UF TRSM PROFESSOR WINS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ADVISOR/MENTORING AWARD

Gainesville, FL -- Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray, Director of the Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI), Associate Director of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute (EFTI), and Associate Professor in the Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management (TRSM) was recently selected as the recipient of the 2012-2013 Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentoring Award for the College of Health and Human Performance. The award encourages and rewards excellence, innovation and effectiveness in mentoring doctoral students through their final dissertation. Nominations for the award come from current graduate students, graduate alumni, faculty members, graduate coordinators, department chairs, school directors, college deans and higher-level administrators.

Pennington-Gray was nominated by current and former doctoral students Ashley Schroeder (1st-year Ph.D. student), Ignatius Cahyanto (Assistant Professor & Program Coordinator in Tourism & Hospitality Management at Black Hills State University), and Chenchen Huang (Assistant Professor in Hospitality & Tourism at Buffalo State College). In addition to letters of recommendation by the students, Pennington-Gray was endorsed by Dr. Michael Sagas, Chair of the TRSM Department, and she had to submit her mentoring philosophy. Pennington-Gray has several tenets to her philosophy of being a mentor: 1) maintaining open communication, 2) building trust, 3) supporting each other’s interests, and 4) inspiring both academic rigor and creativity. In short, Pennington-Gray states, “I believe that my success is defined by my students’ success.” Ever the “proud parent,” she was deeply humbled and honored just to be nominated for the award, let alone selected as a winner.

Here are just a few of the kind lines that the students remarked about Pennington-Gray:

- “…she is my mentor, colleague, and lifelong friend. She is always willing to go the extra mile for her mentees…”
- “Lori has always valued my experiences and knowledge as much as I value hers, which has nurtured a trusting, honest relationship.”
“Dr. Pennington-Gray was the best thing [that ever] happened to me, even more important than the football and basketball national championships!”

“I am very confident that Lori will help a lot of students after me become the researcher and educator that they want to be.”

“Lori is a demanding yet engaging professor that gives students the skillsets needed to succeed and the passion to thrive, instilling in them essential, sustaining qualities for not only the subject matters but also for life.”

“Lori has changed my life; through her profound mentoring, my life is richer and clearer, and I am a better person.”

Ever deserving of this award, Pennington-Gray will be recognized as one of the University’s award winners at a reception date to be announced by the President’s Office.

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).