

*Sustainable Sterling Campaign*

**College Profile**

# **Economic & Service Report**

## **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.*

## **Economic Impact**

As Vermont's Northeast Kingdom's only independent liberal arts college, Sterling spends over \$1.8 million annually on its institutional operations, including utilities, fuel, dining services, and maintenance. Over \$400,000 of the operations budget is paid to regional vendors, and over \$50,000 is spent in Craftsbury, Greensboro, and Hardwick.

In 2006-07, Sterling employed 57 people, with a full-time equivalent of 42. Sterling's payroll adds another \$1.3 million to the Northern Vermont economy. Even at its modest salary scale, Sterling invests annually \$300,000 in employee benefits.

Using a conservative 2.5 multiplier, Sterling's total annual economic impact on its local region is \$7.85 million.

(A multiplier indicates the effect of money as it moves from one source to another; for example, a person's salary as it moves from where they work to the local grocery store or repair shop, and from there to the salaries and operating expenses of the grocery store or repair shop.)

As a private, non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation, Sterling still pays over \$23,000 annually in property tax in Craftsbury and Wolcott.

The College helps generate tens of thousands of dollars more for the local economy by attracting well over 2,000 visitors each year. Included are over 100 visiting prospective students and their families, attendees at the two or more on-campus public events held each month, some 600 Circus Smirkus summer campers over 10 weeks, the 40 writers for the week-long Wildbranch Writing Workshop, the 800 skiers who participate in the mid-winter marathon, as well as bus tours, College sponsored events like the Wood Show, the Speakers Series, art gallery openings, and the Rural Heritage Institute.

Sterling provides, free or at-cost for non-profit organizations and the public, its two largest spaces, the Dunbar Hall dining room and the Simpson III classroom.

## Service Impact

As a federally recognized *Work-Learning-Service College* all students must work at least 80 hours per semester, earning \$1,400 in tuition credit. The majority of students work on-campus taking turns washing dishes and cooking, doing residence hall cleaning and maintenance, and performing morning and evening farm choirs.

Direct service to the community is another essential component of the *Work-Learning-Service* philosophy. In 2006/07 Sterling students provided 2,645 work/service hours in the Northeast Kingdom. That's the equivalent of 330 8-hour work days.

All students are also required to complete 400 hours of service during their 10-week internship at a non-profit organization, small farm, or enterprise. Over the past three years, 62 work/service internships have been completed; 26 of them in Vermont at, for instance, the Lake Salem Association (Derby), the Global Living Project (Corinth), the Vermont Natural Resource Council (Montpelier), and the Willowell Foundation and the Northwoods Stewardship Foundation (East Charleston).

## Students and Alumni

- With 100 students, Sterling is the smallest nondenominational liberal arts college in the nation.
- Sterling is one of seven federally-recognized Work-Learning-Service colleges in the nation, and the only such institution in New England.
- During the required 10-week internship, Sterling students perform at least 400 hours of service to nonprofit farms, small business, youth or service organizations. About one third of all internships take place in Vermont.
- With a 2007/2008 comprehensive fee of \$26,160, Sterling is the second least expensive private residential college in Vermont.
- In 2007/08, 42% of Sterling students qualified for federal Pell grants, which are designed to help the neediest families afford higher education for their children.
- Through its own grants and scholarships, in 2007/08 Sterling provided nearly \$700,000 in need-based financial aid to 75% of the student body.
- In 2007/08, 21% of Sterling's student body was from Vermont, and 90% of Sterling's Vermont students receive need-based aid directly from the College.
- Including Vermont, 17 states are represented among Sterling's 100 students.
- Over 50% of Sterling College alumni have remained in Vermont to work, establish businesses, and raise their families.

## Curriculum

Teaching at the confluence of the liberal arts and experiential learning, Sterling concentrates on four major areas of study in course-specific and student-designed curricula.

**Conservation Ecology:** Sterling's most popular major that also sets the foundation for the other academic areas of concentration.

**Circumpolar Studies:** The study of the peoples and ecologies of the northern world. Sterling offers the only undergraduate major in this field in the continental U.S.

**Outdoor Education & Leadership:** Sterling is accredited by the AEE (Association of Experiential Educators) along with Harvard, UNH, Prescott and a handful of other institutions.

**Sustainable Agriculture:** A unique program in small-scale, regional agriculture with an emphasis on sustainability, policy, and use of mixed power systems.

**Self-design:** A faculty-guided study designed by collaboration between a faculty mentor and the student.

## Giving Through Sterling

Each year Sterling benefits greatly from the philanthropic support of its alumni, current and former parents, faculty, staff, and trustees, and friends throughout Vermont and across the nation. In 2007/08, 351 couples and individuals contributed \$375,426 in unrestricted, restricted, and endowment gifts. Sterling's permanently restricted endowment stands at \$589,589.

Supporting Foundations include:

- The Gladys Brooks Charitable Trust
- The Freeman Foundation
- The Annis Foundation
- The Carter Fund
- The Jephson Educational Trust
- Day is Done Foundation
- The Canaday Family Trust

## Accreditation

- The New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC)
  - 1997 - as a four-year Baccalaureate Liberal Arts College
  - 1981 - as a Associate Degree institution

- Association for Experiential Education 2007 (AEE)