Ethics Takes a Front Seat at USF St. Petersburg
Elliott Named Poynter-Jamison Professor of Journalism Ethics and Press Policy

July 1, 2003 (St. Petersburg, Fla.) - Turn on a newscast or pick up a newspaper and you may be bombed by items about embedded reporters fabricating stories or broadcasting sensitive information that could endanger the lives of our troops. A reporter from a highly respected newspaper may weave his stories out of fictitious facts and concocted events, then his shrug off all responsibility. A journalist who appears on a foreign network in the middle of a war zone denouncing his government's actions and making, what some call, treasonous comments. Many believe modern-day journalists have lost sight of the fact their job is not to 'create the news,' but rather to 'report the news' and to do so with integrity.

USF St. Petersburg acknowledges that ethics and social responsibility is a global concern in the field of journalism and in the corporate world. The university is taking steps to ensure its ethics' education is among the best in the nation. With the addition of new ethics faculty in the field of journalism and its Program of Distinction in Social Responsibility and Corporate Reporting, USF St. Petersburg is meeting the growing need to produce ethical journalists and tomorrow's leaders with integrity.

"We consider ourselves to be very fortunate to have recruited Dr. Deni Elliott, an internationally prominent scholar of ethics to join our faculty as the Poynter-Jamison Professor of Journalism Ethics and Press Policy," said Gary Olson, interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs. "Dr. Elliott will significantly enrich our ethics program. Our students and future journalists will profit from her vast experience and expertise."

The author of more than 100 articles and book chapters on journalism, evolving truths and media ethics, Elliott's writings span the scholarly, trade and lay press. She was the University Professor of Ethics and director of the Practical Ethics Center at the University of Montana, in Missoula. Elliott was also a professor in their Department of Philosophy and an adjunct professor in the School of Journalism. Prior to moving to Montana, she was the founding director for the Dartmouth College Ethics Institute and the Mansfield Professor of Ethics in Public Affairs.

Elliott received funding from the United States Department of Education to create the nation's first graduate degree program in teaching ethics and was the driving force behind the establishment of a national program office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation promoting excellence in end-of-life care.

Her research interests include academic integrity, applied ethics, professional ethics, moral excellence in business, and research ethics. Her most recent publications include The Kindness of Strangers: Philanthropy and Higher Education, and Sources of Sorcery: a New Paradigm for News Reporting and Teaching Ethics in the First Person. She also wrote "P.S./Elliot," a monthly ethical analysis column appearing in Fine Line, a journalism ethics trade magazine.

Elliott's approach to ethics is from a global perspective and she will bring a unique blend of scholarly and first-hand experience to USF St. Petersburg's students. Being interested in press and governmental issues in emerging democracies, Elliott gained practical insight as she explored these issues with a delegation from Kyrgyzstan. She also served as international advisor for West African journalists and governmental officials and participated in international conferences on journalism and on the use of genetic information.

Among her many accomplishments is the creation of documentaries related to practical ethics and the co-production of The Burden of Knowledge, that explores the moral dilemmas and questions that surround genetic testing.

Elliott received her bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Maryland. She
earned her Michigan secondary teaching certification and her master’s in philosophy from Wayne State University. She received an interdisciplinary doctoral degree from Harvard University in philosophy of education that included work at Kennedy School of Government, Department of Philosophy, Graduate School of Education, and Harvard Law School. In addition to teaching at the University of Montana, Dartmouth, Utah State University, Wayne State University and Harvard, she was a reporter for WCSH-TV in Portland, the Louisville Courier Journal and the Philadelphia Inquirer.