Salisbury University has established a new study abroad program with the University of Tartu (UT), one of the most prestigious centers of learning in northern Europe. Ranked as one of the world’s top 600 universities, UT is a robust research institution with a beautiful and historic campus dating back to the 1600s.

Starting in fall 2010, “Salisbury Abroad: Estonia” will allow SU students to live in Tartu and explore European studies and business at UT for the same cost as in-state tuition and housing in Salisbury. Located on the banks of the Emajõgi River, Tartu is known as a city of young people with a rich heritage and culture.

“SU is committed to creating opportunities for all students to have an international experience, especially those who have not been able to afford it in the past,” said Brian Stiegler, SU's director of international education. “The University of Tartu is a world-class institution in a beautiful setting where SU students can have a first-rate European experience.”

The new initiative follows the fall 2009 launch of “Salisbury Abroad: Ecuador,” a similar Latin American program which gives students the opportunity to spend a semester in South America for the same cost as studying on SU’s campus.

Estonia has partnered with the State of Maryland since it emerged from the Soviet Union and gained independence in 1991. Since then, the Maryland National Guard has worked with Estonian colleagues on a variety of development projects. Maryland has more Sister City International relationships in Estonia than with any other nation in the world, including the City of Salisbury’s formal partnership with Tartu. SU’s involvement with UT will enhance ongoing collaboration with Estonia’s education, civic, business and government organizations.

SU faculty and administrators have traveled to Estonia, and Tartu leaders have visited Salisbury repeatedly over the past two decades. The Perdue School of Business took the first group of SU students to UT in summer 2008.

“Salisbury Abroad: Estonia” was made possible after two years of negotiations and a visit to UT in November 2009 by Stiegler; Dr. Dennis Pataniczek, dean of the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies; Dr. Karen Olmstead, dean of the Henson School of Science and Technology; and Dr. Maarten Pereboom, dean of the Fulton School of Liberal Arts.

Both universities hope to expand their partnership. Potential future initiatives include study abroad programs for SU students in education, science, technology and mathematics, as well as exchange programs for faculty, and for Estonian students to study in Salisbury.

Estonia is located on the edge of the Baltic Sea in northeast Europe. The Baltic region is a growing economic powerhouse in Northeastern Europe enjoying vibrant democracies and high standards of living. The historical and cultural meeting of Europe and the West with Russia and the East make Estonia a fascinating destination for a semester abroad. The University of Tartu (UT) was founded in 1632 by the King of Sweden Gustav II Adolph. It is the largest and most comprehensive university in Estonia, producing more than 70 percent of the Ph.D.s in the country. Ranked as one of the top 600 universities in the world, UT is one of the most venerable centers of education and research in northern Europe. Tartu, considered the cultural and intellectual center of the nation, is the second largest city in Estonia, with a population of just over 100,000.