

Peter and Kim

INDEPENDENT HIRES



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Kim Cook, Professor of Music in Cello, and Peter Heaney, Professor of Geology, are an academic couple at the Pennsylvania State University. But they did not begin their Penn State careers this way.

Kim, a graduate of Yale's School of Music, began her academic career serving as principal cellist with the São Paulo State Symphony in Brazil. After a brief period as an assistant professor at New Mexico State University, she chose to come to Penn State in 1991 because she wanted the opportunity to build a cello studio at a major university. The move to Penn State was simplified by the fact that Kim was single at the time. Over the course of a dozen years, her studio

has attracted cellists from around the world. Despite these successes, Kim started seriously "thinking about leaving this job to be in a place where I could meet someone."

Peter arrived on campus seven years after Kim. He was also single. Having done his doctoral work at Johns Hopkins University, Peter taught for seven years at Princeton. When Penn State offered him a tenured post in "one of the best geoscience departments in the country," he grabbed it, knowing that positions in mineralogy are scarce. In his pursuit of tenure, Peter noted that "I focused more on my career than on my personal life." His current position allows him to pursue his research on how certain minerals clean up groundwater polluted with toxic metals.

After many successful years at Penn State, Kim and Peter finally met in 2004 and married in 2005. Both agree that having "a balance between career and personal life" is becoming increasingly important to them. In fact, they believe that they would have made different job choices had they met earlier in their careers. If they had met while Peter was at Princeton and Kim at Penn State, they each say they would have given up their faculty positions to work near the other. But this is not a concern for them now. As an academic couple working happily at the same school, they agree that they are "less likely to go on the job market."