Gainesville, FL -- Dr. J.O. Spengler has been invited to become a member of an American Heart Association’s (AHA) policy statement writing group. The specific policy that Spengler has been asked to provide his expertise is on the topics of physical activity, recreational access, and obesity prevention. “These three topics go hand-in-hand,” noted Spengler. “When provided access to safe and affordable sport and recreation facilities, children and adults have the opportunity to be physically active. Physical activity is a key factor in obesity prevention.” A leading scholar in the area of “shared use” (i.e. sharing school facilities with the community for recreation during non-school hours), Spengler is very interested in continually finding new ways for people to be active. He believes having access to sport and recreational facilities is a key issue for community health.

Dr. Spengler is being joined in this group by colleagues from the University of California-Berkeley, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and the Public Health Law Center based in St. Paul, Minnesota. The interdisciplinary group will primarily conduct meetings via phone and emails due to their geographic distance from one another. The new policy statement writing group consists of scholars from the fields of urban planning, health, law and policy, sport and recreation, and epidemiology (those who study the causes, effects, and patterns of health and disease across populations). Spengler will be a great asset to the committee because of his expertise and research in the areas of health, law, policy, recreation, and sport.

The primary mission of the American Heart Association is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. The general public can recognize the organization through their primary campaigns, “Go Red for Women” and the “Power to End Stroke.” The AHA continually publishes new policy statements that are both used and recognized at the federal, state and local levels as heart health public policy. This particular policy statement writing group will be providing their recommendations in a peer reviewed journal to be published in 2013.
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.

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).