UF TRSM PROFESSOR ELECTED A FELLOW IN THE ACADEMY OF LEISURE SCIENCES
Dr. Heather Gibson Achieves Great Honor in the Leisure Field

Gainesville, FL -- Dr. Heather Gibson, Associate Director of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute at the University of Florida and Professor in the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management was recently elected a Fellow in the Academy of Leisure Sciences. This great honor was awarded for Gibson's “exceptional scholarly and intellectual contributions” to the study of leisure. Only five fellows were elected in 2012 and a total of 83 have been elected since its founding in 1980. Informally known as “The Secret Society,” Gibson had to be nominated by two current fellows, receive a two-thirds majority vote by existing fellows, and be a full professor at a long-standing university. The Academy only nominates and elects fellows based on merit with exceptional lifetime achievements.

Dr. Gibson was nominated by Karla Henderson, currently the ALS Historian and fellow of 22 years who is currently a professor at North Carolina State University. Henderson and Gibson met when both were working at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro as senior and junior faculty, respectively. Henderson is one of the leading female scholars on the subject of leisure in North America and has worked with Gibson on peer reviewed articles and as a mentor so that they could both help to build the body of knowledge for the field. Currently, leisure has its hub in the Western World, with most academic work coming from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia and New Zealand. However, emerging nations are becoming more involved with subject matter now emanating from China, South America (primarily Brazil), and even Africa.

A secondary letter of support for Dr. Gibson was given by Douglas Kleiber, a fellow of 25 years who is currently a professor at the University of Georgia. Kleiber and Gibson have been on conference panels together and have a shared interest in women’s leisure and aging and leisure. Both were founding members of the Leisure Aging Research Group (LARG), which aims to increase academic scholarship of leisure and aging within the cultural contexts of various countries around the globe.
Dr. Heather Gibson was formally inducted into the Academy of Leisure Sciences on Thursday, October 18, 2012 in Anaheim, California at a special luncheon held at the National Recreation and Park Association’s Congress and Exposition.

The Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute is committed to building a bridge between the tourism industry, organizations, destinations, and higher education through excellence in interdisciplinary research that provides strategic information focused on a wide array of travel, tourism and hospitality opportunities.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Dr. Michael Sagas (Department Chair) at msagas@ufl.edu (352.294.1640) or Stephanie Thorn (Marketing and Public Relations) at stephaniethorn1@hhp.ufl.edu (352.392.3992).