



PRESS RELEASE

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PRIBANIC-SMITH DEVOTES PRESIDENCY TO IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

As Erika Pribanic-Smith begins her term as president of the American Journalism Historians Association, she is focused on boosting membership, improving communication, and developing a more dynamic Internet presence for the organization.

Pribanic-Smith, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Texas at Arlington, assumed her new post on Oct. 11, during the 33rd annual AJHA Convention in St. Paul.

She said that although AJHA is a history organization, it needs to stay current with media and communication trends.

“We live in a world where people want information instantly, and they expect that information to be delivered on the mobile devices that live in their pockets,” Pribanic-Smith said. “If we’re going to appeal to younger scholars and build our membership base, we need to adapt.”

Pribanic-Smith plans to work with other officers and board members toward developing a website that offers multimedia content, emphasizes the most up-to-date information, and provides blog space for officers to post columns that previously have appeared in the organization’s quarterly newsletter.

She also hopes to expand the organization’s social media presence. AJHA already has an active Facebook group, but Pribanic-Smith would like to see an AJHA Twitter feed and YouTube channel as well. She said that First Vice-President Pete Smith is working on the latter, which will kick off with videos taken at the most recent convention.

“I anticipate that all of these steps will help us to attract new members, but I hope they will improve communication among our existing members as well,” Pribanic-Smith said. “Members tend to leave our annual convention feeling re-invigorated, but by maintaining contact throughout the year, I feel that we can keep up that energy for historical research in general and AJHA in particular between conventions.”

Pribanic-Smith was elected second vice-president of AJHA at the 2012 annual convention in Raleigh and moved up to first vice-president in 2013. She also has served as chair of the Public Relations and Graduate Student committees, and she sat on the Board of Directors from 2010-2012.

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit <http://www.ajhaonline.org>.

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