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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Vento Scholarship awarded to UW-River Falls graduate student**

A graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is the 2018 recipient of the Bruce F. Vento Science Educator Scholarship. Rebecca (Becca) Stump of Tomah completed her biology major at UW-River Falls and is currently enrolled in the university's *STEMteach* graduate program.

The \$5,000 scholarship, established in 2016 to honor the memory of U.S. Representative Vento, supports students pursuing a science education degree. Before entering Congress, Vento, a UW-River Falls graduate, was a junior high school science and social studies teacher.

Stump was selected based upon her academic standing and demonstrated financial need, according to Michael Harris, dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies.

"The selection committee was especially impressed with Becca's superb work ethic, skill as a reflective practitioner, strong grades, and passion for teaching," Harris said.

Through the *STEMteach* program, Stump is pursuing a Wisconsin license to teach biology and plans to teach in international classrooms.

"I want to give my students the opportunity to explore different areas of science, technology, engineering and math and see how all aspects are intertwined," she said.

Having worked several jobs to support her undergraduate education at UWRF, Stump said the scholarship would ease the financial burden of obtaining a graduate degree.

"This scholarship would allow me to focus on sharpening my skills as a STEM teacher during my teacher apprenticeship," she explained.

All *STEMteach* candidates in good academic standing and enrolled in the winter term of the program are eligible to receive the Vento scholarship. UW-River Falls also provides students in the program who are willing to teach in economically disadvantaged school districts, a forgivable loan which essentially pays for their education.

The *STEMteach* graduate program began in 2015 and has its third cohort of students. The program provides a teacher licensure pathway for candidates who majored in math or science as an undergraduate or who have work experience in any of the STEM fields. After one year of classes and student teaching, students are eligible for a Wisconsin teaching license to teach science, math, or computer science in middle or high schools. The program of study includes early hands-on experience in teaching and the option to continue studies to earn a master of science in education degree.

UW-River Falls is accepting applications for the fourth cohort of the *STEMteach* program which begins in summer 2018.

For more information about *STEMteach* or the Vento scholarship, email [pamela.bowen@uwrf.edu](mailto:pamela.bowen@uwrf.edu) or visit <http://go.uwrf.edu/STEMteach>.

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