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Leading Authority on Developmental Disabilities Makes USF St. Petersburg Home

May 16, 2003 (St. Petersburg, Fla.) - Known worldwide as an authority in the area of developmental disabilities, V. Mark Durand prepares to make USF St. Petersburg and the Bay area his home. Following an international search for several key administrators, Durand was named founding dean of USF St. Petersburg's College of Arts and Sciences.

"I am excited about the prospect of joining such a dynamic administrative team," said Durand. "The energy that is clear from both faculty and staff on campus is infectious and the vision for USF St. Petersburg holds tremendous promise. I feel fortunate to be able to be part of such an ambitious agenda," he said.

"Dr. Durand is well known for his innovation and creativity," said Gary Olson, interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs. "He is sure to make a dynamic administrator; one that can help us reach our goal of making USF St. Petersburg's College of Arts and Sciences the nation's model."

Durand's expertise and creativity are evidenced in his many groundbreaking accomplishments. In 1999 he created the Autism Distance Education Network, a distance-learning curriculum about the origins of autism and treatment options. To date, more than 500 students from several countries have participated in the program. Both the New York Times and the Chronicle of Higher Education highlighted this innovative program.

He also developed a unique treatment for severe behavior problems that is employed worldwide. In addition, he developed an assessment tool that has been translated into 15 languages and is in usage throughout the world.

Durand has written five books including several best-selling textbooks on abnormal psychology that are credited with changing how this popular course is taught world-wide. His books have been translated into Spanish, French, Norwegian and Hindi.

He has administered more than \$3 million in federal research and training grants in the areas of functional communication, assistive technology, home-school training, and improving the problem behaviors of children and adults with autism and other severe disabilities.

Before accepting his new position with USF St. Petersburg, he served as chair of the psychology department and interim dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Albany – The State University of New where he received the University Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1991. He was also the director of the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. He received his bachelor's degree, master's and Ph.D. – all in psychology – at the State University of New York – Stony Brook.

— *USF St. Petersburg* —

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