

Sterling College

Working Hands. Working Minds.

A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN PREPARED BY THE FACULTY,
STAFF & STUDENTS AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2013–2018

I. Our Role in the World

The mission of Sterling College is strongly linked to the critical environmental challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Our vision of the future, detailed in this plan, is to strengthen the capacity of the College to prepare graduates who will commit themselves to environmental stewardship.

To accomplish this purpose the Sterling curriculum equips graduates with the knowledge and the applied skills necessary at this particular crossroad in history. The long-term protection of the planet's food system, water, air, soil, and climate is critical and informs the Sterling College educational model and emphases in Ecology, Environmental Humanities, Outdoor Education, and Sustainable Agriculture.

For more than 30 years this small college in Vermont has looked at the liberal arts through the lens of ecology and sought to shed light on the value of conservation:

“At the core of all Sterling programs is the concern for the relationship between man [sic] and his [sic] environment. No more critical issue faces society today and it has become very clear that neither the narrow technician nor the uninformed idealist can reach a solution alone. Sterling provides a comprehensive bridge between thought and deed as its students confront questions that affect the future of us all.”

—Sterling College publication, 1978

We remain as committed to this purpose now as we were then. Our graduates are vital to the development of a just and sustained approach to supporting the resilience of the natural world around us.

II. Who We Are & What We Believe

Founded in 1958 in Craftsbury Common, Vermont, U.S.A., Sterling College is a baccalaureate degree-granting, non-sectarian, co-educational, residential institution of higher learning. Sterling is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Motto:

Working Hands. Working Minds.

Mission Statement:

The Sterling College community combines structured academic study with experiential challenges and plain hard work to build responsible problem solvers who become stewards of the environment as they pursue productive lives.

Vision Statement:

Sterling will remain a small college but one that speaks with a big voice. Consistent with its historic values, the College will embark upon a strategic path to become a global leader in the promotion of a unique educational model that prepares students to become environmental stewards.

To meet this vision, Sterling embraces its rural location as one of its defining characteristics and strives to foster a community in which people of all backgrounds and identities feel at home, where differences are embraced and individuals take responsibility for furthering the dignity of all.

III. The Sterling Model

The Sterling College educational model of study, work, and community represents a challenging and overlapping set of theory-based and applied learning experiences. The individual components of our educational model are often formally recognized as our curriculum or program, but the program is understood to also include the informal co-curricular and integrative learning experiences of students who participate in a broad range of daily activities that contribute to their education.

A Sterling education is fundamentally experiential and place-based in character, with the world as the primary classroom, laboratory, and research setting. Whether offered in a room on campus, at the State House, on a mountainside on the other side of the continent, classes foster deep inquiry and close relationships between faculty and students. With shared educational outcomes and experiences across our disciplines, the College uses the liberal arts to strengthen our understanding of the natural world (*Ecology*), interpret the human experience with the natural world (*Environmental Humanities*), understand human adaptation of the natural world (*Sustainable Agriculture*), and prepare ourselves and others for experience in and with the natural world (*Outdoor Education*).

Among the most valued elements of a Sterling College education is the 37-year tradition of *Expedition and Bounder*, including a four-day and night winter wilderness trek. Sterling also links academic growth and skill building to daily work responsibilities, encouraging reflection on the relationship of the individual to the community, thereby strengthening the interpersonal skills necessary for effective and shared stewardship of the environment.

Competencies:

A Sterling College education builds the competency of its graduates to:

1. Practice both critical and systems thinking
2. Compile, assess, and use data to make decisions
3. Communicate accurately and effectively in writing and in speech
4. Work effectively both individually and in groups
5. Understand historical and global context of privilege, oppression, poverty and social justice
6. Demonstrate leadership through active participation in supporting community wellbeing
7. Develop and appreciate creativity in expression, work, and problem-solving
8. Develop the skills to live independently and to sustain oneself in a community
9. Continue further investigation of interests, including the pursuit of advanced study
10. Live satisfying and productive lives as environmental stewards

Academics:

The academic curriculum is based on a combination of core courses and elective choices. All students follow an interdisciplinary path toward a Bachelor of Arts degree through which they develop an increasingly focused concentration that culminates in an individually designed research project. Students may select from the majors offered by the College or, as is often the case, develop a self-designed major in conjunction with the faculty.

Community:

Among the most powerful examples of experiential learning is living in community. Together we care for our campus and provide for the College's needs with the understanding that by working collectively we sustain our community and provide a compelling learning experience. The shared commitment to environmental stewardship among students, faculty, and staff engenders a sense of belonging from the start. This bond also provides a sense of daily purpose in our studies and work, as well as in how individuals relate.

Work:

Sterling is one of only seven federally recognized Work Colleges in the United States and also one of a small number of liberal arts colleges that require students to complete an off-campus internship. Regardless of financial need all students participate in the Work Program on-campus and also support nearby communities with service.

Through work experiences, students gain insight into group dynamics, the needs of a community, and the use of finite resources. At Sterling, the community depends on the work of students, and the campus is a laboratory for gaining insight into the role of the individual in the health and welfare of the community.

IV. The Five-Year Plan: 2013 - 2018

This strategic plan is presented in three sections: People & Program, Resources, and Facilities & Infrastructure.

Each section begins with an overview of what we aspire to achieve during this five-year period, followed by goals, objectives, and implementation steps. The goals represent our core vision for Sterling and are not always directly measurable. Objectives are the directions in which we wish to move to meet the goals and are typically measurable. Implementation steps are the incremental choices we make to reach the goals in a specified period of time.

The goals, objectives, and implementation steps, though numbered, are not prioritized, but are rather organized for clarity and according to their relationship in time. The number or numbers following each implementation step refer to years one through five of the plan.

Assumptions Underlying the Plan:

1. Our mission and our unique educational model are well suited to address the challenges of this particular period of human history. A thriving Sterling College will make important contributions to higher education and to environmental stewardship.
2. To remain small and to thrive will require that Sterling both increase its financial resources and carefully align its aspirations with a prudent plan for growth that will strengthen the College's long-term stability. Diverse sources of income for the College will be essential in sustaining its small size.
3. The value of a Sterling education to society is based in the quality of the educational experience of its students. Because the faculty and staff are critical to the fulfillment of the mission, the well-being of those who work at Sterling is an uppermost priority of this plan.

4. The impact of our educational model and its pertinence to society place financial access for prospective and current students among our highest priorities. As part of its mission, the College seeks to serve a diverse student population whose passion for environmental stewardship is paramount.
5. Sterling College is among a small number of rural liberal arts colleges in the United States. The College should embrace the advantages of being in the midst of a revolution in food systems and its proximity to natural areas of great beauty and ecological diversity in Northern New England.
6. The specialized nature of our mission and our vision require a commitment to authentically living the values we espouse with regard to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Therefore, the care of our land and the wise use of energy and conservation are among our highest priorities.
7. Effective advocacy for Sterling requires that those who are affiliated with it have the capacity to easily, and succinctly, describe the mission and curriculum to our stakeholders and the world. We must advocate for the College based on the compelling need in society for our graduates and the skills and vision they bring to the future.

V. Program & People

Program Goals:

The program section of this plan considers the goals that will allow Sterling College to both sustain and expand the reach of its mission. It represents the collective aspirations of our community and our goals over the course of the next five years to ensure that we prepare future generations of environmental stewards.

1. *Goal:* To offer an exemplary experiential place-based liberal arts academic program to aspiring environmental stewards.
 - a. *Objective:* Sustain small classes and personal attention through advising for students and by maintaining a favorable student-to-faculty ratio.
 - b. *Objective:* Investigate adding new major areas of study, consistent with the mission of environmental stewardship.
 - c. *Objective:* Increase resources for research opportunities and the Senior Applied Research Project (SARP).
 - d. *Objective:* Strengthen support of student engagement in the definition and planning of a focused course of study toward a major and degree.
 - i. *Implementation:* Reorganize the administration and the role of Dean of the College & Faculty to ensure needed support for curriculum development and faculty, including a reduction in teaching obligations. (1)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Clarify the working relationship among the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Meeting, Dean of the College & Faculty, and the President. (1)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Increase the focus of Faculty Meeting on discussions of curriculum and program development. (1 through 5)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Increase the opportunities for the President to interact with faculty through regular updates at Faculty Meeting. (1 through 5)
 - v. *Implementation:* Consider proposals of new major areas of study via the Curriculum Committee, including Food Systems and Climate Justice. (1)

- vi. *Implementation:* Develop a three-year plan for the addition of new faculty positions in correspondence to growth in enrollment and new areas of curricular development. (1 through 3)
 - vii. *Implementation:* Study the impact of the first year experience on student success and improve support in the early semesters on campus, including appropriately ensuring resources for the “Sense of Place” curriculum. (1)
 - viii. *Implementation:* Assess the impact of Senior Applied Research Project advising to ensure that faculty has the time and support necessary to aid students in the development of their research. (1)
 - ix. *Implementation:* Improve the balance of course offerings from introductory through advanced levels of the curriculum. (1 through 5)
 - x. *Implementation:* Increase the resources available to support students with learning differences. (1 through 5)
 - xi. *Implementation:* Conduct a review and assessment of the advising and self-designed major process. (2)
2. *Goal:* To support an academic curriculum modeled on learning outcomes.
- a. *Objective:* Focus on outcomes-based assessment models for all majors and a framework for assessing student achievement in those areas.
 - b. *Objective:* Increase opportunities for integrative and collaboratively taught courses with an emphasis on cross-disciplinary work.
 - c. *Objective:* Explore opportunities for outcome-based direct assessment models across the curriculum. (1 through 5)
 - i. *Implementation:* Clarify college-wide outcomes and define major and course-specific outcomes, and define outcomes appropriate to direct assessment of student competence. (1 through 2)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Establish a collaborative design of an outcome-based assessment model with support from the Curriculum Committee, Dean of the College & Faculty, and students. (1 through 5)
3. *Goal:* To ensure that every student can complete a degree in a timely and efficient fashion.
- a. *Objective:* Take full advantage of the small size of the College and faculty to improve upon the advising process for students as they chart their course to graduation.
 - i. *Implementation:* The faculty and the Dean of the College & Faculty will review and readopt the requirements of each major. (1)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Review the progression and sequence of course offerings to ensure that students can progress through the curriculum. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Strengthen course offerings in the Summer Semester. (1 through 3)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Strengthen support for advising skills among faculty through regular workshops to encourage student engagement in the definition and planning of a course of study toward a degree. (1)

4. *Goal:* To ensure that the calendar and schedule support the educational objectives of the College.
 - a. *Objective:* Make the calendar a reflection of the needs of students and the capacity of the faculty and staff.
 - b. *Objective:* Enrich academic, work, and community life through refined and intentional organization of the calendar for the benefit of all.
 - c. *Objective:* Strengthen the commitment of the entire community to the “year-round” calendar of the College.
 - d. *Objective:* Ensure that the organization of the blocks of time used for instruction strengthen the experiential nature of our curriculum.
 - i. *Implementation:* Convene the Calendar Committee to conduct a student, staff, and faculty satisfaction survey of the present calendar and course block system. (1)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Conduct research of calendar models, including those at institutions that use a block calendar or hybrid block calendar. (1 through 2)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Submit a report and recommendation to the President, based on research, to consider implementing changes for the 2016-2017 academic year. (1 through 3)

5. *Goal:* To ensure that a Sterling education includes global perspectives on environmental stewardship and expands upon the community’s understanding of social justice.
 - a. *Objective:* Strengthen and expand the opportunities available to all students, regardless of financial ability, through the Global Field Studies Program.
 - b. *Objective:* Strengthen the link among all three elements of the Sterling model of academics, work, and community through the inclusion of global perspectives.
 - c. *Objective:* Ensure that the Sterling model of academics, work, and community addresses issues often associated with privilege, oppression, diversity, and/or social justice.
 - i. *Implementation:* Establish a taskforce to review the present Global Field Studies Program and to identify the resources necessary to expand upon the range of opportunities available. (1 through 2)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Establish a taskforce of faculty, staff, and students to develop curricular programming and outreach supporting understanding of social justice in the curriculum. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Expand upon our outreach to local communities, including undocumented individuals and those who experience food insecurity. (1 through 5)

6. *Goal:* To strengthen and better define the learning opportunities associated with living in community.
 - a. *Objective:* Improve upon and increase the number of opportunities for students to participate in leadership roles in the community.
 - b. *Objective:* Support the further development of the Student Union and clubs.
 - c. *Objective:* Understand and better document the learning and competency development that takes place outside of academic and work contexts, but within our concept of “community.”
 - d. *Objective:* Encourage compassion and trust in our community through healthy communication.
 - i. *Implementation:* Review the judiciary processes at Sterling and recommend changes to the present structures. (1)

- ii. *Implementation:* Emphasize and support the role of Community Meeting in aiding communication and actively encourage 100% attendance. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Conduct a two-year community-wide study of “community” learning led by the Dean of Students. (1 through 3)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Investigate and implement ways to increase student participation in established College committees. (1 through 3)
7. *Goal:* To create a rich and rewarding on-campus experience for students and the community as a whole.
- a. *Objective:* Expand resources on campus to improve the quality of community life.
 - i. *Implementation:* Identify, propose, and develop designated places for student use including 21+ and wellness/retreat spaces. (1)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Increase budget support for social and wellness programming. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Improve and increase the number of opportunities for students to participate in community leadership roles. (1 through 5)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Develop a plan for supporting wellness initiatives on campus, including staffing, infrastructure, supplies, outreach, mental health support, and community education initiatives. (1 through 2)
 - v. *Implementation:* Identify and propose long-term designated spaces for on and off campus students, including, storage, shower, recreational venues, and spiritual spaces. (1)
 - vi. *Implementation:* Create liaisons with neighboring facilities to offer students opportunities for Nordic skiing, mountain biking, alpine skiing, orienteering, rowing, etc.
8. *Goal:* To affirm the institutional commitment to the Work Program.
- a. *Objective:* Strengthen the learning relationship between Work and the academic program and community life.
 - i. *Implementation:* Review the statement of purpose and curriculum of the Work Program. (1 through 2)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Review student evaluations and conduct a faculty/staff survey to prepare recommendations for consideration by the Curriculum Committee and President. (1)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Assess the impact of supervision on the workload of the faculty and staff. (1)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Increase technology resources available to the Work Program. (1 through 2)
 - v. *Implementation:* Integrate Work transcript with the academic transcript. (2 through 3)
 - vi. *Implementation:* Evaluate Sterling’s relationship to the federal work colleges program. (2 through 5)
9. *Goal:* To reaffirm the College’s commitment to *Expedition* and the *Bounder* programs.
- a. *Objective:* Support the 37-year history of *Expedition* and *Bounder*, which promote inter- and intra-personal and environmental awareness, and leadership capacity through outdoor and group dynamics skills.
 - i. *Implementation:* Document more fully and share the learning objectives and outcomes of *Expedition* and *Bounder* in the College’s written materials and website. (1 through 3)

- ii. *Implementation:* Ensure that faculty and staff who support *Expedition* have adequate resources. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Conduct annual research and report on the community experience with *Expedition* and *Bounder*. (1 through 5)
10. *Goal:* To facilitate the early impact Sterling alumni will have as environmental stewards.
- a. *Objective:* Ensure that Sterling College graduates are prepared for and have the support they require to successfully transition to life after college.
 - i. *Implementation:* Amend and augment our current support for student transition to life after Sterling through comparative research of the programs of other colleges and universities. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Investigate opportunities to strengthen our institutional relationships with graduate programs, including those at the University of Vermont. (2 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Research and develop relationships with organizations and institutions that support certification in areas associated with the Sterling curriculum such as the Teacher Apprenticeship Program in collaboration with the Craftsbury Academy. (1)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Publish an annual report on educational outcomes, including a review of the survey results of recent research of Sterling alumni satisfaction, in order to routinely promote the efficacy of the Sterling educational model. (1 through 5)
11. *Goal:* To strengthen the capacity of the community to use information technology to support broader outreach efforts to the world and to make our work simpler, more efficient, and more effective.
- a. *Objective:* Strengthen our community and its connection to the world through modes of sharing information and improving efficiency.
 - i. *Implementation:* Select and purchase an institution-wide student database to be shared by all administrative offices. (1 through 2)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Provide regular information technology training for all community members. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Assess our information technology needs and propose a 5-year capital plan. (1 through 2)

People Goals:

The individuals who comprise our community are at the core of the mission, define the educational experience of our students, and ultimately govern what we are able to collectively achieve. How we organize our community is a reflection on our values and our capacity to work collectively and to express trust in our individual roles and contributions.

12. *Goal:* To retain and attract talented and passionate faculty who express their commitment to environmental stewardship through life experience, teaching, advising, advocacy, and research.
- a. *Objective:* Offer compensation and benefits appropriate to the resources of the College and increasingly consistent with the middle-50 percentile of our cohort. [Cohort includes: College of the Atlantic, Green Mountain College, Marlboro College, Northland College, Prescott College, and Unity College].
 - b. *Objective:* Strengthen faculty confidence in the commitment Sterling College makes to their professional life and future at the College.

- i. *Implementation:* Provide annual letters of appointment to faculty that clearly detail salary and benefits. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Develop a standardized and formal orientation program for all new faculty. (1)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Implement annual one-on-one meetings with the Dean of the College & Faculty with each faculty member to discuss annual teaching goals and objectives. (1)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Convene an advisory taskforce to study and report on faculty workload, compensation, benefits, and personal/professional leave, chaired by the President and including members of the faculty. (1 through 2)
 - v. *Implementation:* Increase funding for faculty professional development and establish a formal process for requests for funding. (1 through 2)
 - vi. *Implementation:* Launch a 5-year initiative to improve salaries and benefits for faculty. (1 through 5)
13. *Goal:* To retain and attract talented and passionate administrative staff, who express commitment to environmental stewardship through their support of the students and the advancement of the College's mission.
- a. *Objective:* Support an appropriate number of administrative staff to efficiently and effectively carry out the work of the College as enrollment grows.
 - b. *Objective:* Offer compensation and benefits appropriate to the resources of the College and increasingly consistent with the middle-50 percentile of our cohort (cohort list above).
 - c. *Objective:* Strengthen appropriate institutional communication about salaries and benefits for staff.
 - d. *Objective:* Strengthen staff confidence in the commitment Sterling College makes to their professional lives and future at the College.
 - i. *Implementation:* Increase the opportunities for the President to interact with the staff through establishing a monthly Staff Meeting. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Implement an institutional review of all staff job descriptions. (1)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Institute an evaluation process that includes written and oral evaluation and an opportunity to set annual goals and receive regular feedback. (1)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Provide letters of appointment in June that clearly detail salary and benefits. (1)
 - v. *Implementation:* Develop a standardized and formal orientation program for new staff hires. (1)
 - vi. *Implementation:* Increase funding for staff professional development and establish a formal process for requests for funding. (Fall 2014)
 - vii. *Implementation:* Launch 5-year initiative to improve salaries and benefits for staff. (1 through 5)
14. *Goal:* To ensure that Sterling has the best possible administrative structures and leadership for meeting both its long- and short-term objectives.
- a. *Objective:* Contribute to the quality of the communication and collaboration in our community, while facilitating decision-making.
 - i. *Implementation:* The Administrative Council and faculty will study organizational models at similar institutions and review the present purposes and work of standing committees and propose desired changes to current structures. (1 through 3)

- ii. *Implementation:* Establish a review process for administrators and staff including input from faculty and students. (1 through 5)
- iii. *Implementation:* Ensure that the Board of Trustees remains committed to the goals of the community and united in its passion for Sterling and the importance of its mission. (1 through 5)
- iv. *Implementation:* Ensure that Sterling trustees will continue to consider the College among their highest priorities during their tenure on the board. (1 through 5)
- v. *Implementation:* Ensure that all trustees will be actively involved in raising and contributing funds for Sterling as it moves forward in the implementation of this plan. (1 through 5)

VI. Resources

The mission of the College cannot be met if the resources necessary to fulfill it are not available. The relationship of our mission to the resources that support it is a critical element of this plan, but limitations or perceived limitation should not limit our aspirations for the future of Sterling College. While able to make do with the resources at hand and to be effective in the use of funds, the College and its community seek to expand the resources that support the daily work of educating the next generation of environmental stewards.

15. *Goal:* To ensure that Sterling College has the financial resources it needs to meet its mission.

- a. *Objective:* Achieve financial equilibrium through a balanced annual budget.
- b. *Objective:* Raise the funds necessary for capital projects and avoid using operational funds for capital needs.
- c. *Objective:* Increase revenue from philanthropy and decrease dependence upon revenue from tuition.
 - i. *Implementation:* Eliminate deficit spending and reduce dependence on borrowing. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Consider conducting a capital campaign “feasibility study” to assess the state of fundraising opportunity for the College. (1 through 2)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Increase the contribution of the annual fund to the operating budget over the next five years by increasing giving from individual supporters and expanding the total base of support. (1 through 5)
 - Double the annual fund in five years.
 - Emphasize “cause” based support for the College, such as our investment policy in support of fossil fuel divestment, to expand the base of support.
 - Increase outreach to our alumni and the parents of students.
 - Significantly increase the number of \$5,000+ donors.
 - Investigate the creation of a non-governance Board of Visitors composed of friends of Sterling to extend the outreach of the College.
 - iv. *Implementation:* Increase annual income from the endowment through careful investment, and increase in the corpus through fundraising. (1 through 5)
 - Institute Socially Responsible Investment Policy before campaign begins.
 - Raise approximately \$1,500,000 in new gifts and bequests to the endowment over five years.
 - Develop a robust planned giving effort.
 - v. *Implementation:* Raise capital funds from major donors and foundations for the renovation, purchase, and construction of new campus facilities. (1 through 5)
 - Raise approximately \$5,000,000 over five years.

16. *Goal:* To improve alignment with our educational mission and the aspirations of our community by becoming increasingly self-sufficient and committing to practices that are consistent with environmental stewardship.
 - a. *Objective:* Become a model community with regard to use of resources and our capacity to support our mission.
 - b. *Objective:* Become increasingly self-sufficient and self-reliant, while sustaining collaboration with the surrounding community.
 - c. *Objective:* Commit to a comprehensive plan for the use of our lands, including protection of our forests and wildlife, and the thoughtful use of the campus for academic and community purposes.
 - i. *Implementation:* Expand the solar capacity of the campus to produce electricity. (1 through 3)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Convene the Land's Committee, clarify its role, and consider the expansion of the committee's purview to include energy. (1)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Seek to eliminate dependence upon fossil fuels for the heating of buildings. (1 through 5)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Support the production of food on campus and our relationship with local farms, consistent with the curriculum and instructional goals. (1 through 5)
 - v. *Implementation:* Commit funds to support the Green Bike initiative at the College. (1 through 5)
17. *Goal:* To recruit and retain a diverse population of approximately 120 students committed to environmental stewardship.
 - a. *Objective:* Ensure that the mission and Sterling Model of education are known to students around the world.
 - b. *Objective:* Sustain an annual enrollment-planning model that focuses equally on retention and recruitment.
 - i. *Implementation:* Improve the organization and outreach resources of our recruitment effort, emphasizing an equal focus on recruitment in all the College's majors. (1)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Expand dramatically the pool of inquiry to the College through efforts linking recruitment to marketing and public relations efforts. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Increase outreach to veterans, and provide student life support at the College. (1 through 5)
 - iv. *Implementation:* Commit new resources to support the recruitment of an increasingly diverse student population. (1 through 5)
 - v. *Implementation:* Expand recruitment activities outside the United States, and provide appropriate support, such as English as a Second Language resources for those for whom English is a non-native language. (1 through 5)
 - vi. *Implementation:* Develop an economy of scale for the College that is sustainable at 120 students and does not require further growth before 2016. (1 through 5)
 - vii. *Implementation:* Sustain commitment to meeting the need of students with robust institutional support for financial aid at approximately 40–45% of tuition income. (1 through 5)

- viii. *Implementation*: Report on trends in retention each semester, and prepare an annual report on enrollment that includes both retention and admission. (1 through 5)
18. *Goal*: To expand the reach of the Sterling College mission, educational model, and curriculum.
- a. *Objective*: Continue and enhance existing relationships with local non-profit and for-profit businesses and organizations.
 - b. *Objective*: Increase opportunities for Sterling students to complete service, research, and academic work with local and regional partners.
 - c. *Objective*: Open Sterling to greater academic exchange and collaboration with other institutions.
 - d. *Objective*: Contribute to civic good by providing support to the local community.
 - i. *Implementation*: Undertake an initiative to study future partnerships in the Northeast Kingdom and Vermont that are consistent with the mission of the College, such as Bread & Puppet Theater, Northwoods Stewardship Center, the public schools, Craftsbury Outdoor Center, and local businesses associated with food systems, such as Cellars at Jasper Hill and High Mowing Seeds. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation*: Consider outreach opportunities with organizations and institutions in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation*: Continue to review ways in which Sterling College, Craftsbury Academy, and the Craftsbury Outdoor Center could collaborate and share resources. (1 through 5)
 - iv. *Implementation*: Identify, support, and facilitate student participation in research and service opportunities with local non-profit organizations and businesses. (1 through 5)
 - v. *Implementation*: Work with the University of Vermont and other area colleges to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration through faculty and student visits and exchanges. (1 through 5)
 - vi. *Implementation*: Revive the on-campus speaker's series that addresses the full range of curricular offerings, and create space in the College calendar for more regular co-curricular and mission-related community events. (1 through 5)
 - vii. *Implementation*: Sustain support for the Vermont's Table program, and review its outreach to new populations of students and supporters. (1 through 3)
 - viii. *Implementation*: Consider the development of a "continuing education" program. (3 through 5)
19. *Goal*: To celebrate the accomplishments of all of our alumni.
- a. *Objective*: Knit together the evolution of Sterling from 1958 to present.
 - b. *Objective*: Commit to understanding the history of Sterling by providing access to archival materials.
 - i. *Implementation*: Establish a Sterling Alumni Board (1 through 2)
 - ii. *Implementation*: Reach out to alumni of Sterling School and the Grassroots period. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation*: Establish an on-campus archive consistent with modern preservation standards. (1 through 3)
 - iv. *Implementation*: Establish alumni awards to be recognized at an annual reunion. (1)

20. *Goal:* To ensure that Sterling College is widely recognized as a leader among progressive, place-based liberal arts colleges and as an important voice on environmental stewardship.
 - a. *Objective:* Contribute to public dialogue about environmental stewardship in collaboration with other organizations that contribute to civic good.
 - b. *Objective:* Remain a small college, while sustaining a substantial public voice for the issues and topics to which we are committed.
 - i. *Implementation:* Expand the College's commitment to and resources for public relations and its overall communication effort, including printed materials, social media, website, and advertising. (1 through 5)
 - ii. *Implementation:* Connect the College's public relations efforts to others in the Northeast Kingdom, including those associated with the food systems revival in Hardwick. (1 through 5)
 - iii. *Implementation:* Expand access to the resources the faculty, students, and staff need in order to be recognized as experts in their fields and as activists so that they may participate in public forums, policy development, conferences, and other advocacy settings. (1 through 5)

VII. Facilities & Infrastructure Goals

Sterling College will have well-maintained facilities appropriate to the aspirations of our community, our curriculum, and our values including environmental stewardship. To sustain such a campus will require that the College develop adequate funds to maintain and repair its facilities, equipment, tools, and other physical resources. The campus will be integrated into the community of Craftsbury Common and will present an appealing appearance to our neighbors with whom we will seek to share our resources.

Specifically, the College will endeavor to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and will commit to increasingly live by its commitment to environmental stewardship.

21. *Goal:* To restore and renovate the campus so that all buildings are efficient and attractive and serve the needs of the community and a population of approximately 120 students.
 - a. *Objective:* Develop a sustained and organized effort to care for our campus as our home and laboratory, including environmentally sensitive areas.
 - b. *Objective:* Consider the purchase of additional properties that may be important to our growth and educational program.
 - c. *Objective:* Make our worst facilities our best and most efficient facilities first, and thereby lift the whole campus.
 - d. *Objective:* Adapt our relationship to automobiles and where we park them.
 - i. *Implementation:* A five-year campus master plan will be developed to include both the current campus footprint and potential purchased properties. (1 through 5)
 - Establish solar and non-fossil fuel sources of energy as the means of lighting and heating our campus, and invest in renovations that place efficiency as a top priority.
 - Paradise Hall Renovation
Create improved space for the visual arts, including woodworking, fiber arts, ceramics, public presentation space, and space for the Environmental Humanities curricular area.
 - Dunbar & Kane Hall Renovation
Develop new space for student activities/social activities and improved faculty and staff offices.

Improve the kitchen to meet modern professional culinary standards, and improve our ability to use it as an instructional space.

Improve the dining hall with natural lighting, better acoustics, and easier flow of people.

- Simpson Hall Renovation
Create a new and/or renovated chemistry laboratory, and improve all teaching spaces.
Improve Simpson III as a public space and large classroom.
 - Build a new Ecology resource center that offers an appropriate and appealing teaching space and location for coursework and natural history collections.
 - Build a new Outdoor Education facility, including a yurt and a new indoor climbing facility.
 - Develop an agriculture center, including potential purchase of additional land, addition of power system and hot water, a new draft horse and other facilities, and the renovation of the current barns.
 - Add additional new structures to serve as maintenance and storage facilities.
 - Add on-campus housing for faculty and students with partners and/or families.
 - Renovate Madison Hall and Houston House and add better and roughly equivalent social spaces for students in each hall.
 - Provide access to Sterling's Bear Swamp preservation land in Wolcott, Vermont.
 - Reorganize and potentially reduce automobile parking on campus.
- ii. *Implementation:* Develop a five-year capital improvement plan linked to and timed with fund-raising efforts. (1 through 5)
- iii. *Implementation:* Develop a three-year plan for college-wide equipment and fixtures, including the purchasing of new vehicles for community transportation and trucks for maintenance and the farm and other equipment, including outdoor education equipment necessary for the program of study. (1)
- iv. *Implementation:* Create a list of all Sterling College-owned equipment and its condition. (1)

VIII. Planning Process

In the years since Sterling joined the world of higher education, the College has grown and evolved with the aid of a strongly held vision for the future supplemented by periodic strategic planning initiatives.

To further that vision Sterling has embarked upon a new strategic path to promote and sustain an exemplary approach to liberal education. By means of a collaboratively developed plan the College will:

1. Affirm its mission and clearly articulate its vision for the future;
2. Clarify and reinforce the relationship between mission and curriculum;
3. Strengthen long-term financial health;
4. Further the Sterling community's ecological sustainability; and
5. Improve the campus and facilities to better serve the community of faculty, staff, and students.

Sterling College's president, Matthew Derr, and the Board of Trustees initiated the planning process with the understanding that the community was eager to embark upon such a process, a point made evident through the presidential search process in the spring of 2012. The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was co-chaired by trustees Catherine Donnelly and Jonathan Larsen. Its membership included trustees, faculty, alumni, administrators, and students. In addition to this overarching committee, throughout the process various subcommittees, working teams, and individuals consulted many other members of the community.

Several other sources of information were utilized in developing the plan, including a series of interviews of alumni conducted by an evaluation team from the University of Michigan regarding educational outcomes and the most recent self-study completed for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in 2010.

In November 2012 the strategic planning co-chairs, board chair, and vice chair were interviewed by Stephanie Perrin, a highly regarded strategic planning consultant who was retained to aid in gathering further information. Similar interview sessions in large and small settings were held with the entire community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni from October 2012 through January 2013. Information from these interviews and conversations was compiled by the President, with the aid of Pavel Cenkl, Dean of the College & Faculty, and shaped the questions that were later posed to the subcommittees and working teams.

The President appointed three subcommittees, each to cover an aspect of college operations: People & Program, Resources, and Facilities & Infrastructure. A member of the SPC chaired each subcommittee, and each subcommittee convened smaller working teams to report back on areas of specific research.

The first phase of planning focused on the work of the People & Program subcommittee. The second phase includes the efforts of the Resources and Campus & Infrastructure subcommittees. These latter two efforts led to the plans identified in the programmatic and mission-driven goals established in the first phase by the People & Program subcommittee. These initiatives will be supported by a five-year business plan, including fundraising and enrollment goals.

Planning Timeline:

The People & Program portion of the plan was compiled and written in mid-January 2013, reviewed by the faculty and staff and the SPC in late January, and was presented to the community and the Board of Trustees for review and comment in early February.

The second phase of the plan, Resources and Facilities & Infrastructure, was compiled and written in mid-April 2013, reviewed by the faculty in late April and the SPC in early May, and will be presented to the community and to the Board of Trustees for review and comment in on May 3, 2013.

Major Themes Identified in the Planning Process

This plan covers all aspects of the College's operations. However, during the process certain dominant themes came to the fore. They are:

1. Clear in its mission, one of the College's most critical needs is to build long-term financial stability through increased enrollment and increased annual giving.
2. The quality of the educational experience and the satisfaction of students are linked to the commitment of the faculty and staff to the College. Improvement in salaries and benefits is critical to the health of Sterling.
3. The strength of the Sterling College curriculum is partially reflected in our capacity to easily describe it to the world and in how we translate it for students.
4. Revision and evolution of the curriculum of the College requires a shared understanding of the anticipated competencies and outcomes of the educational experience and is important to supporting the mission.
5. Maintaining a robust financial aid policy is critical because of its direct impact on access for students.
6. The health of our community is partially measured through the quality and clarity of communication between its members. There is a need to review the ways in which we share information and to gain greater consistency in our articulation of policies and decision-making processes.

7. The Sterling College community seeks to build stronger relationships with the local individuals and organizations in the Northeast Kingdom community.
8. All academic calendars are imperfect. Sterling's calendar could better serve its needs and aspirations.
9. New and improved facilities, including residence halls, a student social center, and classroom spaces were identified by all participants as important priorities.
10. We espouse appropriately lofty values with regard to sustainability and environmental stewardship. It is important that we seek to live by and support those values in our daily work and aspirations for Sterling.