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Professor Tretter Named Fulbright Scholar

3/31/2008

Lindenwood University Professor Sue Tretter has been named a Fulbright scholar in the "Distinguished Lecturer" category and will, as a result, teach American studies at the University of Leipzig in Germany from January through May of 2009.

Tretter was notified of the prestigious award last week following a long application process that started last year. Approval was sent in December from Fulbright in America, after which all that was needed was approval from Fulbright in Europe. Tretter said the news was at the same time exciting and humbling.

"It is very humbling, really," Tretter said, "knowing full well any one of my colleagues deserves this, too. But I had the time and the push to pursue the application, and it's in my area of expertise. It's affirmation to me as well. I'm bona fide in my area of scholarship now."

With the designation, Tretter joins a select group that have received the Fulbright designation in its 60 years of existence, including heads of state, CEOs, university presidents, cabinet ministers and the winners of 37 Nobel Prizes.

Tretter has a doctorate in American studies and has been teaching at Lindenwood since 1994; she teaches classes in composition, American literature, African American literature, and several others. In the summers, she has taught classes in cowboy poetry and other less traditional offerings. In addition to her doctorate, she has master's degrees in English and communications and a bachelor's degree in English and philosophy.

American studies is actually more popular in Europe than it is in the United States, according to Tretter, who noticed in the Fulbright catalog that there was an assignment available in Germany in her subject area and decided to try for it. Tretter's daughter, Lisa, studied for a year in Germany in 2003, and Tretter has been studying German as well, which added to the appeal of the opportunity in Leipzig.

Tretter will teach two graduate-level courses in American studies, lecturing in English, although she said it will help to have studied German.

There was plenty of support from the Lindenwood community in Tretter's efforts to land the Fulbright scholarship. Professor John Bell, whose German language classes she has been taking, wrote a letter attesting to her abilities with the language, and she received letters of recommendation from Lindenwood President James D. Evans and two vice presidents–Jann Weitzel (academic affairs) and Richard Boyle (human resources).

"That couldn't have hurt," Tretter said.