, many textbook publishers, including Houghton Mifflin Company, Harcourt Brace College Publishers,

TABLE 4
Comparison of APSA and LPSS Rankings for Publisher Quality

APSA Rank	APSA Mean	Publisher	LPSS Rank	LPSS Mean	Ranking Differential
1	3.72	Cambridge University Press	2	3.71	-1
2	3.61	Princeton University Press	9	3.5	-7
t3	3.56	Oxford University Press	1	3.81	2
t3	3.56	University of Chicago Press	6	3.58	-3
5	3.48	Yale University Press	5	3.63	0
6	3.46	Harvard University Press	3	3.68	3
7	3.31	University of California Press	15	3.37	-8
8	3.24	Cornell University Press	8	3.54	0
9	3.19	University of Michigan Press	t21	3.23	-12
10	3.09	MIT Press	10	3.49	0
11	3.06	Stanford University Press	12	3.45	-1
12	3.05	Johns Hopkins University Press	4	3.64	8
13	3.04	Brookings Institution			
14	3.02	Columbia University Press	7	3.55	7
15	2.93	Congressional Quarterly Press	13	3.44	2
16	2.81	Basic Books	45	2.56	-29
t17	2.78	W.W. Norton and Company	44	2.62	-27
t17	2.78	Blackwell Publishers	29	3.03	-12
19	2.74	Routledge	t21	3.23	-2
t20	2.71	Sage Publications, Inc.	t38	2.8	-18
t20	2.71	St. Martin's Press	31	2.97	-11
22	2.65	University of North Carolina Press	14	3.42	8
t23	2.63	Duke University Press	t17	3.3	6
t23	2.63	University of Wisconsin Press	16	3.33	7
25	2.61	Penguin Putnam Inc.	47	2.52	-22
26	2.59	Westview Press	20	3.24	6
27	2.56	Houghton Mifflin Company	52	2.4	-25
28	2.54	Chatham House Publishers	50	2.43	-22
29	2.51	New York University Press	11	3.47	18
t30	2.5	University of Pittsburgh Press	t24	3.15	6
t30	2.5	Random House, Inc.	56	2.31	-26
t30	2.5	Rowman & Littlefield	34	2.86	-4
t33	2.49	Indiana University Press	23	3.21	10
t33	2.49	HarperCollins College Publishers	60	2.17	-27
t35	2.48	Lynne Rienner Publishers	33	2.89	2
t35	2.48	Simon and Schuster	48	2.47	-13
37	2.47	West Publishing Company	28	3.09	9
t38	2.46	Prentice Hall	49	2.45	-11
t38	2.46	Macmillan	35	2.85	3
40	2.4	State University of New York Press	27	3.13	13
41	2.39	Penn State Press	19	3.29	22
42	2.37	McGraw-Hill, Inc.	51	2.42	-9
43	2.35	Longman Publishing Group	43	2.64	0
44	2.32	University of Illinois Press	t24	3.15	20
45	2.31	Harcourt Brace College Publishers	61	2.14	-16
46	2.3	M.E. Sharpe, Inc.	30	3	16

TABLE 4 (CONT)
Comparison of APSA and LPSS Rankings for Publisher Quality

APSA Rank	APSA Mean	Publisher	LPSS Rank	LPSS Mean	Ranking Differential
47	2.26	Temple University Press	t24	3.15	23
48	2.25	Kluwer			
49	2.16	University Press of Virginia	t17	3.3	32
50	2.14	United States Institute of Peace			
51	2.11	Allyn & Bacon	57	2.3	-6
52	2.09	Wadsworth Publishing Company	55	2.36	-3
53	2.08	Frank Cass Publishers	54	2.37	-1
54	2.03	Louisiana State University Press	32	2.93	22
55	2.02	Transaction Publishers	t38	2.8	17
56	2	University of South Carolina Press	t41	2.75	15
57	1.96	D.C. Heath	62	1.94	-5
58	1.95	Greenwood Publishing Group	40	2.78	18
59	1.91	University of Missouri Press	36	2.83	23
60	1.86	Nelson-Hall, Inc.	59	2.21	1
61	1.83	University Press of Florida	37	2.81	24
62	1.81	Humanities Press	46	2.53	16
63	1.51	University Press of America	58	2.23	5
t64	1.47	Markus Weiner Publishers	t41	2.75	23
t64	1.47	Ashgate Publishing Company	53	2.38	11

and Chatham House, ranked at least fifteen places lower in the present survey than in the Goodson study. Most academic libraries do not purchase textbooks, and if they do, they are likely to purchase textbooks specifically because they are used in courses taught on campus. In such cases, the publisher is irrelevant. Because textbook purchases are generally not a priority, librarians' perceptions of the quality of textbook publishers are likely to suffer as well. In addition, political science professors are more likely to have compared the relative quality of textbooks as they make selections for courses and possibly shop for a publisher for a textbook they authored.

Some commercial publishers were ranked relatively high for quality on both lists. For example, Congressional Quarterly, Blackwell, Routledge, Westview, and St. Martin were in the top 50 percent on both lists. However, there were clear differences of opinion between members of LPSS and members of APSA regarding the quality of some commercial publish-

ers. LPSS members ranked Basic, HarperCollins, Norton, Penguin, and Sage at least fifteen points lower than APSA members did but ranked Greenwood, Humanities, Markus Weiner, M. E. Sharpe, Transaction, Ashgate, and West higher.

Twenty-seven of the sixty-two publishers included in the survey also were included in Metz and Stemmer's reputational study of academic publishers. Table 5 lists the common publishers in order of quality ranking in each study. The rankings show noticeable similarities, with rankings varying by only a few places for most publishers. The largest variations in rank are seen for five commercial publishers: Norton, Basic, and Random House were ranked higher in the Metz and Stemmer study, whereas M. E. Sharpe and Westview were ranked higher in the LPSS study. In the Metz and Stemmer study, Norton and Random House were included in a cluster of publishers that targeted the "upper-brow" lay reader, so characterized because they

TABLE 5
Comparison of Publishers' Rankings in LPSS and Metz & Stemmer Studies

LPSS Study	Metz & Stemmer Study
Oxford University Press	Harvard University Press
Cambridge University Press	Cambridge University Press
Harvard University Press	Oxford University Press
Stanford University Press	Stanford University Press
Westview Press	Blackwell Publishers
Routledge	Routledge
State University of New York Press	W.W. Norton and Company
Blackwell Publishers	Basic Books
M.E. Sharpe, Inc.	State University of New York Press
St. Martin's Press	St. Martin's Press
MacMillan	Sage Publications, Inc.
Sage Publications, Inc.	MacMillan
Transaction Publishers	Penguin
Greenwood Publishing Group	Random House, Inc.
W.W. Norton and Company	Humanities Press
Basic Books	Westview
Humanities Press	McGraw-Hill
Penguin Putnam Inc.	Transaction Publishers
Simon and Schuster	Houghton Mifflin Company
Prentice Hall	Greenwood Publishing Group
McGraw-Hill, Inc.	M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
Houghton Mifflin Company	Simon and Schuster
Ashgate Publishing Company	Prentice Hall
Random House, Inc.	Allyn & Bacon
Allyn & Bacon	HarperCollins
University Press of America	Ashgate Publishing Company
HarperCollins College Publishers	United Press of America

ranked fifteen or more places higher for quality than for relevance. Perhaps the lesser degree of relevance of these publishers' political science titles to the academic market helped account for their lower ranking in the LPSS study, in which relevance and quality were not differentiated.

The present study was conducted with the hope that it could help inform political science librarians' collection development decisions by providing information as to how their colleagues ranked a num-

ber of publishers based on the quality of their output in the field of political science. Particularly where the LPSS, APSA, and Metz and Stemmer studies show consistencies, political science collection development librarians may find the opinions of their academic colleagues valuable. Even so, the careful selector will recognize the variations in quality among books produced by the same publisher and continue to use all the tools at his or her disposal to make the most-informed acquisition decisions possible.

Notes

1. Dave Bogart, ed., *The Bowker Annual*, 44th ed. (New Providence, R.I.: R.R. Bowker, 1999), 508-9.
2. John Calhoun and James K. Bracken, "An Index of Publisher Quality for the Academic

Library," *College & Research Libraries* 44 (May 1983): 257-59.

3. Edward A. Goedecken, "An Index to Publisher Quality Revisited: A Partial Replication," *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 17 (fall 1993): 263-68.

4. Paul Metz and John Stemmer, "A Reputational Study of Academic Publishers," *College & Research Libraries* 57 (May 1996): 234-47.

5. Larry P. Goodson, Bradford Dillman, and Anil Hira, "Ranking the Presses: Political Scientists' Evaluations of Publisher Quality," *PS-Political Science & Politics* 32 (June 1999): 257-62.

Ibid., 261.

7. "Law and Political Science Section Bylaws," 1982 [Internet, WWW] , available at: <http://facstaff.uww.edu/hansenc/lpssbylw.htm>. Accessed Feb. 11, 2000.

8. Anil Hira, one of the authors of the Goodson et al study, kindly supplied the author with a draft copy of their survey. This draft contained a list of sixty-two publishers. It was used as the source for the publishers included on the survey mailed to LPSS members. Goodson, Dillman, and Hira apparently added three publishers (Brookings Institution, Kluwer, and United States Institute of Peace) before actually conducting their survey.

9. Congressional Quarterly Press is a well-known publisher of reference titles and other books relevant to government, political science, and public administration. It is a regular exhibitor at ALA and ACRL meetings and conventions and distributes its catalogs widely. In light of the audience surveyed, however, it should be noted that LPSS and Congressional Quarterly have a special relationship that could affect its familiarity with LPSS members. Congressional Quarterly sponsors the Marta Lange/CQ award, given each year to an outstanding academic or law librarian selected by LPSS.