



# University of South Carolina

## Lee Bauknight, English Instructor

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*There's a lot of knee-jerk resistance to custom publishing in English departments, and I think that's shortsighted. Don't dismiss it out of hand. If you're considering options, you should consider all of them—including this.*

*Lee Bauknight  
English Instructor  
University of South Carolina*

South Carolina College was founded in 1801 as part of an effort to unite South Carolinians in the wake of the American Revolution. More than 200 years later, the renamed University of South Carolina (USC) is a multicampus public institution serving the educational needs of the entirety of South Carolina through teaching, research, and service. USC's flagship campus in Columbia offers its roughly 25,000 full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students more than 350 degree programs through 14 degree-granting colleges and schools.

Lee Bauknight helped shepherd USC's first forays into custom publishing, starting with an in-house textbook for English 101 in fall 2003. "We did all the work ourselves: editing, permissions, everything," says Bauknight. "We even printed it at USC. It was a lot of work and didn't look very good, but for pedagogical and financial reasons, we continued that way for three years."

The department needed help, though—specifically with production and permissions. And although several publishers approached the department, talks shut down with every one of them when they learned what level of income the largish, USC English department needed. "None could get close to it," says English instructor Bauknight, "until spring 2006, when Pearson Learning Solutions contacted us.

"Pearson was the only company to grasp the bigger-picture view of what we were doing, offer us relief from the onerous permissions aspects, and ensure we could make the money we needed to," says Bauknight. "Our Pearson Learning Solutions representative created a way to spread the customized text over two semesters, which enabled us to save money while still tailoring the textbooks to our needs and ensuring consistency throughout the department. It was the creative thinking of the Pearson reps that made it happen. We now have access to support materials and resources, and our textbook looks and feels professional.

"Our working experience with Pearson couldn't have been better," says Bauknight. "The first year, we had very little time—only a couple of months to get a

manuscript in. With our editor's help, then the designer's, we established deadlines, and they made sure we met them, including gently cracking the whip when we needed it. They've been ideal partners ever since. It's a real partnership, with a team approach. They let us focus on what we do best, and they take care of the details. The process is streamlined: it enables us to be far more efficient and ensures that the overall strategy works in our curricular program and for our students academically and financially."

Bauknight knows that if he ever has any questions, he can call or e-mail his editor or the designer and that they'll be quick to answer. "My editors and I are always in touch," he says. "They're great. We haven't had any problems at all. The personal attention and the relationships we've built are real strong points.

"We are extremely happy with our books, both of them," says Bauknight. "We're very happy with the content made available through Pearson and with the items for which they obtained permission. And we really like this year's modern covers. As for the students, I don't know that they pay attention to such things. But I do know that if you ask a student to buy a book, you'd better use it. Custom publishing enables us to create a textbook that is used cover to cover. What's more, by customizing our texts, we can be certain that our students are being offered all of the materials they need to succeed in the program, and then we can provide the teaching assistants with specific kinds of support to further that goal. It's more value for the students any way you look at it."

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