

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

English language transition director at UW-River Falls earns Fulbright Award

May 15, 2018 – English Language Transition (ELT) Program Director Rhonda Petree at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls has received a Fulbright Award to teach in Estonia during the 2018-19 academic year.

She will spend the year at Narva College of the University of Tartu, fulfilling a lifelong dream in the process.

“Narva is a Russian-speaking city and I’ve been fascinated by the former states of the Soviet Union since I was in college,” Petree said. Estonia, along with Latvia and Lithuania, make up the Baltic States which were annexed by the former Soviet Union both before and after the second world war.

Petree, who has taught at UW-River Falls since 2011, sees her Fulbright Award as an opportunity to continue a life filled with international learning. She has lived in Australia and Switzerland, in addition to serving a two-year stint in the Peace Corps in Kazakhstan after graduating from UW-Madison.

She lists starting the ELT program at UW-River Falls, however, as one of her proudest accomplishments.

“The chance to build an English program from scratch has been tremendous. To prepare international students who are developing their academic English language skills has made me extremely proud,” Petree said.

While in Estonia, Petree will teach methodology courses and carry out a project titled “Developing Intercultural Competence Through Project-Based Learning and Student Research.”

“Like UW-River Falls, Narva College is a leader in undergraduate research,” Petree said. “I’m very happy to be going to a place where I’ve wanted to live for 20 years. I want to experience the culture. Living abroad has helped shape who I am.”

Her Fulbright Award is a crown jewel in Petree’s teaching career for more than one reason

“It’s powerful to have worked globally,” she said. “I think that’s how we learn from each other – to have respect for other individuals and cultures. Communicating in local languages and interacting with people in daily transactions matters to me. I am honored for the opportunity and feel very fortunate.”

For more information, email rhonda.petree@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-4520.

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