

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED CONSERVATIONIST NAMED DISTINGUISHED UF ALUMNUS

The University of Florida will recognize Dr. Claudio Padua (MA in Latin American Studies 1987, PhD in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation 1993) with its Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2008. Dr. Padua – one of Brazil's foremost academics – is recognized internationally for his local, national, and international efforts in the field of biodiversity conservation. In 2002 he was selected by *Time Magazine*, together with his wife Dr. Suzana Padua (also an alumna of UF's Center for Latin American Studies), as one of the planet's "Conservation Heroes." The Distinguished Alumnus award will be presented at the 2008 Spring College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony (May 2, 3:30 p.m., O'Connell Center).

Padua received a degree in Business Administration in 1974 from the University of Economy and Finances of Rio de Janeiro and worked in this field until 1980. Unhappy with the loss of biodiversity in Brazil, Padua abandoned the business world and decided to study biology and work for the conservation of Brazil's endangered primates. He graduated from the Universidade Gama Filho (Rio de Janeiro) in 1982 and in 1984 began his graduate studies at the University of Florida.

Much of Padua's attention has been devoted towards promoting education and research in the fields of conservation and sustainable development. He is a co-founder of the Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (Institute for Ecological Research, IPÉ), which integrates research on threatened species, environmental education, habitat restoration, community involvement, and corporate partnerships to promote sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. He is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Brasília, vice-president of the Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity (FUNBIO), an Associate Researcher at Columbia University (New York), and a coordinator of the Wildlife Trust Alliance. He has edited two books and published more than 40 scientific articles and book chapters.

Padua has received many important national and international awards in recognition of his conservation and education efforts. These awards include the Henry Ford Award for Conservation, the Whitley Continuation Award from the Royal Geographic Society, the Conservation Award from the American Association of Primatology, and the Achievement Award from the Society for Conservation Biology.

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Founded in 1930, the University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies advances knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean and its peoples throughout the hemisphere. With over 170 faculty from colleges across UF, the Center is one of the largest institutions for interdisciplinary research, teaching and outreach on Latin America, Caribbean, and Latino Studies. Programs include Tropical Conservation and Development, Law and Policy in the Americas, and Latin American Business Environment, among others.