San Francisco State University

Founded in 1899 as San Francisco State Normal School, San Francisco State University (SFSU) is one of California State University's 23 campuses and a leading U.S. public urban university. Promoting respect for scholarship, freedom, and human diversity, SFSU's faculty and administration encourage students to ignore traditional educational barriers: students design their own majors, take part in research projects with senior faculty, collaborate with classmates, and learn by solving real-life problems.

"Pearson Learning Solutions puts the control in my hands. They've accommodated everything I've asked for."

—Norma Carr-Ruffino
Professor of Management

SFSU's nearly 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students represent a broad range of ethnic groups, ages, and life experiences. Sixty percent of undergraduates are students of color, as are 40 percent of graduate students. Some students have professional experience; others are right out of high school. It's the kind of environment that engenders unconventional thinking—and attracts faculty who embrace innovative methods.

Norma Carr-Ruffino, professor of management, is just such a professor, so it should come as no surprise that she's also a veteran of custom publishing. "I used a predecessor of Pearson 15 or 20 years ago," says Carr-Ruffino. "They offered me a short-term contract for a little book called *The Business Student's Guide.* It did well. Then I republished it on my own and realized immediately that self-publishing wasn't how I wanted to spend my time."

Carr-Ruffino intimately knows how good—and how bad—the custom publishing experience can be. "I've had terrible experiences with other publishers," she says. "On one book, I had no control, no power at all. Editors came and went, some weren't even in my field, and none were geographically near me. Worst of all, I wasn't kept informed or consulted on the cover art or other details. My editor was editing the book—changing not just my words but also my meaning—without telling me. When I complained, no one responded. They didn't back me. I felt like I was out there like a lost lamb. It was incredibly stressful." In the early 1990s, Carr-Ruffino returned to Pearson.

"Pearson has integrity," says Carr-Ruffino. "I'm always happy. I feel heard. It's the opposite of my other experiences." She praises Pearson for just about every aspect of the publishing process. "My editor is geographically close to me. I always know what is going on. I feel very taken care of. She accommodates me, including getting my books published in the shortest possible time."

Carr-Ruffino rates her satisfaction level with Pearson Learning Solutions as high. "The results are wonderful," she says. "My books have all the appearances of national, off-the-shelf textbooks. Some really prestigious, Ivy League colleges have adopted this book; it's important that it meld with their curricula in every way: quality, content, tone, and aesthetics. I'm proud my book is usable for the whole spectrum of educational institutions: from community colleges to the Ivy League.

"Where they're needed, my books are sold," says Carr-Ruffino, who appreciates that Pearson's work doesn't stop at book production but continues through promotion, distribution, and reprints. "My textbook on diversity is required reading at more than 40 colleges. Anytime I want to update, it happens very quickly—in one case, three months! I don't think I could find that kind of speed anywhere else. Especially with such quality."

As someone whose topics have historically forged new areas of academic research—from women's leadership to workplace diversity, to creativity and innovation—Carr-Ruffino understood early on the benefits of custom publishing. "For my courses, there weren't books available to start with," she says. "Cobbling text together and using handouts was unsatisfactory. The solution was to write my own books. Now, instead of buying two or three books and using a little of each, students purchase one book with all the information they'll need. On the faculty side, it streamlines the teaching process, saves time, and in general, simplifies matters."