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DELIVERING THE ‘SUCCESSFUL PACKAGE’ TO USF ST. PETERSBURG IS GOAL OF NEW PROFESSOR

St. Petersburg Fla - May 30, 2003

Delivering the ‘Successful Package’ to USF St. Petersburg is Goal of New Professor

A well-read newspaper communicates with much more than writing, says Pegie Stark Adam. The words merely start a series of discussions.

“Successful, engaging, informative pages involve the appreciation of all three areas of writing, editing and design,” says Stark Adam, who joins the faculty of USF St. Petersburg as an associate professor of journalism and visual communication in the fall. “The concept or ideas formed in words lead the way to discussions of news judgment, placement on the page and spirit of display which leads to discussions on appropriate imagery, whether it be photographs, illustration, or typography. In the end, successful packages combine all elements of writing, editing, and design,” she said.

Even so, content is still king for Stark Adam. “I focus on content in my teaching of design,” she said. “I emphasize how content leads all decisions on design. I help students realize the importance of understanding the story or message being communicated. I emphasize that they must not have simply a superficial understanding, but an intimate and deep understanding in order to design the story in the best possible way.”

The professor teaches that design is an integral part of the communications process. “I encourage students to see that design decisions are not just intuitive but are based on clear and precise scientific and experimental research, hands-on practice, and trial and error,” she said. I encourage students to understand in depth how we see and understand messages and help them articulate why certain design solutions work and why others don’t. I push students to leave behind the phrase ‘I like it because I like it’ and discover new and articulate ways to describe visual solutions.”

“Dr. Stark Adam brings volumes of experience to the field of media studies,” said Gary Olson, interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs. “Her knowledge of how design helps to communicate a message will be invaluable to our students and others who live in an increasingly visual world.”

She has worked as design editor of the St. Petersburg Times, graphics director of the Detroit Free Press and graphics editor of The Detroit News. In 2002 she won awards from the Society of Newspaper Design for redesign of two sections of the Ottawa Citizen.

A freelance design partner in the Garcia Media group in Tampa, she has worked as a design consultant in newspapers and corporate publications in various countries including Canada, Britain and Brazil.

Stark Adam is designer and author of the book, “Color, Contrast and Dimension in News Design.” She is co-author with Dr. Mario Garcia of “Eyes on the News,” a compilation of their research about how readers enter and read newspaper pages and how color affects the way readers navigate through newspapers.

She has taught at the University of Florida, Indiana University, Ringling School of Art and Design, and the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. She has given presentations and seminars in various places around the globe including South Africa, Brazil, Spain, Germany, Canada, Egypt, Britain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Currently Stark Adam is visiting associate professor at Syracuse University S.I. Newhouse School of Communications. Her research interests and areas of experimentation include color theory and its application in news design.

She received her doctorate and master’s degrees in mass communications from the Indiana University School of Journalism. She holds a bachelors degree in fine arts from John Herron School of Art in Indianapolis.

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