UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA STUDENT EARN INTERNATIONAL AWARD RECOGNITION
Tourism Integrated with Technology is the Wave of the Future

Gainesville, FL -- The University of Florida’s Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management never ceases to find academically-inclined students of stellar quality. Ashley Schroeder, a first-year Ph.D. tourism student, recently won 3rd place to receive the International Federation for Information Technology and Travel & Tourism (IFITT) Thesis Excellence Award.

The IFITT Thesis Excellence Award is presented on a yearly basis to the top three most innovative Master or Ph.D. theses or dissertations worldwide in the field of tourism and technology. Those applying for the award had to successfully defend their theses or dissertations between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012. Schroeder, who graduated with a Master of Science degree in Tourism & Commercial Recreation in May 2012, was the perfect applicant due to her interests in both tourism and social media. Her thesis was entitled, “Caught in a Crisis: International Travelers’ Likelihood of Social Media Use.” Schroder’s interest in the topic stemmed from working as a Research Associate with the Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI) at UF.

Schroeder had to submit a one-thousand word thesis abstract, a brief biographical note, and a recommendation from her advisor, Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray, to apply for this prestigious award. Pennington-Gray is also the Director of TCMI and was thrilled to learn that Schroeder had earned this esteemed award: “I am so proud of Ashley. She is a true emerging scholar and we are so lucky to have her at the University of Florida.”

The award was presented in late January at the ENTER 2013 conference in Innsbruck, Austria, which is hosted by IFITT. The final selection for the awards was made by the ENTER Ph.D. Workshop committee led by Dr. Ulrike Gretzel from the University of Wollongong, Australia.
Although she was unable to attend the conference, Schroeder was recognized throughout the four-day event and was wholeheartedly pleased to receive this great honor.

The Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management is committed to national and international excellence in the generation, dissemination, and communication of knowledge in tourism, recreation and sport management. The Department is also dedicated to excellence in the preparation and training of future industry and academic professionals, and providing relevant outreach to stakeholders.

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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).