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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 2014

Tourism Crisis Management Institute Making a Difference Abroad
The Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI) hosted a five day training session in Okinawa, Japan

Gainesville, FL -- Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray, Associate Professor at the Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management and Director of TCMI and Elaine McLaughlin, Instructor for the Online Continuing Education Program for TCMI spent a week in Japan bringing the Online Continuing Education Program in Tourism Crisis Management to the classroom. This is the first time both TCMI affiliates have been to Japan.

Dr. Pennington Gray and Ms. McLaughlin met with several hotel managers, travel agents, destination management organization staff and the Japan Tourism Board. This trip required a lot of preparation due to the fact that it has never been produced for Japanese businesses before. The weeks leading up to the trip were spent translating all the course material and handbooks into Japanese with the help of their Japanese associate.

By having all the course materials in Japanese, TCMI was able to conduct a “Train the Trainer” program so that the instructors would have all the materials they need to deliver the content face to face to their colleagues in their workplace. This has granted Japan to be the only other country besides the United States with the ability to teach this course to other tourism professionals.

The program focuses on crisis reduction, readiness, response, and recovery efforts from natural- and human- induced disasters that might affect destination or tourism-related businesses. Each of the topics are discussed in detail with one day being dedicated to one of the respective program areas. At the end of the training, each participant recaps the lessons learned, takes a test and if they pass they receive a Certificate of Completion from TCMI.



Left to right: CEO Japan Tourism Company Masato Takamatsu, Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray, Elaine McLaughlin, Governor Okinawa Prefecture Hirokazu Nakaima, and General Director Seijum Makugawa



The participants with their Certificates of Completion

The training sessions began on November 12, 2013 and went on through Saturday, November 16. The training consisted of eight hour classes over the course of these five days. Each day included lectures and videos in the morning followed by table top exercises and case studies in the afternoon. An example of a table top exercise was how to handle the media when a crisis unfolds. Two examples of the case studies that were discussed were Mud Slide readiness and the recent

Fukushima radiation incident. Overall at the end of the training, the participants had a well-balanced understanding of how to take control of crisis situations.

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. Lori Pennington-Gray (Associate Professor & Director, UF Tourism Crisis Management Institute) at penngray@hhp.ufl.edu (352.294.1657) or Arielle Gousse (Marketing and Public Relations) at agousse@ufl.edu (352.392.3992).