A Sterling Story

Sterling College 2009 Self-Study Report

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Organization of the Self-Study Report and Supporting Documentation

The Introduction to the report contains an overview of the College's history, an overview of its accreditation history, a short campus profile, an overview of significant changes since the last comprehensive visit, a brief summary of the College's responses to the Commission's previous concerns, and an overview of the self-study process. Chapters One through Five contain information about each of the Commission's accreditation criteria, and each of those chapters is organized by the Core Components that further define the criteria. Chapter Six is the report's federal compliance section. A brief Conclusion is followed by an Appendix, which contains the Institutional Snapshot and other documents that are evidentiary to statements in the report.

Supporting documents are available electronically for the Commission's peer-review team, and hard copies of all documents will be available in the resource room during the team's visit to campus. To the extent possible, the organization of electronic resources mirrors the organization of the documents in the on-site resource room—only a few large documents have been excluded from the electronic collection.

Resources have been categorized by report sections. In most cases, a resource that is referenced more than once is categorized with the section in which it is referenced first. For example, resource file CC1C-9 is referenced under Core Component sections 4A, 4C, 4D, and 5B, but it is first referenced under Core Component 1C. It is thus coded CC1C-9 because it is the ninth resource categorized under that Core Component. Occasionally, a document that is referenced multiple times is categorized with the section in which its impact is most significant, not necessarily with the section in which it is first referenced. A Documentation Guide begins on the following page.

Documentation Guide

Items in parentheses ( ) are available only in the physical resource room arranged for the site visit.

General Documentation	
GD01	*2009–2010 Sterling College Academic Catalog*
GD02[1]	*Sterling College Faculty Handbook*
GD03	*Sterling College Staff Handbook*
GD04	*Sterling College Bylaws*
GD05	*Sterling College 3-Year Strategic Plan*
GD06	*Sterling College Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws*
GD07	Archive of Board minutes
GD08	*Sterling College Student Handbook*
GD09[2]	Archive of annual audit reports and management letters
GD10	*Sterling College Assessment Plan*
GD11	*Sterling College Operational Plan for Enrollment* (SCOPE)
GD12[3]	Archive of Faculty Council minutes
(GD13)	(*Sterling College: An Emerging Story*—Sterling College's 2000 Self-Study Report)
GD14	2000 Comprehensive Visit Report by the peer-review team for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
GD15	2003 Focused Visit Report by the peer-review team for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
GD16[4]	Annual Assessment Reports from 2001 to 2007
GD17	Annual assessment newsletters
GD18	Curriculum alignment matrices for academic programs
(GD19)	(*The Library's Legal Answer Book*)
(GD20)	(Third-party advertisements for reaccreditation visit)
(GD21)	(*Sterling College: Co-worker with God—The First 100 Years*)
(GD22)	(Collection of Sterling College yearbooks)
(GD23)	(Archive of alumni magazines)
(GD24)	(Collection of *Our Stories*, stories of Sterling College graduates)
Introduction	
Intro-1	Page 10 from *Sterling College: Co-worker with God*
Intro-2	Sterling College amended charter from 1930
Intro-3	Statements on accreditation from 1927 and 1928 College *Catalogs*
Intro-4	President's column in May 1936 *Ye Sterling Stir*—explanation of discontinued

[1] The College's Faculty Council plans to submit an updated version of the *Faculty Handbook* to the Board of Trustees at its October 2009 meeting. Therefore, a newer handbook may be in effect when Higher Learning Commission's peer-review team conducts its site visit in December 2009.

[2] At the time of this report's publication, the auditors have not yet finalized their annual report for the 2008–2009 fiscal year. That report can be submitted to the peer-review team as an addendum, possibly after the team receives the self-study report. The audit report and the auditor's management letter for the 2007–2008 fiscal year are categorized under Core Component 2B, for they are referenced specifically in that section.

[3] Faculty governance minutes are available in electronic form from September 2006 through September 2009. Older minutes will be available in hard copy in the physical resource room.

[4] Academic year 2008–2009 served as a transition period to a new assessment plan. The first assessment report under that plan will be completed in November 2009 and will be available in the on-site resource room.

	membership with the North Central Association
Inro-5	Reports from former President William McCreery to the Board of Trustees—1953–1957
Intro-6	Page 14 from *Sterling College: Co-worker with God*
Intro-7	February 2001 *Sterling* Magazine
Intro-8	Page from May 2006 Board minutes—dissolution of Faculty Assembly and adoption of Faculty Council
Intro-9	Revised student projections and breakeven analysis for e.Sterling
Intro-10	Change Request to Offer Online Degrees
Intro-11	Response to Change Request to Offer Online Degrees from the College's Higher Learning Commission liaison
Intro-12	Endowment spending policy
Intro-13	Retention plans, goals, and initiatives
Intro-14	Bond expenditures
Intro-15	Invitation from the VPAA's Office to join the self-study steering committee
Intro-16	Self-study coordinators' presentation of self-study process to Board
Intro-17	Self-study coordinators' presentation of self-study process to entire campus
Intro-18	Self-study timeline
Intro-19	Example of "electronic workspace" for self-study process
Intro-20	Self-study steering committee minutes
Intro-21	*The Stir* article about the College's comprehensive visit for reaccreditation
Intro-22	Page from October 2008 Board minutes—approval of self-study goals
Core Component 1A	
CC1A-1	Page from February 1991 minutes—adoption of mission statement, "Our Priorities," "Our Process," "Our Faith," and "Our Relationships"
CC1A-2	Page from February 2009 Board minutes—reaffirmation of mission and vision statements
CC1A-3	Page from October 1998 Board minutes—adoption of current vision statement
CC1A-4	1998 Strategic Initiatives Advisory Team Report
CC1A-5	Page from October 2008 Board minutes—adoption of institutional objectives
CC1A-6	Page from February 2000 Board minutes—adoption of core values
CC1A-7	Pages from February 2009 Board minutes—reaffirmation of core values
CC1A-8	Mission documents titled "Our Faith" and "Our Beliefs" before they were combined in April 2009
CC1A-9	Page from February 2002 Board minutes—adoption of "Our Beliefs"
CC1A-10	Page from February 2009 Board minutes—appointment of task force to revise "Our Faith" and "Our Beliefs"
CC1A-11	Page from April 2009 Board minutes—adoption of "Our Statement of Faith"
CC1A-12	Page from February 2009 Board minutes—reaffirmation of "Our Process" and "Our Priorities"
CC1A-13	Pages from February 2009 Board minutes—appointment of task force to revise "Our Relationships"
CC1A-14	1993–1997 "Covenant Relationship" with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
CC1A-15	Mission document titled "Our Relationships" before it was revised in April 2009
CC1A-16	Page from April 2009 Board minutes—approval of revised mission document titled "Our Relationships"
CC1A-17	"Mission and Vision" page of the Sterling College Web site

CC1A-18	"What We Believe" brochure
CC1A-19	Testimony from the Director of Gift Planning regarding the College's "What We Believe" brochure
Core Component 1B	
Mission documents listed under Core Component 1A	
Core Component 1C	
CC1C-1	Survey results regarding Board understanding of mission
CC1C-2	Summary of recent Board giving
CC1C-3	Pages from December 1999 Faculty Assembly minutes—approval of Social Entrepreneurship minor
CC1C-4	Pages from September 2000 Faculty Assembly minutes—former president's announcement of partnership with Habitat for Humanity International
CC1C-5	Fall 2008 syllabus for GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership
CC1C-6	Fall 2007 syllabus for GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership
CC1C-7	Fall 2008 syllabus for LL101: English Composition I
CC1C-8	*Conceptual Framework for the Sterling Teacher Education Program*
CC1C-9	Student Government Association Fall Quarterly Report for 2008
CC1C-10	Data regarding student involvement in campus organizations and activities
CC1C-11	Job descriptions for student chaplains, resident assistants, and campus prayer leaders
Core Component 1D	
CC1D-1	Pages from various Board minutes—approval of revisions to faculty and staff handbooks
CC1D-2	Page from February 2009 Board minutes—approval of president's request to devote time to Board development
CC1D-3	Pages from January 2008 and April 2009 Board minutes—Board Development Chair's discussion of Board criteria and evaluation
CC1D-4	College President's résumé
CC1D-5	Chief Financial Officer's résumé
CC1D-6	Vice President for Institutional Advancement's résumé
CC1D-7	Vice President for Academic Affair's résumé
CC1D-8	Vice President for Student Life's résumé
CC1D-9	Vice President for Innovation and Technology's résumé
CC1D-10	Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing's résumé
CC1D-11	Athletic Director's résumé
CC1D-12	Pages from May 2007 Board meeting book—VPAA's rationale for dividing the College into two schools
CC1D-13	Summary of recent *Faculty Handbook* changes related to faculty workload and extended contracts
CC1D-14	Previous *Sterling College Faculty Handbook*, adopted May 2006
CC1D-15	Previous *Sterling College Faculty Handbook*, adopted January 2003
CC1D-16	Faculty Council's communication with other faculty members
CC1D-17	President's informational session regarding February 2009 Board meeting
CC1D-18	Example of standing committees' reports to Faculty Council
Core Component 1E	
CC1E-1	Syllabus for TM440: Philosophy for Faith and Life
CC1E-2	Press release about opening of Quiznos restaurant
CC1E-3	Pages from Board minutes reflecting Board review of financial audits

CC1E-4	Pages from Board minutes reflecting Board approval of track and stadium renovation
CC1E-5	Pages from Faculty Council minutes reflecting the Faculty Welfare Committee's work on the *Faculty Handbook*
CC1E-6	Examples of rights and responsibilities statements not found in handbooks
CC1E-7	Sportsmanship Creed
CC1E-8	IRS Form 990 for Sterling College
CC1E-9	Annual Performance Reports for Title III funding
CC1E-10	Documentation relating to compliance with various legal and organizational policies
CC1E-11	Letters about the College's integrity from city officials and local leaders
CC1E-12	Pages from January 2009 self-study steering committee minutes—president's suggestion that the *Sterling College Bylaws* serve as the "source location" for all mission documents
CC1E-13	Home page of the Sterling College Web site
CC1E-14	"School History" page of the Sterling College Web site
CC1E-15	"Quick Facts" page of the Sterling College Web site
CC1E-16	Fall 2008 *Sterling* magazine
CC1E-17	Examples of e-newsletters to alumni
CC1E-18	Writing Center Daily Log—statement explaining students' right to privacy regarding academic support
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CC2A-1	*Sterling College 3-Year Strategic Plan* action items
CC2A-2	*e.Sterling Business Plan*
CC2A-3	*e.Sterling Marketing Plan*
CC2A-4	Pages from March 31 self-study steering committee meeting—Cabinet's recognition of need for integrated marketing plan
CC2A-5	Sterling College National Advisory Council guidelines
CC2A-6	Pages from October 2007 and 2008 Board minutes—briefings about National Advisory Council discussions
CC2A-7	Student demographic data
CC2A-8	Contract with and information about Archimedes Group International
CC2A-9	Home page of micro Web site for prospective students
CC2A-10	Home page of micro Web site for applicants
CC2A-11	Survey regarding reasons students withdraw from the College
CC2A-12	Data regarding reasons students do not return to the College after a completed semester
CC2A-13	*Sterling College Strategic Plan for Technology*
CC2A-14	Example of electronic communication forum designed to limit academically unimportant e-mail
CC2A-15	Home page of New Teachers For Kansas Web site
CC2A-16	Home page of Embanet Web site
CC2A-17	Articulation agreements with community colleges
Core Component 2B	
CC2B-1	Auditor's management letter for year ended June 30, 2008
CC2B-2	IPEDS reports of employees by assigned positions
CC2B-3	Faculty lists for 2006–2007 through 2008–2009 academic years
CC2B-4	Class sizes for 2008–2009 academic year

CC2B-5	Title III-funded expenditures by equipment purchases and professional development expenses
CC2B-6	Lists of journal subscriptions available in the Mabee Library
CC2B-7	Press release regarding hiring of interim Director of Advancement
CC2B-8	Press release regarding hiring of Vice President for Institutional Advancement
CC2B-9	List of positions created since January 2006
CC2B-10	Budget history for faculty professional development
CC2B-11	Budget history for academic programs
CC2B-12	2008 financial audit report
CC2B-13	Cabinet's SWOT analysis, summer 2009
CC2B-14	Promissory note for the College's line of credit
CC2B-15	Final report for $125,000 Title III matching-grant challenge
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CC2C-1	Page from 2007 Annual Assessment Report—explanation of previous Assessment Director's resignation
CC2C-2	E-mail from Academic Dean soliciting faculty feedback about assessment plan
CC2C-3	August 2008 Faculty Council minutes and agenda—approval of assessment plan
CC2C-4	Pages from October 2007 Board meeting book—VPAA's explanation of associate deans' responsibilities
CC2C-5	History of assessment budget
CC2C-6[5]	Folder of Non-Academic Program Assessment Worksheets from all contributing offices
CC2C-7	Staff evaluation form
CC2C-8	Fall 2008 Student Life survey and results
CC2C-9	Vice President for Student Life's summary of improvements driven by fall 2008 Student Life survey results
CC2C-10	Professor's summary of how Faculty Council standing committees contribute to institutional effectiveness
Core Component 2D	
CC2D-1	Budget information for spiritual formation, missions, and servant leadership
CC2D-2	Old and new curricula for the Art and Design major
CC2D-3	Budget information for e.Sterling
CC2D-4	Summary of Title III spending
CC2D-5	Vice President for Innovation and Technology's summary of technological improvements that help improve teaching and learning
CC2D-6	Budget information for Marketing and Communications Office
CC2D-7	Budget information for Alumni Relations Office
CC2D-8	Press releases about record enrollments for fall 2008 and 2009
CC2D-9	Expenditures on prospective student names profiled by external entity
CC2D-10	History of faculty and staff salaries by department
CC2D-11	Information about Tuition Exchange Program through the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities
Core Component 3A	
CC3A-1	Course report template
CC3A-2	List of general education objectives by course
CC3A-3	Example of end-of-course evaluation

[5] This folder will be updated after publication of the self-study report but before the comprehensive visit.

CC3A-4	Sample course report
CC3A-5	Program report template
CC3A-6	Pages from the 2005 Annual Assessment Report—summary of Education Department's use of assessment data to improve ethics instruction
CC3A-7	Page from 2006 Annual Assessment Report—summary of Behavioral Science Department's use of assessment process to improve ethics instruction
CC3A-8	Pages from 2004 Annual Assessment Report—summary of Biology Department's use of assessment data to improve writing instruction within its curriculum
CC3A-9	2009 course report for MA220: Multivariable Calculus
CC3A-10	2009 course report for MA108: Contemporary Math
CC3A-11	2009 course report for TM103: Introduction to the Old Testament
CC3A-12	2009 course report for BS295: Behavioral Science Research Methods
CC3A-13	Folder of program reports for 2008–2009 academic year
Core Component 3B	
CC3B-1	Results of the Sterling Technology and Readiness Assessment (STAR)
CC3B-2	Example of educational technology goals worksheet for faculty
CC3B-3	Technology skills checklist for faculty
CC3B-4	Technology integration checklist for faculty
CC3B-5	Technology Internet integration checklist for faculty
CC3B-6	Summary of faculty training led by IT Department
CC3B-7	Contracts with faculty to serve as learning management system liaisons
CC3B-8	Agenda for professional development training in Moodle learning management system
CC3B-9	List of current faculty by degree and employment status
CC3B-10	Guidelines for Proposing Curricular Changes
CC3B-11	Classroom Observation Evaluation Form
CC3B-12	Archive of IDEA institutional summaries on teaching effectiveness
CC3B-13	IDEA evaluation form for faculty not employed on extended contract
CC3B-14	IDEA evaluation form for faculty employed on extended contract
Core Component 3C	
CC3C-1	Classroom data
CC3C-2	Summary of recent technological improvements
CC3C-3	Summary of improvements made to Culbertson Auditorium
CC3C-4	Summary of improvements made to second story of Wilson Hall
CC3C-5	Article regarding track and stadium renovation from fall 2008 *Sterling* magazine
CC3C-6	Information about campus security practices
CC3C-7	Information about training and expectations of resident directors and resident assistants
CC3C-8	*Sterling College Emergency Response Plan*
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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago Sterling College titled its self-study report *An Emerging Story*. At the time of the College's last comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, relatively new leadership had cast new vision, and the College was beginning to embrace Christ-centered servant leadership as a value to be incorporated across the institutional culture. A capital campaign to restore the institution's original building, which had been in disrepair since 1987, was fostering excitement on campus and nurturing a passion for progress. The renovation would provide state-of-the-art classrooms and "incubation labs" in which students could develop plans for positively affecting society in the spirit of servant leadership. In short, the College was seriously and innovatively approaching its mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith."

As the 2009–2010 academic year begins, all first-time Sterling College students are enrolled in a course called Foundations of Servant Leadership, which has become a staple of the first-year experience. The College continues to esteem servant leadership as a primary means by which individuals and organizations can help transform a broken world. A modernized Cooper Hall now graces the campus landscape and stands as a testament to the College's rich history as well as its relevance in a technological and ever-changing society.

Embracing Christ-centered servant leadership ten years ago helped the College become more intentional about achieving its mission. The vision added clarity to the mission and helped create a clearer institutional identity. The College's 2009 self-study report is titled *A Sterling Story* in part because it is the story of an organization that has adopted an honorable vision and benefited from having the resolve to see it through.

The adjective *Sterling*, however, does not insinuate that this report is an account of institutional perfection. On the contrary, *A Sterling Story* contains candid statements about the College's challenges and imperfections. Yet one of the College's *sterling* characteristics is its willingness to learn from honest evaluation and assessment of itself. Significant portions of this report reflect that willingness.

History of Sterling College

Sterling College first opened as Cooper Memorial College in 1887. The institution was named originally after Joseph Tate Cooper, a leader in Christian education and the United Presbyterian Church from the late 1850s to his death in 1886. The College's first president, Francis Marion Spencer, said of Cooper in his inaugural address, "That name Cooper, which has already been endeared to the hearts of the ministry, and membership of the United Presbyterian church, will become precious to generations yet unborn" (Intro-1; GD21, pg. 10). Spencer could not have been more right, for Cooper Hall, the campus's "old main" building, today stands as a renovated reminder of the man for whom a small college on the sparsely populated plains of Kansas was named over 120 years ago.

The College originally offered only four majors—a "classical course" of study with a general liberal arts emphasis; a "normal course" for students wishing to become teachers; an "English course" for future school administrators; and a "business course." The influence of that original curriculum is evident in the College's twenty-first century educational framework. As stated in the institution's mission document titled "Our Process," located under Core Component 1A in this report: "The College works to achieve its priorities through the learning experiences of the

liberal arts curriculum, faculty/student interactions, and a residential lifestyle. The liberal arts curriculum is designed to build breadth and depth of understanding through a general education core, specialization in a major, and attention within majors to career preparation." A liberal arts framework is still a fundamental aspect of the Sterling College experience, and Education and Business remain two of the College's most popular academic programs.

Throughout its history, the College has also remained dedicated to its Christian heritage and mission. According to the school's original charter, "The aim of the institution [was] to afford young men and women an opportunity to obtain a liberal education enlightened by the teachings of the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ" (Intro-2, pg. 1). Today, Article I of the *Sterling College Bylaws* begins with the College's current mission statement, affirming that "the purpose of Sterling College is to develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith" (GD04, pg. 1). As this report illustrates, particularly in Chapter One, the College takes seriously its mission and maintains processes that help ensure alignment between its mission and activities.

From 1887 to 1996, Sterling College was led by only eight presidents, with the first four serving as chief executive officers for an average of 20.5 years each. Since 1997 the College has had three other presidents. Dr. Paul Maurer became the eleventh CEO in January 2009, replacing Dr. Bruce Douglas, who served as president from 2005 to 2008.

Many of the campus's buildings are named after former faculty members and administrators who served the College for much of their lives. Thompson Hall, where the math and science departments are located today, derives its name from Dr. Ruth Thompson, who served as Professor of Chemistry from 1920–1966. Located inside Thompson Hall is Bell Hall, a theatre-style classroom named for Talmon Bell, Professor of Mathematics from 1891–1946. The College's Music department resides in Wilson Hall, which is named after Samuel A. Wilson, who taught ancient languages from 1887–1942. Clair L. Gleason inspired the name for the Gleason Physical Education Center. Gleason coached many varsity sports and served as Athletic Director from 1953–1986. Campbell Hall and McCreery Hall, both dormitories, bear the names of former presidents, as does Kelsey Hall, the College's administration building. In total, Campbell, McCreery, and Kelsey served in the President's Office for sixty-two years.

The College's rich history of career-long commitment by employees is embodied today by individuals such as Gordon Kling, Diane DeFranco-Kling, Dr. Arn Froese, and Don Reed. Gordon Kling and Diane DeFranco-Kling have taught theatre at Sterling College for forty-one and thirty-eight years, respectively. Dr. Arn Froese has taught in the Behavioral Science Department for thirty-five years, and three additional faculty members have served for twenty years or more. Sterling College alumnus Don Reed has been involved in public relations or advancement for thirty-five years, all the while sharing with the public his love for the institution.

Because the College has been largely tuition dependent for much of its existence, its rural location has presented and continues to present challenges in maintaining an enrollment that fosters financial vitality. From 1996 through 2005, enrollment fluctuated between 456 and 552 students (CC2A-7). Since fall 2006, however, the College has started each academic year with over 600 students, and in fall 2009 the College saw a record enrollment of 722 students[6] (CC2A:7; CC2D-8). Many of the recent accomplishments highlighted throughout this self-study report are either symptomatic of or precursory to the College's enrollment growth.

[6] Number is unofficial at the time of this report's publication.

Accreditation History

According to information in the College's previous self-study report and other available publications, Sterling College first received accreditation from the North Central Association in 1928 (Intro-3; GD13, pg. 1). In 1936 it lost its accreditation due to financial instability (Intro-4). As indicated in some of former President William McCreery's reports to the Board of Trustees, re-establishing the College as a member institution with the North Central Association was a "chief concern" of the McCreery administration for many years. In 1957, which McCreery noted was "one of the most significant years in [the College's] history," the institution was "crowned with the achievement of full accreditation by the North Central Association" (Intro-5).

Since 1957 the College has maintained its affiliation with the North Central Association, being reaccredited in 1967, 1977, 1987, 1993, and 2000. The College hosted NCA focused visits in 1990, 1992, 1996, and 2003. Focused visits have always involved the College's finances and enrollment. The 1996 focused visit involved the College's continuing education program in Missouri, which it has since discontinued, and a concern with the number of majors offered (GD13, pgs. 6–7). In addition to finances and enrollment, the 2003 focused visit revolved around the College's assessment efforts (GD14, pg. 30). The institution's responses to the Association's concerns from the 2000 comprehensive visit and the 2003 focused visit are addressed later in this introduction.

Campus Profile

Sterling College is located in the city of Sterling, Kansas, a community of approximately 2500 residents about sixty miles northwest of Wichita. Sterling is the second-most populated town in Rice County. The largest city is Lyons, which is eight miles to the north and has a population of approximately 3700. The College is located at the north end of the city on State Highway 14/96. It occupies nineteen buildings, all but three of which are located on the main 52-acre area west of the highway. In 2003, the institution purchased an additional thirty-one acres of undeveloped land immediately to the west of its campus.

Sterling College is a private, four-year, degree-granting liberal arts institution that offers a bachelor of arts degree in nine programs of study and a bachelor of science degree in nine programs. Academic majors are listed in Figure I.1 below.

Figure I.1: Academic Majors by Type of Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor of Arts	Bachelor of Science
Art and Design	Athletic Training
Christian Ministries	Biology
Communication and Theatre Arts	Business Administration
English	Chemistry
History	Elementary Education
Independent Interdisciplinary	Exercise Science
Music	Math
Psychology	Music Education
Theology	Sports Management

Students can also earn professional teaching licensure in eight academic disciplines.

The College is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, and it is a member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, and the Kansas Independent College Association.

FAITH-BASED EMPHASIS

Sterling College faculty and staff are believing Christians who strive to combine the concepts of faith and learning in their lives and in the classroom. The mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith" permeates academic as well as co-curricular activities. At the heart of the College's Christian mission is the principle of servant leadership, which was modeled by Jesus Christ Himself. Servant-leadership training begins with a required first-year course called Foundations of Servant Leadership. Spiritual development is also fostered by required attendance at fourteen chapel services per semester (one per week). This has been a staple of the Sterling College experience for many years. In fact, the College's first chapel service was held on its first day of operational existence on November 1, 1887 (Intro-6; GD21, pg. 14). Through Bible studies, prayer groups, student organizations, and various leadership positions, students have a variety of opportunities to grow in their faith and share their growth with others.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY

In fall 2008, enrollment consisted of students from thirty-eight states and seven foreign countries. Fifty-five percent of students were from Kansas. Students from California, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas comprised fifty-four percent of the out-of-state student population (CC2A-7).

The 2004–2009 average acceptance rate for new students was ninety-five percent. For the same period, the average percentage of students who were accepted and actually enrolled was forty-two percent.

The student-to-faculty ratio was fourteen to one at the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year. The College employs thirty-nine full-time teaching faculty members, seventeen of whom have terminal degrees.

Additional information about faculty and student demography can be found in the Institutional Snapshot, located in Appendix A.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATIONS

The College offers two academic programs that are accredited by discipline-specific professional accrediting bodies. The Sterling Teacher Education Program is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (FC20). The program also meets the teaching licensure standards of the Kansas State Department of Education (FC21). The College's Athletic Training program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (FC22).

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Performing arts groups, student organizations, and athletic teams allow students to enrich their college experience with co-curricular learning activities. Students interested in the arts may participate in theatre productions, art exhibits, forensics, or debate, or they may hone musical talents in various choirs and bands. The College's Student Government Association sponsors fourteen student organizations. Fifteen men's and women's intercollegiate athletic teams compete nationally through the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Conference. Regionally, athletic teams are part of the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference.

Significant Changes Since the 2000 Comprehensive Visit

The past decade has been a transformative time for Sterling College. A number of momentous changes underscore the institution's success and adaptability. Six are most significant.

1. Increased Enrollment

Cited by 2000 and 2003 NCA visit teams as a concern, enrollment growth has been a recent focus of the institution. In its 2003 focused visit report, the NCA peer-review team suggested that the College reach "an FTE enrollment of at least 500 by fall 2004" (GD15, pg. 31). In 2004 the College fell slightly short of that mark when it started the fall semester with an FTE enrollment of 454 students. Under new administration in 2006, however, the College started the 2006–2007 academic year with an FTE enrollment of 559. In fall 2008 the number jumped to 616, and the fall 2009 FTE is 655[7] (CC2A-7).

2. Renovation of Cooper Hall and Other Capital Improvements

In 1987, one hundred years after it housed the College's first classes, the campus's "old main" building, Cooper Hall, was closed due to structural shifting in its limestone foundation. From 1987 to 2003, the building sat empty and in disrepair. In 2003, however, thanks in part to a gift of $2.3 million from M.D. and Mary McVay, the building was completely renovated to provide additional office space and state-of-the-art classrooms (Intro-7, pg. 3). Now Cooper Hall stands as the most striking edifice on campus, reminding students, faculty, staff, and travelers on State Highway 14 that Sterling College has an important legacy in higher education. In an effort to give campus visitors the best "first impression" possible, the College made Cooper Hall the location of the Admissions Office in summer 2009.

Since the previous comprehensive visit, the College has also added two residence halls to accommodate its growing enrollment. A major renovation of the athletic track and football stadium was completed in fall 2008, and underground sprinkler systems and other landscaping initiatives have increased the campus's "curb appeal." Other capital improvements are addressed under "Facility Aging" in the Introduction and under Core Component 3C.

3. Change in Faculty Governance Structure

Before 2006, the purely democratic Faculty Assembly had overseen the integrity of academic processes. In 2006, however, at the insistence of former President Bruce Douglas, the faculty adopted a representative governance structure (Intro-8). As discussed under Core Component 1D, the current Faculty Council keeps the greater faculty constituency informed about Council issues.

4. Separation of Academic Programs into Two Schools

In 2007, the College divided its academic programs into two schools: the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies. With this change, an associate dean was appointed to represent each school. Figure I.2 lists academic majors by school.

[7] Number is unofficial at the time of this report's publication.

Figure I.2: Academic Majors by School

School of Liberal Arts and Sciences	School of Professional Studies
Art and Design	Art and Design with Education Licensure
Biology	Athletic Training
Chemistry	Biology with Education Licensure
Christian Ministries	Business Administration
Communication and Theatre Arts	Chemistry with Education Licensure
English	Communication and Theatre Arts with Education Licensure
History	Elementary Education
Independent Interdisciplinary	English with Education Licensure
Mathematics	Exercise Science (with or without Education Licensure)
Music	History with Education Licensure
Psychology	Independent Interdisciplinary (depending on emphasis)
Theology	Mathematics with Education Licensure
	Music Education
	Sports Management

5. e.STERLING

In fall 2007, Sterling College began offering three degree-completion programs online through its newly created online learning division, e.Sterling. The program started its first session with sixteen students. It now has fifty-nine students enrolled in its programs. The division has of course necessitated additional staff and other resources. Increasing enrollment has matched the program's semester-by-semester projected increases, and e.Sterling is thus on course to be financially self-sufficient by the start of its second session in fall 2009 (Intro-9: CC2A-2, pgs. 17–18).

Because of miscommunication between the College and the Higher Learning Commission (explained in resource files Intro-10 and Intro-11), Sterling College did not initially seek HLC special approval to offer degree-completion programs in an online format. However, conversations with the College's new Higher Learning Commission liaison during the self-study process led the institution to submit a formal Change Request to Offer Online Degrees in January 2009 (Intro-10). In response to the Change Request, submitted by the College's Vice President for Academic Affairs, the College's HLC liaison wrote:

> Thank you for your correspondence of January 9, 2009 which followed our previous conversations about Sterling College's online degree completion instructional programs. The materials you provided recently via email detail the significant planning, financial resources, and other infrastructure in place to support these programs which are currently operational.
>
> My understanding is that due to unclear HLC policy and advice that Sterling College initiated three online degree completion programs with the understanding that it was in compliance with HLC policy. It is clear to me that Sterling College administration and staff were extensive in their efforts to ensure that the College was doing the right thing and that, due to a number of factors beyond the control of Sterling personnel, acted on information that was not well-

> articulated by HLC. I appreciate your efforts to keep the Commission informed of Sterling College's three current online degree completion programs, and I also appreciate your efforts to be sensitive to, and in compliance with, the approval status which your institution holds with the Commission.
>
> I am accepting your correspondence as official notification to the Commission about the online degree completion activity and see no compelling reason to cease this activity at this time. I am recommending that the peer review team scheduled to visit Sterling College this coming December confirm Sterling College's ability to offer quality online instruction and make an official recommendation about the approval status for Sterling College regarding online instructional activity. (Intro-11)

As implied in its formal Change Request, the College thus seeks the December 2009 visit team's confirmation of the College's "ability to offer quality online instruction."

6. TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Just as it has on most other college campuses, technology use has changed drastically over the past ten years. Many of the College's recent technological improvements are highlighted throughout this report, but three are worth mentioning as significant changes since the last comprehensive visit:

- Over a two-year span beginning in 2006, the College became one of only a few Kansas colleges to offer free wireless Internet access to students and employees in 100% of its facilities.
- From 2006 to 2008, almost all major classrooms received state-of-the-art LCD projectors for computer-generated images.
- At the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year, all full-time faculty members received a new wireless laptop computer with a wireless keyboard, a wireless mouse, and an external 19-inch monitor.

Responses to Concerns of the 2000 Comprehensive Visit and the 2003 Focused Visit

Concerns from the NCA's visits in 2000 and 2003 involved five issues. Listed below are the concerns exactly as they are expressed in the visit reports. Following each concern is a summary of how the College has responded.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

From the 2000 Comprehensive Visit Report:

> Careful attention must be given to financial affairs in the following areas:
>
> a) the preparation of and adherence to a responsible institutional budget,
> b) production and dissemination of timely and accurate reports to proper constituencies;
> c) over-reliance on wills and estates to balance the budget,
> d) short-term borrowing to cover pay-roll,
> e) small endowment,

> f) lack of written endowment spending policy,
> g) the magnitude of the tuition discounting (currently around 38%),
> h) the number of reportable conditions in the auditor's management letter. (GD14, pg. 26)

Responses:
The College has implemented new procedures and techniques in the preparation of the budget. The President's Cabinet is involved at each stage of budget deliberation. During the deliberation process, expenses are evaluated for legitimacy and accuracy, revenue sources are identified, and attainable goals are set for gift income and tuition (the two main sources of revenue). Discount and retention rates are forecast and calculated into the budget. The budget is adjusted throughout the summer months as enrollment, retention rates, and discount rates change.

a) Departmental budgets are evaluated monthly by the Chief Financial Officer and reviewed with Cabinet members and/or department directors.
b) The College's leaders agree that the College should not rely on wills and estates to balance the budget, and it has taken steps to address the issue. First, the College has decreased its gift income budget to reflect a more accurate projection of funds that realistically can be raised in a year. Leaders are also making safe projections on annual revenue received specifically from wills and estates, in most cases basing projections on wills and estates that are already in the process of distribution and closing. Finally, the College is communicating with donors that it does not wish to rely on wills and estates to meet annual needs, thereby using the challenge as a marketing vehicle to secure increased philanthropic support.
c) A line of credit has been established, serving as working capital for the operational needs of the College. This short-term debt is paid to zero during the fiscal year.
d) Because of the size of the endowment, the College has elected to exclude the reliance upon its earnings as a revenue source for the current year and the most recent fiscal years. The College may elect, based upon Board approval, to request a draw on earnings, but the endowment has not been included as a revenue source.
e) In the audit year of 2004–2005, the College created the Sterling College Endowment and Management Operation Policy (SCEMOP) (Intro-12). Minor revisions were made to the document in the 2006–2007 audit year, and it is currently being reviewed in light of the global recession. The document articulates that "all endowment funds support the Mission of Sterling College: *to develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith*" (Intro-12). SCEMOP establishes institutional regulations about general endowment operations, management of endowed chairs, and management of endowed scholarships.
f) The effect of discount on the revenue stream of the College is a known figure. As the discount rate changes, the correlated effect is calculated into the budget. Discount rate reports are developed regularly by the Financial Aid Office and distributed to members of the President's Cabinet.
g) The number of reportable conditions in the auditor's report continues to decline (GD09; CC2B-12).

ASSESSMENT
From the 2000 Comprehensive Visit Report

> Although the college has made progress in the area of assessment, it still has not determined how it will assess either its general education component or some of the components of the mission statement. Furthermore, the assessment

> perspective needs to be more broadly embraced across the campus, and more useful data should be collected, summarized and strategically utilized for institutional and curricular change. (GD14, pg. 26)

Response:
After the 2000 comprehensive visit, the College developed an assessment plan that had the following data-collection characteristics:

- evaluation of general education outcomes
- use of both nationally normed tests and locally developed instruments
- use of instruments that were common across all academic programs
- collection of information that included data about knowledge, skills, and values components

The plan implemented in 2001 addressed all specific concerns from the 2000 comprehensive review team visit:

- The collected data were efficiently summarized across academic programs.
- A parallel and equitable distribution of objectives existed across all academic programs.
- A significant portion of the data was nationally normed—for general education as well as academic majors.
- Data were used to produce demonstrable changes in programs.

The plan included productive feedback cycles between departmental units and the Assessment Committee, and the plan was embraced by faculty and understood across campus. The 2003 focused-visit team affirmed the College's assessment efforts, noting, "The progress that Sterling College has made since the fall of 2000 in developing and implementing an assessment plan that over time can lead to program improvement is significant" (GD15, pg. 29). Annual reports from the assessment plan are available in resource folder GD16.

With the former Assessment Director's resignation[8] coinciding with discussion about the College's 2010 comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, the transition period served as a logical time to closely review the College's assessment plan. The Higher Learning Commission adopted newer criteria in 2004, after the 2003 focused-visit team noted the College's improvement in the area of assessment. In reviewing the new *Handbook of Accreditation*, Core Component 3A was cause for concern. Sterling College had experienced great success in assessing knowledge, skills, and values common to the general education curriculum and each academic discipline, but the plan did not provide direction about how to assess learning outcomes that might be unique to Sterling College's programs. Consequently, a new assessment plan was phased in, starting in fall 2007 (GD10). Detailed information about the transition between the two plans is located under Core Components 2C, 3A, and 4B.

When the previous Assessment Director resigned from his assessment duties in fall 2007, the College did not immediately fill the assessment position. A new director, appointed in summer 2008, was asked to co-coordinate the institutional self study and serve as the self-study report writer while also implementing the new plan. Because of the new director's workload during a

[8] The Assessment Director is still a Sterling College faculty member—he resigned as the Assessment Director only.

self-study year, the transition between assessment plans has not been as swift as he hoped it would be. However, the new director is confident that the new plan will help improve student learning and foster greater attention to the importance of student learning outcomes at every level.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION
From the 2000 Comprehensive Visit Report

- The college has a history of uneven or declining numbers of new students.
- The college does not have a thoughtful, systematic, vigorous and coordinated plan to address student attrition.
- There is significant faculty and administrative turnover. Causes must be examined for this problem, and solutions must be generated that include continued salary adjustments and the integration of new faculty into the campus ethos. (GD14, pg. 26)

From the 2003 Focused Visit Report

> The College must increase its enrollments to be financially viable over time. (GD15, pg. 30)

Response:
As already mentioned, the College has experienced significant enrollment growth since fall 2006. Figure I.3 demonstrates the positive enrollment trend since the last comprehensive visit. The College has increased its enrollment by almost 200 students since 2001.

Figure I.3: Enrollment History (CC2A-7)

Fall Semester	Overall Headcount	FTE[9]
2009[10]	722	655
2008	653	616.7
2007	619	573.8
2006	607	559
2005	516	459
2004	487	454
2003	495	454
2002	466	443
2001	461	448

As Figure I.4 demonstrates, the overall retention rate of students has neither increased nor decreased significantly since fall 2001. The average fall-to-fall retention rate for years 2001–2009 is 76%.

[9] FTE is calculated with the method used by the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas. Figures are based on full-time enrollment plus the total number of credit hours taken by part-time students, divided by 12.
[10] Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.

Figure I.4: Student Retention Percentages (Full- and Part-time Students) (CC5D-11)

Period	Retention Rate
Fall 2001–Fall 2002	76%
Fall 2002–Fall 2003	73%
Fall 2003–Fall 2004	73%
Fall 2004–Fall 2005	73%
Fall 2005–Fall 2006	76%
Fall 2006–Fall 2007	67%
Fall 2007–Fall 2008	73%

Naturally, fall-to-spring retention rates are much higher. The average fall-to-spring retention percentage for fall 2001 through spring 2009 is 88% (CC5D-12).

With funding from its Title III grant in 2006, the College hired a Director of Academic Effectiveness to research retention issues and make recommendations about how to better serve students. The individual who initially filled the position now serves as Vice President for Student Life and therefore brings strong retention knowledge and sensitivities to the President's Cabinet and to Student Life leadership.

While enrollment increases have improved the institution's financial viability, they have at times involved some risk, for students who were not good "mission fits" or who did not fit the College's ideal academic profile have been a part of those increases. The fall 2006–fall 2007 drop in the retention rate, as demonstrated in Figure I.4 above, may underscore the problem. However, the Vice President for Student Life has worked especially hard to retain such students. In 2007 she worked closely with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Support Office on an aggressive plan to support students who are either admitted on or fall onto academic probation. Since implementing the plan, the retention rate of these students has increased significantly. While other retention initiatives were initiated at about the same time, the College believes its aggressive support of these students has made a difference. From 2000 to 2006, the average fall-to-spring retention rate of first-time, full-time probationary students was approximately 64%. For the past two academic years, the fall-to-spring retention rate of probationary students has been 78%. The spring-to-following-academic-year retention rate of the same group of students was approximately 40% from 2000 to 2006. If fall 2009 projections are accurate, the spring-to-following-academic-year retention rate of these students since the plan was implemented will be approximately 60%. (See Figure 4.16 under Core Component 4D.)

The following initiatives also reflect the College's efforts to improve student retention:

- the administration of the College Student Inventory, which helps faculty and staff identify students who might have low academic motivation or otherwise need customized support
- the implementation of the Three-Week Academic Alert Program
- the implementation of an attendance-tracking plan for students on academic probation
- the development of the community "host family" program
- weekly meetings between the Vice President for Student Life and each residence hall director in which resident directors share concerns about students who could benefit from extra support

- the implementation of a plan to monitor students performing poorly at the mid-term point in a semester
- end-of-semester calls from the President's Cabinet members to students' parents

More information about student retention plans, goals, and initiatives is available in resource folder Intro-13.

Regarding faculty and administrative turnover, the College has made a great deal of progress in the past two years. New presidential leadership often creates some administrative turnover, and such turnover occurred in the early and middle parts of the decade. However, the College's current president, who came to the institution in January 2009, has not made any changes to his Cabinet except for filling the vacant position of Vice President for Institutional Advancement and permanently eliminating a Cabinet position when the Chief Administration Officer announced his retirement in summer 2009. The position was conceived as a temporary one and was largely a CFO role. With the College now employing a qualified, full-time CFO, the CAO's resignation prompted a logical restructuring of the President's Cabinet.

Faculty retention has improved in recent years as well. From academic years 2004–2005 to 2006–2007, the College lost an average of eight faculty members per year. Not all faculty retention issues were due to dissatisfaction with Sterling College, and although the institution's low average salary for faculty is certainly an issue about which administrators are aware, some faculty members left because of retirement or because their contracts were not renewed. More recently, however, the faculty retention rate has improved dramatically. After the 2007–2008 academic year, the College lost only four faculty members, and it will have a 100% faculty retention rate from spring 2009 to fall 2009 (CC5D-13).

OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES REGARDING INSTITUTIONAL VISION

From the 2003 Focused Visit Report

> The college must give greater attention to operations and processes required to carry out the college's vision. (GD15, pg. 30)

Response:

The 2003 focused-visit report does not provide context for this concern, which is actually listed as a "challenge." Given the statement's use of the word *vision*, rather than *mission*, the College assumes the challenge was meant to encourage greater attention to servant-leadership development, for the Sterling College vision is to become "the finest Christ-centered, servant leadership development-focused, liberal arts experience in the Great Plains."

In an effort to realize its vision, the College has 1) significantly increased the number of mission trips it offers to its students (CC3C-27); 2) created a budget for the servant leadership curriculum (CC2D-1), and 3) revised GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which all students are required to complete during their first semester at the College (CC1C-5). The College could still benefit from servant-leadership development training for faculty and staff, and the general education curriculum could be more thorough in its approach to the "civic responsibility" learning objective, which is closely associated with servant leadership.

FACILITY AGING
From the 2000 Comprehensive Visit Report

> Portions of the campus are aging and due to deferred maintenance are not adequate for future aspirations. (GD14, pg. 26)

The College has made many capital improvements since its last comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, the most significant being the renovation of Cooper Hall. In 2003, thanks in large part to the generous gift of $2.3 million from M.D. and Mary McVay, the building was completely renovated (Intro-7). Other improvements, many of them listed below, were made possible by the refinancing of Cooper Hall in 2007, which resulted in a $1.5 million bond for capital improvements (Intro-14):

- the addition of air conditioning in McCreery Hall, a women's dormitory
- new bathrooms in Campbell Hall, a men's dormitory
- remodeling of the dining hall to allow more dining space
- the addition of two new dormitories
- the renovation of the College's football stadium, track, and field
- new offices for Exercise Science faculty in the Gleason Physical Education Center
- new classrooms and a remodeled gallery in the Art Center
- the renovation of the second floor of Wilson Hall
- new equipment for Culbertson Auditorium

The Self-Study Process

The self-study process began in October 2007 when the Vice President for Academic Affairs invited key employees to serve on the original steering committee (Intro-15). This original committee was chosen carefully to ensure broad representation of internal constituents.

Before the steering committee met for the first time, the co-coordinators spent a few months reading accreditation-related information from the Higher Learning Commission and familiarizing themselves with the self-study process. The steering committee then met for the first time in March 2008 and agreed to meet twice per month for an indefinite amount of time.

The original plan for the self-study process involved the steering committee discussing each accreditation criterion and being responsible for collecting evidence from various units and individuals on campus. After two meetings, however, the self-study coordinators attended the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Conference in Chicago and quickly realized that the study needed much broader campus involvement. The coordinators agreed that the entire campus should be more intricately involved in the process, and they returned from Chicago with a new approach. Upon returning from the conference, they presented the new plan to the Board of Trustees at its April 2008 meeting (Intro-16).

In May 2008, the self-study coordinators explained the self-study process to all faculty and staff at a mandatory school assembly (Intro-17). At this assembly, employees were asked to sign up to participate on various committees. Nine committees were established: five to address accreditation criteria, one to address compliance with federal regulations, one to address the Higher Learning Commission's concerns from previous visits, one to coordinate the electronic and physical resource room that will supplement the bound report, and one to address the peer-

review team's accommodation needs prior to and during their comprehensive visit. Students, Board members, and key community members were also asked to serve on various committees.

Once the major committees were established, sub-committees were formed to address Core Components within criteria. At this time, the steering committee was expanded to include the Criterion chairs and the chairs of the Resource Room and Federal Compliance committees. A complete committee list is located in Appendix B, and the self-study timeline is included in resource file Intro-18.

Throughout August and September of 2008, the College's Director of Institutional Assessment, who served as a study co-coordinator and the report's writer, trained almost every self-study participant to use "electronic workspaces" that allowed for easy collaboration and the sharing of information. These workspaces were designed in the learning management system called Moodle. A workspace was created for each committee. Each workspace included the following:

- Links to other schools' self-study reports. The campus community found other schools' reports quite helpful.
- Examples of documents that might be used as evidence to prove the College is meeting accreditation criteria.
- A link to the *Handbook for Accreditation*, published by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.
- Two other helpful documents from the Higher Learning Commission: "The Challenge of Evidence and Evaluative Writing: A Practical Lesson" and "Selected Comments on Evidence/Analysis for the Criteria." These documents were presented at the 113th Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission by Robert Appleson, Associate Director of Accreditation at the Commission.
- Electronic discussion/announcement forums.
- Electronic "notebooks" (wikis) for each Core Component committee. These "notebooks" allowed committees to compile evidence and write rough drafts of reports. (Intro-19)

During the workspace training sessions, the Director of Institutional Assessment also reiterated much of what was explained at the May 2008 all-school assembly and provided committees with more information about accreditation and the self-study process. Committee members were alerted to each Core Component's "Examples of Evidence" in the Higher Learning Commission's *Handbook for Accreditation*, but they were given the freedom to either follow the examples directly or simply use them as a starting point for addressing the main Core Component statements. The Director of Institutional Assessment informed participants that all information should be collected by December 2008 so that he could write/compile the report during spring and summer 2009.

After the Core Component committees wrote rough drafts of their respective report sections, the Director of Institutional Assessment spent the spring semester of 2009 and most of the summer editing the information. The steering committee met every two weeks throughout the spring semester to review each draft and discuss relevant issues, and it met throughout the summer as appropriate (Intro-20).

The report was submitted to the president and the campus community for final approval in August, and advertising for third-party comment regarding the College's comprehensive visit for

reaccreditation is scheduled to begin in mid-to late September. The College will advertise the visit on its Web site, in *The Bulletin* (the community newspaper), and in the *Hutchinson News* (GD20). Hutchinson is the area's largest city and is located approximately twenty miles southeast of Sterling. In February 2009, *The Stir* printed a story about the College's upcoming reaccreditation visit (Intro-21). *The Stir* is the College's student newspaper, but it is published as an insert in *The Bulletin*.

Goals of the Self Study

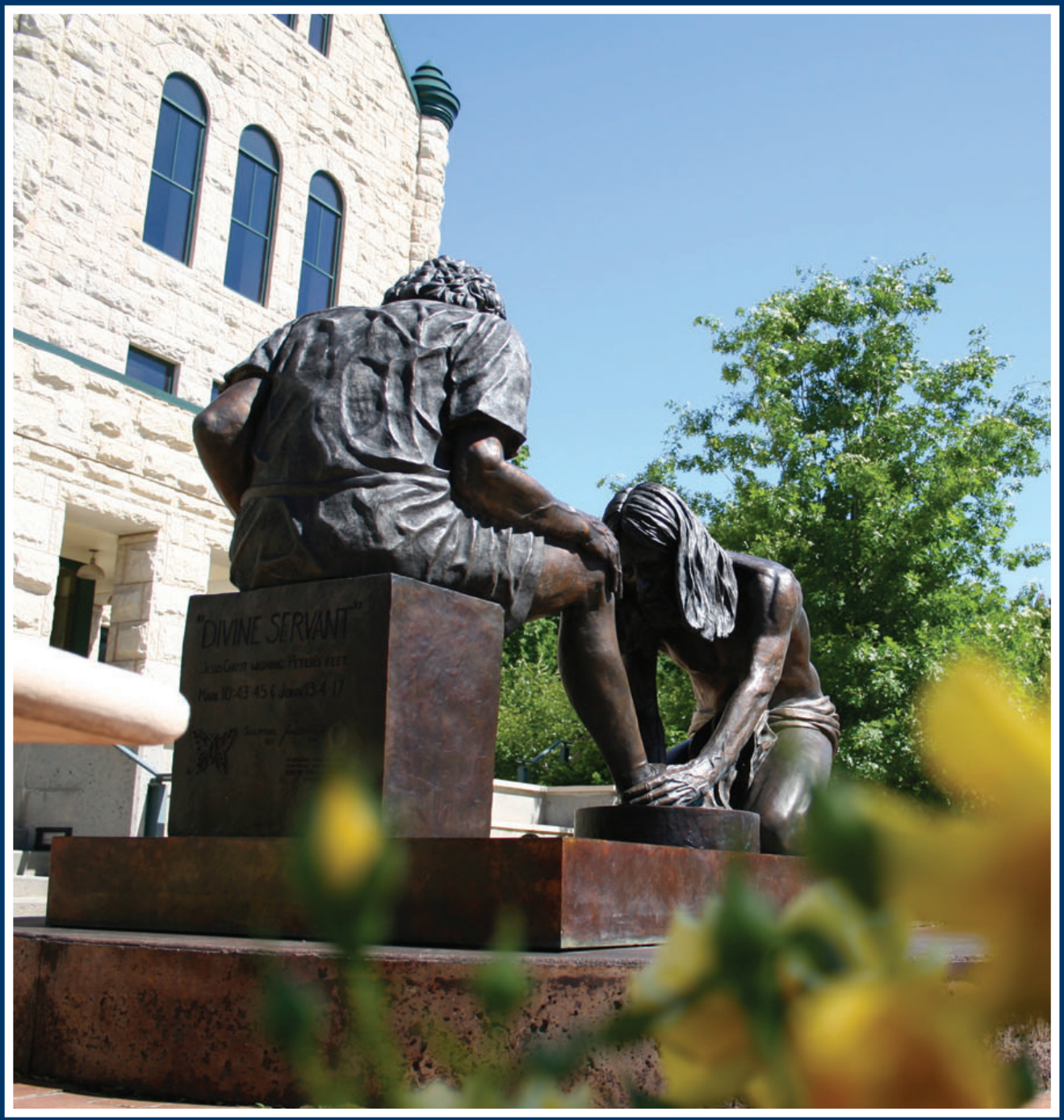
Sterling College's self study had two main purposes and a number of other goals. One of the main purposes was to examine the College's success in meeting accreditation criteria. Because the Higher Learning Commission's criteria are designed to help institutions be genuinely self-reflective, however, another main purpose was to utilize that design to help the College identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition to the main purposes, six other goals informed the self-study process. These goals underscore the College's desire to maximize the self study's effectiveness on the institution and utilize its conclusions in the coming years:

1. Identify opportunities to help the College grow and thrive.
2. Improve organizational understanding about the importance of continuous improvement processes.
3. Create and implement more continuous improvement processes.
4. Foster a stronger organizational commitment to alignment between institutional activities and the mission statement.
5. Foster a stronger organizational commitment to a culture of evidence ("prove" that the institution is doing what it claims to do).
6. Improve data-collection processes to better inform continuous improvement efforts, decision-making, resource acquisition, and resource allocation.

The Board of Trustees approved these six goals at their October 2008 meeting (Intro-22). Many of the goals have been or are currently being realized through the College's new Assessment Plan, which was revised in 2008 with the Higher Learning Commission's newer accreditation criteria in mind. The Assessment Plan is discussed in detail throughout this report.

Chapter One
Mission and Integrity



CHAPTER ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

Sterling College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Integrity is one of six Sterling College core values, and the College has formally adopted the position that integrity must be evident in "scholarship, the arts, athletics, and all other co-curricular activities." To be an organization in which integrity is fundamental in all activities and processes, all organizational constituencies must not only know and value the stated mission but also incorporate it into their work.

This chapter contains information about how Sterling College constituencies help ensure that the College fulfills its mission and does so with integrity. Moreover, this chapter illustrates how the College has recently made strides to improve the alignment between mission and activities. Thoughtful Board review of mission documents, curricular alignment matrices in which mission components are aligned with academic program goals, student organization goals that complement the institutional mission, and administrative planning designed around mission fulfillment are just a few examples of how various constituencies work to help the College achieve its stated purposes.

Core Component 1A: Sterling College's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

During the 2008–2009 academic year, the College's Board of Trustees reviewed all mission documents. The Board reaffirmed the essence of all mission documents and made minor changes to four of them. Two of the documents—"Our Faith" and "Our Beliefs"—were formally combined into a single document and slightly revised. The document titled "Our Relationships" was updated for accuracy, as was the vision statement. The processes of reaffirmation and revision are described below each mission document in this section.

STERLING COLLEGE'S MISSION STATEMENT ARTICULATES THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS THE COLLEGE SEEKS TO DEVELOP IN STUDENTS AND IDENTIFIES THE INSTITUTION AS A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.

Our Mission

> To develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith

The current mission statement was unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees during its February 1991 meeting (CC1A-1). The "creative and thoughtful leaders" aspect of the mission underscores the organization's purpose as an institution of higher learning. That is, the school views creative and thoughtful leadership as a quality of an individual educated through a liberal arts curriculum. The "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the mission communicates to the public that the College's academic priorities are framed in a Christian context. The Board of Trustees reaffirmed the mission statement in February 2009 (CC1A-2).

THE STERLING COLLEGE VISION STATEMENT COMMUNICATES THE ORGANIZATION'S IDENTITY AS A CHRIST-CENTERED, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE THAT VALUES AND PROMOTES SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

Our Vision

To be recognized as the finest Christ-centered, servant leadership development-focused, liberal arts experience in the Great Plains

Reaffirmed with a slight modification at the February 2009 Board meeting (CC1A-2), the College's vision statement was originally adopted in October 1998 (CC1A-3; CC1A-4, pg. 19). Since the vision statement was first embraced, servant leadership has become an integral part of the Sterling College experience. While the College has almost continually reviewed and revised the servant-leadership aspect of its curriculum, the vision statement identifies servant leadership as a priority that helps define the College's mission.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES ALIGN WITH THE MISSION AND PUBLICLY STATE THE GOALS FOR LEARNING TO BE ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS.

Institutional Learning Objectives

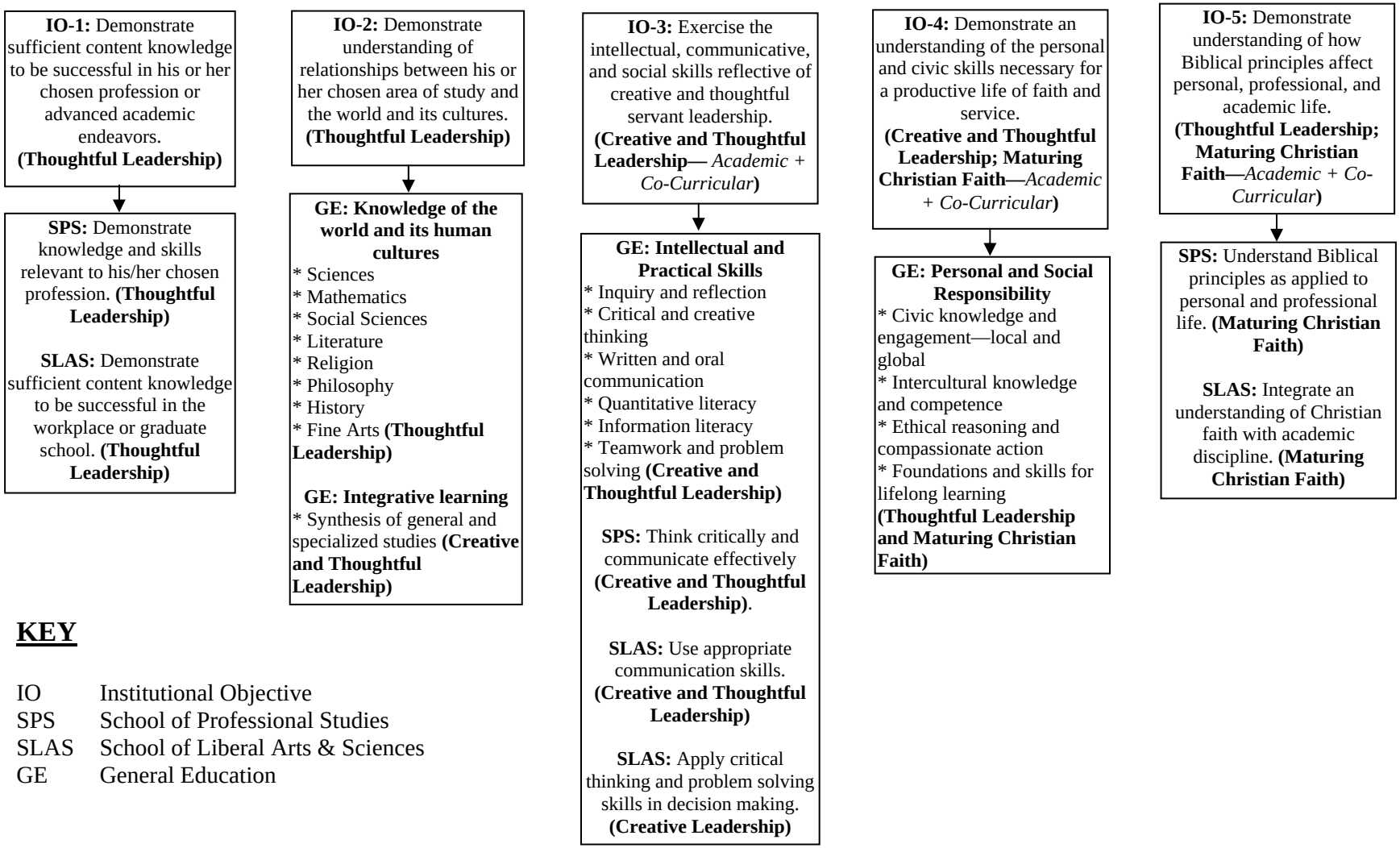
The Sterling College graduate will:

1. Demonstrate sufficient content knowledge to be successful in his or her chosen profession or advanced academic endeavors.
2. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between his or her chosen area of study and the world and its cultures.
3. Exercise the intellectual, communicative, and social skills reflective of creative and thoughtful servant leadership.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the personal and civic skills necessary for a productive life of faith and service.
5. Demonstrate understanding of how Biblical principles affect personal, professional, and academic life.

Collectively, the institutional learning objectives underscore the College's commitment to the high academic standards necessary for sustaining and advancing excellence in higher education. They also formally and publicly state the student learning goals for which the College holds itself accountable. The Board of Trustees formally adopted the institutional learning objectives at its October 2008 meeting (CC1A-5). Figure 1.1 on the following page illustrates how the institutional learning objectives align with the mission, the objectives from the general education program, and the objectives from the College's two schools.

Figure 1.1: Alignment of High-Level Learning Objectives

The Sterling College graduate will:



KEY

IO	Institutional Objective
SPS	School of Professional Studies
SLAS	School of Liberal Arts & Sciences
GE	General Education

STERLING COLLEGE'S CORE VALUES HELP CLEARLY AND BROADLY DEFINE THE MISSION, IDENTIFY THE VARIED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES TO BE SERVED, AND ACCENTUATE A COMMITMENT TO HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

Our Core Values

In active, vital partnership with church, community and strategic partners, and ever striving for first-class quality in all that it does, the Sterling College community will be guided in all its work by the following intrinsic values:

- ***Faith:*** *Faithful discernment of and response to God's self-revelation in Christ in Scripture*
- ***Calling:*** *Faithful discovery and pursuit of each person's particular calling in life*
- ***Learning:*** *A love of learning and a dedication to the pursuit of truth*
- ***Integrity:*** *Integrity in scholarship, the arts, athletics, and all other co-curricular activities*
- ***Service:*** *Faithful practice of redemptive servant leadership involving a vision of wholeness in a broken world*
- ***Community:*** *Mutual respect amid diversity as members of the body of Christ*

The College's core values were formally adopted by the Board of Trustees at the February 2000 Board meeting (CC1A-6) and reaffirmed at the February 2009 meeting (CC1A-7). As implied in the organizational definitions of the core values:

- *Faith* helps to further define the organization's mission as a Christian college;
- *Calling* makes clear that the College is committed to its most important internal constituency—its students;
- *Learning* and *Integrity* underscore the College's commitment to high academic standards; and
- *Service* informs the public that the College exists ultimately for society's benefit and acknowledges society in general as an external constituency.

The introductory pledge by which the core values are framed not only acknowledges the need for integrity and quality but further declares the College's sensitivity to its role in a larger society. By identifying "church, community, and strategic partners" as external constituencies, the College publicly declares a responsibility to build and maintain relationships with these important stakeholders and serve them.

THE COLLEGE'S STATEMENT OF FAITH IS CLEAR AND IT FURTHER DEFINES THE INSTITUTION'S IDENTITY AND PURPOSE AS A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.

Our Statement of Faith

The board, faculty, administration and staff possess an active and visible Christian faith which encourages the entire campus community in our pursuit of a wholesome and practical Christian life. We personally trust in and collectively bear witness to the one, eternal God, revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- We believe in God the Father who created the heavens and the earth.
- We believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus suffered, died, and was buried. He rose from the dead. Jesus ascended into heaven and remains with the Father and the Holy Spirit to judge the living and the dead. Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life. There is salvation in and through no other.
- We believe in God the Holy Spirit who is the comforter, sustainer and sanctifier of all who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- We believe that humanity has hope for redemption from sin by Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. It is by God's grace alone that we joyfully receive our salvation through a personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the Bible is God's revealed Word. It is authoritative and infallible in all matters of faith and practice.
- We believe that the Church is the body of Christ and God's witness in the world.
- We believe that Jesus Christ will return and claim his own, ushering in the new heaven and new earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign forever.

While the College respects the theological diversity within the Christian community, it is unapologetic about its role as an institution guided by teachings of the Reformed Christian tradition. These guiding principles are specifically articulated in the College's statement of faith, which further defines the organization's mission.

At its February 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees reviewed previously adopted mission documents titled "Our Faith" and "Our Beliefs," which can be found in resource file CC1A-8. The document titled "Our Faith" was originally adopted in 1991 (CC1A-1), and the document titled "Our Beliefs" was adopted in 2002 (CC1A-9). Because having separate documents about "faith" and "belief" seemed redundant, the Board Chair appointed a task force to further review the documents (CC1A-10). Between the February and April 2009 Board meetings, the task committee, comprised of four trustees and the College's president, combined the former documents to produce the statement of faith above. In April 2009 the Board unanimously approved the statement and voted to include it the *Sterling College Bylaws* (CC1A-11).

The College's statement of faith is foundational in the assessment of how well it develops leaders who "understand a maturing Christian faith." As discussed under Core Component 4B, the College's definition of faith is the basis for maturing-Christian-faith-related items on the Sterling College General Education Exam, which is administered to first-year students and graduating seniors.

THE COLLEGE'S FORMAL STATEMENT CONCERNING ITS OPERATIONAL PROCESS CLEARLY CONVEYS INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND A COMMITMENT TO HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

Our Process

The College works to achieve its priorities through the learning experiences of the liberal arts curriculum, faculty/student interactions, and a residential lifestyle. The liberal arts curriculum is designed to build breadth and depth of understanding through a general education core, specialization in a major, and attention within majors to career preparation. The College affirms the primacy of the faculty/student relationship and the importance of excellence in instruction and advising. Relationships of faculty to students are built around principles of serving, mentoring, modeling, and discipleship. The Campus lifestyle is designed to provide a unifying community experience for social, educational and faith development.

The College's statement of educational process was also reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees at its February 2009 meeting (CC1A-12). Like the mission statement and other documents, the process document was originally adopted in 1991 (CC1A-1). Included in this document are a number of statements that provide information about institutional identity.

- The College is a liberal arts institution.
- The College is primarily a residential institution.
- The College places value on faculty/student interaction and relationships.
- Faculty members are expected to model service.
- The institution values community, and community life is designed for social, educational, and faith development.

The document also articulates the College's commitment to high academic standards. Faculty are expected to maintain these standards not only through "excellence in instruction and advising" but also through "serving, mentoring, modeling, and discipleship." The College's core value of *service* is thus more than a value unto itself—it is a part of academic excellence.

THE COLLEGE'S FORMAL STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES ARTICULATES THE FRAMEWORK BY WHICH THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION IS FULFILLED AND IDENTIFIES BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES.

Our Priorities

Sterling College is committed to an environment of academic excitement in the Reformed tradition of a thorough exploration of all truth in the light of God's Word. An enthusiastic Christian faith and experience permeate all aspects of the College life. Activities are designed to encourage and develop the skills necessary to understand our world and to create positive change in it. Specifically, we seek to build within our students creativity, critical thinking, effective communication and leadership for use in the workplace as well as in the community, church and home. We seek to cultivate a Christ-centered world view through which students are able to explore and understand themselves, their faith, their environment, and their heritage. We further strive to foster the values of independent inquiry, a thirst for life-long learning, emotional maturity, positive self-worth, and an understanding of a maturing Christian faith that provides the foundation and meaning for life.

The mission document titled "Our Priorities," originally adopted in 1991 (CC1A-1) and reaffirmed by the Board in February 2009 (CC1A-12), serves as a compass by which the College operates and fulfills its mission. Declaring a commitment to the development of creativity, thoughtfulness, leadership, and maturing Christian faith, the priorities underscore and further explain the mission of Sterling College. The priorities also emphasize that students are the fundamental internal constituency while simultaneously acknowledging a responsibility to serve the world in which it operates, for students are to "develop the skills necessary to understand our world *and create positive change in it*."

THE COLLEGE'S FORMAL STATEMENT CONCERNING ITS RELATIONSHIPS ACCENTUATES ITS CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT.

Our Relationships

> Founded in 1887 by the Synod of Kansas of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, Sterling College continues to affirm its historical ties with the Reformed tradition. As an institution, the College nurtures and develops strategic partnerships within the Presbyterian Church (USA), and with evangelical organizations, in order to advance the mission and vision of the College. Accountability for the College's mission and vision rests in governance by an independent self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. Sterling College holds strong the mandate of the original charter to be "thoroughly Christian, but not in any sense sectarian." The diversity of God's people is welcomed and the College respects the differences in denominational distinctives and worship traditions.

The Board of Trustees voted to slightly revise "Our Relationships" at its April 2009 meeting (CC1A-13). In 1993 Sterling College entered into a "covenant relationship" with the Presbyterian Church (USA) (CC1A-14), and language in the document titled "Our Relationships" affirmed that covenant. In 1997, the covenant relationship contractually expired (CC1A-14) and was never renewed; however, language in the "Our Relationships" document continued to suggest that the College indeed had a covenant relationship with the PC (USA). (See resource file CC1A-15 for a copy of the "Our Relationships" document before it was revised). At its meeting in February of 2009, the chair of the Board of Trustees appointed the same task force that was charged with examining the College's statements of "faith" and "belief" to revise "Our Relationships" and make the document current and accurate (CC1A-13). In April 2009, the task committee submitted the version above, and the document was approved by the Board (CC1A-16). Instead of stating that the College has a "covenant relationship" with the PC (USA), the "Our Relationships" document now indicates that "the College nurtures and develops strategic partnerships within the Presbyterian Church (USA)."

Although it no longer maintains a formal, legal relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the College proudly acknowledges the influence of the Presbyterian tradition on its foundation and development. At the same time, the relationships document affirms that the College is first and foremost a Christian institution and is in no sense "sectarian."

THE MISSION DOCUMENTS ARTICULATE THE COLLEGE'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING. Sterling College's impact on its students and on society would be only minimal if it did not promote lifelong learning as a virtue. The institution's commitment to developing lifelong learning skills is inherent in its very mission: the goal to develop in students a

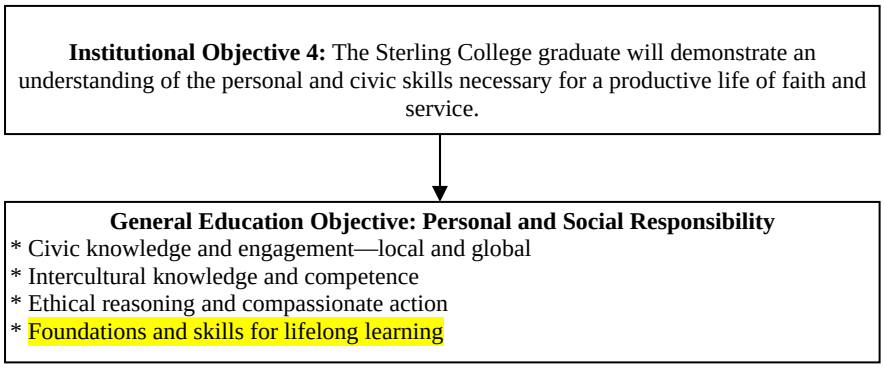
"*maturing* Christian faith" underscores the College's recognition that faith development is a learning process that is never quite complete.

Other mission documents also highlight the College's concern with lifelong learning. In its core values, the College defines *learning* as "a love of learning and a dedication to the pursuit of truth." Instilling in students a "love" of learning certainly fosters lifelong learning habits, and the "pursuit of truth" is no doubt an endless pursuit.

The College's document titled "Our Priorities" articulates this commitment most directly. In its priorities, the College states that fostering "a thirst for life-long learning," among other values and characteristics, "provides the foundation and meaning for life." Thus, the promotion of lifelong learning skills and habits is fundamental to the College's goal of helping students live purpose-driven lives.

Finally, one of the College's institutional learning objectives operationally enables the development of lifelong learning skills and habits. Institutional objective 4 states that the Sterling College graduate will "demonstrate an understanding of the personal and civic skills necessary for a productive life of faith and service." As Figure 1.2 indicates, this objective aligns with a general education objective to develop "skills for lifelong learning."

Figure 1.2: Lifelong Learning in Institutional Objective 4



Through its mission documents, the College undoubtedly acknowledges a responsibility to promote lifelong learning habits. Relevant statements not only inform the general public of the institution's commitment to this value, they also influence curricular decisions via institutional learning objective 4.

THE MISSION DOCUMENTS ARE READILY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. The formal mission statement can be seen in a number of places on campus. Banners and signs containing the mission statement hang in a number of buildings, and the mission statement is framed in the hallway outside of the Admissions Office, allowing all prospective students and parents to see it. A plaque containing the mission, vision, and core values can also be found in many employees' offices.

Recently, the College has made an attempt to make the complete set of mission documents available in a number of places:

- The College Web site. (http://www.sterling.edu/about-sterling/mission-and-vision) (CC1A-17).

- The "What We Believe" brochure (CC1A-18), an important piece of literature that is given to prospective students and donors. The centerpiece of this brochure is a photograph of the "Divine Servant" statue, which sits in front of the entrance to the College's main building. The statue portrays Jesus washing the Apostle Peter's feet and consequently symbolizes the College's emphasis on servant leadership. Don Reed, Director of Gift Planning, offers the following anecdote about the clarity and effectiveness of the brochure:

  > In visiting a major foundation back east, the Executive Director was greatly impressed and spent some time expressing his absolute amazement that we would be so "bold and public" about declaring this "type" (Christ-centered) of leadership study on our campus. He was impressed with the picture in the brochure of how the "Divine Servant" statue of Christ washing the Apostle Peter's feet depicted the concept of service so clearly. His comments were very positive and supportive that a college would be teaching this concept to serve and care for other people and that we would have such a statue that so clearly set forth this concept. He stated how he appreciated our clear statements in the brochure and that these statements made it clear of this "alternative approach" to value-added education. (CC1A-19)

  Mr. Reed adds, "This brochure is probably the most effective piece of printed material that Advancement has had in the 35 years I have worked here. It both states our approach to the educational experience and identifies those who wish to support … 'value-added' education very quickly." (CC1A-19)

- The *Sterling College Academic Catalog*. The mission documents are included as front matter in the catalog, which is updated and revised annually. (GD 01, pgs. 5– 6)
- The *Sterling College Staff Handbook.* (GD03, pgs. 2–3)
- The *Sterling College Bylaws.* (GD04, pp 1–2)

The College is currently updating its *Faculty Handbook* (GD02). All mission documents will be included in the handbook when the revision is completed.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- Prior to the self study, the vision statement was expressed slightly differently in a couple of publications. The differences shed light on a lack of stated policy concerning changes in mission documents. The phrase "within a decade" was removed from the original statement for obvious reasons after a decade had passed. While the essence of the statement remained the same, the revision was made by a Cabinet-level administrator (no longer employed by the College) without the Board's consent. The College needs a policy and an alert system to inform internal constituencies

Strengths

- The mission documents' emphases on servant leadership communicate a **distinctive** aspect of the Sterling College experience.
- The mission documents are **learning-focused,** acknowledging students as the most important constituents and identifying the educational process and desired outcomes that inform the institution's decisions.
- The mission documents are clear and they accurately describe the campus environment.
- Mission alignment is strong within the

about revisions to mission documents.

- In its mission documents, the College could capitalize on the comprehensiveness of its new assessment plan and publicly declare its commitment to the assessment and continuous improvement of student learning.
- The College could also benefit from a stated policy about the publication of mission documents in their entirety. In previous years, a publication might contain most mission documents, but not all, while another publication might also contain most but *different* mission documents. Where multiple mission documents are published, such as in faculty and staff handbooks, they should perhaps all be published. As of May 2009, the College is in the process of publishing mission documents more consistently.
- The institution could benefit from a policy or standard practice of including the mission statement on large-circulation publications such as the viewbook and the alumni magazine.
- With the institution's emphasis on servant leadership, as expressed most explicitly in the vision statement, the College could possibly articulate its vision more accurately by adding the word *servant* to its formal mission statement. The mission statement would then read, "Developing creative and thoughtful *servant* leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." The issue warrants further discussion at the administrative level.

various mission documents. Each document helps further define the mission of the institution.

Core Component 1B: In its mission documents, Sterling College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

IN ITS INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ITS FORMAL STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES, STERLING COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS AND THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES. The College states in its mission document titled "Our Priorities" that its "activities are designed to encourage and develop the skills necessary to understand our world and create positive change in it." Understanding of the diverse world in which we live cannot occur without learning activities that promote understanding of such a diverse world. Operationally, Sterling College addresses this priority through learning activities aligned with institutional objectives. Objective 2 states that the Sterling College graduate will "demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between his or her chosen area of study and the world and its cultures." This objective communicates the College's commitment to helping learners function in a diverse culture. The College recognizes the responsibility to familiarize students with and teach them about cultural issues they may encounter while they work to create positive change in a diverse world.

The "Priorities" document states that the College seeks to "cultivate a Christ-centered world view through which students are able to explore and understand themselves, their faith, their *environment,* and their *heritage*" (emphases added). The College thus expresses its commitment to a student body that represents a number of environments and heritages.

Through its priorities and institutional learning objectives, Sterling College presents its function in a multicultural society and addresses diversity within the purposes it considers fundamental to its mission. Mission documents help ensure that the institution recognizes the diversity of its student body and prepares learners for life and work in a diverse world upon graduation.

IN THE CORE VALUES IT CONSIDERS FUNDAMENTAL TO ITS MISSION, STERLING COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS, OTHER CONSTITUENCIES, AND THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES. The Sterling College core values are framed and introduced by a pledge that underscores the organization's commitment to diversity. In its declaration to labor in "active, vital partnership with church, community, and strategic partners," the College not only acknowledges but also embraces its role in a diverse world. Recognizing that partnership with church, community, and strategic partners is "vital" implies an organizational awareness of diversity's importance, for these constituencies can surely be as diverse as the world itself.

Furthermore, the core value of *community* specifically recognizes the diversity of Sterling College learners and other internal constituencies, for the organization has defined this value as "mutual respect amid diversity as members of the body of Christ." Through this organizational definition, the College publicly welcomes the diversity represented within the campus community.

While the organizational definition of *community* emphasizes the importance of diversity, the College recognizes the limits of the definition when applied to its faculty, staff, and administration. According to Article VIII of the *Sterling College Bylaws,* the president is charged with hiring men and women who are "able to commit to and identify with the institution's stated Christian faith perspective and who demonstrate in their personal and professional life evidence of a lively and enduring relationship with Jesus Christ" (GD 04, pg. 6). The College does not,

however, expect the same demonstration of its students. It welcomes students who do not necessarily identify with the institution's Christian faith perspective, and the College's long tradition of welcoming these students is perhaps best addressed in its organizational definition of *calling*, another core value. By defining this value as "a faithful discovery and pursuit of each person's particular calling in life," Sterling College accepts a responsibility to honor the dignity and worth of all its learners, for a student's calling may be shaped by his or her cultural experiences. Commitment to the core value of *calling* also means that the institution must help students prepare for any number of workplace environments, many of which will be extremely diverse in nature.

IN ITS FORMAL STATEMENT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, STERLING COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES. As stated in the mission document titled "Our Process":

> The College works to achieve its priorities through the learning experiences of the liberal arts curriculum, faculty/student interactions, and a residential lifestyle. The liberal arts curriculum is designed to build breadth and depth of understanding through a general education core, specialization in a major, and attention within majors to career preparation.

A "breadth and depth of understanding" through a liberal arts curriculum is achieved through general education objectives, one of which addresses "intercultural knowledge and competence." While this general education objective is not presented to the public in a mission document, it is part of a broader general education goal of helping students learn about personal and social responsibility. Sterling College thus views the acquisition of intercultural knowledge and competence as part of an educated individual's responsibility. Graduates should employ intercultural knowledge to serve the greater society in which they live.

Although this general education objective is not public, an institutional-level learning objective, which is public, is informed by it. (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2.) The College's formal educational process thus provides a basis for the organization's basic strategies to address diversity.

IN ITS FORMAL STATEMENT CONCERNING ITS RELATIONSHIPS, STERLING COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS AND OTHER CONSTITUENCIES. Much of the content in Sterling College's mission documents has no doubt been informed by the mandate in the school's original charter to be "thoroughly Christian, but not in any sense sectarian," a declaration found in the current mission document titled "Our Relationships." While proud of its Presbyterian heritage, the College has a long history of welcoming both students and employees from different denominational backgrounds. As stated in the document titled "Our Relationships," "The diversity of God's people is welcomed and the College respects the differences in denominational distinctive and worship traditions." Moreover, the College welcomes students who do not personally identify with its identity as a faith-based institution.

IN ITS MISSION STATEMENT, STERLING COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES. All of the College's mission documents align with the institution's formal mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." While the mission speaks directly to student development and achievement, it implies that graduates will later serve their greater communities through leadership and a life of faith. Meeting the leadership challenges of such a diverse world certainly requires creativity and thoughtfulness, and the Sterling College curriculum, as summarized by the institutional objectives, equips students with knowledge about the world and its cultures.

Moreover, as students begin to "understand a maturing Christian faith," they should form the habit of seeing the world as the central figure of the Christian faith saw it. Jesus was no respecter of persons, and He saw a world in desperate need of love. This is a message that Sterling College students encounter numerous times, especially as they engage in required service projects. The College affirms that a "maturing Christian faith" responds to the needs of a broken and diverse world. Consequently, the College's mission statement recognizes the diversity of the greater society it serves.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

Opportunity

- The Sterling College Education Department does an excellent job of promoting instruction for different learning styles. Differentiated instruction is addressed especially well in instructional-methods courses required for students seeking teaching certification, but it is addressed in other courses as well. Because so many departments work closely with the Education Department to train teacher candidates, and because approximately one-third of Sterling College students pursue teacher certification, the College could easily strengthen its mission documents by adding statements about how it addresses different learning styles.

Strengths

- In various places, attention to diversity within the mission documents is **learning-focused**, underscoring that learning activities encourage understanding of diversity within the campus community and beyond.
- Institutional learning objective 2 simultaneously addresses diversity and **connectedness,** as it underscores the College's commitment to helping students understanding "relationships between [their] chosen area of study and the world and its cultures."
- The core values of Sterling College are encompassed by the overall commitment to being **connected** through "active, vital partnership with church, community, and strategic partners."
- The institutional value of "calling" encourages students to be **future-centered** through "faithful discovery and pursuit of [their] particular calling in life."

Core Component 1C: Understanding of and support for the Sterling College mission pervade the organization.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES UNDERSTANDS AND SUPPORTS THE MISSION. In winter 2009, Sterling College Board members were asked to respond to a short survey about their understanding of and support for the institutional mission. Of the 24 trustees, 18 participated in the survey. Survey results are summarized in Figures 1.3–1.6 (CC1C-1).

Figure 1.3: Factors Attracting Board Members to Board Positions

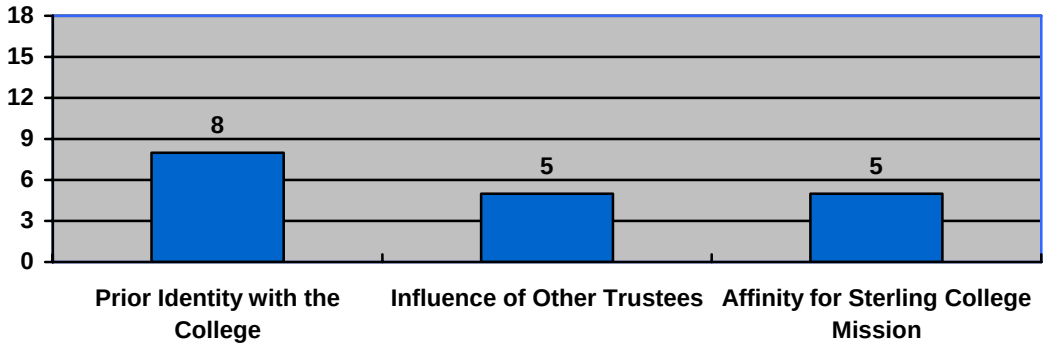


Figure 1.4: Degree to Which Trustees Feel Informed about the College Mission

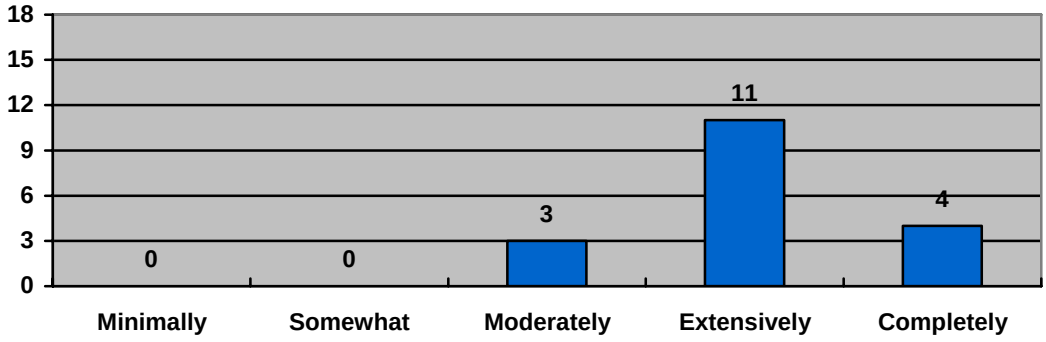
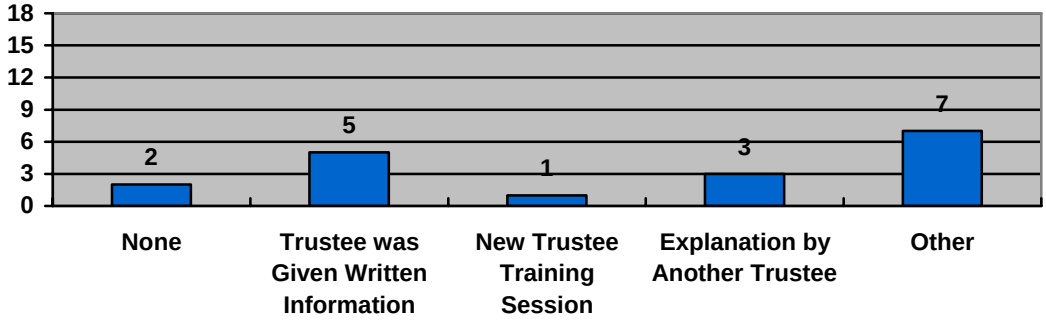


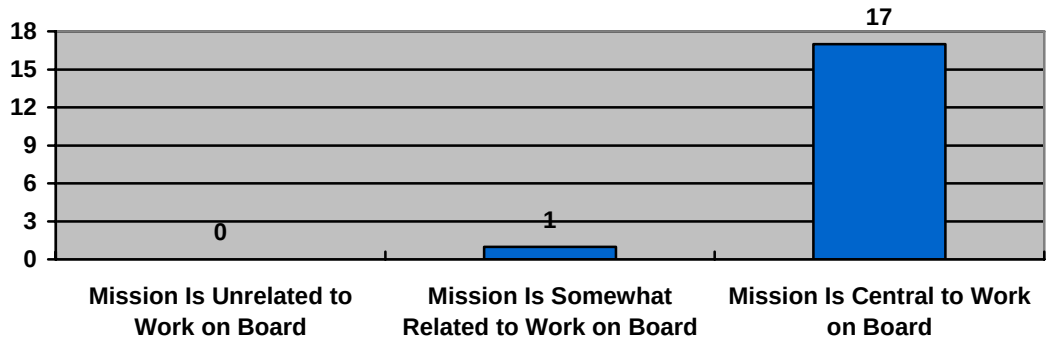
Figure 1.5: Methods by Which Trustees Learned about the Mission



Below are the comments from the trustees who answered "other" to the question regarding the methods by which they learned about the mission

- I and other Board members had small group meetings and individual discussions with the president and other key leaders, who gave us a very good understanding of goals.
- Being from Sterling, I was already aware of the history and mission.
- Because of my background I have a very good understanding of the history and mission of Sterling College.
- I received some information, and there was some orientation, but it was not formal. The most significant introduction came from participation on the Sterling Advisory Board for several years and a certain amount of interaction with the president at that time.
- I graduated from Sterling College, and I think it was assumed that I knew what I needed to know about the College.
- I already had a very good understanding of Sterling College.
- I was given a Board orientation manual and assigned a mentor.

Figure 1.6: Trustees' Perceptions about the Importance of the Mission



As the last figure indicates, trustees understand that the College mission should be central to their work on the Board. However, the survey results highlight areas for improvement. The degree to which trustees feel informed about the mission and the methods by which they learn about the mission can be improved by more intentional Board development and orientation processes. As discussed under Core Component 4A, the chair of the Board Development Committee is aware that a more standardized Board development process needs to be implemented, and the College's new president plans to formalize the orientation process.

The College's Board of Trustees is governed by the *Sterling College Bylaws*, and Article I of the *Bylaws* contains the College's mission documents (GD04, pgs. 1–2). Included in this article are the College's mission statement, vision statement, core values, statement of priorities, statements of process, statement of faith, and information about the institution's relationships. Like the *Bylaws* themselves, all mission documents have been approved by the College's Board. (See Core Component 1A.)

Article II of the *Bylaws* appropriately underscores the importance of Board members understanding and supporting the institutional mission. Recognizing the importance of the mission, the Board has approved Article II to read as follows:

> The position of Trustee at Sterling College is an active leadership position requiring wisdom, spiritual commitment, eagerness to work, and a willingness to

> share wealth. The responsibility of this position is to focus the mission for Sterling, to assure the financial integrity of the College, and to provide the necessary leadership to accomplish these objectives. Those elected to this position must be fully supportive of the mission and purpose of Sterling College and must affirm a personal commitment to its stated Christian faith perspective. (GD04, pg. 2)

Article III of the *Bylaws* addresses the specific powers granted to the trustees. The first power grants the Board authority to "determine and periodically review the mission and purpose of the College" (GD04, pg. 3). The College's current mission statement was adopted by the Board in February 1991 (CC1A-1). At its February 2009 meeting, the Board reaffirmed the College's mission statement (CC1A-2). At its October 2008 meeting, the Board expressed an eagerness to see how data from the College's new assessment plan addresses how the College meets its stated institutional objectives, which are anchored in the mission statement. When the first set of data under the new plan is presented, probably in October 2009, the Board will have valuable information about how the College is fulfilling its mission.

Article IV of the *Bylaws*, which addresses Board membership issues, makes clear that Board members must support the College's mission. According to Section 1:

> The Board of Trustees shall consist of persons able to affirm a personal commitment to and identification with the College's stated Christian faith perspective, educational objectives and mission. They should demonstrate personal and professional life evidence of a lively and enduring relationship with Jesus Christ. (GD04, pgs. 3–4)

Another Section of Article IV also underscores the Board's understanding that its members should value the mission. Section 8 states that "a minimum of twenty-five percent of the trustees shall be alumni of Sterling College" (GD04, pg. 4). Alumni who serve on the College's Board of Trustees are likely to have a deep-rooted passion for the mission. While the mission has changed over the years and Board members who are alumni might have studied under a different mission statement, the essence of the Sterling College mission, especially as it conveys a Christian faith commitment, has been the same for over 120 years.

In its *Bylaws*, the Board has also charged the President of the College with the task of hiring personnel who are "able to commit to and identify with the institution's stated Christian faith perspective and who demonstrate in their personal and professional life evidence of a lively and enduring relationship with Jesus Christ" (GD04, pg. 6). As an institution with a faith-related mission, the Board's hiring-related charge to the president is an important one.

Of course, Board members support the mission through their financial involvement with the College. During the 2007–2008 fiscal year, trustees were responsible for almost 24% of all giving to the College. Trustees were responsible for almost 17% of all giving in the 2008–2009 fiscal year. The percentage of trustee giving to the College's annual fund is generally much higher. During the 2007–2008 year, approximately 32% of the annual fund amount was contributed by the Board of Trustees. While the percentage of the annual fund contributed by the Board decreased in 2008–2009, trustee giving remains higher than it been historically (CC1C-2).

THE ADMINISTRATION UNDERSTANDS AND SUPPORTS THE MISSION. In addition to their formal support for the mission as addressed in the faculty and staff handbooks (referenced in more detail later in this section), administrators support the mission and demonstrate their understanding of it

when they make strategic decisions and set budgeting priorities**.** The Introduction to the *Sterling College 3-Year Strategic Plan* states that "the strategic plan of Sterling College is guided by the vision and mission statements of SC. It seeks to identify strategic initiatives and responses to changing conditions that will allow the school to move to a position of distinction among America's Christ-centered, liberal arts colleges" (GD05, pg. 5). The *Strategic Plan* is thus grounded in the College's mission. Its concern with the College attaining a place of distinction among "Christ-centered, liberal arts colleges" speaks to both the "creative and thoughtful leader" and "maturing Christian faith" aspects of the mission.

The specifics of the plan, driven by thirteen goals (GD05, pgs. 8-9), nine strategic initiatives (GD05, pgs. 10-14), and a number of action items that have been revised since the plan was adopted (CC2A-1), indicate the care that was taken to align strategic planning with the College's mission. One initiative involves recruiting "students who share the vision and mission of SC." Another involves designing the student application process "to emphasize Sterling's 'academically demanding, enthusiastically Christian' focus." Other initiatives, such as creating student activities to foster "interaction, growth and community" speak to core values such as *community* and *learning* (GD05, pg. 13).

The initiatives mentioned above concern students, and students are certainly the heart and soul of any college campus. However, in order for students to become creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith, the College must provide resources—human, technological, and fiscal—that enable students to become the leaders envisioned in the mission statement. To that end, members of the President's Cabinet have committed to several action items such as those listed below:

- hiring professors who enthusiastically embrace the College's mission
- measuring teaching effectiveness
- implementing servant leadership training
- helping professors redesign pedagogies
- expanding grant writing resources
- designing the application process to emphasize the College's mission
- establishing a Career Services office
- implementing a campus-wide education program to address social issues (CC2A-1)

The Sterling College administration is committed to providing the resources and strategic vision that will enable the development of creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith.

THE FACULTY UNDERSTANDS AND SUPPORTS THE MISSION. Section 1.2.1 of the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook* addresses educational assumptions and outcomes by which the Sterling College educational experience is driven:

> From the perspective of Biblical revelation, Sterling College has developed its curriculum in terms of the educated person: one who possesses basic skills in communication, library research, mathematics, and physical fitness; one who understands the religious and philosophical foundations of life; one who has a wide-ranging perspective on the breadth of human knowledge; and one who has acquired an in-depth knowledge of at least one area of study. (GD02, pg. 5)

The handbook's general statement on faculty responsibilities (Section 2.5.1) further underscores the faculty's duty to understand and support the "creative and thoughtful leader" as well as the "maturing Christian faith" aspects of the mission:

> Membership in the academic profession carries with it responsibilities for the advancement of knowledge, the intellectual growth of students, and the improvement of society. Faculty must order and evaluate their personal and professional development in terms of their commitment to these goals.
>
> Sterling College is a Christian College, presenting a Christ-centered education as an essential part of its mission. As a part of their professional responsibility, faculty, full- and part-time, are expected to demonstrate in both their personal and professional lives, a personal behavior and Christian faith in conformity with the mission of the College. Further, faculty, both full- and part-time, are expected to engage in professional and scholarly activities exploring the relationships of their Christian faith with their discipline. The faculty have a special obligation to understand and support Sterling College and to appreciate its unique characteristics. (GD02, pg. 19)

Other sections of the *Faculty Handbook* that directly address faculty members' responsibility to "live" the mission can be found in the following sections:

- 2.5.3.3 Scholarship and Creative Work (pg. 20)
- 2.5.3.4 Service to the College (pgs. 20–21)
- 2.5.3.5 Service to the Profession (pg. 21)
- 2.5.3.6 Service to the Student Body (pg. 21)
- 2.5.3.7 Service to the Community (pg. 21)

A few years ago, the College began to formally consider its leadership-development endeavors from a servant-leadership perspective. In the 1999–2000 academic year, an academic minor called Social Entrepreneurship was added to the curriculum (CC1C-3). The Social Entrepreneurship minor enables students to learn about servant leadership via the development and management of not-for-profit endeavors intended to meet social needs. The College sees *servant* leadership as an integral part of developing "creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." That is, the College believes a Christian leader will be a servant first. The minor was initially created in partnership with Habitat for Humanity International (CC1C-4). The organization's founder and president agreed to offer twenty full-tuition scholarships per year for students who earned the minor and then served a stipulated amount of time with the organization. However, funding for the agreement never materialized, and student enrollment in the minor has since declined.

Not long after the minor was created, a course called Foundations of Servant Leadership was developed. This course, required for all first-time students at Sterling College, enables students to approach the subject of leadership from a biblical perspective, closely examining the leadership style of Jesus Christ (CC1C-5). A number of faculty members have taught sections of this course. While the syllabus has changed over the years, the essence of the course has remained the same. In years past, one of the course's units revolved specifically around the College's mission and core values (CC1C-6). The course also requires students to reflect on the service project in which they participate during freshmen orientation. As servant leadership has become more and more fundamental to the College's identity, faculty have added service and servant-leadership

requirements to a number of courses and programs. All major programs of study require a service project, and some programs require an entire course that emphasizes service. More detailed information about these learning experiences can be found under Core Components 4C and 4D.

Another required mission-related course in the general education curriculum is English Composition I. This course was revised in the fall of 2008 so that the major "topics" about which students write are the College's core values (CC1C-7). While the approach is still in a trial stage, this course underscores the willingness of faculty in the Language and Literature Department to invest time and effort in making sure instruction facilitates student understanding of the College's mission and values. Faculty in the Language and Literature Department are trying the approach again during the 2009–2010 academic year.

Faculty also demonstrate understanding of and support for the mission through curriculum alignment matrices in their departments. Each department has marked program objectives with a "CL" (Creative Leader), "TL" (Thoughtful Leader), or "CTL" (Creative and Thoughtful Leader). Some departments have marked certain objectives with an "MTF" (Maturing Christian Faith), though this aspect of the mission is currently assessed *institutionally* rather than through each program (GD10, pg. 36). Figure 1.7 presents the curriculum alignment matrix for the Psychology program in the Behavioral Science Department. Curriculum alignment matrices for other programs can be found in resource folder GD18.

Figure 1.7: Curriculum Alignment Matrix for the Psychology Program

Course	Goal 1 Obj. 1	Goal 1 Obj. 2 (TL)	Goal 2 Obj. 3	Goal 2 Obj. 4 (TL)	Goal 2 Obj. 5 (CL)	Goal 2 Obj. 6 (CL)	Goal 3 Obj. 7 (TL)	Goal 3 Obj. 8 (MCF)	Goal 3 Obj. 9 (CTL)	Goal 3 Obj. 10 (CTL)	Goal 3 Obj. 11 (CTL; MCF)
BS 125	I	I	I	I	I			I	I	I	
BS 130										I/P	I/P
BS 160								P		P	P
BS 196			I/P	I/P	P						
BS 225	I	I/P	P				I	I		I	
BS 242	I	P	I				I		P	P	I
BS 261	P/D	P		P		P	I	P	P	P	I
BS 265	I	P	P		P	P	P		P	P	
BS 270	P/D	P/D					P	P/D	P	P	I/P
BS 290		P				P	D	D	P/D	D	D
BS 295			P/D	P	I/P	I/P	I/D				
BS 325	P/D	P				P		P/D			
BS 345		D		D		D		P/D			
BS 350	P	P	P	P		P		P	P		
BS 365		D		D		D		P/D			
BS 385	I/P	P/D	D	D		P/D	D	P	P/D	P/D	
BS 386	P/D	D	P/D	D		D		D			
BS 397					D	D	D				
BS 490							D	D		P/D	P/D

I = Introduced; P = Practiced; D = Demonstrated

According to the curriculum alignment matrix presented in Figure 1.7, program objective 2 prepares students to be thoughtful leaders (TL), program objective 5 prepares students to be creative leaders (CL), program objective 8 addresses the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the mission statement (MCF), etc. The column on the left identifies the courses in which students are introduced to those objectives or in which they practice or demonstrate their ability to meet them.

The College's Education Department, which affects most other academic programs because of teacher-licensing requirements, has modeled excellence in its commitment to the mission. The mission of the Sterling Teacher Education Program is to "disciple teacher candidates into IDEAL[11] servant leader educators who are called, competent, and committed." As stated in the department's Conceptual Framework:

> A significant common thread that ties the institutional and unit missions, visions, and values together is servant-leadership. Both STEP and all of Sterling College endeavor to cultivate the attitudes and skills required of students to become effective servant leaders.
>
> A core institutional value to teacher education is *calling*. The STEP unit incorporates field experiences into each level of the program as one way of helping students determine if professional education is indeed their calling in life.
>
> Creative and thoughtful leaders are competent and committed. Incorporating differentiated instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy into instruction are two ways in which the STEP unit focuses candidates' attention on the need to be creative and thoughtful leaders in the classroom. The **IDEAL** professional attributes have been derived from the Sterling College core values in light of input from K–12 partners, content faculty, and unit members. (CC1C-8, pg. 6)

The Education Department works closely with all other departments through which students take courses toward licensure. Those departments work cooperatively to ensure their licensure-related courses meet the standards established by STEP. In short, STEP's commitment to institutional mission alignment provides an additional measure to ensure that understanding of the institutional mission is fostered through courses in a number of departments.

THE STAFF UNDERSTANDS AND SUPPORTS THE MISSION. Staff members demonstrate support for the mission in a number of ways. In recent years, some staff members have sponsored mission trips and participated in a variety service projects with students (CC3C-27; CC4C-2). Others lead Bible studies on campus, and some support the mission by serving as staff sponsors to clubs and organizations governed by the Student Government Association (CC4D-20, pg. 18; CC4D-21, pg. 2; CC1C-9, pgs. 5–10). Still other staff members, as well as faculty, open their homes to students as part of the College's foster parent program. Foster parents of college students often invite students into their homes for meals and fellowship, and some even lend their laundry rooms to students on weekends. The foster parent program, in which community members also participate, has been one of the College's distinguishing characteristics for a number of years. Also worth noting is that many staff members are alumni who work at the College because they love and support the institutional mission. As of April 2009, 27 staff members are alumni. Seven additional alumni serve as full-time or part-time faculty members.

[11] Integrity, Dependability, Effective Communication Skills, Appropriate Attitude, and Leadership

Director-level staff members have completed a Non-Academic Assessment Worksheet, which is an important part of the College's assessment plan. This worksheet contains an office's mission statement and an explanation of how its mission aligns with the institutional mission. It also contains fields for Intended Departmental Outcomes, the Assessment Measures the offices will use to measure progress toward those outcomes, Success Indicators, Data Summary and Evaluation, Proposed Use of Results, and an Update on Previous Changes. Because the current assessment plan was only recently implemented, during the 2008–2009 academic year directors completed only the fields for Mission, Intended Departmental Outcomes, Assessment Measures, and Success Indicators. Other fields on the worksheet will be completed by September 30, 2009. The Athletic Department's Non-Academic Assessment Worksheet is included in Figure 1.8 on the following page. Examples of two other Non-Academic Assessment Worksheets are included in Appendix C, and resource folder CC2C-6 contains completed worksheets from most other departments.

As the first "Success Indicator" in Figure 1.8 suggests, the Athletic Department will use coaches' evaluations of players to assess its progress toward its mission and intended outcomes. The evaluation form was developed jointly by the Athletic Director and the Director of Institutional Assessment. Both are looking forward to seeing first-year data from the form, and because approximately half of all Sterling College students participate in athletics, they are hopeful that this assessment will become an important part of co-curricular assessment of student learning. The form is included on the pages following Figure 1.8.

Figure 1.8: Athletic Department's Non-Academic Assessment Worksheet

Departmental/Office Mission Statement:	**Alignment of Departmental Mission with Sterling College Mission:**	**Intended Departmental Outcomes**	**Assessment Measures**	**Success Indicators**	**Data Summary and Evaluation**	**Proposed use of Results**	**Update on Past Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment Data**
The Athletic Department develops student-athletes who demonstrate character, competence, and a commitment to community.	Competence—Competent student-athletes demonstrate "thoughtful leadership" by • striving for excellence in all they do • exercising discipline and habits that will enable lifelong achievement Character—Student-athletes with character demonstrate their understanding of a "maturing Christian faith" by • exhibiting personal traits common to success from a Christian worldview • growing as influential leaders Community—Student-athletes who are committed to community demonstrate "creative leadership" by • finding/identifying ways to give of themselves to the team • generously seeing and encouraging the best in all people	Student-athletes will demonstrate • Competence • Character • Commitment to community	• End-of-season Likert scale ratings based on coaches' observations • End-of-season interviews with first-year and final-year student athletes	1. Student-athletes will score at or above a certain level on Likert scale ratings for each of the following categories: Competence • Focus • Persistence • Energy • Consistency • Organization • Ability to perform necessary athletic tasks Character • Behaviors that are consistent with and *not* inconsistent with biblical teaching Commitment to community • Generosity • Flexibility • Encouragement • Humility • Optimism 2. Scores show improvement from one "testing point" (first season) to another (final season).	*To be completed for the first time by September 30, 2009*	*To be completed for the first time by September 30, 2009*	*To be completed by September 30 of the **following** year*

ASSESSMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC PROGRAMS WORKSHEET

Student-Athlete Assessment

Based on your observations of and interactions with your players throughout the season, please complete items 1–12 for **every** student-athlete in your program. You do *not* need to share the results with your sophomores and juniors, though you should if they ask.

After completing items 1–12, schedule one-on-one interviews with your **freshmen and senior** student-athletes. As you interview freshmen and seniors, ask them to respond to questions 13–15 at the end. Write their answers in the blank spaces below each question. If extra paper is required, staple it to this assessment sheet before you file it.

Then review the results of items 1–12 with them and explain *why* you rated them as you did on each point. This review will be especially helpful for freshmen, as it will allow them to know how to focus their energy to improve in following years. (Because you will save these sheets, in four years you will be able show seniors comparative data from their previous years.)

Important: To the extent that turnover in the coaching staff allows, it is imperative that each student-athlete be evaluated by the same coach each year.

NAME OF STUDENT:

_____

SPORT:

_____

NAME OF COACH/EVALUATOR:

_____

ACADEMIC YEAR:

_____

GRADE LEVEL OF STUDENT-ATHLETE:

_____

Items 1–6: How well did the student-athlete demonstrate COMPETENCE throughout the season?

1. Focus

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

2. Persistence

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

3. Energy

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

4. Consistency

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

5. Organization

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

6. Ability to perform necessary athletic tasks

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

Item 7: How well did the student-athlete demonstrate CHARACTER throughout the season?

7. Behaviors were consistent with and *not* inconsistent with biblical teaching

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

Items 8–12: How well did the student-athlete demonstrate COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY throughout the season?

8. Generosity

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

9. Flexibility

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

10. Encouragement

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

11. Humility

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

12. Optimism

(5) Outstanding; far exceeded expectations
(4) Very good; more than met expectations
(3) Adequate; met expectations
(2) Minimal; below expectations
(1) Poor; unacceptable

Student Feedback about the Program (Questions asked to freshmen and seniors):

13. What do/did you like about the program?

14. How do you think the program could be improved?

15. (If not addressed in previous questions) What did/do you like about your program's facilities?

If the student-athlete is a senior:

Review the student-athlete's worksheets from each year he or she was in the program.

On which assessment points did the student-athlete show overall improvement? (Please list.)

On which assessment points did the student-athlete get worse throughout the program? (Please list.)

On which assessment points did the student-athlete stay the same throughout his or her time in the program? (Please list.)

Has the same coach evaluated the student-athlete every year/season? If not, explain.

Many staff and faculty members display the mission statement and other mission documents in framed desk or wall ornaments, and the Sterling College Bible Verse of the Year is displayed on banners in various campus locations. Such displays help lend a sense of commitment and intentionality to the work of faculty and staff. They also serve as reminders to students that the College takes its mission seriously. The *Sterling College Staff Handbook* begins with the College's mission documents and makes clear that staff members are to uphold standards in accordance with the Christian mission of the College (GD03, pgs. 2–3, 6, 12). However, the handbook does not contain any information about how staff members are to contribute to the "creative and thoughtful" leader aspect of the mission. Inclusion of such information could perhaps foster greater staff understanding of and support for the mission.

STUDENTS UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THE MISSION. Sterling College students have a long tradition of being involved in campus activities. According to the 2008–2009 President of the Student Government Association (SGA), about 183 students (approximately one-third of full-time enrollment) were involved in some type of club, organization, or governance body. This number does not include the freshman class, which is itself considered a student organization under SGA's umbrella. Nor does the number include students who simply attend SGA-sponsored events (CC1C-10). Most clubs and organizations are formally governed by the SGA, which has also submitted a Non-Academic Assessment Worksheet with information about how its own mission statement aligns with the institutional mission (CC2C-6). Furthermore, SGA has required all clubs, organizations, and governance bodies under its care to write their own mission statements and goals. While SGA did not require the leaders of these groups to demonstrate alignment between their own missions and the school's, the student leaders who crafted the mission statements seem to have intuitively understood the importance of mission alignment. Below are a few examples:

- The mission of the Antiquity Meets Present organization is to "involve the campus in historically and culturally related activities," a mission that certainly addresses creativity and thoughtfulness.
- The mission of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes is to "involve athletes and non athletes alike in a Christ enriched environment that challenges and creates growth in their faith."
- The mission of the freshman class governance body is to "represent the freshman class through providing service in hope of increasing community and understanding on the Sterling College campus."
- The mission of Raya 327 is to "raise campus awareness towards the needs of others locally, nationally, and globally while providing opportunities to minister to those needs." (CC1C-9, pgs. 5–12)

As these and other SGA-approved mission statements demonstrate, Sterling College students definitely understand and support the institutional mission. Moreover, they promote and sponsor specific activities that foster excitement about the mission. Below are just a few examples from the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years:

- Orientation activities (SGA)
- Organization officer training (SGA)
- Senate training (SGA)
- General Assembly (SGA)
- Fuel (worship) in the Student Union (chaplains)
- Awake '08 on the Cooper Hall lawn
- SGA Executive Cabinet dinner with Administrative Cabinet (SGA)

- Organization fair (SGA)
- Voter awareness week (SGA and AMP)
- Senate meetings (SGA)
- Mini-missions trip to Wichita, Kansas (Raya 327)
- Trick or change day (Habitat for Humanity)
- Blood Drive Day (American Red Cross)
- Thank you letters in the Fireside Lounge (Fellowship of Christian Athletes)
- Habitat for Humanity builds (Habitat for Humanity) (CC1C-9, pg. 14)

SGA has also enthusiastically embraced a Leadership Success Program. Its mission is to "develop the servant leadership skills of students." SGA has developed structured parameters for this program (CC4A-15). In recent years, SGA has taken quite seriously its role on campus and has fostered and promoted activities that demonstrate understanding of and support for the Sterling College mission. The involvement of almost one-third of all students in SGA-governed organizations, and the fact that even more students attend SGA-sponsored events (CC1C-10), speaks to how well students support the mission.

Finally, a number of students support the College's Christian mission by serving the student body in various capacities. Campus prayer leaders, student chaplains, and resident assistants in dormitories are expected to have servant attitudes and maintain a commitment to helping themselves and others grow spiritually (CC1C-11). A praise and worship band that functions independently of SGA also serves both students and employees by leading worship at chapel services and other events. Sterling College students demonstrate commitment to the institutional mission in many ways.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The Board Development Committee can move forward with more intentional and standardized Board development and new-member orientation processes.
- The College's three-year strategic plan, designed for 2007–2010, has been clearly framed in the institutional mission and vision. However, the self study has shed light on the fact that many employees were unaware of the plan's existence. Excitement about and support for the mission could have perhaps been enhanced by including the campus community in the development of the plan and with campus publicity about how certain action items align with the mission and that administration indeed considered the mission in its planning.
- As the College's three-year strategic plan approaches its end, the administration has an opportunity to follow the example of other institutions and more intentionally consider accreditation criteria in its

Strengths

- Student learning outcomes in academic programs are aligned with elements of the Sterling College mission.
- The College requires the **distinctive** Foundations of Servant Leadership course for all first-time students and incorporates service experiences across the curriculum.
- Mission documents are visible across campus in a number of hallways and offices.
- A number of student organizations and activities are missionally **connected** to the purpose of the institution.
- A number of student leaders are committed to helping themselves and others develop spiritually.
- Faculty and staff model servant leadership by sponsoring service-related activities. Many employees also help create a **distinctive** college environment by opening their homes to students and allowing them to have a "home away from

planning processes.

- While faith *integration* is a major component of some academic programs, much *assessment* of students' "maturing Christian faith" currently resides in the Theology and Ministry Department, the Athletics Department, and the General Education program. In the immediate future, assessment of this mission-statement aspect will occur mostly, if not exclusively, through these programs and departments. Ideally, this component of the mission statement should be assessed in every academic program as well. The assessment plan calls for better assessment methods to be integrated with each program's comprehensive review, which occurs every six years (GD10, pg. 23, 36). The administration and faculty must continue to support efforts to strengthen "maturing Christian faith" assessment in academic programs.
- During interviews with prospective faculty members, intentional discussions about the College mission are common. However, because of inconsistent interview practices, these discussions are not as common with prospective staff members.
- A more intentional effort to anchor employee performance evaluations in the mission could also help the College become a more mission-focused institution.
- Expectations about how staff should model and/or promote "creative and thoughtful leadership"—not simply a "maturing Christian faith"—should be made explicit and possibly included in performance evaluations.

home."

- Many alumni are **connected** with the College and supportive of its mission through their willingness to either stay at or return to the College to serve as employees.

Core Component 1D: Sterling College's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the College to fulfill its mission.

BOARD POLICIES AND PRACTICES DOCUMENT THAT THE BOARD'S FOCUS IS ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION. As stated under Core Component 1C, the *Sterling College Bylaws* make clear the Board's responsibility to ensure the College fulfills its mission. According to Article II of the *Bylaws*, one of the main responsibilities of a trustee is to "focus on the mission." Article III establishes the Board's authority to "determine and periodically review the mission and purpose of the College" (GD04, pg. 3), and in the past year, the Board has done just that, reaffirming most of the College's mission documents and forming a task committee to clarify/combine the College's statements of faith and belief. (See Core Component 1A.) Also addressed under Core Component 1C is how Article IV of the *Bylaws* underscores the Board's responsibility to help the College fulfill its mission, making clear that the Board should "consist of persons able to affirm a personal commitment to and identification with the College's stated Christian faith perspective, educational objectives and mission" (GD04, pgs. 3–4). Furthermore, the Board of Trustees maintains oversight of other governing documents, such as the faculty and staff handbooks. In recent years, the Board has approved various revisions to these documents, particularly the faculty handbook (CC1D-1).

Board of Trustee work is guided by an Executive Committee and five standing committees that oversee important areas and operations at the College. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and the chairs of the five standing committees. The standing committees are the Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Life Committee, the Finance and Investment Committee, the Institutional Advancement Committee, and the Board Development Committee.

Board development has significant implications on the College's ability to meet Core Component 1D, and the Board has recently taken steps to ensure the development of a Board that better enables mission fulfillment. At its February 2009 meeting, the President of the College expressed to the Board his belief in the centrality of Board development and stated his willingness to utilize a significant amount of time for developing the Board, if the Board would agree on Board development being a strategic use of his time. With the College's *Bylaws* requiring a Board of between of 24 and 36 individuals, and with the current composition being only 24 members, the president sees a great opportunity to strengthen the Board with proven leaders who will be supportive of the institutional mission. The trustees agreed that developing a stronger Board would indeed be a good use of the president's time (CC1D-2). Before that meeting, the Board Development Committee had already begun to discuss more aggressive Board development initiatives. At the January 2008 and April 2009 meetings, the Committee discussed and reviewed the criteria and procedure for electing new Board members, and the chair of the committee proposed an evaluation process for Board members (CC1D-3). Additionally, the Chair of the Board of Trustees has been actively engaged in the transformation of the Board. In recent years, the Chair has personally enlisted new Board members and is currently engaged with the College's president in Board development activities.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENABLES THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. Article VIII of the *Bylaws* specifies the administrative and governance rights that the Board grants to the College's Chief Executive Officer, declaring that the president shall "exercise a general superintendence over all the affairs of the institution and bring such

matters to the attention of the Board as appropriate to keep the Board fully informed in meeting its policy-making responsibilities." Specifically, Article VIII grants the president the authority to perform the following duties:

1. Perform all acts and execute all documents to make effective the actions of the Board or its Executive Committee;
2. Provide leadership for all departments of the College, including all activities in the Board areas of academic, business, student life, and institutional advancement, exercising such supervision and direction as will promote their effectiveness;
3. Provide leadership to the faculty by: presiding or assigning someone to represent him at all meetings of the faculty; recommending to the Trustees all promotions and appointments to the faculty; and in consultation with the faculty recommend to the Trustees the academic program of the College;
4. Recommend to the Board the appointments of all faculty and executive administrators and appoint and release other staff and administrators as is deemed necessary. Consistent with the College's Christian position, all hiring of administrative and faculty personnel will be limited to those persons able to commit to and identify with the institution's stated Christian faith perspective and demonstrate in their personal and professional life evidence of a lively and enduring relationship with Jesus Christ;
5. Set salaries and job descriptions for all college employees;
6. Report in written form annually to the Trustees regarding the work and condition of the College;
7. Except as otherwise provided in the bylaws, be an ex officio member of all committees of the Board without power to vote. (GD04, pg. 6)

THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IS CLEARLY DEFINED IN GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES. As described above, the College is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees that grants the institution's president the appropriate authority to supervise College personnel and provide effective leadership. The president maintains a Cabinet that meets weekly and offers guidance about operational and strategic decision making. The current members of the Cabinet include the following:

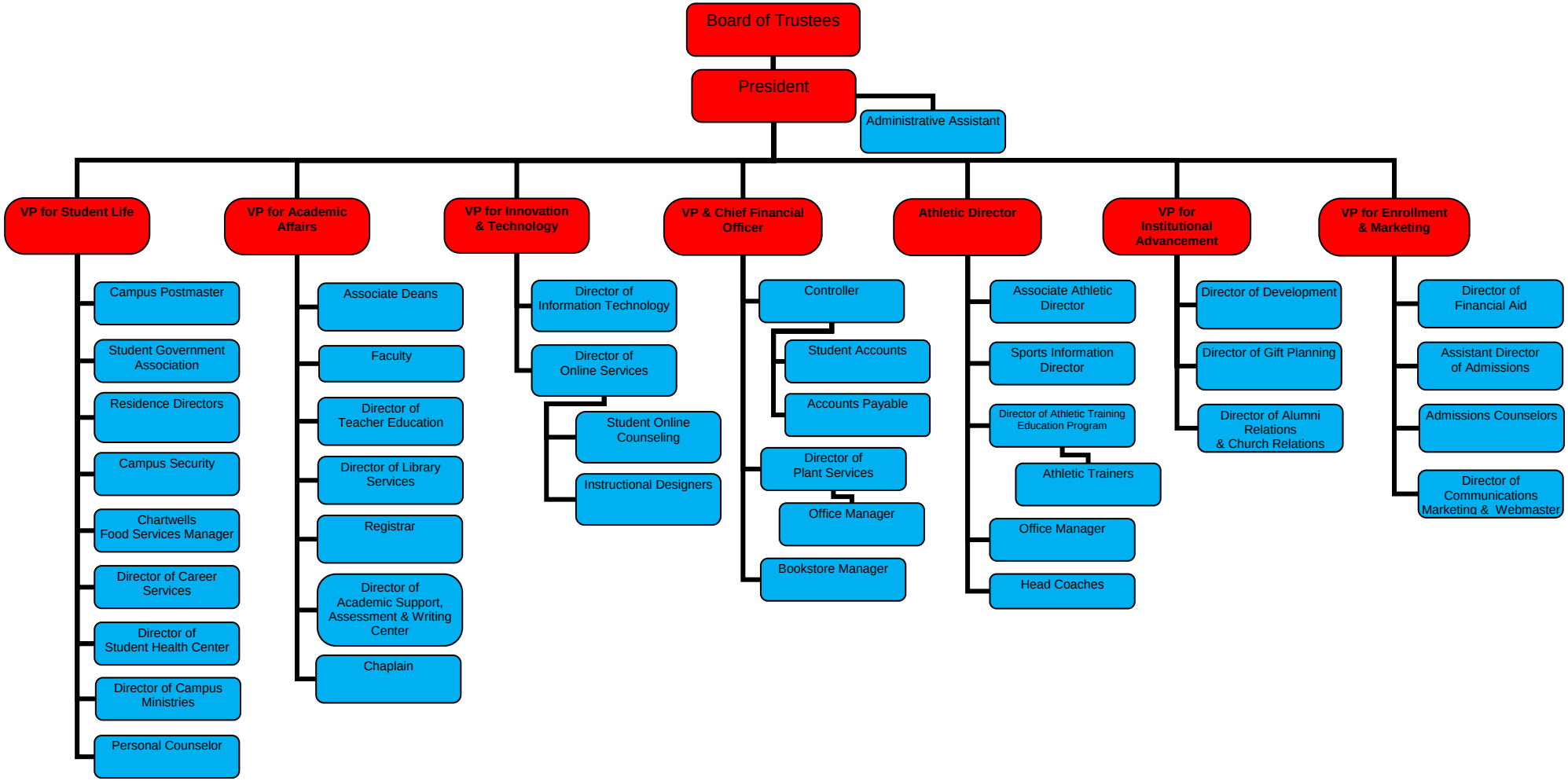
- Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Vice President for Student Life
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Innovation and Technology
- Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing
- Athletic Director

One significant imperfection in clarity of governance structures and processes from recent years is related to turnover in the office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Members of the advancement staff have perhaps been most affected, for they have often lacked direct representation by a Cabinet member from their office. Consequently, at times they may have felt uninformed about current plans and decisions that could help them raise funds and relate to constituents. In June 2009, the College filled the position of VP of Institutional Advancement, which had been vacant since October 2008.

Operational duties inherent to each Cabinet member's department are carried out by directors in a number of offices. Because of the College's size, some offices are maintained by a single director with no additional staff. The College's organizational chart on the following page illustrates the College's governance structure.

Figure 1.9: 2009 Sterling College Organizational Chart

The positions below represent primary positions, not all employees.



The *Sterling College Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws* also contains information about important governance processes (GD06). This document makes clear the role of faculty in maintaining the integrity of the College's academic programs. *The Constitution and By-Laws* outlines the purpose of the Faculty Council and establish the policies and processes by which the Council operates. The Council is guided by the work of four standing committees throughout the academic year. Information about one of those committees, Academic Affairs, is included under this Core Component on subsequent pages. The other three standing committees include the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee, the Student Services Committee, and the Institutional Advancement Committee. Administrators and faculty members are updating the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws*. Discussion about the relevance of the Student Services Committee and the Institutional Advancement Committee has occurred. These standing committees will perhaps be replaced with an academic long-range strategic planning committee.

STERLING COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS ARE APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED TO CARRY OUT THEIR DEFINED RESPONSIBILITIES. The College's administrative leadership has evolved significantly in recent years. When the institution's ninth president resigned in 2003, Sterling College was in a state of extreme financial distress. An interim president led the College for the next two years, until the Board of Trustees welcomed Dr. Bruce Douglas as the tenth president. Under Dr. Douglas's leadership, the College saw its full-time enrollment grow by almost 200 students in a period of three years. Larger enrollment necessitated new dormitories and allowed the hiring of additional faculty and staff.

Because he believed in the mission and vision of the College, and because of adequate personal resources, Dr. Douglas did not take a salary. Moreover, he secured the services of a consultant-Board member who closely monitored the College's financial affairs during his tenure. The consultant did not take a salary either.

While turnover in the office of Vice President for Institutional Advancement created substantial challenges during the Douglas administration, an alumnus joined the administrative leadership as an interim Director of Advancement in fall 2008. Then, when the College's current and eleventh president took office in January 2009, he immediately began the search for a full-time Vice President for Institutional Advancement who could rebuild an important office that has been plagued by leadership turnover. That individual, a former college president with extensive advancement experience (see below), began serving the College in June 2009, and the interim Director of Advancement agreed to stay on staff as a full-time development officer. The College has thus not only attracted a highly qualified leader of advancement but also increased the size of the Advancement Office.

When the consultant-Board member resigned at about the same time as Dr. Douglas, the College welcomed a full-time Chief Financial Officer for the first time in a number of years. The evolution of leadership underscores the Board and the College's desire to be a forward-looking institution and to build upon the progress initiated under the previous administration. In fact, the College's current president, Dr. Paul Maurer, sees himself as a leadership "bridge" with a responsibility to build on recent achievements.

Today the President's Cabinet consists of eight talented campus leaders who are committed to the mission of Sterling College. Dr. Maurer, the College's eleventh president, came to Sterling from Trinity International University, where he served for almost seven years as Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement and President of the Trinity International Foundation. Before serving at Trinity International University, he worked at Westmont College as Director of the

school's capital campaign from 1999–2002. Like Sterling College, both of these institutions are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, so Dr. Maurer brings not only executive leadership experience to the College but also rich experience in faith-based higher education. He holds a Master of Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Claremont Graduate University, and he has published and presented scholarship about the role of morality and religion in executive leadership. His knowledge, experience, and scholarly interests help make him an excellent "mission fit" for Sterling College (CC1D-4).

Scott Rich, the College's Chief Financial Officer, holds an M.B.A. and acquired eleven years of high-level financial management experience before coming to SC. His experience in the private sector helped him develop valuable skills and knowledge in planning, product development, reporting, and quality control processes. Moreover, he has an impressive history of being a successful and fiscally responsible financial leader. In his previous position as the Chief Operating and Financial Officer of a private company, Scott grew the company's revenue by 60% in seven years and increased its profitability by 18% in his last three years (CC1D-5).

Dr. Marvin Dewey began serving as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement in June 2009. Dr. Dewey holds a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Divinity from North American Baptist University (now Sioux Falls Seminary). He previously served as President of Taylor University College and Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta (Canada). During his tenure at that institution, he helped double annual fund giving and grow the school's endowment by almost 300%. Before going to Taylor, he served as the Director of Development and the Vice President for Advancement at Sioux Falls Seminary, where he participated in two capital campaigns and led the development, public relations, and recruitment staffs (CC1D-6).

The College's Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Troy Peters, benefits from a diverse set of educational leadership experiences as he oversees the academic affairs of the institution. After beginning his professional career as a public school educator with expertise in educational technology, Dr. Peters became highly involved in educational-technology planning at the public school district level. After almost ten years in secondary school systems, he made the full-time transition to higher education in 2003 when he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Teacher Education at Sterling College. With much experience in technology-related education, and a Ph.D. in Educational Technology, Dr. Peters was then asked to serve as Vice President for Distributed Learning when the College began to offer Web-based learning opportunities to students. In 2006 he accepted his current position as Vice President for Academic Affairs (CC1D-7).

Tina Wohler serves as the College's Vice President for Student Life. She holds a Master of Science degree in Counseling and Student Personnel, and she has served students all of her professional career. Having worked as Dean of Student Life at another faith-based institution, Wohler brings to the Student Life office valuable cabinet-level leadership experience. In addition, her previous work as a Director of Admissions, an Academic Counselor, and a Director of Records at other colleges equips her with knowledge about and sensitivities to students' entire college experience (CC1D-8).

Dr. Ken Brown serves as Vice President for Innovation and Technology and also directs the College's Title III grant. He holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Educational Computing, Design, and Online Learning. Dr. Brown worked in public school systems and two area community colleges before joining the Sterling College leadership team

(CC1D-9). Under Dr. Brown's direction, the Department of Innovation and Technology has been responsible for a number of technological advancements at the College. As discussed elsewhere in this report, Dr. Brown has led a connectivity initiative that has resulted in a campus on which students and employees can have free wireless Internet access in any building. He has also led an aggressive professional development initiative to help faculty better integrate technology in the classroom. The plan on which he based this initiative was published in *Technology and Learning* in April 2007 (CC4D-6).

Dennis Dutton serves as Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing, and he has been involved in the Admissions Office for approximately twenty years. After serving four years as an Admissions Counselor, Dennis became Director of Admissions in 1988. After serving for ten years in that position, he was asked to join the Advancement team and serve as Director of Development. Then he returned to Admissions in 2003. A Sterling College alumnus, Dennis's passion for and ability to communicate the mission of Sterling College have helped him *personally* recruit almost 600 students during his time at SC. In recent years, he has directed efforts to help Sterling College grow from an institution of just over 400 full-time students to one with an FTE of over 600 students and a headcount of over 700 students. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Arts Administration, and he has a reputation for working enthusiastically and tirelessly to bring new students to Sterling College (CC1D-10).

Andy Lambert serves as the College's Athletic Director and the Head Football Coach. He holds a Master of Science degree in Education, and he has been extremely successful at Sterling College. In his leadership of the entire athletic program, which affects almost half of the College's full-time enrollment, Andy has demonstrated a keen ability to hire coaches who are good "mission fits" for the institution. As a former coach and student of a CCCU-member institution, Andy also brings a passion for Christ-centered education to an important position. He has been instrumental in the administrative and financial aspects of the College's football stadium and track renovation, and he is currently leading a monumental effort to promote and assess student-athletes' progress toward becoming "creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith," helping athletics become truly co-curricular instead of extra-curricular. His concern with whole-person development has won him much favor with Sterling College faculty (CC1D-11).

Sterling College Cabinet members are not only qualified to lead, they are passionate about Sterling College and its impact on students and the community. As addressed in other places in this report, Cabinet members have modeled excellence by calling students' parents at the end of each semester and thanking them for the privilege of educating their sons and daughters. Such commitment—no doubt rare in today's leadership culture—is one of the reasons the College has been able to increase its full-time enrollment by almost 200 students in the last three years.

FACULTY AND OTHER ACADEMIC LEADERS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COHERENCE OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE ACADEMIC PROCESS. The Sterling College Faculty Council serves as the primary gatekeeper for coherence and integrity within the College's academic programs. The Council is comprised of faculty members elected by their peers to represent the greater faculty community in matters of academic integrity and faculty welfare. Article II of the *Sterling College Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws* lists four main Council purposes:

1. To provide a means whereby representatives of the faculty can offer recommendations to the president, or a presidential designee, pertaining to the academic and operational improvement of Sterling College and to matters

concerning the improvement of the general welfare of the Sterling faculty community.
2. To provide a framework for cooperation between the faculty and the administration in order to accomplish the strategic goals of Sterling College and achieve its mission and vision.
3. To afford each faculty member an opportunity to make recommendations concerning the development and operation of the College and the improvement of the general welfare of the faculty community.
4. To provide a means whereby the administration can refer academic, operational, or common interest matters to a body representing the faculty of Sterling College. (GD06, pg. 1)

The very purposes of the Council thus underscore a process that enables the College to fulfill its mission through collaborative processes. Faculty understand that it is largely through curriculum and the academic process that the College fulfills its mission and meets strategic goals, and the administration understands that faculty must be an integral part of decisions involving teaching and learning.

A fundamental entity in the process of maintaining academic integrity is the Academic Affairs Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Council. As stated in Article VI, Section B.1 of the Council's *By-Laws*, the purpose of the Academic Affairs Committee is to "research, report on, and recommend to the Council actions relevant to the academic standards and programs of the College, including any actions relating to the development and modification [of] courses and programs including general education" (GD06, pg. 5). To enhance the effectiveness of the Academic Affairs Committee, key employees have been appointed to the committee as non-voting, ex-officio members, and others have been appointed as permanent voting members. Non-voting, ex-officio members include the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies, and the Director of Institutional Assessment. The Registrar and the General Education Chair are permanent voting members of the committee.

In addition, Article VI, Section C of the *By-Laws* establishes the Council's authority to appoint or form ad hoc committees as necessary (GD06, pg. 6). In fall 2007, for example, the Council formed a special committee to review and lead the revision of the general education curriculum (CC4B-2). Academic leaders at the College have also developed formal guidelines for developing and revising curriculum. These guidelines are contained in resource file CC3B-10.

In 2007, the College made a change in the governance structure of its academic programs, dividing its program into two schools: the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies. In his May 2007 report to the Board of Trustees, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) summarized why the College believed such a change was necessary:

> Majors in professional programs such as business, teacher education, and athletic training are evaluated and eventually accredited by specialized accrediting agencies to ensure that appropriate content is being covered. In the truest sense, this has proven to be somewhat problematic when these majors have had to cut content knowledge hours to keep the total number of hours to a degree as close to 124 as possible.

The VPAA argued that separating the College into two schools would help alleviate problems associated with "trying to make a professional studies degree look like a liberal arts degree"

(CC1D-12). In other words, while still meeting general education outcomes that would be consistent across both schools, each school could identify the curriculum through which students would meet those outcomes. This freedom has allowed the School of Professional Studies to cover content required for specialized accreditation while keeping its total number of degree hours close to 124. Additional benefits of separating the College into two schools include better alignment of institutional objectives and student learning objectives at other levels and the ability of each school to set its own admission requirements.

COMMUNICATION FOR FACILITATING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES IS IMPROVING. While the organization chart in Figure 1.9 clearly outlines typical communication pathways, the College has historically lacked process and procedural policies in certain areas. Recently, administrators and other leaders have recognized this tendency and taken important steps to improve communication processes.

In spring 2009, for example, the Faculty Welfare Committee began revising the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook* to clarify certain statements. Furthermore, the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Students has offered to begin assembling and composing a collection of procedural documents related to curricular changes. While certain processes are clear, others are not. Guidance about developing and revising academic minors, for instance, has been unclear.

In the spring of 2007, the VPAA worked with the Faculty Council to rectify issues created by the previous president's authoritarian leadership style. Certain policy changes had been dictated without much faculty involvement. The VPAA has since consulted with faculty to rewrite policy language pertaining to expected workload and extended contracts (CC1D-13). The current *Faculty Handbook* (GD02) was adopted in 2007. The *Handbook* adopted in May 2006 is in resource file CC1D-14, and the *Handbook* that was used prior to the 2006 revision is located in resource file CC1D-15.

The previous president also insisted that the faculty adopt a representative governance structure instead of the purely democratic Faculty Assembly that had existed for a number of years. Since the adoption of the representative Faculty Council, the chairs of the Council and its various committees have kept the faculty community informed of issues by consistently sending requests for meeting agenda items and by distributing minutes (CC1D-16).

In addition, the College's new president is committed to communicating regularly with the campus community. Only a few weeks after arriving on campus, he called an all-employee assembly to give a "State of the College Address" and explain reasons for budgets cuts that were prompted in part by the economic recession (addressed under Core Component 2A). In addition to explaining the rationale behind the cutbacks, he invited faculty and staff to ask questions about the decision-making process. After a few days, he then held a follow-up meeting and again invited faculty to ask questions. Similarly, after attending his first Board of Trustees meeting, he held a meeting to summarize the trustees' actions and again encouraged faculty to ask questions about the rationale behind certain decisions (CC1D-17). He has expressed his desire to continue offering such dialogue sessions, and he has also begun to speak at the College's chapel services on Wednesday mornings. His willingness to communicate with the campus community has been welcomed by a number of faculty members, some of whom felt uninformed about administrative decisions prior to his arrival.

Of course, the College has certainly had some governance-related communication processes in place for quite some time. Regular formal reporting and the publication of minutes add integrity to the communication process, and reporting at a number of levels helps various parties stay

informed about operations and decisions. For example, at Faculty Council meetings, which are held monthly during the academic year, the chair of each standing committee updates the Council on any significant actions that have occurred during the month (CC1D-18). Cabinet members report to the president on a weekly basis, and along with the president, Cabinet members also report to the Board of Trustees three times per year (GD07). Faculty Council minutes are distributed to all faculty through e-mail (CC1D-16), and minutes from trustee meetings are accessible in the Mabee library.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- Often staff members are not as informed about institutional issues as are faculty members, and their feedback may not be solicited as often.
- With its required number of members close to the minimum, the Board of Trustees has an opportunity to develop and thereby help the College with a greater depth of expertise and resources.
- Given the College's newly adopted faculty governance structure, Faculty Council leaders must continue to keep non-Council-member faculty informed about important issues.

Strengths

- Administrators' knowledge, skills, and experiences support the College mission.
- The administration demonstrates **future-centeredness** with its willingness to adapt and make necessary changes.
- Leaders understand the need to clarify policies and communicate well with faculty.
- Even though the College has undergone a great deal of change in recent years, administrative and faculty leaders have remained focused on the mission, suggesting that understanding of and support for the mission are anchored in the institutional culture.

Core Component 1E: Sterling College upholds and protects its integrity.

THE COLLEGE'S ACTIVITIES ARE CONGRUENT WITH ITS MISSION. As addressed under Core Component 1C, the College's assessment plan has begun to foster more intentional thought about how both student learning activities and operational activities within non-academic departments align with the institutional mission. Faculty have identified programmatic learning objectives that meet certain elements of the Sterling College mission statement (GD18), and directors of non-academic programs have written departmental mission statements that complement the institutional mission (CC2C-6).

The College demonstrates congruency between its mission and activities in other areas as well. Consistent with its Christian purpose, required attendance at chapel services has been a staple of the Sterling College experience for many years. Traditional chapel services continue to be held on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., during which time no classes meet. In the 2008–2009 academic year, the chaplaincy began offering non-traditional ways to meet chapel credit. In addition to the traditional Wednesday morning service, students may now earn their chapel credits by attending other regularly scheduled events that occur throughout the week (CC3C-24; GD01, pgs. 28– 29). Bible studies, praise and worship services, and prayer groups are all parts of the spiritual formation program at Sterling College, which is intended to help students "understand a maturing Christian faith."

As for becoming "creative and thoughtful leaders," students are given many opportunities over the course of their college experience to develop creativity and leadership skills. For example, all in-coming freshman and transfer students are required to take GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which is designed to introduce students to the basic principles of servant leadership as well as give them the opportunity to apply those principles by completing service projects (CC1C-5). Students also have opportunities to lead as student chaplains, prayer leaders, worship team members, Bible study leaders, officers of student organizations, residence hall officers, and leaders of athletic teams. The required senior capstone course TM440: Philosophy for Faith and Life gives students the opportunity to reflect on their education at SC and plan ways to apply their faith and abilities to their chosen field of work (CC1E-1). Multiple mission trips to countries all over the world are planned, sponsored, and taken every academic year by students and faculty. The trips offer students the chance to creatively raise money, prepare and plan for interactions in diverse cultures, and demonstrate the Christian values and principles that the College promotes. More detailed information about mission trips can be found under Core Component 3C and in resource folder CC3C-27.

During the 2008–2009 academic year, a new leadership opportunity was created when the Quiznos franchise was opened across the street from the campus (CC1E-2). The restaurant is operated and managed by students and Business Department faculty. This new venture allows students to integrate a number of the College's core values (integrity, service, learning, and community) into their work as they serve the public.

Integration of core values is evident in other activities and operations as well. Figure 1.10 on the following page illustrates how a number of the College's activities and operations align with the values that help define the mission.

Table 1.10: Alignment of Core Values with Organizational Activities and Operations

Faith Faithful discernment of and response to God's self-revelation in Christ in Scripture	• Weekly chapel services • Mission trips • A chaplaincy consisting of student chaplains, a faculty Chaplain, and a Director of Campus Ministries • Service projects in the general education curriculum and within academic majors • Bible studies, led by faculty and staff as well as students • Faculty and staff involvement in local churches • Student organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Raya 327
Calling Faithful discovery and pursuit of each person's particular calling in life	• Recent employment of a Career Services Director • Recent employment of a Campus Counselor • Administration to all first-year students of the StrengthsQuest™ assessment, which helps students identify skills, abilities, and interests • College emphasis on advising as a critical faculty responsibility (GD02, pgs. 19–20) • Chapel services and convocations
Learning A love of learning and a dedication to the pursuit of truth	• Faculty and staff involvement and leadership in professional organizations (See Core Component 4A, Appendix H, and Appendix I.) • Chapel services and convocations • Recognition of academic excellence (See Core Component 4A.) • Assessment plan driven by student learning outcomes • Student organizations anchored in academic content—Behavioral Science Club, Future Science Professionals Association, Real Estate Development Association, etc.
Integrity Integrity in scholarship, the arts, athletics, and all other co-curricular activities	• Clearly stated student life and residence life expectations/Community Life Covenant • Clearly stated employment expectations for faculty and staff • Academic Probation Covenant • Sportsmanship Creed • Clearly stated policies on academic integrity • Chapel services and convocations • Monthly budget reviews by the Chief Financial Officer
Service Faithful practice of redemptive servant leadership involving a vision of wholeness in a broken world	• Required service projects • Service-related courses • Mission trips • Student organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Raya 327 • Community foster parent program for students, in which many faculty and staff participate • Strong involvement of faculty and staff in local churches and community organizations (school board, Main Street, etc.) • Faculty and staff involvement in professional organizations (See Core Component 4A, Appendix H, and Appendix I.)
Community Mutual respect amid diversity as members of the body of Christ	• Community foster parent program for students, in which many faculty and staff participate • Strong involvement of faculty and staff in local churches and community organizations (school board, Main Street, etc.) • Students involved in local churches • College involvement with local businesses, such as Quiznos • Free attendance at campus events for students and College employees • General Education learning outcome specific to local and global engagement (See Appendix J)

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXERCISES ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC TO ENSURE THAT THE ORGANIZATION OPERATES LEGALLY, RESPONSIBLY, AND WITH FISCAL HONESTY. The very structure of the Sterling College Board of Trustees helps ensure that it oversees the integrity of College operations, particularly those related to fiscal and legal matters. In regard to financial integrity, the Board is guided by two standing committees that are particularly instrumental. According to Article XIV, Sections 10 and 11 of the *Sterling College Bylaws*, two of the Board's standing committees include the Finance and Investment Committee and the Institutional Advancement Committee. The Finance and Investment Committee is charged with annually reviewing operating and capital budgets. This committee also appraises the financial control and accounting systems of the College and recommends changes that it deems appropriate. It annually approves an independent auditor of the College and reviews reports prepared by the auditor. Generally, the Finance and Investment Committee listens to an auditor's report at the Board's October meeting. During the 2008–2009 academic year, the auditor presented a report at the April Board meeting (CC1E-3). Additional responsibilities of the Finance and Investment Committee can be found under Article XIV, Section 10 of the *Sterling College Bylaws* (GD04, pgs. 11–12).

The Institutional Advancement Committee reviews and recommends "fund raising, alumni relations, church relations and public relations programs which are necessary to enable the College to carry out its purpose." As required, this committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and it contains as a non-voting, ex officio member the College's Vice President for Institutional Advancement (GD04, pg. 12).

To help ensure integrity, the Sterling College Board of Trustees currently has three members who are practicing attorneys and one member who is a Certified Public Accountant. One of the attorneys is an alumnus and a long-time member of both the community and the Board of Trustees. This Board member and the CPA, also a graduate of Sterling College, serve on the Finance and Investment Committee.

Finally, the Board of Trustees reviews any new ventures that require significant funding. In 2006 and 2007, for example, the Board made important decisions about the renovation of the College's football stadium and surrounding facilities (CC1E-4).

STERLING COLLEGE PUBLISHES AND DISTRIBUTES CLEAR AND FAIR POLICIES REGARDING THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH OF ITS INTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES. Policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of students, faculty, and staff are generally found in the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* and in the procedural handbooks related to each constituency. These publications contain the rights-and-responsibilities statements one would expect to find in an institution of higher education—student and residence life expectations, academic integrity statements, academic and student life appeals processes, employment expectations, grievance and complaint procedures, etc. In spring 2009, the Faculty Welfare Committee began revising the *Faculty Handbook* to clarify certain statements and policies (CC1E-5).

In recent years, the College has stopped distributing to some constituents bound copies of certain publications and instead published these documents electronically. For example, students now receive the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* on a compact disc, and they may also view the catalog online. Some policies may be published in other places, such as the College Web site, or they may simply be distributed as needed. Examples of rights-and-responsibilities statements that may not be contained in major publications but are distributed as necessary include the following:

- Payment plan expectations/agreements
- Student loan agreements

- Insurance plan rights and responsibilities
- Three-week academic alert policy
- Academic Support Covenant for Probationary Students
- Athletic Drug Policy

The documents listed above can be found in resource folder CC1E-6. General handbooks related to each internal constituency include the following:

- The *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01)
- The *Sterling College Faculty Handbook* (GD02)
- The *Sterling College Staff Handbook* (GD03)
- The *Sterling College Bylaws* (GD04)
- The *Sterling College Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws* (GD06)
- The *Sterling College Student Handbook* (GD08)

Because Sterling College does not have an office of human resources, employees' job descriptions are maintained by vice presidents and director-level staff.

THE COLLEGE'S STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES ALLOW IT TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF ITS CO-CURRICULAR AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES. The organizational chart in Figure 1.9 illustrates the College's accountability structure. All persons in charge of co-curricular and non-academic activities report to the Cabinet member from their respective divisions, and Cabinet members report to the Chief Executive Officer of the College.

Of course, organizational structure alone does not completely explain how the College's structures and processes facilitate integrity in co-curricular and non-academic activities. One key factor in maintaining integrity involves the character that students demonstrate in activities. Stakeholders and external constituents expect the College's mission and values to be reflected in its students, and the College maintains structures, processes, and policies that help students understand and embrace the College's core values as not only institutional values but also as qualities to be esteemed in their individual lives. The Student Life Office plays a significant role in this area. For instance, resident directors and assistant directors of residence life halls are expected to model the College's values. They, in turn, expect that students who reside in their residence halls embrace the values of the College as they live in community with students, faculty, and staff. Programs to help foster these values in students include spiritual formation events in the residence halls themselves, which are led by staff and student leaders under the framework of the Student Life office. The Student Life Office also maintains clear standards and expectations for spiritual life, community life, and residence life. These expectations include the Community Life Covenant and an explanation of the disciplinary system, which is intended to help students work through problems and better model the College's values, not simply penalize students for less-than-exemplary behavior (GD08, pgs. 18, 19–21, 24–29, 35–36). The College recognizes that spiritual formation and character development are processes and that students must sometimes be taught to take some responsibility for maintaining the integrity of co-curricular and non-academic activities.

The chaplaincy also plays a major role in helping the College ensure integrity across campus. In addition to the Director of Campus Ministries and the student chaplains who facilitate integrity in student life, the College hired a Chaplain for Academic Life in fall 2007. During her first year, this individual worked with faculty in an effort to help them better integrate a Christian

worldview in their classrooms. The Chaplain for Academic Life has since become the Chaplain and assumed traditional chaplain duties.

Other methods for ensuring integrity in co-curricular and non-academic activities include the College's sportsmanship creed, implemented by the Athletic Director in spring 2009 (CC1E-7); monthly budget reviews by the Chief Financial Officer; and the requirement of faculty or staff sponsors for mission trips and student organizations (CC4D-20, pg. 18; CC4D-21, pg. 2). Whenever possible, student organizations are guided by counsel from faculty or staff sponsors who have professional expertise related to the organizations. The Chair of the Behavioral Science Department, for example, is the sponsor of the Behavioral Science Club (CC1C-9, pgs. 5–6).

THE COLLEGE ABIDES BY LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAWS AS WELL AS BY THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH IT BELONGS. The Federal Compliance section of this report contains an explanation of how the College meets certain federal requirements, particularly those related to financial aid and required reporting to the federal government. Information about the institution's financial condition is included in IRS Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax," in resource file CC1E-8. In August of 2004, Sterling College was awarded a $1.75 million Title III, Strengthening Institutions Program Grant. The College is nearing completion of the fifth and final year of that grant. Sterling College has been, and remains, in full compliance with all Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) regarding its Title III funding. Each year the College has successfully completed all Annual Performance Reports as required through Title III and the Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service (IDUES) reporting system (CC1E-9). Other issues related to laws and the expectations of affiliated organizations include the following:

- Fire code and boiler regulations
- Insurance expectations
- Hiring and employment practices
- Title IX regulations
- Regulations of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference
- Reporting of crime statistics
- Expectations regarding members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Documentation concerning some of the expectations and regulations listed above can be found in resource folder CC1E-10. The College's statements on equal opportunity can be found in the *Staff Handbook* (GD03, pg. 3), the *Academic Catalog* (GD01, pg. 3), the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pg. 3), and the *Faculty Handbook* (GD02, pgs. 30–31).

STERLING COLLEGE DEALS FAIRLY WITH ITS EXTERNAL CONSTITUENTS. With *community* as one of its core values, the College strives to foster positive relationships with external constituents. In fact, the College acknowledges that it seeks to be guided by its core values "in active, vital partnership with church, community and strategic partners." Moreover, the College embraces servant leadership in recognition that the purpose of servant leadership is to positively impact community through service. One of the ways the College deals fairly with external constituents, then, is to give to those who surround it. Through business ventures such as the Quiznos franchise, community activities such as Homecoming Weekend, and the involvement of faculty and staff in community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, the

local school board, and local churches, the College and its employees serve, interact, and build relationships in the city of Sterling.

Of course, some relationships with external constituents are more business related than others. Annual reports from the College's auditors demonstrate that the College deals fairly with the public and with specific external constituents (GD09; CC2B-1; CC2B-12). In addition, local officials testify that Sterling College deals fairly with them in its ventures. Resource folder CC1E-11 contains signed letters from local officials such as the City Manager, the Superintendent and principals of the local school system, the City of Sterling's Chief of Police, and the College's attorney.

STERLING COLLEGE PRESENTS ITSELF FAIRLY AND HONESTLY TO THE PUBLIC. Recently the College has reviewed all of its mission documents and involved the Board of Trustees in that review. At the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year, two significant issues concerning mission documents began to be addressed by the administration and the Board. First, the mission documents in their entirety were not consistently published in the College's various publications. For example, the College Web site contained six mission documents, while the *Faculty Handbook* contained only four. The *Sterling College Bylaws* contained five mission documents, and the *Academic Catalog* contained seven. Moreover, slight variations existed in the way some of the documents were published. Although these variations were not significant, they shed light on an important procedural flaw: changes in mission documents were not always approved by the Board of Trustees.

Another important issue involved the College's relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1993 Sterling College entered into a "covenant relationship" with the denomination (CC1A-14), and language in the mission document titled "Our Relationships" affirmed that covenant. In 1997, the covenant relationship contractually expired (CC1A-14) and was never renewed; however, the language in the "Our Relationships" document continued to suggest that the College indeed had a covenant relationship with the PC (USA). At its meetings in February and April of 2009, the Board of Trustees reviewed the issue and voted to revise the College's statement concerning its relationship with the denomination (CC1A-13; CC1A-16). Instead of stating that the College has a "covenant relationship" with the PC (USA), the "Our Relationships" document now indicates that "the College nurtures and develops strategic partnerships within the Presbyterian Church (USA)." (See "Our Relationships" under Core Component 1A.) The Board felt this minor revision would state the College's church relationship more accurately, since the covenant relationship had not been renewed.

The College is currently in the process of updating major publications so that mission documents are more consistently presented. At a self-study steering committee meeting on January 20, 2009, the president suggested that the *Sterling College Bylaws* exist as the "source location" for mission documents and that their publication in other locations be identical to their presentation in the *Bylaws* (CC1E-12). The College is currently updating major publications to ensure that mission documents are published consistently. The College's mission, vision, core values, priorities, process, statement of faith, and relationships statement will be printed in the *Bylaws*, the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Staff Handbook*, the *Academic Catalog*, and the Web site. The institutional learning objectives, which have also been approved by the Board of Trustees (CC1A-5), will be published in the *Academic Catalog* and on the Web site. The objectives will be published only in these two places because they may be periodically revised depending on assessment results, and the Web site and the *Academic Catalog* are updated more easily than the other publications.

Throughout the mission documents and the Web site, the College's emphasis on faith-based learning is clear. The Web site's home page contains obvious links to information about "campus ministry" and "mission trips" (CC1E-13), and some of the videos highlight the College's commitment to faith-based education. The Web site's page about the school's history also makes clear the College's identity as a Christian institution: "Another distinctive aspect of Sterling College, dating from its inception, is the emphasis placed on its status as a Christian college. Sterling faculty and staff have always been, and continue to be, believing Christians who strive to combine the concepts of faith and learning in their lives and in the classroom" (CC1E-14). In addition, the Web site contains a page of "Quick Facts" with the College's academic profile, student profile, spiritual life requirements and opportunities, and relationship to the Higher Learning Commission (CC1E-15).

Another important way the College presents itself fairly and honestly to the public is through its published "Statement of Financial Condition." The *Sterling College Academic Catalog* informs the public that information about the College's financial condition is included on IRS Form 990, which may obtained through the Office of Financial Services (GD01, pg. 9).

In 2008, the College hired a full-time Director of Marketing Communications to oversee the Marketing Communications Office. The very mission of the Marketing Communications office is to "provide innovative and effective marketing communication strategies that are *anchored in integrity* and help strengthen the College" (Appendix C; CC2C-6). In spring 2009, the Director of Marketing Communications also became the College's Webmaster. The individual in this position reviews many Web site updates before publishing them. Updates that she does not review are reviewed and approved by "content managers" of various Web site pages. These managers include associate deans and other employees with the appropriate authority to approve or disapprove statements submitted for Web site publication.

Finally, the College has recently renewed its commitment to keeping alumni informed with publications designed specifically for them. After a two-year lapse in publication due to turnover in the office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Marketing Communications Office published and mailed in fall 2008 a new edition of *Sterling*, the College's alumni magazine (CC1E-16), which has traditionally been published tri-annually. The Director of Alumni Relations is also keeping alumni informed with a monthly newsletter distributed through e-mail (CC1E-17). These renewed and intensified efforts highlight the College's concern with keeping important stakeholders informed about the College's achievements and challenges.

THE COLLEGE MAINTAINS CLEAR POLICIES AND PROCESSES TO ENSURE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION. Institutional policies about academic integrity are clearly stated in a number of places. For students, the College's statements related to academic integrity may be found in the *Academic Catalog*. The section of the *Catalog* titled "Academic Program Information" addresses a number of issues and contains information about class schedules, attendance, enrollment and withdrawal, grading, academic status, academic honors, degree requirements, appeals processes, and academic dishonesty (GD01, pgs. 32–47). The College's policies about a number of these issues are also restated on course syllabi at instructors' discretion.

The *Faculty Handbook* contains statements on academic integrity for faculty. Section 2.9 addresses the issues of academic freedom and professional ethics. Specifically, Section 2.9.2 contains the College's Code of Professional Ethics, which was adopted by the Faculty Assembly in 1986 (GD02, pgs. 28–30). The Code lists faculty members' responsibilities, which include expected behavior toward students, other faculty members, the administration, and the institution

as a whole. The Code also states what faculty members can expect from administrators regarding professional ethics. Like faculty, administrators have ethical responsibilities related to various constituents, including faculty, students, and the institution as a whole. This section of the *Faculty Handbook* also contains the College's policies concerning harassment and discrimination as well as faculty use of copyrighted material.

Processes that help ensure academic integrity are explained under Core Components 1D, 3A, 3B, 4B, and 4C. Faculty Council and its various standing committees, particularly the Academic Affairs Committee, play important roles in ensuring integrity of the academic process. Instructional alignment, which is addressed in detail in the College's assessment plan (GD10), also plays an important role. Faculty attention to instructional alignment helps ensure the appropriate connections between learning activities and the learning objectives that are stated for courses, programs, schools, and the institution (GD18). Academic integrity also involves qualified faculty determining course and program content. Information about the qualifications of Sterling College faculty is included under Core Component 3B.

Attention to matters of privacy and confidentiality is an important part of academic integrity as well. Sterling College employees take seriously the charge to be responsible stewards of sensitive information. As an institution of higher learning, the College must ensure that staff members handle sensitive information with care. This responsibility generally rests with directors and supervisors. In Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, Student Life, e.Sterling, Academic Affairs, the Business Office, Admissions, and Institutional Assessment, directors and supervisors visit at length about confidentiality with all new employees and student workers. The Director of Alumni Relations maintains an unwritten policy of contacting alumni for approval before releasing contact information to outside parties. The Director of Institutional Assessment ensures that the Assessment Committee and support staff read and understand the College's "Policy Regarding Confidentiality of Assessment Data" (CC4D-4). The Writing Center Director presents students with a form that students complete each time they visit the center for tutoring. The form contains a statement indicating that the Writing Center Director will communicate the details of a student's visit with faculty only if the student by signature grants the Writing Center Director such permission (CC1E-18). The Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing has underscored the importance of confidentiality for admissions staff in "The Sterling College Operational Plan for Enrollment" (SCOPE) (GD11, pg. 5). Various offices must be especially mindful of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All students receive a copy of their FERPA rights in their mailboxes at the beginning of each academic year, and a copy of the FERPA rights document is included in the *Student Life Handbook* (GD08, pgs. 14–15). In previous years, the *Academic Catalog* has contained a statement referring students to the *Student Life Handbook* for information about FERPA. The 2009–2010 *Academic Catalog* will also contain the entire document.

The technology involved in higher education today has significant implications related to academic integrity. While technologies may improve teaching and learning, they must also be safe and secure. Under the Vice President for Innovation and Technology and the Director of Information Technology, the College has taken a number of steps to ensure privacy and security. One important measure that protects the integrity of the College's technology is an all-in-one program designed to guard College-owned computers against viruses, spam, and undesirable content. In addition, the College maintains a firewall to protect the Sterling College network from being manipulated by outside users. As of May 2009, the VPIT is initiating the installation of a new firewall. A more up-to-date firewall will add protection and enhance off-campus access to the College network.

The network and its course management systems are password protected, and access levels are strictly controlled. For example, personnel in the Department of Information Technology control employees' ability to manipulate network data, and the Director of Online Learning and the instructional designers who work in e.Sterling ensure that faculty and students have the appropriate level of access to online courses. The College maintains a separate server for each major technological function, including the following:

- the College's virus, spam, and undesirable content program
- the College's internal data storage network
- data and programs in the Admissions and Advancement departments
- one of the College's two course management systems (A server for the other course management system is located in McPherson, Kansas, as it is a system shared by the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas.)
- campus computers' access to the Internet
- the College's Intranet
- the Mabee Library databases
- backup of all important data

In addition to these servers, the IT Department maintains two servers for College e-mail.

In revisiting the *Sterling College Strategic Plan for Technology* (CC2A-13), personnel in the Department of Innovation and Technology are in the process of making a couple of other significant improvements. Beginning in the summer of 2009, administrative passwords for the network will change periodically, and the College will begin to store backup data at an off-campus location, updating it on a weekly basis.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The *Faculty Handbook* Revision Committee is creating an opportunity to operate with even more integrity by clarifying certain statements and policies.
- While the Department of Innovation and Technology has made significant improvements in providing technological support and securing information, room for improvement exists. Off-campus storage of back-up data and more funding for technology maintenance should be a priority.
- During the 2009–2010 year, IT staff and the VPIT will create a strategic plan specifically for IT. The plan will include an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and thus help create real opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

- Alignment between the College's mission and activities is strong.
- The College maintains many policies and rights-and-responsibilities statements that address a number of issues.
- The College's core values are integrated across the campus community and are a part of **learning-focused** activities.
- The College's Board of Trustees has been actively involved in reviewing, revising, and updating mission documents.

Chapter Two
Preparing for the Future

CHAPTER TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Sterling College's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Like many colleges and universities, Sterling College has changed significantly during the past ten years. It has changed in large part because it has adapted to meet the demands of a new generation of learners. Almost every classroom on campus is now equipped with current technologies that enhance students' learning experiences; faculty have revised traditional curricula to better prepare students for various careers in an ever changing world; and the College has utilized non-traditional educational formats to reach a more diverse student population.

The College has also made important changes to its employee base. Recently, the institution has invested in personnel who are fundamental to the development and responsible management of its resources. In addition, the College has created new positions in student services and academic support in an effort to better serve students and fulfill its mission.

While the College's leadership recognizes its dependence on tuition as a major source of revenue and is working to develop additional financial resources, it has invested in innovative ways to generate tuition-based revenue until those additional sources are established. Creative partnerships and online programs that target specific audiences are helping the College maneuver through lean financial times.

Moreover, a broader assessment plan has fostered greater attention to alignment between mission and activities, and strategic planning, driven by analysis of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, has helped the College stay focused on meeting the demands of the future.

Although the College continues to face the financial challenges it has faced for many years, it is facing these challenges with forethought and prudence. Chapter 2 is the story of how the College has managed its resources effectively to prepare for its future and better enable mission fulfillment.

Core Component 2A: Sterling College realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

STRATEGIC PLANNING INVOLVES ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING AND SCRUTINY OF CURRENT FISCAL REALITIES. In 2007, the former president and his Cabinet finalized a three-year strategic plan "to identify strategic initiatives and responses to changing conditions" so the institution could "move to a position of distinction among America's Christ-centered, liberal arts colleges" (GD05, pg. 5). This "move" is certainly no easy task, for college and university competition for students is fierce in Kansas, a state with more than fifty regionally accredited institutions of higher learning and a population of fewer than three million people. With a solid understanding of this challenge, the College's leadership rightly framed the plan in the context of the institution's

distinctive characteristics, acknowledging that "the leadership to implement [the] plan can be achieved only through change which will create a unique faith-oriented academic profile for SC" (GD05, pg. 5). The plan includes an analysis of SC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and it contains a number of strategic action items that are tailored to that analysis (CC2A-1). Because of a relatively small endowment and the subsequent need for tuition-based revenue, the College's financial stability is ultimately driven by successful recruitment and retention. Consequently, many of the plan's action items are also related to these two functions. Given the importance of a "unique faith-oriented academic profile, retention, and recruitment, $SC = R^3$ (Renew, Retain, Recruit) was dubbed the motto of the strategic plan.

All of the plan's action items support renewal, retention, and recruitment in some way. A few of the action items for which these associations are most overt are listed in Figure 2.1 below. All of the strategic plan's action items can be found in resource file CC2A-1.

Figure 2.1: *Strategic Plan* Action Items Closely Associated with Recruitment, Retention, and Renewal

Action Item	Status or Completion Date
Renewal through a unique faith-oriented academic profile	
Find professors who are the right fit.	Ongoing
Implement servant-leadership training.	Ongoing
Continue brand refinement.	Ongoing
Fund matching gifts for chaplain and missiology chairs.	Ongoing
Design the application process to emphasize "academically demanding, enthusiastically Christian" focus.	August 2010
Devise overall marketing plan including brand focus and strategies	January 2009
Retention	
Create an effective advising program.	May 2008
Continue to improve the retention system.	Ongoing
Research the need for additional on- and off-campus housing.	August 2009
Reorganize Student Center and create off-campus facilities for students (bookstore, coffee house, etc.)	Ongoing
Continue to improve the early alert program for probationary students.	Ongoing
Recruit	
Build connections with universities, communities, alumni, and corporations to attract students and visiting faculty.	Ongoing
Establish for-credit online summer sessions.	Ongoing
Establish non-credit summer programs.	June 2009
Design online programs.	Ongoing
Increase the College's presence on the Web.	Ongoing
Involve more alumni in fundraising and recruiting.	Ongoing
Recruit 250 new on-campus students with full-time enrollment of 605.	Fall 2009
Refine online recruitment efforts.	Ongoing

Many of the action items listed above are "ongoing" because they will always be important to the maintenance of a healthy institution. Their inclusion in a three-year strategic plan helps emphasize them and move the College toward real progress in related areas. They are anchored in both internal and external environmental scanning.

The action items in Figure 2.1 summarize the entire Cabinet's role in renewing the College and recruiting and retaining students, but some departments have strategic plans specific to their goals and objectives. The Admissions Department has developed a Sterling College Operational Plan for Enrollment (SCOPE). This plan outlines operational guidelines for admissions counselors, who are fundamental to the College's recruiting and enrollment process. SCOPE provides counselors guidance about how to prioritize their attention to and interaction with prospective students. The prioritization process involves careful scrutiny of the prospective student pool and an awareness of connections that prospective students may already have with the College. For example, counselors are expected to be efficient when scheduling high school recruiting visits, and SCOPE outlines the considerations that should inform that process:

1. Does the College currently have students who graduated from the high school? Does the College have a history of enrolling graduates from the high school?
2. Are any of the high school's teachers Sterling College alumni?
3. Does the College have any other special connections with the high school?
4. Is the high school a good demographic or profile "fit" for the College? (GD11, pg 14)

In answering these questions, counselors consider environmental factors involved in recruiting. They also use judgment in choosing college planning conferences to attend, considering which conferences will be the most efficient use of the travel funds required to attend them.

The College has other plans for campus development as well. Two of them involve the institution's online learning division, e.Sterling, which is an important aspect of the College's plan to grow enrollment. Led by the Vice President for Innovation and Technology (VPIT), e.Sterling has developed both a business plan (CC2A-2) and a marketing plan (CC2A-3) that demonstrate careful attention to fiscal realities and environmental factors. First, the academic programs delivered through e.Sterling have been chosen carefully in recognition of competitive realities in online education. That is, e.Sterling has concentrated its efforts on programs that 1) meet social needs and 2) relate to the College's unique function as a faith-based institution. Offering the College's Teacher Education Program online responds to the teacher shortage in the state of Kansas. Other programs currently offered through e.Sterling—Christian Ministries and Theology and Ministry—capitalize on the College's rich history of providing Christ-centered education.

A key component of e.Sterling's business plan has involved and will continue to involve careful internal scanning in regard to personnel. Because the initiation of an online learning division requires significant capital, the VPIT has led efforts to streamline services to e.Sterling students. The VPIT has urged campus leaders in Admissions, Financial Aid, Marketing, and Student Life to think of online learners as "Sterling College students who learn online" rather than as "e.Sterling students" and to include recognition of these students in their planning (CC2A-2, pgs. 20–22). The streamlining process has not been without its challenges, but progress has certainly been made in this area. Because e.Sterling "semesters" are non-traditional (eight-week sessions), e.Sterling and the Financial Aid Office have worked closely together to overcome initial challenges related to the calculation and disbursement of financial aid.

The marketing and business plans from the Admissions Office and Department of Innovation Technology underscore thoughtful planning in those operational areas of the College, but they also highlight an institutional challenge. That is, the College lacks a comprehensive and *integrated* marketing plan that could ensure more efficient resource use and growth across the

entire campus—not just in certain areas. Members of the President's Cabinet are aware of the need for an integrated plan, and they have discussed possibilities (CC2A-4).

In 2002 the College formed a National Advisory Council with a mission to "help Sterling College move strategically towards its vision." According to its guidelines, the Council may consist of as many as seventy-five individuals, and it should be balanced in regard to gender, ethnicity, geography, vocation, alumni, and friends. Preferred members are visionaries who love the College and develop strategic ideas and suggest them to the Board of Trustees, the president, and the campus community for implementation. The Council must contain at least one Sterling College Board member (CC2A-5). Recently, a Board member who serves on the National Advisory Council has shared results of NAC gatherings at Board Development Committee sessions of Trustee meetings (CC2A-6).

Environmental scanning also helps the College properly manage its fiscal affairs in a difficult economy. Like most other colleges and universities throughout the nation, Sterling College must be especially cautious and wise in the face of a national economic recession. In February 2009, the president announced a five percent cut in operating expenses from the 2008–2009 budget. This cut involved a faculty and staff salary freeze, an overall hiring freeze, and an indefinite suspension of contributions to employees' retirement accounts. The recession also led to some organizational restructuring, through which five full-time positions were eliminated. Two of these positions were open at the time, so the College actually terminated only three full-time employees.

In 2007, the College changed the way it offered its Interterm. Traditionally, Interterm had been a three-week intensive mini-semester offered in January. Students met for a three-hour class every day and completed the course in three weeks. Interterm had always been included as part of full-time tuition for the fall semester. After close examination in 2007, however, administrators realized the College was losing a significant sum of money by including Interterm as part of fall tuition costs. With little revenue during the month of January, the practice was costly, and the College decided to change Interterm to "May Term," for which students would pay separately. Student dissent was strong, less because of the additional cost than because students preferred the month of January for the intensive course. In January 2010, Interterm will return; however, it will now be calculated in students' yearly tuition—$750.00 in the fall and $750.00 in the spring. The Vice President for Academic Affairs worked with the student body to reach this compromise. While students would of course prefer to have a "free" Interterm, many were willing to incur the cost in fall and spring tuition if the intensive term were moved back to January.

The planning processes described above involve both internal and external environmental scanning. Recruitment initiatives are driven by factors in a competitive market, and retention efforts are grounded in the growing demand for quality customer service. Through research and data collection, the Student Life Office is making more informed decisions about how best to retain students. The administration has responded to current economic and internal fiscal realities as it has managed its resources, and through the National Advisory Council, it has sought the wisdom of employers and alumni from various industries and geographical locations. In short, the College has demonstrated a capacity to acknowledge social and economic trends and adapt accordingly.

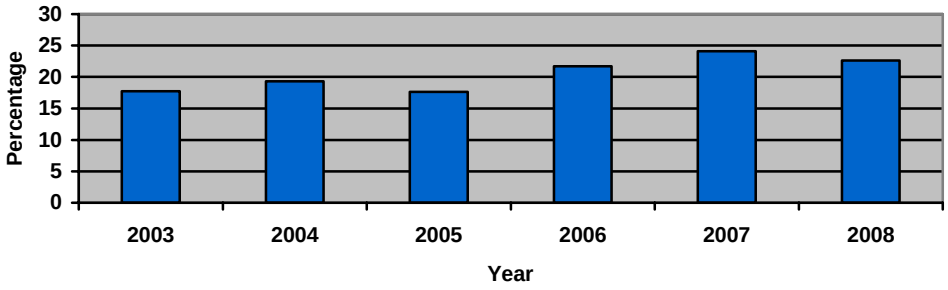
ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION INITIATIVES DEMONSTRATE RECOGNITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES AS WELL AS SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS. In recent years, the Office for Enrollment and Marketing has made a number of changes in its approach to new-student recruitment. Some of these changes have been geographical in nature, and some have

been related to the communication habits of a new generation. In its effort to improve retention, the Student Life Office has also been responsive to environmental realities and trends. Initiatives in both recruitment and retention have resulted in significant changes at Sterling College.

Recruitment

For a number of years, the Admissions Office focused its recruiting efforts almost exclusively within "the triangle"—the geographical area between Dallas, Kansas City, and Denver. This area is certainly the most important recruitment area, and admissions counselors will continue to devote much of their time to students and recruiting events within the triangle. However, economic realities—driven in part by college and university competition for students—have forced the College to rethink its recruiting approach. Recently, the Admissions Office has more intentionally developed relationships with alumni outside of the triangle. Some of these relationships have resulted in counselors attending college fairs in California, Arizona, Illinois, and New Mexico. The Admissions Office has also connected the College's Music Department with alumni in states outside of the triangle, resulting in choir trips that help the College gain more national exposure. Figure 2.2 below contains 2003–2008 data about the percentage of Sterling College students who have come from places other than Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. The data suggests that the College is successfully adjusting to a broader recruitment strategy.

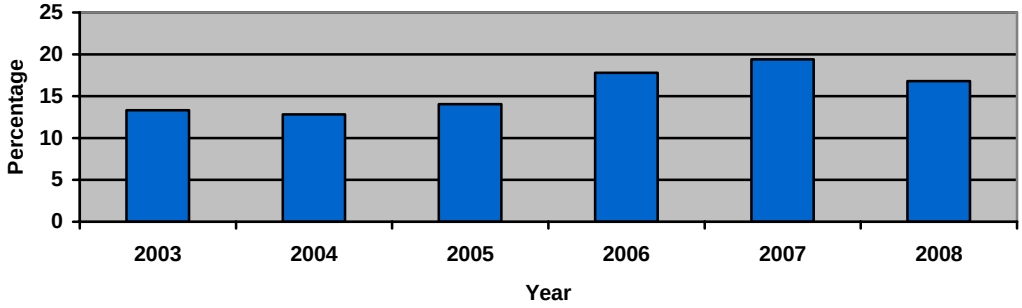
Figure 2.2: Percentage of Students from Outside the Traditional Recruiting Triangle, 2003–2008 (CC2A-7)



The Admissions Office has taken steps to build a more ethnically diverse student population as well, for the College cannot provide the types of intercultural experiences that today's students expect if it does not maintain a diverse student base. While the College's rural location creates challenges in building and maintaining a diverse enrollment, the Admissions Office has helped increase diversity on campus. In recent years, admissions counselors have attended the Black College Expo in Wichita, Kansas, and in 2007 the College signed a contract with Archimedes Group International, which pledged to help the College recruit more international students (CC2A-8). Moreover, the Admissions Office has worked with the College's Director of Campus Ministries to build relationships with Native American high schools in eastern Oklahoma.

Figure 2.3 demonstrates the growth in the percentage of non-white students in recent years. While the percentage took a slight downturn in 2008, the data suggests that more intentional efforts to increase the diversity of the student population may be working.

Figure 2.3: Percentage of Non-White Students, 2003–2008 (CC2A-7)



In order to accommodate a generation of students that is much more technological than past generations, the Admissions Office has also been instrumental in redesigning the College's Web site and, in the process, creating two important micro-sites—one for general prospective students and one for applicants. The site for general prospective students is media enriched and contains a number of articles relating to frequently asked questions. It also contains a form on which prospective students can ask questions (http://www.youaresterling.org/index.html#) (CC2A-9). The site for applicants is a Facebook-like site that allows applicants to interact with each other and with current students through discussion forums. Launched in fall 2008, the applicant site is especially promising. As of July 8, 2009, 198 applicants had posted over 800 pictures and over 3200 notes on the site (http://www.welcometosterling.org/account/login/) (CC2A-10). Adjusting to the communication habits of a new generation seems to be paying off. The College is hopeful that the applicant site will positively impact retention as well, for it allows applicants to establish relationships before they even enroll.

Retention

Led by the Vice President for Student Life, initiatives to improve student retention have involved almost every area of campus. In fall 2007, members of the previous President's Cabinet did their own part to personally improve retention when they endeavored to call students' parents at the end of the semester. Aware of the increasing need for customer service, Cabinet members phoned parents simply to thank them for the privilege of educating their sons and daughters. Naturally, the calls also provided parents with opportunities to ask important questions of high-level administrators. Cabinet members continue to call parents at the end of every semester, and they are hopeful that this improved customer-service initiative helps retain students.

The Student Life Office has now developed a survey to be completed by every student who withdraws from the College during a semester. The survey will help staff assess the reasons that students may withdraw and determine which of those factors might be in the College's control (CC2A-11). Student Life is also beginning to research the characteristics of students who do not return for spring semesters (CC2A-12). The College has added key positions in Student Life as well, including a Campus Nurse, a Personal Counselor, and a Career Services Director. The addition of a campus nurse brought with it a new student health facility, which contains exercise equipment as an alternative to the equipment used primarily by student-athletes in the College's physical education center.

Another important retention initiative has involved the Office of Academic Support, which in the fall of 2007 began tracking the attendance of students who enroll on probation or who fall into probationary status while attending Sterling College. Personnel in the office communicate with Academic Affairs, the Registrar, Student Life, faculty, and coaches in an effort to intervene

immediately when students show signs of academic distress. Administrators believe this system has played a major role in increasing the student retention rate since it was implemented. Data from this initiative, included in Figure 4.16 under Core Component 4D, are of yet inconclusive, but they are certainly encouraging. Other retention-related information is included throughout Chapter Five.

As a faith-based institution, the College cannot ignore the role of spiritual formation processes in retention. In fall 2007, the College added a second student chaplain to its spiritual formation structure, resulting in a dual chaplaincy that allowed for diversity in relational strengths between students and chaplains. The chaplain who was already serving has since become the Director of Campus Ministries.

In 2008, the College began offering students alternative ways to fulfill chapel credit. In addition to the traditional chapel service that has been offered on Wednesday mornings for a number of years, students may now earn chapel credit by engaging in one of four small groups that allow exploration of spiritual issues in a more informal environment. Students may also engage in spiritual-development activities that do not count for chapel credit but foster fellowship and community (CC3C-24). The move toward a broader and more diverse approach to spiritual formation underscores the College's willingness and desire to adapt to trends and environmental realities. As the student body becomes more diverse, spiritual formation initiatives must reflect attention to different learning styles and attitudes about faith development.

CURRICULAR CHANGES REFLECT ATTENTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES AS WELL AS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS. In a time when employees with specialized skills are highly sought after by employers, small liberal arts institutions such as Sterling College must strike a delicate balance between maintaining a liberal-education emphasis and offering programs that are practical for students who will soon be entering an ever-changing workforce. In recent years, the College's faculty has worked hard to find this balance, being mindful of workplace trends while maintaining its tradition of grounding academic programs in a liberal arts framework.

One of the most important ways the College has struck this balance is by restructuring a number of existing academic programs to make them more attractive to and practical for students. Since 2003, three programs have been restructured so that students may choose a specialized area of emphasis under the umbrella of a traditional discipline. Believing that the College's Art and Design major was too general to be practical for future artists in the workforce, faculty in the Art and Design Department redesigned the major to include concentration areas in studio/fine art, computer design, and ceramics/sculpture (GD01, pgs. 55–56; CC2D-2). In response to a growing number of Business majors, the College added two full-time faculty members to the Business Department and created the McVay Endowed Chair for the department. It also added a number of emphases within the major (GD01, pg. 197). While all Business majors must complete 43 credits of core requirements, they may now choose from one of the following concentrations:

- International Business
- Entrepreneurship
- Marketing
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Economics
- Leadership-Management
- Real Estate
- Externship Program (GD01, pgs. 73–74)

Many of the improvements to the Business program were based on in-depth research conducted by faculty in the department. Faculty considered feedback from practitioner professionals as they worked to make the improvements to the curriculum (CC4C-1, pgs. 3–7).

In addition, the Department of Theology and Ministry, which changed its name in spring 2009 from the Department of Religion and Philosophy, now offers a Christian Ministries major with concentration areas in youth, educational leadership, missions, worship leadership, and urban ministry (GD01, pgs. 166–167). Such programmatic restructuring allows the College to offer attractive and practical majors to students while it keeps the programs from being overspecialized.

The Exercise Science Department has done more than restructure; it has added two new majors that were developed in response to student demand and the need to improve program convenience for students. In fall 2004, the College began offering an Athletic Training program on its campus. From 1999–2003, the Athletic Training program was offered in partnership with other Colleges belonging to the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas (ACCK), a consortium to which Sterling College belongs. Eventually, student demand for the major, as well as issues related to student travel to and from consortium colleges, resulted in the College's development of its own program (GD01, pgs. 113–115). The Exercise Science Department is also home to a recently developed Sports Management major. The Sports Management program contains a number of emphasis areas that address popular trends in today's workforce. These areas of emphasis include marketing, promotions and sports information; club, fitness, and recreation; coaching and instruction; and collegiate, professional, or corporate sport administration. Like Business majors, Sports Management majors must complete core requirements that are common to all students in the program (GD01, pgs. 117–118).

In addition to restructuring programs in response to social trends, the faculty has also responded to increasing pressures related to accountability. Whereas colleges and universities were once known primarily for imparting knowledge to students, employers today rightly expect graduates to demonstrate not only practical knowledge but also essential skills in their fields. The College's implementation of an assessment plan that is driven at every level by learning outcomes is one example of how the College is not only trying to improve teaching and learning but also be more relevant to society. More importantly, the assessment plan calls for stakeholder input in the development of those outcomes (GD10, pg. 23). In fall 2008, all academic programs were scheduled for comprehensive reviews on a six-year cycle. During these reviews, program faculty will seek input from stakeholders, including employers and alumni. The College's two programs that maintain professional accreditation, Education and Athletic Training, already had stakeholder-input initiatives in place even before the new assessment plan was implemented.

A newly adopted emphasis on internships and field experiences also underscores the College's desire to produce graduates with both knowledge and skills. Internships within academic programs have increased tremendously in the past few years. Some departments require students to complete an internship before graduation. In addition to the semester-length clinical teaching experience required for Education majors, students majoring in Business, Christian Ministries, Athletic Training, Exercise Science, and Sports Management must also complete an internship. The Theology major requires an internship-like service component, and Communication and Theatre Arts majors must choose between an internship or a research/performance project. Athletic training majors also complete a number of practicums on campus by serving varsity athletic teams. The College has partnered with the Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture to provide students with urban internship opportunities. This center specializes in coordinating Chicago-based internships with students' academic areas of interest. The partnership is especially

helpful to the College's Education department, as it allows students to complete their student teaching in a more culturally diverse environment than they would encounter in central Kansas (CC3D-14).

As the College plans and reviews its academic offerings, it considers the needs of students, society, and the employers of its graduates. In doing so, it helps guarantee its relevance in a society that is continually being shaped by trends and environmental changes.

STERLING COLLEGE CONSIDERS TECHNOLOGY-RELATED TRENDS, TOOLS, AND OPPORTUNITIES AS IT PREPARES FOR ITS FUTURE. In addition to adding online programs that address social needs and capitalize on the College's strengths, the Department of Innovation and Technology has led the institution in a number of other technology-based initiatives designed to position the College for a bright future. These steps are described in a *Strategic Plan for Technology*, which is anchored in ten guiding objectives and a goal to "revolutionize teaching, learning, and daily practices through the investigation and implementation of appropriate technologies relevant to the mission and vision of Sterling College" (CC2A-13). The *Strategic Plan for Technology* was shaped by the results of the Sterling Technology and Readiness Assessment (STAR), which was administered in 2006. This assessment indicated that one of the College's greatest weaknesses was insufficient technology and technology use related to teaching and learning (CC3B-1). Described below are a number of the initiatives at the heart of the *Strategic Plan for Technology*.

In 2005, the College offered wireless Internet access in only 10% of its academic areas/classrooms. After a two-year initiative to improve that statistic, Sterling College is now one of only a few colleges in Kansas that offer free wireless access to faculty, staff, and students in 100% of its facilities. Wireless access is also available in almost all open-areas on campus (CC3C-2). An entirely wireless campus allows faculty to incorporate and students to benefit from certain instructional technologies no matter where they are on campus.

With incentives from the College's Title III grant in 2006, the VP of Innovation and Technology and the school's Webmaster designed and piloted for students in the Education Department an ePortfolio system that could showcase students' work. This system offers students a powerful tool as they begin their job searches. Prospective employers may visit a student's portfolio and not only view samples of coursework but also read about the students' accomplishments and educational philosophies. The College's technology plan calls for further development of the system and its integration with other academic programs. As of April 2009, the VPIT is considering an alternative software program for the portfolio system before moving forward with plans for integration into other academic departments.

The use of technology to improve learning and research is also an aspect of the technology plan. In regard to research, the College has streamlined usernames and passwords across different electronic systems. This means that faculty and students can access any electronic database with one username and password—whether on or off campus. The achievement of this streamlining initiative is a major step toward easier access of research databases managed by the Mabee Library. As for improving learning with technology, Title III funding has allowed the College to make a number of hardware and software improvements, many of which are listed in Appendix E.

Leading an aggressive initiative related to technology-based professional development has been another major part of the VPIT's work over the past couple of years. At the beginning of this initiative, the VPIT administered an all-faculty assessment of technological skills. He then

worked with each faculty member and helped him or her create an individualized improvement plan based on the results of the assessment. Still in progress, the main goal of this initiative is to help faculty make better use of technology to improve teaching and learning. The initiative is described in more detail under Core Component 3B.

Another element of the strategic technology plan involves the improvement of electronic collaboration and communication amongst all members of the academic community. The VPIT has recommended that technology-related planning should involve communication systems that enable synchronous messaging, blogs, discussion boards, podcasts, electronic bulletin boards, etc. Some of these communication systems are intended to supplement and enhance learning. Others are necessities. For example, in 2007 the VPIT worked with the Student Government Association to create online forums for students. These forums were developed in response to students' dissatisfaction with too much campus-wide e-mail containing academically unimportant information—carpooling requests, items for sale, etc. (CC2A-14). Implementation of some of these communication systems occurred relatively easily through the College's online learning management systems. Implementation of more advanced systems will require purchases of a server and special software designed to maintain such tools and systems.

The 2008–2009 academic year brought with it one of the greatest successes of the technology plan—a new wireless laptop system (fully equipped with a powerful laptop, wireless keyboard and mouse, external 19-inch monitor, external storage devices, and carrying case) for every full-time faculty member. The delivery of these systems helped the Department of Innovation and Technology realize its goal of giving employees greater access to wireless/mobile computing devices. In addition, in spring 2009 four faculty members teaching hybrid courses piloted an initiative that could help Sterling College provide cutting-edge instructional technology. Instead of the College dictating to students what type of technology should be used to enhance instruction, Sterling College provided these four faculty members with the advanced technology many students already own and encouraged these faculty members to supplement instruction in very non-traditional ways. That is, these instructors used applications from Web-connected, hand-held computing devices to deliver content to students anytime, anywhere. Through this initiative, Sterling College is making an effort to reach individual students "where they are" rather than forcing them to use *only* the more general technology that is owned by the College and is available to all students.

Finally, the technology plan calls for the College to research and explore technological partnerships that could further support technology-related initiatives. A major partnership related to this aspect of the technology plan has been realized through e.Sterling's marketing plan (CC2A-3). New Teachers For Kansas (NT4K) is "a central clearinghouse of resources and information" intended to "help reduce teacher shortages in Kansas" (http://nt4k.org/index.php) (CC2A-15). The College's partnership with NT4K was developed in hopes of promoting the Sterling Teacher Education Program and directing Internet traffic from the NT4K Web site to the Sterling Teacher Education Program Web site. The College's online learning division also maintains a relationship with a corporation called Embanet, which markets two of e.Sterling's programs, manages course delivery, and plays a significant role in enrollment processes (http://www.embanet.com/) (CC2A-16). Through e.Sterling, the College has developed articulation agreements with two community colleges and is in the process of finalizing agreements with two others (CC2A-17). Leaders in e.Sterling are exploring partnerships with area correctional facilities as well—partnerships that would help the online division fulfill its mission to "deliver unique educational programs that unite societal needs and non-traditional learners."

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- While a three-year, College-wide strategic plan and strategic plans within certain departments have helped move the College forward, the institution lacks a comprehensive and integrated marketing plan.
- The impact of not having a marketing plan is compounded by the College's existence in a state where competition for new students is fierce. The College must develop a marketing plan and capitalize on its strengths as a servant-leadership and Christ-centered liberal arts college.

Strengths

- For its three-year strategic plan, the organization has analyzed its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges and tailored its initiatives to those analyses.
- The College's technology plan and recruitment and retention efforts are **future centered.**
- The College has made **future-centered** curricular changes in recent years.
- Through the National Advisory Council, through efforts to coordinate alumni relations and recruiting, and through academic program revision involving employers and alumni, the College has improved its **connectedness** to important stakeholders.
- Efforts to recruit students from outside the traditional recruiting area seem to be increasing overall enrollment numbers as well as the diversity of the student population.
- Cabinet members have modeled exemplary customer service and underscored for all employees the importance of retention efforts.

Core Component 2B: Sterling College's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

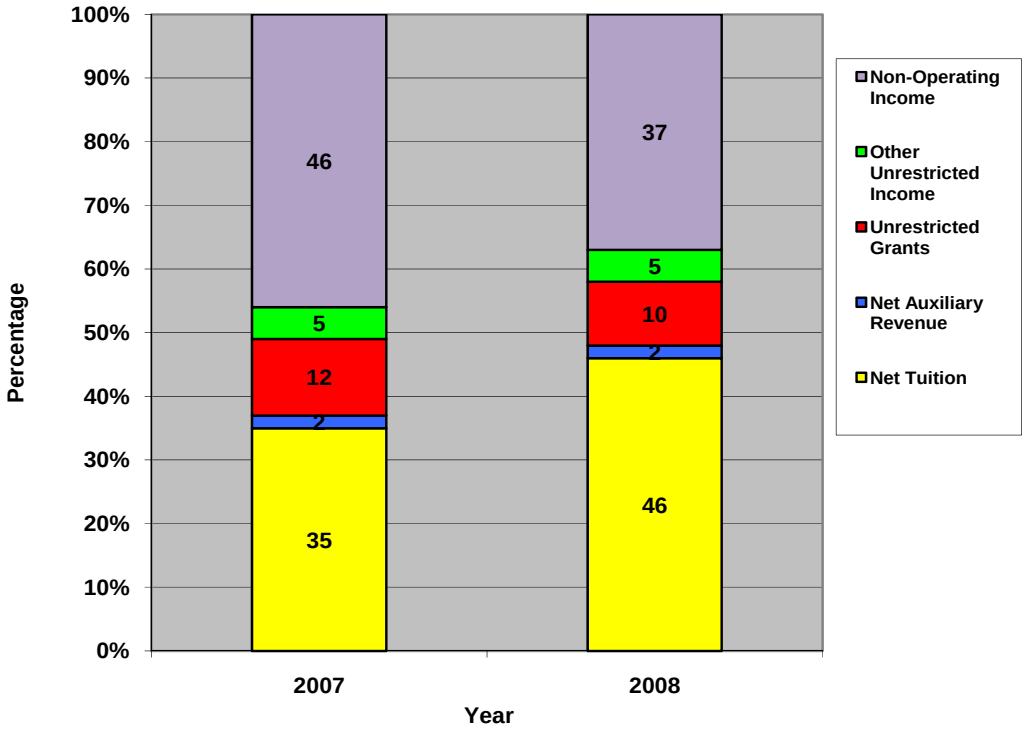
Since the College opened over 120 years ago, financial resources have been a concern. The past ten years have been similar to other lean times in the institution's history, and like many similar schools, Sterling College has had to adapt to a changing economic climate. Revenue streams that may have once been available have declined, while others have been developed.

Despite financial obstacles, however, the College has sustained itself and even thrived. An increasing enrollment trend, which has continued since fall 2004, has helped the College maintain the resources necessary for providing quality education (CC2A-7). Another highlight of the past decade has been the Title III grant that has allowed the College to develop an online presence—and consequently an alternative revenue stream. Title III funding has also allowed the College to make significant technological improvements. In fall 2008, all full-time faculty members received new laptop computers and extra monitors. State-of-the-art projectors are mounted in most classrooms, and wireless Internet access is now available in all College buildings. A summary of other technological improvements is available in resource file CC2D-5.

While a volatile stock market has severely curtailed cash flow at some institutions, Sterling College has not been as affected by market fluctuations because it has never relied heavily on endowment income. Of course, the College has not escaped the economic recession without some pain. Necessary budget reductions were made in February and July 2009, but administrators have worked hard to make reasonable cuts that position the College to operate more efficiently. As this section of the report demonstrates, the College remains committed to securing and allocating resources that enable it to maintain and promote academic quality.

STERLING COLLEGE DEVELOPS ITS MAIN SOURCES OF REVENUE WHILE REMAINING AWARE OF THE NEED TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SOURCES. Sterling College operates with two major revenue sources: tuition and its annual fund (Sterling Fund). Figure 2.4 on the following page shows the College's sources of income by percentages for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Section 7 of Appendix A contains a summary of the College's revenue and expenditures for the past two audited fiscal years.

Figure 2.4: Tuition Dependency



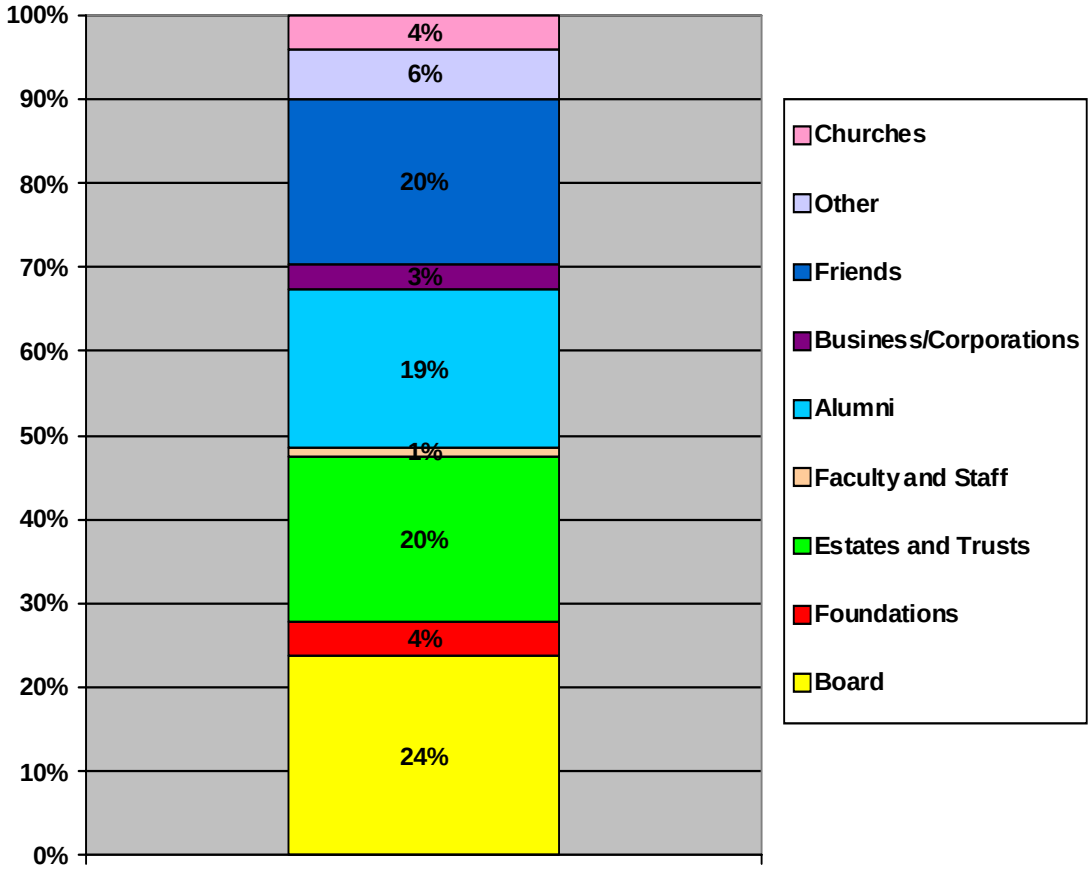
According to the auditor's management letter for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, "The operating expenses for Sterling College are $8,509,801 and $8,194,726 for the years ended June 20, 2008 and June 20, 2007, respectively. For the year ended June 30, 2008, 62% of the operating expenses were funded by operating revenue. For the year ended June 30, 2007, 55% of the operating expenses were funded by operating revenue" (CC2B-1, pg. 10). That the College relied less on non-operating income and more on tuition in 2008 can be viewed both positively and negatively. On one hand, the College recognizes the inherent dangers of relying too much on tuition. With limited boarding, over-reliance on tuition could cause a problem as the College grows. While the Admissions Office should be applauded for its ability to bring new students to campus, the College must develop reliable revenue sources other than tuition.

Nonetheless, because tuition *is* the chief revenue source, the College has developed innovative ways to attract new students and develop partnerships. The College's online learning division serves as one example. Another example is Teen Mania. This organization offers a one-year Honor Academy for high school graduates. The purpose of the academy is to help train the next generation of Christian leaders (http://www.honoracademy.com/) (CC3D-20). A new partnership between the College and Teen Mania allows students of the Honor Academy to transfer coursework to Sterling College and apply it towards a degree. Establishing a dual-credit partnership with the local school district has also proven beneficial. While none of these initiatives alone generates significant revenue, taken together they underscore the wisdom of developing non-traditional tuition income.

The College's other main source of revenue is its annual fund. Figure 2.5 shows the sources of annual fund contributions by percentages from 2006 through August 2009. Additional

information about annual fund giving is available in resource file CC1C-2. Annual fund giving increased significantly during the 2005–2006 and 2007–2008 fiscal years. Much of the increase had to do with Board development initiated by the College's previous president. While the College stays committed to appointing alumni, local citizens, and church leaders to the Board, in recent years new trustees have brought a greater depth of financial knowledge to the College's leadership and have been pivotal in helping the institution navigate through difficult financial times.

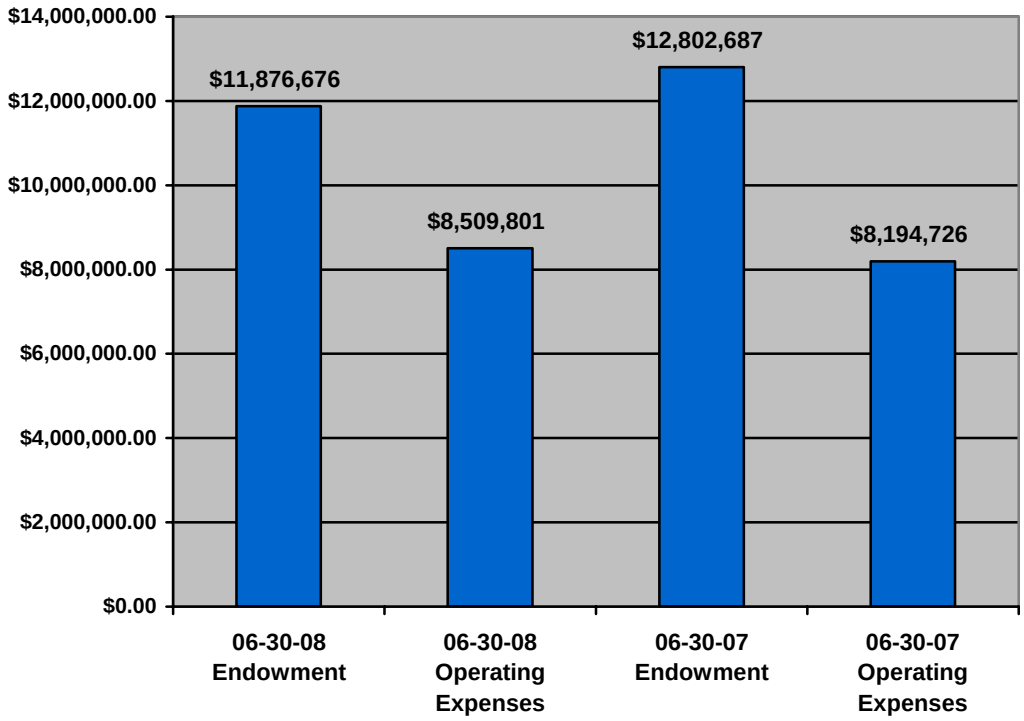
Figure 2.5: Summary of Annual Fund Giving by Donor Type, 2006–2009



As stated under Core Component 1C, the College's current president has expressed to the trustees his strong concern about Board development and has stated his willingness to utilize a significant amount time for developing the Board. With the College's *Bylaws* requiring a Board of between 24 and 36 individuals, and with the current Board having only 24 members, the president sees a great opportunity to strengthen the Board with proven leaders who will support the institutional mission. The trustees agreed that developing a stronger Board would indeed be a good use of the president's time (CC1D-2). Of course, the College recognizes the danger of over-reliance on Board members' financial contributions and realizes that annual-fund contributions from sources other than the Board must increase. Recent additions to the College's Advancement Office are fundamental to that initiative. Those additions are discussed on subsequent pages under this Core Component.

Figure 2.6 shows the College's endowment-to-operating expenses for the past two audited fiscal years. Market fluctuations lowered the College's endowment during the 2007–2008 fiscal year, while the College's operating expenses increased slightly.

Figure 2.6: Endowment-to-Operating Expenses (CC2B-1, pg. 11)



As stated in the introduction to this Core Component section, recent market fluctuations have not affected Sterling College as significantly as they have other institutions because the College has never relied heavily upon its endowment as a revenue source. For the past two fiscal years, in fact, the College has not budgeted for any endowment income.

STERLING COLLEGE IS MANAGING ITS CASH AND DEBT EFFECTIVELY. Figure 2.7 shows the College's ability to meet its debt service requirements from current operating cash flow. The larger the ratio, the more likely the College is to meet its debt service requirements from operating income.

Figure 2.7: Operating Cash Flow to Debt Service (CC2B-1, pg. 13)

	6/30/2008	6/30/2007	6/30/2006
Cash Provided by Operating Activities + Interest Expense / Debt Service	1.30	(0.14)	0.17
Net cash provided by operating activities	$406,442	$(859,791)	$103,778
Interest expense	$260,560	$274,763	$453,761
Required principal payments on debt	$254,312	$3,993,954	$2,741,089

As stated in the auditor's management letter, "The ratio does indicate that the College is relying on additional financing and other sources of current assets to meet [its] current financing obligations" (CC2B-1, pg. 13). However, the ratio has improved considerably. The College has increased the amount of net cash provided by operating activities while decreasing its overall debt service. Most notably, the College decreased its required principal payments on debt by almost 94% during the 2007–2008 fiscal year. However, due to market trends, the College utilized its available lines of credit to meet its financial obligations during the 2008–2009 fiscal year, which has not yet been audited at the time of this report's publication.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING FACULTY, ARE ADEQUATE FOR ACHIEVING THE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY THE COLLEGE CLAIMS TO PROVIDE. One of Sterling College's distinguishing characteristics is its emphasis on community and relationships. With *community* as a core value, the College maintains a student-faculty ratio that enables students to establish meaningful relationships with their professors. Listed in Figure 2.8 are the student-faculty ratios for fall semesters 2004–2008. The College has stayed committed to a low student-faculty ratio through the recent period of enrollment growth.

Figure 2.8: Overall Student-Faculty Ratios, 2004–2008 (CC2B-2; CC2A-7)

Year	Number of Full-time Faculty	Number of Full-time Students–Fall	Ratio
November 1, 2008	37	541	14:1
November 1, 2007	37	551	15:1
November 1, 2006	34	537	16:1
November 1, 2005	37	433	12:1
November 1 2004	37	413	11:1

Of course, the general student-to-faculty ratio provides only basic information. Through the self-study process, the College has analyzed the ratio in more detail to determine equity across academic programs. Figure 2.9 compares the number of faculty to the number of majors in each department.

Figure 2.9: Number of Faculty and Majors in Academic Departments, 2006–2008[12] (CC2B-3; CC2D-10)

Academic Department	2006–2007			2007–2008			2008–2009		
	# of Majors	# of Full-time & Pro-rata Faculty	# of Part-time Faculty	# of Majors	# of Full-time & Pro-rata Faculty	# of Part-time Faculty	# of Majors	# of Full-time & Pro-rata Faculty	# of Part-time Faculty
Art & Design	26	2	1	19	2	1	19	2	1
Behavioral Science	33	2	0	29	2	0	27	2	0
Business	79	4	1	94	4	1	91	4	1
Communication and Theatre Arts	50	4	0	56	4	1	57	4	0
Elementary Education[13]	52	5	3	55	4	3	59	4	3
Language and Literature	20	3	2	17	3	1	21	3	1
Exercise Science*	71	3	3	77	4	2	83	5	3
History and Government	22	2	1	25	2	0	22	2	0
Math and Computer Science	17	3	0	19	4	0	16	4	1
Music*	10	2	3	5	2	4	4	3	5
Natural Science*	31	3	0	43	3	1	38	3	1
Theology and Ministry*	35	2	3	32	4	1	33	4	2

[12] Departments that offer more than one major are marked with an * in Figures 2-9–2.14. For these departments, the sum of all majors *in the department* has been calculated.

[13] Number of majors includes only students pursuing a degree in Elementary Education. It does not include students pursuing teaching licensure for secondary school subjects.

Figure 2.10 contains student-to-faculty ratios based on the information provided in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.10: Majors-to-Faculty Ratios, 2006–2008[14]

Academic Department	2006–2007		2007–2008		2008–2009	
	Major-to-faculty Ratio (Full-time and Pro-rata Faculty Only)	Major-to-faculty Ratio (All Full-time and Part-time Faculty)	Major-to-faculty Ratio (Full-time and Pro-rata Faculty Only)	Major-to-faculty Ratio (All Full-time and Part-time Faculty)	Major-to-faculty Ratio (Full-time and Pro-rata Faculty Only)	Major-to-faculty Ratio (All Full-time and Part-time Faculty)
Art & Design	13:1	9:1	10:1	6:1	10:1	6:1
Behavioral Science	17:1	17:1	15:1	15:1	14:1	14:1
Business	20:1	16:1	24:1	19:1	23:1	18:1
Communication and Theatre Arts	13:1	13:1	14:1	11:1	14:1	14:1
Elementary Education[15]	10:1	7:1	14:1	8:1	15:1	8:1
Language and Literature	7:1	4:1	6:1	4:1	7:1	5:1
Exercise Science*	24:1	12:1	20:1	13:1	17:1	10:1
History and Government	11:1	7:1	13:1	13:1	11:1	11:1
Math and Computer Science	6:1	6:1	5:1	5:1	4:1	3:1
Music*	5:1	2:1	3:1	1:1	1:1	1:1
Natural Science*	10:1	10:1	14:1	11:1	13:1	10:1
Theology and Ministry*	18:1	5:1	8:1	6:1	8:1	6:1

At first glance, the figure above seems to highlight a number of inequities between certain departments. Based on the number of majors, faculty in the Language and Literature Department, the Math and Computer Science Department, the Music Department, and the Theology and Ministry Department all seem to have a lighter workload, while faculty in the Business Department appear to be overworked, especially when one considers that Sports Management majors (in the Exercise Science Department) take over 50% of their core curriculum courses from Business faculty, and these numbers are not reflected in the ratios for the Business Department.

The Business Department certainly has higher student-to-faculty ratios, and faculty in the Music Department are well aware of the need for more majors. In the past three years, the College has invested in an entirely new Music Department faculty in an effort to rebuild a program that faced serious challenges in the middle of the decade. New faculty have rewritten curricula, and they are working hard to attract students to the program. One initiative led by the Director of Bands is the

[14] Ratios are rounded to the nearest whole number.
[15] Ratios include only students majoring in Elementary Education—not those pursuing teaching licensure in secondary school subjects.

Community Band, which combines musical talent in the Sterling community with students and faculty in the College's Music program (CC3D-22).

While there is great disparity in major-to-faculty ratios between departments, Figure 2.11 below contains additional information that must be considered in the discussion about student-to-faculty ratios. Ratios are much more equitable across the disciplines when average class sizes are calculated. Moreover, departments such as the Language and Literature and Music departments, which have very low major-to-faculty ratios, have much higher ratios when the average class size of general education courses taught by their faculty is factored into the analysis.

The data in Figure 2.11 are based on both semesters of the 2008–2009 academic year. The number of general education courses in each department is based on the general education curriculum as listed in the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01, pgs. 49–51). Some special issues have not been figured into the data. For example, some courses are required, while others are electives within the GE curriculum. Nonetheless, Figure 2.11 provides a generally clear picture of class sizes at Sterling College.

Figure 2.11: Average Class Size by Program, 2008–2009 Academic Year (CC2B-4)

Academic Department	Number of GE Courses Offered	Average Class Size in GE Courses	Average Class Size in Non-GE Courses	Overall Average Class Size	Student-to-faculty Ratio Based on Overall Average Class Size (Full-time and Pro-rata Faculty Only)	Student-to-faculty Ratio Based on Overall Average Class Size (All Full-time and Part-time Faculty)
Art & Design	3	18	5	6	3:1	2:1
Behavioral Science	4	23	8	13	7:1	7:1
Business	2	30	15	16	4:1	3:1
Communication and Theatre Arts	7	17	6	8	2:1	2:1
Elementary Education	0	0	14	14	4:1	2:1
Language and Literature	6	26	7	14	5:1	4:1
Exercise Science*	1	32	13	14	3:1	2:1
History and Government	6	38	7	13	7:1	7:1
Math and Computer Science	9	14	7	8	2:1	2:1
Music*	3	19	7	8	3:1	1:1
Natural Science*	7	20	6	13	4:1	3:1
Theology and Ministry*	4	32	9	16	4:1	3:1

As Figure 2.11 demonstrates, the size of the College's faculty is adequate for meeting students' educational needs and maintaining the quality education it provides. When class sizes are considered, a picture emerges of a much more equitable faculty distribution. General education courses are naturally more populated in certain areas, but overall average class sizes are relatively consistent across departments.

It is also important to consider the numbers in Figures 2.9–2.11 in relationship to the tuition-based revenue generated by each academic program. Figure 2.12 shows tuition-based revenue from the 2007–2008 academic year for each program, after faculty salaries have been deducted. Revenue is based on the number of declared majors in each department.

Figure 2.12: Tuition-based Revenue by Declared Majors in Academic Departments, 2007–2008

Academic Department	Tuition Revenue by Declared Majors in Department
Art & Design	$62,275.98
Behavioral Science	$129,911.18
Business	$482,448.48
Communication and Theatre Arts	$240,124.52
Elementary Education	$294,664.10
Language and Literature	$13,477.14
Exercise Science*	$719,997.56
History and Government	$111,716.50
Math and Computer Science	$63,806.98
Music*	$-94,816.90
Natural Science*	$178,407.06
Theology and Ministry*	$95,689.44

As a comparison of Figures 2.9 and 2.12 indicates, faculty in the College's five most profitable academic programs comprise one-half of the total faculty. The College has invested in the faculty to maintain its significant revenue sources and maintain quality education in those programs.

However, the information in Figures 2.10 and 2.11 sheds light on areas for improvement. The College could benefit from hiring additional faculty in its most populated programs, particularly the Business and Exercise Science programs. The College should also consider that the figures do not accurately represent challenges faced by the Education Department. As Figures 2.10 and 2.11 indicate, the Education Department has relatively high student-faculty ratios even without factoring in students pursuing teaching licensure in secondary school subjects. Moreover, faculty in the Education Department, as well as faculty in the Theology and Ministry Department, which had the highest overall class size in 2007–2008, also teach e.Sterling courses. While these faculty are not required to teach through the College's online learning division, many of them have elected to do so in order to maintain the academic integrity of the programs. These faculty receive additional compensation through e.Sterling's budget, but classes taught through the online learning division do not count toward their faculty teaching loads. These facts, combined with the data in the figures above, suggest that the Education Department, the Theology and Ministry Department, the Business Department, and the Exercise Science Department could benefit from additional faculty.

The College has also invested in other instructional resources to maintain quality in its educational programs. As mentioned throughout this report, the institution's Title III grant has

played a significant role in helping the College improve its educational environment. In addition to the new laptop computers for full-time faculty and the mounted projectors mentioned in the introduction to this Core Component section, Title III funding has also allowed the College to enhance connectivity capability to the Internet by developing an entirely wireless campus. The Title III grant has helped the College purchase new servers and make other improvements to its technological infrastructure. Additional information about Title III-funded expenditures for equipment is available in resource file CC2B-5.

Core Component 3D contains detailed information about the College's learning resources. Key among such resources are the library and its print and electronic subscriptions to academic journals and databases. Figure 3.13 under Core Component 3D lists the major vendors from which the library subscribes to electronic databases. Resource file CC2B-6 contains a list of all journal subscriptions and the academic departments with which they are associated. Figure 2.13 below shows the number of subscriptions available for students and faculty in each department.

Figure 2.13: Number of Mabee Library Print and Online Subscriptions by Academic Department[16]

Academic Department	Number of Print Subscriptions	Number of Online Subscriptions[17]
Art & Design	3	119 (Visual Arts—general: 90; Photography: 28; Painting: 1)
Behavioral Science	8	576 (Psychology: 383; Social Sciences—general: 193)
Business	6	624 (Accounting: 97; Business Education: 4; Financial Management & Planning: 72; Management Theory: 120; Marketing & Sales: 270; Real Estate: 61)
Communication & Theatre Arts	10	110 (Communication: 148; Drama and Dance: 62)
Elementary Education	8	831 (Education—general: 247; Education—special topics: 147; Theory & Practice of Education: 437)
Language and Literature	7	507 (English Language/Literature: 168; Greek & Latin Language/Literature: 36; Literature—general: 303)
Exercise Science	7	53 (Physical Therapy: 31; Sports Medicine: 22)
History and Government	15	311 (History-general: 193; Government: 129)
Math & Computer Science	3	587 (Mathematics: 319; Computer Science: 268)
Music	3	140
Natural Science	12	279 (Ecology: 112; Environmental Sciences: 148; Geology: 19)
Theology & Ministry	32	322 (Christianity: 198; Religion—general: 124)

STERLING COLLEGE ALLOCATES AND INTENTIONALLY DEVELOPS ITS HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MEET FUTURE CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF THE EDUCATION IT PROVIDES. One of the College's greatest resources is its people. Trustees,

[16] Includes both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed titles.
[17] The number of titles has been calculated by sub-category, and some titles are associated with more than one category. Therefore, the total number includes some titles counted more than once.

administrators, faculty, and staff all exhibit a deep commitment to the College and its mission. In return, the College has sought to develop its employee base, understanding that dedicated people are imperative to the institution's success.

The Advancement Office is fundamental in the College's planning to meet future challenges. Turnover in the Vice President for Institutional Advancement position left the Advancement Office in flux during the previous president's tenure. Finding the appropriate person to serve as Vice President for Advancement has been difficult, but because the Advancement Office is so critical to the College's success, the president and the Board of Trustees have worked diligently to find talented Advancement leadership that supports the institutional mission. In fall 2008, an alumnus with a great deal of passion for and knowledge about the College agreed to serve as the Advancement Office's interim director (CC2B-7). In June 2009, the College appointed a permanent Vice President for Institutional Advancement. This new Cabinet member is a former college president with significant development experience (CC2B-8; CC1D-6). The individual who served as the interim director of the department has been retained to serve as Director of Development. These two strong additions to the Advancement staff demonstrate that Sterling College is committed to raising money and developing additional revenue sources.

Since its last comprehensive visit, the College has improved its financial services staff as well. For a period of time in the middle of the decade, the College operated without a Chief Financial Officer. In summer 2008, however, the College hired a CFO with a proven history of being a successful and fiscally responsible leader (CC1D-5). Since coming to Sterling College, the CFO has worked hard to improve internal accountability and fiscal processes. He is assisted by a Controller who has served the College for more than a decade and who brings to the office continuity and knowledge of historical practices.

The College has also developed its employee base in other areas. Since January 2006, twenty new positions have been added, and they have affected almost all major areas—Academic Affairs, Information Technology, e.Sterling, Student Life, Institutional Assessment, and Athletics. Resource file CC2B-9 contains a list of these new positions.

An important goal for the College involves the continuous improvement of the student retention rate, and the College has added a number of positions to ensure that students are served in ways they value. A Career Services Director, a Campus Nurse, and a Personal Counselor have all been hired since 2005 (CC2B-9).

As a Christian institution, Sterling College has also invested in personnel who promote the spiritual development of students. At the time of the College's last comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, students were served by a part-time chaplain who was a full-time professor at the College. While he was supported by student chaplains, the administration felt that chaplain services could not be adequately offered under that model. Consequently, the College now employs a Director of Campus Ministries, who works out of the Student Life Office, and a campus Chaplain, who works out of the Academic Affairs Office. The College still uses student chaplains and prayer leaders, but the leadership of a staffed chaplaincy whose primary duties revolve around the spiritual life of the campus has enabled the College to more effectively achieve its mission of "developing creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith."

In addition, the College has invested in salaries for personnel who have a more direct impact on student learning. Two key additions to the faculty are the professors who fill newly endowed chairs (GD01, pg. 197). One serves as the McVay Endowed Chair of the Business Department,

and the other serves as the Thompson-Ferrari Endowed Chair of Real Estate within the Business Department. These endowed positions add stability to one of the most populated and profitable academic programs on campus. Additionally, since its last comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, the College has added faculty members to the Art and Design Department and the Communication and Theatre Arts Department. In 2007, a Writing Center and an Institutional Assessment Office were created, and the Academic Support Assistant's position has changed from part time to full time, allowing more effective monitoring of students who are admitted on or are placed on academic probation.

Another important initiative has involved a clear distinction between faculty and coaches in athletics. Rather than asking coaches to maintain quality athletic programs *and* teach in the Exercise Science Department, as had been the case for a number of years, full-time faculty now devote their time to teaching, and full-time coaches devote their time to coaching and recruiting. Moreover, coaches work with the Admissions Office to recruit many of our students. Distinguishing faculty from coaches has freed Exercise Science faculty from many of the recruiting responsibilities that had traditionally infringed upon their duties as instructors. While they still participate in the recruiting process because all Sterling College faculty are expected to do so, they now have more time to devote to teaching.

Additionally, faculty in the Athletic Training program work alongside students who serve athletic teams in fulfillment of practicum requirements. Students in the program are thus able to interact with Athletic Training faculty outside of the classroom in real "laboratories," but Athletic Training faculty also serve varsity athletic teams themselves. In short, the College has allocated resources wisely as it has considered its personnel in the Athletic Department and the academic programs within the Exercise Science Department.

An opportunity for improvement exists for the College to build a faculty with similar cultural demographics to the student body. As Figure 2.3 under Core Component 2A demonstrates, the percentage of non-white students has increased steadily since 2003, with a slight downturn in 2008. As Section 5 of Appendix A demonstrates, however, faculty demographics have not changed proportionately. The College should be sensitive to this issue as it continues to prepare for its future and the changing demographics of its student population.

Another opportunity involves the development of clearer human resource policies and procedures, especially for staff. As stated under Core Component 2C, staff are not consistently evaluated at Sterling College. Unlike the *Faculty Handbook*, which is currently being updated by a standing committee of the Faculty Council, the *Staff Handbook* has not been updated regularly, in large part because the College lacks a human resources department. The College would do well to review its *Staff Handbook* more regularly and make improvements as necessary, for one way to ensure human-resource development is to keep policies and procedures in step with environmental changes.

The College is also sensitive to the importance of professional development as it prepares for its future, although lean financial times have not allowed the institution to invest in professional development to the degree it would like (CC2B-10). Traditionally, the administration has budgeted for faculty to have access to $500 per year for conferences and travel. In the 2007–2008 year, however, the amount was reduced to $300 due to budget constraints. At the request of the Faculty Welfare Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Council, the amount was increased to $600 in fall 2008, but that number was reduced again during the budget reductions of February 2009. Figure 3.9 in Chapter 3 shows the dollars spent on faculty professional development from 2005–2008 and the number of faculty who have taken advantage of

professional development funds. While the number of faculty members who have benefitted from professional development increased significantly during the 2007–2008 academic year, financial realities have prevented overall expenditures from increasing proportionately. Fortunately, the College's Title III grant has allowed more funding for professional development than would have been possible from annual budgeting alone. A summary of Title-III-funded professional development activities is available in resource file CC2B-5.

Core Component sections 4A and 4D contain information about how the College supports the professional development of its staff. The College pays for staff in the Admissions Office, the Financial Aid Office, and the Registrar's Office to belong to professional organizations and attend annual events. Title III funding and the Department of Innovation and Technology have also played important roles in staff development during the past few years. While IT's training endeavors have recently revolved around improving technology in instruction and have therefore been largely directed to faculty, staff members have attended a number of IT-led training sessions and tutorials as well (CC3B-6). With its Title III grant coming to an end in fall 2009, the College should pursue alternative ways to fund professional development for both staff and faculty. Currently, the College does not budget for the professional development of its staff.
While the College has not been able to provide the professional-development funding it would like to provide, it has invested wisely in faculty salaries and academic programs. Since the 2003–2004 academic year, the sum of faculty salaries has increased by over $500,000. (The total payroll sum has increased by over $1.1 million.) Figure 2.14 shows the percentage of budget increase in each academic program since the 2006–2007 academic year and also lists each program's tuition-based revenue by number of majors (from Figure 2.12). The 2006–2007 year was the year the College began to experience significant enrollment growth.

Figure 2.14: Budget Increases by Academic Programs vs. Tuition Generated by Those Programs (CC2B-11)

Academic Department	Overall Budget Increase Since 2006–2007 Academic Year	Tuition-based Revenue by Number of Declared Majors in Department (2007–2008)
Art & Design	14%	$62,275.98
Behavioral Science	9%	$129,911.18
Business	15%	$482,448.48
Communication and Theatre Arts	9%	$240,124.52
Elementary Education	--	$294,664.10
Language and Literature	4%	$13,477.14
Exercise Science*	30%	$719,997.56
History and Government	6%	$111,716.50
Math and Computer Science	26%	$63,806.98
Music*	54%	$-94,816.90
Natural Science*	17%	$178,407.06
Theology and Ministry*	37%	$95,689.44

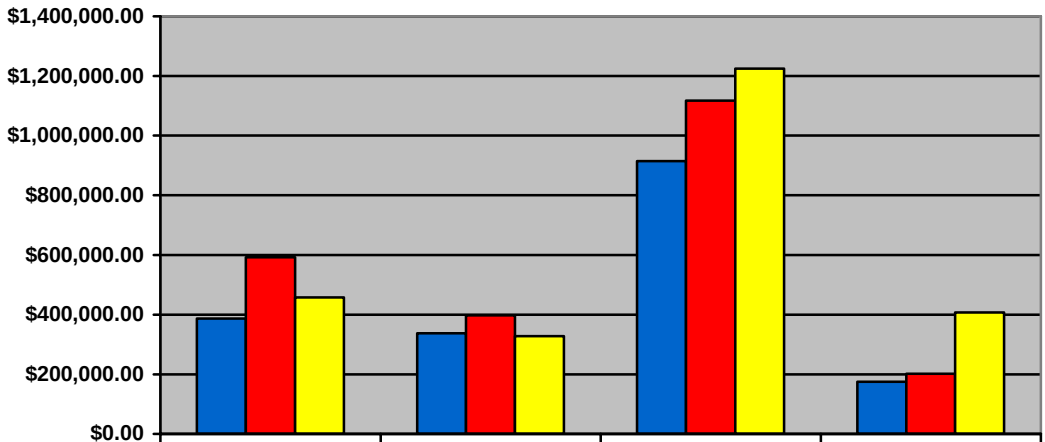
The figure demonstrates that the College has been willing to invest in the programs that enable it to maintain and strengthen the overall quality of the education it provides, though it does suggest that it should reconsider resource allocation for some programs. The Education Department, for example, has not seen a budget increase, although it generates a significant amount of revenue. The disproportionate increase in the Music Department can be explained by 1) the College's willingness to rebuild the program, 2) the number of faculty required to teach courses associated with the College's bands and vocal ensembles, and 3) the Music Department's importance in

recruiting and development, as student performance groups travel and establish connections with schools, students, and prospective donors across the country. Choir tours typically include performances at schools with which the College already has a relationship or would like to build a relationship.

Page 23 of the *Sterling College 3-Year Strategic Plan* contains a summary of how the administration has budgeted to strengthen the quality of the education the College provides (GD05). As the funding summary on page 23 indicates, the majority of the plan's funding is directed toward academics.

Figure 2.15, which is taken from the auditor's management letter from year ended June 30, 2008, shows the College's student services expenses for the past three audited years. The spikes and decreases in Admissions and Student Life expenditures reflect the purchase in 2007 of software and marketing programs intended to increase enrollment and retention. Increases in Athletics expenditures reflect the addition of athletic programs and the hiring of new coaches.

Figure 2.15: Student Services Expenses (CC2B-1, pg. 16)



	Admissions	Student Life, Registrar, & Student Aid	Total Athletics	Other
2006	$386,644	$337,896	$914,396	$175,505
2007	$591,751	$397,927	$1,116,981	$201,916
2008	$457,821	$327,499	$1,224,746	$406,697

Finally, it should be noted that all structures on the Sterling College campus are paid for, with the exception of Cooper Hall, two new dormitories built in 2006, and the athletic stadium. However, the renovation to the football track and stadium was set up as a lease, so the College should pay off the renovation project in three years, regardless of whether all pledges are realized. The College also leases its new dormitories, though it may purchase them at any time.

The College has opportunities to improve how it allocates and develops its resources, but it is making data-driven decisions and investing in areas that are fundamental to its ability to sustain growth and maintain quality. Key personnel additions in Advancement and in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer underscore a commitment to developing new resources and managing those resources effectively.

STERLING COLLEGE USES ITS HUMAN RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY. Since the College's two most important revenue sources are tuition and its annual fund, it is important that human and financial resources are used effectively in these two areas. According to the Consolidated Financial Statements for fiscal years ended June 30, 2008 and 2007, Sterling College's expenses related to fundraising and development for the years ending June 30, 2008 and 2007 were $365, 174 and $436,607, respectively (CC2B-12, pg. 10). Figure 2.16 shows the ratio between restricted and temporarily restricted gifts and the costs to raise those gifts, including the salaries of Advancement personnel.

Figure 2.16: Fundraising Expenses per Dollar Raised

Fiscal Year Ending	Total Private Gifts and Grants	Development and Fundraising Expenses	Fundraising Expense per Dollar Raised
June 30, 2006	$3,929,705	$253,121	.06
June 30, 2007	$3,696,461	$436,607	.12
June 30, 2008	$1,557,532	$365,174	.23

Because of the College's dependence on tuition, the number of recruiting dollars spent per matriculated student is an important figure to know. Figures 2.17 and 2.18 show recruiting expenses and revenue per full-time student.

Figure 2.17: Recruiting Expenses per New Student

Fiscal Year Ending	Total full-time, First-time Students	Admissions Expenses	$ Spent per new Full-time Student to Enroll
June 30, 2006	258 – Fall 2006	$386, 644	$1498.62
June 30, 2007	237 – Fall 2007	$591,751	$2496.84
June 30, 2008	216 – Fall 2008	$457,821	$2119.54

Figure 2.18: Revenue per Full-time Student per Year

Fiscal Year Ending	Total Average of Full-time Students Enrolled in the Academic Year	Net Tuition and Fees	Revenue per Full-time Student for the Year
June 30, 2006	483	2,291,907	$4,745.15
June 30, 2007	508	2,892,599	$5,694.09
June 30, 2008	508.5	3,893,292	$7,656.42

Faculty workload policy is also an important issue related to effective management of human resources. In spring 2007, the Vice President for Academic Affairs worked with the Faculty Council to revise the *Faculty Handbook's* statement on faculty workload, which is contained in Section 2.11.1.1.2 of the handbook:

> Faculty workload requirements are based primarily on credit hours taught. The credit hour load reflects actual time in class with students, preparation for that class work, and time outside of class providing feedback on student assignments. Furthermore, general professional involvement in the discipline contributes to student learning by modeling professional activity for students and providing a

> continuing learning context for the faculty member from which to improve one's ability to convey concepts and skills to students.
>
> In addition, the college recognizes that some faculty members provide leadership in administration and faculty governance beyond what is expected of all faculty.
>
> Given these understandings, the standard expectation for workload units is 30 units per academic year. These units are normally distributed as 12 teaching units per semester, with the understanding that if needed, faculty may be asked to teach up to 15 teaching units per semester. Additional workload units may come from professional and scholarly activities as described in Section 2.11.1.1.3, Load Equivalencies, and/or from May term teaching opportunities if the faculty member elects to apply this teaching to workload units instead of additional pay. (GD02, pgs. 34–35)

Resource folder CC1D-13 contains a table in which the current statement is compared to the workload statement from the previous *Faculty Handbook* (CC1D-15). The College's development of an equitable faculty workload policy is additional evidence of its dedication to managing human resources effectively.

The *Faculty Handbook* also makes clear that Sterling College faculty members have responsibilities other than teaching. Advising is considered a "principal" responsibility, and faculty members are expected to participate in student recruitment and retention as necessary. They should be available for College committees as needed, and they should be willing to serve the student body in "other ways when appropriate." Sponsoring a student organization is an example of how a faculty member might serve the student body outside of the classroom (GD02, pgs. 19–21).

When the College was divided into two schools at the beginning of the 2007–2008 academic year, associate deans were appointed over each school. A faculty member in the Business Department became the Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies, and a faculty member in the Language and Literature Department became the Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. One purpose of these positions is to facilitate communication between the faculty and administration. When the purely democratic Faculty Assembly meetings were replaced with Faculty Council meetings, which reflect a more representative faculty governance structure, some faculty felt left out of the communication loop. Communication is now better, but improvements still need to be made so that communication misunderstandings don't negatively affect the efficiency of academic affairs. The associate deans serve as liaisons between faculty and administration when curricular concerns arise, and they assist the Vice President for Academic Affairs in evaluating the teaching effectiveness of faculty. The two associate deans are compensated both monetarily and with release time from regular classroom duties (CC1D-12).

The Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing has worked diligently to involve faculty as well as key staff members in the recruiting process. The Admissions Office's close communication with staff in the Athletics Department serves as an example of how the College maximizes human resource potential. Coaches meet recruiting responsibilities in addition to their coaching duties, and they work closely with Admissions staff, sharing important information about prospective students.

THE COLLEGE'S PLANNING PROCESSES ARE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO RESPOND TO UNANTICIPATED NEEDS FOR PROGRAM REALLOCATION, DOWNSIZING, OR GROWTH. Sterling College's *3-Year Strategic Plan* (GD05) is a living, breathing document that has guided administrative planning since 2007. As addressed under other Core Component sections, each Cabinet-level administrator is responsible for action items designed to help the College achieve the goals stated in the plan. At the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year, the Cabinet began to update and revise the actions items list (CC2A-1), and at its retreat in summer 2009, Cabinet members conducted a thorough SWOT analysis as they discussed continued execution of the strategic plan (CC2B-13). While some of the initiatives have been completed, the Cabinet has agreed that some action items should be "ongoing," possibly even after the three-year plan has expired.

In 2009, the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees were faced with difficult decisions due in part to the economic recession. Although the College is not dependent on its endowment, difficult financial times affect giving to the annual fund, which is a major source of revenue. With annual fund giving below expectations in 2008–2009, the President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees made the difficult choice to terminate some positions in February 2009. Personnel cuts were also made in February 2005.

As enrollment began to grow in 2005 and 2006, the College explored creative funding options to build two new dormitories. The College currently leases these buildings and will be able to buy them for one dollar after thirty-three years. If it finds itself in a stronger financial position, however, it may purchase the buildings before the lease expires. Moreover, the College refinanced Cooper Hall in 2007 and through the refinancing was able to leverage a $1.5 million bond to make a number of improvements to facilities (Intro-14).

A number of assets were liquidated during the 2006–2007 fiscal year in order to meet short-term needs. While the College lost valuable revenue sources when it sold these assets, the sales allowed the institution to survive through a difficult financial period. The College also has an unsecured line of credit for $500,000 and a second available line that is tied to its Evans trust (CC2B-14). The College's credit line allows it to operate at full capacity during the months of June and July, when it receives little revenue from tuition.

Adequate classroom space is an issue that is becoming more and more significant as enrollment increases. Faculty have demonstrated their adaptability by raising enrollment caps for general education courses and accepting a per-semester teaching load increase. Moving to a lecture hall format and sometimes teaching fifteen credit hours per semester have been an adjustment for some, but faculty members are willing to help the College run as efficiently as possible. Flexibility in offering classes online and in a hybrid format will help minimize spacing issues that could occur in the near future. Offering evening classes could also alleviate some classroom-space problems caused by growing enrollments. The idea of offering evening classes is not popular on campus, however, and a tremendous shift in cultural perspective would need to occur before the College made such a significant change to its academic calendar, for classes have ended in the middle of the afternoon for years. The College welcomes the Commission's guidance on how to implement this change in a way that would generate support from key campus constituents.

THE COLLEGE HAS A HISTORY OF ACHIEVING ITS PLANNING GOALS. As this report indicates, Sterling College has experienced much success since its last self study. The Quiznos project, a franchise agreement allowing students the opportunity to experience and participate in the management of a business, was completed in spring 2009 (CC5D-16). In 2007, the College's

Athletic Training program received full accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (FC22), and the Sterling Teacher Education Program was accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (FC20).

Two major facility renovations have been completed in recent years as well. The College's "old main" building, Cooper Hall, was restored in 2003, creating much needed classroom and office space. The beautiful building also adds landscape appeal to the campus. As addressed under Core Component 5A, the College worked closely with the local public school district to renovate the football stadium and track during the 2007–2008 academic year.

New dormitories and the College's charter school also highlight success in meeting goals. As stated above, the College erected two new dormitories in 2006. In the same year, the College opened the basement of a women's dorm to house the Sterling Academy, an alternative elementary school that benefits both the community and the College (CC3D-15; CC5C-8). In addition to providing Sterling College teacher candidates with a "laboratory," the Academy offers a great deal of personalized attention to its students.

The College's online learning division, e.Sterling, serves as another example of the College meeting a planning goal. After starting its first session with sixteen students in fall 2007, it now has sixty-two students enrolled in its programs. Enrollment increases have matched the program's semester-by-semester projected increases, and e.Sterling is thus on course to be financially self-sufficient by the start of its second fall session in 2009 (CC2A-2, pgs. 17–18).

Strategic planning involving funds from the College's Title III grant is addressed throughout this report. The grant's funding has allowed the College to make a number of technological improvements that have direct effects on teaching and learning. The Title III grant was intended to help the College institutionalize activities and even personnel related to its funding, and it has done just that. Title III funding has been absorbed into the College's 2009–2010 budget. Moreover, through a dollar-for-dollar matching-grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, the College has added over $255,000 to its endowment to produce earnings for students in the Education Department. The matching-grant challenge called for the College to raise $25,000 in each of the grant's five years. The College met the challenge every year and received a total of 613 gifts from 276 donors, for a total of $130,426 (CC2B-15).

Perhaps most importantly, the Admissions Office has a history of achieving its recruiting goals. As Section 1 of Appendix A demonstrates, the College has experienced consistent and significant increases in enrollment for the past few years.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The College should continue to grow its endowment, develop additional sources of revenue, and build relationships with new donors.
- Attention must be given to funding for professional development, and the College should consider professional-development budgeting for staff as well as faculty.
- Some academic programs have an

Strengths

- The College has successfully grown its enrollment and sustained enrollment increases for a number of years.
- Administrators have sought innovative ways to generate tuition revenue, which is the College's main source of revenue. Innovative initiatives have been both **future centered** and **distinctive**.
- True to its heritage and identity, the

unsustainably low number of majors. The College should continue to consider innovative ways to populate these programs.
- The College should closely monitor changing student demographics and develop its faculty and staff accordingly.
- If enrollment continues to increase at its current pace, adequate classroom space and increasingly large class sizes will become more of a problem. The College must be proactive in addressing this issue.
- With the current Board make-up at the required minimum number of members, the College has a great opportunity to develop its Board and utilize trustee leadership to move the College forward.

College continues to maintain a low student-to-faculty ratio, contributing to a **learning-focused** environment.
- Administrators have wisely invested in academic programs that are fundamental to the institution's financial viability.
- The College has demonstrated **future-centeredness** by investing in salaries for individuals who help develop new resources and manage resources effectively.
- The College has demonstrated **future-centeredness** by creating new positions intended to improve student retention and help the institution fulfill its Christian mission.
- Most of the College's facilities are paid for.

Core Component 2C: Sterling College's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

THE COLLEGE PROVIDES ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR ITS EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES AND MAINTAINS AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING, ANALYZING, AND USING ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION. In fall 2008 the College made an important improvement in its assessment processes when it hired a Director of Institutional Assessment. Technically, the Director of Institutional Assessment serves half time in that position and half time in the position of Writing Center Director, but the College's willingness to employ a half-time Director of Institutional Assessment underscores an improvement in its approach to assessment.

Until summer 2008, a single faculty member had been responsible for the College's assessment work. For compensation, that faculty member received an eleven-month contract instead of a ten-month contract and a slight reduction in teaching load. The teaching-load reduction was not equivalent to the amount of work required for the assessment plan, however. The faculty member resigned from his position as Assessment Director after completing the 2007 Annual Assessment Report[18] (CC2C-1, pg. 29).

During the 2007–2008 academic year, an interim Assessment Director researched, developed, and began to phase in a new assessment plan that required more data-collection methods (GD10, pg. 6). An effort was made not to discard what had been done through the previous plan, but instead leverage past assessment success in developing a plan that would be more thorough and foster more transparency than the previous plan. Many of the assessment tools used in the old plan were incorporated into the new plan (national standardized tests and creative products/capstone assignments), but new assessment methods were added. The plan was submitted to faculty for feedback (CC2C-2) and then approved by the Faculty Council at its August 2008 meeting (CC2C-3). The College's previous assessment plan revolved exclusively around student learning, but the new plan involves assessment of non-academic programs as well. (Information about assessment of non-academic programs can be found on subsequent pages under this Core Component.) The new director began coordinating the College's assessment efforts immediately after the plan was approved by Faculty Council. He also assembled an Assessment Committee consisting of himself, three full-time teaching faculty members, one staff member, and one student.

Detailed information related to the assessment of student learning outcomes is included under Core Components 3A (academic majors) and 4B (general education), but support and processes related to academic assessment involve issues other than student learning outcomes. In recent years the College has made some significant improvements in such areas. For example, when the academic structure of the institution was divided into two schools—the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies—an associate dean was appointed to lead each school. One responsibility of the associate deans involves communicating with their school's faculty about program and school assessment and assisting in data collection and research (CC2C-4). While the two-school structure and the associate deans were not necessarily added for assessment-related reasons, the associate deans' responsibilities add a meaningful element to the assessment process. By working closely with

[18] This faculty member did not resign from the College—only from the Assessment Director position.

the Director of Institutional Assessment, they are able to communicate to faculty important information about assessment, thereby improving the assessment culture.

As an important part of the faculty evaluation process, associate deans also help the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) observe faculty in the classroom. Classroom observation reports (CC3B-11) are completed by associate deans for every faculty member who has not yet received an extended contract, which means that every faculty member is observed at least once per year for his or her first three years at the College. In addition, associate deans review faculty members' course syllabi at their discretion. As part of the faculty evaluation and assessment process, they may communicate any concerns about syllabi to the VPAA or the faculty members themselves. Associate deans are compensated both monetarily and with release time from regular classroom duties (CC1D-12).

Another example of support for academic-related assessment is the appointment of a General Education Chair in the fall of 2008. When revising the general education curriculum during the 2007–2008 academic year, the General Education Committee recommended to the administration that a GE Chair be appointed to assist faculty in monitoring the GE program (CC4B-1, pg. 20). The VPAA appointed such a chair in spring 2008. The GE Chair has since been instrumental in developing an assessment for the GE program and assisting the Director of Institutional Assessment in coordinating assessment processes.

Clear processes for assessment are articulated in the College's current assessment plan, which includes a List of Annual Responsibilities and a Yearly Assessment Calendar. The List of Annual Responsibilities makes clear the assessment-related responsibilities of the VPAA, the associate deans, academic program chairs, faculty, the GE Program Chair, the Director of Institutional Assessment, and the College's Assessment Committee. The Yearly Assessment Calendar contains the dates by which each party's annual assessment responsibilities should be completed. Program chairs and departmental faculty have been informed about these documents at school meetings, and they may view them online within the assessment plan itself. In addition to being in resource file GD10 with the assessment plan, the List of Annual Responsibilities and the Yearly Assessment Calendar are also included in Appendix F and Appendix G, respectively.

Finally, a budget increase for assessment also demonstrates the College's support for assessment activities. While the budget has fluctuated somewhat over the years (CC2C-5), the College began paying a half-time salary to the Director of Institutional Assessment in July 2008.

While the information presented above demonstrates the College's support for assessment *activities*, the institution lacks a history of linking assessment to *financial planning*. In recent years, assessment data, particularly as related to student performance in math and writing, confirmed what faculty already knew, and important changes have been based on the obvious—the implementation of a Writing Center and a more rigorous math program being perhaps the most significant. In addition, faculty have made adjustments to their own courses and programs as appropriate. However, the actual data related to student learning has yet to be used to inform strategic or financial planning in any significant ways. While the College has certainly begun to recognize the importance of assessment activities, it must become intentional about considering assessment data in strategic and continuous-improvement decision-making.

NON-ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS ARE BEGINNING TO EVALUATE PROGRESS TOWARD INTENDED OUTCOMES. As mentioned above, the College's new assessment plan brings with it the institution's first attempt to systematically and annually assess every non-academic department's progress toward intended outcomes (GD10, pg. 17). Just as faculty roles in

assessment are stated in the assessment plan's List of Annual Responsibilities, so too are the assessment-related roles of non-academic program directors (Appendix F). The plan calls for the employee who oversees each department to work with the Director of Institutional Assessment in writing measurable intended outcomes and discussing methods by which to assess those outcomes. Documentation of this planning occurs via the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet. The Athletic Department's worksheet is included under Core Component 1C, and examples from two other departments can be found in Appendix C. All of the worksheets that were completed for the 2008–2009 academic year can be found in resource folder CC2C-6. The worksheet contains places for directors to provide the following information:

- the institutional mission statement
- a departmental mission statement and an explanation of how it aligns with or supports the institutional mission
- intended departmental outcomes
- measures by which progress toward the intended outcomes will be assessed
- success indicators
- data summary and evaluation
- proposed use of results
- update on past actions taken as a result of assessment data

During the 2008–2009 academic year, four departments of twenty-five failed to complete the worksheet. For most departments that have completed the worksheet, intended outcomes are more operational in nature than they are idealistic. In the future, outcomes may be stated in more ambitious terms, but for the first year, the Director of Institutional Assessment felt that documenting even operational outcomes was a step in a positive direction. He also felt that helping non-academic program directors write mission statements was a meaningful task, even if the benefits of that task were not immediately observable or documentable. Some non-academic program directors took great pride and care in writing their mission statements and completing their first-year assessment worksheets. Some directors involved their staff, and a couple of directors proudly displayed their department's worksheets in their offices as a reminder that their work promotes the greater mission of the College.

Because the 2008–2009 academic year was the first year that the worksheet was implemented, directors did not complete the sections reserved for data summary and evaluation, proposed use of results, or updates on past actions. Per the Yearly Assessment Calendar in Appendix G, directors of non-academic departments are to meet with the Director of Institutional Assessment by September 30 of each year to update the worksheet. In September 2009, the directors who completed the worksheet for the previous academic year will write evaluative summaries based on assessment measures and stated success indicators, and they will state their proposed use of assessment results. At the beginning of the 2010–2011 academic year, they will submit an update on actions taken as a result of assessment data.

Moving forward, the College faces the challenge of promoting greater assessment compliance from more non-academic departments. The Director of Institutional Assessment's goal for the 2009–2010 academic year is to file assessment worksheets for every non-academic program on campus. One suggested revision to the assessment plan that the Director of Institutional Assessment will be making to the Assessment Committee involves vice presidents annually reviewing the assessment worksheets from departments under their organizational authority. The Director of Institutional Assessment feels this initiative would not only foster compliance and accentuate the importance of

the Non-Academic Program Assessment Worksheet but also facilitate better institutional communication and planning.

STERLING COLLEGE EVALUATES EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE. Although employee evaluation processes are described elsewhere in this report, it is appropriate to outline them under this Core Component, for employee evaluations should play a vital role in any organization's assessment of its effectiveness. At Sterling College, administrators and faculty are evaluated in a consistent manner and on a regular basis. Historically, evaluations of departmental directors and their staffs have not been as consistent.

The President of the College is evaluated by the Board of Trustees, and Cabinet-level administrators are evaluated by the president. Additionally, Cabinet members are asked to complete a self-evaluation using a form almost identical to the one used by the president for their evaluation (CC4A-4). Administrators work with the president to set personal goals, and these become part of the evaluation process as well.

Faculty are also evaluated in a consistent manner. In addition to the classroom observation reports completed by associate deans (described previously under this Core Component and located in resource file CC3B-11, faculty members are subject to IDEA evaluations, which are completed by students and help the College assess teaching effectiveness. The IDEA is a standardized evaluation, and results from the IDEA are norm-referenced against scores from other institutions. In addition to providing data about the teaching effectiveness of individual instructors, IDEA reports provide data about how teaching at Sterling College compares to teaching at other colleges and universities (CC3B-12). For faculty members who are not employed on extended contract, the IDEA evaluation is given in every course they teach (CC3B-13). Faculty who are on extended contract choose one course per semester for IDEA evaluation, and their students complete a shorter form of the survey (CC3B-14). Like classroom observation reports, IDEA results become a part of each faculty member's permanent file, and they may also be used in consideration of promotion and reappointment (GD02, pg. 21).

Although a standardized form for staff evaluations exists and is available through the Controller's office (CC2C-7), staff have not been consistently evaluated at Sterling College. Some vice presidents have annually evaluated directors in their divisions, and some directors have annually evaluated their staff members, but evaluation practices vary from department to department. The College's stated policy regarding staff evaluations contributes to the problem of inconsistency. According to the Section B7 of the *Sterling College Staff Handbook*, staff members are to be evaluated "annually *or upon special request of the employee*" (GD03, pg. 5).

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PROCESSES INVOLVE APPROPRIATE CONSTITUENTS. Figures 2.19 and 2.20 on the following pages outline how personnel are involved in assessment and evaluation processes.

Figure 2.19: Personnel Involved in the Assessment of Learning and Teaching

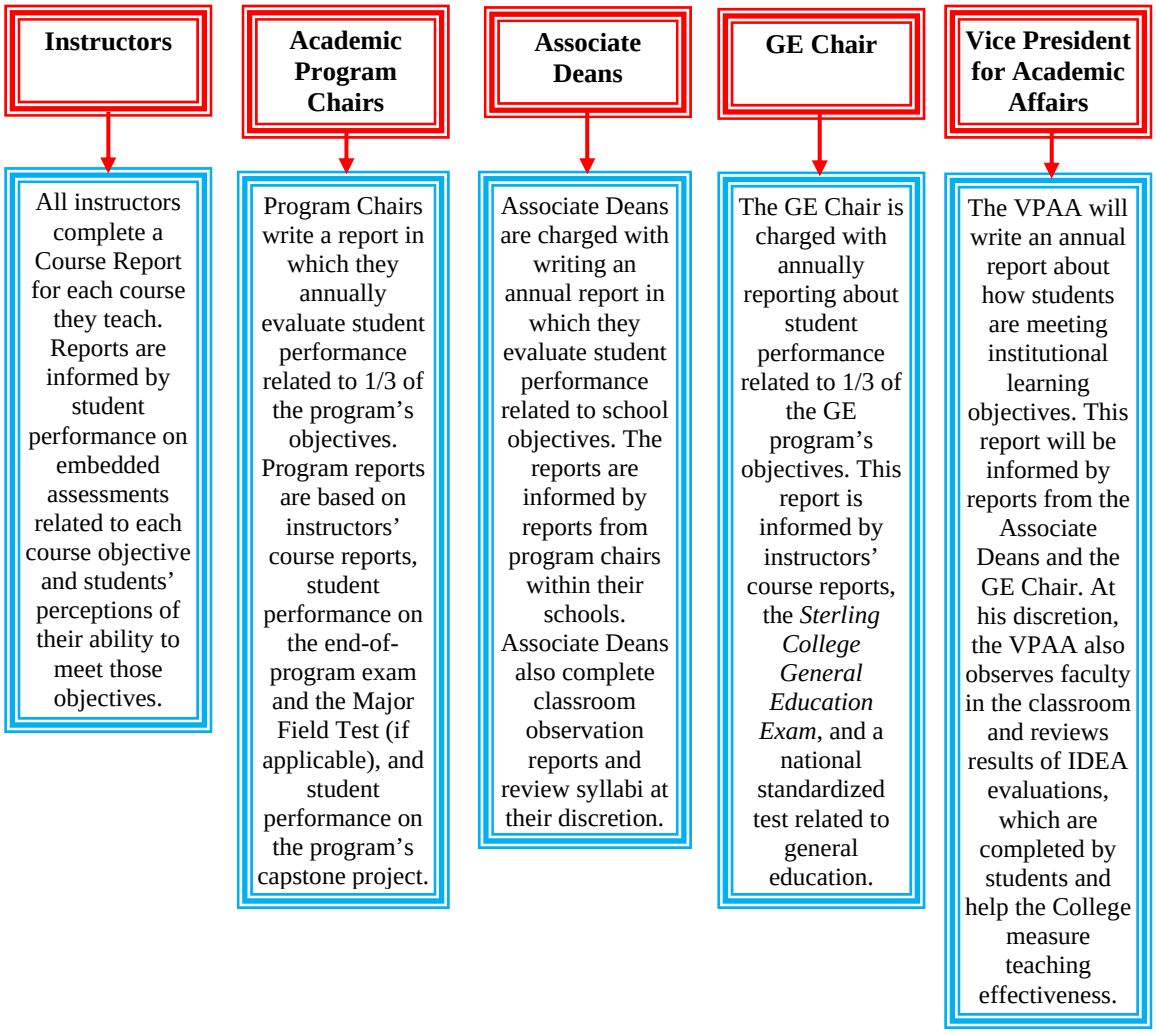
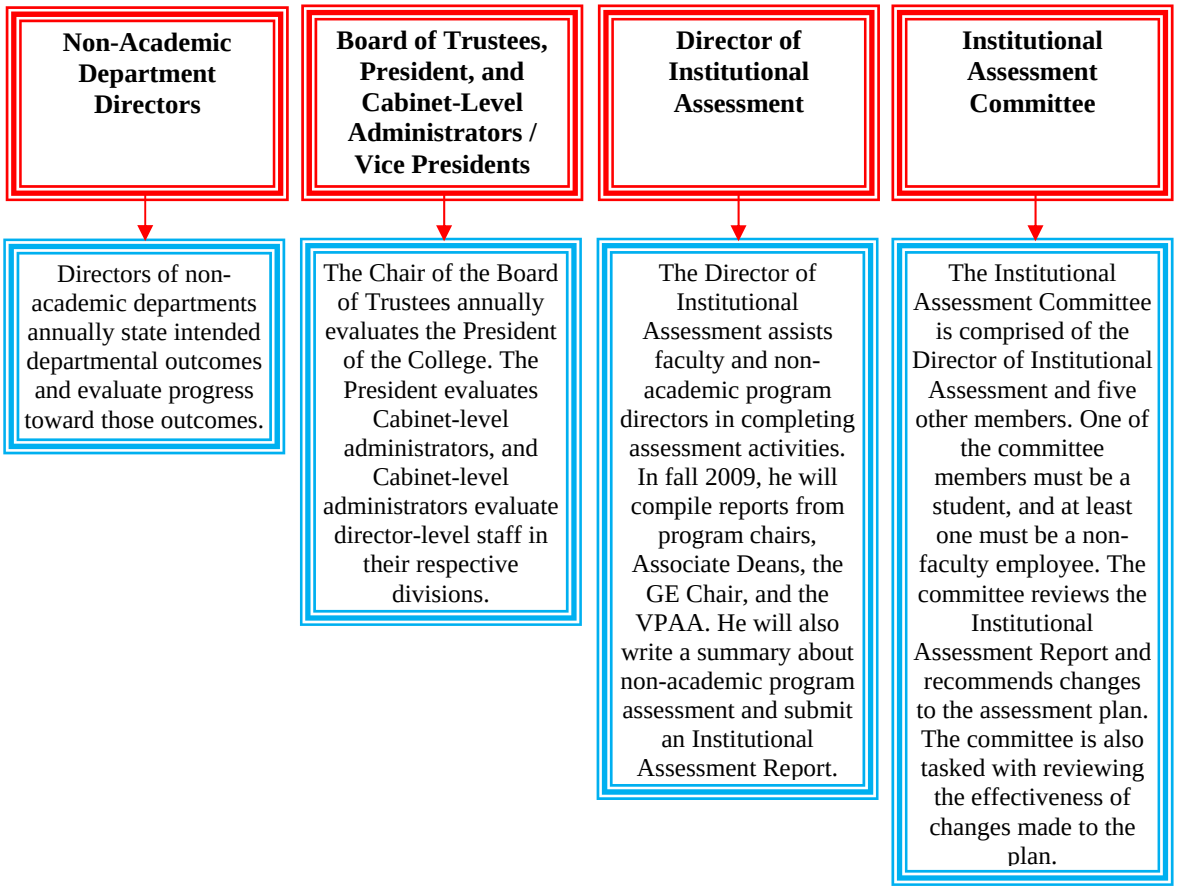


Figure 2.20: Personnel Involved in Non-Academic and Institutional Assessment



EVALUATION THAT OCCURS THROUGH REGULAR MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE HELPS INFORM STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. Even before the College implemented a plan to assess the intended outcomes of all non-academic departments, evaluation was occurring in some departments. Best practices in management and governance help ensure that the College evaluates its processes and makes data-driven improvements in a number of areas.

The Student Life Office, for example, has made improvements based on a survey sent to students in spring 2008 (CC2C-8). Twenty-four percent of the students who completed the survey reported that they did not find counseling services accessible. As a result, the Counselor periodically began to send e-mails about various issues as a way to help familiarize students with counseling services. The Student Life Office also posted the Counselor's available hours in more campus locations.

Nineteen percent of the students who completed the survey expressed that having the Counselor available in multiple campus areas might be helpful, for certain students feel more comfortable in certain locations. The Counselor responded by keeping office hours in the Student Life Office one day per week and in the Health Services Office two days per week.

Results from the spring 2008 Student Life survey also fostered improvements in Career Services. Based on student feedback, the Career Services Director initiated a program to reach more students. In fall 2008, the Director held a career program in each of the residence halls and tailored the program to the population of the halls. In dormitories containing mostly juniors and

seniors, the program revolved around applying for jobs. In dormitories containing mostly first-year students and sophomores, the program was more general. Because 48% of the students who completed the survey wanted assistance preparing résumés and cover letters, the Career Services Director also purchased an online computer program to help students in these areas (CC2C-9).

One Resident Director has testified to how his evaluations from residents helped improve his performance. When a number of student-residents expressed that they could benefit from the Resident Director being more accessible, the RD radically changed his approach to his work. Not only did he make himself more visible with an "open-door" policy and more intentional appearances throughout the hall, he also led more events in the dorm. The criticism of unavailability has since been minimal, and the RD believes his efforts fostered better relationships with the hall's residents.

Frequent evaluation by the Chief Financial Officer obviously leads to data-driven changes and improvements. Monthly budget reviews, quarterly evaluations of insurance policies, and internal control processes such as a three-person review of bank statements all enhance the CFO's decision-making process. In 2009, based on regular evaluation that occurs through standard operational procedures, the CFO determined that the College could save financial resources by processing payroll internally with software that was already available through the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, a six-institution consortium to which the College belongs.

Additionally, external data related to trends in e-learning and societal needs led to the College's decision to absorb for two years the costs related to the development of e.Sterling, the institution's online learning division. The division's business plan assumes that e.Sterling will be completely self-sufficient in fewer than three years of operation. Given the programs developed through e.Sterling, which address a Kansas need for more teachers and capitalize on the College's rich history of providing faith-based education, the College determined that e.Sterling's potential was worth two to three years of subsidization.

Of course, budget reviews informed the budget reductions that were made in February 2009 (described under Core Component 2A). In making those reductions, much consideration was given to how students and student learning would be affected. The president and his Cabinet made every effort to make reductions that would have no or minimal impact on students.

Another important data-driven decision from recent years is described in detail under Core Component 3B. When the Vice President for Innovation and Technology conducted the Sterling Technology and Readiness Assessment (STAR) in 2006, results from the assessment indicated that one of the College's greatest weaknesses was insufficient technology and technology use related to teaching and learning (CC3B-1). Title III funding has since allowed the College to make major improvements in response to this concern. Improvements have involved a training initiative to help faculty better integrate technology with their teaching (CC2A-13, pg. 13; CC3B-2).

The Admissions Office has also made a number of changes based on internal assessment and evaluation. At the end of every year, Admissions personnel analyze their database and collect information about the geographic locations of students, their academic and co-curricular interests, and the contact sources that initiated their communication with Sterling College. Based on data from 2005, the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing elected to make California a greater recruiting priority, in part because California had recently usurped Oklahoma as the state from which the fourth largest number of students had enrolled. In addition, a staff member had a connection with some California schools, so the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing

directed budget resources to recruiting activities in that state. For two years Sterling College was represented at Christian college fairs in California. After two years, the Admissions Office re-evaluated and determined that its recruiting efforts in California had not resulted in a significant number of students, so the College has since adopted a less aggressive recruiting approach there.

Admissions personnel also prioritize high schools from which multiple students enroll. Recently a high school in Denver, Colorado, became a "feeder school," and the Admissions Office attends events in the Denver area and maintains relationships with people associated with that school. Furthermore, the Admissions Office considers the geographic location of active alumni in its planning. Occasionally, the College contracts with alumni to represent its information table at college fairs. Such activities allow the College to have a presence at events that full-time Admissions staff cannot attend.

Based on surveys given to students who visit campus, the Admissions Office has made changes to its communication process as well. When a number of campus visitors reported that they received too much paper mail, the Admissions Office converted some of the letters in its communication flow to e-mail messages and designed micro Web sites to enhance communication with and between prospective students. These sites are described under Core Component 2A.

Faculty governance processes likewise contribute to decisions based on thoughtful evaluation. As one professor who was involved in addressing this Core Component stated, "The work of Faculty Council committees plays a…significant role" in promoting institutional effectiveness through ongoing evaluation assessment. The professor cited a number of issues with which he has been personally involved as a member of the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs committees of the Faculty Council:

- faculty development funds for travel to professional meetings and purchase of books and journals
- review processes for general education courses
- fair market value of teaching positions
- criteria for awarding honorary degrees
- teaching-load calculations
- granting of sabbaticals
- standardization of templates for syllabi
- calendar issues
- faculty promotions
- grievance hearings
- classroom observation evaluation tools
- grading scale proposals
- faculty retention
- review of faculty for extended contracts (CC2C-10)

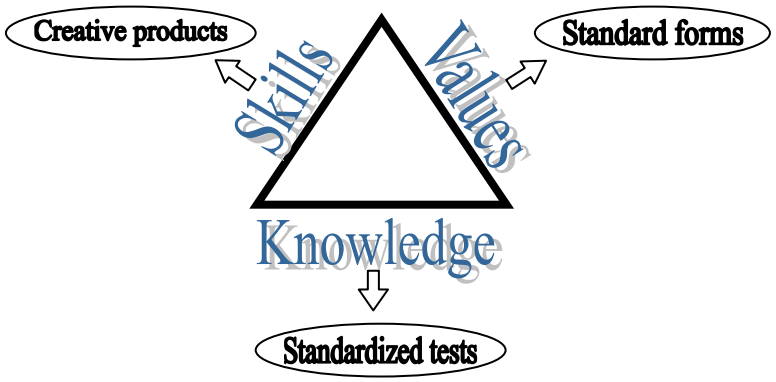
Many of the Faculty Council issues listed above involve review of trends as well as internal and external data. While such issues are not necessarily addressed under the College's assessment plan, they indeed serve as examples of how evaluation through the faculty governance structure contributes to institutional effectiveness. The archive of Faculty Council minutes can be found in resource folder GD12.

STERLING COLLEGE'S ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PROCESSES ARE EVOLVING. Sterling College developed an assessment plan in 1996. In spring 2000, the peer-review team for the

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools evaluated the assessment program and presented three significant concerns. The concerns related to 1) major omissions in the plan, 2) weaknesses in the kinds of data the plan generated, and 3) variations in constituent understanding of assessment (GD14, pgs. 21, 26). During the following years, the College completely revised its assessment plan to address NCA concerns about generating better data to improve student learning. Below is a summary of changes that were made in the fall of 2000:

- The College decided to assess students' progress toward knowledge, skills, and values.
- Standardized tests were adopted to assess student learning of knowledge and skills where possible.
- The Assessment Committee created standardized forms for faculty to assess skills and values components.
- Self-report data could be a part of assessment but could not be the only measure of student learning outcomes.

Figure 2.21: Structure of Assessment Plan Implemented in 2000



The standardized tests that were adopted included the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) for general education, and Major Field Tests, developed by the Educational Testing Service, for ten majors. The Committee also developed common materials to assess creative products/capstone assignments in every academic major. The materials included a department chair's information and evaluation form, student self-evaluation forms, and samples of products for evaluation by the Assessment Committee. In addition, the Assessment Committee created forms for department chairs to describe the service opportunity in their discipline and to assess student responses to the experience. These forms served as assessment methods for the values component of the plan. From 2001 to 2007, annual assessment reports were written to document the plan's results (GD16).

The College began yet another time of transition in assessment when the past Assessment Director resigned from the position after completing the 2007 Assessment Report in the fall of 2007. With the Assessment Director's resignation coinciding with discussion about the College's 2010 comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, the transition period served as a logical time to closely review the College's assessment plan in light of the Higher Learning Commission's newer criteria, adopted in 2004, after the follow-up visit team noted the College's improvement in the area of assessment. In reviewing the *Handbook of Accreditation,* Core Component 3A was cause for concern. Sterling College had experienced great success in assessing knowledge, skills, and

values common to the general education curriculum and each academic discipline, but the plan did not provide direction about how to assess learning outcomes that might be unique to Sterling College's programs. Nor did the plan account for the assessment best practice of obtaining multiple measures of data related to each outcome.

The movement to a new plan is more of an evolution than a transition. Essentially, it has maintained elements from the previous plan and added additional assessment measures and methods. For the first time, the College is directly assessing student learning related to the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the mission statement. Under the previous assessment plan, this component of the mission was equated with service, service learning, and ethics instruction. In fall 2008, a Sterling College General Education Exam was created for first-year students and seniors (CC4B-9). On this exam are questions anchored in the College's mission document titled "Our Faith," which is located under Core Component 1A. Another strength of the new plan is that it includes assessment of non-academic programs as well.

Implementation of the new plan has shed light on challenges, nonetheless. One issue quickly identified was that the new plan would be more time intensive than the old for all parties involved. While the Director of Institutional Assessment coordinates assessment efforts, the new plan is still dependent upon participation from almost every individual on campus. Faculty are now being asked to write a brief report about every course they teach. The report requires each faculty member's evaluation of student performance related to each stated learning outcome. Program chairs must then sort through their faculty members' course reports and use them to write a program report about the one-third of the program objectives they have chosen to review for the year. Directors of non-academic programs must also spend time collecting data about progress toward intended departmental outcomes. Moving forward, the College must consider issues such as faculty load for program chairs, who now have more assessment-related responsibilities.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- While the College has demonstrated support for assessment-related *activities,* it lacks a history of linking assessment results to *financial planning*. Assessment results should become a more integral part of planning and budgeting processes.
- An opportunity exists to see greater assessment compliance from non-academic departments.
- The College could benefit from a more consistent approach to staff evaluations.
- Increased workload for academic program chairs is being considered as the College moves forward with a more rigorous assessment plan.

Strengths

- The College's assessment plan is both **learning focused** and **future centered.** It focuses on student learning outcomes and the annual improvement of non-academic programs.
- The College's assessment plan involves much of the campus, allowing more employees to be **connected** to the assessment process.
- Assessment and evaluation activities involve the appropriate constituents.
- Although formal assessment of non-academic programs is new, assessment and evaluation results have been a part of planning in some programs for some time.

Core Component 2D: All levels of planning align with Sterling College's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

MISSION CONSIDERATION IS FUNDAMENTAL TO BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE COLLEGE'S EMPLOYEE BASE. Within the past three years the College has created a number of new positions. All of them underscore a commitment to the institutional mission of developing "creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." A few of the new positions are listed below with a brief explanation of how they support the mission.

- **Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministries.** In years past, the College chaplain was a faculty member who performed chaplaincy duties in addition to meeting teaching responsibilities. The addition of a half-time Chaplain and a full-time Director of Campus Ministries helps the College more efficiently and effectively fulfill its Christian mission.
- **e.Sterling personnel.** The addition of an online learning division has necessitated a number of new employees. In addition to the director of the program and the Vice President for Innovation and Technology, skilled instructional designers and a Student Counselor for distance learning students help the College deliver academic programs that support its mission. Offering the College's Teacher Education Program online responds to the teacher shortage in the state of Kansas and thus provides important leadership across the state. Other programs currently offered through e.Sterling—Christian Ministries and Theology and Ministry—capitalize on the College's rich history of Christ-centered education and support its mission to develop leaders who "understand a maturing Christian faith."
- **Additional faculty in the Business Department.** With a growing number of Business majors and an increased need for responsible and ethical leaders in today's business world, the College has added two full-time Business faculty since 2006. Two of these faculty members occupy newly endowed chairs.
- **Career Services Director.** The Career Services Office helps students better understand how to navigate job markets and thus plays a role in how they will lead in society.
- **Student Health Center Director.** The mission of the Student Health Center is to foster "the development of mind, body, and soul and thereby contribute to the College's mission." The Center's director is employed on a two-thirds-time basis.
- **Personal Counselor.** Having a licensed Personal Counselor on campus complements the work of the Student Health Center, allowing students to seek counsel when life distractions affect their ability to develop according to the College mission. The Personal Counselor works on campus ten hours per week.
- **Director of Institutional Assessment.** The addition of this position allows the College to more holistically evaluate its progress toward fulfilling its mission.
- **General Education Program Chair.** A full-time faculty member now oversees the maintenance of the College's General Education curriculum. This faculty member works closely with the Director of Institutional Assessment to evaluate the College's progress toward realizing its mission.

STRATEGIC GOALS ADVANCE THE MISSION OF THE COLLEGE AND LINK WITH BUDGETING PROCESSES. The College's *3-Year Strategic Plan* for 2007–2010 contains 13 main goals. The specific objectives of these goals can be found on pages 8–9 of the plan (GD05). One would expect to find many of these goals in a strategic plan for any institution of higher education. Others more obviously support the College's mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." Specific information about these particular goals follows.

Strategic Goal 1: Spiritual Formation

Through its spiritual formation goal, the College seeks to create programs that encourage the development of a robust faith in students. As stated previously, the hiring of a Chaplain and a Director of Campus Ministries highlights an important improvement in the College's spiritual formation staff. The Chaplain has been instrumental in developing alternative ways for students to earn chapel credit. In recent years, spiritual formation, missions, and servant leadership have all been given separate budgets. Information about their budgets can be found in resource folder CC2D-1.

Strategic Goal 2: Academics

Specifically, this goal calls for the development of innovative academic programs and the incorporation of distance learning to enhance and expand campus programs. New programs and restructuring of existing programs are described in detail under Core Component 2A. New academic majors include Sports Management and Athletic Training, which have necessitated additional faculty. Restructuring of programs and the addition of concentrations and areas of emphasis have aligned well with the College's mission. For example, the Department of Theology and Ministry now offers a Christian Ministries major with concentration areas in youth, educational leadership, missions, worship leadership, and urban ministry. The curriculum for the College's Art and Design major was rewritten in 2007 (implemented in fall 2008) so it would be more current and better prepare students for leadership opportunities in the marketplace (CC2D-2). The College's online learning division also underscores a commitment to the goal of developing innovative academic programs. The degree-completion programs delivered through e.Sterling support the College's mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." Information about e.Sterling's budget is located in CC2D-3 and in its business plan (CC2A-2).

Strategic Goal 3: Technology

Through this goal, the College seeks to improve teaching, learning, and daily practices with the implementation of appropriate technologies relevant to the College mission. Again, e.Sterling has played a major role in meeting strategic goal 3. Title III funding has also been crucial; it has allowed the College to acquire new technology and implement a professional development program to help faculty better integrate technology with their teaching. Resource folders CC1E-9, CC2B-5, and CC2D-4 contain information about the role of Title III funding in the progress toward this goal. Several other technological improvements help improve teaching and learning as well:

- new servers
- new infrastructure and peripherals
- wireless laptops for all full-time faculty
- enhanced workstations for staff
- a 100% wireless campus
- increased high-speed access to the Web (CC2D-5)

Strategic Goal 7: Image

This goal was implemented to help guarantee a clear, realistic, and inspiring image of Sterling College's unique strengths as a Christ-centered institution. In fall 2008, the College recreated its marketing department, which had been non-existent since the previous Communications and Marketing Director's resignation in 2005. The College now employs a Marketing and Communications Manager to help the College meet strategic goal 7 (CC2D-6). During the 2008–2009 academic year, the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing also employed a part-time writer to assist the marketing office in writing press releases and generating more publicity for the College.

Strategic Goal 9: Alumni

Through this goal, the College seeks to enhance alumni relations and facilitate more alumni involvement with the College. In addition to the Office of Alumni Relations having its own budget (CC2D-7), the Marketing and Communications Manager works closely with the Director of Alumni Relations to plan events and produce publications targeted toward alumni. The College has recently renewed its commitment to keeping alumni informed with publications designed specifically for them. After a two-year lapse in publication due to turnover in the Office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Marketing Communications Office published a new edition of *Sterling*, the College's alumni magazine, in fall 2008 (CC1E-16), which has traditionally been published three times per year. The Director of Alumni Relations is also keeping alumni informed with a monthly newsletter distributed through e-mail (CC1E-17). These renewed and intensified efforts highlight the College's concern with keeping important stakeholders informed about the College's achievements and challenges.

Strategic Goal 10: Students

This goal calls for the College to improve the size, quality, and diversity of the student body. Through a comprehensive recruitment plan (GD11), the dedication of a hard-working admissions team, and the launch of e.Sterling, the College has neared or set record enrollments for the past couple of years (CC2D-8; CC2A-7). It has also taken steps to build a more diverse student body and attract more students with an affinity for the Sterling College mission. Given the College's residential nature and the young adult population that nature promotes, the online learning division has fostered greater diversity in the student body by offering degree-completion programs for working adults. Additional information about the College's efforts to improve the diversity of its students is included under Core Component 2A. In recent years the College has attempted to attract students who may be more inclined to embrace the mission by purchasing prospective student names that have been profiled by an external organization (CC2D-9).

Strategic Goal 11: External Programs

The specific purpose of this goal is to create outreach programs to both utilize and contribute to the special characteristics of Sterling, Kansas, and its environs and create a synergy with stakeholders and partners. The Business Department has been instrumental in helping the College meet this goal. In addition to partnering with Quiznos to open a student-run restaurant franchise in the community (CC1E-2; CC5D-16), faculty in the Business Department have also coordinated non-credit continuing education course offerings for the past three semesters and worked with the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship to help the city of Sterling secure a $300,000 grant for economic development. (See "Sterling College Business Department" under Core Component 5B.)

Strategic Goal 13: Athletics

In addition to renovating the football stadium and track—a project completed in fall 2008—the Athletic Department has been charged with improving and maintaining highly competitive programs and promoting academic excellence in student-athletes. As the budget history in resource file CC2D-10 indicates, the College has supported this initiative in a way that adds integrity to both athletics and academic programs. Rather than asking coaches to maintain quality athletic programs *and* teach in the Exercise Science Department, as had been the case for a number of years, the College has made a clear distinction between faculty in that department and coaches. Full-time faculty can now devote their time to teaching, and full-time coaches can devote their time to coaching and recruiting.

THE ASSESSMENT PLAN FOSTERS MISSION ALIGNMENT IN ACADEMIC AS WELL AS NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES. The College's assessment plan is addressed in detail throughout this report. For Core Component 2D, it is important to note that the assessment plan calls for explicit alignment between the mission and intended outcomes in both academic and non-academic programs. Faculty members in academic departments have created curriculum alignment matrices on which programmatic objectives are designated with a "CL" (Creative Leader), "TL" (Thoughtful Leader), or "CTL" (Creative and Thoughtful Leader). (See Figure 1.1 in Chapter One and resource folder GD18.) In some academic programs, faculty have identified objectives that address the development of "maturing Christian faith," though the plan calls for this aspect of the mission to be assessed *institutionally* for now. During comprehensive program reviews, which each program will conduct every six years, the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the mission will be incorporated more intentionally. Directors of non-academic programs have completed a Non-Academic Program Assessment Worksheet (CC2C-6), on which they have stated their departmental mission and provided an explanation of how that mission aligns with the institutional mission. Examples of these worksheets are included in Appendix C.

PARTIES INVOLVED IN PLANNING SUPPORT THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION. In addition to the College's faculty, staff, and administration, the College also looks to people from other places to aid in planning. Core Component 1C includes information about how the Board supports and is expected to support the mission. In 2002 the College formed a National Advisory Council with a mission to "help Sterling College move strategically towards its vision." The Council must contain at least one Sterling College Board member (CC2A-5), and preferred members are visionaries who love the College.

Under Core Component 4C is detailed information about newly adopted guidelines for the comprehensive review of academic programs, which should occur every six years. The guidelines call for external constituents—alumni, employers, donors, Board members, former school employees, etc.—to be involved in program reviews. While these guidelines do not currently require that external review teams contain alumni, the Director of Institutional Assessment will be proposing to the Assessment Committee in September 2009 that at least 33% of the external constituents involved in each program review be former Sterling College students who support the institutional mission.

PARTNERSHIPS CONSIDERED IN PLANNING COMPLEMENT THE MISSION AND HELP THE COLLEGE FULFILL ITS MISSION. The College has aligned itself with a number of organizations that help fulfill the mission. The institution benefits from involvement with and membership in educational entities such as the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas (ACCK), the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), and the Kansas Independent College Association (KICA).

The College is now using its resources more efficiently by processing payroll internally with software available through the ACCK. Other technology available through the ACCK, such as one of the learning management systems used at the College and the student database used by financial aid, Student Life, and the Registrar's Office, also aid in daily operations. Furthermore, the ACCK allows the College to participate in a cooperative benefits program for employees. Cooperation with other institutions helps the College save additional resources. More information about the ACCK is available at https://www.acck.edu/ics/ (CC3D-9).

Administrators sometimes participate in Webinars offered through the CCCU (http://www.cccu.org/; CC3D-8), and some administrators belong to cohort e-mail groups within the CCCU. Members of this organization share ideas and explore ways to improve operations and processes. Many CCCU-member schools, Sterling College included, participate in a tuition exchange program with other member institutions. Children of employees at CCCU-member schools may attend other CCCU-member schools without paying tuition (CC2D-11). Because of these students' connection with Christian higher education, students who attend Sterling College through the tuition exchange program are generally individuals who enthusiastically embrace the College's mission.

In summer 2008, an institutional effectiveness group was formed by employees who work at KICA-member institutions, and the group has since met twice. Sterling College hosted a meeting in October 2008 and invited a Higher Learning Commission peer reviewer from nearby Hutchinson Community College to speak about accreditation and the self-study process (CC3D-11). College administrators have also discussed with the KICA the possibility of cooperative purchasing power for textbooks, janitorial supplies, etc. While no decisions have been made, such discussions demonstrate how the College seeks to leverage its relationships to help itself as well as other, similar institutions.

Through e.Sterling, the College has developed articulation agreements with two community colleges (CC2A-17). It is nearing the finalization of agreements with two more and is beginning to discuss articulation agreements with four other institutions. Students from these schools may transfer credits into the College's degree-completion programs and prepare for careers in elementary education or secondary education through math and history licensure programs. Such agreements help the College develop future leaders for the state's classrooms.

Other organizations to recently partner with Sterling College include Teen Mania in Texas, Mile High Ministries in Colorado, and the Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture in downtown Chicago, Illinois. In addition to sponsoring youth events, summer camps, and mission trips, Teen Mania offers a one-year Honor Academy for high school graduates. This academy is intended to help train the next generation of Christian leaders (CC3D-20). Sterling College now has a partnership with Teen Mania so that students of the Honor Academy may transfer Teen Mania coursework to Sterling College and apply it towards a degree. The College's Vice President for Academic Affairs and some faculty have worked with Honor Academy instructors to develop course syllabi that ensure the integrity of the academic and transfer processes.

Mile High Ministries, located in urban Denver, Colorado, is an organization that involves itself in many areas of ministry, including assisting the homeless with housing, maintaining a legal aid clinic, leading international mission trips, and training leaders in urban leadership development (CC3D-17). The organization offers the "Denver Urban Semester," an internship for students interested in urban ministry. The Chair of Sterling College's Theology and Ministry Department is now serving as the organization's academic advisor, and SC has become a participating college in the program (CC3D-18).

As stated under Core Component 3C, Sterling College has partnered with the Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture to provide students with urban internships in still another city. This center specializes in coordinating Chicago-based internships with students' academic areas of interest. The partnership has been especially helpful to the College's Education department, as it allows students to complete their student teaching while encountering cultural diversity they would not otherwise encounter in central Kansas, consequently developing skills necessary for educational leaders in an urban environment (CC3D-14).

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- Additional articulation agreements between e.Sterling and other colleges can create a number of new and exciting opportunities.

Strengths

- The College's online learning division is increasing the diversity of the student body by attracting working adults through its degree-completion programs.
- Personnel additions complement the Sterling College mission.
- Organizations that partner with Sterling College support the institutional mission.

Chapter Three
Student Learning and Effective Teaching

CHAPTER THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Sterling College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

This chapter contains a detailed explanation of how the College's assessment plan is providing evidence of student learning and informing improvement efforts at the course, program, school, and institutional levels. It also outlines the processes by which instruction is intentionally aligned with the Sterling College mission.

Results of teaching evaluation suggest that the College has a faculty of which it can be proud. Stated expectations and recent technological improvements that affect instruction also underscore the College's commitment to teaching excellence. Mission-centered learning environments at all levels further demonstrate the College's strong concern with achieving its stated purposes, as does strategic, effective, and efficient use of resources. Technology, partnerships, and human resources are particularly important. Recent improvements in all of these areas have helped the College move successfully into the twenty-first century while providing quality educational experiences that are grounded in a historical identity and mission.

Core Component 3A: Sterling College's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Sterling College began an important period of transition when its former Assessment Director, a full-time faculty member who received a slight reduction in teaching load to direct the College's assessment efforts, resigned as the Assessment Director in fall 2007.[19] After the peer-review team for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools cited the institution's assessment plan as a significant concern in its 2000 Comprehensive Visit Report (GD14, pg. 26), the previous Assessment Director helped to drastically improve the assessment culture at Sterling College. He not only implemented a plan that provided more meaningful data than the College had ever collected, he also wrote informative annual assessment reports from 2001 to 2007 (GD16) and annual assessment newsletters from 2004 to 2007 (GD17). When an NCA peer-review team conducted a follow-up visit in 2003, they noted, "The progress that Sterling College has made since the fall of 2000 in developing and implementing an assessment plan that over time can lead to program improvement is significant" (GD15, pg. 29).

With the Assessment Director's resignation coinciding with discussion about the College's 2010 comprehensive visit for reaccreditation, the transition period served as a logical time to closely review the College's assessment plan in light of the Higher Learning Commission's newer criteria, adopted in 2004, after the 2003 focused-visit team noted the College's improvement in the area of assessment. In reviewing the *Handbook of Accreditation*, Core Component 3A was

[19] This faculty member did not resign from the College—only from the Assessment Director position.

some cause for concern. Sterling College had experienced great success in assessing knowledge, skills, and values common to the general education curriculum and each academic discipline, but the plan did not provide direction about how to assess learning outcomes that might be unique to Sterling College's programs.

During the 2007–2008 academic year, an interim Assessment Director researched, developed, and began to implement a new assessment plan that required more data-collection methods. An effort was made to not discard what had been done through the previous plan, but leverage past assessment success in developing a plan that would be more thorough and foster more transparency. Many of the assessment tools from the previous plan were incorporated into the current one (national standardized tests and creative products/capstone assignments), but new assessment methods have been added.

Most of the information presented in this section pertains to discipline-specific academic programs. Student-learning data about the College's general education program is included under Core Component 4B.

FACULTY ARE INVOLVED IN DEFINING EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CREATING THE STRATEGIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THOSE OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED.
The current assessment plan was implemented in three phases, beginning in fall 2007. The second and arguably most important phase involved the completion of curriculum alignment matrices for every academic program. These matrices, submitted to the interim Assessment Director in May 2008, contain the programmatic objectives for student learning and an alignment map that indicates which objectives are to be addressed in which courses. They also include a map that illustrates the alignment of program objectives with school objectives. With the curriculum matrices, departments submitted course objectives as well, and most departments included maps that describe how course objectives will be assessed. All faculty members participated in creating the alignment matrices.

Faculty have also been asked to identify program objectives that relate directly to elements of the Sterling College mission statement. As Figure 1.7 in Chapter One demonstrates, some objectives within academic programs are labeled with a "CL" for "Creative Leader," a "TL" for "Thoughtful Leader," or a "CTL" for "Creative and Thoughtful Leader." Programs that did not submit such descriptors have been asked to include them in their first program report under the new plan. The reports are to be completed by August 15, 2009. The collection of curriculum alignment matrices can be found in resource folder GD18.

Of course, faculty are involved in defining the expected student learning objectives for the general education program as well. The GE curriculum was most recently revised during the 2007–2008 academic year, when a sub-committee of the Academic Affairs Committee worked with the associate deans of the College's two schools to conduct a thorough review of the program. The sub-committee consisted of the following members:

- Dr. Felicia Squires, Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Language and Literature (*ex officio*)
- Dr. Kevin Hill, Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies and Assistant Professor of Business (*ex officio*)
- Dr. Arn Froese, Professor of Behavioral Science and Chair of the General Education Committee

- Dr. Gladys Ritterhouse, Associate Professor of Education
- Gordon Kling, Senior Associate Professor of Theatre Arts (CC4B-4)

The process of the GE curriculum review and revision is described in detail under Core Component 4B. As stated in that section, the general education sub-committee conducted three sets of hearings with the greater faculty constituency (CC4B-1, pg. 1).

Each faculty member who teaches a general education course is responsible for establishing the assessment(s) that determine the degree to which students meet general education objectives. In their end-of-year course reports, they are asked to include information about student performance related to GE objectives (CC3A-1). Starting in fall 2009, all GE objectives will be included on relevant syllabi.

In future years, the Sterling College General Education Examination (CC4B-9), administered for the first time in fall 2008, will play a significant role in the assessment of general education objectives.[20] To create the exam, the GE Chair asked instructors to submit multiple-choice items related to the GE objectives embedded in the GE courses they teach (CC3A-2). Items on the exam were then arranged by course. Freshmen are asked to complete the entire exam, while graduating seniors are asked to answer only the questions related to courses they completed at Sterling College. The exam will thus provide valuable entrance and exit data by which the College can determine the GE curriculum's success in helping students meet core objectives.

The Sterling College General Education Examination will serve as an important tool in measuring the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the College's mission statement. Based on the institution's mission document titled "Our Faith" (located under Core Component 1A), the GE Chair and the Director of Institutional Assessment worked with two other faculty members to create items intended to measure the College's success in regard to the spiritual component of its mission. The other faculty members who participated in writing those questions teach GE courses that all students are required to take. One coordinates and teaches GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which all students must complete during the first semester at Sterling College. The other teaches RP440: Philosophy for Faith and Life, which all students must complete toward the end of their Sterling College experience.

Other important examples of faculty involvement in defining outcomes and assessment strategies include the composition of the Assessment Committee and the Faculty Council's approval of the assessment plan. As stated in the assessment plan itself, "The Sterling College Assessment Committee will be formed and chaired annually by the Assessment Director. The committee will consist of six members, including at least one non-faculty member and one student" (GD10, pg. 17). During the 2008–2009 academic year, faculty members from the Business Department, the Athletic Training Department, and the Education Department served on the committee. The member from the Education Department is also the GE Chair, and two of these three faculty members served on the Academic Affairs Committee during the 2008–2009 academic year. As for faculty approval of the plan, it was submitted to all faculty for feedback (CC2C-2) and then approved by Faculty Council at its August 2008 meeting (CC2C-3).

[20] The first set of data from the Sterling College General Education Examination will be available in November 2009, when the first Institutional Assessment Report informed by the College's new assessment plan is completed.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING INCLUDES MULTIPLE DIRECT AND INDIRECT MEASURES. One of the main goals behind creating and implementing a new assessment plan involved the desire to have more than one data-collection measure for every objective. Because scores from even the best and most reliable assessments can be subject to environmental factors, many institutions prefer to assess objectives in multiple ways. Ideally, data for any given objective should be collected from both direct and indirect sources. Under the College's current plan, both direct and indirect data about student learning are collected at the course and program levels.

Assessment of Course Objectives

Systematic assessment of every course objective has just begun at Sterling College. At the end of the 2008–2009 academic year, faculty members submitted to their respective program chairs a course report for every course they taught during the year. Course reports are informed by two modes of input: 1) embedded assessments (the course assessments aligned with each course objective) and 2) end-of-course evaluations. End-of-course evaluations contain questions related to each course objective. Students are asked to describe the degree to which they feel equipped to meet each stated objective on the course syllabus (CC3A-3). To help faculty adjust to this new assessment activity, the Director of Institutional Assessment provided all faculty with a course report template (CC3A-1) and a sample course report (CC3A-4). He also attended faculty meetings with both the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies to explain these documents.

In each course report, faculty are asked to provide the following information:

- Course title
- Instructor
- Course objectives, including any general education objectives aligned with the course
- Review of previous changes
- Update on previous changes
- Report of data based on embedded assessments and end-of-course evaluations
- Evaluation of data based on embedded assessments and end-of-course evaluations
- Proposed changes to the course
- Timeline for changes

One problem quickly identified in the plan's first year involves low student-response rates to the end-of-course evaluations. The evaluations are not mandatory, and the low response rate is compounded by the fact that students are also asked to complete an IDEA evaluation for some courses (CC3B-13; CC3B-14). IDEA evaluations are standardized evaluations that are used to assess teaching effectiveness rather than student learning, and many students feel beleaguered by the amount of assessment the College has begun to do. Some faculty members see great response rates to their evaluations, but most do not.

Assessment of Program Objectives

Starting at the end of the 2008–2009 year, program chairs were asked to begin a process of reviewing one-third of their program objectives each year. Given that comprehensive program reviews are scheduled for each program every six years (GD10, pg. 23), this approach allows departments to thoughtfully review each program objective two times per program-review cycle.

Each year faculty chairs will submit a report in which they will evaluate students' ability to meet the chosen one-third of objectives based on the following modes of input:

- National field tests
- Capstone projects/creative products
- End-of-program exams created by each department
- Course reports from faculty in their respective departments (GD10, pg. 12)

Capstone Projects and End-of-Program Exams
The most direct assessment measures are the capstone projects/creative products and the end-of-program exams created by each department. Creative products and capstone assignments are skill-based assignments completed by seniors. These assignments were implemented under the previous assessment plan and are intended to provide a holistic picture of the skills students have learned throughout any given program. At the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year, the Director of Institutional Assessment informed program chairs that these assignments should contain elements that address all programmatic objectives. He advised chairs to review these assignments at the end of the year and add elements if necessary. If additions are needed, they should be incorporated for students who will complete the assignments during the 2009–2010 year.

Unlike national field tests, which assess knowledge and skills that are common to an academic discipline, the end-of-program exam is intended to assess program objectives that are specific to a major *at Sterling College*. Like capstone assignments, end-of-program exams should provide data about every stated objective within the program.

Under the current assessment plan, end-of-program exams should also provide indirect data about program objectives. That is, the exams should contain questions similar to those on end-of-course evaluations—questions that allow students to indicate the degree to which they feel equipped to meet each stated program objective. During the 2008–2009 year, the Director of Institutional Assessment did not clearly communicate the need to include such items on the exam. Consequently, not all programs included these items during the first year. The Director of Institutional Assessment will rectify the problem during the 2009–2010 year.

Course Reports
The individual course reports completed by each faculty member inform the program chairs' reports. While chairs are asked to collect all course reports each year, they review only the reports related to the one-third of the program objectives they have chosen to assess. The curriculum alignment matrix (GD18) allows them to determine which course reports they need.

National Field Tests
Under the previous assessment plan, Major Field Tests, created by the Educational Testing Service, began to be used as assessments in ten academic programs. While these tests do not necessarily provide data about program objectives that are unique to academic programs *at Sterling College*, they do provide valuable data about Sterling College students' abilities to demonstrate knowledge and skills that are common to academic disciplines across the country. Moreover, results from these tests provide the College and its academic units with information about how Sterling College students compare to students in the same major(s) at other institutions. Of course, many of the program objectives at Sterling *are* similar to objectives at other institutions, so Major Field Tests serve as a valuable and additional measure of student learning.

Because some academic programs are drastically different from institution to institution, Major Field Tests do not exist for every Sterling College major. For example, the Educational Testing Service does not offer a comprehensive test in Theology and Ministry. These departments therefore have one fewer assessment measure contributing to their data pool.

Other Assessment Considerations in Academic Programs
Just as all faculty are provided with a course report template, program chairs are provided with a program report template for their annual report about one-third of their programmatic objectives (CC3A-5). When writing their reports, program chairs are asked to review their curriculum alignment matrices and comment on any reviewed objectives that align with elements of the Sterling College mission. Annual review of alignment matrices is important because course changes made over time can affect the degree to which certain courses complement aspects of the mission. This review helps ensure mission fulfillment in academic programs.

The General Education Program
Assessment of the general education curriculum also involves multiple direct and indirect assessment measures. Beginning with the fall 2009 Institutional Assessment Report, student-learning data about general education objectives will be informed by the following:

- results from a national standardized test
- individual course reviews
- the Sterling College General Education Examination
- review of alignment with aspects of the College mission (GD10, pg. 14)

National Standardized Test
From 2001 to spring 2009, the College used the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) as its standardized assessment for general education. Starting in the 2009–2010 academic year, the CBASE will be abandoned in favor of the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP), which is developed by the Educational Testing Service. Rationale behind the change is explained at the end of the Core Component 4B section.

Like Major Field Tests for academic disciplines, standardized tests related to general education provide valuable data about learning objectives that are common to GE curriculums throughout the country, and they provide the College with a picture of how its students compare to students at other institutions. However, standardized tests do not assess every general education objective that might be specific to the Sterling College GE curriculum. Therefore, additional assessment measures are necessary.

The Sterling College General Education Examination
In fall 2008, the GE Chair worked with the Director of Institutional Assessment to create an exam to measure students' progress toward every GE objective (CC4B-9). The first Institutional Assessment Report under the current assessment plan, which will be completed in November 2009, will include a data summary of both first-year students' and graduating seniors' performance on this exam. The exam will also provide indirect data about general education objectives—students' own perceptions of how prepared they feel to meet them.

Individual Course Reports
In addition to sending course reports to their department chairs, faculty have been asked to send copies of relevant course reports to the GE Chair as well. Because faculty are asked to comment on student performance related to GE objectives when they complete course

reports, the GE chair can use these reports to inform his own report about the general education curriculum. Like program chairs, the GE Chair will annually report on one-third of the objectives in the GE program. Starting in fall 2009, when GE objectives are included on relevant syllabi, end-of-course evaluations will also provide indirect data about each objective—students' own perceptions of how prepared they feel to meet general education objectives.

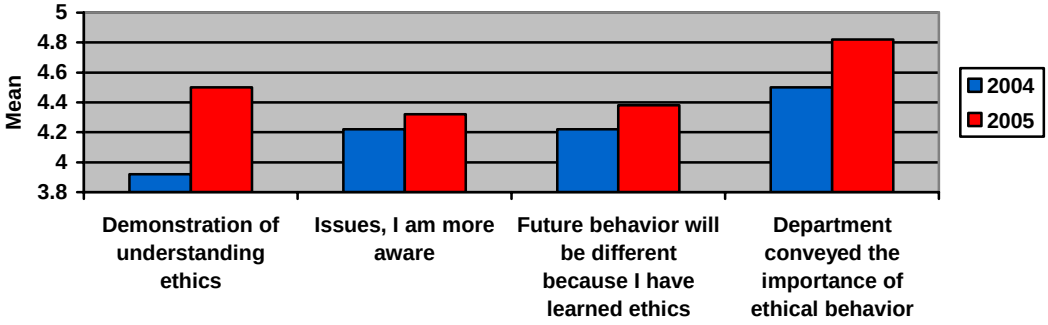
Review of Alignment with Aspects of the College Mission
As Figure 1.1 in Chapter One demonstrates, all four of the major general education objectives have been aligned with elements of the Sterling College mission statement. In fall 2009, the first Institutional Assessment Report under the new assessment plan will contain the GE Chair's review of GE objective 1: "Knowledge of the World and Its Human Cultures." This objective has been designated as one that addresses "thoughtful leadership." Consequently, the GE Chair's report will contain a brief summary about how the College fulfills this aspect of its mission through instruction intended to help students demonstrate "knowledge of the world and its human cultures."

ASSESSMENT UNDER THE COLLEGE'S PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT PLAN IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING RELATED TO KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND VALUES. As stated previously, the assessment plan used at Sterling College from 2001–2007 did not emphasize improvement at academic levels—i.e., courses, programs, and schools—but instead focused on improving student learning related to knowledge, skills, and values. While assessment processes naturally fostered improvements at various levels, the former plan was intended to improve student knowledge, skills, and values in a more general sense.

Knowledge was assessed using Major Field Tests specific to the majors for which the tests were available. Skills were assessed through a creative product, similar to a capstone assignment, in every academic program. Values were assessed using standardized student-evaluation forms pertaining to service projects and the ethics instruction students encountered in their programs.

In the Annual Assessment Reports from 2001–2007, the Assessment Director included assessment success stories from various departments. In 2005, for instance, the Education Department used assessment data to improve its ethics instruction. After reviewing the 2004 Annual Assessment Report, faculty in the Education Department worked closely with the Assessment Committee to clarify an approach to ethics instruction. When students completed the ethics-instruction evaluation in 2005, the mean response to all four major statements on the evaluation increased, as Figure 3.1 demonstrates (CC3A-6, pgs. 18–20).

Figure 3.1: Student Ratings of Ethics Instruction in Education: 2004–2005



In 2006, the Behavioral Science Department realized after reflecting on assessment data that it did not assess students' professional ethics related to counseling. The department consequently identified courses that were required of all majors and in which such content would be appropriate. Faculty in the department then developed assignments designed to assess students' knowledge of professional ethics related to counseling (CC3A-7).

In 2004, the Biology Department added more writing instruction to its curriculum when assessment data revealed its senior-level research paper, which was used as its creative product, did not meet the department's stated criteria. In this case, improvements in instruction were made to various courses that students took prior to their Senior Seminar course, the course in which the creative product was completed (CC3A-8).

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING UNDER THE COLLEGE'S CURRENT ASSESSMENT PLAN PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF LEARNING AND INFORMS IMPROVEMENTS AT MULTIPLE LEVELS. As indicated in the Yearly Assessment Calendar, located in the *Sterling College Assessment Plan* (GD10, pgs. 21–22) and also in Appendix G, course reports from each faculty member should be completed by May 31 of each year, and program reports from department chairs should be completed by August 15 of each year. Because the institution has just completed its first year under the new plan, and because this section of the self-study report is being written before August 15, 2009, assessment data for most academic programs is not yet available. However, a few program chairs chose to complete their reports early. Therefore, examples presented in this section are from those programs.

Course-Level Evidence and Improvement

As stated previously, faculty are asked to evaluate student performance related to each course objective when they complete their end-of-year course reports. They are also asked to state proposed changes to courses and list the date by which changes will be implemented. The examples below are from course reports submitted in May 2009.

MA220: Multivariable Calculus

According to the instructor of this course, student learning can be improved through a course modification related to two objectives. The instructor notes that when he taught the course in fall 2008, "There was no 3D plotting software with which to demonstrate or plot some of the surfaces that we were working with, which caused a few difficulties." Consequently, the instructor proposes to implement 3D plotting software when the course is taught again in spring 2010 (CC3A-9).

MA108: Contemporary Math
After taking this course, students should "understand ways data can be displayed and described, including the uses of statistics and probability in everyday life." Students who completed the end-of-course evaluation for this course noted that their confidence level in meeting this objective was somewhat lower than it was for other course objectives. Therefore, when she teaches the course again in fall 2009, the instructor pledges to "spend more time and focus 5–10% more on lectures, activities, and lessons devoted to probability statistics in everyday life" (CC3A-10).

TM103: Introduction to the New Testament
One of the stated learning objectives in this course relates to students learning about "New Testament background." One of this course's instructors noted that students performed poorly on assessments related to this objective, partly because students may have rushed through related assessments and partly because of inadequate in-class practice time. In addition to making the objective itself more assessable, the instructor suggests more regular and in-class assignments (CC3A-11).

BS295: Behavioral Science Research Methods
An important objective in this course involves students understanding "the nature of publication manuals and their use in preparing manuscripts describing experimental results." According to the instructor who teaches this course, student learning related to this objective can be improved. The next time he teaches the course, the instructor will incorporate a worksheet about locating information in the discipline's publication manual, and he will require students to identify style errors on their paper drafts (CC3A-12).

Because course reports were submitted for the first time in May 2009, only time will tell if the instructors' proposed changes do improve student learning. However, these examples demonstrate how the current assessment plan is intended to foster continuous improvement at the course level.

Program-Level Evidence and Improvement
Under the College's new assessment plan, program chairs report on one-third of their programmatic objectives each year. Below is a summary from the four reports that have been submitted before the August 15, 2009, deadline. See resource folder CC3A-13 for these reports and all others to be completed by the time the self-study report is published.

Christian Ministries and Theology (The objectives listed below are common to both of these programs.)

Objectives Chosen for Review:

- Objective 1: Students will understand the teaching and genres of Old Testament literature.
- Objective 2: Students will understand the teaching and genres of New Testament literature.

Summary of Program Chair's Report:

Data from the end-of-program exam and faculty course reports indicate that students are meeting these two objectives. Moreover, the capstone projects contribute to fulfillment of the College mission statement. In the Christian

Ministries program, students design their own curriculum and in doing so demonstrate thoughtful Christian leadership. Students in the Theology program write a thesis. Although few were written during the 2008–2009 academic year, the students who did write them demonstrated an acute ability to understand the Scriptures and "thoughtfully and creatively" address contemporary issues.

The program's success in meeting these two objectives may have much to do with proper course sequencing. Also, the professor who teaches the courses most related to these objectives scored exceptionally high on the IDEA evaluations completed by students.

Regarding the objectives chosen for review, the program Chair proposes no changes.

Art and Design

Objectives Chosen for Review:

- Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to create well-designed and aesthetically pleasing works of art with various media.
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze works of art.
- Objective 3: Students will understand foundational art concepts.

Summary of Program Chair's Report:

Objective 1 is addressed most directly through graduating students' creative products. Results from that assessment indicate that, generally, graduates meet this objective. However, room for improvement exists.

The end-of-program exam addresses objective 2 most directly. Results from the exam indicate that students can "demonstrate the ability to critically analyze works of art."

The national field test is perhaps the best assessment of objective 3. Scores on the Design section of the exam improved slightly from previous years, while scores on the History and Studio Art sections suggest room for improvement. The test's small sample size must be considered, however.

Improved scores on the Design section of the national field test could be related to the instruction given by an instructor who was hired in fall 2006. Because of small sample size, aggregated data over a number of years must be collected before any statements can be made with certainty.

Room for improvement regarding objective 1 could relate to the major curricular changes that were implemented in fall 2008. That is, this year's graduates studied mostly under the previous curriculum.

Regarding the objectives chosen for review, the chair proposes no changes that will have a direct impact on student learning.

Psychology

Objectives Chosen for Review:

- Objective 2: Students will analyze observed human behavior in terms of concepts and structures typical of academic psychology.
- Objective 4: Students will critically evaluate research findings from several primary sources.
- Objective 7: Students will act consistently with the ethical code of the American Psychological Association as they work in research and applied settings.
- Objective 11: Students will appreciate and internalize the value of social capital—developing a habit of applying knowledge and skills to community service.

Summary of Program Chair's Report:

> After evaluating the assessment data, the Chair noted some discrepancies between course objectives and program objectives. He also noted that the program could benefit from improvements in instructional alignment amongst course objectives, instructional activities, and related assessment methods. In particular, student performance pertaining to objective 7 likely can be improved with greater attention to instruction and evaluation related to that objective. Such changes are scheduled to be implemented prior to offering the next advanced clinical course.
>
> One particular issue identified by the Chair involves the relationship between course sequencing and program assessment. The Chair noted that scores related to certain objectives may be lower than expected on the end-of-program exam because students practice demonstrating the related skills and knowledge early in the program. One of the Chair's proposed changes involves developing "assignments for advanced courses that require students to practice basic skills learned in prerequisite courses." Such a change demonstrates how students can benefit from thoughtful program assessment. Because end-of-program scores related to these objectives may reflect student forgetting, the program Chair acknowledges that more continual review throughout the program might improve learning and knowledge/ability retention.

These summaries highlight the value of program assessment by objective. While the chairs of the Art and Theology departments reported that students were generally meeting the objectives designated for review and that no major changes needed to be implemented, the assessment and report processes nonetheless fostered thoughtful review and comments. For example, the Chair of the Theology department wrote:

> "One interesting observation was that students met objectives best the more difficult the course. This suggests that students need more challenge and when they are challenged they in turn will fulfill these objectives. Possibly objectives one and two should continue to be encouraged more in TM499:

> Senior Thesis by choosing topics with current relevance with the view to becoming more thoughtful creative leaders."

Such reflection helps faculty enhance learning approaches that are already working. The Chair of the Behavioral Science Department, on the other hand, noted changes that needed to be made in order to improve student progress toward meeting programmatic objectives. In both cases, faculty have used the new assessment process to inform continuous improvement efforts.

School- and Institutional-Level Assessment

Figure 3.2 lists the stated student-learning objectives for each school. As indicated in the Yearly Assessment Calendar (Appendix G), associate deans will submit a report on school objectives by August 31 of each year.

Figure 3.2: School Objectives

School of Liberal Arts and Sciences	***School of Professional Studies***
Students will: 1. Demonstrate sufficient content knowledge to be successful in the workplace or graduate school. **(Thoughtful Leadership)** 2. Use appropriate communication skills **(Creative and Thoughtful Leadership)** 3. Apply critical thinking and problem solving skills in decision making. **(Creative Leadership)** 4. Integrate an understanding of Christian faith with academic discipline. **(Maturing Christian Faith)**	Students will: 1. Demonstrate knowledge and skills relevant to his/her chosen profession. **(Thoughtful Leadership)** 2. Think critically and communicate effectively. **(Creative and Thoughtful Leadership)** 3. Understand biblical principles as applied to personal and professional life. **(Maturing Christian Faith)**

The associate deans' reports will be informed by the program reports from chairs within their schools. Along with their curriculum alignment matrices, program chairs have also submitted matrices that depict alignment between their own program objectives and the school objectives. Figure 3.3 serves as an example of such a matrix, illustrating the alignment between the English program's objectives and those of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Figure 3.3: Alignment between English Program Objectives and School of Liberal Arts and Sciences

English Objectives	Knowledge, Skill, or Value	School of Liberal Arts Objective: Use appropriate communication skills **(Creative and Thoughtful Leadership)**	School of Liberal Arts Objective: Apply critical thinking and problem solving skills in decision making. **(Creative Leadership)**	School of Liberal Arts Objective: Demonstrate sufficient content knowledge to be successful in the workplace or graduate school. **(Thoughtful Leadership)**	School of Liberal Arts Objective: Integrate an understanding of Christian faith with academic discipline. **(Maturing Christian Faith)**
1: Interpret and analyze texts and language.	**Knowledge**		**X**	**X**	
2: Communicate understanding of texts in innovative and adaptive methods.	**Skill**	**X**		**X**	
3: Use language responsibly by producing critical responses to a variety of texts.	**Skill**	**X**	**X**	**X**	
4: Create comprehensive reflection and response on the presence of the Divine in literature.	**Value**	**X**			**X**

The associate deans will submit their reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will use them and the report from the GE Program Chair to write a summary of the how the College is achieving its institutional learning objectives. Progress toward some institutional objectives is affected by both academic and co-curricular activities. With data from certain non-academic programs, the Director of Institutional Assessment will add information about progress toward institutional objectives.

STERLING COLLEGE INTEGRATES INTO ITS ASSESSMENT PROCESSES THE DATA REQUIRED FOR PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION IN RELEVANT PROGRAMS. National field tests are used as end-of-program assessment measures in ten of the College's major programs of study. They are not used in every program because a national standardized test is not available for every program.

As stated earlier in this section, national field tests provide information about Sterling College students' abilities to demonstrate knowledge and skills that are common to academic disciplines across the country. They also provide the College and its academic units with information about how Sterling College students compare to students in the same major(s) at other institutions. Because they are standardized, they do not necessarily address objectives that are specific to a given major *at Sterling College*. For example, program objectives aligned with the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the College's mission must be assessed by measures other than a national standardized test. This is one reason that a departmentally created end-of-program exam is part of the College's newly implemented assessment plan.

Two Sterling College programs, Elementary Education and Athletic Training, are assessed in a slightly differently manner because they are accredited by professional accrediting

bodies. Because students in these programs must meet certain objectives before they can earn licensure, the objectives in these programs align with expectations related to professional licensure. Consequently, the new assessment plan will allow them to use their professional licensing exams as both a national field test and an end-of-program exam. Data from these tests will be included in their 2009 program reports, available in resource folder CC3A-13.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The College must consider innovative ways to improve the student response rate to end-of-course evaluations.
- First-year assessment plan mistakes, such as inconsistent collection of indirect data about program objectives, must be corrected in a timely manner.

Strengths

- The College has implemented an assessment plan that is both **learning focused** and **future centered**, relying on various forms of data and evaluation tools at different levels.
- The assessment plan helps guide the College toward fulfillment of its mission to develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith.
- A number of constituencies, including students, faculty, and administrators, are involved in the assessment process.

Core Component 3B: Sterling College values and supports effective teaching.

STERLING COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO ENHANCING INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY. In 2006, the Sterling Technology and Readiness Assessment (STAR) indicated that one of the College's greatest weaknesses was insufficient technology and technology use related to teaching and learning (CC3B-1). In recent years, Title III funding has allowed the College to make major improvements in response to this concern. The Vice President for Innovation and Technology (VPIT) has led an aggressive training initiative to help faculty better integrate technology with their teaching. Early in this initiative the VPIT oversaw an all-faculty assessment of technological skills. After each faculty member completed the assessment, the VPIT worked with him or her to develop an individualized improvement plan (CC2A-13, pg. 13; CC3B-2). The assessment included three checklists:

- a technology skills checklist related to the skills required to use educational technologies as a productivity tool (CC3B-3)
- a technology integration checklist related to the skills required during the general integration of technology into the learning environment (CC3B-4)
- an Internet integration checklist related to the skills required for integrating the World Wide Web with the learning process (CC3B-5)

In 2008, IT purchased new laptop computers. Two classrooms in Cooper Hall contain a number of laptops that are locked in security carts. These classrooms allow students to use College-owned computers during class. IT also purchased new laptops for all full-time faculty members, allowing faculty to have an up-to-date tool by which to realize their individual improvement plans. Before they received their new laptops, faculty were required to attend training sessions, which included instruction about how teaching and learning could be improved with the use of Microsoft PowerPoint (CC3B-6). With their laptops, each faculty member also received a flat-screen monitor to allow for a dual-screen arrangement in their offices. Dual screens help faculty save time and work more efficiently. Information about other related training offered through IT can be found in the Summary of Faculty Training by the IT Department (CC3B-6).

Because of IT's efforts and Title III funding, new laptop computers are not the only technological improvements on campus. IT has also purchased a number of overhead projectors and led professional development sessions about how to use them to improve teaching (CC3B-6). All academic departments now have at least one projector, and the College is in the process of making a projector a permanent fixture in every classroom. Furthermore, Sterling College is now one of only a few colleges in Kansas that can boast of an entirely wireless campus, which allows faculty to incorporate certain technologies with instruction no matter where they are on the College premises.

The campus computing budget has also allowed the College to modestly compensate two faculty members to train other faculty in the use of one of the two learning management systems used at the institution (CC3B-7). In addition to offering workshops at the beginning of each semester, these two employees answer questions and help faculty use the learning management system throughout the year. This system is used primarily by campus instructors to enhance and supplement traditional courses taught in a physical classroom. Another learning management system is maintained by e.Sterling, the College's online learning division. All faculty are free to

use this system if they choose, and in the fall of 2008 the Director of Online Operations began offering training sessions for this system (CC3B-8).

Additional information regarding the integration of technology and instruction can be found in resource file CC2A-13.

QUALIFIED FACULTY CREATE AND DETERMINE CURRICULAR CONTENT THROUGH A PROCESS THAT HELPS ENSURE INTEGRITY. As explained in Section 2.5.2.1 of the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook*, each faculty member is responsible for:

a. planning course outcomes and objectives consistent with the faculty approved description of the course;
b. selecting materials which fulfill those outcomes and objectives;
c. informing students of course outcomes, objectives, and requirements in a syllabus;
d. planning and implementing instructional activities which fulfill the outcomes and objectives and promote learning; and
e. evaluating student progress. (GD02, pg. 19)

These responsibilities can only be met by faculty with the appropriate academic experiences and credentials. Including full-time, part-time, and pro-rata faculty, Sterling College employs a total of 61 faculty members. Figure 3.4 demonstrates the degree distribution of faculty by employment status.

Figure 3.4: Degrees Held by Sterling College Teaching Faculty, 2009–2010[21]

Degree	*Full-Time*	*Part-Time*	*Pro-Rata*
Terminal Degree in Discipline	13	3	0
Master's Degree in Discipline	21	10	0
Juris Doctorate or Other Terminal Degree not in Teaching Field	3	1	0
Bachelor's	0	8	2
Total	37	22	2

A more complete list of faculty by degree and employment status can be found in resource file CC3B-9.

Integrity in curriculum design and maintenance is ensured not only through professional qualifications but also through thoughtful process. When faculty develop and revise curriculum, they must first submit proposals if revision includes course additions, course-sequencing changes, changes in graduation requirements, or modifications to program goals or objectives. Proposals are initially submitted to the appropriate association dean, who then approves or disapproves them to be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Council that exists to research, report on, and recommend to the Council actions that are relevant to the academic standards and programs of the College. According to the College's Guidelines for

[21] Figure includes part-time instructors who teach in the College's online learning division.

Proposing Curricular Changes, three main criteria should inform the Academic Affairs Committee's evaluation of proposals:

1. how and if the proposed changes strengthen the affected program(s);
2. the feasibility of the proposed changes in light of staffing and capital requirements; and
3. how and if the proposal adequately addresses potential concerns related to the program unit(s). (CC3B-10)

The College's Guidelines for Proposing Curricular Changes also list the documentation that must be included with proposals sent to the Academic Affairs Committee:

1. a clear rationale for the proposal, including supporting documentation that might include:
    a. assessment data
    b. national standards
    c. professional publications
    d. general education objectives
    e. common objectives for all majors as identified in the *Academic Catalog*
    f. separate departmental objectives
2. a syllabus for each newly proposed course. The syllabus should specify:
    a. course objectives
    b. links with larger program/institutional objectives
    c. sample course content and text/readings
    d. methods of assessing whether students have met course objectives
3. descriptions of all changes in *Academic Catalog* statements that would be required; and
4. a two-year faculty course rotation for the department documenting how the change will impact teaching loads. (CC3B-10)

The Guidelines for Proposing Curricular Changes help ensure that all curricular changes are thoughtfully evaluated by multiple parties before they are implemented. The presentation of curricular changes to the Academic Affairs Committee fosters not only valuable faculty discussion but also feedback from the Registrar, the Director of Institutional Assessment, the GE Chair, and a representative from the student body, all of whom are ex-officio members of the committee.

STERLING COLLEGE EVALUATES TEACHING. Teaching at Sterling College is evaluated via three main methods: course reports, classroom observations, and IDEA evaluations.

Course reports provide faculty with an opportunity to evaluate their own instruction. As an important step in the College's assessment plan, faculty complete a course report for every course they teach. Detailed information about course reports can be found under Core Component 3A, and examples of course reports can be found in resource files CC3A-9–CC3A-12.

Classroom observation reports (CC3B-11) are completed by associate deans for every faculty member who has not yet received an extended contract. This means that every faculty member is observed at least once per year for his or her first three years at the College. Associate deans submit the classroom observation reports to the VPAA, and the reports become a part of each faculty member's permanent file. These reports may be referenced for consideration of promotion

and reappointment. Reports in which concerns are expressed facilitate discussion between the faculty member and his or her associate dean and/or the VPAA.

IDEA evaluations are completed by students. These evaluations are standardized, and scores are norm-referenced against scores from other institutions. In addition to providing data about the teaching effectiveness of individual instructors, IDEA reports provide data about how teaching at Sterling College compares to teaching at other colleges and universities (CC3B-12).

Figures 3.5 and 3.6 contain information about how Sterling College instruction compared to instruction at other institutions during the fall 2008 and spring 2009 semesters. Both figures demonstrate how students rated Sterling College instruction in regard to three main categories: 1) progress on relevant objectives, 2) excellence of teacher, and 3) excellence of course. The table shows the percentage of classes in each of five performance categories, which are identified in the left-hand column of each figure.

Figure 3.5: Effectiveness of Sterling College Instruction Compared to the IDEA Database, Spring 2009 (CC3B-12)

Converted Score Category	Expected Distribution (Percentage of Classes)	Progress on Relevant Objectives (Percentage of Classes)		Excellence of Teacher (Percentage of Classes)		Excellence of Course (Percentage of Classes)	
		Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted
Much Higher (63 or higher)	10%	8%	7%	5%	2%	9%	9%
Higher (56–62)	20%	23%	26%	31%	32%	18%	21%
Similar (45–55)	40%	50%	44%	34%	36%	44%	45%
Lower (38–44)	20%	13%	16%	17%	11%	17%	13%
Much Lower (37 or lower)	10%	5%	7%	13%	19%	11%	11%
Average Scores (5-Point Scale)							
Sterling College		4.0	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.9
IDEA System		3.8	3.8	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9

Figure 3.6: Effectiveness of Sterling College Instruction Compared to the IDEA Database, Fall 2008 (CC3B-12)

Converted Score Category	Expected Distribution (Percentage of Classes)	Progress on Relevant Objectives (Percentage of Classes)		Excellence of Teacher (Percentage of Classes)		Excellence of Course (Percentage of Classes)	
		Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted
Much Higher (63 or higher)	10%	8%	3%	3%	0%	13%	4%
Higher (56–62)	20%	25%	24%	37%	32%	25%	25%
Similar (45–55)	40%	40%	49%	29%	39%	30%	41%
Lower (38–44)	20%	19%	18%	12%	12%	19%	17%
Much Lower (37 or lower)	10%	8%	7%	19%	17%	14%	13%
Average Scores (5-Point Scale)							
Sterling College		3.9	3.9	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.0
IDEA System		3.8	3.8	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9

Figures 3.7 and 3.8 show the percentage of classes with ratings at or above the converted score of the IDEA database. According to IDEA literature, a percentage that exceeds sixty percent indicates the instructional effectiveness is unusually high.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of Classes at or Above the IDEA Database Average, Spring 2009 (CC3B-12)

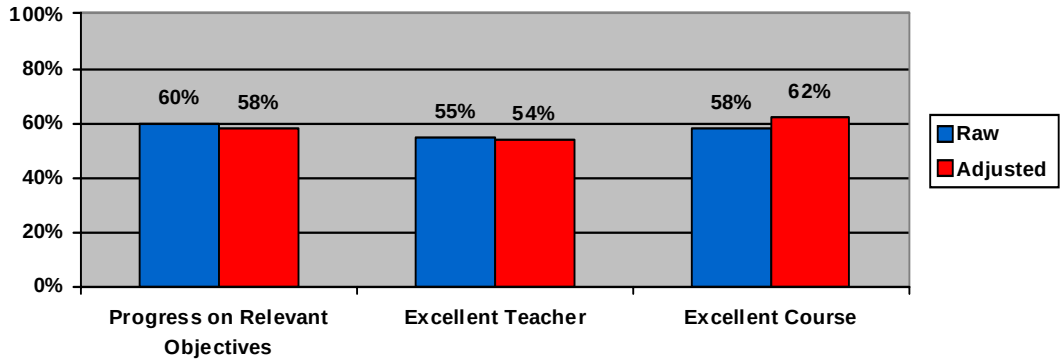
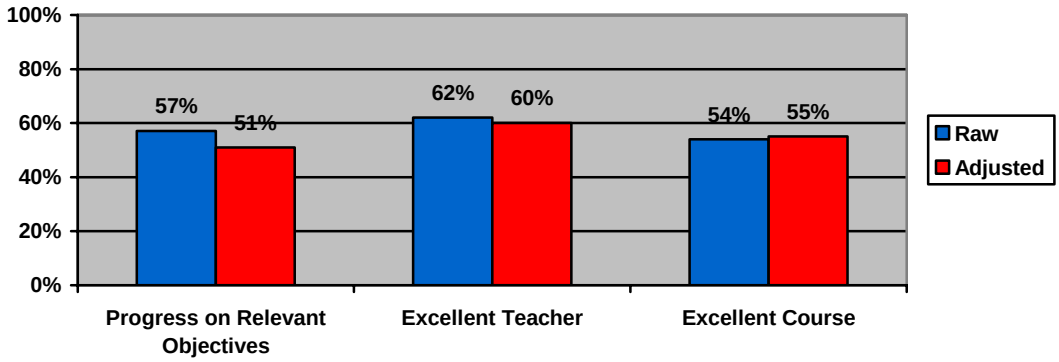


Figure 3.8: Percentage of Classes at or Above the IDEA Database Average, Fall 2008
(CC3B-12)



The IDEA data suggests that students value the instruction they receive at Sterling College. During both semesters of the 2008–2009 academic year, the percentage of courses that students rated "higher" in regard to the three main categories exceeded the IDEA expected distribution. Moreover, instructional effectiveness at Sterling College is generally comparable to instruction at other institutions. An archive of IDEA institutional summaries on teaching effectiveness can be found in resource folder CC3B-12.

For faculty members who are not employed on extended contract, the IDEA evaluation is given in every course they teach (CC3B-13). Faculty who are on extended contract choose one course per semester for IDEA evaluation, and their students complete a shorter form of the survey (CC3B-14). Like classroom observation reports, IDEA results become a part of each faculty member's permanent file, and they may also be used in consideration of promotion and reappointment.

In addition to the three evaluation methods explained above, associate deans and the VPAA review faculty members' course syllabi at their discretion. Concerns identified through syllabi reviews may result in discussions between faculty members and deans.

Classroom observations and IDEA evaluations allow the College to address the four *purposes* of evaluation that are outlined in Section 2.6.1 of the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook*:

a. Initial evaluations, conducted in each of the first three years of full-time employment, are designed to determine the compatibility of the faculty member with the College, the faculty member's ability to meet the performance expectations of the College as identified in this Handbook, and to provide guidance for improvement to the faculty member.

b. Focused evaluations, conducted in the fourth year or on the occasion of review for promotion, are designed to determine whether the faculty member meets the criteria established in this Handbook so successfully that he or she is eligible for recommendation to the president and Board of Trustees for the extended contract or promotion. The burden of proof is on the faculty member to make the case for eligibility.

c. Developmental evaluations, conducted every third year for faculty on extended contracts, are to provide each faculty member an occasion for a self review, and

for the Vice President for Academic Affairs to note the faculty member's development as a professional, for registering concerns of the faculty member or the Vice President for Academic Affairs, for determining the faculty member's progress on personal and professional goals, and for affirming the faculty member's contribution to the life of the College community.

d. Other evaluations may be conducted when special circumstances indicate a serious condition may exist (Section 2.8.3). The Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or the Chief Administrative Officer will inform the faculty member that serious conditions have been identified. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the President and Chief Administrative Officer, will determine the scope and focus of the evaluation. (GD02, pg. 21)

The information presented above describes how *teaching effectiveness* is evaluated at Sterling College. Information about *student learning assessment* is included under Core Components 3A (academic programs) and 4B (general education).

STERLING COLLEGE SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FACULTY. Faculty development funds are provided by the College to facilitate and nurture the professional growth and academic enrichment of faculty members. In collaboration with the VPAA and the associate deans, the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committees are responsible for the allocation of these funds. Figure 3.9 contains information about professional development funding from academic years 2004–2005 to 2007–2008.

Figure 3.9: History of Faculty Development Funding

Faculty Development Funding			
Academic Year	*Eligible Faculty*	*Number of Participating Faculty*	*Total Awarded*
2007–2008	39	25	$6,960.83
2006–2007	35	14	$5,046.44
2005–2006	37	16	$6,713.86
2004–20005	40	18	$7,091.79

As the figure indicates, the number of faculty members who have benefitted from development funds increased significantly during the 2007–2008 academic year. However, financial realities have prevented overall expenditures from increasing proportionately. The College must consider ways to improve faculty development funding, especially in light of increasing enrollments and growing programs.

Other faculty development opportunities include sabbatical leave, educational leave, other types of development leave, study credit, and forgivable loan policies for graduate degrees. Excerpts from respective sections of the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook* follow.

Sabbatical Leave
A faculty member will become eligible for a Sabbatical leave after six years of continuous service at Sterling College, provided he or she shall not have been granted a leave of absence during that time period. Finances permitting, a faculty member normally will not be employed for more than ten years without taking a

sabbatical leave. The sabbatical must be for one or several of the following purposes:

a. research,
b. academic improvement,
c. other approved project

The outline of study shall be approved by the Academic Affairs Committee or the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President.

The faculty member may choose one of two plans:

a. one academic year at one-half salary, or
b. one semester at full salary, the salary being based on that of the year of leave

The sabbatical salary is paid on a loan basis to the faculty member at an annual interest rate equal to the prime rate at the beginning of the sabbatical. If the faculty member returns to the College and continues to serve the College in an acceptable manner for two more years, the loan will be canceled along with the interest thereon. In the event the faculty member chooses to resign before the two full year period is completed, his or her obligation to the College shall be reduced by one-half for each full year of service rendered after the sabbatical. (GD02, pgs. 31–32)

Educational Leave
After three years of full-time faculty employment at Sterling College, a faculty member is eligible to apply to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for a leave of absence of no more than one year for the purpose of pursuing an advanced degree.

The outline of study shall be approved by the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President.

The faculty member may choose one of two plans:

a. one academic year at one-half salary, or
b. one semester at full salary, the salary being based on that of the year of leave.

The educational leave salary is paid on a loan basis to the faculty member at an annual interest rate equal to the prime rate at the beginning of the educational leave. If the faculty member returns to the College and continues to serve the College in an acceptable manner for three (3) more years, the loan will be canceled along with the interest thereon. In the event the faculty member chooses to resign before the full three (3) year period is completed, his or her obligation to the College shall be reduced by one-third for each full year of service rendered after the educational leave. (GD02, pg. 32)

> **Study Credit**
> Full-time faculty are eligible to receive 3 study credits after teaching full-time for three years, and will be given notice of eligibility by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After notification, faculty members should present a study plan for approval by the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Study credits may be taken in units of 1, 2, or 3 credits during a regular semester or other term. Study credits should engage the faculty member in research, writing, or preparation of new classes. Other academic projects may qualify for study credits but these will be approved by the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs on a case-by-case basis. (GD02, pg. 32)
>
> **Other Development Leave**
> From time to time, full-time faculty members may have special opportunities to contribute their expertise in mission, church, government, scholarly or other service deemed consonant with the mission of Sterling College which would benefit both the faculty member and the College and require the faculty member to be absent from teaching at Sterling College for a period of time. In such instances, a plan for leave, including a request for non-salary benefits, shall be submitted by the faculty member for approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The faculty member is expected to return to Sterling College after the leave and be a contributing member of the College community. In no case shall this leave of absence exceed two consecutive academic years. Time spent on this type of leave does not count toward the six-year requirement for sabbatical leave. (GD02, pg. 32)

One faculty member was awarded Sabbatical Leave for spring 2009. No sabbaticals were taken during the prior three academic years, and no faculty members received Educational Leave, Study Credit, or Other Development Leave from 2004–2008.

The College's policy on forgivable loan for graduate degrees is also stated in the *Faculty Handbook*:

> **Forgivable Loan for Faculty Graduate Degrees**
> To recruit, retain, and develop competent faculty, Sterling College endeavors to encourage its faculty members to continue studies for advanced degrees in their respective fields. Consequently, a moderate amount of financial help is made available to faculty members who undertake a program of graduate study applying directly toward a graduate degree. (GD02, pg. 33)

Figure 3.10 contains information about forgivable loan funding over the past four academic years.

Figure 3.10: Forgivable Loan Funding, 2004–2007

Forgivable Loan Funding		
Academic Year	*Number of Participating Faculty*	*Loan Amount*
2007	2	$5,775.00 and $3,500.00
2006	0	—
2005	0	—
2004	1	$4721.35
Totals	3	$13,996.35

The Academic Affairs Office also fosters professional development by coordinating faculty retreats at the beginning of each academic year. Over the past few years, these mission-focused workshops have featured presentations about responding to post-modern students, being a mission-driven college, and effectively incorporating a Christian worldview in the classroom (CC4D-7). The latter presentation, which occurred in August 2008, initiated a follow-up professional development event (CC4D-8).

STERLING COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE DISCIPLINES THEY TEACH. Most faculty members are involved in one or more professional organizations. Some participate in organizations that help keep them connected at local as well as state and national levels. Over sixty-three professional organizations were represented by the fifty-eight members of the faculty during the 2008–2009 academic year. Appendix H contains a comprehensive list of the organizations to which various Sterling College faculty members belong.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- In some cases, the Guidelines for Proposing Curricular Changes make clear the process for submitting proposals to the Academic Affairs Committee. However, the College lacks guidelines concerning certain types of changes or modifications, such as those pertaining to academic minors. Faculty could benefit from more detailed guidelines.
- The College should continue to explore ways to increase funding for professional development. While policy demonstrates the College's concern about the issue, financial realities often make it difficult to fund professional development activities.
- Some faculty members may be unaware of the professional development opportunities offered by the College. Perhaps awareness could increase through a more formal and structured orientation process for new employees.

Strengths

- Efforts in the Department of Innovation and Technology have led to an increased amount of technology for faculty, staff, and students. The acquisition of new laptops, flat-screen monitors, and projectors (as well as the administration of assessments and training sessions) demonstrates the College's concern with providing a **learning-focused** environment for students.
- Technological improvements also demonstrate the College's concern with being **future-centered**.
- The College's entirely wireless campus allows faculty, staff, and students to be more **connected** with both the College community and the global community.
- Through involvement in professional organizations, faculty members are **connected** with other professionals in their fields.

Core Component 3C: Sterling College creates effective learning environments.

STERLING COLLEGE MAINTAINS PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE SAFE AND CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING. Classroom space, campus security, student health facilities, and attention to comfort and amenities all help the College meet students' needs in both instructional and non-instructional settings.

Classrooms and Other Learning-Related Facilities

The campus currently has 36 available classrooms with seats for 978 students. Most buildings on campus house classrooms. In addition to the regular classrooms, Culbertson Auditorium, which seats up to 600, may be used for large lecture-style classes (CC3C-1). To complement science instruction, the College maintains four science labs in Thompson Hall. The Art Center was renovated in 2008 to include an appropriate gallery and ample studio space, and the visual communications part of the Communications and Theatre department was moved to the Art Center to provide better studio space for students studying media.

The College is committed to equipping its classrooms with adequate technology. Eleven classrooms are equipped with projectors, and each department has received at least one projector for use in any classroom that is not already supported with a projector. The entire campus, including residence halls, maintenance and administration buildings, and athletic facilities, is equipped with wireless Internet access, which allows students to access Internet and network resources from anywhere on campus. The College also maintains seven computer labs and several more public computers in public buildings. With marked increases in enrollment, Bell Hall and Culbertson Auditorium were often used as classrooms in 2008. Consequently, mounted projection systems were installed in both locations, and a high-definition auditorium projector was placed in Culbertson (CC3C-2). Technological improvements are discussed in more detail on subsequent pages under this Core Component.

The Business Department has also seen an important improvement to is learning environment—the addition of a business "laboratory." The acquisition of a Quiznos restaurant franchise in 2008 allows Business majors to gain a great deal of hands-on business experience, for the franchise is managed and operated by Sterling College students (CC1E-2; CC5D-16).

Many co-curricular learning experiences occur in performing arts and athletic facilities, and the College has made a number of improvements to these learning environments in recent years. In 2001, Culbertson received a computerized lightboard with 48 dimmers. In 2007, routers were installed for wireless Internet access. The 2008–2009 years brought many of Culberton's improvements:

- new circuits for mid-electric pipe, floor pockets, the balcony, and an additional forty-eight dimmers
- two flyline sets
- a new grand drape, black side curtains, and legs and borders
- a new intercom, wireless microphones, and sound system
- a motorized projection screen
- two portable whiteboards for classroom use
- new furniture (CC3C-3)

Wilson Hall, which houses the College's music department, saw improvements in 2007 when the upstairs of the building was renovated (CC3C-4). In addition, the Mabee Library is now home to a high-tech room that houses equipment for students who manage SCOR, the Sterling College online radio station, and *The Stir*, the College's student newspaper.

Athletic facilities have seen improvements as well. Major renovations to the football stadium and track were completed in 2009 (CC3C-5). These renovations included new turf, a new track, and refurbished press boxes and offices. In the Gleason Physical Education Center, the swimming pool was completely renovated during the 2001–2002 academic year. In 2008, a number of faculty offices were added in Gleason, allowing students majoring in Exercise Science or Athletic Training to access most of their professors' offices in a single building.

Safety and Security

Of course, classroom and co-curricular learning spaces alone do not adequately meet the needs of residential college students. Learners must feel safe and comfortable, and they must be provided with health and recreational facilities that offer relaxation opportunities and ways to maintain and improve personal health.

The College takes a number of measures to keep students safe. In terms of personnel, the College employs two part-time security workers who are on duty from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. throughout the week (CC3C-6). The Library Director now ensures that a staff person is present at all times in the Mabee Library—opposed to student workers closing the facility at night, which was once the practice. A resident director (RD) of a residence hall is on duty at all times, and RDs and Resident Assistants (RAs) are instructed that the first course of action during any emergency is to call 911. Furthermore, RDs and RAs participate in preparedness training before each academic year. Training requires RAs to be familiar with the *RA Manual* (CC3C-7). The Student Life Office has also developed a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan (CC3C-8). The Vice President for Student Life submitted the plan to the local police department for review, and the Police Department concluded that the plan was indeed adequate (CC3C-9).

The Student Life Office takes seriously its responsibility to maintain a safe and secure campus and has used technology to make a number of security improvements in recent years. All residence halls are now equipped with an electronic entry system that requires students and employees to scan their College identification card before entering (GD08, pg. 10). In 2008, the Student Life Office initiated the e2Campus system, which allows students and employees to quickly receive a text message in the event of a campus emergency (CC3C-10). During new-student orientation, students are encouraged to register in the e2Campus system. Security cameras have been installed in strategic areas, including the Student Union, the Gleason Physical Education Center, and Kilbourn Hall, a men's residence hall that has traditionally been the location of more thefts than any other building on campus. The College is now in the process of installing an emergency siren on the roof of Thompson Hall, which is centrally located on campus (CC3C-11). Safety and security information is available on the College's Web site, so students may access it at any time (http://www.sterling.edu/current-students/student-life/safety-security) (CC3C-12).

Figure 3.11 contains criminal statistics from 2004–2008. Statistics for 2005–2008 are disaggregated by location (public property and residence halls) and are located in resource file CC3C-13.

Figure 3.11: Criminal Offenses, 2004–2008

Offense	***Number of Offenses by Year***				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Murder/Non-negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses—Forcible	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses—Non-forcible (Includes only incest and statutory rape)	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	6	1	0	3	3
Aggravated Assault	0	0	1	0	0
Burglary	6	1	5	3	3
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	0	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	0	0	0

As the figure above indicates, criminal activity is minimal on the Sterling College campus.

Student Health Facilities

In 2006 Sterling College reinforced its commitment to the physical and mental health of all students by creating an on-campus Student Health Center. The Health Center employs a Registered Nurse who is able to offer basic medical advice, make referrals to licensed physicians, and help students relax with massage therapy (CC3C-14). The RN also administers flu shots each flu season and promotes basic hygiene practices such as hand-washing and health-enhancing behavior such as adequate rest and proper nutrition. In addition, the Health Center employs a counselor who is able to meet with students about academic or personal issues (CC3C-15). The basement of the Health Center houses The Underground Pulse, an exercise facility that is open to all students for relaxation and fitness. The Underground Pulse is open twenty-four hours a day with security code entrance, for which students must register. The Health Center contains an assortment of exercise equipment including treadmills, elliptical machines, recumbent bikes, exercise balls, free weights, an upright bike, a Bowflex® home gym, and a television with DVD and VHS players for taped exercise programs. Approximately eighty-three percent of usage of the Underground Pulse is by females (CC3C-16). A fitness facility is also located in the Gleason Physical Education Center. While it is generally reserved for varsity athletes, it is available to non-athletes at certain times, as is the swimming pool located in the same building.

Quality dining service is an important aspect of campus health as well. The College's cafeteria is operated by Chartwells College and University Dining Services, which is a subsidiary of Compass Group North America. Chartwells is contractually obligated to provide certain food options at certain times of the day. In doing so, Chartwells strives to cater to the diverse tastes and needs of Sterling College students. As the College's food service provider, Chartwells also agrees to serve special dinners, such as those for banquets, at no extra cost to students (CC3C-17). The

company offers students educational literature about a number of life and health issues related to diet. This literature, published in brochure form, is free to students and is located in the dining hall (CC3C-18).

Comfort and Amenities

Comfort and amenities are also important for students. At Sterling College, all dormitories except one, Campbell Hall, are equipped with air-conditioning. All residence halls have either one or two cable-equipped televisions in lobby areas, and all dorm rooms are cable ready. Students may connect their own televisions for cable reception.

The College's Plant Services Department plays an important role in keeping students and employees comfortable and safe. In addition to a Plant Director, the College employs four full-time maintenance technicians, each with a different area of expertise. One specializes in carpentry, locksmithing, and other general tasks; the others specialize in plumbing, electrical work, and grounds work. One maintenance technician is on call every weekend (CC3C-19). Seven full-time and two part-time employees are responsible for campus housekeeping. Each of these employees maintains approximately two buildings.

THE STERLING COLLEGE MABEE LIBRARY PROVIDES RESOURCES TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED. Built in 1996, the Mabee Library is one of the most beautiful and state-of-the-art facilities owned by the College. Located in the center of campus and equipped with computer labs as well as both open and closed study rooms, it is a convenient place for students to research and study. The library staff work hard to maintain hours of operation that best serve students. Weekend hours are scheduled based on trends in student use, and the library is open for extended hours during finals weeks.

In the past few years, the library has invested in new servers and upgraded software for the resource catalog. The most recent improvements include the addition of a proxy server that simplifies off-campus access to electronic subscription resources such as LexisNexis®, BioOne™, and Serial Solutions®. The library is slowly updating its print-resource collection by eliminating outdated books and materials (print indexes, full-text journals in electronic databases, etc.). The library uses *Resources for College Libraries*, a core collection of essential titles for a variety of academic subjects, to assist the Library Director in growing and weeding the collection. In fall 2007 a new curriculum library was created with relevant materials for students pursuing careers in education. The collection contains K–12 textbooks and helpful resources for Education majors.

Since 2000, the library has also offered research instruction. Library research is not a mandatory requirement for students, so librarians provide instruction at the request of faculty. Academic year The most instruction occurred during the 2007–2008 academic year, when sixteen sessions were taught to 210 attendees (CC3C-20). The library also provides a Frequently Asked Questions brochure about research and general resources (CC3C-21). The brochure is available in the library at all times.

The library's budget has been relatively stagnant for the past ten years. The library has provided basic services but has not had the financial support to expand the number of resources it offers. The stagnant budget has forced relatively large cuts to journal subscriptions—eighty-one journal titles in 2003 and another twenty-nine in 2007. To offset such budget realities, library staff work hard to acquire materials via interlibrary loan. For the past ten years, the library has consistently filled approximately eighty-five percent of all requests to borrow items from other libraries

(CC3C-20). Nonetheless, the College recognizes that it must continue to explore ways to help the library grow and improve, especially with increases in student enrollment.

STERLING COLLEGE SUPPORTS CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS STUDENTS. Students are afforded valuable co-curricular experiences in a number of ways. Some of the most important occur through the Student Government Association and its organizations and through spiritual formation, varsity and intramural athletics, and internships.

As addressed in detail under Core Component 1C, the College has an active and vibrant Student Government Association that sponsors a number of student organizations. The College commits a certain percentage of student fees to SGA, which in turn allocates funding to the organizations under its charge (CC3C-22, pg. 8). In fall 2008, SGA's budget was twenty percent of student fees (CC3C-23). In addition to participating in SGA-sponsored organizations, students may also play important roles on campus as student chaplains, prayer leaders, or resident assistants in dormitories. Additionally, they may be involved in the Leadership Success Program (CC4A-15) or serve on the Homecoming Committee.

In 2008, the College began offering students alternative ways to meet chapel requirements. In addition to the traditional chapel service that has been offered on Wednesday mornings for a number of years, students may now earn chapel credit by engaging in one of four small groups that allow them to explore spiritual issues in a more informal environment. Students may also engage in spiritual-development activities that do not count for chapel credit but foster fellowship and community (CC3C-24).

Varsity and intramural athletics also provide important co-curricular learning opportunities for students. The College offers seventeen varsity sports, including football, baseball, softball, dance/cheer, tennis, volleyball, basketball, track and field, cross country, soccer, and golf (http://www.sterling.edu/athletics) (CC3C-25). The Athletic Department takes seriously its commitment to manage athletic programs as co-curricular and not simply extra-curricular entities. With a mission to develop "student-athletes who demonstrate character, competence, and a commitment to community," in 2008 the Athletic Director instituted an assessment by which coaches evaluate student-athlete's progress toward the department's mission. This assessment is located under Core Component 1C. Intramural sport "seasons" typically last three to four weeks each. Behavior expectations for both varsity and intramural athletics are addressed in Statement #8 of the College's "Community Life Covenant," which all students are asked to sign (GD08, pg. 18).

Internships and mission trips serve as important co-curricular learning opportunities as well. Through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), an organization to which Sterling College belongs, students are able to participate in study-abroad opportunities for credit. Since 2000, fourteen students have taken advantage of the CCCU opportunity and studied in Oxford, Latin America, Australia, Los Angeles, Russia, and Washington, D.C. (CC3C-26). Internships within academic programs have increased tremendously within the past few years. While many students pursue internships on their own, some departments require students to complete an internship before graduation. In addition to the semester-length clinical teaching experience required for Education majors, students majoring in Business, Christian Ministries, Athletic Training, Exercise Science, and Sports Management must also complete an internship. The Theology major requires an internship-like service component, and Communication and Theatre Arts majors must choose between an internship or a research/performance project. Athletic training majors also complete a number of practicums on campus by serving varsity athletic teams (GD01, pgs. 114–115). In addition, the College has partnered with the Chicago

Center for Urban Life and Culture to provide students with urban internships. The Chicago Center specializes in coordinating Chicago-based internships with students' academic areas of interest. The partnership is especially helpful to the College's Education department, as it allows students to complete their student teaching while encountering cultural diversity they would not encounter in central Kansas (CC3CD-14).

Mission trips and other service opportunities also allow students to utilize skills and knowledge learned in the classroom. In addition to serving on mission teams within the United States, students have served in eleven different countries since 2003. In the past few years, mission trips have occurred during both the summer and the winter. The winter trips occur during the break between semesters, or during the January interterm when it is offered. Detailed information about a few of these trips can be found in resource folder CC3C-27. Mission work at Sterling College is enhanced by the service of Dr. Hank Lederle, Professor of Theology and Missions, who is highly involved in the coordination of mission trips. In addition to his academic background in the area of missions, Dr. Lederle has served as an Associate Pastor and as a missionary to Malawi. To help students better apply knowledge on mission trips, he has developed a course titled TM107: Cross-Cultural Ministry (CC4C-4). Mission trips are also addressed under Core Components 4C and 4D.

STERLING COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS WITH TECHNOLOGY. During the past four years especially, the Department of Innovation and Technology has made great strides in acquiring, implementing, and updating technology intended to enhance students' learning experiences. The majority of these improvements have involved hardware and software acquisition, connectivity with the World Wide Web, the physical implementation and maintenance of computer labs and learning management systems, and the use of non-traditional learning formats.

Connectivity

Increasing connectivity levels has been an important part of IT's work since 2004, when rooms in residence halls were equipped with access to specific areas of the College network and free access to the Internet. Network connections to various classrooms and offices in Wilson, Spencer, and Kelsey Halls as well as the Gleason Physical Education Center and the Art Center were also improved during the 2004–2005 academic year. Physical limitations and grounds issues had previously inhibited network connections in these buildings. In 2006, a major step was taken toward more effective use of the Internet when bandwidth on campus was increased from 3MB to 12MB. This resulted in Sterling College offering the fastest Internet connectivity speed of any comparably sized college in the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, a six-college consortium to which the College belongs. Finally, over a two-year span beginning in 2006, the College moved from being an institution that offered wireless Internet access in only ten percent of its academic areas/classrooms to being a *completely* wireless campus. Sterling College is now one of only a few Kansas colleges that offer free wireless access to its faculty, staff, and students in 100% of its facilities. Wireless access is also available in almost all open areas on campus, the only exceptions being extremely remote areas (CC3C-2).

Hardware and Software

Major hardware and software improvements began in 2004, when state-of-the-art LCD projectors were purchased for classrooms in six buildings. The same year, document cameras, or digital visual presenters, were placed in key academic areas across campus. These devices allow instructors to project three-dimensional objects and other forms of non-electronic documentation onto a projection screen. Document cameras are especially helpful in situations that require close examination of items in a group format. In the spring of 2006, through collaborative efforts with

the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, Sterling College implemented a learning management system that allowed electronically enhanced communication, collaboration, and file sharing between faculty and students. Also in 2006, academic departments were able to increase their offerings of instructional/productivity software packages that directly impacted their curricula. Examples include statistical software used by the Business, Behavioral Science, and Education Departments, and lesson-mapping software for the Education Department (CC3C-2). The statistical software is installed on computers in campus computer labs, while the lesson-mapping software has been installed on computers in the Education building.

During academic year 2006–2007, major server upgrades enhanced the connection and integration of servers while reducing the number of systems required for proper functionality. Paired with these server upgrades, all network system software on campus was updated to maximize use and functionality. In academic year 2007–2008, all academic *departments* on campus received additional LCD projectors (CC3C-2).

Perhaps the greatest improvement to the learning environment in recent years occurred during the 2008–2009 academic year, when all full-time faculty received a new wireless laptop system, fully equipped with a powerful laptop, a wireless keyboard and mouse, an external 19-inch monitor, external storage devices, and a carrying case. The laptop systems have allowed the faculty to make the most of recent technological developments, such as the wireless campus initiative, increased access/speed to the Internet, stronger infrastructure/network services, and instructional-based software/services (CC3C-2).

Technology Labs

The development and maintenance of strategically placed computer labs have also enhanced the Sterling College learning environment over the past few years. Each residence hall houses its own lab, and each lab has from three to six computers and at least one printer. The computers in the residence-hall labs are connected to the College network and provide access to the Internet. Major updates and upgrades to these labs were a focus in 2007–2008. Similarly, upgrades and improvements were made to academic computer labs during the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 academic years. Improvements allowed increased levels of access during class time and non-class time. In 2005, one classroom in Cooper Hall became home to a mobile cart full of twenty wireless laptop computers for use in that room. The laptops were replaced with newer ones in 2009, and they are now equipped with the same power and software as the computers in the general academic labs. With the implementation of a campus Writing Center in 2008, a few computers and a presentation station were provided to meet the technological needs of that department as well (CC3C-2).

Learning Management Systems

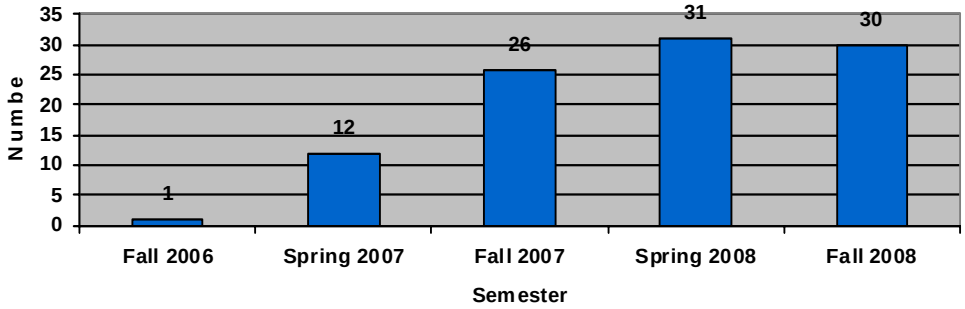
Learning management systems that meet students' needs are also important. Sterling College uses two online learning management systems. One is provided by Jenzabar Integrated Campus Solution (JICS), and the other is an open-source system called Moodle. The JICS system is tailored to Sterling College's needs and is managed by the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas. Moodle is used in all programs offered through e.Sterling, the College's online learning division, and by any campus faculty who choose to use it. In January 2007, the College installed updated versions of Moodle to support its online course offerings. In May of 2007, the College installed a new Moodle server and peripherals, enhancing the system's speed, storage capacity, and backup systems. Through collaboration between e.Sterling, the College's library, and the Registrar's Office, enhanced levels of user authentication were adopted in May–August 2008, allowing students to use only one username and password across multiple management systems. For example, online learners who live in other communities are now able to access their Moodle

courses as well as the Mabee Library's electronic resources with the same username and password (CC3C-2; CC3C-20).

Non-Traditional Learning Formats

An increasing number of courses are being created and delivered in a hybrid format. While many courses have an online component that is used as a mere supplement to the classroom, hybrid courses are designed so that traditional face-to-face interaction between faculty and students is paired with online instruction and communication. To date, four departments—Music, Math (Computer Science courses), History, and Business—have offered many of their courses in a hybrid format in order to accommodate a new generation of students that responds favorably to technology-reliant education. Figure 3.12 demonstrates the increase in the number of hybrid courses offered from fall 2006 through fall 2008. Additional information about hybrid courses can be found in resource folder CC3C-28.

Figure 3.12: Number of Hybrid Courses Offered by Semester



In spring 2009, four faculty members teaching hybrid courses piloted an initiative that could help Sterling College provide cutting-edge instructional technology. Instead of the College dictating to students which type of technology should be used to enhance instruction, Sterling College provided these four faculty members with the advanced technology many students already own and encouraged these faculty members to supplement instruction in very non-traditional ways. That is, these instructors used applications from Web-connected, hand-held computing devices to deliver content to students anytime, anywhere. Through this initiative, Sterling College is making an effort to reach individual students "where they are" rather than forcing them to use *only* the more general technology that is owned by the College and available to all students.

STERLING COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING. Appendix E summarizes the College's efforts in recent years to provide classroom equipment and other instructional resources upon departmental request.

STERLING COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO A QUALITY ADVISING SYSTEM. Care in academic advising is a major concern at Sterling College. As indicated in Section 2.5.2.2 of the *Faculty Handbook*, all faculty members are responsible for advising (GD02, pg. 20). The faculty-student interaction that advising provides is an important part of the Sterling College student's experience. However, personnel in a number of departments also play key roles in the advising process. Always concerned with improving relationships, the College's academic advising system has been enhanced in a number of ways in recent years.

First, the Admissions and Registrar's Offices have collaborated to develop a way of updating new student admission information through an enrollment questionnaire. After students submit an enrollment deposit, they complete the questionnaire and provide information about any college coursework they have completed through other institutions. They also provide information about their curricular and co-curricular areas of interest. For those students who initially apply to Sterling College during their junior year of high school and then change their areas of interest between then and when they deposit, the questionnaire serves as an update that is critical to the advising system. With the updated information, the College links each student with a faculty member who teaches in the student's discipline of interest. This process helps ensure accuracy in advising as well as valuable student-faculty interaction.

Technology has also fostered improvements in advising. Advisors now have online access to advisees' records through the JICS Web portal. This constantly up-to-date access facilitates better and more accurate advising at any given time. For those in the Registrar's Office, a computerized degree-audit program has been developed, allowing for quicker processing and feedback from that office. Students and advisors have access to the degree-audit program as well. Additionally, special forms used within the advising process are available to faculty advisors through the College Web site. These forms include Requests for Independent Study, Requests for Directed Study, and forms for Independent Interdisciplinary Major Proposals (CC3C-29).

Finally, the instructors of GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which all students must take during their first semester, have been asked to encourage students to formally declare a major if they indeed know the discipline they intend to study. This is not meant to rush undecided students to declare a major, but to facilitate proper advising for students who have decided on a major. Formal declaration allows for earlier faculty advising by a faculty member in the student's discipline of interest.

STERLING COLLEGE OFFERS QUALITY ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ITS STUDENTS. The College's Academic Support Office tracks the attendance of students who enroll on probation or who fall into probationary status while attending Sterling College. Each day, instructors report student attendance to the Academic Support Office. Attendance reports allow the VPAA, faculty, coaches, and other co-curricular leaders to work together when students begin to exhibit academic behaviors that may indicate intervention is needed. Attendance reports have allowed the College to intervene earlier when students show signs of distress.

The department also offers tutoring services, academic counseling and advising, and a course titled GD104: Academic Success, which helps at-risk students develop the skills necessary to succeed at Sterling College. Moreover, the College opened a Writing Center in fall 2008. The Writing Center offers walk-in times during the day and appointment times during the evening for students who desire writing-specific assistance (http://www.sterling.edu/academics/resources/writing-center) (CC3C-30).

Information about how the College's academic support efforts may be improving retention is included under Core Components 3D, 4D, and 5C.

STERLING COLLEGE OFFERS AN HONORS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. The Sterling College Honors program provides alternative general education opportunities in history and literature to students with an ACT over 25 and a high school GPA of 3.5 or higher. These general education alternatives are taught in small seminar groups (12-15 students) so that students have the opportunity to engage the texts and issues in a discussion format rather than a lecture setting. Instead of reading textbooks and

listening to lectures, these students read primary historical documents. The Honors program also offers off-campus educational opportunities. In the past, these opportunities have included trips to the Wichita Opera, the Highland Festival in nearby McPherson, and the Renaissance Festival, the World War I Museum, and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. Honors students also have the opportunity to participate in foreign film nights and dinner discussions with faculty regarding faculty research. Approximately 15-20 students are admitted to the Honors program each year, but perhaps only 10-12 actually end up participating in the program's classes and events. Should the campus budget allow, the Honors program would eventually like to offer its students international travel opportunities.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The Mabee Library's stagnant budget over the past few years has necessitated cuts in the number of journal subscriptions. As enrollment continues to increase, the library's budget should allow for growth in resources.
- Increasing enrollments have forced the College to use facilities such as Culbertson Auditorium for classroom space. To eliminate future scheduling conflicts and maintain the small class sizes that have long been a distinguishing characteristic of Sterling College, the challenge of classroom space must be addressed.
- While faculty and staff are trained to use the College's learning management systems, students typically learn how to navigate online course spaces from their instructors. Students could benefit from formal LMS training.

Strengths

- Through technological improvements and internships, the College has created learning environments that help keep students **connected.**
- The College maintains a safe learning environment.
- The College has improved its advising system to make it more efficient and relationship driven.
- The Athletic Department's commitment to its mission has helped some of the College's main co-curricular activities become more **learning focused.**
- The Department of Innovation and Technology's recent initiative to adapt education to student-owned technology is **future centered** and **distinctive.**
- The development of an early intervention system for struggling students fosters a stronger sense of community and improves communication between faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 3D: Sterling College's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

STERLING COLLEGE ENSURES ACCESS TO THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND TEACHING. In addition to having access to qualified faculty and staff, students must have the physical resources and the academic support they need in order to succeed. Faculty and staff must also have access to necessary physical resources and know that students are able to find learning-related support outside of the classroom. Key among such resources are the Mabee Library, the Academic Support Office, and specialized instructional spaces such as laboratories and performance spaces.

The Mabee Library

The Mabee Library is home to over fifty bibliographic databases and over 100,000 volumes of resources. The library is located in the center of campus and is equipped with computer labs as well as open and closed study rooms. Library staff work hard to maintain hours of operation that best serve students. During the academic year, the library is open from 8 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Thursday, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. It is generally closed on Saturdays and open from 4 p.m. to midnight on Sundays. However, weekend hours are scheduled based on trends in student use. The library is also open for an extra hour, until 1 a.m., during finals weeks.

Periodically since 2000, the library has provided research instruction. Library research is not a mandatory requirement for students, so librarians provide instruction at the request of faculty. The most instruction occurred during the 2007–2008 academic year, when sixteen sessions were taught to 210 attendees (CC3C-20). Use of research instruction declined slightly during the 2008–2009 year; however, the Director plans to utilize additional communication methods in an effort to provide research instruction for more students in fall 2009 (CC2C6; Appendix C). The library also provides a Frequently Asked Questions brochure about research and general resources (CC3C-21). The brochure is available in the library at all times.

In 2008, library staff made a number of enhancements related to electronic access of resources:

- the implementation of a proxy server, which simplified off-campus access to electronic databases
- the addition of LexisNexis® with legal and newspaper resources
- the addition of *Journals—Print & Online* to help users find journal titles
- redesigned Web pages to streamline access to databases
- the addition of the BioOne™ science database to support research in the Biological Sciences (CC3C-20)

Figure 3.13 shows the number of electronic database searches from June 2008 through May 2009. The total number of searches averages to 21.5 per student, based on the fall 2008 FTE of 616. More detailed information about electronic database use can be found in resource folder CC3D-1.

Figure 3.13: Electronic Database Searches, June 2008–May 2009

	VENDORS					
	EBSCO Selected Databases	**Firstsearch (WorldCat)**	**Gale Selected Databases**	**Lexis-Nexis (All Databases)**	**Proquest Selected Databases**	**Grand Total**
Total Number of Searches	5414	1850	2668	821	2515	13268

The library is staffed by a full-time Director, a full-time Coordinator of Circulation Services, a part-time Library Assistant, and a number of student employees who combine to contribute forty hours per week to library work. The library could certainly benefit from more professional staff, especially since a professional staff member is on duty during all open hours. Some regional college libraries that are similar in size have only student workers on duty during evening hours—particularly near closing time. While the internal policy of requiring a professional staff member to be on duty at all times means that all staff members must work some evenings, the Director feels that the policy helps ensure integrity and enhances library users' experiences.

To help maintain the most useful collection of resources, the Director asks faculty to provide feedback about the usefulness of the library and to help scrutinize holdings to make sure physical space and budgets are being utilized efficiently. She has invited faculty input and feedback through both e-mail invitations (CC3D-2) and an "open house" at which faculty are given a coupon by which they can request new holdings (CC3D-3).

Academic Support

A number of support resources and programs are coordinated through the Academic Support Office, which is staffed by a faculty coordinator and an administrative assistant. These resources and programs include tutoring, study halls, attendance and academic alert reports, placement testing, the Writing Center, an academic success course, and ADA accommodations. The Academic Support Office is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and the Writing Center, which is a part of academic support, is open during weekday afternoons, from 6 to 8 p.m. three evenings per week, and by special appointment.

In addition to the writing assistance that students may obtain through the Writing Center, assistance is available in other subjects through peer tutoring. At the beginning of each academic year, the Academic Support Office works with faculty to coordinate a list of student tutors who have exceptional abilities in relevant subjects and are interested in helping other students work through problems. Student tutors may be compensated directly through the Academic Support budget or through the Federal Work Study program. During the 2008–2009 academic year, seven students served as tutors for seven academic subjects.

The Academic Support Office also coordinates placement testing for writing and math courses. Students who have not completed their English requirement for the general education curriculum and who have scored lower than a 19 on the English section of the ACT must take the Compass Test in English. Their score on the Compass Test determines whether they are enrolled in LL101: College Composition I or LL095: Basic Writing, a remedial writing course that prepares students for LL101. Students who have not completed their math requirement for the general education curriculum and who have scored lower than a 21 on the math section of the ACT must take a

placement test developed by the Math Department. Students' scores on the math placement test determine if they must enroll in a remedial math course before attempting to earn math credits that fulfill the general education math requirement.

GD104: Academic Success is generally taught by the faculty coordinator in the Academic Support Office. In this course, students who are admitted on academic probation learn about the time-management, study, and basic academic skills they will need to succeed in college (CC3D-4). In addition to attending weekly classes, students are required to meet with the instructor on a weekly basis. These one-on-one meetings are designed to hold students accountable for attending classes, submitting assignments on time, and notifying their instructors of any problems they may be facing in their courses.

Probationary students attend weekly study halls as well. The Academic Support Office tracks probationary students' attendance at study halls and in their classes. At the end of each day, faculty submit to the office a record of probationary students who were absent in their classes and information about any assignments or tests that those students fail to complete or submit. These records help the Academic Support Office initiate research-based interventions that involve advisors, coaches, Student Life personnel, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, for all these parties are notified when students show signs of low motivation. Administrators believe this system has played a major role in increasing the student retention rate since it was implemented in fall 2007. Figure 4.16 under Core Component 4D contains data about retention and probationary students. While the data is inconclusive, it is certainly encouraging. From 2000 to 2006, the average fall-to-spring retention rate of first-time, full-time probationary students was approximately sixty-four percent. During the two years that the Academic Support Office has tracked student attendance, the fall-to-spring retention rate of probationary students has been seventy-eight percent. The spring-to-following-academic-year retention rate of the same group of students was approximately forty percent from 2000 to 2006. If fall 2009 projections are accurate, the spring-to-following-academic-year retention rate of these students since attendance tracking was implemented will be approximately sixty percent (CC4D-15). The College is encouraged by these statistics, and academic support personnel have recently discussed with the VPAA the possibility of tracking attendance for all students, not just those who are on probation.

The Academic Support Office also works with students who require special classroom accommodations. Students themselves must contact academic support personnel to inform them of required accommodations. Information about academic support, including the contact information of academic support personnel and students' responsibilities concerning accommodations, is included in the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pg. 9).

Special Instructional Spaces

A number of academic units require special instructional spaces so that students can get the most from their learning experiences. Figure 3.14 lists such instructional spaces and summarizes how they contribute to learning and teaching.

Figure 3.14: Special Instructional Spaces

Department	Building and Room	Function
Academic Support	Thompson Hall 211	Writing laboratory
Academic Support	Thompson Hall 216	Academic support laboratory
Art	Art Center lobby	Gallery
Art	Art Center 101	Drawing/painting studio
Art	Art Center 102	Photography/sculpture studio
Art	Art Center 104	Ceramics studio
Art	Art Center computer lab	Graphic Design laboratory
Art	Art Center darkroom	Darkroom
Biology	Thompson Hall 136	Biology laboratory
Biology	Thompson Hall 138	Biology laboratory
Biology	Thompson Hall 135	Biology storeroom
Biology	Thompson Hall 137	Biology storeroom
Biology	Thompson Hall 139	Instrument laboratory
Chemistry	Thompson Hall 106	Organic chemistry laboratory
Chemistry	Thompson Hall 111	Inorganic chemistry laboratory
Chemistry	Thompson Hall 108	Chemistry storeroom
Chemistry	Thompson Hall 112	Instrumentation room
Chemistry	Thompson Hall 113	Weighing room
Physics	Thompson Hall 110	Physics laboratory
Behavioral Sciences	Thompson Hall 110	Animal learning laboratory
Communication & Theatre Arts	Spencer Hall Auditorium	Stage
Communication & Theatre Arts	Spencer Hall 100, 103	Dressing rooms
Communication & Theatre Arts	Spencer Hall 107	Set construction room
Communication & Theatre Arts	Spencer Hall 203	Costume shop
Communication & Theatre Arts	Spencer Hall 300	Debate/Forensics
Communication & Theatre Arts	Art Center 103B	Mass Media lab
Communication & Theatre Arts	Mabee Library, Sterling College Online Radio	Radio/Communications lab
Communication & Theatre Arts; Music	Wilson Hall 201	Dance instruction for theatre; rehearsals for music groups
Education	Evans Hall basement	Charter School
Exercise Science	Gleason Physical Education Center 112	Athletic Training lab
Music	Wilson Hall 104	Group rehearsal & instruction
Music	Wilson Hall 108	Keyboard lab & instruction
Music	Wilson Hall 110	Choir library
Music	Wilson Hall 119	Band library
Music	Wilson Hall 115, 116, 118, 120, 121	Individual rehearsal rooms and part-time faculty offices
Business	Quiznos Restaurant	Business instruction/training
Library	Mabee Library	Computer/resource lab
Computer	Thompson Hall 202	Computer/resource lab

In 2006, academic departments were able to obtain instructional/productivity software packages that directly impacted their curricula. Examples included statistical software used by the

Business, Behavioral Science, and Education Departments, and lesson-mapping software used by the Education Department (CC3C-2). The statistical software is installed on computers in campus computer labs, while the lesson-mapping software has been installed on computers located in the Education Department. Appendix E summarizes the recent addition of other specialized equipment, some of which is used in the special instructional spaces listed in Figure 3.14.

STERLING COLLEGE SUPPORTS STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY IN USING TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY. The positive impact that the Department of Innovation and Technology has had on Sterling College during recent years is highlighted throughout this report. Not only has the department coordinated many technological improvements, it has also led a number of professional development activities. For example, the VPIT has led a training initiative to help faculty better integrate technology with their teaching. Early in this initiative the VPIT oversaw an all-faculty assessment of technological skills. After each faculty member completed the assessment, the VPIT worked with him or her to develop an individualized improvement plan (CC2A-13, pg. 13; CC3B-2). More detailed information about this initiative can be found under Core Component 3B.

Before receiving new laptop computers in fall 2008, faculty were required to attend training sessions, which included instruction about how teaching and learning could be improved with the use of Microsoft PowerPoint (CC3B-6). In May 2009, the VPIT announced that the Microsoft Office package on all College computers would be upgraded from the 2003 version to the 2007 version over the summer. With the announcement of the upgrade, employees were asked to attend a professional development activity by August 1 in order to understand the nuances of the newer software (CC3D-5).

The campus computing budget has also allowed the College to modestly compensate two faculty members to train other faculty in the use of one of the two learning management systems used by the institution (CC3B-7). In addition to offering workshops at the beginning of each semester, these two employees answer questions and help faculty use the learning management system throughout the year. The system for which these two faculty members provide support is used primarily by campus instructors to enhance and supplement traditional brick-and-mortar courses. Another learning management system is maintained by e.Sterling, the College's online learning division. Faculty are also free to use this system if they choose, and in the fall of 2008 the Director of Online Operations began offering training sessions for this system (CC3B-8). Since 2007, staff in the Department of Innovation and Technology have offered a number of additional training sessions and tutorials. Among other topics, events have covered e.Portfolio design and maintenance, learning management system use, and Web page design (CC3B-6).

Within the Department of Innovation and Technology, the Office of Information Technology (IT) assists technology users on a daily basis. Staff in this office have designed the Sterling College Information Technology Web site as a support resource for employees. In addition to containing links to technology-related policy and procedure documents, the Web site allows employees to submit technology support requests and view the status of their requests (CC3D-6). Students who need technological support contact IT staff through e-mail. The focus of IT's work with students is to ensure that students have full connectivity to the Internet and the College's network. As of May 2009, IT staff are working with the Vice President for Innovation and Technology to create a strategic plan specifically for IT. Included in the plan will be goals and internal policies related to how quickly and with what success rate IT staff respond to technology support requests. A major challenge facing the Office of Information Technology is a shortage of staff. Due to the five percent overall budget reduction in February 2009, which is explained under Core Component 2A, IT lost a valuable staff member. As technology's impact on higher education

continues to increase, the College must seriously consider greater staffing for technological support.

FACULTY AND STAFF ARE IMPORTANT SUPPORT RESOURCES AT STERLING COLLEGE. Sterling College has always prided itself on the quality of its human resources. With *community* as one of its core values, the College holds in high regard people and relationships. In addition to the library, academic support, and technology support staffs already mentioned under this Core Component, the College employs a number of people who play significant roles in supporting learning and ensuring access to learning resources:

- *Campus Information Coordinator (CIC)*—The CIC works with faculty and staff to ensure that facilities are available when needed.
- *Maintenance technicians*—Four full-time maintenance technicians serve the College with different areas of expertise, including carpentry, locksmithing, plumbing, electrical work, and grounds work. One maintenance technician is on call every weekend (CC3C-19).
- *Housekeeping personnel*—Six members of the housekeeping staff maintain fourteen campus buildings.
- *Spiritual leaders*—A full-time Chaplain, a Director of Campus Ministries, eight student chaplains, and six prayer leaders support students, faculty, and staff in a number of capacities.
- *Personal Counselor*—A licensed Personal Counselor serves on campus ten hours per week during the academic year. Before the five percent overall budget reduction in February 2009 (explained under Core Component 2A), the position was half time.
- *Student Health Center Director*—Employed on a two-thirds-time basis, the Student Health Center Director maintains a fitness facility and provides health resources. This was a full-time position before the February 2009 budget reduction.
- *Faculty advisors*—As stated in Section 2.5.2 of the *Faculty Handbook* (GD02, pg. 19), advising is a "principal responsibility" of Sterling College faculty members. Faculty thus serve not only as classroom teachers but also as counselors in helping undergraduates set professional goals and understand the collegiate process. To promote the student-advisor relationship, the College has recently held "advising days," during which no classes were held. The College also provides training for advisors (CC3D-7).

THE COLLEGE'S PARTNERSHIPS, AFFILIATIONS, AND MEMBERSHIPS ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING AND STRENGTHEN TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS. Sterling College works with a number of parties and is affiliated with various organizations that enhance its capacity to provide quality higher education. Many of these relationships are addressed throughout the self study report. Below is a list of most of these organizations and brief summaries of how they help improve teaching and/or learning.

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)

Sterling College is one of 110 institutions of higher education that belong to the CCCU. The purpose of the CCCU is to help colleges and universities more effectively integrate faith in learning. Through its Best Semester program, the CCCU offers students who attend member colleges the chance to study both abroad and at various locations within the United States. The organization coordinates and sponsors professional development events for the faculty and staff

of member institutions, and it offers publications, research, and other helpful resources to aid professionals who work in Christian higher education (http://www.cccu.org/) (CC3D-8). Employees of member institutions may also subscribe to CCCU-sponsored electronic mailing lists and dialogue about important issues with experts at other colleges and universities.

The Associated Colleges of Central Kansas (ACCK)

Sterling College is one of six institutions that belong to the ACCK, which is "a consortium of six private, liberal arts, four-year, church-related, co-educational institutions located within 40 miles of McPherson, Kansas" (https://www.acck.edu/ics/) (CC3D-9). According to its official Web site, the ACCK exists to:

1. provide facilities and services for advancement of higher education;
2. advance interests and effectiveness of members;
3. improve efficiency of operations for members;
4. develop additional sources of revenue;
5. maximize the advantages of geographic proximity; and
6. promote collegiality.
   (https://www.acck.edu/ics/Campus_Life/Mission_and_Purpose.jnz) (CC3D-10)

Through the ACCK, Sterling College is able to offer a concentration in Special Education within its Elementary Education major. Before 2004, the College's major in Athletic Training was also offered in partnership with other ACCK-member institutions. Student demand eventually led to the College offering all of the program on its own campus, but the ACCK was instrumental in the development of the major.

That the ACCK is dedicated to its stated purposes is evident in Sterling College operations. For instance, the College is now using its resources more efficiently by processing payroll internally with software available through the ACCK. Other technologies available through the ACCK, such as one of the learning management systems used at the College and the student database used by Financial Aid, Student Life, and the Registrar, also aid in daily operations. In spring 2009, the Registrar's Office implemented a Web-based advising program to streamline the advising process and allow students and their advisors any-time access to advising history and information. Furthermore, the ACCK allows the College to participate in a cooperative benefits program for employees. Some College administrators belong to the ACCK electronic mailing list and communicate with other administrators at member institutions.

The Kansas Independent College Association (KICA)

In summer 2008, an institutional effectiveness group was formed by employees who work at KICA-member institutions, and the group has since met twice. Sterling College hosted a meeting in October 2008 and invited a Higher Learning Commission peer reviewer from nearby Hutchinson Community College to speak about accreditation and the self-study process (CC3D-11). College administrators have also discussed with the KICA the possibility of cooperative purchasing power for textbooks, janitorial supplies, etc. While no decisions have been made, such discussions demonstrate how the College seeks to use strategic partnerships to be a more efficient institution.

As of May 2009, the next institutional effectiveness meeting sponsored by the KICA is scheduled for July 2009 at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. On the agenda is a presentation about the Higher Education Reauthorization Act and reports from members institutions who have recently hosted Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation visits (CC3D-12).

***The* Sterling Bulletin *and* The Stir**
Every other week during the academic year, the weekly local newspaper, *The Bulletin*, publishes the College's student paper, *The Stir*, as an insert (See CC3D-13). This partnership allows student writers and photographers to gain valuable journalistic experience. *The Stir* covers all aspects of the College's life and mission.

The Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture
Sterling College has partnered with the Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture to provide students with internships in a major urban area. The Chicago Center specializes in coordinating Chicago-based internships with students' academic areas of interest. The partnership has been especially helpful to the College's Education department, as it allows students to complete their student teaching while encountering cultural diversity they would not otherwise encounter in central Kansas. Consequently, they develop skills necessary for responsibilities in an urban environment (http://www.chicagocenter.org/) (CC3D-14).

Public School and Cooperating Teacher Partnerships
The Sterling Teacher Education Program (STEP) has built a network of relationships with area school districts and cooperating teachers who agree to have STEP students in their classrooms. At least twelve area school districts and a host of cooperating teachers within a seventy-five mile radius agree to work with the 115 or more STEP students during one or more phases of their education program. These relationships benefit not only students but also faculty, for Sterling College instructors communicate with working professionals in these school districts and thus learn more about current classroom trends. Some of the relationships are actual contractual agreements, while others are verbal agreements. Aspects of these partnerships include:

- *The classroom observation requirement*—The requirement of STEP students to fulfill 100 classroom observation hours before their semester-long clinical teaching block forges relationships between students and cooperating teachers even before the clinical teaching experience begins.
- *The semester-length clinical teaching experience*—Partnerships with cooperating teachers and schools establish meaningful and often lasting links with schools and administrators. Sterling College teacher candidates frequently are offered jobs while in this phase of their preparation.
- *Sterling Academy*—The Sterling Academy is a one-of-a-kind public/private partnership that not only gives Sterling College teacher candidates multiple opportunities to observe educational best practices but also allows them to practice using those methods in an on-campus facility. The Sterling Public School District pays the Academy's teacher salaries and the College provides classroom space in one of its women's dormitories, Evans Hall. This partnership of a public school district and a charter campus demonstration school is the only one in the state of Kansas (http://www.usd376.com/gs/academy/academy.html) (CC3D-15).
- *Sterling Academy's association with Newark Christian School*—Teachers and students at Sterling Academy link with teachers at Newark Christian School in Newark, New Jersey, to create a unique relationship. STEP students prepare art, math, and other lessons that are packaged in a ready-to-use format, and inner-city teachers at Newark Christian School incorporate these lessons in their classrooms.
- *Cultural diversity connections*—Students enrolled in ED205: Cultural Diversity partner with the Hutchinson Soup Kitchen. This relationship

provides teacher candidates with an almost-inner-city poverty experience in nearby Hutchinson, Kansas. Students in the class prepare a meal, serve it at the ministry's facility, and deliver it to shut-ins throughout the Hutchinson community. This partnership has lasted for several years and provided many Sterling College students, who are often from non-diverse, rural communities, valuable exposure to a diverse environment (CC3D-16).

Quiznos and the Sterling College Business Department

Over several semesters, two groups of Business Department students researched franchising opportunities for the town of Sterling and then presented their plans to the DeBoer Family Foundation for funding (CC1E-2; CC5D-16). Ultimately, Quiznos became the franchise of choice. Quiznos, the city of Sterling, the College Business Department, and even the Kansas Department of Transportation worked together to open and operate the new eatery. The partnership is ongoing, with Sterling College students managing and operating the eatery under Quiznos guidelines. The combination of relationships created to complete the project was rare for liberal arts institutions, and the arrangement allows students to have some of the most real-world and applicable learning experiences that higher education can offer.

Rice County Arts Council

For many years, faculty in the College's Art and Design Department have worked cooperatively with the Rice County Arts Council to host the Prairie Art Show, an annual juried event.

Mile High Ministries

Located in urban Denver, Colorado, Mile High Ministries is an organization that involves itself in many areas of ministry, including helping the homeless find housing, maintaining a legal aid clinic, leading international mission trips, and training leaders in urban leadership development (http://www.milehighmin.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1) (CC3D-17). The organization offers the "Denver Urban Semester," an internship for students interested in urban ministry. The Chair of Sterling College's Theology and Ministry Department is now serving as the organization's academic advisor, and SC has become a participating college in the program (CC3D-18).

Sterling Services

Sterling Services, located in the community of Sterling, is "a full-service customer contact outsourcer providing solutions primarily for ministries and non-profit organizations" (http://www.sterlingservices.org/about.htm) (CC3D-19). The enterprise employs many Sterling College students to help non-profit organizations raise funds. While not a direct partnership, the relationship complements the College's servant-leadership-related vision.

Teen Mania

In addition to sponsoring youth events, summer camps, and mission trips, Teen Mania offers a one-year Honor Academy for high school graduates. This academy is intended to help train the next generation of Christian leaders (http://www.honoracademy.com/) (CC3D-20). Sterling College now has a partnership with Teen Mania so that students of the Honor Academy may transfer Teen Mania coursework to Sterling College and apply it towards a degree. The College's Vice President for Academic Affairs and some faculty have worked with Honor Academy instructors to develop course syllabi that ensure the integrity of the academic and transfer processes.

Global Infusion
Sterling College's mission trips, which usually number four to eight per year, now have partnership support from Global Infusion. This organization matches Sterling College students' strengths with short-term mission opportunities abroad. The organization handles finances, arranges travel and ministry itineraries, and provides training for students and their leaders. The partnership makes it possible for local leaders to focus on fundraising and building a sense of community (http://www.globalinfusion.org/whoweare.html) (CC3D-21).

Habitat for Humanity
The College's Habitat for Humanity chapter partners with the Rice County chapter, the state of Kansas organization, and the national Habitat for Humanity organization in providing building opportunities for students at Sterling. Some students have worked or volunteered at the nearby "Re-store," a Rice County Habitat for Humanity thrift store.

Sterling Community Band
A source of pride for many people in the community of Sterling is the unofficial-yet-real joint community/college band, which plays at a number of community and school events each year. The Sterling Community Band affords Sterling College students, particularly those who are studying music, the opportunity to diversify their musical experiences (CC3D-22).

Sterling College's Mabee Library and Interlibrary Loan Organizations
The College's library uses the Kansas Information Circuit and the Online Computer Library Center WorldCat system to provide access to materials from across Kansas and around the world. For the past ten years, the library has consistently filled approximately 85% of all requests to borrow items from other libraries (CC3C-20).

BUDGETING PRIORITIES REFLECT THAT IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITY. The College demonstrates a financial commitment to teaching and learning improvement in a number of ways, and a great deal of progress in this area has been made in recent years. Below is a list of examples that highlight the College's dedication to funding initiatives and positions intended to help improve teaching and learning.

- *IDEA evaluations*—As explained under Core Component 3B, Sterling College uses the national IDEA evaluation as one means of evaluating teaching effectiveness. For faculty members who are not employed on extended contract, the IDEA evaluation, completed by students, is administered in every course they teach. Faculty who are on extended contract choose one course per semester for IDEA evaluation, and their students complete a shorter form of the survey. In addition to a $0.25 charge for each paper evaluation form, evaluation results cost between $5.00 and $7.00 per course. The College uses approximately 2100 paper evaluation forms per semester, though the number varies according to the number of faculty who are employed on extended contract (CC3D-23).
- *Standardized testing*—As part of the College's assessment program, students complete standardized testing related to majors as well as the general education curriculum. During the 2008–2009 academic year, the College spent approximately $4,200.00 on standardizing testing (CC3D-24).
- *Faculty support for one of the College's learning management systems*—For the past few years, two faculty members have been modestly compensated, through the campus computing budget, to train other faculty in the use of one of the learning management systems used on campus (CC3B-7).

- *General Education Program Chair*—A full-time faculty member now oversees the maintenance of the College's general education curriculum and works closely with the Director of Institutional Assessment to evaluate the College's progress toward helping students meet general education learning objectives. The GE Chair is compensated for these additional responsibilities.
- *Sterling Academy*—As explained previously under this Core Component, the Sterling Academy allows Sterling College teacher candidates to observe educational best practices and practice using those methods in an on-campus facility. While the Sterling Public School District pays the Academy's teacher salaries, the College provides classroom space in one of its women's dormitories, Evans Hall, and also pays for utilities, maintenance, and renovations to the facility.
- *Separation of teaching and coaching responsibilities*—As addressed under Core Component 2D, the *Sterling College 3-Year Strategic Plan* called for quality enhancement in both academic and athletic programs. One way the College has improved in both areas is by making a clear distinction between coaches and faculty who teach in the Exercise Science Department. Rather than asking coaches to maintain quality athletic programs *and* teach in the department, as had been the case for many years, full-time faculty now devote their time to teaching, and coaches devote their time to coaching (CC2D-10).
- *Associate deans*—When the College was divided into two schools at the beginning of the 2007–2008 academic year, associate deans were appointed over each school. The associate deans play an important role in improving teaching and learning as they help the VPAA observe faculty in the classroom and complete observation reports. The two associate deans are compensated both monetarily and with release time from regular classroom duties (CC1D-12).
- *The Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director*—In fall 2008 the College hired an individual to serve as both the Director of Institutional Assessment and the Writing Center Director. This employee contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning in both capacities. As of May 2009, he is also expected to be a more integral part of the academic support process.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The College faces the challenge of increasing staffing in both the library and the IT office.
- The IT staff have an opportunity to increase effectiveness through goal setting and strategic planning, which is being discussed as of May 2009.
- Since qualified personnel are already on staff, the College should consider restoring half-time and full-time status, respectively, to the Personal Counselor and the Health Center Director as soon as funding allows.

Strengths

- A **learning-focused** academic support/alert system seems to be improving the retention rate of probationary students.
- The Department of Innovation and Technology has proven its commitment to being both **learning focused** and **future centered** by not only acquiring new technology but also requiring training in the use of new technology.
- New positions and budget appropriations underscore the College's dedication to **improving learning and teaching**.

- Partnerships enhance the College's **focus on learning** and help keep students and faculty **connected** to professionals outside of higher education.
- Certain relationships and partnerships, particularly those with the Sterling Academy and the Quiznos franchise, offer students **distinct** learning opportunities.

Chapter Four

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

CHAPTER FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Sterling College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

As stated in its mission document titled "Our Priorities," Sterling College strives to instill in students a "thirst for lifelong learning." Operationally, this goal is achieved through a general education learning objective that involves teaching personal and social responsibility, of which "foundations and skills for lifelong learning" is an important part (see Figure 1.1. under Core Component 1A). The College's general education curriculum also ensures that students acquire a breadth and depth of knowledge that facilitates whole-person development.

Of course, faculty, staff, and administrators must also embrace lifelong learning habits. Despite limited funding for professional development, Sterling College employees work hard to better themselves professionally and model what it means to "thirst for lifelong learning." Through involvement in professional organizations and activities as well as through design, approval, and implementation of socially relevant curricula, faculty, staff, and administrators affirm the importance of intellectual inquiry and the ethical application of knowledge of skills. Institutional policies also underscore the College's concern for responsible knowledge management.

Core Component 4A: Sterling College demonstrates, through the actions of its Board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff that it values a life of learning.

THE STERLING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DEMONSTRATES THAT IT VALUES A LIFE OF LEARNING. Because it is a governing entity, the Board's commitment to lifelong learning is perhaps most noticeable in its formal governance structure and actions. The *Sterling College Bylaws*, which govern the Board, address the importance of valuing a life of learning. Article II of the *Bylaws* states that Board members "must be fully supportive of the mission and purpose of Sterling College" (GD04, pg. 2). Article IV states that Board members must be able to "affirm a personal commitment to and identification with the College's stated Christian faith perspective, *educational objectives and mission*" (GD04, pgs.3–4, emphasis added). While such statements may seem rather obligatory in a document such as an institution's bylaws, these expectations are taken quite seriously by the Sterling College Board of Trustees.

Within the past couple of years, the Board of Trustees' Board Development Committee has taken strides to better cultivate and orient new Board members to Sterling College's mission. At trustee meetings in 2008 and 2009, the Board Development Committee reviewed the criteria and procedure for electing new Board members, and the Chair of the committee proposed an evaluation process for Board members (CC1D-3). At its October 2007 meeting, the committee recommended that a retreat for committee members coincide with the February 2008 meeting (CC4A-1). Three members of the Board of Trustees serve on the College's National Advisory Council (NAC), which exists to "help Sterling College move strategically toward its vision"

(CC2A-5). A Board member who serves on both the NAC and the Board Development Committee has been sharing the results of NAC gatherings at Board Development sessions of Trustee meetings (CC2A-6).

The College's bylaws also grant the Board power to "establish, review, and approve changes in the educational programs of the College" (GD04, pg. 3). One of the Board's standing committees is the Academic Affairs Committee, which addresses curricular issues and takes recommendations to the other trustees. In October 2008, the Board approved institutional learning objectives, one of which states that Sterling College graduates will "demonstrate an understanding of the personal and civic skills necessary for a productive life of faith and service" (CC1A-5). This particular objective is achieved through a general education objective geared toward developing in students "skills for lifelong learning." (See Figure 1.1 under Core Component 1A.)

As a governing entity, the Board reviews and approves the College's mission documents as well. In 2009, the Board reaffirmed most mission documents and made minor changes to four of them (CC1A-2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16). As stated under Core Component 1A, *learning* is a Sterling College core value, and the College has embraced the organizational definition of *learning* as "a love of learning and a dedication to the pursuit of truth." Instilling in students a "love" of learning certainly fosters lifelong learning habits, and the "pursuit of truth" is no doubt an endless pursuit. The mission document titled "Our Priorities" (located under Core Component 1A) also articulates how the College values a life of learning. By reaffirming the document, the Board has agreed that one of the College's priorities should involve fostering "a thirst for life-long learning."

The Board also demonstrates its commitment to lifelong learning by reviewing and approving the *Sterling College Faculty Handbook*. Policies related to sabbaticals and other types of professional leave, forgivable loan for continuing education, tuition remission for employees, and criteria regarding faculty rank and promotion all demonstrate the Board's concern for lifelong learning. Specific information about these policies can be found under Core Component 3B.

Furthermore, the Board-approved *Faculty Handbook* contains information about the College's commitment to academic freedom, which is essential to an environment in which lifelong learning is valued:

> **2.9.1 Academic Freedom**
> Academic freedom is essential and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries duties correlative with rights.
>
> The faculty member is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of required academic duties. The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, and is supported in introducing controversial issues relevant to the course, but should take care when introducing material that may be interpreted by some as irrelevant.
>
> The faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When he/she speaks or writes as a citizen, he/she

should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. When appropriate, the faculty member should indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesperson.

2.9.1.1 Special Academic Freedom Considerations for Librarians

Librarians are free from fear of dismissal or reprisal for carrying out job-related tasks such as those listed below:

a. the selection of publications, including determination of what to discard from an existing collection and what to accept or refuse from donors;
b. the determination of restrictions on circulation or on access with regard to library materials;
c. the determination of the degree of prominence in the shelving of selected library materials;
d. the issuing of bibliographies that might include controversial publications; and
e. the advising of students as to what to read or study. (GD02, pg. 27)

The Board's approval of the College's academic freedom statement highlights its concern about lifelong learning.

Finally, the Board of Trustees recognizes lifelong learning by honoring a Sterling College alumnus or alumna with a Distinguished Service Award at every spring commencement ceremony. The Distinguished Service Award honors and recognizes a lifetime of professional development, leadership, character, and exceptional contributions to society (CC4A-2).

THE STERLING COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION DEMONSTRATES THAT IT VALUES A LIFE OF LEARNING. The College's Cabinet-level administrators display a commitment to lifelong learning in a number of ways. Not only do they involve themselves in professional organizations and conferences, they also lend their expertise to a variety of educational endeavors, and they support lifelong learning efforts through planning, evaluation, policy, and recognition of learning and academic excellence.

Collectively, administrators belong to a number of professional organizations, including the following:

- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
- International Society for Technology in Education
- United School Administrators
- Kansas Association of School Administrators
- Kan-Ed Consortium
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education
- Kansas Association of School Boards
- Kansas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers
- American Educational Research Association
- Council on Undergraduate Research
- Sloan Consortium for Online Learning
- Kansas Technology Coordinators Network
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators

Additionally, two Cabinet-level administrators maintain their state teaching certification, and one serves on the local school board.

Administrators also attend professional conferences geared toward research and the application of knowledge in their respective fields. Cabinet members have attended several conferences in recent years:

- STAMATS Higher Ed Marketing and Recruitment Conference
- Noel-Levitz Conference
- Conference for the National Association of Christian College Admissions Personnel
- The Higher Learning Commission's Annual Conference on Accreditation
- The ACCK Dean of Students semi-annual meeting
- Council of Christian Colleges and Universities Annual President's Conference

Although the Sterling College President has been at the institution for only a few months, he has already demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting lifelong learning. When he arrived at Sterling College, he immediately engaged the campus community by regularly speaking at chapel services. He says that chapel presentations will become a regular part of his communication with students, faculty, and staff (CC4A-3). Dr. Maurer is committed to an educational approach that includes character development; therefore, his chapel presentations will encourage students to value a life of learning.

In terms of administrative planning, the College's three-year strategic plan contains a number of action items that address the administration's commitment to lifelong learning. Presented in Figure 4.1 are a few of the relevant action items that have been achieved or are ongoing.

Figure 4.1: Strategic Action Items Related to Lifelong Learning (CC2A-1)

Action	***Completion Date/Status***
Academic Affairs	
Reward faculty for earning advanced degrees.	Ongoing
Create an effective advising program.	Completed
Implement servant-leadership training.	Ongoing
Measure teaching effectiveness.	Ongoing
Improve graduation rates commensurate with national rates.	Ongoing
Help professors redesign pedagogies.	Ongoing
Develop curriculum for Honors program.	May 2009
Create a panel to develop a plan for inclusion of international issues in the curriculum and expanded international experiences for students.	Completed
Innovation and Technology	
Enhance e-Learning and e-Research.	Ongoing
Advancement	
Provide faculty and staff training.	Ongoing
Student Life	
Establish career services.	Completed
Implement campus-wide education program to address social issues.	Ongoing

In recent years, the Department of Innovation and Technology has led a number of initiatives to foster lifelong learning skills and habits. Those improvements are explained in detail under Core Components 3B, 3C, and 4D.

Employee evaluation processes also underscore how the administration values a life of learning. Evaluations are intended not only to assess performance but also offer employees feedback that will help them grow as professionals. At Sterling College, the President of the College is evaluated by the Board of Trustees, and Cabinet-level administrators are evaluated by the president. Additionally, Cabinet members are asked to complete a self-evaluation using a form almost identical to the one used by the president for their evaluation (CC4A-4). Administrators work with the president to set personal goals, and these become part of the evaluation process as well.

Another way the administration demonstrates that it values a life of learning is through offering students, faculty, and staff free admission to campus events. Athletic events, music and stage productions, exhibits, and guest speakers are almost always free to those belonging to the campus community. The importance of this long-held administrative policy should not be overlooked in its relationship to lifelong learning. Because of the College's status as a small and private institution in a rural area, free admission to events helps students, faculty, and staff engage in learning opportunities they might otherwise miss.

Finally, the administration shows that it values a life of learning by recognizing the academic achievements of Sterling College students. The Sterling College Tuition Matrix demonstrates how the College rewards incoming students who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to academic achievement in high school or previous college endeavors (CC4A-5). Academic scholarships are based on students' ACT scores and incoming grade point averages. Students with records that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to learning receive more financial aid in the form of scholarships.

The administration recognizes the sustained excellence of not only incoming students but also students who make Sterling College their educational home. The Dean's Honor Roll is announced at the end of each semester. To be eligible, students must have a GPA of 3.5 or better in at least twelve credits of graded residential work (ten credits for student in an online program). At the end of the spring semester each year, full-time students who have met certain criteria are designated as Kelsey Scholars and recognized at the Annual Awards Convocation. They are also recognized at the Keynote Convocation the following fall, as are students who have been named Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. A student must meet the following criteria to be named a Kelsey Scholar:

1. be sophomore standing or above
2. have a GPA of 3.5 or above in both residential and cumulative GPA
3. have a minimum of two semesters in residence at Sterling College
4. have no Incompletes on his or her transcript

From the group of Kelsey Scholars, some students are eligible during their junior or senior year to become members of Alpha Chi, a national honorary scholastic fraternity. Graduating Alpha Chi members are identified in the College's annual Commencement ceremony program (GD01, pg. 43; CC4A-6). Students who graduate with honors are also recognized at the annual commencement ceremony. Figure 4.2 lists the criteria for graduating with honors.

Figure 4.2: Criteria for Graduating with Honors

3.90 and above	Summa Cum Laude
3.70 to 3.89	Magna Cum Laude
3.50 to 3.69	Cum Laude

To graduate with honors, students must complete at least sixty credits at Sterling College. These students are recognized with special academic regalia during commencement.

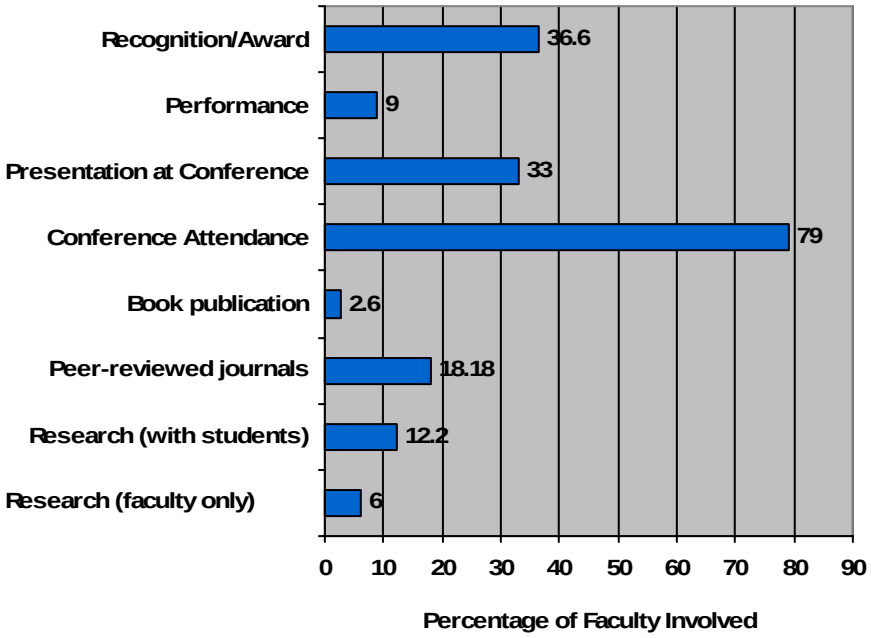
At the Annual Awards Convocation, the College announces the winners of over fifty-five scholarships that are given to students who demonstrate a commitment to learning (CC4A-7). Students identified as Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges are also recognized at the Annual Awards Convocation.

Budgeting for professional development also demonstrates the administration's commitment to lifelong learning. While faculty, staff, and administration all agree that the amount of professional development funding budgeted is not ideal, administrators do indeed consider professional development when budgeting. Detailed information about professional development funding can be found under Core Component 3B.

STERLING COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY VALUE A LIFE OF LEARNING. Faculty demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning by attending conferences, presenting at conferences, working toward advanced degrees, conducting research, and publishing.

In fall 2008, Sterling College employed a total of thirty-eight full-time faculty members. Thirty-three of these faculty members responded to a questionnaire about their involvement in lifelong learning activities. Figure 4.3 below shows the results of that questionnaire.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of Faculty Involved in Lifelong Learning Activities



Of the thirty-three faculty members who responded to the questionnaire, thirteen have been working at Sterling College for more than five years. The data in Figure 4.3 is affected by the fact that twenty of these faculty members have worked at the College for fewer than five years, which means that many of their professional activities occurred before they joined Sterling College.

As Figure 4.3 indicates, almost nineteen percent of faculty members have been involved in research projects during the past five years—six percent have not involved students while twelve percent have. Almost nineteen percent of faculty members have also published in peer-reviewed journals during the past five years. One faculty member has published a peer-reviewed book, another has published a non-peer-reviewed book, and two faculty members have published their dissertations. In 2006, faculty in the Business Department used research to revise their program curriculum. In an effort to create a better program, the department sent surveys to over 1000 people in the business world. The responses confirmed what the department's secondary research had indicated: employers need people who can communicate, write, think critically, act ethically, listen, follow directions, and apply foundational business knowledge. The results of the research served as a guideline for the new curriculum which went into effect during the 2007-2008 academic year. More detailed information about the Business Department's research process can be found under Core Components 4C and 5C.

Faculty in some departments, such as Art and Graphic Design, Music, and Communication and Theatre Arts, display their scholarly creativity through performance, not pure research. Therefore, their scholarly accomplishments must be evaluated separately. Almost all of these faculty members have exhibited art, directed a stage production, or performed musically for the public during the past five years (CC4A-8).

Earning faculty rank promotion is another way that faculty members demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning. The *Faculty Handbook* details rank and promotion criteria, which include evidence of scholarly activity. Since 2001, twenty promotions have been earned by seventeen different professors (CC4A-7).

In regard to professional development, the number of faculty who benefited from professional development funding increased from fourteen in 2006–2007 to twenty-five in 2007–2008 (see Figure 3.9 under Core Component 3B). Until this increase, the number had remained relatively stagnant for a number of years. A list of the professional organizations to which faculty belong can be found in Appendix H. Faculty have also participated in a number of development opportunities coordinated by the Department of Innovation and Technology (CC3B-6). During the 2007–2008 academic year, all faculty members completed a technology assessment intended to target ways they could better integrate technology in their teaching. The assessment consisted of three checklists:

- a technology skills checklist related to the skills required to use educational technologies as a productivity tool;
- a technology integration checklist related to the skills required during the general integration of technology into the learning environment;
- an Internet integration checklist related to the skills required for integrating the World Wide Web with the learning process. (CC3B-3–CC3B-5)

After faculty had completed the assessment, the Vice President for Innovation and Technology then worked with all faculty members to develop an individualized improvement plan (CC2A-13, pg. 13; and CC3B-2). More detailed information about faculty participation in professional development led by IT can be found under Core Components 3B and 4D.

In recent years, Title III funding has allowed faculty to attend several one-time professional development events. Some of these events have included:

- KACTE meeting in Wichita (Education Department)
- ATHE Annual Conference (Theatre Department)
- Graduate Courses (Academic Support)
- Dyslexia Workshop (Academic Support)
- Forensic Science Convention
- KAHPERO Convention (Exercise Science)
- National Council of Math Teachers Membership
- ASCD Conference (Education Department)
- History Conference
- Music Conference (CC4A-9)
- 114th Annual Meeting of NCA/The Higher Learning Commission

The College's assessment plan also speaks to how faculty embrace a life of learning. Through the assessment plan, faculty are asked to evaluate their teaching experiences in each course and make educated judgments about what approaches and learning activities are most successful in helping students achieve desired outcomes. Department chairs are asked to make the same educated judgments about programmatic outcomes (GD10, pgs. 11–14).

Faculty librarians recognize the lifelong learning of Sterling College alumni by maintaining a Heritage Collection of their publications. These books, located throughout the library, can be identified by a special sticker found on their spines.

Despite full class loads and other responsibilities, Sterling College faculty also manage to publish articles, speak at conventions, display art, and be involved in their communities. While these endeavors take time and energy, they greatly enhance professors' professional connections, academic growth, and, ultimately, their teaching.

Dr. Beth Kilday, Chair of Sterling's Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics Department, presented a ninety-minute, hands-on workshop at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics regional conference in fall 2008. She spoke to high school teachers on "How to Examine Temperature, pH, Dissolved Oxygen, and Nitrate Levels in Water and Soil." In April 2009 Dr. Kilday spoke at the Annual National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference in Washington, D.C., a conference that involved nearly 20,000 participants.

Dr. Craig Smith, Chair of the Department of Theology and Ministry, has had several recent accomplishments. He was nominated for the Society of Biblical Literature Regional Scholar Award for his paper titled "The Development of Style (5th Century BC to 2nd Century AD) and the Consequences for Understanding the Style of the New Testament" and was awarded finalist status. Smith also presented a paper titled "Loving Our Enemies in a Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Religious Society" at the International Institute of Christian Studies. His article "Richard Baxter, a Pioneer in Youth Ministry," which is a study of the 17th century Puritan clergyman's emphasis on spiritual instruction to youth and their families, was recently published in *Anvil* (an Evangelical Anglican journal). In fall 2008, Smith signed a contract with Sheffield Phoenix Publishers to write a commentary on II Timothy.

Blair Martin, Assistant Professor of Music, not only keeps busy teaching several classes and directing five instrumental ensembles, he has been contracted as a musician for the Hutchinson Symphony Orchestra, which features some of the finest musical talents in the area. He played

tuba in the 2008–2009 season, which runs from September through April. Martin's artistic talents also extend to script-writing, and one of his scripts, "Samuel Gumsandal—Jerusalem P.I.," a drama designed to convey the resurrection of Jesus in a non-traditional manner, was recently selected by Randall House to be included in a collection of Easter scripts. Professor Martin also writes with his wife, Mary Martin, and three of their dramas were included in a recently released collection of Christmas scripts, also published by Randall House.

In spring 2009, Dr. Arn Froese, Chair of Sterling's Behavioral Science Department, was elected as President of the Southwestern Psychological Association. Previously he had served for six years as the Kansas state representative to the Association's Executive Committee. He was asked by the Association's former president to develop and chair a symposium for the Association's April 2009 convention, where he spoke on "Psychology for General Education in a Global Environment: Visions and Roadblocks." He argued that "curricula should present psychology content selected for its foundational impact on understanding self as a participant in global interactions" and discussed "roadblocks to implementing this vision presented by tradition and ideology."

David Harmon, Associate Professor of Art, recently had two seascape paintings accepted for an exhibition at the Millrun Gallery in Rhode Island. The two paintings were on exhibit through November 2008. Harmon also had an exhibit at Augusta State University, Augusta, Georgia, based on sixteen drawings involving his interest in pictographs and world petroglyphs, also known as carved rock or Indian writing. The drawings were done using charcoal and pastel on paper.

Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and the Writing Center Director, recently spoke at the TSA (Technology Students Association) Fall Leadership Conference in Hays, Kansas. Sutton presented on the topic "Teamwork Is a Way of Life," which is also the subject of Sutton's book, *Team Church: Big-League Teamwork to Strengthen the Local Church*, published in 2006. TSA is a student organization for junior and senior high students.

Ken Troyer, Assistant Professor of Communications and coach of the Sterling College Debate and Forensics team, has spoken several times at conferences and other events. He and Sterling College student Jana Miller presented at the Kansas Speech Communication Association Annual Convention in Salina as part of the forum titled Kansas Collegiate Forensics Showcase. At the same conference Troyer was invited to be part of a panel discussing the subject "What Works in a College Speech Class." Troyer also presented at an educator in-service in Lyons, Kansas. He spoke about "Oral Competency Expectations and Guidelines," focusing on the ongoing changes in national expectations and guidelines regarding oral competency. On a regular basis Troyer speaks and facilitates at local Parents-as-Teacher meetings held through the Rice County Special Services Cooperative. Parents-as-Teachers is an international organization that began in Missouri in the 1970s to encourage parents to be active participants in their children's lives and education. (CC4A-10).

STERLING COLLEGE STAFF MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY VALUE A LIFE OF LEARNING. In Appendix I are a list of the professional organizations to which staff members belong and a summary of staff-related professional development from the past five years. This section contains a short narrative of how some staff members have used their professional expertise to the benefit of others in recent years. Examples that might be considered as a normal part of an employee's job have been excluded from the narrative. For example, admissions counselors, who are usually alumni of the College and are therefore quite knowledgeable about Sterling College life, often speak to parents and students at prospective student events.

In fall 2008, the Director of Financial Aid was asked by the College's guarantee agency to present a webinar over financial aid budget construction. The webinar was offered nationwide and was "attended" by over 100 financial aid professionals. In addition, she has written for the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators' (KASFAA) newsletter and presented financial-aid related information at area high schools during their financial aid information nights. She and the Assistant Director of Financial Aid have also been involved in KASFAA's training committee (CC4A-11).

As a faith-affiliated institution, the College routinely employs staff members who have formal or lay pastoral experience. In recent years, a number of coaches have spoken at chapel services, camps, and conventions about matters related to faith.

As a retired military officer, the campus's mailroom superintendent is involved in various military organizations and has spoken at Veteran's Day and Memorial Day services for the American Legion. He is also native to the community of Sterling and shares his knowledge about the area as President of the Rice County Arts Council and as a member of a number of Sterling organizations, including the Sterling Historic Preservation Society and Main Street Sterling (CC4A-12). In April 2009, he was elected to the board of the local public school district.

Various coaches in the Athletic Department teach "Theories of Coaching" classes related to the sports they coach. In addition, the College's baseball coach was invited to the Kansas Baseball Coaches Association Convention to speak about the fundamentals of the game (CC4A-13).

Other staff members demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning by sharing their professional expertise in various ways. The campus's Personal Counselor has spoken in the College's Academic Success course, the Career Services Director has addressed students pursuing a certificate in the Leadership Development Program, and the Director of Online Learning has provided campus-wide training for one of the College's online learning management systems (CC4A-14; CC3B-8).

In regard to valuing lifelong learning, the College's Alumni Office is also important. In cooperation with the Alumni Council, the Director of Alumni Relations solicits nominations for three alumni awards each year. The Alumni Award is given to a graduate of fifteen years or less who has made outstanding contributions to his or profession and community and who has demonstrated loyalty to Sterling College. The Alumni Citation is given to a graduate of fifteen years or more who meets the same criteria. The Distinguished Service Award honors and recognizes a lifetime of professional development, leadership, character, and exceptional contributions to society. The Board of Trustees approves the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award (CC4A-2).

STERLING COLLEGE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY VALUE A LIFE OF LEARNING. The College has an active and vibrant Student Government Association (SGA) that sponsors most student organizations. According to the SGA President, 183 students are involved in organizations. This number does not include the freshman class, which is itself considered a student organization under SGA's umbrella (CC1C-10). SGA-sponsored organizations are listed in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Sterling College Student Organizations (SGA Sponsored)

Campus Activities Board	Habitat for Humanity
Antiquity Meets Present	Musicians at Sterling College
Behavioral Science Club	Praise Band
Campbell Hall	Raya 327
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Real Estate Development Association
Freshman Class	*The Stir* (Campus Newspaper)
Future Science Professionals of America	Thespians at Sterling College

Some of these organizations have written mission statements and goals that underscore their concern with a life of learning. The Antiquity Meets Present Club, for instance, strives to "involve the campus in historically and culturally related activities." A goal of the Behavioral Science Club is to "provide students with examples of how the knowledge they acquire in classes may be utilized for service in communities." The mission of the Habitat for Humanity chapter and Raya 327 involve raising awareness about social problems. A commitment to lifelong learning is thus evident in these organizations' very purposes (CC1C-9, pgs. 5–9).

In 2008, the SGA President worked with the Academic Affairs Office to create a Leadership Success Certificate Program for students. In this program, leadership lectures are delivered by faculty, staff, and other professionals on Friday mornings at 10:00 on days that the College does not have a special convocation (the ten o'clock hour is reserved for convocations). Six to seven lectures are offered in a typical semester. Certificate requirements include attendance at 75% of the lectures offered, attendance at three consecutive networking team meetings, and three hours of community service. Successful completion of the program is indicated on students' transcripts (CC4A-14; CC4A-15).

The administration's recognition of students who value a life of learning has already been discussed under this core component. Figures 4.5–4.7 contain information about the number and percentage of students who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to learning during their time at Sterling College.

Figure 4.5: Academic Dean's Honor Roll Data for 2002–2008 (CC4A-16)

Semester	Full-time Enrollment	Number of Students on the Dean's List	Percentage of Students on the Dean's List
Fall 2002	432	163	37.7%
Spring 2003	380	171	45.0%
Fall 2003	433	149	34.4%
Spring 2004	355	134	37.7%
Fall 2004	438	142	32.4%
Spring 2005	380	122	32.1%
Fall 2005	433	137	31.6%
Spring 2006	383	125	32.6%
Fall 2006	537	154	28.7%
Spring 2007	444	131	29.5%
Fall 2007	551	146	26.5%
Spring 2008	485	121	24.9%
Fall 2008	571	149	26.1%
Spring 2009	497	203	40.9%

The Dean's Honor Roll is announced at the end of each semester. To be eligible, students must have a GPA of 3.5 or better in at least 12 credits of graded residential work (ten credits for student in an online program).

Figure 4.6: Kelsey Scholar Data for 2003–2008 (CC4A-16)

Year	Full-time Enrollment	Number of Kelsey Scholars	Percentage of Students Who Are Kelsey Scholars
2003	380	141	37.1%
2004	355	110	31.0%
2005	380	101	26.6%
2006	383	97	25.3%
2007	444	108	24.3%
2008	485	93	19.2%
2009	497	97	19.5%

Kelsey Scholar requirements include the following:

1. sophomore standing or above
2. GPA of 3.5 or above in both residential and cumulative GPA
3. minimum of two semesters in residence at Sterling College
4. no Incompletes on transcript

Students who meet Kelsey Scholar requirements and rank in the top ten percent of their junior or senior class qualify for the Alpha Chi national scholastic fraternity. From 2002 to 2008, the College has graduated an average of 8.7 Alpha Chi members each year. The highest numbers were in 2002 and 2004. In both of these years, thirteen students graduated as members of Alpha Chi. The lowest numbers were in 2005 and 2008. In 2005, five graduates were Alpha Chi members, and the 2008 graduating class had no Alpha Chi members. It should be noted that membership in the Alpha Chi fraternity requires that students pay a membership fee, and some students choose not to join. Therefore, the number of students who qualify for Alpha Chi is higher than the number of students who actually join the fraternity (CC4A-6; CC4A-17).

Figure 4.7: Honors Graduate Data for 2002–2008 (CC4A-6; CC4A-17)

Honors Graduate* Data for 2002–2008					
Year	**Total Number of Graduates**	**Summa Cum Laude**	**Magna Cum Laude**	**Cum Laude**	**Percentage of Students Graduating with Honors**
2002	92	12	14	18	47.8%
2003	93	12	19	14	48.3%
2004	81	5	16	13	41.9%
2005	85	7	11	13	36.4%
2006	76	10	14	9	43.2%
2007	77	9	12	15	46.7%
2008	76	6	5	6	22.3%
2009	110	10	12	11	33.0%

Of course, these are not the only students who demonstrate a commitment to learning. Every year a great number of students receive scholarships and recognition for their scholarly dedication. These students are listed in the Annual Awards Convocation programs, which can be found in resource folder CC4A-7.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS

Challenge

- At recent meetings, the College's Board of Trustees has discussed the importance of Board members' professional development, and a retreat occurred in winter 2008. With Board members' various geographical locations making regular development-related gatherings difficult, persistence in coordinating development opportunities is essential to the initiative.

Strengths

- Despite full teaching loads and recruiting and advising responsibilities, Sterling College faculty manage to speak at conferences and produce scholarship.
- Sterling College students are highly involved on campus and take advantage of co-curricular learning opportunities.
- The Sterling College administration recognizes students who demonstrate a commitment to learning.

Core Component 4B: Sterling College demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

STERLING COLLEGE INTEGRATES INTO ALL OF ITS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS A GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. As servant-leaders with a Christ-centered worldview, Sterling College students are encouraged to develop an understanding of the world so they can create positive change in it. Given the pace of change in the world, students must learn to remain open to new ideas and allow such learning to inform their maturing faith.

The College divides its curriculum in a traditional way, maintaining specialized majors and a general education program that equips students with a common body of knowledge and set of skills. Like its major programs, the College's general education program is grounded in the institutional mission and is consequently designed to help develop creative, thoughtful, and faithful leaders.

Each academic major falls under one of two schools—the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences or the School of Professional Studies. The courses that a student takes to meet general education requirements vary depending on which school houses his or her major. However, general education goals and objectives are the same in both schools. To meet these goals and objectives, all students must complete from 50–58 credit hours of general education. Transfer students who enroll with an Associate's Degree must complete an additional twelve credit hours in theology and ministry, for these subjects are critical to the College's faith-based mission and therefore its general education curriculum. In keeping with a liberal arts tradition, general education courses are offered in all departments except one.

General goals for the GE curriculum are divided into four different areas: 1) knowledge of the world and its human cultures, 2) intellectual and practical skills, 3) personal and social responsibility, and 4) integrative learning.

Knowledge of the world and its human cultures includes knowledge of:

- sciences
- mathematics
- social sciences
- literature
- religion
- philosophy
- history
- arts

As students develop intellectual and practical skills, they should demonstrate:

- capacity for inquiry and reflection
- critical and creative thinking
- written and oral communication skills
- quantitative literacy
- information literacy
- teamwork and problem-solving skills

The development of personal and social responsibility includes:

- local and global civic knowledge and engagement
- intercultural knowledge and competence
- ethical reasoning and compassionate action
- foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Integrative learning includes the synthesis of general and specialized studies.

All of the specific learning objectives that foster development toward these goals and drive the general education curriculum are included in Appendix J. A number of those objectives help ensure that students develop skills requisite for a life of learning:

- understanding the scientific method for exploring the world
- appreciating how mathematics is a tool for exploring our world
- understanding how social institutions organize and regulate social life
- understanding civic engagement as a necessary ingredient of a vital society
- experiencing how professional and intellectual skills benefit society
- understanding that one's choices and behaviors may have profound effects for people of all cultures and places
- using information to act in ways that respect the physical universe
- using knowledge to address contemporary problems produced by social inequalities
- applying skills for effective participation in personal, work-related, and civic commitments

The curriculum that prepares students to meet these and all of the other general education objectives is included below. It is also published on pages 49–51 of the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01).

Courses Required For General Education

1.	LL101 College Composition I	3 credits
2.	CT101 Public Speaking or	3 credits
	CT130 Oral Interpretation	
	or	
	RP245 Homiletics (RP & CM majors only)	3 credits
	BU140 Business Communication (Business and Sports Management majors only)	2 credits
3.	MA108 Contemporary Math or	3 credits
	MA110 College Algebra or	
	3 credits	
	MA150 Pre-Calculus or	4 credits
	MA200 Calculus I or	5 credits
	MA240 Elementary Statistics or	3 credits
	BS196 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences	3 credits
	For students with a math ACT of 16-19:	
	MA109A College Algebra with Review I **and**	
	MA109B College Algebra with Review II, the combination of these	

two courses will meet the general education requirement for math.

4. ES101 Concepts in Physical Fitness and Health 2 credits

The above courses represent basic skills necessary for all college students. Students are required to earn a minimum grade of C- in each of these classes to meet the basic skills requirement.

5. GD105 Foundations of Servant Leadership 1 credit

6. Take any one literature course from the following:

LL151 Introduction to Literature	3 credits
LL166 American Literature II	3 credits
LL251 World Literature I	3 credits
LL252 World Literature II	3 credits
HR201 Non-Western Culture & History I *(Honors Program only)*	3 credits
HR202 Non-Western Culture & History II *(Honors Program only)*	3 credits

7. Sciences

Professional Studies requirement, take one of the following courses:

BI101/L Principles of Biology with Lab	4 credits
BI110/L Human Anatomy and Physiology	5 credits
BI125/L Environmental Science	4 credits
BI170/L Zoology	4 credits
CH151/L General Chemistry I	5 credits
PH110/L Physical Science	5 credits

Liberal Arts & Sciences requirement, take one life science and one physical science. *One course must include a lab*:

Life Science

BI100 Principles of Biology (non-lab)	3 credits
BI101/L Principles of Biology (w/lab)	4 credits
BI110/L Human Anatomy and Physiology	5 credits
BI125/L Environmental Science	4 credits
BI170/L Zoology	4 credits

Physical Science

CH110 Introductory General Chemistry (non-lab)	3 credits
CH151/L General Chemistry I	5 credits
PH108 Introduction to Physical Science (non-lab)	3 credits
PH110/L Physical Science	5 credits

8. HG101 History of World Civilization I **or** 3 credits
HG102 History of World Civilization II 3 credits
HR201 Non-Western Culture & History I *(Honors Program only)* **or** 3 credits
HR202 Non-Western Culture & History II *(Honors Program only)* 3 credits

Two Social Science courses are required; one each from the lists for numbers 9 and 10.

9. **One** Social Science course from the following:

BS125 Psychology or 3 credits
BS131 Self and Society 3 credits

10. **One** Social Science course from the following:

BU103 Economics 3 credits
HG240 World and Regional Geography 3 credits
HG255 Comparative Government 3 credits
HG262 World Religions 3 credits
HG272 International Relations 3 credits
CT365 Gendered/Intercultural Communication 3 credits
BS115 Principles of Sociology 3 credits

11. Fine Arts

Professional Studies requirement, take one of the following non-applied courses:

AR105 Art Appreciation 3 credits
AR211 Art History I 3 credits
AR212 Art History II 3 credits
CT105 Introduction to the Theatre 3 credits
CT351 Theatre History I 3 credits
CT352 Theatre History II 3 credits
MU100 Music Appreciation 3 credits
MU354 Music History & Literature I 3 credits
MU355 Music History & Literature II 3 credits

Liberal Arts and Science requirement—take six credits from two departments.

Non-applied course options:
At least three credits must be from one of the above non-applied courses. (A second non-applied course may be taken instead of an applied course.)

Applied course options:
AR, CT, MU Any combination of 3 credits from applied courses for which the student is eligible.

12.	RP102 Intro to Old Testament	3 credits
13.	RP103 Intro to New Testament	3 credits
14.	RP266 Basic Christian Doctrine	3 credits
15.	RP440 Philosophy for Faith and Life	3 credits

To graduate, students must complete all of the general education requirements as described above. In addition, they must attend fourteen chapel services and two convocations during each semester they are enrolled full time. They must also complete two writing-intensive courses, one of which must be in the chosen major (GD10, pg. 51)

STERLING COLLEGE REVIEWS ITS GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM.[22] In December 2005, the Faculty Assembly voted to review and revise the general education curriculum (CC4B-2). The Faculty Assembly, to which every faculty member belonged, was the faculty governing body before the more representative and current governance structure, Faculty Council, was instituted in fall 2006. Partly because of instituting a new governance structure, and partly because of turnover in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the process of reviewing and revising the GE curriculum did not go swiftly in 2005 and 2006. At its May 2007 meeting, the Board of Trustees requested that the revision be completed by October 1, 2007 (CC4B-3). Prior to the start of the 2007–2008 academic year, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Council met with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the College to request that the final revision date be moved from October 1, 2007 to April 1, 2008. The extension was granted.

A general education sub-committee was established by the Academic Affairs Committee at its first meeting of the 2007–2008 academic year. The committee consisted of the following members:

- Dr. Felicia Squires, Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Language and Literature (*ex officio*)
- Dr. Kevin Hill, Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies and Assistant Professor of Business (*ex officio*)
- Dr. Arn Froese, Professor of Behavioral Science and Chair of the General Education Committee
- Dr. Gladys Ritterhouse, Associate Professor of Education
- Gordon Kling, Senior Associate Professor of Theatre Arts (CC4B-4)

During fall 2007, the committee met each month, prepared for hearings with campus constituents, and heard presentations by a special speaker. During spring 2008, the committee met every week to complete its work. The committee met to deliberate a total of thirteen times. It also conducted three sets of hearings with faculty and two with students. Hearings for faculty were by school; student hearings included students from the Student Government Association and the Student Senate.

The committee began its work by asking, “What is wrong with the current program?” Answering this question required a comparison of stated goals and information from course syllabi. The committee collected syllabi for all courses that met general education requirements. Then it

[22] Much of the information in this section is taken directly from the 2008 General Education Committee Final Report, resource file CC4B-1.

completed review sheets for each course to determine whether the implemented program clearly matched the stated general education objectives. Results of the review, which indicated that a revision of the GE curriculum was indeed warranted, were presented to the faculty and administration in the form of a report entitled "Summary of Course Syllabus Review for GE Courses" (CC4B-5). Faculty Council affirmed the committee's conclusion at its meeting on November 20, 2007 (CC4B-6).

The committee then developed principles for revising the GE curriculum and presented the principles to faculty and students. Feedback about the proposed principles was solicited, and the committee revised the principles with faculty and student feedback in mind. In fall 2007, the committee also asked departments to submit objectives that faculty believed were important for all graduates. The committee used the departmental submissions and objectives from other schools, professionals, and organizations to begin creating a list of GE objectives for the Sterling College curriculum.

In December 2007, Dr. Peggy Cowan from Maryville College spoke to faculty and student representatives about the process of revising general education curricula. The committee participated in workshops with Dr. Cowan, who provided important insight into the revision process and described how a quality general education program can be maintained and continually improved. For spring 2008, three major tasks remained—finalizing objectives for the curriculum, organizing a course structure for curriculum implementation, and proposing organizational structures to maintain the curriculum and implement evaluation and revision processes.

The committee found recommendations for "essential learning outcomes" for liberal education in the LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) campaign of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (CC4B-7). The learning outcomes presented by LEAP were developed by many academics from many institutions. The committee chose these outcomes as a starting point for developing core curriculum goals and then modified them to fit Sterling College's mission. The committee presented the goals and explanatory objectives to faculty and students in February 2008. The presentation resulted in further content modifications to the objectives.

The most difficult work in February 2008 was identifying courses that would address the goals. Several principles aided the committee's deliberations. First, some of the goals would be embedded in content and skill courses. Second, the difference in requirements between the schools could be identified as differences in breadth of content in the arts and sciences. These principles produced a set of courses that addressed all of the goals yet permitted flexibility in credit hours for students in the School of Professional Studies.

While addressing the remaining tasks, the committee considered how the College could ensure that all courses directly addressed the goals they were supposed to address. Taking guidance from Dr. Cowan, the committee developed a "Course Prospectus" form for each GE course. This form contained:

- identification of the course
- a list of the core curriculum goals and objectives to be met by the course
- a description of course content in relationship to the goals and objectives
- a description of pedagogical techniques necessary for helping students to achieve the objectives
- a description of relevant course assignments

- a description of assessment instruments necessary for documenting student progress toward the stated objectives

The committee also addressed a structure for implementing, maintaining, and revising the core curriculum. Again heeding the advice of Dr. Cowan, the committee recommended that the core curriculum be directed by a designated chair and that the chair have a department of faculty to assist in monitoring core curriculum implementation and revision. A General Education Chair was appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs in spring 2008. To date, however, no faculty "department" has been appointed or elected to help that professor with his duties.

In its final report of the revision process, the committee submitted a number of recommendations concerning the implementation of the slightly revised core curriculum. Those recommendations can be found on pages 4–5 of the report (CC4B-1). The summary of the committee's work included the following statement:

> Our work has been comprehensive, deliberately sequential, participative, and driven by commonly accepted principles. The comprehensive character of our work is reflected in addressing the entire former general education curriculum. That comprehensive review did not produce revolutionary changes, but clarifications and adjustments to direct the alignment of courses with stated goals. The sequential nature of the work is reflected in the initial analysis of the problems, the development of guiding principles, the development of goals, and the selection of courses that fit the goals. The participative nature of our work is reflected in correspondence with administration and faculty about all steps in the sequential process, and open hearings for faculty and students interspersed with the major sequential steps. The principle-driven nature of our work is reflected in the search for common principles in US higher education and the early development of principles for revision adopted at this local level. (CC4B-1, pg. 3)

The final report also contained a list of issues related to the transition from the old general education curriculum to the new. Issues concerning advising and specific courses were clearly articulated (CC4B-1, pgs. 7–11). As the committee's own summary indicates, the most recent revision of the Sterling College general education program was thorough and rooted in concerns about quality, excellence, and best practices.

STERLING COLLEGE ASSESSES THE USEFULNESS OF ITS GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. As explained under Core Component 3A, the College instituted a major revision to its general education assessment approach in the fall of 2000. The College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE), a standardized test that assesses students' knowledge of English, math, science, and social studies, was the main assessment tool for general education under the previous plan. In its 2003 follow-up visit, which was partly focused on the College's assessment practices, the Higher Learning Commission's peer-review team concluded that "the progress that Sterling College has made since the fall of 2000 in developing and implementing an assessment plan that over time can lead to program improvement is significant" (GD15, pg. 29).

Under the plan adopted in 2000, the College collected a great deal of data from administering the CBASE to all outgoing seniors and a random sample of first-year students. Nevertheless, in reviewing the Higher Learning Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation*, which was revised after the College's assessment plan was instituted in 2000, Core Component 3A was cause for concern. While the College had been successful in assessing knowledge, skills, and values

common to general education and academic disciplines throughout higher education, the previous plan did not provide direction about how to assess learning outcomes that might be unique to Sterling College's programs. Consequently, in fall 2007 a new assessment plan was phased in—then fully implemented in fall 2008. Faculty Council voted to endorse the new plan at its September 2008 meeting (CC2C-3).

An effort was made not to discard processes from the previous plan, but leverage past assessment success in developing a plan that would better address learning outcomes specific to Sterling College. Knowledge, skills, and values were made an integral part of the revised plan to create a connection between the two approaches. Many of the assessment tools used in the old plan were also incorporated into the new plan, including the CBASE for general education. Moreover, the recommendation from past assessment reports to hire an assessment director who could focus more time on assessment was heeded. In summer 2008, the College welcomed an individual who now serves as half-time Director of Institutional Assessment and half-time Writing Center Director.

The remainder of this section will explain general education assessment processes under the new assessment plan and summarize the data collected from the plan that was instituted in 2000.

Assessment of General Education under the College's New Assessment Plan

The new plan calls for assessment of the general education curriculum to occur every year. While the Director of Institutional Assessment helps coordinate testing, the GE Chair is tasked with writing an annual report. Each year the report will contain data related to approximately one-third of the GE objectives. The goals and objectives listed under "Knowledge of the World and its Human Cultures" will be assessed in year 1 (fall 2009). The goals and objectives listed under "Intellectual and Practical Skills" will be assessed in year 2. The goals and objectives listed under "Personal and Social Responsibility" and "Integrative Learning" will be assessed in year 3. The GE Chair's report will contain:

- a list of the goals and objectives being reviewed
- a review of the assessment data
- an evaluation of the assessment data
- proposed changes
- a timeline for proposed changes
- a review of previous changes
- curriculum alignment matrices with any changes incorporated

The GE curriculum will be assessed through the following means:

- a national standardized test
- individual course reviews
- a Sterling College General Education Exam
- review of alignment with the mission statement

National Standardized Test

As it did under the previous assessment plan, the College will continue to use a national standardized test related to knowledge and skills learned in the GE curriculum. The College continued to use the CBASE throughout the 2008–2009 academic year. However, the CBASE presents challenges as the College moves forward with its online learning division. Because

students graduating from e.Sterling's programs should also complete the national standardized test, and because these students do not reside in or near Sterling, Kansas, they cannot take the CBASE, which is delivered only in a traditional, paper-and-pencil, strictly proctored format. Desiring that e.Sterling students complete the same assessments that residential students complete, the College's Assessment Committee submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs a proposal to change from the CBASE to the MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress) in the 2009–2010 year (CC4B-8). The MAPP can be taken online in a non-proctored environment and is thus more practical for e.Sterling students. Instead of measuring content knowledge, the MAPP assesses four skill areas—critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics. It provides context-based sub-scores in the areas of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Another logical reason to move from the CBASE to the MAPP involves budget issues. Currently, all graduating seniors complete the CBASE writing sample; however, because of CBASE costs and budget constraints, they are randomly assigned to only one of the four subjects tested by the CBASE. Because Sterling College is a small school that graduates only 70–100 students each year, CBASE results leave the College with a small statistical sample size in each subject. On the other hand, the College can deliver the *entire* MAPP exam for approximately the same cost and therefore collect data from more students.

Regardless of the standardized test the College uses for general education assessment, one significant difference will be realized under the new assessment plan. Previously, CBASE sub-scores were used to assess Sterling College GE objectives, and these sub-scores were only *related* to those objectives. Under the current plan, GE objectives specific to Sterling College will be assessed through course reviews and the Sterling College General Education Examination. The standardized test will provide comparative data with other institutions and serve as an additional measure of student entrance vs. exit assessment.

Individual Course Reports
Every instructor is now asked to submit a course report for every course he or she teaches. The Director of Institutional Assessment has provided a template for this report, on which instructors provide information about the degree to which students have met stated course objectives (CC3A-1). The report should contain the same information about any general education objectives associated with the course. Once completed, faculty are to send these reports to the appropriate department chairs. The GE Chair will then collect from department chairs any course reports for courses that meet GE objectives. Even though each GE objective will be reviewed every third year, the GE Chair will collect data for GE objectives every year. These course reports will inform the GE Chair's annual report.

Sterling College General Education Examination
In fall 2008, the GE Chair worked with the Director of Institutional Assessment to create an exam to measure students' progress toward every GE objective (CC4B-9). To create the exam, the GE Chair asked instructors to submit multiple-choice items related to the GE objectives embedded in the GE courses they teach. Items on the exam were then arranged by course. First-year students are asked to complete the entire exam, while graduating seniors are asked to answer only questions related to courses they completed at Sterling College. The exam will thus provide valuable entrance and exit data by which the College can determine the GE curriculum's success in helping students meeting core objectives.

In the test, students are asked to provide demographic information including their major, minor, estimated GPA, co-curricular activities, gender, and ethnicity. The demographics section also

prompts student to provide spiritual information. This exam will serve as an important tool in measuring the "maturing Christian faith" aspect of the College's mission statement. Based on the institution's mission document titled "Our Faith" (located under Core Component 1A), the GE Chair and the Director of Institutional Assessment worked with two other faculty members to create items intended to measure the College's success in regard to the spiritual component of its mission. The other two faculty members who participated in writing those questions teach GE courses that all students are required to take. One coordinates and teaches GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which all students must complete during their first semester at Sterling College. The other teaches RP440: Philosophy for Faith and Life, which all students must complete toward the end of their Sterling College experience.

The GE Chair has been tasked with collecting data from the Sterling College General Education Examination and providing the following information in his report:

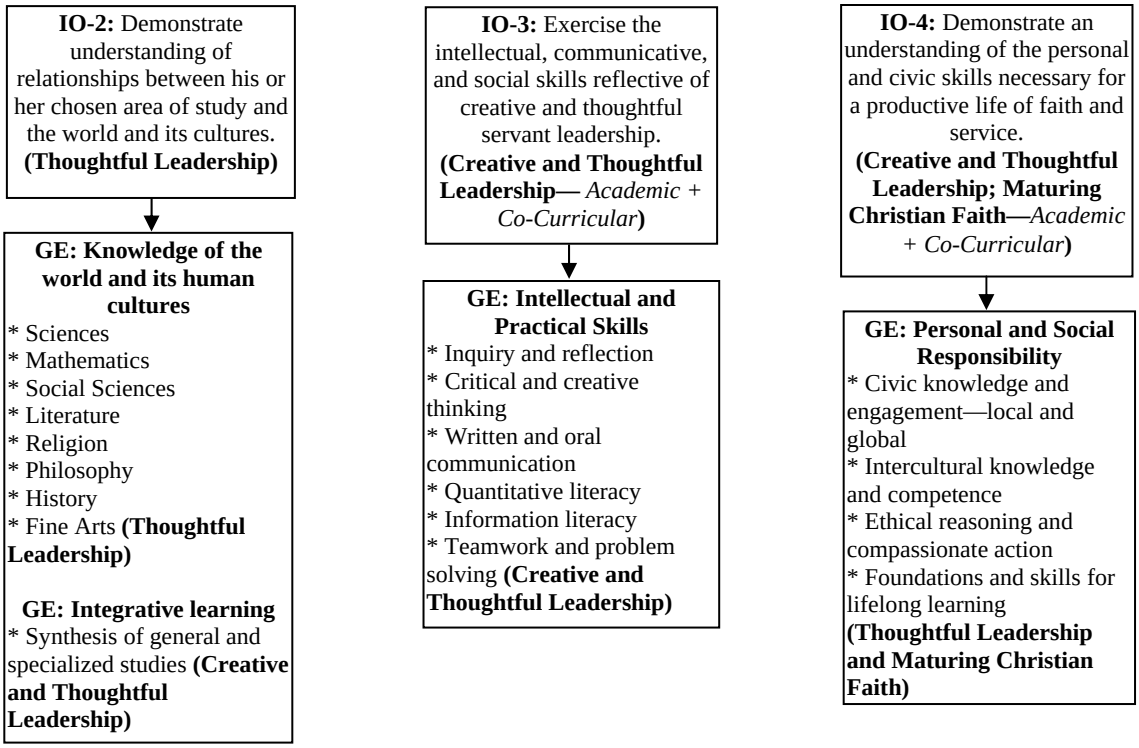
- a mean score for each GE objective (disaggregated by demographic data)
- a mean score on the ability of each course to meet each corresponding objective (disaggregated by demographic data)
- a cumulative effectiveness score for each course ((based on the exam items related to the course and disaggregated by demographic data)
- a cumulative mean score (disaggregated by demographic data) (GD10, pgs. 15–16)

The exam also contains survey questions designed to provide indirect assessment data about the GE program. Students will thus have the opportunity to state the degree to which they felt the GE program prepared them to meet objectives, and they will provide valuable student-satisfaction information.

Review of Alignment with the Mission Statement

Based on the methods of data collection described above, the GE Chair will review objectives to determine the degree to which they help the College realize its mission. Of the five institutional objectives that help the College meet its mission, three are reached in part by GE objectives—the other two are reached through co-curricular activities and learning objectives from the College's two schools. Using the information from Figure 4.8 and the collected assessment data, the GE chair will be able to report on the degree to which the College is meeting three institutional objectives and consequently how it is meeting its mission through its GE curriculum.

Figure 4.8: Alignment of GE Objectives and Institutional Objectives



As Figure 4.8 demonstrates, students' ability to meet institutional objectives 3 and 4 (and 5) is developed in part through co-curricular activities. The implementation of the new assessment plan, which is institutional in nature and not just academic, has helped create stronger alignment between classroom learning and co-curricular learning, for all non-academic departments have been asked to align their missions and intended outcomes with the mission of the College. This alignment, and the assessment of it through the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet (CC2C-6), helps ensure that activities that have sometimes been viewed as extra-curricular are now truly co-curricular. In the first institutional assessment report under the new plan, to be completed in November 2009, the Director of Institutional Assessment will include data from certain non-academic departments, for their activities are certainly important in helping students meet institutional objectives 3, 4, and 5. Detailed information about the Athletic Department's assessment endeavors can be found under Core Component 1C.

Assessment of General Education under the College's Previous Assessment Plan

In 2002, the College began publishing in an annual assessment report the data gleaned from its administration of the CBASE (GD16). Initially, only graduating seniors took the CBASE. In fall 2004, the College began randomly choosing forty first-time, first-year students to also take the test. Because the cost of CBASE scoring prevented the College from administering all sections of the test to all of its takers, sample size was limited for the first few years. As previously mentioned, all seniors completed the test as well, but they were randomly assigned to only one of the test's four other subject areas. First-year have also been randomly assigned to only one subject, but they have not completed the writing sample.

Much of the remaining information in this section is taken directly from the Summer 2007 Annual Assessment Report (GD16), but CBASE data from 2008 and 2009 are included where appropriate.

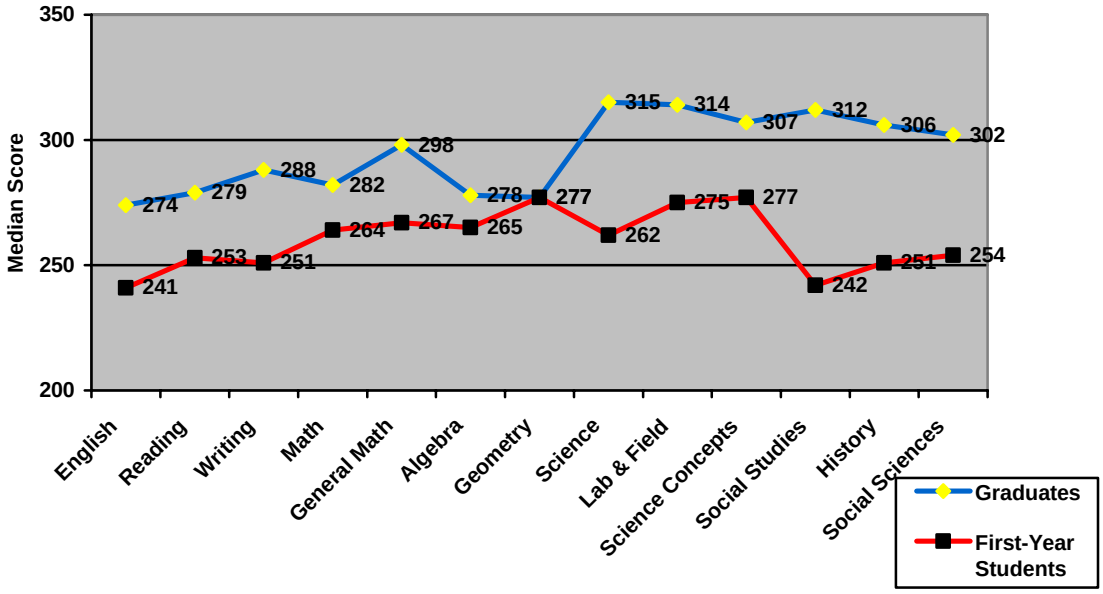
Figure 4.9 shows the number of graduates who took each subject of the CBASE from 2001 to 2009. By 2007 the sample size was large enough that the College could confidently draw some conclusions.

Figure 4.9: Number of Graduates in Subject Areas across All CBASE Testing Years

Subject	*Number of Students*
English	157
Math	156
Science	149
Social Studies	153
Total	615

Fall 2008 was the fifth time that the College randomly selected forty first-time, first-year students to take the CBASE. Each subject area has been completed annually by ten such students, allowing baseline data from fifty students per subject after fall 2008. Notwithstanding the small sample size of first-year student scores, the data from the figures below suggest that the Sterling College GE curriculum is successful in developing students' knowledge related to general education. Figure 4.10 presents median scores by subject and sub-scores for graduating seniors and first-year students.

Figure 4.10: Median CBASE Scores for Graduates and First-Year Students, 2001–2009



In Figure 4.10, "English," "Math," "Science," and "Social Studies" represent the main subject areas tested. All other labels indicate sub-scores. Because CBASE interpreters suggest that differences greater than seventeen raw score points are "meaningful," the data in Figure 4.10 suggests that graduating seniors score "meaningfully" higher in a number of areas, particularly in the social studies areas. When the last assessment report was published in summer 2007, seniors had yet to score "meaningfully" higher than first-year students in math. Now, however, a median difference of eighteen points exists between seniors and first-year students. While it is prudent to withhold judgment until such results are sustained for a period of time, the improvement is

certainly encouraging, and it could underscore the value of implementing more rigorous GE math requirements in 2005.

As already mentioned, some Sterling College GE knowledge-related outcomes from the previous GE curriculum were closely related to CBASE sub-scores. The 2001–2007 data presented in Figure 4.11 suggests that the Sterling College GE curriculum met these objectives.

Figure 4.11: CBASE Scores and Percentiles Related to GE Knowledge Objectives

GE Objective	CBASE Sub-Score	Graduate Median	Graduate Percentile	Freshman Median
Whole person development	English: Reading & Literature	305	64	253
Natural world knowledge	Science: Concepts	310	69	295
Social world knowledge	Social Sciences: Social Studies	322	78	251
Historical patterns	Social Sciences: History	313	68	242

Under the former assessment plan, the CBASE was also used to assess progress toward skills-related outcomes. Information acquisition skills were related to student performance in reading, historical analysis, scientific data collection, and social science procedures. Thinking skills were related to student demonstration of quantitative and critical thinking. Communication skills were related to written communication ability and student performance on a writing sample. CBASE documents skills-related data differently than it documents its main subject and sub-score data. For each skill, the College received a statement of the percentage of students who fell into each of three categories—high, medium, and low. A high score represented the top 16% of all scores; a medium score represented the middle 68%; and a low score represented the bottom 16%. Figure 4.12 contains data about Sterling College GE skills objectives related to CBASE's measure of skills.

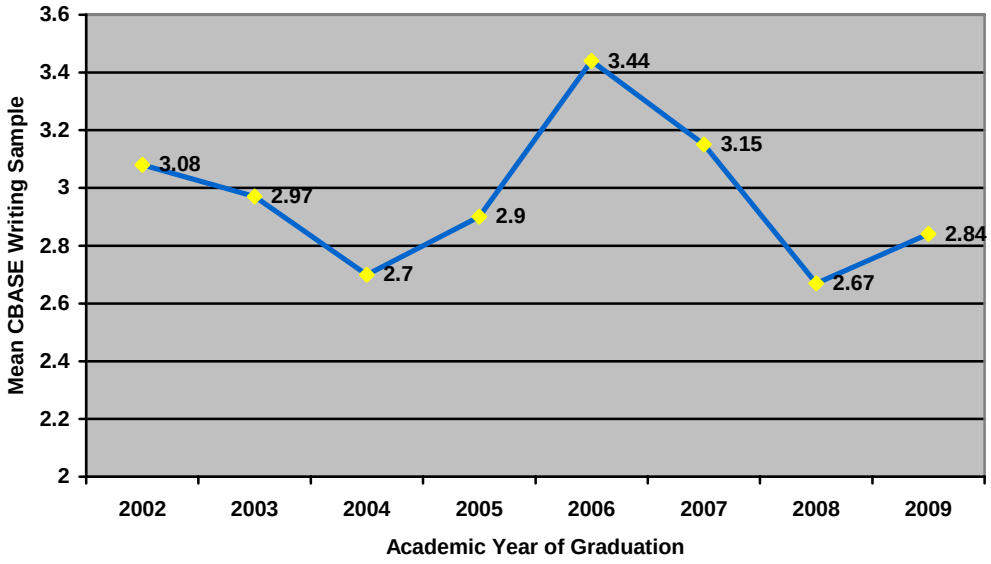
Figure 4.12: GE Skills Objectives in Relationship to Skills Assessed by the CBASE

GE Objective	Skill Name on CBASE	% Low	% Medium	% High	Mean
Information Acquisition Skills	Read accurately and critically	25	49	26	2.01
Information Acquisition Skills	Read analytically	22	48	29	2.07
Information Acquisition Skills	Understand writing process	21	56	22	2.01
Information Acquisition Skills	Role of observing and experimenting in science	17	52	31	2.14
Information Acquisition Skills	Science lab and field procedures	10	63	27	2.17
Thinking Skills	Use math to solve real problems	22	55	24	2.02
Thinking Skills	Use statistical reasoning	14	42	44	2.29
Thinking Skills	Evaluate algebraic expressions	29	51	20	1.92
Thinking Skills	Solve equations	18	68	13	1.95
Thinking Skills	Recognize 2-D and 3-D figures and properties	22	60	18	1.97
Thinking Skills	Perform calculations based on above	33	53	14	1.82
Thinking Skills	Interpret scientific results	5	65	30	2.25
Thinking Skills	Recognize social science procedures	6	51	42	2.36
Communication Skills	Use standard written English	19	61	21	2.02
Communication Skills	Use math notation to express ideas	13	71	16	2.03

The yellow rows indicate the skill areas for which Sterling College students performed better than other students in the national sample. The blue rows indicate the skill areas for which Sterling College students performed worse than other students in the national sample. According to the data, students' strongest skill areas have been in social science and science, which have also been their strongest knowledge areas.

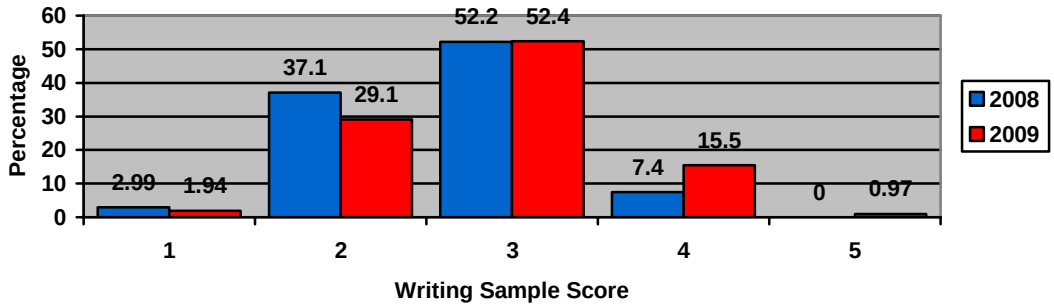
Writing samples are scored on a scale from 0 to 6, with 6 being exemplary. The majority of Sterling College students score 3 on the CBASE writing sample. Figure 4.13 demonstrates the writing sample score average by students' graduation year.

Figure 4.13: Mean CBASE Writing Sample Score by Students' Graduation Year



Sterling College students can certainly improve their writing ability, and the College has made strides toward fostering that improvement. When the general education curriculum was reviewed and revised during the 2007–2008 academic year, Faculty Council voted to make at least one writing-intensive course a part of every student's major. Remedial writing courses were also added in fall 2007, and students who score poorly on a writing placement test must now pass a remedial writing course before they can enroll in LL101: English Composition I. While writing sample scores have dropped since 2006—even below historical points in 2008 and 2009—Figure 4.14 contains some positive data. From 2008–2009, the percentage of students scoring a 2 has decreased, while the percentage of students scoring a 4 has steadily increased.

Figure 4.14: Percentage of Students Scoring 1–5 on CBASE Writing Sample, 2008–2009



Conclusion about Assessment of the General Education Program

As the CBASE data from 2002 to 2009 suggest, Sterling College students have performed noticeably well in science and social science. Writing and math scores leave room for improvement, though improvements have certainly been made, particularly in math. Under the new assessment plan, assessment data for *every* GE objective will be collected from multiple sources, and a national standardized test will be used to provide comparative data. Switching from the CBASE to the MAPP will certainly interrupt the data continuum. However, the

Assessment Committee has argued that the benefits of moving to the MAPP outweigh the costs of ceasing administration of the CBASE. The committee cites the following reasons for the change:

1. Continued use of the CBASE would not allow for a logical comparison between residential/commuter students and e.Sterling students, for the CBASE is a strictly proctored paper-and-pencil exam that is not practical for online learners who may live hundreds of miles from the College. The MAPP may be taken online in a non-proctored environment.
2. The significantly lower cost of the MAPP will allow the College to administer an entire exam to its seniors and randomly chosen freshmen, whereas CBASE scoring costs allow the College to administer only the writing sample and one subject-area test.
3. Because students will be able to complete all sections of the MAPP, a meaningful sample size can be established in much less time than it took to establish a meaningful sample size with the CBASE. Therefore, the interruption of the data continuum will not be prohibitive.
4. The CBASE was originally chosen instead of the MAPP (previously the Academic Profile) because the Assessment Committee at the time felt that the CBASE more closely aligned with the College's GE outcomes. Under the new assessment plan, GE outcomes will be assessed "in house" through individual course reviews and the Sterling College General Education Exam, whereas the standardized test will be used to provide comparative data about knowledge and skills common to GE curriculums throughout the nation.
5. The MAPP is used by over twice as many institutions, so comparative data may be more meaningful.

Assessment of the general education curriculum under the new assessment plan will take more coordination than in years past. However, the appointment of a GE Chair and the hiring of a half-time Director of Institutional Assessment make the new process manageable. While the "CBASE-only" approach to GE assessment has paid dividends, the College felt that measuring GE outcomes in a more direct manner—and collecting data from multiple sources—would provide better guidance about how to continually improve the curriculum and would more wholly satisfy The Higher Learning Commission's Core Component 3A for reaccreditation.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- Data collection from the GE curriculum now requires participation from all faculty members who teach GE courses. In order to make data-driven improvements in the near future, faculty and administrators must continue to support the College's new assessment plan with compliance and interest. The Director of Institutional Assessment and program chairs must be especially diligent about making sure that adjunct instructors understand the course-review process, for a number of GE courses are taught by adjunct instructors.
- Faculty and administrators have taken

Strengths

- Measurable outcomes that drive the Sterling College general education curriculum demonstrate that the curriculum is **learning focused.**
- A new triangulated assessment approach has moved GE assessment toward being more **learning focused**.
- The recent revision of the GE curriculum involved administrators, faculty, students, and the consideration of learning objectives common to GE curriculums throughout the nation.
- The College now has a GE Chair and a

strides to improve student performance related to math- and writing-related outcomes. Persistence and diligence are now particularly important.
- Once data has been published in the College's annual assessment report, faculty must encounter the data in a meaningful way. Faculty Council must especially consider data as it makes governing decisions regarding curricula.

Director of Institutional Assessment to coordinate and manage the assessment of the GE program.
- The new institutional assessment plan has helped make athletic programs and student government activities markedly more co-curricular, opposed to extra-curricular.

Core Component 4C: Sterling College assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS INVOLVE ALUMNI, EMPLOYERS, AND OTHER EXTERNAL CONSTITUENTS WHO CAN HELP ASSESS THE CURRENCY AND RELEVANCE OF COURSES AND PROGRAMS. Guidelines that address curriculum currency and relevance are an important part of the College's assessment plan. These guidelines are listed in the Comprehensive Program Review section of the plan (GD10, pg. 23). Review methods that specifically address attention to currency and relevance include:

- input from stakeholders
- review of similar programs at other institutions
- incorporation of guidelines and/or standards from all appropriate accrediting bodies
- incorporation of pertinent information from appropriate associations

In the context of program review, the term "stakeholders," as used above, is meant to include alumni, employers, donors, Board members, former school employees, personal contacts of individuals associated with programs, or anyone else who might share valuable knowledge in the review of a designated program.

While these guidelines were only recently formalized through the College's new assessment plan in 2008, faculty in the Sterling College Business Department used them during their comprehensive program review in 2006. The Education Department has used similar guidelines when conducting its program reviews for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. A program review cycle will dictate which departments use these guidelines in future years. When the assessment plan was written, faculty were asked when the last comprehensive review of their programs occurred. The review cycle was established according to their responses, and the programs that had not been reviewed recently were slated for review first. The program review cycle has thus been established as follows:

- Year 1 (2009–2010)
  - Biology, Chemistry, History, Athletic Training
- Year 2 (2010–2011)
  - Communication and Theatre Arts, Psychology, Theology
- Year 3 (2011–2012)
  - Elementary Education, English, Exercise Science
- Year 4 (2012–2013)
  - Mathematics, Sports Management
- Year 5 (2013–2014)
  - Business Administration, Christian Ministries, Art and Graphic Design
- Year 6 (2014–2015)
  - Music, Music Education (GD10, pgs. 23– 24)

The following sections are from the Sterling College Business Department Program Revision (CC4C-1).

Core Curriculum

The first step in the revision process was to develop a core curriculum for the Business Program that focused on workplace preparation. To do so, a list of learning objectives was compiled from other successful programs, key stakeholders, and people in the business field. The list contains about 300 objectives, which was reduced to 75 by eliminating duplicates and by combining overly specific objectives into those that are slightly more generalized. From these 75 objectives, a survey was created and was sent to business professionals. The process of finding, selecting, and surveying the respondents is summarized in the revision outline (below). The survey results were then strategically interwoven with the existing core to create a synergistically optimized list of core curriculum courses.

Outline

Part 1: Develop Core Curriculum

Step 1–Develop list of potential outcomes.
Step 2–Gather stakeholder information.
Step 3–Ask stakeholders to evaluate outcomes using a Likert scale and add outcomes where necessary.
Step 4–Revise outcome list based on rankings and additions.
Step 5–Ask stakeholders to evaluate new outcomes.
Step 6–Review survey results and develop list of course titles.
Step 7–Organize meeting of key program stakeholders.
Step 8–Conduct stakeholder meeting in which outcomes are sorted into courses.
Step 9–Develop program goals and outcomes from the course outcomes.

Expanded Descriptions of Each Step

Step 1: Develop list of potential outcomes.

There are several sources from which to pull outcomes. These sources include the outcomes from courses currently in the program, suggested outcomes from faculty, outcomes from other business programs, outcomes from student surveys, etc. The idea is to develop a list of a couple hundred outcomes. Quantity and comprehensiveness is much more important than quality at this point.

The list should be edited to eliminate repetition, which should result in a list of about 75–100 outcomes.

Step 2: Gather stakeholder information.

Stakeholders include faculty, key administrators, select students, alumni, and business professionals. The faculty, administrator, and alumni e-mail contacts are easily found and processed. The real work is assembling a list of professionals willing to take fifteen minutes to complete out a survey. This is usually done by sending out a campus wide e-mail asking for the e-mail addresses of those who would be good candidates. It is desirable to have over 100 quality e-mail addresses.

Step 3: Ask stakeholders to evaluate outcomes using a Likert scale and add outcomes where necessary.

Once the list has been finalized, an e-mail is sent asking for help in developing the new business curriculum. The e-mail provides a link that will take stakeholders to a survey in which they will be asked to rank each outcome on a

scale of 1 to 10 in terms of importance. Stakeholders will also be given an opportunity to add additional outcomes. If the average stakeholder spends 7-10 seconds on each outcome, a 75- to 100-outcome survey will take a little over ten minutes.

The most difficult part of this entire process is getting stakeholders to complete the survey. One of the most effective ways to get a high response rate is to offer some sort of reward (free passes to a Sterling athletic event, Sterling pennant, or some other inexpensive or free item).

Step 4: Revise outcome list based on rankings and additions.
The lowest ranking outcomes will be eliminated, and all new non-repetitive outcome recommendations will be added to the list. The list should now be around 75 outcomes.

Step 5: Ask stakeholders to evaluate new outcomes.
The stakeholders are now asked to participate in the second and last survey. Note: This step will only occur if there is at least a ten percent change in the survey. Anything less than this does not represent a substantive change in the survey. The stakeholders will then be asked to rank only the new or modified outcomes. This survey should only include approximately twenty items, at the most, and should take only a couple of minutes. If the fact that the survey will only take a couple of minutes is advertised, the response rate is usually pretty high. The final outcome list should be around 80 outcomes.

Step 6: Review survey results and develop list of course titles.
Before beginning this step, it is important to realize that the course titles are not nearly as important as the outcomes to be assigned to them in the next step. The course title selection process should take the current program as well as the survey results into account. The course title is for organizational purposes, while the assigned outcomes determine course, and thereby program, content. The process should be led by the department chair, but input and approval should be sought from all stakeholders within the College.

Step 7: Organize meeting of key program stakeholders.
This meeting should include all full-time faculty in the program, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, if available, and one or two business professionals with academic backgrounds, if available. No more than six or seven people at the meeting. The department chair should serve as the moderator.

Step 8: Conduct stakeholder meeting in which outcomes are sorted into courses.
This process is actually rather simple. The easiest way to complete this step is to place each outcome on a large “post it” style piece of paper. The stakeholders will then go through the objectives one by one and assign them to courses. There should be about fifteen groups when finished. Each group should contain between four and six outcomes. If time allows, the group should also develop course descriptions for each new course.

Step 9: Develop program goals and outcomes from the course outcomes
This task can be undertaken by the academic committee.

STATED LEARNING OUTCOMES HELP ENSURE THAT GRADUATES GAIN THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THEY NEED TO FUNCTION IN DIVERSE LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL SOCIETIES. Sterling College curriculum is driven by a number of outcomes that address preparing students to function in various societies. These outcomes can be found in the general education curriculum as well as program curriculums.

As stated on pages 48–49 of the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD 01):

> The general education core curriculum addresses the College's mission "to develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith." These characteristics are realized in graduates who develop broad knowledge, skills for thinking and acting, and values that arise from our Christian heritage that aim to build a better society. Knowledge, skills, and values should be integrated into a worldview from which graduates seek to serve God and the world. More specifically, students should gain:
>
> 1. **Knowledge of the world and its human cultures**
> Sciences, Mathematics, Social Science, Literature, Religion, Philosophy, History, Fine Arts
> 2. **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
> Inquiry and Reflection, Critical and Creative Thinking, Written and Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Information Literacy
> 3. **Personal and Social Responsibility**
> Civic Knowledge and Engagement—Local and Global, Foundations and Skills for life-long learning
> 4. **Integrative Learning**
> Synthesis of General/Specialized Studies

More specific objectives that address preparation for effective participation in various societies are listed below.

- As students meet Literature objectives they will:
  - know literary works from various cultures
  - appreciate literature as a reflection of diverse cultures
- As students meet History objectives they will:
  - understand history and interaction of western and non-western cultures
- As students meet Intercultural Knowledge and Competence objectives they will:
  - develop understanding and respect for their own culture
  - develop understanding and respect for different cultures
  - explore cultural diversity through literature and the arts
- As students meet Ethical Reasoning and Compassionate Action objectives they will:
  - demonstrate appreciation for the religious and cultural beliefs of others
- As students meet Science objectives they will:
  - understand the scientific method for exploring the world
- As students meet Math objectives they will:
  - appreciate how mathematics is a tool for exploring the world

- As students meet Social Science objectives they will:
  - understand how social institutions organize and regulate social life
- As students meet Civic Knowledge and Engagement—Local and Global objectives they will:
  - understand civic engagement as a necessary ingredient of a vital society
  - experience how professional and intellectual skills benefit society
  - understand that one's choices and behaviors may have profound effects for people of all cultures and places
- As students meet Ethical Reasoning and Compassionate Action objectives they will:
  - use information to act in ways that respect the physical universe
  - use knowledge to address contemporary problems produced by social inequalities
- As students meet Life-Long Learning objectives they will:
  - apply skills for effective participation in personal, work-related, and civic commitments (Appendix J)

Programmatic objectives that help ensure graduates gain the skills and knowledge they need to function in various societies are also important. Appendix D contains the programmatic objectives that underscore how each program prepares students to function in diverse local, national, and global societies.

LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES INTENDED TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A DIVERSE WORKFORCE ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COLLEGE'S MISSION. The Sterling College institutional learning objectives align with the College mission as well as the objectives of the general education program and the College's two schools. The alignment is demonstrated in Figure 1.1 under Core Component 1A. The objectives themselves are listed below.

The Sterling College graduate will:

1. Demonstrate sufficient content knowledge to be successful in his or her chosen profession or advanced academic endeavors.
2. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between his or her chosen area of study and the world and its cultures.
3. Exercise the intellectual, communicative, and social skills reflective of creative and thoughtful servant leadership.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the personal and civic skills necessary for a productive life of faith and service.
5. Demonstrate understanding of how biblical principles affect personal, professional, and academic life.

The Sterling College curriculum is thus driven by learning goals that prepare students for a diverse workforce yet remain true to an educational experience that is grounded in the liberal arts tradition. Indeed, the institutional learning objectives reflect the College's long-held belief that the liberal arts curriculum should be "designed to build breadth and depth of understanding through a general education core, specialization in a major, and attention to career preparation" (See "Our Process" under Core Component 1A). The institutional objectives also support the College's formal statement of Priorities, which specifies that an organizational desire is to "build within our students creativity, critical thinking, effective communication and leadership for use in

the workplace as well as in the community, church and home" (See "Our Priorities" under Core Component 1A).

In addition, the academic programs offered at Sterling College reflect, within the liberal arts framework, alignment with the institutional mission to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understanding a maturing Christian faith." Figure 4.15 contains a complete list of majors and minors.

Figure 4.15: Sterling College Majors and Minors

MAJORS	MINORS
Art and Design	Art and Design
Athletic Training	
Biology	Biology
Business Administration	Economics, Entrepreneurship, General Business, International Business, Leadership Management, Marketing, Real Estate, Social Entrepreneurship
Chemistry	Chemistry
Christian Ministries	Christian Ministries
Communication and Theatre Arts	Communication and Theatre Arts
Elementary Education	Adaptive Special Education
English	English
Exercise Science	Exercise Science
History	History, Political Science
Independent Interdisciplinary	
Mathematics	
Music	Music
Music Education	
Psychology	Psychology
Sports Management	
Theology	Family Studies, Greek, Theology

Consistent with the mission, the College recognizes the typical careers associated with these programs as careers that offer excellent opportunities in thoughtful leadership and creativity. Additionally, the College has a long history of graduating quality teacher-educators and is proud that over half of the major programs listed above work closely with the Education Department to offer educational endorsements in subject areas. Students who embark on careers in education no doubt need to be creative and thoughtful leaders.

FACULTY EXPECT STUDENTS TO MASTER THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY FOR INDEPENDENT LEARNING IN PROGRAMS OF APPLIED PRACTICE. Sterling College faculty have developed and organized programmatic learning objectives into categories of knowledge, skills, and values. The program objectives for two programs are listed below. All other program objectives can be found in resource file GD18.

Business Administration

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Sterling College Business Department is to prepare students for careers of service to organizations and communities through content knowledge and skills within an ethical framework and Christian world view.

Objectives:

Goal 1: Having completed the Business Curriculum, students will be able to use traditional and emergent tools and skills to effectively communicate in complex business environments.

- Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally, and through the written word. (Skill)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate communication methods and styles at appropriate times. (Value)
- Objective 3: Students will understand of the impact of communication in the business world. (Knowledge)

Goal 2: Having completed the Business Curriculum, students will be able to use coursework concepts to critically analyze specific business situations, synthesize solutions, and make quality business and/or policy decisions.

- Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze business situations. (Skill)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to problem solve when confronted with complex business situations. (Skill)
- Objective 3: Students will understand the process of developing policy decisions and the ramifications thereof. (Knowledge)
- Objective 4: Students will understand foundational business concepts. (Knowledge)

Goal 3: Having completed the Business Curriculum, students will be able to apply biblical principles to business situations.

- Objective 1: Students will understand foundational business related biblical concepts. (Knowledge)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate business situations through a biblical worldview. (Value)
- Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply biblical concepts to business situations. (Skill)

Art and Design

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Art & Design Department is to prepare students spiritually, skillfully, and professionally in the visual arts to make a positive difference in their careers and the world in which they live. This type of instruction from the Art & Design faculty prepares students to meet challenges by presenting real world situations so that the student is able to take the design concepts and creative skills they have learned from the classroom to graduate school or dynamic job opportunities.

Objectives:
Goal 1: Having completed the Art & Design Curriculum, students will be able to use their skills and knowledge to effectively create and critically analyze creative works of art.

- Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to create well-designed and aesthetically pleasing works of art with various media. (Skill)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze works of art. (Value)
- Objective 3: Students will understand foundational art concepts. (Knowledge)

Goal 2: Having completed the Art & Design Curriculum, students will be able to use their skills and knowledge to communicate effectively in creative environments.

- Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally and through the written word. (Skill)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through works of art. (Skill)
- Objective 3: Students will understand how art communicates to the world. (Knowledge)

Goal 3: Having completed the Art & Design Curriculum, students will be able to apply biblical principles to art situations.

- Objective 1: Students will understand foundational art related biblical concepts. (Knowledge)
- Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate art through a biblical world view. (Value)
- Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply biblical concepts to art situations. (Skill)

In addition to programmatic outcomes that drive curricula, internships, field experiences, and discipline-related technology also help students master the skills that are necessary for success in their disciplines. The number of internships within academic programs has increased tremendously within the past few years. In an effort to better prepare students for the workforce, a number of departments have added internships to their program requirements. In addition to the semester-length clinical teaching experience required for students seeking teaching licensure, students majoring in Business, Christian Ministries, Athletic Training, Exercise Science, and Sports Management must also complete an internship. The Theology major requires an internship-like service component, and Communication and Theatre Arts majors must choose between an internship or a research/performance project. In addition to their internship, Athletic Training majors also complete a number of practicums on campus by using the skills they are learning to serve varsity athletic teams as student trainers (GD01, pgs. 114–115). Moreover, students are able to participate in for-credit study-abroad opportunities through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, an organization to which Sterling College belongs. Since 2000, fourteen students have taken advantage of the CCCU opportunity and studied in Oxford, Latin America, Australia, Los Angeles, Russia, and Washington, D.C. (CC3C-26).

The Education and Behavioral Science departments require or offer shorter field experiences. The Behavioral Science Department has occasionally sponsored class trips to Honduras during the January interterm. Students participating in the Honduras trips have studied social inequality in this developing country (CC4C-2). Students pursuing teaching licensure must complete a number

of field experiences in addition to their semester-length clinical teaching requirement. Field experiences in some courses require observation only, but others require students to practice using skills and knowledge they have learned in the classroom (CC4C-3).

Completing skills-based capstone assignments is another way that students demonstrate mastery of knowledge of and skills required for applied practice. As indicated in the *Sterling College Assessment Plan*, all programs administer a capstone assignment through which all programmatic outcomes are assessed (GD10, pgs. 12–13). Some of these assignments are more skills-based than others. For students who major in Art and Graphic Design, the capstone assignment is a part of AR490: Senior Art Exhibit. In this course, seniors assess the strengths and weaknesses of their portfolios and prepare a portfolio of their best work to present to the public and prospective employers (GD01, pg. 58). Christian Ministries majors must successfully complete TM466: Senior Project/Curriculum Design. This course requires students to develop a curriculum for church settings (GD01, pg. 174).

STERLING COLLEGE'S ACADEMIC PROGRAMS REQUIRE STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT DISCIPLINE-RELEVANT SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY. A number of departments have incorporated computer programs intended to not only enhance students' learning experiences but also familiarize them with the tools that will help them be more productive and efficient in their careers. The Behavioral Science Department, for instance, has purchased both desk and network versions of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The network version may be accessed from computers in a number of labs on campus. Students in the Biology department have benefitted from mapping software and statistical add-ons to Microsoft Office products. Biology students also use SPSS occasionally. Students majoring in Athletic Training use an injury-tracking program to help them meet the needs of the intervarsity student-athletes they serve in their training practicums. Business majors must learn to use a number of Microsoft Office products in BU302: Business Computing. Future teacher-educators are able to use a lesson- and unit-planning program on campus computers. Communication and Theatre Arts majors use video-editing programs, and students in the Art and Graphic Design Department benefit from programs that enable image editing, Web-page development, and professional layout and design of publications. Art and Graphic Design majors may also use animation software on workstations in the department.

STERLING COLLEGE PROVIDES CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. The College's emphasis on servant leadership naturally helps develop a sense of social responsibility in students. The curriculum requires that students engage in service projects in both the General Education program and their major areas of study, and a number of co-curricular opportunities also help students learn and practice social responsibility.

Curricular

All students, even those who transfer from other institutions, must complete GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership during their first semester of study. Students participate in a service project at the beginning of the course and later write a reflection paper about the experience (CC1C-5). In addition, a top-level general education objective concerning "personal and social responsibility" is achieved in part through a second-level objective that revolves around "ethical reasoning and compassionate action." The College addresses this objective through its Chapel program: GD190.

All *major* programs of study also require a service project. Most impressive, however, is that a few departments are now requiring an entire *course* that emphasizes service. Students in the Math program are required to complete MA392: Mathematics Service. In this course, students provide

assistance to the College, a local church, school, or non-profit organization in mathematics-related areas such as installation and evaluation of mathematical software, tutoring or assisting the teaching of developmental mathematics for one semester, or tutoring GED candidates in mathematics. Students gain hands-on experience while providing a service for local institutions. The purpose of this course is to further the College's goal of producing servant leaders (GD01, pg. 151).

Psychology majors must complete BS490: Service Seminar. This course addresses professional expectations about using one's skills to serve the community and provides students the opportunity to reflect on their service assignments. Each student identifies a voluntary service opportunity and conducts that voluntary service throughout the course (GD01, pg. 65).

The Theology and Ministry Department also requires an entire course with an emphasis on service. In TM392: Service Component, students take the initiative in creating, developing, and providing some form of hands-on voluntary service to an agency or ministry in which they can utilize the skills and insights acquired from their studies in the department (GD01, pg. 173).

In the Communication and Theatre Arts program, students are required to complete four one-credit laboratory courses. At least one of these credits must be taken as a "service" laboratory (GD01, pg. 87).

The most elaborate service-related experience at the College is actually an entire program of study. The Business Department houses a distinctive academic minor called Social Entrepreneurship, which prepares students for work in the not-for-profit world. This program is now in its ninth year of existence. Within the minor, a three-credit Social Entrepreneurship practicum is required. This experience takes place in a non-profit social service organization. Depending on the experience hours accumulated (50 hours = 1 credit), this course may be repeated with different social service organizations to gain a wider breadth of knowledge. Students keep a journal about the experience and ultimately write a definitive paper in which they analyze and describe how social entrepreneurship knowledge and skills are applied to accomplish the organization's mission (GD01, pg. 81).

Co-Curricular

Co-curricular opportunities that promote social responsibility include school-sponsored mission trips as well as activities sponsored by the Student Government Association.

Over the past few years, mission trips have occurred during both the summer and the winter. The winter trips occur during the break between semesters, or during the January interterm when it is offered. In addition to serving on mission teams within the United States, students have served in eleven different countries since 2003. Detailed information about a few of these trips can be found in resource folder CC3C-27. To help students better apply knowledge on mission trips, a course titled RP107: Cross-Cultural Ministry has been developed in the Department of Theology and Ministry (CC4C-4).

Through the Student Government Association, students may engage in social responsibility activities through the Association's member organizations as well as through SGA itself. One of SGA's goals is to "model service to the Sterling College body by organizing at least one service project each month." SGA's action plan to accomplish this goal involves planning activities that will be open to the entire campus (CC1C-9, pgs. 3–4).

Under SGA's governance, the Behavioral Science Club states as part of its mission that it will "provide students with examples of how the knowledge they acquire in classes may be utilized for service in communities." The Freshmen Class mission is to "represent the freshmen class through providing service in hope of increasing community and understanding on the Sterling College campus." The College's Habitat for Humanity chapter states as one of its goals that it will participate in "at least 3–4 builds a semester." Raya 327 is another student organization that both promotes service and provides service opportunities as it seeks to address social needs around the globe (CC1C-9, pgs. 5–9). The Leadership Success Program, which is sponsored by SGA and described in more detail under Core Component 3C, requires students to complete three hours of community service (CC4A-15).

Through curricular as well as co-curricular activities, Sterling College promotes social responsibility and encourages students to understand the importance of service. In keeping with its mission, the College believes that "creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith" will make service a part of their lives.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The academic program review process described in the College's assessment plan and modeled by the Business Department in 2006 is critical to maintaining programs that are relevant in a global, diverse, and technological society. Because such a comprehensive review takes a significant amount of time and effort, proper planning is essential, and faculty must be diligent about complying with the review processes described.
- The College has no formal processes for tracking graduates' success in their disciplines. Better tracking of and communication with alumni could enhance program review processes.

Strengths

- Institutional, school, programmatic, and course outcomes align with the College mission.
- Internships in a number of academic programs help **connect** students with working professionals in their fields.
- Relevant programs familiarize students with technology that will help them be more productive and efficient in their careers.

Core Component 4D: Sterling College provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

STERLING COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS ACQUIRE, DISCOVER, AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBLY. The College has defined the core value of *learning* as "a love of learning and a dedication to the pursuit of truth." The "pursuit of truth" surely cannot occur without academic integrity. Recognizing the importance of integrity in learning, the College has adopted *integrity* as another core value and approved an institutional definition of integrity that underscores a commitment to managing knowledge in a responsible manner. When the College publicizes integrity as a core value, it vows to promote and model integrity "in scholarship, the arts, athletics, and all other co-curricular activities" (See core values under Core Component 1A).

Governance, Policies, and Codes of Conduct

The faculty- and Board-approved *Faculty Handbook* provides clear ethical guidelines pertaining to faculty members' acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Specifically:

- Section 2.9.2 outlines the "Code of Professional Ethics" that is to guide faculty work. The code requires faculty to "foster and defend intellectual honesty" (GD 02, pgs. 28–30).
- Section 2.9.3 addresses the proper use of copyrighted material. Although detailed guidelines are not provided, a statement referring faculty to a library resource is included in this section. This resource contains information about copyright law (GD 02, pg. 30; GD19).
- Section 2.5.3.5 addresses faculty members' "obligation to maintain a high level of professional competence and to keep abreast of developments in their field." This section also states that faculty members are "encouraged to support and be active in appropriate professional organizations" (GD 02, pg. 21). Detailed information about the professional organizations to which faculty belong can be found in Appendix H.
- Section 2.10.1 contains information about Sabbatical Leave. Sabbaticals must be for research, academic improvement, or other approved projects. This section stipulates that "finances permitting, a faculty member normally will not be employed for more than ten years without taking a sabbatical" (GD02, pgs. 31–32).
- Policy regarding other types of development leave is found in Section 2.10.4. The College recognizes that "full-time faculty members may have special opportunities to contribute their expertise in mission, church, government, scholarly, or other service deemed consonant with the mission of Sterling College" (GD 02, pg. 32).
- Section 2.10.2 outlines the College's policy regarding educational leave. Faculty may apply for up to one year of educational leave after three years of full-time employment (GD02, pg. 32).
- Explanation of the College's forgivable loan policy for faculty graduate degrees is found in Section 2.10.5. This policy outlines the College's endeavor to "encourage its faculty members to continue studies for advanced degrees" by offering a moderate amount of financial assistance (GD 02, pgs. 33–34

- Through Sections 2.5.3.6–7, the College formally encourages faculty to use their expertise in service to the student body as well as the community (GD 02, pg. 21).

Information about the use of sabbatical leave, other types of development leave, educational leave, and forgivable loans from the past five years is included under Core Component 3B.

In addition to being guided by the Sterling College "Code of Professional Ethics" found in the *Faculty Handbook* (GD 02, pgs. 28–30), faculty in some departments use scholarly codes of ethics published by professional organizations related to their disciplines. Faculty in the behavioral sciences use the American Psychological Association's "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (CC4D-1). Faculty members teaching biology and chemistry uphold the "Society for Conservation Biology Code of Ethics" (CC4D-2) and "The Chemist's Code of Conduct" (CC4D-3), respectively.

Faculty serving on the Assessment Committee must abide by the College's "Policy Regarding Confidentiality of Assessment Data" (CC4D-4). The policy is especially thorough in its guidelines to protect student identity.

In addition to the policies and guidelines cited above, the faculty governance structure also helps ensure that faculty manage knowledge responsibly. The *Sterling College Faculty Council Constitution and By-Laws* establishes the framework by which faculty members work with administrators to ensure the overall welfare of the campus community. The Faculty Council, comprised of full-time and part-time faculty members, is enhanced by four standing committees that address specific issues and make recommendations to the Council about operations and processes. These four standing committees are the Academic Affairs Committee, the Faculty Welfare and Fiscal Affairs Committee, the Student Services Committee, and the Institutional Advancement Committee. Standing committees may establish sub-committees as deemed necessary, and Faculty Council may appoint ad hoc committees at its discretion. Through Faculty Council and its standing committees, faculty participate in College governance and rely on their expertise and experience to help ensure that knowledge is managed responsibly (GD 06).

The Department of Innovation and Technology

The Department of Innovation and Technology is also instrumental in helping faculty use and disseminate knowledge in a responsible manner. In addition to publishing the "Acceptable Technology Use Policy" on the College's Intranet (CC4D-5), the Department of Innovation and Technology oversees faculty training intended to help instructors improve student learning with technology. Since 2007 the DIT staff has offered a number of training sessions and tutorials. Among other topics, events have covered e.Portfolio design and maintenance, learning management system use, and Web page design (CC3B-6).

The coordination of training events, however, is not DIT's only contribution toward the improvement of student learning. In fall 2008 the VPIT began leading an aggressive initiative to help faculty better integrate technology with their teaching. An important part of the initiative involved an all-faculty assessment of technological skills. After each faculty member completed the assessment, the VPIT then worked with him or her to develop an individualized improvement plan (CC2A-13, pg. 13; CC3B-2). The initiative is partly funded by the College's Title III grant, and it was nationally recognized when it was summarized in *Technology and Learning* in April 2008 (CC4D-6).

The Academic Affairs Office

The Academic Affairs Office helps ensure responsible knowledge management by coordinating faculty retreats at the beginning of each academic year. Over the past few years, these mission-focused, professional-development opportunities have featured presentations on responding to post-modern students, being a mission-driven college, and effectively incorporating a Christian worldview in the classroom (CC4D-7). The latter presentation, which occurred in August 2008, initiated a lunch-time professional development event later in the year (CC4D-8).

STERLING COLLEGE STAFF MEMBERS ACQUIRE, DISCOVER, AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBLY. Hiring practices, confidentiality training and discussions, involvement in professional organizations, and the actions of staff in the Department of Innovation and Technology all foster staff members' responsible management of knowledge.

Hiring

Upon their hiring, all staff members receive a packet containing a number of documents (CC4D-9). Among them are documents that explain servant leadership and the Sterling College mission. The *Sterling College Staff Handbook* (GD03) is also included in the packet. Policy in the handbook stipulates that all new employees "undergo a 120-day probationary period, after which the employee will have [his or her] performance evaluated in writing" (GD03, pg. 5). This probationary period helps ensure that staff responsibly manage knowledge as they begin to perform their duties. The handbook also outlines the employee-review process and states that all employees are entitled to know what constitutes "acceptable performance" (GD03, pg. 5). To date, the College does not offer a *formal* new-employee orientation for staff members. All employees are required to have a job description (GD 03, pg. 5), and supervisors are to furnish operational instruction and guidelines to new employees.

Confidentiality

An important issue pertaining to responsible knowledge management relates to confidentiality. As an institution of higher learning, the College must ensure that staff members handle sensitive information with care. This responsibility rests with directors and supervisors. In Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, Student Life, e.Sterling, Academic Affairs, the Business Office, Admissions, and Institutional Assessment, directors and supervisors visit at length about confidentiality with all new employees and student workers. The Director of Alumni Relations maintains an unwritten policy of contacting alumni for approval before releasing contact information to outside parties. The Director of Institutional Assessment ensures that the Assessment Committee and support staff read and understand the College's "Policy Regarding Confidentiality of Assessment Data" (CC4D-4). The Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing has underscored the importance of confidentiality for admissions staff in *The Sterling College Operational Plan for Enrollment* (SCOPE) (GD11, pg. 5).

In SCOPE, the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing has provided admissions staff with guidelines about responsible recruiting as well. Specifically, the document articulates the need for admissions counselors to balance the degree of prospective students' "institutional fit" with the reality of enrollment's importance in relation to College finances (GD11, pgs 1–2). As they recruit students, admissions counselors must be forthright and honest about the institution's Christian mission while simultaneously encouraging students who might not be optimal mission fits to attend Sterling College.

Professional Involvement

Belonging to professional organizations and attending conferences is also a way to help facilitate responsible management of knowledge, and a number of Sterling College staff members benefit

from professional involvement. The College pays for staff in the Registrar's and Admissions Offices to belong to the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Counselors (KACRAO). The College also financially supports staff members who wish to attend this organization's conferences. With her membership paid by the College, the Registrar belongs to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) as well. The Director and Assistant Director of Financial Aid belong to similar organizations: the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (KASFAA) and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Membership in these organizations is also funded by the College, as are some conference costs.

Coaching and training staff belong to professional organizations that help ensure they use and convey knowledge responsibly as they work with student-athletes. The professional involvement of staff members is discussed more under Core Component 4A, and Appendix I contains additional information about staff members' professional involvement.

In the summer of 2008, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Institutional Assessment were invited to join an informal group of institutional effectiveness professionals who belong to colleges and universities within the Kansas Independent College Association. The group has agreed to meet three times per year, and at its second meeting in October 2008, which Sterling College hosted, the guest speaker was a Higher Learning Commission peer reviewer from nearby Hutchinson Community College (CC3D-11).

In addition to the organizations and conferences with which Cabinet-level administrators are associated (discussed in more detail under Core Component 4A), at least a few administrators usually attend the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Conference. Generally, the College sends two to four employees to the conference, with faculty, staff, and administration all represented. In spring 2009, Title III funding allowed the College to send nine employees to the conference (CC4D-10).

The Department of Innovation and Technology

Just as they do with faculty, IT staff members facilitate responsible knowledge management for staff as well. College staff attend professional-development events coordinated by the department (CC3B-6). While IT's training endeavors have recently revolved around improving technology in instruction and have therefore been largely directed to faculty, staff members are invited to attend a number of training sessions and tutorials (CC3B-6). In addition, IT has provided Web-page publishing guidelines on the College's Intranet (CC4D-11). Starting in January 2008, the department began holding monthly "mini-conferences" for its own staff. At these professional-development events, employees take turns presenting work-related information to their colleagues within the department (CC4D-12).

STERLING COLLEGE STUDENTS ACQUIRE, DISCOVER, AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBLY.

Responsible management of knowledge by students is facilitated through policies, operations, and processes as well as through curriculum and instruction. Co-curricular activities also help ensure that knowledge is used properly and ethically.

Policies, Operations, and Processes

Academic and student support programs help students develop healthy skills and attitudes pertaining to responsible knowledge management. Employees in offices such as Student Life, Academic Support, Financial Aid, the Student Heath Center, the Counseling Center, the Writing Center, Career Services, the chaplaincy, the Department of Information Technology, and the Mabee Library all help students acquire, discover, and use knowledge appropriately. These

personnel are committed to helping students learn and develop sensitivity to the boundaries and responsibilities associated with learning and personal development. Resource file CC4D-13 contains the professional credentials of many of the individuals who work in these offices.

Upon enrollment and/or admission to the College, students are given an electronic copy of the *Sterling College Academic Catalog*, which contains both explanatory information and policies related to many academic and student support offices. For example, the "Student Life" section of the *Catalog* addresses lifestyle guidelines and expectations that the College has established for its students. It also contains the institution's academic integrity policy in full (GD01, pages 44–45). Processes have been built into registration and new-student orientation events to ensure that students are familiar with these offices and services (CC4D-14). Furthermore, in fall 2007 the Academic Support Office began tracking attendance of students who enroll on probation or who fall into probationary status while attending Sterling College. Personnel in the office communicate with Academic Affairs, the Registrar, Student Life, faculty, and coaches in an effort to intervene immediately when students show signs of academic distress. Administrators believe this system has played a major role in increasing the student retention rate since it was implemented. While the data in Figure 4.16 are inconclusive, they are certainly encouraging. The figure demonstrates how the retention rate of first-time, full-time students admitted on probation has increased since attendance tracking was implemented in fall 2007.

Figure 4.16: Retention Statistics for First-time, Full-time Probationary Students (CC4D-15)

Year	***% of Freshman Class on Academic Probation***	***% Who Returned for Spring Semester***	***% Who Returned for Following Fall Semester***
Fall 2008	17%	81%	61.50%
Fall 2007	22%	75%	58.30%
Fall 2006	24%	56.50%	32.60%
Fall 2005	13%	70.60%	41.20%
Fall 2004	17%	79.20%	45.80%
Fall 2003	16%	65%	40%
Fall 2002	20%	55%	50%
Fall 2001	14%	53.30%	26.70%
Fall 2000	12%	66.70%	46.70%

The Department of Innovation and Technology

The Department of Innovation and Technology also plays a critical role in ensuring responsible student management of knowledge. Not only does the department facilitate compliance with the "Acceptable Technology Use Policy" by helping students understand what constitutes inappropriate technology use (CC4D-5), in recent years the VPIT has worked hard to create an electronic-information filtering system that serves the interests of the entire campus community. In concert with the Student Government Association, IT fashioned a plan to limit the number of unsolicited e-mail messages that students both send and receive while not inhibiting necessary campus communication (CC4D-16; CC2A-14). Furthermore, IT ensures that computers in student computer labs are configured so that students cannot install programs or software without permission.

The VPIT delivers a presentation to students titled "Research: the 4th "R." In this presentation, students acquire advanced Internet search information and are provided with a number of links to helpful search engines and directories. The VPIT also addresses research ethics and information

validation in his presentation (CC4D-17).

Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

The Sterling College curriculum facilitates responsible management of knowledge in many courses and in a variety of ways. In fall 2008, the Department of Language and Literature revised its English Composition I course to include readings and written assignments about the College's core values. The core values served as the "topics" for student papers. In the *integrity* unit, academic integrity was explored thoroughly through reading, writing, and discussion. All students are required to take this course unless they have transferred it from another institution. Course objectives in English Composition I specifically address integrity in research (CC1C-7), which is covered in other courses as well.

Some academic programs require a research course in their core requirements, and in spring 2008, through its acceptance of the General Education Committee Final Report (CC4B-1), Faculty Council approved a proposal to require a writing-intensive course in all majors (CC4D-18). Instruction in these courses must include library search strategies and clear guidelines about what constitutes plagiarism (CC4B-1, pg. 12). Mabee Library staff also provide research instruction and encourage professors to incorporate instructional sessions into their courses (CC3C-20).

The College promotes responsible student management of knowledge through its core value of *service*, too. All students—even transfers students—are required to take GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership. Typically, this course includes at least a reading assignment and discussion about academic integrity. Students are taught in GD105 that a responsible use of knowledge involves intentional service to others (CC1C-5). A service project, which is supervised by the course instructor, begins every course and is followed by a reflection paper about the project.

Furthermore, all majors require at least one service project, and some programs require an entire course that emphasizes service. Among these courses are MA392: Mathematics Service in the Math Department (GD01, pg. 151); BS490: Service Seminar in the Behavioral Science Department (GD01, pg. 65); TM392: Service Component in the Department of Theology and Ministry (GD01, pg. 173); and CT155S: Theatre Laboratory (with a service requirement) in the Communication and Theatre Arts Department (GD01, pg. 93). These courses, as well as the College's unique academic minor that emphasizes service—Social Entrepreneurship (GD01, pg. 75)—are described under Core Component 4C.

Students also apply knowledge through a variety of co-curricular activities. The College has an active and vibrant Student Government Association that sponsors most student organizations, including a Habitat for Humanity chapter that was instrumental in the development of a county-wide chapter in 2004 (CC4D-19). To help ensure proper knowledge management, all organizations, including SGA itself, are required to have a faculty or staff advisor (CC4D-20, pg. 18; CC4D-21, pg. 2). When possible, faculty and staff with expertise related to the organizations' causes serve as advisors. For example, the Athletic Director advises the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and an Assistant Professor of Communications advises students who coordinate the campus newspaper (CC1C-9, pgs. 6, 9). The Student Government Association uses a number of methods to keep the campus community informed about upcoming activities. The SGA President contributes to the school calendar, sends a weekly campus e-mail that lists events (CC4D-22), and publicizes activities by hanging posters in campus buildings.

Mission trips are another popular co-curricular way for students to acquire and use knowledge. Trips are typically offered during summer and winter vacations, and occasional weekend mission

projects are also available to students. In addition to serving within the United States, students have served in eleven different countries in the past few years (CC3C-27). To help ensure that students use mission knowledge responsibly, all trips require a faculty or staff sponsor.

Mission work at Sterling College is enhanced by the service of Dr. Hank Lederle, Professor of Theology and Missions, who is highly involved in the coordination of mission trips. In addition to his academic background in the area of missions, Dr. Lederle has served as an Associate Pastor and as a missionary to Malawi. To help students better apply knowledge on mission trips, he has developed a course titled RP107: Cross-Cultural Ministry (CC4C-4).

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- Few opportunities exist for faculty and staff to share information and collaborate professionally. Responsible knowledge management could be enhanced with more faculty-staff interaction.
- The College should continue to explore ways to increase funding for professional development. *Policy* demonstrates the College's concern about the issue, but financial realities often make professional-development funding difficult.
- The Department of Innovation and Technology has led many of the College's professional development opportunities in recent years. As a way to offer more professional development opportunities with limited resources, other departments could follow IT's example and use their personnel's expertise to offer more opportunities.
- The College could benefit from workshops or instructional materials related to copyright issues. While the *Faculty Handbook* refers faculty to library resources when they have questions about copyright issues, library personnel feel under-equipped to deal with many of the ambiguities of copyright law as it relates to Web-based learning. The counsel of a copyright attorney might also be considered.
- The College might wish to consider a more formal orientation process for new employees.

Strengths

- Through its emphasis on service, Sterling College addresses knowledge management in a **distinctive** manner. Not only do majors require service projects and entire service-related courses, the College offers a **distinct** academic minor in Social Entrepreneurship.
- Sterling College offers co-curricular activities that are **learning-focused.**
- Increased communication efforts involving many offices have helped keep coaches and faculty better **connected** than in years past and consequently allowed for earlier intervention when students begin to show signs of academic distress.

Chapter Five
Engagement and Service

CHAPTER FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, Sterling College identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

The College addressed Criterion 5 in the self-study process differently than it addressed other criteria. Whereas most Criterion committees were divided into sub-committees, each of which addressed a separate Core Component, the Criterion 5 committee divided into "topic" committees that addressed *all* Criterion 5 Core Components through certain topical lenses. Initially, the committee tried to approach Criterion 5 through five lenses: 1) retention efforts, 2) the campus charter school, 3) servant leadership and missions, 4) recent achievements of the Business Department and its students, and 5) facilities—particularly the recent track and field renovation, which was completed in collaboration with the local school district. The committee also understood that academic programs play a significant role in the College's engagement with and service to its various constituencies, and committee co-chairs agreed with the self-study coordinators that this chapter should thus contain specific information about some of those programs.

In the end, the committee co-chairs realized that other important examples of the College's engagement and service did not fit within the parameters of the five lenses and that some information about missions and servant leadership might be best addressed under more than one heading. Thus, in the final draft of Chapter 5, each Core Component section begins with information about academic programs and other initiatives that explain how the College meets the Core Component statements. Information submitted by the topical sub-committees then follows.

Core Component 5A: Sterling College learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Many examples of how Sterling College meets Core Component 5A are addressed in detail under other Core Components. For example, under Core Component 2A is information about how environmental scanning affects recruiting practices in the Admissions Office. According to the Sterling College Operation Plan for Enrollment (SCOPE) (GD11), admissions counselors consider demographic data when they plan their yearly recruiting strategies. Upon review of their database, counselors schedule high school visits based on answers to questions such as the following:

5. Does the College currently have students who graduated from the high school? Does the College have a history of enrolling graduates from the high school?
6. Are any of the high school's teachers Sterling College alumni?
7. Does the College have any other special connections with the high school?
8. Is the high school a good demographic or profile "fit" for the College? (GD11, pg. 14)

The Admissions Office has also used feedback from prospective and current students to improve its communication processes. In the effort to accommodate a technologically inclined generation of learners, Admissions has been instrumental in redesigning the College's Web site and creating

micro-sites for both general prospective students and applicants. The site for applicants is a Facebook-like site that allows applicants to interact with each other and with current students through discussion forums. As of July 8, 2009, 198 applicants had posted over 800 pictures and over 3200 notes on the site (CC2A-10). These adjustments to the communication habits of a new generation seem to be paying off. Not only have applicants been active on the micro-site, the Admissions Office had another successful recruiting year in a challenging economic period. The College has begun its 2009–2010 academic year with a record enrollment (CC2D-8). The College is hopeful that the applicant site will positively impact retention as well, for it allows applicants to establish relationships before they even enroll.

Also located under Core Component 2A is information about the College's National Advisory Council (NAC). Formed in 2002, the NAC exists to "help Sterling College move strategically toward its vision." The NAC is comprised of visionaries who love the College and suggest strategic ideas to institutional leadership (CC2A-5).

The College's recent decision to re-implement Interterm, rather than continue its May Term, was influenced by the student voice. For many years, Interterm was a three-week intensive mini-semester that was offered in January. It afforded students the opportunity to concentrate on only one course during those three weeks. Interterm had always been included as part of full-time tuition for the fall semester. In 2007, administrators realized the College was losing a significant sum of money by including Interterm as part of fall tuition costs. With little revenue during the month of January, the practice was costly, and the College decided to change Interterm to "May Term," for which students would have to pay separately. However, student dissent about the change was strong, less because of additional cost than because students preferred the month of January for the intensive course. Therefore, the administration reached a compromise with student leaders. In January 2010, Interterm will return; however, it will now be calculated in students' tuition—$750.00 in the fall and $750.00 in the spring. While students would of course prefer to have a "free" Interterm, many of them are willing to incur the cost in fall and spring tuition if the intensive term is moved back to January.

Under Core Components 3A, 3B, and 4C is detailed information about how the College learns from its constituencies to improve instruction and curricula. The College's assessment plan calls for feedback from students, faculty, and others who have stake in the education students receive at Sterling College.

Students

Students are asked to complete a course evaluation for every course they complete. They also provide feedback through the Sterling College General Education Exam (CC4B-9), which is completed by all first-year students and all graduates, and through the End-of-Program Exam, which students take upon completion of their degree requirements. Both exams provide data about students' ability to meet program objectives (direct data) as well as student perceptions of how well the programs prepared them to meet objectives (indirect data). Because of challenges related to implementing a much more rigorous assessment plan in a single year, not all end-of-program exams incorporated indirect data questions in the spring of 2009. So much energy was devoted to collecting direct data about programmatic outcomes under the new assessment plan that the collection of indirect data was overlooked in certain programs. Such errors will be corrected in academic year 2009–2010.

Faculty

Faculty provide feedback through course and program reports. Under the College's new assessment plan, faculty are asked at the end of each academic year to complete a course report

about every course they taught. Reports address students' levels of success in meeting course objectives, and reports are informed by student performance on assessments as well as the course evaluations completed by students (CC3A-1). Course reports are sent to department chairs, who use them, as well as end-of-program exams and capstone assignments, to write a program report about one-third of the program's stated objectives (CC3A-5). Faculty have opportunities in both the course reports and the program reports to state any changes they believe should be made to improve student learning. Program reports from the 2008–2009 academic year can be found in resource folder CC3A-13.

Outside Stakeholders

As described under Core Component 4C, the College's assessment plan also calls for outside constituencies to comment on the quality of programmatic curricula. Each academic program is scheduled for comprehensive review every six years, and part of the review process requires input from stakeholders such as alumni, employers, donors, etc. (GD10, pg. 23). Formally, this part of the assessment plan will be implemented for the first time during the 2009–2010 academic year. However, faculty in the Sterling College Business Department gathered much input from stakeholders when they revised their programmatic curriculum in 2006. Stakeholder involvement in that review process is described under Core Component 4C and in resource file CC4C-1. Faculty in the Education Department have also collected information from outside stakeholders. For example, cooperating teachers in public schools are asked to evaluate teacher candidates during the clinical teaching blocks (CC5A-1).

The remainder of this section addresses how the College meets Core Component 5A through its retention efforts, its charter school, its track and field renovation project and partnership with the local school district, and through the Sterling College Business Department.

Retention

Through its retention efforts, the Student Life Office collects a great deal of information about the College's most important constituency—its students. Research based on surveys and demographic data allows Student Life personnel to make informed decisions about how to continually improve the student retention rate. For example:

- Since spring 2007, the Student Life Office has administered a withdrawal survey to every student who withdraws from the College during a semester. The office has also administered a similar survey to students who wish to transfer out of Sterling College after a semester has ended (CC2A-11). Results from these surveys (CC2A-12) help Student Life personnel make strategic decisions about retention improvement.
- To learn about student perceptions of Student Life services in general, the office has developed a survey for all students to complete. The survey was administered in spring 2008, and it will be administered again in spring 2010 (CC2C-8).
- In fall 2008, all first-time Sterling College students were asked to complete the College Student Inventory. This national survey provides information about students' academic motivation, general coping skills, and receptivity to support services. This information helps the Student Life Office identify first-time students' strengths and needs early in a semester. Using data from the survey, employees can interact with students in meaningful ways while students are still deciding if they will stay at the College or transfer. When the survey was used in fall 2008, all advisors, coaches, and resident directors received reports about the students with whom they would be interacting.

They were asked to review the reports and note any students who, according to the survey, might need extra support from faculty and staff. In addition, the instructors of GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which is a first-semester requirement for all first-time students, discussed the survey results with each student in their GD105 sections.

- When the current Vice President for Student Life arrived as the Director of Academic Effectiveness in fall 2006, she compiled research about the characteristics of the College's first-time, full-time students from 2000–2004 and examined factors that might have contributed to their abilities and decisions to stay at Sterling College and graduate. Research revolved around the following characteristics:
    - state of residence
    - gender
    - academic major
    - co-curricular interests
    - ethnicity
    - academic preparation and record, including ACT score and cumulative high school GPA
    - date of application for admission
    - financial circumstances

  Included in the resource room are the following files related to retention studies from the Student Life Office:
    - Retention study summary of overall averages, 2000–2004 (CC5A-2)
    - Retention study data for overall averages, 2000–2004 (CC5A-3)
    - Retention study summary of graduate demographics (CC5A-4)
    - Retention study data for graduate demographics (CC5A-5)
    - Retention study of first-time, full-time student demographics (CC5A-6)
    - Retention study data for first-time, full-time student demographics (CC5A-7)
- Within the Student Life Office, the Student Health Center has collected its own survey data. Resource folder CC3C-16 contains information about student use of the Health Center.

Sterling Academy

As stated under Core Component 3D, the Sterling Academy is a one-of-a-kind public/private partnership that not only gives Sterling College teacher candidates multiple opportunities to observe educational best practices but also allows them to practice those methods in an on-campus facility. The Sterling Public School District pays the Academy's teacher salaries, and the College provides classroom space in one of its women's dormitories, Evans Hall. This partnership of a public school district and a charter campus demonstration school is the only one in the state of Kansas (CC3D-15).

Sterling Academy was formed as an on-campus charter school in the spring of 2006, and it opened in August of that year. The Academy has a two-fold purpose: 1) to serve as a professional development school for Elementary Education majors, and 2) to provide an alternative educational setting for elementary students in the Sterling area.

To foster the most learning possible, the charter school creates curriculum and plans activities based on the needs and interests of its students (CC5A-8). The Academy participates in the Quality Performance Accreditation program (QPA) to maintain its accreditation with the state of

Kansas (http://online.ksde.org/rcard/building.aspx?org_no=D0376&bldg_no=4862) (CC5A-9). Through QPA, the school analyzes student growth, school needs, and future goals.

Sterling College and Sterling-Alden USD 376 depend on one another for the services they provide. The College depends on the school district for field and practicum experiences, and the school district depends on the College's Education Department for excellent teacher candidates. Historically, many of those teacher candidates have taught in the district after graduation, often for long periods of time (see "Sterling Academy" under Core Component 5D). As Sterling College grows and prospers, the hiring pool for USD 376 grows proportionately.

Facilities—The Track and Field Renovation Project

The recent renovation of the Sterling College football stadium and track serves as an excellent example of how the College works with and considers the needs of the local school district in its operations. As part of a usage agreement, Sterling College has shared its track and football stadium with the Sterling public school system for many years. Perhaps a testimony to the College's willingness to listen to district officials is evident in the fact that, until the recent stadium renovation, very little of the usage agreement was formalized. Problems and conflicts between the two parties had always been resolved efficiently and quickly through personal contacts and communications. A new lease agreement subsequent to the renovations does include a few more specific details and responsibilities than were formalized in the past, however (CC5A-10).

By 2005, the stadium track had fallen into disrepair, and it needed significant upgrades in order to be in compliance with current athletic regulations. The field needed improvements as well. Long before any formal meetings were held between the College and the school district, informal discussions about needed improvements were common. Because many College personnel and community members attend the same events in town, numerous informal discussions helped lay the groundwork for the renovation project. In January 2006, when discussions became more pointed, a group of College administrators and school district officials, including the local school board, began to meet and formalize plans for the project. Since neither the College nor the district could fund the renovation alone, an effective partnership was established to pay for the needed renovations. Ultimately, the district contributed a gift covering twenty-six percent of the renovation cost, and the College agreed to pay the rest (CC5A-11). Community meetings were held during the negotiation process, and the College's Board of Trustees also discussed the renovation project at length (CC5A-12).

The Sterling College Business Department

In an effort to provide continuing education for the local community and alumni, the Business Department initiated the Sterling College Outreach Education (SCOE) program in the spring of 2008. The program started small, with only two adult students from the community attending Working with Clay, a ceramics course designed to help students explore various pottery techniques. In fall 2008, additional courses, including Basic Accounting and Real Estate Mathematics, were offered. As of May 2009, community enrollment in SCOE courses has not been as high as the Business Department had hoped. Nonetheless, the College believes the program serves as a good example of how the institution listens to local external constituents and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs. Several of SCOE's stated objectives underscore this concern:

1. help the College stay engaged with the community and region;
2. provide an accessible bridge for the community to reach into the various fields of knowledge and experiences represented by Sterling College faculty;

3. provide the community and region with an exhilarating learning environment in which learners can meet, make new friends, and learn from one another;
4. enrich the lives of people who want to be involved in lifelong learning;
5. help some of these lifelong learners discover new talents and interests;
6. enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will help prepare them for a better future;
7. provide varied educational amenities to help make the city of Sterling a better place in which to live;
8. provide an opportunity for Sterling College alumni to return to their alma mater and participate in continuing education opportunities for minimal expense;
9. enhance the College's reputation as a special center for continuing learning and lifelong education. (CC5A-13)

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- In the upcoming academic year, assessment efforts must more intentionally include collection of student-perception data about the quality of each academic program.
- While the Business Department has laid the foundation for developing a continuing education program for the local community, the College should continue to increase interest and awareness about community outreach courses.

Strengths

- The Admissions Office has demonstrated **future-centeredness** by listening to students and using student data to implement communication processes that resonate with the current generation of prospective collegians.
- The College reconsidered a change in its academic calendar after listening to student dissent.
- The College's assessment plan is moving academic programs toward involving stakeholders in curricular reviews. The Business Department demonstrated its **future-centeredness** in 2006 when it made a number of curricular changes based on stakeholder feedback.
- The Student Life Office is staying **connected** to students and learning about their needs through surveys, evaluation, and internal research.
- The College has been **connected** with the local school district through the track and field renovation project and the **distinctive** charter school. Cooperation between the two entities has benefited both students at the College and students in the Sterling-Alden public school system.

Core Component 5B: Sterling College has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

In addition to the four lenses through which the College has addressed all Criterion 5 Core Components, the College demonstrates its commitment to engagement in other ways as well—most notably through academic programs, student organizations, missions outreach efforts, and community celebrations such as Homecoming Weekend and Warrior Fest.

Students in the Sterling Teacher Education Program (STEP) are particularly engaged with the community. Learners pursuing teaching certification are required to log over 100 hours of observation and participation in classrooms before they begin their full semester of clinical teaching. They also complete required service projects. For example, in ED205: Cultural Diversity, students spend an evening preparing and serving a meal at a nearby soup kitchen (CC3D-16). Moreover, STEP students must complete a service project *every year*. At the senior level, the project must benefit the school at which they are completing their semester of clinical teaching (CC1C-8, pg. 12). Students enrolled in ED357: Reading and Writing in the Content Area read self-authored children's books, which they write as a requirement of the course (CC5B-1), to local school children in the Sterling Academy (CC5B-2).

While all majors require at least one service project, some programs have built an entire service-related course into their curricula. In December 2008, one psychology major engaged with a local family in an especially meaningful way. For his BS490: Service Seminar course, Lazerrick Young wanted to go above and beyond course expectations. When he learned of a local single mother who had recently lost both her husband and her father, Young rallied the campus community to support an especially touching service project. During an inspirational chapel service on December 3, 2008, Young called the family to the auditorium stage and watched as students placed Christmas gifts—food, clothes, and toys—in front of the woman and her children. Young said that "the success of [his] project was contingent on the hearts of the students at Sterling College—and it was a success" (CC5B-3).

One course highlighted throughout this report is GD105: Foundations of Servant Leadership, which all students are required to take during their first semester at the College. During orientation, students enrolled in this course complete a service project and later write a reflection paper about the project. Projects typically involve clean-up or restoration efforts for local businesses or citizens (CC1C-5).

Students of the visual and performing arts also engage with the surrounding community. Art and Design majors are required to exhibit a portfolio of work during their senior year, and their exhibits are open to the public (CC5B-4). Music and theatre performances are also open to the public. In 2008, a community band featuring both students and community members was formed, and it plays a number of events each year on campus as well as in the community (CC5B-5; CC3D-22).

In addition, academic programs engage students with various constituencies through field trips and guest speakers. The following are examples from fall 2008:

- Charles Locust, current Assistant Chief of the United Keetoowah Cherokee Band from Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and Leroy Adair, a leader in the Keetoowah Band, spoke to Professor Doug Boardman's U.S. History and Government I class about the history of the tribe and the work they are currently doing with it.
- Education Department Lecturer Dean Mantz used guest speakers and classroom visits to allow his Technology in the Classroom students to view firsthand how excellent teachers enhance their curriculum with technology. Early in the fall 2008 semester, Mantz's students visited the classroom of a social science teacher at Sterling High School to see how the teacher uses interactive boards, Elmo projectors, and podcasts. Later in the semester, the Superintendent of the Kingman School District visited the College to speak with students about teacher expectations and technology integration. The following week, an educator from the nearby Lyons school district discussed the role of Webquest in education and provided instruction in the Webquest design process.
- Dr. Felicia Squires, Associate Professor in the Language and Literature Department, took two groups of students to Kansas State University for author readings. On the first trip, writer Meredith Hall read selections from her memoir *Without a Map*. On the second trip, students had the opportunity to listen to Charles Simic, the 15th Poet Laureate of the U.S. and winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize. Simic read selections from his poetry. Dr. Squires noted, "The benefit in seeing a writer read and talk about his/her work is that the writer is no longer just a name on the page, but has a real voice, personality and appearance. The Sterling students enjoyed Charles Simic's reading so much they were among the last to leave and joked about hitting the road with Simic. That's something you can't get just by having a student read the text aloud in class."
- Students in the Theology and Ministry Department were both inspired and challenged by fall 2008 trips. The Contemporary Trends in Christian Worship class traveled to Colorado Springs for the ENTER Worship Conference. The keynote speaker was Paul Baloche, who is known for composing the well-known worship song "Open the Eyes of My Heart." Students were also able to attend topical and technical sessions.
- Rev. Seth Svaty, pastor of the United Presbyterian Church in Sterling and part-time instructor at the College, drove to Friends University in Wichita with two of his Spiritual Formation students to hear speaker Dr. Alan Torrance, professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.
- David Harmon, Assistant Professor of Art, took students to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. On their return they were required to write a paper on one viewed work of art. Professor Harmon said, "This experience tied in nicely with the Art History course content, but it was also successful because students visually engaged with ancient through modern works of art in a professional setting. We plan these kinds of trips each semester to expose students to visual art in all realms."
- Exercise science professors Mary Ver Steeg and Shawn Reed and the twenty-eight students in the Exercise Science Senior Seminar class attended the KAHPERD (Kansas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance) state convention at Emporia State University. Ver Steeg says

exposure to this convention benefits students in a number of ways. "They learn how teachers and coaches and trainers network, and they learn what this particular organization has to offer its members. Plus, they come away with creative ideas for the classroom, recreation, or coaching."

- Professors in the Music Department often bring in artists as part of their mission "to enrich the educational environment and provide new musical experiences within the community." In fall 2008, Dan Duncan, trumpet performer, and Ron Chioldi, pianist, presented recitals as part of the Sterling College Artist Series. Dr. Brad Nix, Chair of Sterling's Music Department, says, "It is essential that music students attend live concerts given by reputable artists. Students can certainly listen to great classical artists on CDs and recordings, but there is something different about a live performance. During the course of a recital, students are exposed to a diverse repertoire and stylistic performance practices. They also see firsthand how a good performer communicates thoughts, feelings, and emotions to a live audience, and the extremely high level of performance ability required from today's concert artists." (CC5B-6)

Another issue addressed under various Core Components involves mission trips. Since 2003 students have served in eleven different countries besides the United States. Detailed information about a few of these trips can be found in resource folder CC3C-27. Mission work at Sterling College is enhanced by the service of Dr. Hank Lederle, Professor of Theology and Missions, who is highly involved in the coordination of mission trips. In addition to his academic background in the area, Dr. Lederle has served as an Associate Pastor and as a missionary to Malawi. To help students better apply knowledge on mission trips, he has developed a course titled TM107: Cross-Cultural Ministry (CC4C-4).

Student organizations such as Habitat for Humanity help the College engage with the community as well. In 2008, the College's Habitat chapter set a goal to be involved in at least three to four builds per semester (CC1C-9, pg. 7). The chapter works locally and throughout different regions of the country. Over spring break in 2009, students traveled to southeastern Minnesota to help build four homes. The student president of the chapter says, "I am involved in Habitat because I'm learning that when we physically help others in our community, we are actually sharing Christ's love with them, and then that builds a base for sharing his love with the entire world" (CC5B-7). The College's Habitat for Humanity chapter is an organization under the direction of the Student Government Association (SGA), which itself is driven by a quest to engage and serve. One of SGA's five main goals, set in fall 2008, is to "model service to the Sterling College body by organizing at least one service project each month" (CC1C-9, pg. 3).

Two annual activities also allow the College to engage with the local community. During Homecoming Weekend each fall, faculty, staff, and students participate in a town parade. Some athletic teams coordinate meals. For example, the pancake breakfast that is organized by the women's basketball team has become a staple of the Homecoming weekend. Students and alumni serve at a small carnival, and some student organizations set up informational booths to further engage with community members (CC5B-8). At Homecoming 2009, the College's new president will be inaugurated, and community members will be invited to festivities. Warrior Fest in early fall is another event that brings the College and the community together. At this event, local citizens are able to meet many of the College's athletes.

The remainder of this section addresses how the College meets Core Component 5B through its retention efforts, its charter school, its facilities, and the Sterling College Business Department.

Retention

Information obtained through discussions with students, administrative planning, and the research described under "Retention" in Core Component 5A has led to a number of actions. To demonstrate its commitment and capacity to meet students' needs and improve retention, the College has taken the following steps:

- The Academic Support Assistant's position was changed from part time to full time, allowing additional monitoring of students on academic probation.
- With funding from the Title III grant, the College hired a Director of Academic Effectiveness to research retention issues and make recommendations about how students could be better served. The individual who initially filled the position is now the Vice President for Student Life.
- In fall 2006 the College hired a part-time Registered Nurse as its Student Health Center Director. As enrollment and need for services increased, the position eventually became full time, though it was reduced to two-thirds-time during the budget reductions of February 2009 (explained under Core Component 2A). The RN has worked with the community's medical center to create student health forms that allow students to record the information they need in order to receive non-emergency health care without delay at the community facility (CC5B-9). The cost of student health services is funded by student fees.
- A Qualified Mental Health Practitioner was hired as a part-time Personal Counselor in fall 2007. The counselor has a working relationship with mental health centers in the area.
- The College hired a full-time Director of Career Services in February 2008.
- In January 2007, the College hired a full-time Chaplain for Student Life, and in August 2007, a Chaplain for Academic Life joined the chaplaincy. In 2009, the Chaplain for Student Life became the Director of Campus Ministries, and the Chaplain for Academic Life assumed all chaplain duties.
- In fall 2007, the Student Life Office expanded its foster family program to all non-athletes on campus. The foster family program was initiated by the Athletic Department many years ago. It allows families in the Sterling community to "adopt" students, giving them "a home away from home."
- To help address student needs, the Vice President for Student Life now coordinates weekly retention meetings with resident directors to better understand the issues that students face.

Sterling Academy

As explained under Core Component 5A, Sterling College and its Education Department consider the needs and interests of Sterling Academy's students when developing the Academy's curriculum. Moreover, the very existence of the Academy, with the College providing and maintaining the facility, underscores the College's commitment to working with the local school district and training excellent teachers who may stay in the community and serve the district. These examples address how the Academy serves external constituencies in the community. However, the existence of the Academy also demonstrates the College's commitment to serving its own students in the Sterling Teacher Education Program. While the Academy is only three years old, it has already built into its processes specific ways for Sterling College students to gain valuable experience while simultaneously being part of a unique collaborative effort between the College and the local school district. For example:

- Some methods classes for Elementary Education majors are taught in the Academy's facility, allowing teacher candidates to observe teachers demonstrating skills about which they are simultaneously learning (CC5B-10).
- During AR275: Elementary Art Methods, teacher candidates teach a lesson at each of the Academy's levels (CC5B-10).
- Some students are assigned to the Academy during their clinical teaching blocks.
- Education majors enrolled in professional courses may complete required observation hours at the Academy.
- Each year several Sterling College students earn Federal Work Study money by working at the Academy, allowing additional experiences in the classroom.
- Sterling College students majoring in Art, Music, and Exercise Science have worked with the Academy to complete internships, developing programs and thus gaining beginning teaching experiences in their fields.
- The Academy allows teacher candidates to be a part of programs and services offered by the local school district.

Facilities

Operating in a small town, Sterling College has many opportunities to engage with external constituencies—especially local community members—by sharing its facilities. While larger entities may work through the Campus Information Center and sign official agreements, many groups are able to schedule the use of facilities with a phone call, an e-mail, or a personal connection with a College employee. Often external constituents who responded to a survey about their use of Sterling College facilities, nine indicated that this approach satisfied their needs, and one indicated that it exceeded needs (CC5B-11).

Throughout the year, the College hosts a number of events and groups that demonstrate engagement with the local community and other external constituencies:

- The Rice County EMS Kids Camp and EMT Training
- The senior swimming group from the local community
- Kansas Wesleyan Church kids camp
- Local youth and public school athletic teams
- Invitational tournaments with area high school athletic teams
- Sterling Recreation basketball league
- Sports camps
- Sterling community theatre
- Striders Youth Track program
- Rice County Arts Council
- Kansas Christian Ashrams
- Local churches who need College facilities for various reasons
- Sterling Rotary
- Family reunions
- Southern Kansas Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Presbyterian Church weekend event for youth in the region
- High school reunions
- Public school piano recitals

- Office of Rural Development
- K-96/Kansas Department of Transportation meetings
- Santa Fe Bike Trail
- Local Masonic Lodge Easter event
- Overnight housing for College guests and alumni

In the 2008–2009 academic year, the College has hosted two events that engaged the College with a large number of surrounding communities. In fall 2008, over 1500 area students attended the seventh annual Santa Fe Children's Literature Festival held on the College's campus. This event features children's book authors who speak to area youth about their writing experiences. In 2008, students from seven surrounding school districts attended the event (CC5B-12). In spring 2009, the College hosted over 400 judges and high school students who competed in the West Kansas National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament. Students from nineteen high schools competed in the tournament, and over fifty Sterling College students and faculty members volunteered to help with the event. The College's Debate and Forensics coach said, "We had high school students speaking in every building on campus…An added bonus was the interaction of the contestants and their coaches with the community. They stayed in the area and were able to enjoy local dining and shopping when there were breaks in the competition. The event was very successful" (CC5B-13).

The Sterling College Business Department

One way the Sterling College Business Department demonstrates engagement and service with external constituencies is through its involvement with the Sterling/Alden E-Communities Program. This program, created through the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship tax credit pilot program in 2007, is the result of a collaborative effort involving faculty in the Sterling College Business Department, the City of Sterling, the local school district, the local Chamber of Commerce, Rice County Economic Development, and the City of Alden (a small community located just a few miles northwest of Sterling). The purpose of the program is to encourage entrepreneurial activity in the Sterling-Alden area and create jobs. Using a creative tax credit incentive, a $300,000 entrepreneurial fund was successfully created through the program. In order to secure the funds, the team members publicized the purpose of the program to area business leaders and other local citizens. These community members were encouraged to contribute to the fund, knowing they could receive back much of the funding through tax credits.

The response from the local community was expeditious and overwhelming. The $300,000 fund for community economic development became available within four months of the application process through the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship. Qualifying entrepreneurial projects, including start-up businesses, purchases of existing businesses, and expansion of existing businesses, may receive up to $45,000 through the program. Funding may be in the form of grants or low-interest loans.

One local entrepreneur has taken advantage of the fund by applying for the maximum loan amount and using it as part of a larger investment to revitalize a vacant downtown historic building. His plan is to turn the building into a hotel and restaurant, thereby creating new jobs for the local community (CC5B-14). As other up-and-coming entrepreneurs become aware of the availability and purpose of the program, leaders expect to see more applications from community members. In addition to faculty in the Business Department being instrumental in creating the program, one Sterling College student volunteered his skills to create a marketing Web site to advertise the availability of the funding[23] (CC5B-15). Applicants are encouraged to contact Dr.

[23] This Web site is not yet live. However, the student's design is located in resource file CC5B-15.

T.H. Kwa, Endowed Chair of Real Estate in the College's Business Department, for assistance in the application process (CC5B-16).

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- The College surveyed constituencies about facilities use to gather data for the self study. However, no such data had been collected previously. The College would do well to solicit feedback about facilities use more regularly.
- The self-study process has revealed that the College engages with constituencies quite well. An opportunity exists to leverage that strength with publicity. Recent staff increases in marketing and public relations have helped. The College is now challenged to continue generating publicity about its engagement, as more publicity will foster even more opportunities to engage and serve.

Strengths

- Service requirements in academic programs help students—and their sponsoring faculty and staff—stay **connected** in the local community.
- As demonstrated through their use of guest speakers and field trips, faculty understand the value of helping students engage with practitioners in their respective academic disciplines.
- As demonstrated through the goals and mission statements of the Student Government Association and its member organizations, the College's resolve to **connect** with constituencies through service has been embraced by the student body.
- The Student Life Office has been **future centered** by making data-driven decisions to better serve students and increase retention.
- The College **connects** with various organizations and groups through its facilities.
- Faculty in the Business Department have been **connected** with area leaders by sharing their expertise to foster economic growth.

Core Component 5C: Sterling College demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Most of this section addresses how the College meets Core Component 5C through its retention efforts, its charter school, its facilities, and the Sterling College Business Department. However, the College serves constituencies in other significant ways as well. The online program launched in fall 2007 is one example of how the institution has responded to an important societal need. As mentioned under Core Component 2A, the academic programs delivered through e.Sterling have been carefully chosen. Through its online delivery of a degree-completion program in Teacher Education/Elementary Education, Sterling College has responded to the teacher shortage in the state of Kansas (CC5C-1). Moreover, through e.Sterling the College has developed articulation agreements with two community colleges (CC2A-17) and is currently working to finalize agreements with other institutions. Students from these schools may transfer credits into the College's degree-completion program in Elementary Education.

All of e.Sterling's programs respond to non-traditional learners' needs or desires to further their education while meeting the responsibilities of adulthood. In fact, e.Sterling's very mission is to "deliver unique educational programs that unite societal needs and non-traditional learners" (http://www.online.sterling.edu/esterling/) (CC5C-2). One student in e.Sterling's Christian Ministries program is a single mother with a full-time job. She says that being able to study in the evenings after her son is asleep is "a great benefit" (CC5C-3). Other student comments related to the benefits of the College's online educational options are published on the "Testimonials" page of e.Sterling's Web site (http://www.online.sterling.edu/esterling/) (CC5C-4).

Adhering to commonly accepted transfer-of-credit practices is another way that Sterling College responds to constituencies who depend on it for service. As detailed under the Federal Compliance section of this report, the Registrar reviews and evaluates transfer credit equivalencies based on standards that are common to higher education and published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officials (FC01).

Students also play a major role in serving constituencies who depend on the College. For example, a number of students serve area churches by leading music during Sunday services and working with church youth. Occasionally, students majoring in Theology or Christian Ministries even fill pulpits as interim pastors or guest speakers. Through academic programs, students serve area communities in more structured ways. Students majoring in Athletic Training meet practicum requirements by working with athletic teams at area high schools. Students majoring in Business are involved in managing and operating the Quiznos restaurant across the street from the northeast corner of campus. Students involved in the performing arts provide valuable entertainment options for community members who, given Sterling's rural make-up, would otherwise need to travel to larger cities for such entertainment. Students who produce the school newspaper, *The Stir,* keep community members informed about college affairs, as *The Stir* is published as in insert in the town newspaper, *The Sterling Bulletin*. Sterling College teacher candidates have a significant impact on the local community. A former[24] member of the local school board has noted that "the classroom assistance provided by Sterling College students permits full-time faculty to focus individual attention on at-risk students" and that "student

[24] David Wilson, a business owner and leader in the local community, served on the Criterion 5 committee. He was a member of the local school board when he submitted information for the self-study report. He was replaced as a school board member in July 2009 when he decided against running for another term.

teaching requirements for Sterling College education students often provide Sterling-Alden USD 376 with valuable cost-effective teaching resources." He adds, "Recent graduates of the Sterling College Education Program often fulfill…substitute teacher needs at USD 376…during spring semester while interviewing for full-time teaching positions in the fall" (CC5C-5).

The remainder of this section addresses how the College meets Core Component 5C through its retention efforts, its charter school, its facilities, and the Sterling College Business Department.

Retention

Mentioned throughout this report is the College's success in improving the retention rate of students admitted on probation. Because of dependence on tuition for revenue, the College has traditionally admitted more students on academic probation than is ideal for building and maintaining a strong academic profile. However, the College has initiated a program to aggressively support these students once they are on campus. Daily monitoring reports, which are sent to coaches, advisors, faculty, and resident directors when students miss class or fail to submit assignments, have become a standard part of operations. Students admitted on probation are also required to take GD104: Academic Success and attend two hours of study hall per week (CC3D-4). Under Core Components 3D and 4D is specific information about how the program may be helping to improve the retention rate of these students.

The percentage of students who have been subject to academic action has decreased noticeably since the daily monitoring reports became a part of the academic support process. During the 2006–2007 academic year, the per-semester average number of students who were subject to academic action was 11.9 %. Since fall 2007, when the Academic Support Office began keeping daily monitoring reports, the per-semester average of students who have been subject to academic action has decreased to 7.68% (CC5C-6). In short, the willingness of faculty and staff to engage with and serve students is having a positive effect on retention.

Another factor possibly contributing to greater academic success is the Three-Week Academic Alert Program. The purpose of this program is to minimize the number of students who are academically at risk at the three-week, mid-term, and finals marks in a semester. A student who is academically "at risk" has a D or F mark and/or has two or more absences in a single course after three weeks. Students who are identified to be at risk receive a letter informing them of their status and stating the steps they should take to improve. Academic advisors and coaches receive a copy of the letter. An at-risk student must complete a Course Plan of Action Form, which must be reviewed and approved by his or her academic advisor, relevant instructor(s), and coach or activity sponsor. Either the Vice President for Student Life or the Vice President for Academic Affairs should also approve the plan (CC5C-7). Again, the engagement—and teamwork—of faculty and staff in this process underscores the College's commitment to helping students succeed.

In addition, the College has initiated a reward system for returning students who complete required return paperwork on time. Because many students were procrastinating about submitting financial aid paperwork before returning for fall semesters, the College decided to encourage students to complete their paperwork before summer vacation. Students were told they would receive a $20 cash reward for completing and submitting paperwork on time. The Financial Aid Director strongly supports the incentive program, believing it has indeed increased the percentage of students who file paperwork early. The program also helps students rest assured over the summer that they are ready to return for fall semester.

Sterling Academy

The Academy helps the College demonstrate responsiveness to constituencies in a number of ways:

- maintaining a site council composed of faculty, parents, and school district personnel that reviews the program and makes suggestions about how to better serve all involved parties
- maintaining a leadership council comprised of sixth-grade students that identifies and solves problems, provides leadership in interaction with the other students in the school, and makes suggestions and decisions (http://www.usd376.com/gs/academy/academy.html) (CC5C-8)
- incorporating into its operations and processes suggestions made by parents, students, faculty, school district personnel, and teacher candidates from the College
- encouraging parent volunteers and families to be an active part of the school program. For example, some parents visit the Academy regularly to read to students (http://www.usd376.com/gs/academy/academy.html) (CC5C-8).
- creating a school schedule that accommodates Sterling College students' course schedules
- being flexible and available so teacher candidates can observe or teach lessons in accordance with their course schedules

Also noteworthy is the College's willingness to sacrifice valuable campus space and maintain that space so the unique partnership between the institution and the local school district can exist. In regard to teacher preparation, the College believes that Sterling Academy is one of the greatest on-campus "laboratories" the state has to offer.

Facilities

Under Core Component 5B is information about how the College's facilities help it engage with organizations both within and outside of the local community. It is appropriate here to emphasize how the College shares its facilities, particularly with the local school district, for USD 376 truly depends on the College to carry out some of its co-curricular activities, especially those relating to athletics. Sterling College is in almost constant dialogue and communication with the school district, and the two parties have a strong relationship. College facilities used by the school district include the following:

- The track and football field—The local high school and middle school use the track for physical education classes and intervarsity football.
- Gleason Center—Each year the Sterling High School basketball invitational tournament is in the Gleason Center.
- Tennis courts—Occasionally, USD 376 uses the College's tennis courts for high school and junior high matches.
- Swimming pool—The local high school uses the College pool for track and cross country training as well as for swimming courses. The College's pool is the only indoor pool in Rice County that is available to the public.
- Soccer field—The charter school sometimes uses the soccer field and equipment for physical education modules.
- Spencer Auditorium—The high school occasionally uses the College's auditorium for major performing arts productions.

Of course, the primary constituents who use Sterling College facilities are faculty, staff, and students. When one looks specifically at the athletic and performing arts facilities, most are in use every night of the week, sometimes until the early morning. The College does, however, face challenges in providing enough space for its internal constituents, especially its athletes. Intramurals, intercollegiate sports, and physical education courses place many demands on the College's single gymnasium. This challenge highlights the importance of the College's close relationship with the local school district, as some athletic practices are held at the high school when the College gymnasium is in use. The College's softball team also uses the high school softball diamonds for practice and intercollegiate play.

Finally, the Mabee Library is open and free to the public. During the academic year, the library maintains operating hours that allow community members to use it even after the community library has closed.

The Sterling College Business Department

In 1999, Sterling College distinguished itself by becoming the only college in the nation to offer a program in Social Entrepreneurship (CC1C-3). An academic minor in the Business Department, the Social Entrepreneurship program was developed to train students to start and manage non-profit organizations, thereby working to meet the needs of a broken world. The minor started as an agreement between the College and Habitat for Humanity International. Initially, students with a passion for non-profit enterprise could compete for scholarships and become "Habitat fellows." Requirements for being a Habitat fellow included pursuing a minor in Social Entrepreneurship and working for Habitat for Humanity for a stipulated period of time after graduation. The relationship between the College and the organization has since diminished, but the Business Department continues to offer the minor for students who wish to make a difference through entrepreneurial service.

As addressed under Core Component 4C, the Business Department responded to its constituents in a significant way when it revised its curricula in 2006. Using a survey, faculty in the Business Department solicited feedback about the skills and knowledge that stakeholders believe students of business should be able to demonstrate upon graduation. One issue that quickly surfaced in the research involved the need for future business leaders to understand ethical principles as they relate to the business world. Consequently, the department created BU362: Ethics in Business (CC5C-9) and made it a part of the core curriculum for Business majors (GD01, pg. 73). Foundational Christian concepts were also more intentionally incorporated throughout the curriculum so that students could study them in the context of business situations and practices. More concentrations and minors, including Real Estate and the Externship, were added to the curriculum as well. In the Externship concentration, students take a series of courses through which they work on and in an actual business. Students majoring in Business must now choose at least one concentration.

To help develop students' abilities to deal with electronic information, the Business Department pioneered the College's use of a hybrid course format, forcing students to communicate electronically and familiarize themselves with communication systems they will encounter in job situations after graduation. The department's survey results further indicated that stakeholders view students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities to be especially important in the workforce. Faculty therefore developed and added to the core curriculum a course called Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, which is designed to help students analyze situations and address business scenarios requiring problem solving skills (CC5C-10). Not surprisingly, survey results also supported a need for teamwork training in the major. Consequently, a course in teamwork was developed and added to the core curriculum (GD01, pg. 72; CC5C-11).

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- As enrollment continues to grow, the College must face challenges related to providing adequate classroom space and facilities for co-curricular activities.
- The Business Department has modeled a curricular revision process that incorporates data obtained from outside stakeholders. As called for in the College's assessment plan, other academic programs must also involve stakeholders in their six-year program reviews.

Strengths

- The College's online learning division has focused energy on a degree-completion program in teacher education, thereby helping to address a teacher shortage in the state of Kansas. Moreover, the division is driven by a mission to "deliver unique educational programs that unite societal needs and non-traditional learners."
- Service and internship requirements in academic programs not only help the College respond to constituencies' needs and stay **connected**, they involve students in the process and consequently help them understand the importance of serving.
- **Learning-focused** academic support processes help faculty and staff stay **connected** with students.
- The Sterling Academy stays **connected** with the community and its students, utilizing parent volunteers and learning from its site council and student leadership council.
- The College's Business Department demonstrated its responsiveness to constituencies in 2006 when it made a number of curricular changes based on stakeholder feedback.

Core Component 5D: Internal and external constituencies value the services Sterling College provides.

Just as the College has examined Core Components 5A–5C through the lenses of its retention efforts, its charter school, its facilities, and the Sterling College Business Department, so too has it examined Core Component 5D through those lenses. Other evidence also underscores how constituencies value the College, however. Key among these examples are the College's academic programs and the social leadership that is provided by faculty, staff, and students.

The Foundations of Servant Leadership course that all students must complete during their first semester places students and course facilitators in service projects throughout the area. The director of the Lyons Recreation Commission appreciated students' service in fall 2008 when they spent a day painting buildings at one of the Commission's facilities. "Our commission is very appreciative of the concern these students and faculty showed while they were helping us maintain our facilities," said Junior Soeken, the Commission's Director (CC5D-1). The local elementary school has also benefited from the course's service projects. Sterling Grade School Principal Brennan Riffel writes, "The students at Sterling College really do demonstrate 'servant leadership' within the community. We cherish the relationship that we have with the students and staff at Sterling College and look forward to many years of working together as we strive to serve the students of Sterling Grade School" (CC5D-2). Michael J. Rajewski, Executive Director of Sterling Presbyterian Manor, writes:

> Students from the college participate in many facets of the manor operation. Some work as employees caring for the elderly in between taking classes at Sterling College. Others have done lengthy volunteer internships at the manor to give them the necessary practical experience related to their degree programs…Other students have done short term projects in art, music, and multimedia specifically for the benefit of the manor…
>
> I offer strong support for the continued success of the college and its current and future endeavors. The relationship between the college and the manor is unique for a city the size of Sterling but has proven to be a great asset to the surrounding community. (CC5D-3)

Constituencies have expressed admiration for the experiences and preparation students have gained through other academic courses and programs as well. In January 2009, for example, the Kansas Department of Education announced that two recent graduates of the Sterling Teacher Education Program (STEP), Maeghan Bishop and Andrew Wesner, were winners of the Kansas Horizon Award, which was given to only thirty-two of the state's educators during the 2008–2009 academic year. It is an award bestowed directly by the Kansas Commissioner of Education (CC5D-4). Another graduate of STEP, Kacie Rife, was named the Teacher of the Month at a Kansas elementary school in December 2008. The school's principal, Jan Inman, says, "I can only hope that we can have as many children go through her room as we possibly can and that she can one day mentor teachers to be as great as she is" (CC5D-5). In spring 2009 STEP senior Kelli LaRosch received recognition of a different sort when her children's book titled *What's Math Got to Do with Farming?* was published by Ad Astra publishing, which specializes in publishing books about Kansas (CC5D-6). LaRosch wrote the book for an assignment in ED357: Reading and Writing in the Content Area. She has received recognition from the Kansas Farm Bureau, and several public schools in Kansas have invited her to speak about her book and the math concepts

in it (CC5D-5). The local community's appreciation of STEP is evident in the number of Sterling College alumni who work in the Sterling school district. According to one former school board member, three of five USD 376 administrators were trained at Sterling College. Ten of eighteen faculty members in grades kindergarten through eight were Sterling College trained, and eight of twenty-three faculty members at the local high school graduated from Sterling College. The former board member says, "The school district depends on Sterling College's Department of Education as a pool for excellent teacher candidates" (CC5D-7).

As stated under Core Component 5B, one Sterling College psychology major affected a local family significantly through his required Service Seminar course. When Lazerrick Young learned of a Sterling family that had recently lost a father and grandfather, he rallied the campus community to shower the family with food, clothes, and toys at Christmas. The mother of the family said, "When Lazerrick contacted me about this project, I was amazed that a college student would even think of doing something like this. What has amazed me even more is that Lazerrick has kept in touch even after the project has been finished. He calls to see how we are doing" (CC5B-3).

Young's project and the success of STEP graduates demonstrate how constituencies value not only the College's ability to prepare students academically but also its dedication to character development and the training of servant leaders. However, constituencies' value of the leadership provided by the College involves more than its academic programs. For example:

- Three Sterling College employees have been elected by the community to serve on the local school board.
- In spring 2009, Dr. Arnold Froese, chair of Sterling's Behavioral Science Department, was elected as President of the Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA). Previously he had served for six years as the Kansas state representative to the association's Executive Committee. The former SWPA President said, "How fitting it is to recognize Dr. Froese's many years of fine service…He has the respect of so many throughout the region because of his proved leadership. The organization is fortunate to have him as its next President" (CC5D-8).
- In 2003, the Honorable Josh Svaty, a 2002 graduate of the College, became the youngest member of the Kansas House of Representatives when he was elected as the state's representative for the 108th congressional district. During his time in office, Svaty served on House committees for Energy and Utilities and Agriculture and Natural Resources. In July 2009, he was named by Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson as Acting Secretary of Agriculture. Svaty serves on the joint committee for Energy and Environmental Policy as well. He was the College's Baccalaureate speaker in spring 2009, and he is a member of the Sterling College National Advisory Council (CC5D-9).
- In 2008 the College was selected by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) as a Champions of Character Institution because of its commitment to using athletics as a way to build character in students. The College received the award in part because of its athletes' service in the local community and surrounding area (CC5D-10).

Such examples underscore how constituencies value the College's ability not only to "develop creative and thoughtful leaders who understand a maturing Christian faith" but also to model that mission through the actions of its faculty and staff.

Retention

Perhaps one of the greatest indicators that students value the College's services is found in recent enrollment trends. Until fall 2006, a relatively stagnant enrollment had been cause for concern for a number of years. From fall 2000 through fall 2005, the average FTE had been 446. From fall 2006 through fall 2009, the average FTE increased to 600 (CC2A-7). The increase in enrollment has many causes, not the least of which are a hard-working Admissions staff and a recruitment plan that engages faculty in the recruiting process, fostering greater campus understanding about the importance of recruitment. The College's online learning division has also helped increase the number of full-time students. Still other factors contribute to increased enrollment, and the College is proud of the success of its academic and co-curricular programs, many of which have been improved through revised curricula and renewed and energized vision from leadership. Increases in enrollment also suggest that the College as a whole is articulating and fulfilling a mission that resonates with college students.

The College must now work hard to sustain its increased enrollment by not only actively recruiting but also retaining students. Fall-to-fall retention rates have been consistently around 75% since 2000 (CC5D-11). Fall-to-spring retention rates are naturally much better, staying between 85–90% (CC5D-12). The College is hopeful that its aggressive approach to retaining first-time probationary students and other academically at-risk students, as described under Core Components 3D, 4D, and 5C, will help increase overall retention.

Faculty retention has improved in recent years as well. From academic years 2004–2005 to 2006–2007, the College lost an average of eight faculty members per year. Not all faculty retention issues were to due to dissatisfaction with Sterling College. Although the institution's low average salary for faculty is certainly an issue about which administrators are aware, some faculty members left because of retirement or because their contracts were not renewed. More recently, however, the faculty retention rate has improved dramatically. After the 2007–2008 academic year, the College lost only four faculty members, and it will have a 100% faculty retention rate from spring 2009 to fall 2009 (CC5D-13). Moreover, a number of faculty members have served the College for long periods of time. Of the current thirty-nine full-time faculty members, seven have been at Sterling College for twenty years or more. Seven others have served the College for at least five years. If faculty retention is an indicator, then the degree to which faculty value the College's services seems to be increasing.

Sterling Academy

The campus charter school is unique in its ability to benefit so many constituents, both internal and external. The College, especially the Education Department, values Sterling Academy as a recruiting asset because prospective students and their parents can see teacher candidates in action, utilizing skills and knowledge they are simultaneously learning in the classroom. Obviously, teacher candidates and their professors also value the "laboratory" that the Academy provides.

Officials of the local district value the Academy because it helps increase enrollment in the district and diversifies the services it can provide to its own constituents. A number of parents in the community choose to send their children to the Academy instead of the traditional elementary school because Academy students benefit from a great amount of personalized attention—from both teachers and Sterling College teacher candidates. The Academy's curriculum is designed around student needs and interests, so parents of elementary-aged students appreciate having the Academy in the community. According to a former school board member and community business leader, "Local economic development officials such as Rice County Economic Development and the Sterling and Lyons Chambers of Commerce appreciate the additional traffic

that Sterling Academy brings to town." Noting the Academy's trend-setting, innovative, and entrepreneurial nature, the same community member adds, "Sterling-Alden USD 376 and the Sterling community overall have benefited from the valuable public relations benefit of the Sterling Academy initiative" (CC5D-14).

The Academy's director points out that the state of Kansas also values the charter school, stating that "the state of Kansas has accredited us and worked with us to promote our ideas and establish our school. As one of the few elementary charter schools in Kansas, we have been given encouragement to continue excellence and innovation in our program" (CC5D-14).

Facilities

To address Core Component 5D, the facilities committee created a survey and asked many of the constituencies identified under the "Facilities" section of Core Component 5B to provide feedback about their experiences using Sterling College facilities. Representatives from eleven entities responded. Results of relevant questions are contained in Figure 5.1 on the following page.

Figure 5.1: Results of Campus Facilities Survey (CC5B-11)

Question	Responses
How well did/do Sterling College facilities meet your needs?	• They exceed my needs. = 0% • They satisfy my needs. = 90% • They do not satisfy my needs. = 10%
If Sterling College facilities did/do not meet your needs, what changes would you recommend?	• "We need an elevator for Wilson Hall." • "Some facilities need better care (i.e. more security when they are not in use, and better preparation and checking before the facility is needed. Also need consistent policies regarding use."
How did/does Sterling College identify your needs? (Respondents were asked to check all that applied.)	• Discussion by phone = 63.6% • Discussion by e-mail = 54.5% • A form = 18.2% • A meeting = 36.4% • Other: o "I reserve buildings through [the Campus Information Coordinator]." o "This is not consistent in my opinion. Not all areas of the College facilities have the same reservation process."
How did/does the scheduling process meet your needs?	• It exceeds my needs. = 10% • It satisfies my needs. = 90% • It does not meet my needs. = 0%
If the scheduling process did/does not meet your needs, what process would you prefer?	• "It would seem that there should be one person or office that every party should be directed to to reserve facilities for the entire College."
How satisfied were/are you that Sterling College understood or understands you or your group's needs?	• Very satisfied = 45.5% • Somewhat satisfied = 54.5% • Dissatisfied = 0% • Very dissatisfied = 0%
Regarding your use of Sterling College facilities, how do you feel the College handled/handles your special concerns or special accommodation needs?	• In a timely manner = 72.7% • Slowly but effectively = 27.3% • The College did not address my concerns or it addressed them ineffectively. = 0%
Please complete the following sentence by choosing one answer: Sterling College services and facilities have _____.	• remained the same during my period of usage = 45.5% • improved to meet my needs = 45.5% • become less effective/useful during my period of usage = 9.1%
Will you continue to use Sterling College facilities?	• Yes, consistently = 90.9% • Yes, infrequently = 9.1% • Possible = 0% • No = 0%
Do you have any additional comments about your experience using Sterling College facilities?	• "I think it is wonderful that SC allows the community to use its facilities, and I hope the cooperation always continues." • "It would be helpful to us if there was someone on hand when we first arrived who could show us the light switches and the thermostats, etc. Last year we didn't have heat in one building and way too much heat in the other building!" • "It just seems like not everyone at the College is in agreement on how facility use and reservation should be done."

Overall, constituents seem satisfied with Sterling College facilities, though the survey sheds light on improvements the College can make. One recurring theme in the responses involves the lack of stated policies about facilities use, specifically that the College does not have a single employee who coordinates the use of facilities. In fact, the College does employ such an individual. Coordinating the use of facilities is a duty of the Campus Information Coordinator (CIC) (CC5D-15). However, some constituents may not realize the College employs a person in this position. Moreover, some employees may not realize that the CIC maintains a master

calendar related to facilities use. The College could perhaps better serve both internal and external constituencies by making people aware that the CIC is available to help schedule rooms and other facilities.

Under Core Component 5B is information about two particular events that have been hosted at the College and have drawn large numbers of people: the seventh annual Santa Fe Children's Literature Festival in fall 2008 and the West Kansas National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament in spring 2009. The children's literature festival brought over 1500 area students to the campus, and the forensic tournament brought over 400 judges and high school students (CC5B-12; CC5B-13). That students from seven school districts attended the children's literature event highlights the value of the College's willingness to host it, as does the fact that such notable children's book authors as Jane Kurtz and Alane Ferguson chose to engage with the region by presenting (CC5B-12). Sterling College was chosen to host the forensic tournament in part because of its geographical proximity to competing schools but also because of its reputation for excellence in debate and forensics (CC5B-13).

The Sterling College Business Department

The Sterling College Business Department and its students recently opened a student-managed Quiznos restaurant franchise, which is located across the street from the northeast corner of campus (CC5D-16). When students were initially researching the Quiznos franchise, ideas for other business opportunities also began to surface. Working closely with the City Manager's Office, the College initiated a process whereby Dollar General began to consider Sterling as a potential store location. A commercial development firm eventually agreed to work with the College to develop a small strip mall that would contain both businesses. After months of collaboration with the College—specifically the Business Department and its students—the firm presented a plan to the City Planning and Zoning Committee and the City Commission, and the plan was approved. Quiznos and Dollar General opened in March 2009.

These businesses not only add jobs to the local community but also provide additional amenities for community and campus residents, who no longer need to travel to Lyons or Hutchinson (eight and twenty-three miles from Sterling, respectively) to buy some common items. The City of Sterling had not completed a project of such scale in decades. The College and its students have truly played a significant role in the economic development of the community, and the willingness of Quiznos and Dollar General to open stores in the community clearly demonstrates how they value the work of the College's internal constituents.

In addition, the Kansas Department of Commerce has demonstrated that it values the College and its services by partnering to spur economic growth in the region. Designed to "spur rural development" and serve as "a contact point for rural communities seeking assistance in the development of strategic plans to attract businesses, workers, and investment," the Office of Rural Opportunity (ORO), which is a division of the Department of Commerce, uses a campus office for its central region representative (CC5D-17). When ORO began considering Sterling College as the location for its central region office, some students helped research and gather basic demographic information about the small cities that ORO serves. In addition to having physical space for its office, ORO also benefits from the expertise of faculty in the College's Business Department. Kansas Department of Commerce Secretary David Kerr writes:

> In addition to donations of space and equipment, the College's staff and faculty have provided invaluable expertise on issues brought to us by communities—expertise that has enhanced the quality of service we provide to these communities. We are currently exploring ways for the College's faculty and

> students to collaborate with our Office on projects that will not only benefit communities, but also provide a learning opportunity for the students. (CC5D-18)

As a member of the Criterion 5 self-study committee, one Sterling College board member, who has also been a local community leader for a number of years, submitted to a Business Department faculty member the following remarks about how the local community values the work of the Business Department:

> As a Sterling College board member and a member of the Sterling community, it is my pleasure to provide an overview of the College Business Department…The most notable and noticeable effort has been the work [Business Department faculty and] students have done to bring the retail building to the north side of town that we anxiously await to be housed by Dollar General and Quiznos. The management of the Quizinos by SC students will be exciting to watch. Sterling currently has lost most of its retail businesses. Your efforts will do much to keep local dollars in our community. Your department's efforts to work with local community leaders to secure $300,000 in tax credits for local community entrepreneurs was huge and may well have tremendous impact on our community in the years to come. Your involvement in educating potential real estate agents in our community received good press in our local papers and will, I believe, positively affect our community in the years to come. As a long- time student and advocate of rural life and economic development, I am aware of your involvement in bringing the Office of Rural Opportunity to our campus. This project, too, will no doubt enhance our community's future and has already resulted in the College's recognition as a business school stronghold. I am aware of the new faculty that have been recruited to SC during the past three years. I am probably not so aware of the many curricular changes and improvements that have been made and are resulting in the above more obvious and recognizable accomplishments. Keep up the good work! (CC5D-19)

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRENGTHS

Opportunities and Challenges

- While faculty retention has improved considerably in the past two years, the College must continue to address the issue and invest the resources to retain quality professors.
- The College could better serve both internal and external constituencies with more consistent policies and information about scheduling the use of facilities.

Strengths

- Students, faculty, and staff provide leadership in the local community and surrounding area.
- Enrollment increases and retention data suggest that students value the Sterling College experience.
- Improving faculty retention suggests that current faculty value the institution.
- The Business Department and its students have created a **distinctive** partnership between the College and a major restaurant franchise, bringing much needed business to the local community.

Chapter Six
Federal Compliance

CHAPTER SIX: FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH, AND TUITION

Sterling College utilizes semester credits to document student learning. Credit and program length follow common practices used in higher education. The traditional instructional program contains fifteen weeks in which classes meet for instruction and final exams. The College's online learning division (e.Sterling) utilizes seven-week periods of instruction—six per year. Sterling College has used a 4-4-1 calendar pattern, moving from a 4-1-4 pattern in the 2007-2008 academic year. This change, establishing a May term and discontinuing Interterm, was approved on a two-year trial basis. May term is a three-week term during which students enroll in only one class, similar to the Interterm that was formerly offered. The College will return to a 4-1-4 term beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year. The *Sterling College Academic Catalog* clearly identifies the academic calendar, program length, and course requirements. Changes or additions to academic programs are approved through governance processes. These practices are consistent with guidance provided in *The Registrar's Guide: Evolving Best Practices in Registration*, which is a handbook published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officials (AACRAO) and used by the Registrar's Office (FC01).

Sterling College has begun to offer courses in both online and hybrid formats. To date, no institutional policy exists is to determine the credit-hour worth of these courses. Rather, individual departments have implemented their own methods. In the Business Department, one hour of class time and two hours of work outside of class per week is equivalent to one credit hour for both online and hybrid courses. Only online courses are delivered through e.Sterling. To determine the credit-hour worth of its courses, e.Sterling aligns the learning objectives of traditional, campus-based courses with the objectives of online courses. Within the Teacher Education Online program, a course's credit-hour worth is the same as the credit-hour worth of the same course offered in residence. However, the five-credit courses offered within e.Sterling's Theology and Christian Ministries programs are combinations of two traditional courses worth two-three credit hours each (FC02).

In 2008, Sterling College entered into an agreement with Teen Mania, allowing for courses offered through Teen Mania's Honor Academy to be transcripted as Sterling College courses (CC3D-20). Before the partnership was finalized, the College's Vice President for Academic Affairs and some faculty worked with Honor Academy instructors to develop course syllabi that ensure the integrity of the academic and transfer processes.

Tuition and fees are reviewed and set annually by the Sterling College Board of Trustees. Two fee structures have been implemented. The fee structure of the traditional campus is based on a flat tuition rate charged for 12–17 credit hours per semester. Additional fees apply for enrollment beyond seventeen credit hours. Part-time tuition is charged on a per-credit-hour basis. The tuition rates established by Sterling College are consistent with rates charged by other private colleges within the region (FC03). Tuition and fee charts are available in the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01, pgs. 19–20), on the Sterling College Web site (FC04), and in printed material sent to each student in a financial aid award packet (FC05). The tuition rates for e.Sterling, as approved by the Board of Trustees (FC06), are comparable with other online and adult degree-completion programs (FC07).

ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDS OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Informal complaints are addressed by the administrator closest to the complaint. The College attempts to resolve issues at the lowest level possible. However, formal appeals processes exist for student complaints that are more serious. Appeals processes for student-life-related issues are published in the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pgs. 21–22). Appeal procedures for academic-related issues are published in the *Academic Catalog* (GD01, pg. 46). Policies regarding sexual and other forms of harassment and misconduct are published in the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pgs. 27–28), *Faculty Handbook* (GD02, pgs. 30–31), and *Staff Handbook* (GD03, pg 3).

Student Life

A disciplinary spreadsheet is maintained by the Vice President for Student Life, documenting violations, appeals, and resolutions.

Financial Services

Regarding complaints to Financial Services, the action taken by the Chief Financial Officer is final and reviewable only by the President of Sterling College. Most complaints are resolved without formal appeal. Documentation of an appeal is placed in a student file.

Academic Affairs

For student appeals related to course syllabi and/or grading, students are encouraged to seek resolution first with the course instructor. Appeals related to academic policy and procedure are first presented to the Registrar. Issues unresolved at these lowest levels are taken to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and then to the Academic Affairs Committee, if necessary.

The Registrar files copies of academic warning, probation, continued probation, suspension and dismissal letters in students' files at the end of each semester. Student appeals of academic actions and resolutions are given to the Registrar's Office by the Office of Academic Affairs. The Registrar's Office maintains a spreadsheet of the "academic actions" each semester, thus allowing for easy tracking of these letters and appeals. Upon review of procedure, the Registrar's Office has developed a process to not only place the appeal information in the student's file but to also record the information in a log, including the date, student name, appeal, resolution, and location of documentation. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is developing a log of all appeals that they process. They are adding this to a log of academic misconduct/plagiarism cases, which is already in place.

Efforts are made in various offices to track student complaints and appeals, usually in the form of a document being placed in a student's folder. A weakness in this process is its inability to efficiently produce a record of student complaints. Consequently, the self-study process has led to various offices implementing complaint-recording procedures. Records of student complaints and appeals for the past two academic years are located in resource folder FC08.

TRANSFER POLICIES

The Registrar reviews and evaluates transfer credit equivalencies based on standards common to the field and published by AACRAO (FC01). Admissible transfer coursework completed at another college or university and awarded in semester credit hours is transcribed on a Sterling College transcript as semester credit hours. Credits earned under a quarter system are adjusted to .67 semester credits for 1 quarter credit.

Students must complete a minimum of 124 credit hours for a bachelor's degree. Eight semesters are typically required for degree completion. This is a common requirement for the awarding of a

bachelor's degree as evidenced through the graduation requirements of both public and private colleges and universities (FC09).

The College's official transfer policy is published annually in the *Academic Catalog*. The policy is printed in full below:

> Courses taken at another institution before the student enrolls at Sterling College will be evaluated by the Registrar in terms of the requirements at Sterling. All prior academic work must be reported for evaluation. Sterling College reserves the right to decline the transfer of courses completed at an unaccredited institution. For full admission to Sterling College, transfer students must have a 2.0 cumulative college grade point average (on a 4-point scale) of transferrable credit. If less than 12 semester credits have been earned at the college level, they must also have a minimum ACT composite score of 18 or SAT composite score of 1290. Transfer students who do not meet the minimum admission requirements may appeal to the Vice President for Enrollment Services to be considered for acceptance on probationary status.
>
> The policies for admission for candidates of advanced standing are as follows:
>
> 1. Transferring students will provide official transcripts to the Registrar of Sterling College for evaluation. Courses being transferred must have a grade of C- or better.
> 2. Remedial/preparatory level credits will not be accepted for transfer.
> 3. Transfer credit can be accepted for only one physical activity course per year. Sterling College does not give or accept credit for athletic participation.
> 4. No more than 65 transferred hours from a two-year college will count toward Sterling College graduation requirements.
> 5. Courses submitted for transfer from institutions not accredited by a regional accrediting agency will be accepted if one of the following criteria can be met:
>   a. a grade of C or better in a succeeding course taken at Sterling;
>   b. a passing grade on an examination for the specific subject; and/ or
>   c. a written notification from the Registrar and appropriate department head stating the equivalency of each course in question.
> 6. In order to graduate from Sterling College, transfer students must fulfill all requirements for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. They must meet all general education requirements and specific departmental requirements for the major as well as the residency requirements (24 of the last 30 credits taken at Sterling College). A minimum of six credits must be taken in the department of one's major to enable a transfer student to receive a Sterling College major; a minimum of three credits is required for a minor. (GD01, pgs. 15–16)

VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

Sterling College students who take hybrid or online courses are required to enter a username and password before they can access their electronic course spaces (FC10). In addition, some courses in the College's online learning division require proctored examinations (FC11).

TITLE IV PROGRAM AND RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES

General Program Responsibilities and Financial Responsibility Requirements

Sterling College participates with the federal government in disbursing federal financial aid to students. Therefore, the College applies to the Department of Education for authorization to participate in federal programs and files required forms. Supporting documentation available for review includes the Program Participation Agreement (PPA) (FC12) and the Eligibility and Certificate Renewal (ECAR) (FC13). Both documents support the United States Department of Education's eligibility determination and approval for Sterling College to participate in federal student aid programs.

During the 2007–2008 year, 542 students received some type of Title IV aid (excluding Perkins Loans), and the College distributed $4,386,280 in federal awards (CC2B-12, pg. 27).

Every other month Sterling College files a Student Status Confirmation Report with the United States Department of Education. This information is confirmed by the Registrar's Office and submitted by Financial Aid through their connection to the National Student Loan Data System. The College does not partner with Clearinghouse Services for Colleges and Universities at this time.

Each year an accounting firm audits the College's financial aid program as well as its general financial activity. The most recent audit completed was for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 (CC2B-12). The auditor's findings of significant deficiencies, as well as summaries of the College's corrective actions/responses, are printed in full below. The original document can be found at the end of the 2007–2008 audit report (CC2B-12). There have been no limitations, restrictions, or termination measures taken regarding the Title IV federal aid programs. However, due to a financial composite score of below 1.5, the College did secure an irrevocable letter of credit to comply with U.S.D.E standards (FC14). The letter of credit allows the College to be provisionally certified to disburse federal financial aid for a period of three years (FC15, pg. 2). This issue is addressed in item number 08-7 below.

Findings—Financial Statements Audit

Significant Deficiencies

Number 08-1	*Investment Reconciliation* *Year ended June 30, 2008*
Condition:	During our examination of College investments, we noticed the College was not reconciling the brokerage investment statements to the general ledger on a periodic basis.
Criteria:	Internal controls should be in place to provide reasonable assurance of accurate general ledger balances

Effect: Because of the failure to reconcile on a regular basis, investments could be misstated.

Recommendation: The Controller should perform a monthly reconciliation of the broker statements to the general ledger. This reconciliation should be reviewed and initialed by someone independent of the recording of investment activity.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College has placed into its internal control procedures a method reconciling the brokerage investment statements on a monthly basis and reconciling activity to the general ledger. These procedures and their results are reviewed monthly by the Chief Financial Officer.

Number 08-2 *Bank Reconciliations*
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: There is currently no evidence of a secondary review of the bank reconciliation and the monthly bank reconciliation is not being completed in a timely manner.

Criteria: Internal controls should be in place to provide reasonable assurance of accurate general ledger balance.

Effect: Because of the failure to reconcile on a regular basis, cash could be misstated.

Recommendation: The practice of reviewing the bank reconciliation after it is completed would greatly enforce the checks and balances necessary for strong controls over cash. We suggest that a member of management, such as the Chief Financial Officer, review the bank reconciliations for any unusual items, investigate and fully resolve any such items, and document his or her approval by initialing the form. We also recommend that all of the bank accounts be reconciled monthly to the general ledger.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College has implemented the formal review of each bank statement of reconciliation by the Chief Financial Officer separate from the clerk who receives them and the controller who reconciles them to the general ledger.

Number 08-3 *Capitalization of Collection Items:*
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: During the year ended June 30, 2008, adequate controls were not in place to accurately identify, catalog, value, and track non-

capitalized collection items (i.e. artwork, tapestries, museum pieces, etc.) In addition, these items were not disclosed in the Financial Statements or the Notes to the Financial Statements as required by FASB Statement No. 116.

Criteria: Accurate records and reporting are required to comply with FASB Statement No. 116.

Effect: Because of lack of adequate controls, items could be lost through theft or could be underinsured leaving the College under-reimbursed in the case of a loss.

Recommendation: To maintain proper control over non-capitalized collection items, we suggest that an inventory be taken of items on campus and off campus (on loan to museums) and an appraisal be performed of any potentially substantial items. These items should then be insured (by the college or hosting museum) against loss if they are of substantial value. The inventory listing should then be updated as new items are donated along with the donors' intent for use of the item. A yearly inventory should be taken to ensure all items are still accounted for. These items should be reported in the Notes to the Financial Statements. The note should include: a description of the collections, relative significance of the collections, the College's accounting and stewardship policies and a description of any items have been given away, damaged, destroyed, lost, or otherwise deaccessed during the period. These procedures will ensure that the non-capitalized collection items are properly tracked and reported in accordance with FASB Statement No. 116.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College is in the process of developing a policy and plan for tracking all non-depreciable inventories such as artwork, tapestries, museum pieces, etc., either housed within the College or on loan to another entity in order that Sterling College can meet the above recommendation and act in accordance with FASB Statement No. 116.

Number 08-4 *Reconciling Bond Payable Activity to General Ledger*
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: During our audit, it came to our attention that the bond statements are not being reconciled to the general ledger on a monthly basis.

Criteria: Internal controls should be in place to provide reasonable assurance of accurate general ledger balances.

Effect: Because of failure to reconcile, bonds payable could be misstated.

Recommendation: To reflect accurate bond payable account balances in the general ledger, we suggest that management record the activity monthly. This practice will provide a better review and reconciliation process over the outstanding note payable balance and thereby safeguard the College assets. We would also recommend that the reconciliation be reviewed and approved by a member of management.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College has put procedures in place to reconcile on a monthly basis bonds payable to the general ledger. These procedures and their results are reviewed monthly by the Chief Financial Officer.

Number 08-5 *Restatement Due to Prior Period Impairment*
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: After the results of a 2008 appraisal were received on a campus building, it was determined the value of the building was overstated, due to unexpected problems incurred during prior year renovation which added significant costs. The consequential impairment loss was calculated at approximately $2.5 million.

Criteria: FASB Statement No. 144 requires that long-lived assets classified as to be held and used be assessed for impairment if events or changes in circumstances indicate that their carrying amount may not be fully recoverable.

Effect: Assets in prior years are overstated necessitating a restatement in the current period.

Recommendation: We recommend that management develop and maintain a system to monitor information regarding the existence of potential impairment indicators. Such an analysis would include identifying whether there were any events or changes in circumstances that have occurred within the College, the industry, or the economy in general that would indicate that the carrying value of the asset would not be recoverable. Monitoring for impairment would prevent the after-the-fact restatement of net assets.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College has placed in its internal controls a system to monitor information regarding the existence of potential impairment indicators. Such an analysis includes identifying whether there were any events or changes in circumstances that have occurred within the College, the industry, or the economy in general indicating that the carrying value of the asset may not be recoverable.

Number 08-6 *Financial Statement Reporting*
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: Our firm has been asked to prepare the financial statements for the College; however, our firm cannot be considered part of the internal control structure of the College in regard to the preparation of the financial statements. Since the internal staff responsible for the internal controls over the external accounting and reporting function does not possess the proper expertise to apply those mandated accounting practices when preparing the College's external financial statements, we have considered this lack of expertise to prepare the financial statements a significant deficiency under the standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Criteria: Statement on Auditing Standards (SAS) No. 112, *Communicating Internal Control Related Matters Identified in an Audit*, indicates that where employees or management lack the qualifications and training to fulfill their assigned functions (e.g., the controller, finance director, chief financial officer or clerk is unable to apply GAAP or other comprehensive basis of accounting in recording the entity's financial transactions, preparing its external financial statements or note disclosures required in the applicable presentation, and the requirements associated with this SAS in order to provide financial statements to the external users that are not materially misstated). Since the auditor cannot be considered a part of the internal control mechanism over the issuance of the external financial statements of the entity, this creates a significant risk that needs to be addressed internally. If this internal risk does not have an appropriate mitigating control in place, this control deficiency will be considered either a significant deficiency or a material weakness. This SAS is applicable to all entities, regardless of their size or structure.

Effect: Based on the above information reflected in the auditing standard SAS 112, it is our professional judgment that the external financial statements could not be prepared by the internal staff of the College without a significant risk of material misstatement.

Recommendation: Management should have an understanding of how the financial statements are assembled and assist the audit firm with any possible missing or incomplete information. It would be to the advantage of management to obtain the appropriate training and expertise to better understand the preparation and issuance of their external financial statements. However, for the size of your entity, it may be cost prohibitive to secure either the necessary training and expertise or the additional staff to gain the knowledge and expertise necessary to assemble the College's external financial statements.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. As of July 1, 2008 Sterling College has added to its staff the position of a Chief Financial Officer. Financial statements are generated by the CFO regularly throughout the fiscal year.

Findings and Questioned Costs—Major Federal Award Programs Audit

Significant Deficiency

Number 08-7 *Department of Education—Eligibility—Financial Responsibility*

SFA Cluster
Year ended June 30, 2008

Condition: During the audit of the year ended June 30, 2008, we became aware that the College's financial ratio composite score would fail to meet the numeric standards of financial responsibility as set by the Department of Education. We expect the score to be below 1.0. The minimum score allowed is 1.5.

Criteria: In accordance with Federal Regulations 34 CFR 668.171, an institution administering Federal Student Financial Aid must obtain a minimum composite score of 1.5 to fulfill the requirements of financial responsibility. This composite score consists of three financial ratios named the Equity, Primary Reserve and Net Income ratios. However, when an Institution cannot meet the criteria, the Department of Education provides other ways to comply with this standard. One way the Institution can meet this standard is by obtaining an irrevocable letter of credit from a bank. In addition, the Institution must make Federal aid disbursements under the cash monitoring method described in 34 CFR 668.162.

Effect: The College could lose its ability to draw and administer Federal Student Financial Aid.

Cause: The current market conditions have resulted in large losses in the Endowment Fund. These losses have led to the financial ratio decline.

Recommendation: We recommend the College continue to strengthen its financial condition to improve its financial ratios. We have encouraged the College to negotiate an irrevocable letter of credit to be able to participate in the Title IV programs.

Management Response:
The College concurs with the auditor's finding and the circumstances behind it. Sterling College has made a series of strategic pre-emptive decisions in order to reduce its overall

operating budget due to the present economic downturn. Investment strategies are under evaluation and careful attention is being given to improving its financial condition within a turbulent and challenging economy. The College is prepared to negotiate an irrevocable letter of credit so that its participation in the Title IV programs will continue.

Student Loan Default Rates

Sterling College continues to maintain a lower than average default rate, well below criteria for necessitating sanctions. The most up-to-date documentation from the Department of Education indicates a 5.7% default rate and proposes no sanctions. Figure 6.1 shows the official default rates for the past three years.

Figure 6.1: Default Rates for Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) (FC16)

FY 2004	1.7%
FY 2005	2.4%
FY 2006	5.7%

Sterling College follows regulatory guidance with regard to entrance and exit counseling for borrowers, the reporting of timely and accurate enrollment information to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Student Loan Data Service, and the sharing of satisfactory academic progress information.

Through the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP), Sterling College also submits the default rates for its Perkins Loan Program. Figure 6.2 contains the default rates for the past three years:

Figure 6.2: Default Rates for the Perkins Loan Program (FC17)

FY 2004	14.29%
FY 2005	8.33%
FY 2006	16.28%

The College's Perkins Loan office is located within the Office of Financial Services. The various departments involved in financially assisting the students have been praised during its two most recent audits for careful management of student financial assistance funds. The College has demonstrated attention to the minor suggestions that have been made since 2003. Sterling College's financial aid programs have no limitations, suspensions, or termination actions.

Disclosure of College Crimes and Graduation Rates

In compliance with the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act, Sterling College annually reports crime statistics and completion/graduation rates. The Campus Crime Statistics are published in the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pg. 11) and are accessible to the community through the Sterling College Web site (http://www.sterling.edu/current-students/student-life/safety-security) (CC3C-12; CC3C-13). Graduation rates are distributed to current students via e-mail each year and posted outside of the Registrar's Office. Annually, the College reports to the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) its graduation rates, financial aid information, and other consumer information. This information can be accessed by the general public through the National Center for Education Statistics at http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator.

At the time of this report's publication, the College is in the process of including this link on its Web site.

Policies regarding sexual and other forms of harassment and misconduct are published in the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pgs. 27–28), *Faculty Handbook* (GD02, pgs. 30–31), and *Staff Handbook* (GD03, pg 3).

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies
The College's policies on attendance and satisfactory academic progress are published in the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01) on pages 33–34 and 39–42, respectively. The policies are reprinted in full below.

> *Attendance*
> Class attendance is required of all students. It is the obligation of the student to maintain good standing in the course. Absences, especially unexcused absences, may make this difficult.
>
> Faculty members will specify in the course syllabus at the beginning of the term their policies regarding absences or irregular attendance and will keep a record of attendance. Irregular attendance or excessive absences may result in the lowering of a student's grade or the student being withdrawn from the course. Activity sponsors will identify participants and their schedules for faculty records.
>
> Excused absences are those that occur because of illness, death in the family, or similar emergency, of which the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) has been notified. (Appropriate documentation may be required.)
>
> Absences due to college-sponsored activities are those relating to academic or co-curricular field trips (including athletic events and concert tours), conferences or the like. While faculty members are normally expected to work with students involved in such activities, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor **prior** to the absence according to the instructor's attendance policy set forth in their syllabus. Such absences do not in any case excuse the student from work required in the course.
>
> Students must complete course assignments missed due to any absence. When an exam, student performance, or laboratory is scheduled for the same time as the student activity, the student's first responsibility is to the exam, performance, or laboratory, unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance. Students are responsible for reporting absences to their instructors prior to class. In addition, an extended absence of more than 3 days must also be reported to the VPAA's Office. Students are responsible for all class work. (GD01, pgs. 33–34)
>
> *Satisfactory Academic Progress*
> Students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 in order to graduate. The College will notify students when their performance is not reaching that minimum level. Students who cannot reasonably expect to successfully finish their academic program will not be allowed to continue enrolling at Sterling College. The minimum academic standards used to determine satisfactory progress are listed [below].

The following standards are consistent with federal and state financial aid regulations and the NAIA athletic regulations and apply to academic standing, financial aid, and athletic eligibility.

Students must meet the following two minimum standards:

A. Students must complete at least 24 semester hours in a calendar year (two semesters and winter, summer, &/or May-terms) at an accredited institution.
B. Students must keep their GPAs above the limits that determine suspension as listed [on page 42 of the *Academic Catalog*).

The status of every student, whether full- or part-time, is determined after each semester grading period and is based on the following:

A. To avoid suspension, full-time, first-time freshmen MUST earn at least six credit hours in each of their first two semesters. Beyond that point, they must earn at least eight credit hours each semester. Transfer students must earn at least 8 credit hours beginning with their first Sterling College semester
B. Summer study may be used to make up deficiencies for athletic eligibility in either minimum hours or in GPA. However, students should seek the approval of the Registrar before they schedule summer work to be sure that the courses they take are appropriate and will be acceptable to the College.
C. Full-time students must complete the Chapel/Convocation requirement during every semester during which they are enrolled in the College. **Chapel/Convocation is a requirement for graduation**. See Chapel Attendance Probation and Disciplinary Action.
E. Additional rules apply to financial aid and athletic eligibility. For example, financial aid will NOT be continued after two semesters on Financial Aid Probation.
F. Students readmitted following academic suspension are not eligible for financial aid that semester.

Even these minimal standards may not be sufficient for some varieties of financial aid or for students wishing to attend graduate or professional schools. Students should seek advice from their academic advisors about the level of academic performance that is appropriate.

Any student who is not making satisfactory progress may lose financial aid and athletic eligibility and/or the right to continue academic coursework.

Academic Warning

If the academic deficiency can be corrected with only slight improvement in grades in one semester, the student is placed on academic warning. There are no restrictions of activity but the student needs to be aware of the GPA requirements for graduation.

Academic Probation

When a deficiency is serious enough to require significant improvement in grades for more than one semester, in order to achieve the GPA requirements for graduation, students are placed on academic probation. During the first semester that students are placed on academic probation, they are required to participate in GD104 and a study skills group in order to obtain the skills needed to be successful in college. Students on academic probation should be aware that their academic careers are in serious jeopardy. Some programs and activities, financial aid, and athletic eligibility may not be available. Students on academic probation will not be allowed to enroll in more than 13 credit hours.

If at the end of the first probationary semester sufficient academic progress still has not occurred, the student will again be placed on academic probation for the following semester. At the end of the second consecutive probationary semester if the criteria for satisfactory academic progress has not been met, academic suspension will result.

Exception:

Any student who achieves a semester GPA of at least 2.0 for 8 or more completed hours will be allowed to remain at the institution for the subsequent semester regardless of the cumulative GPA.

Chapel/Convocation Attendance Probation and Disciplinary Action

Just like regular class attendance, chapel/convocation attendance is required for all students. Sterling College provides at least two chapel opportunities per week, and three to four convocation opportunities each semester. Students are expected to attend chapel at least once per week during each semester of attendance for a total of 14, and two convocations each semester of attendance. Students who have not met the chapel/convocation attendance requirements in the semester immediately prior to the current semester will be placed on Chapel/Convocation Attendance Probation. Students must meet with the Chaplain for Academic Life to make arrangements to attend additional chapel services or convocations during the current semester in order to remove prior semester attendance deficiencies. The current semester chapel/convocation attendance requirements must be met BEFORE additional chapel services or convocations can be used to remove a prior semester's attendance deficiency.

After meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chaplain for Academic Life, a student placed on chapel/convocation attendance probation for a second consecutive semester may have limitations placed on them concerning their participation in the following activities until chapel/convocation deficiencies are made up:

- Student Government
- Leadership training

- Athletic competitions
- Drama performances
- Music performances
- Student ministries
- Praise band
- Intramural activities
- Debate/Forensics teams
- Honors program

Students who do not meet chapel/convocation attendance requirements for three semesters, regardless of whether or not it is consecutive or cumulative, may be suspended from Sterling College for one semester. After one semester, students wishing to be readmitted to Sterling College must meet with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chaplain for Academic Life prior to pre-enrollment. Some programs and activities, financial aid, and athletic eligibility may not be available. Further unsuccessful chapel/convocation attendance beyond this point will result in immediate and permanent suspension from Sterling College. (GD01, pgs. 39–42)

ADVERTISING AND RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Sterling College provides consumer information regarding its affiliations in advertising and recruitment materials. The *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01) is the only document in print that identifies Sterling College's affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission. Information about the affiliation is found on pages 3 and 9 of the 2009-2010 *Catalog*, and the information is stated in accordance with the guidance provided in Chapter 8, Section 3, page 4 of the Higher Learning Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation*. The College's Web site also includes an affiliation statement, including the HLC's telephone number and Web address (http://www.sterling.edu/about-sterling/mission-and-vision) (CC1A-17). Sterling College publishes a notice of non-discrimination in the *Sterling College Academic Catalog* (GD01, pg. 3), the *Student Handbook* (GD08, pg. 3), and its Application for Admission (FC18). It also publishes a notice on its Web site via the Web publication of these documents.

Of course, the College's viewbook is an important piece of advertising literature (FC19). Academic and co-curricular programs are clearly identified in the viewbook, as is the College's Christian mission.

Throughout the development and publication of advertising and recruitment materials, the College presents itself clearly and accurately.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES AND WITH STATE REGULATORY BODIES

Two of the College's academic programs hold professional accreditation. Each program is currently in good standing with its outside accrediting agency.

Sterling Teacher Education Program

The Sterling Teacher Education Program is accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education (KSDE) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE granted the Sterling College Teacher Education Program accreditation in 2007 (FC20). In January 2008, the Kansas State Department of Education recommended "Continuing Accreditation" through December 31, 2012 (FC21). Both entities will conduct their next site visits in the spring of 2012.

Athletic Training Education Program

The Sterling College Athletic Training Education Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). On February 24, 2007, CAATE awarded accreditation to the Athletic Training Education Program, noting that Sterling College had "completed a comprehensive accreditation review and demonstrated compliance with the nationally established standards" (FC22). The Athletic Training program's next comprehensive review will occur during the 2010–2011 academic year.

OTHER—TITLE III STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS PROGRAM GRANT

On August 27, 2004, Sterling College was awarded a $1.75 million Title III, Strengthening Institutions Program Grant. This five-year grant has a fiscal year that begins October 1 of a given year and ends September 30 of the following year. Currently, the College is nearing the completion of the fifth and final year of the grant. The College has been, and remains, in full compliance with all Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) regarding its Title III funding. Each year the College has successfully completed all Annual Performance Reports as required through Title III and the Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service (IDUES) reporting system (CC1E-9).

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Introduction, Sterling College's self study process had two main purposes and a number of other goals. Naturally, one of the main purposes was to examine the College's success in meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation criteria. The other was to identify opportunities for improvement.

Other goals of the self study are listed below:

1. Identify opportunities to help the College grow and thrive.
2. Improve organizational understanding about the importance of continuous improvement processes.
3. Create and implement more continuous improvement processes.
4. Foster a stronger organizational commitment to alignment between institutional activities and the mission statement.
5. Foster a stronger organizational commitment to a culture of evidence ("prove" that the institution is doing what it claims to do).
6. Improve data-collection processes to better inform continuous improvement efforts, decision-making, resource acquisition, and resource allocation.

Before the College even began its self-study process, it realized that it needed to implement an assessment plan that involved the entire organization. While a thoughtful and efficient plan had provided the College with valuable data about student learning for a number of years, leadership understood that an *institutional* assessment plan was necessary for fostering accountability and transparency across the organization. Consequently, the College adopted a more comprehensive assessment plan in fall 2008. For the first time, leaders in every unit on campus were asked to craft mission statements and goals that align with the mission of the College, and they will be asked to analyze progress toward those goals on an annual basis. First-year compliance was remarkably high—all academic departments submitted end-of-year reports, and all but four non-academic units crafted mission statements and intended-outcome statements. (Leaders in non-academic departments will analyze success toward those outcomes for the first time in fall 2009.) The College's new assessment plan, thoughtfully written with the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation criteria in mind yet tailored for Sterling College's unique environment, has helped the College meet goals 2–6 above.

As recorded in the "Summary of Opportunities, Challenges, and Strengths" sections throughout the report, the self-study process has also allowed the College to meet goal #1. Self-study steering committee meetings as well as sub-committee meetings have generated discussion about initiatives the College should consider in order to grow and thrive.

The "Summary of Opportunities, Challenges, and Strengths" sections also contain information about how the Commission's four cross-cutting themes are evident in the College's operations and planning. As the whole of this report indicates, Sterling College is indeed connected, distinctive, learning focused, and future centered.

Therefore, Sterling College respectfully requests that the Higher Learning Commission reaccredit the institution for a period of ten years.

Appendices

CANADA
Hudson Bay
Labrador Sea
Montreal
Toronto
Boston
Detroit
Chicago
New York
Philadelphia
Washington, D.C.
UNITED STATES
Atlanta
Dallas
Houston
Gulf of Mexico
Miami
BAHAMAS
Mexico City
Caribbean Sea

Appendix A
Institutional Snapshot

SECTION 1: STUDENT DEMOGRAPHY HEADCOUNTS

1A: Undergraduate Enrollments by Class Levels

Class	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009†
Freshman	180	180	259	238	216	259
Sophomore	81	101	118	119	130	123
Junior	83	75	80	110	102	115
Senior	93	86	84	86	122	117
Other*	10	33	16	11	6	8
High School	40	41	50	39	38	41
Online				16	39	59
Total enrollment	487	516	607	619	653	722

**Guests & post-bacc Education Certificate completers*
† Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.

1B: Undergraduate Students by Degree Seeking and Non-degree Seeking Status

Degree Seeking Status						
Men	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009***
Nonresident alien	7	3	3	4	6	5
Black, non-Hispanic	24	31	49	45	36	36
Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	6	6	6	7	9	7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	3	5	5	7	7
Hispanic	13	16	19	23	21	27
White, non-Hispanic	173	172	214	223	235	262
Race/ethnicity unknown	2	5	7	12	5	10
Total men	227	236	303	319	319	354
Women	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009***
Nonresident alien	2	1	0	0	1	2
Black, non-Hispanic	5	7	8	11	13	9
Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	4	1	3	5	5	5
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	2	0	1	1
Hispanic	10	10	13	17	15	19
White, non-Hispanic	189	184	210	200	249	276
Race/ethnicity unknown	0	3	3	17	9	8
Total women	210	206	239	250	293	320
Degree seeking total	437	442	542	569	612	674
Non-degree Seeking Status						
Men	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009***
Nonresident alien	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black, non-Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	1
Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	0	0	1	1	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	1	1	0	0	0
White, non-Hispanic	21	26	29	21	20	15
Race/ethnicity unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total men	21	28	31	22	20	17
Women	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009***
Nonresident alien	2	0	0	0	0	0
Black, non-Hispanic	0	0	1	2	2	2
Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hispanic	0	0	0	1	0	0
White, non-Hispanic	27	46	32	25	18	28
Race/ethnicity unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total women	29	46	34	28	21	31
Non-degree seeking total	50	74	65	50	41	48
Total undergraduates	487	516	607	619	653	722
** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*						

1C: Age Range of Undergraduate Students

Age Range	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009*
Age 24 or younger	456	468	565	568	592	629
Age 25 or older	22	41	32	51	61	51
Unknown	9	7	10			42
Total undergraduates	487	516	607	619	653	722
** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*						

1D: Credit-seeking Students by Residency Status

Residency Status	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007*	Fall 2008*	Fall 2009†
In-State Resident	279	305	281	322	355	426
Out-of-State Resident	197	207	323	277	252	288
Non-US Resident	11	4	3	4	7	8
Total students	487	516	607	603	614	722
**Numbers do not include e.Sterling. These students do not come to campus or to a site.* *† Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*						

SECTION 2: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

2A: Number of Applications, Acceptances, and Matriculations for Entering Students

Undergraduate Freshmen Students						
Status	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009***
Applied	605	572	764	804	754	953
Completed Applications	348	327	539	476	468	559
Accepted	317	315	515	466	431	525
Enrolled	148	133	202	169	152	181
% of completed applcations to accepted	91%	96%	96%	98%	92%	94%
% of accepted to enrolled	47%	42%	39%	36%	35%	34%
Undergraduate Transfer Students						
Applied	144	143	168	218	217	239
Completed Applications	88	95	98	101	95	141
Accepted	85	95	93	94	88	139
Enrolled	45	46	63	71	58	73
% of completed applications to accepted	96%	100%	95%	93%	93%	96%
% accepted who enroll	54%	48%	68%	76%	66%	53%
** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*						

2B: Average ACT Score of Admitted Undergraduates

	Fall 2004	**Fall 2005**	**Fall 2006**	**Fall 2007**	**Fall 2008**	**Fall 2009**
Average ACT score	21.6	21.7	21.5	20.9	21.0	21.5
Number reporting ACT score	129	127	195	162	150	175

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS

3A: Percentage of Students Applying for Financial Aid

Fiscal Year	Total number of undergraduates in the FY (full-time degree-seeking)	Number of undergraduates who applied* for any type of financial assistance (full-time degree-seeking)	Percentage who applied for any financial assistance
FY 2003	434	434	100%
FY 2004	449	449	100%
FY 2005	447	447	100%
FY 2006	534	534	100%
FY 2007	563	563	100%
FY 2008	583	583	100%
* Includes Sterling College application for institutional aid			

3B: Students Financial Aid by Type

Fiscal Year	Number of Undergraduates who received any type of financial assistance (full-time degree-seeking)	Percentage of Undergraduates who received any type of financial aid compared to total enrollment	Percentage of total enrollment who received assistance in the named category*		
FY 2003	434	100%	Loans	345	79.49%
			Work Study	109	25.12%
			Scholarship/Grants	434	100%
FY 2004	449	100%	Loans	383	85.30%
			Work Study	115	25.61%
			Scholarship/Grants	449	100.00%
FY 2005	447	100%	Loans	398	89.04%
			Work Study	101	22.60%
			Scholarship/Grants	447	100.00%
FY 2006	534	100%	Loans	463	86.70%
			Work Study	115	21.54%
			Scholarship/Grants	534	100.00%
FY 2007	563	100%	Loans	479	85.08%
			Work Study	96	17.05%
			Scholarship/Grants	563	100.00%
FY 2008	583	100%	Loans	549	94.17%
			Work Study	93	15.95%
			Scholarship/Grants	583	100.00%
* Loan amount includes Stafford Subsidized, Stafford Unsubsidized, PLUS, and Alternative Scholarship/Grant amount includes institutional scholarships, federal grants, and state grants					

3C: Tuition Discount Rates

Academic Year	Level	Sterling College Institutional Financial Aid Dollars Awarded for Tuition	Payments of Tuition Expected of Students and their External Aid	TDR = Total Institutional Financial Aid dollars as a proportion of income
2003-2004	Undergraduate	$3,527,947	$5,386,117	65.50%
2004-2005	Undergraduate	$3,898,573	$5,784,381	67.40%
2005-2006	Undergraduate	$3,706,237	$5,818,606	63.70%
2006-2007	Undergraduate	$4,474,213	$7,236,114	61.83%
2007-2008	Undergraduate	$4,402,236	$8,388,208	52.48%
2008-2009	Undergraduate	$4,979,850	$9,386,406	53.05%

SECTION 4: STUDENT RETENTION AND PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

4A: Student Retention by Race/Ethnicity

First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking, Fall Entering Undergraduate Students									
	Nonresident Alien			Black, non-Hispanic			Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native		
Year	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall
2003	1	1	100%	25	3	12%	3	1	33%
2004	1	0	0%	14	7	50%	5	2	40%
2005	0	0	0%	9	4	44%	2	1	50%
2006	1	1	100%	21	6	29%	2	2	100%
2007	1	1	100%	21	10	48%	5	2	40%
2008*	0	0	0%	11	8	73%	8	2	25%
	Asian/ Pacific Islander			Hispanic			White, non-Hispanic		
Year	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall
2003	0	0	0%	3	3	100%	93	64	69%
2004	0	0	0%	6	4	67%	109	72	66%
2005	1	0	0%	6	3	50%	103	80	78%
2006	4	1	25%	10	2	20%	156	93	60%
2007	3	3	100%	8	5	63%	117	79	68%
2008*	0	0	0%	8	6	75%	122	77	63%
	Race/Ethnicity Unknown								
Year	Total Entering	Total Returning	% Returning Next Fall						
2003	0	0	0%						
2004	1	1	100%						
2005	5	3	60%						
2006	3	1	33%						
2007	9	6	67%						
2008*	1	0	0%						
** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*									

4B: Total College One-Year Retention Cycle

Headcount	Graduates	Returning	Semester	Graduates	Returning	One-Year
Fall 2003	Fall/Winter	Spring 2004	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2004	Retention
495	32* & 44 HS	371	89%	64*	279 (-3)*	78%
					*Return '04 grads	
Fall 2004	Fall/Winter	Spring 2005	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2005	Retention
487	28* & 38(HS)	375	89%	67*	264	75%
Fall 2005	Fall/Winter	Spring 2006	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2006	Retention
516	34* & 41(HS)	399	90%	56	282	76%
Fall 2006	Fall/Winter	Spring 2007	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2007	Retention
607	25* & 50(HS)	458	86%	63+3	327	70%
Fall 2007	Fall/Winter	Spring 2008	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2008	Retention
603	58*	485	89%	58	360	74%
Fall 2008	Fall/Winter	Spring 2009†	Retention	Spring-Summer	Fall 2009†	Retention
614	29/38 (HS)	510	93%	80*	397	85%
	*grad/completers			*grad/completers		
† Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.						

4C: Number of Graduates by College Program

CIP Designation	2003 - 04	2004 - 05	2005 - 06	2006 - 07	2007 - 08	2008 - 09
Biological & Physical Science	5	7	7 (1)	4	4 (1)	6
Business	8	8	16 (1)	10	10	27 (1)
Communication/Fine Arts	16 (2)	13	6	23	14 (3)	11
Education/Library Science	16	22	9	10	8	5
Fitness (Exercise Science)	2 (1)	6	6	4	5	18 (2)
Health (Athletic Training)	2	0	2	2	1	3
Humanities/Interdisciplinary (History/Language-Literature/Theology-Ministry)	24 (3)	17 (3)	23 (2)	12 (1)	14	16 (3)
Mathematics/Computer Science	1 (1)	2 (1)	6 (2)	4 (3)	0	4
Psychology	5	5	2	5	1	6 (1)
Total graduates	79 (7)	80 (4)	77 (6)	74 (4)	57 (4)	96 (7)
(#) *represents second majors*						

4D: Licensure Examinations and Pass Rates

Department/Exam	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Education Department/Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Athletic Training Department/Board of Certification (BOC)	NA	50%	100%	50%	100%

SECTION 5: FACULTY DEMOGRAPHY

5A: Faculty by Highest Degree

Degree Level	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10*
Doctorate or terminal/Full-time	21	23	18	16	17	17
Doctorate or terminal/Part-time	7	2	2	5	3	4
Master's/Full-time	16	17	19	21	22	21
Master's/Part-time	10	7	6	5	6	10
Bachelor's/Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bachelor's/Part-time	8	9	9	6	9	8
Associates	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	62	58	54	53	57	61

** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*

5B: Faculty by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Rank

Faculty by Race/Ethnicity												
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10*	
Ethnicity/Race	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**
Nonresident alien	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0
Black, non-Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	0
Hispanic	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
White, non-Hispanic	36	23	37	19	35	16	33	16	36	18	35	22
Race/ethnicity unknown	0		0		0		0		0		0	0
Total	37	25	37	21	37	17	37	16	39	18	39	22

Faculty by Gender												
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10*	
Gender	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**	**FT**	**PT**
Men	23	17	22	15	22	12	25	7	27	11	29	12
Women	14	8	15	6	15	5	12	9	12	7	10	10
Total	37	25	37	21	37	17	37	16	39	18	39	22

Full-time and Part-time Faculty Rank						
Rank	**2004-05**	**2005-06**	**2006-07**	**2007-08**	**2008-09**	**2009-10***
Professor/Full-time	4	4	5	5	5	5
Professor/Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professor/Full-time	10	11	10	10	9	12
Associate Professor/Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Professor/Full-time	17	17	18	22	25	22
Assistant Professor/Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructor/Full-time	4	4	3	0	0	0
Instructor/Part-time	15	4	0	0	0	0
Lecturer/Full-time	2	1	1	0	18	22
Lecturer/Part-time	10	17	17	16	0	0
Other						
TOTAL THIS REPORT	62	58	54	53	57	61

** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*

5C: Faculty (Full-time/Part-time) by Program per CIP Codes

CIP Designation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10*
Biological & Physical Science	4	4	3	3	5	5
Business	5	4	7	7	5	5
Communication/Fine Arts	19	17	9	9	7	7
Education/Library Science	7	7	10	9	7	11
Health (Exercise Science & AT)	6	6	7	7	8	9
Mathematics/Computer Science	7	6	3	3	4	2
Psychology	3	3	2	2	2	2
Humanities (History/Language-Literature/Theology-Ministry	11	11	13	13	19	20
Total for Academic Year	62	58	54	53	57	61
** Numbers are unofficial at the time of this report's publication.*						

SECTION 6: AVAILABILITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Computer Labs That Support Student Learning*

#	Name	Bldg/Hall	Dept.	# Stations	Purpose
1	Thompson Lab	Thompson Hall	I.T. Dept.	21	General purpose lab (for student/faculty use)
2	Cooper Laptop Lab	Cooper Hall	I.T. Dept.	20	Wireless laptop lab (for student/faculty use)
3	Education Lab	Evans Hall / Charter School	Educ.	7	Lab/software for education majors
4	Art Lab	Art/Comm. Building	Art	14	Art and graphic design
5	Communications Lab	Art/Comm. Building	Comm.	5	Video/Communications Production
6	Mabee Computer Lab	Mabee Library	Library	19	General purpose lab (for student/faculty use)
7	Mabee Pavilion Lab	Mabee Library	Library	11	Library/Research
8	Academic Support Lab	Thompson Hall	Academic Affairs	5	Students needing academic support
9	Writing Lab	Thompson Hall	Academic Affairs	7	Writing assistance for Students
10	Music/Keyboarding Lab	Wilson Hall	Music	3	Electronic Piano/Keyboarding
11	Student Union Lab	Student Union	Student Life	3	General purpose lab (for student use)
12	Biology Resource Lab	Thompson Hall	Biology	2	Research and Resources
13	STIR/SCOR	Mabee Library	Comm.	6	Campus Newspaper and Online Radio Station
14	SCOT	Spencer Hall	Comm.	1	Online Television
15	Evans Lab	Evans Residence Hall	Student Life	5	General purpose lab (for student use)
16	McCreery Lab	McCreery Residence Hall	Student Life	5	General purpose lab (for student use)
17	Campbell Lab	Campbell Residence Hall	Student Life	5	General purpose lab (for student use)
18	Kilbourn Lab	Kilbourn Residence Hall	Student Life	5	General purpose lab (for student use)
19	Douglas Men's Lab	Douglas Men's Residence Hall	Student Life	3	General purpose lab (for student use)
20	Douglas Women's Lab	Douglas Women's Residence Hall	Student Life	3	General purpose lab (for student use)

*All computer labs are equipped with the following:

- CD-recordable drives (with several locations offering DVD recordable drives)
- USB connectivity for personal flash drives, digital cameras, etc.
- High-speed Internet Access
- Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- A variety of other electronic resources and software packages (appropriate to the purpose and use of the lab)
- Laser printing capabilities (except for the Student Union Lab)

Summary of Progress

Through both local funds and funds available through a five-year Department of Education Title III grant, Sterling College has made significant improvements over the past few years toward the research, purchase, acquisition, installation, integration, and professional development of/for educational technologies that ultimately and profoundly impact teaching and learning. Over those past few years, Sterling College has revolutionized many areas of the campus, as briefly outlined below.

- Multiple enhanced academic computer labs
- Expanded online library resources and databases
- Improved classroom technologies
- Increased access to educational technologies within residence halls
- Stronger technological infrastructure for technology services
- Streamlined system for monitoring, service, and support

Computer Labs/Centers

Sterling College has approximately 150 computers available for access within 20 computer labs/centers available for students on campus, with all of these (except for residence hall labs) available to faculty and staff as well. These labs range in size, as well as configuration, with many supporting individual departments or curriculums, while several others are available for general student use. Beyond the simple availability of computers, each lab offers high-speed access to the Internet, the Microsoft Office suite of products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.), a variety of other software packages and resources, laser printing capabilities, USB connectivity for personal flash-drives, and the ability to burn CDs. (See Computer Lab Inventory attached for more detailed information.)

Library Sites

Mabee Library offers two areas of computer technology available for faculty, staff, student, and public use. The Mabee Computer Lab houses 19 networked workstations within a classroom format, complete with a ceiling-mounted projector, and high-speed access to the Internet as well as other library-based resources and databases.

The Mabee Pavilion Lab has an array of 11 networked workstations, having the same availability to resources as the main lab, but are strategically located in the pavilion area of the lobby of the library, highlighting their use for investigation and research.

Classroom Technology

While the initial focus was on a strong technological infrastructure from which to build on, significant progress has been made over recent years within the areas of classroom technology. These include, but are not limited to:

- *New workstations*—In the fall of 2008, all full-time faculty were presented with new wireless laptop setups (DVD burners, secondary monitor, docking station, wireless keyboards/mice, carrying cases, flash-drives, etc.), paired with appropriate professional development on their use.
- *Recycled workstations*—Existing workstations that continued to meet minimum specification technology standards were "recycled" into other areas of use on campus for users (adjunct/part-time faculty and staff) who were previously using outdated/ineffective workstations, or who previously had no such access at all.
- *Ceiling-Mounted LCD Projectors*—Through a recent initiative in the summer of 2009, all classrooms are now equipped with ceiling-mounted, LCD projectors for use by faculty and students.
- *Laser Printers*—Access to laser printers are available in all faculty/departmental offices, as well as classrooms that double as computer labs.
- *Wireless Access to Network Services and the Internet*—Through the wireless campus initiative, 100% of classrooms on campus have both wired and wireless access to network services and the Internet for both faculty and students.

Residence Halls

Each residence hall has 3–5 computers and a laser printer available in a lab configuration available for student use. Within these labs, students have access to all campus networks, databases, software, and resources, as they would within any other campus lab.

Additionally, as over 90% of our incoming students are bringing wireless laptops and other handheld devices with them to campus, and as all other academic, athletic, and support buildings on campus are set up for wireless Internet access, all residence halls offer 100% high-speed, wireless connectivity to the campus networks and Internet.

Infrastructure

Over the past 3 years, the College has made significant strides to update/upgrade the technological infrastructure of the institution. These include, but are not limited to:

- *New Fileservers*—Including: Microsoft Exchange (email), Novell (networking), DHCP (IP addresses), DNS (Internet/Domains), SMTP (email), Knox (local Intranet), Moodle (online), LightSpeed (SPAM/virus/content filtering), EZProxy (off-campus access to library databases/resources), Ghosting (workstation images), Advancement/Admissions databases, and Backups (scheduled).
- *Wireless Access*—Sterling College is one of only a few colleges in Kansas that can boast a 100% wireless campus, offering such access in all academic, athletic, and residence hall buildings, including the football stadium/track.
- *High-speed Access*—Over the past three years, and with an expanded use of web-based materials and resources, Sterling College has increased its high-speed bandwidth from 3MB to 30MB, offering superior speed and reliability.
- *Internal Equipment*—Also included within the upgrades are the purchase and installation of appropriate cabling, switches, racks, and other networking peripherals to support the overall technological infrastructure.

Usage Monitoring (Services and Support)

Electronic Monitoring—Sterling College currently provides monitoring of student computer usage in a manner that respects the privacy of the user. Logs pertaining to login dates/times are stored, in addition to web site monitoring, but can be accessed only by appropriate personnel, and

only in case of specific need, when directed by the administration. These are further supported, guided, and monitored by spam/virus/content filtering applications in use by the IT department, under the direction of the VP for Innovation & Technology.

Personnel Monitoring—Most labs are monitored by personnel in the immediate area of the lab (library staff, sponsors, faculty members within a specific department, etc.). General use labs are monitored through visits by IT personnel, while residence hall labs are monitored by resident assistants and/or directors (under the supervision of the VP for Student Life).

Services and Support—An electronic tech request system is in place, where faculty and students can submit electronic requests for tech support which are dated, logged, prioritized, and provide an electronic avenue for communication regarding service and support needs on campus-owned equipment. The system was instituted approximately 2 years ago, and has greatly enhanced the overall service and support environment through the IT department. Additionally, IT assistance for students with personally-owned computing systems is also available via the reporting system, offering students the avenue to have a technician evaluate and recommend courses of action for the owner of the equipment.

SECTION 7: FINANCIAL DATA

7A: Actual Unrestricted Revenues

	FY 07–08	**FY 06–07**
Tuition and Fees	$3,893,292	$2,892,599
Private Gifts and Grants	$1,557,532	$2,610,148
Government Grants	$893,336	$979,051
Investment Income	$282,113	$242,177
Gains (Losses)	-$1,153,636	$656,236
Other Income	$324,418	$365,226
Auxiliary Income	$2,913,234	$2,828,046
Released Assets	$913,736	$1,409,590
Total	**$9,624,025**	**$11,983,073**

7B: Actual Unrestricted Expense

	FY 07–08	**FY 06–07**
Instruction	$2,516,059	$2,362,415
Academic Support	$975,896	$1,086,211
Student Services	$2,800,489	$2,710,205
Institutional Support	$2,217,356	$1,991,558
Auxiliary Enterprises	$2,773,834	$2,629,865
Total	**$11,283,634**	**$10,780,254**

7C: 2007–2008 Shortfall

The 2007–2008 was covered with short-term debt. Initially, the College developed a $500,000 unsecured line of credit with a local lender (CC2B-14). An additional $500,000 credit was developed by collateralizing an estate. The College has a history of absorbing revenue-expense gaps through short-term debt, especially during the summer months when it receives little revenue from tuition.

Appendix B

Self-Study Committees

Steering Committee:

- Gentry Sutton, Co-Coordinator of Self Study, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
- Dr. Gladys Ritterhouse, Co-Coordinator, Associate Professor of Education and Director of Teacher Education
- Dr. Paul Maurer, President
- Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Tina Wohler, Vice President for Student Life
- Scott Rich, Chief Financial Officer
- Dr. Ken Brown, Vice President for Innovation and Technology and Director of Strengthening Institutions Program
- Dennis Dutton, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing
- Dr. Felicia Squires, Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Language and Literature
- Dr. Kevin Hill, Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies, McVay Endowed Chair of Business, and Assistant Professor of Business
- Don Reed, Director of Gift Planning
- Valorie Starr, Library Director
- Janet Caywood, Registrar
- David Earle, Director of Alumni Relations
- Herb Albertson, Career Services Director
- Nathan Graber, Director of Information Technology
- Rob McNeal, Admissions Counselor
- Renee Dodson, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs

Self-Study Report Writers:

- Gentry Sutton, Co-Coordinator of Self Study, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
- Dr. Felicia Squires, Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Language and Literature

Editors and Proofreaders:

- Jennifer Underwood, Writer for Marketing Communications
- Brooke Sutton, Library Associate and Part-time Lecturer in Language and Literature

Cover Designer:

- Ashley Dowgwillo, Student Assistant

Criterion 1:

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Dennis Dutton, Co-Chair, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing
  - Don Reed, Co-Chair, Director of Gift Planning
- *Core Component 1A*:
  - Dennis Dutton, Chair, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing
  - Gordon Kling, Senior Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and Chair of Communication and Theatre Arts
  - Dr. Mark Watney, Assistant Professor of Language & Literature
  - Seth Svaty, Part-time Lecturer in Biblical Studies
- *Core Component 1B*:
  - Don Reed, Chair, Director of Gift Planning
  - Brooke Sutton, Library Associate and Part-time Lecturer in Language & Literature
  - Carrie McGlynn, Admissions Counselor
  - Mary Ver Steeg, Associate Professor of Physical Education
  - Cecil Smart (student)
- *Core Component 1C*:
  - Anne Smith, Co-Chair, Chaplain
  - Gentry Sutton, Co-Chair, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
  - Melvin Balogh, Former Head Volleyball Coach
  - Gloria Pierce, Former Service Department Employee
  - Rev. Dr. Steven Marsh, Board Member
  - Hilary Thomas (student)
- *Core Component 1D*:
  - Shawn Reed, Chair, Instructor in Exercise Science
  - Dr. Bruce Douglas, Former President
  - Andy Lambert, Athletic Director
  - Stephanie Minix, Financial Accountant
  - Mark Clark, Assistant Professor of Music
- *Core Component 1E*:
  - Blair Martin, Chair, Assistant Professor of Music Education
  - Eric Saiz, Resident Director
  - Marge Jones, Admissions Office Manager

Criterion 2:

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Dr. Ken Brown, Vice President for Innovation and Technology and Director of Strengthening Institutions Program,
  - David Earle, Director of Alumni Relations
- *Core Component 2A*:
  - Karin Lederle, Chair, Director of Marketing Communications and Webmaster
  - Dr. Curtis Beechan, Professor of Chemistry
  - Christy Herzog, Former Resident Director
  - Brian Sampson, Director of Online Operations
  - Clay Thomas, Electrician

- *Core Component 2B*:
  - Scott Rich, Chair, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
  - Diane DeFranco-Kling, Senior Associate Professor of Theatre Arts
  - Terri Gaeddert, Assistant Professor of Education
  - Dr. Beth Kilday, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Chair of Mathematics Department
  - Alysha Brintnall (student)
- *Core Component 2C*:
  - Andrew Tash, Chair, Assistant Professor of Communications
  - Deanna Henning, Administrative Assistant in Advancement and Research and Database Analyst
  - Dr. Hank Lederle, Professor of Religion & Philosophy and Director of Missions
  - Andrea Walton, Former Library Assistant
- *Core Component 2D*:
  - Rishawn Austin, Chair, Lecturer in Biblical Studies
  - Kim Kelley, Online Student Counselor
  - Sean Gillespie, Former Head Golf Coach
  - Randy Henry, Board and Community Member
  - Melissa Yarrow (student/Resident Director)

Criterion 3:

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Dr. Gladys Ritterhouse, Associate Professor of Education and Director of Teacher Education
- *Core Component 3A*:
  - Dr. Gladys Ritterhouse, Chair, Associate Professor of Education & Director of Teacher Education
  - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Sasha Hildebrand, Admissions Counselor
  - Dr. Fred Dierksen, Superintendant of Sterling Public Schools and community member
  - Ashley Perrett (student)
- *Core Component 3B*:
  - Dr. Brad Nix, Chair, Associate Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department
  - Doug Boardman, Assistant Professor of History and Chair of the History Department
  - Dave Underwood, Head Men's Soccer Coach
  - Ken Troyer, Assistant Professor of Communications and Director of Forensics
- *Core Component 3C*:
  - Dr. Felicia Squires, Chair, Associate Professor of Language & Literature and Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences
  - Dr. Johnson Agbo, Assistant Professor of Physics
  - Pete Manely, Lecturer in Exercise Science
  - Jared Hamilton, Head Baseball Coach
  - Ben Edwards, Former Resident Director

- *Core Component 3D*:
    - Dr. Will Best, Assistant Professor of Language & Literature and Chair of Language & Literature Department
    - Valorie Starr, Library Director
    - Hosea Bell, Head Softball Coach
    - William Morse, Assistant Professor of Art and Chair of Department of Art & Graphic Design
    - Rev. Charles Ayers, Board member

Criterion 4:

- *Co-Chairs*:
    - Renee Dodson, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs
    - Cristi Gale, Former Associate Professor of Computer Science and Director of Academic Support
- *Core Component 4A*:
    - Cristi Gale, Chair, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Director of Academic Support
    - Dr. Wai-Foong Hong, Associate Professor of Microbiology/Molecular Biology
    - Lynn Valentine, Service Department Employee
    - Cyndy Claussen, Financial Services Employee
    - Susan Sankey, Community Member
    - Jaclyn Coxwell (student)
- *Core Component 4B*:
    - Spencer Wagley, Chair, Assistant Professor of Education and General Education Chair
    - Jack Dillard, Head Track & Cross Country Coach
    - Jonathan Conard, Assistant Professor of Biology
    - John Hackbarth, Resident Director
- *Core Component 4C*:
    - Dr. Kevin Hill, Chair, McVay Endowed Chair of Business Department and Assistant Professor of Business
    - Daniel Callahan, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
    - Charles Harding, Former Webmaster
    - Chris Brown, Head Athletic Trainer and Assistant Professor of Athletic Training
- *Core Component 4D*:
    - Kathy Glynn, Chair, Senior Associate Professor of Business
    - Connie Carey, Student Health Center Director
    - Sally Haggerty, Former Associate Director of Library
    - Joe Jacob, Part-time Lecturer in Art

Criterion 5:[25]

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Tina Wohler, Vice President for Student Life
  - Herb Albertson, Director of Career Services
- *Charter School Committee*:
  - Judith Best, Chair, Assistant Professor of Education and Charter School Director
  - Chuck Lambert, Defensive Coordinator for Football
  - David Wilson, Community Member
- *Track and Field Project/Facilities Committee*:
  - Dean Jaderston, Chair, Head Men's Basketball Coach
  - Justin Morris, Head Women's Soccer Coach and Sports Information Director
  - Ray Williford, Former Information Technology Technician
  - Kyle Schenk, Assistant Football Coach
- *Retention Committee*:
  - Tina Wohler, Chair, Vice President for Student Life
  - Teri Anderson, Personal Counselor
- *Business School Committee*:
  - Dr. T.H. Kwa, Chair, Professor of Business
  - Karen Olson, Campus Information Coordinator
  - Dr. Tom Simpson, Board and Community Member
  - Ashlen Stamm (Student)
- *Servant Leadership/Missions Committee*:
  - Herb Albertson, Chair, Career Services Director
  - Jerrod Adair, Director of Campus Ministries
  - Tom Bronleewe, Lecturer in Biblical Studies
  - Stephanie Landsberger, Former Resident Director

Responses to Previous Concerns:

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
- *Financial Affairs*:
  - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Dr. Craig Smith, Professor of Biblical Studies and Chair of the Theology & Ministry Department
  - Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
- *Assessment*:
  - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Dr. Arn Froese, Professor of Psychology and Chair of Behavioral Science Department
  - Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director

[25] Opposed to having a sub-committee that responded to every Core Component, this committee arranged itself by various "lenses" through which it addressed *each* Core Component. Those on the Retention Committee, for instance, examined how retention efforts underscore the College's ability to meet each Core Component statement. The "lenses" thus serve as detailed examples of how the College meets Criterion Five.

- *Enrollment and Retention*:
    - Luke Orr, Former Admissions Counselor
    - Sherry Earle, Student Life Office Manager
    - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- *Operations and Processes*:
    - Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
    - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs
    - Dr. Arn Froese, Professor of Psychology and Chair of Behavioral Science Department
- *Aging Facilities*:
    - Gentry Sutton, Director of Institutional Assessment and Writing Center Director
    - Dr. Troy Peters, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Federal Compliance:

- *Co-Chairs*:
    - Janet Caywood, Registrar
    - Rob McNeal, Admissions Counselor
- *Credits, Program Length, and Tuition*:
    - Janet Caywood, Chair, Registrar
    - Ginger Reed, Assistant Registrar
    - Michelle Pitts, Controller
- *Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act*:
    - Rachel Gillespie, Chair, Former Assistant Financial Aid Director
    - Janet Caywood, Registrar
    - Ginger Reed, Assistant Registrar
    - Michelle Pitts, Controller
- *Advertising and Recruitment Materials*:
    - Rob McNeal, Admissions Counselor
- *Professional Accreditation*:
    - Erin Sheehan, Chair, Assistant Professor of Athletic Training
    - Tom Vessey, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- *Institutional Records of Student Complaints*:
    - Rob McNeal, Chair, Admissions Counselor
    - Paul Bingle, Former Chief Administrative Officer
    - Pam Bradford, Service Department Employee

Resource Room:

- *Co-Chairs*:
    - Valorie Starr, Library Director
    - Nathan Graber, Director of Information Technology
- *Committee:*
    - Darrel Ames, Information Technology Support Technician
    - Kay Axtell, Library Assistant
    - Tricia Brothers, Financial Aid Director
    - Brooke Sutton, Library Associate and Part-time Lecturer in Language & Literature
    - Deb Wiebe, Athletic Department Office Manager

Visitation Committee:

- *Co-Chairs*:
  - Cindy Fry, Assistant to the President
  - Vicky Kirchoff, Physical Plant Office Manager
- *Committee*:
  - Johnnie Bridges, Service Department Employee
  - Brian Fish, Offensive Coordinator for Football
  - Connie Garrett, Admissions Visit Coordinator
  - Arlen Nuest, Physical Plant Director
  - Christine Foster, Academic Support Assistant
  - Mitzi Suhler, Administrative Assistant for Innovation and Technology

Appendix C

Examples of Non-Academic Assessment Worksheets

Example 1: Marketing and Communications

Departmental/Office Mission Statement:	**Alignment of Departmental Mission with Sterling College Mission:**	**Intended Departmental Outcomes**	**Assessment Measures**	**Success Indicators**	**Data Summary and Evaluation**	**Proposed use of Results**	**Update on Past Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment Data**
To provide innovative and effective marketing communication strategies that are anchored in integrity and help strengthen Sterling College.	• The Marketing Communications Office will be an office of integrity, ensuring that the voice of the College is aligned with its practices and mission. • By utilizing innovative strategies, the Marketing Communications Office will be exemplifying creative leadership.	• Provide accurate and effective marketing materials to assist in the recruiting of students, donors, and friends. • Generate a uniform voice for all news release and print materials. • Assist departments in understanding how to best communicate and market their programs to internal and external constituencies. • Become the inflow and outflow of communication for the College and disseminate news in a timely manner.	• Surveys of incoming students to help determine the alignment between first impressions and what materializes when students arrive on campus • Records of all print materials and releases for the purpose of noting similarities and differences • Surveys of departments to see if they feel the Marketing Communications Office helped them promote their programs. Records of our communication with other departments. • Records of releases and materials for the purpose of noting whether information was channeled through our department. • Surveys about alumni satisfaction with published/distributed information.	• Students testify that they were given accurate material and not misled to attend the College. • After reflection upon releases and materials, it can be determined that the Office maintained a uniform voice. • Departments initiate new marketing techniques and communicate with the Office about their upcoming happenings in a timely manner • 75% of promotional or information material is approved by the Office and distributed on time. • Alumni attest that publications are accurate, informative, and interesting.	*To be completed by September 30*	*To be completed by September 30*	*To be completed by September 30 of the **following** year*

Example 2: Library

Departmental/Office Mission Statement:	**Alignment of Departmental Mission with Sterling College Mission:**	**Intended Departmental Outcomes**	**Assessment Measures**	**Success Indicators**	**Data Summary and Evaluation**	**Proposed use of Results**	**Update on Past Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment Data**
To serve the information needs of the Sterling College community.	In support of the library's mission statement and that of Sterling College, Mabee Library strives to offer a good selection of resources—both print and electronic—that support academic programs. The library also offers library instruction classes to assist students and faculty in using those resources. In addition, Mabee Library has a small collection of non-academic titles with a Christian focus to provide variety for all reading interests.	• Acquire, organize, and preserve library materials • Assist in the use of library materials. • Provide instruction in effectively obtaining, evaluating, and applying information.	• Feedback from faculty who schedule library instruction for their classes. • Tracking of departments and faculty members who schedule library instruction.	• A constant or increasing number of library instruction sessions are offered each academic year. • Faculty representing a cross-section of academic programs indicate that the library is meeting the needs of all departments.	*To be completed by September 30*	*To be completed by September 30*	*To be completed by September 30 of the **following** year*

Appendix D

Academic Program Objectives That Help Ensure Graduates Function Successfully in Diverse Local, National, and Global Societies

Art and Design
Students will understand how art communicates to the world.

Business Administration
Having completed the Business Curriculum, students will be able to use traditional and emergent tools and skills to effectively communicate in complex business environments.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally, and through the written word.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate communication methods and styles at appropriate times.
- Students will understand the impact of communication in the business world.

Having completed the Business Curriculum, students will be able to use coursework concepts to critically analyze specific business situations, synthesize solutions, and make quality business and/or policy decisions.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to problem solve when confronted with complex business situations.
- Students will understand the process of developing policy decisions and the ramifications thereof.

Exercise Science
Having completed the Exercise Science Curriculum, students will be able to use traditional and emergent tools and skills to effectively communicate in complex exercise science environments.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally, and through the written word.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate communication methods and styles at appropriate times.
- Students will understand the impact of communication in the exercise science world.

Having completed the Exercise Science/Health/PE Curriculum, students will be able to use coursework concepts to critically analyze specific situations in the discipline, synthesize solutions, and make quality decisions in the discipline.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to problem solve when confronted with complex situations in the discipline.
- Students will understand the process of developing decisions in the discipline and the ramifications thereof.

Math

- Mathematics graduates will effectively be able to communicate (through verbal communication, technology, and the written word) in mathematics and related disciplines.
- Mathematics graduates will be prepared for graduates study or entry-level positions in business, industry, or secondary education.

Sports Management
Having completed the Sports Management Curriculum, students will be able to use traditional and emergent tools and skills to effectively communicate in complex sports business environments.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally, and through the written word.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate communication methods and styles at appropriate times.
- Students will understand the impact of communication in the sports management world.

Having completed the Sports Management Curriculum, students will be able to use coursework concepts to critically analyze specific sports management situations, synthesize solutions, and make quality industry and/or policy decisions.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to problem solve when confronted with complex sports business situations.
- Students will understand the process of developing policy decisions and the ramifications thereof.

Athletic Training
Graduates of the Athletic Training program will:

- Demonstrate competency in knowledge and skills related to accepted methods of athletic injury and illness prevention.
- Demonstrate competency in knowledge and skills related to the plans, policies, and procedures by which athletic trainers organize and administrate athletic training programs.
- Demonstrate competency in knowledge and skills related to ethical, legal, and other professional standards necessary for the safe practice of athletic training.

History and Government
In order to be a creative leader, a Sterling College major in History/Government will:

- be prepared for teaching, graduate school, or other avenues within the history/government field.

Music
Having completed the Department of Music curriculum, students will have gained knowledge of content and methods in music.

- Students will understand fundamental pedagogy, methods and approaches of K-12 vocal/instrumental music education.

Behavioral Science
Students will act in ways that reflect professional and Sterling College values.

- Students will act consistently with the ethical code of the American Psychological Association as they work in research and applied settings.
- Students will integrate their knowledge from various sources with their faith commitments.
- Students will make informed decisions about careers related to psychology.
- Students will appreciate, respect, and work productively with diverse populations.
- Students will appreciate and internalize the value of social capital—developing a habit of applying knowledge and skills to community service.

Communication and Theatre Arts
The Communication and Theatre Arts major will be able to demonstrate:

- skills related to the content of Communication and Theatre Arts.
  * planning for and implementing advanced study and/or a career
- values relating Communication and Theatre Arts to worldview perspectives.
  * relating the field to other areas of inquiry

Biology

- Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically to solve problems in the biological sciences and supporting fields.
- Students will engage in service activities designed to foster servant leadership while using discipline-related skills and knowledge in service to the campus, community, and/or region.

Education
Teacher candidates will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the importance of teaching and learning resources, including technology;
- show understanding of local, state, and national curriculum standards and their application and integration to instruction;
- plan engaging instruction that will address the needs of diverse students;
- understand the diverse needs of students;
- incorporate technology that will appropriately enhance [instruction];
- know how to effectively work with support staff;
- interact professionally with colleagues and a school community;
- communicate appropriately with families.

Religion and Philosophy
Religion and Philosophy graduates will:

- appropriate the theological framework for practical theology in the fields or worship, youth, missions and Christian education.
  * Students will understand the nature of Christian worship and the process of leading worship in a variety of styles.
  * Students will comprehend missional outreach and communicating the gospel cross-culturally.
  * Students will develop skills by practical service in ministerial context under professional supervision.

Appendix E

Summary of Recent Hardware and Software Improvements for Academic Programs

Department	Equipment	Purpose	Year
History and Government	T.V, VCR and a Laptop	Watch documentaries and various other programs for History and Government, use it for class, etc.	2005
Theology and Ministry	Videos, DVDs, CDs	Watch documentaries and movies on Ethics, Reformation overview, missions of William Wilberforce, and on Christianity, Islam and other religions of the 2orld	2005
Art and Design	New 32"flat-panel TV and DVD player, 6 new tables and 30 stools for studio 101 classes and ceramics room, new easels for painting and drawing students, 3 new pottery wheels for ceramics, 3 new computer workstations and Bamboo digital drawing tablets for the computer design classes, new projector for computer lab, 2 new digital cameras for graphic design, 2 new cameras for photography, 12 new taborets/carts for the painting studio	Advanced computer design classes	2008
Language and Literature	Computer, Projector	Teaching in the auditorium which has no black or white-boards.	2007
Writing Center	8 desktop computers, style manuals covering 6 style formats	Writing instruction about documentation	2008
Theatre	Vhsc camera, Laptop, Video projector	Speech classes, office and class	2004-2008
Psychology	Perception demonstration equipment, statistical package for the Social Sciences—network version	To demonstrate illusions and other perceptual principles. To teach students statistical software packages—to analyze research data	2007

Exercise Science	Sportsware Injury Tracking Program, Dynatron 950 Plus Combination Electrotherapy Unit, Intellect Legend XT Electrotherapy Unit, Biodex Isokenetic Therapy Unit, Polar Heart, Monitor, Pedometer, Electronic Body Fat Analyzers Projector/ Lap top PE equipment (balls, hoops, racquets, scooters, etc) Mannequins	Teaching about injury tracking, Therapeutic Modalities, Isokenetics in Rehabilitation, Use for Labs in Concepts of PE course, Health & Nutrition classes Class presentation Activity classes and First Aid	2003–2004 2008 2008
Chemistry	2 Analytical Balances, HPLC	Accurate measurement of mass of samples. UV-VIS detection and liquid chromatography	2008
Biology	Laminar flow, Micro-Centrifuge, Temperature control incubator shaker, Autoclave, -80 C deep freezer, UV trans illuminator, Polaroid camera, Electrophoresis Power Supply, Gel electrophoresis Chamber set, Water bath, -20 C freezer, Instructor grade dissecting microscope Olympus SZX 7, Lab scale for weighting, PCR machine, pH meter, Pipettes, Pipette controller, Vortex mixer, Incubator and Computers	Working in a sterile environment, Spin DNA, Growing bacteria for cloning, Sterile bacteria, leaves, RNA storage visualize DNA and RNA, taking picture of DNA, RNA, DNA transformation enzyme reaction, Assessment of mutant phenotypes, Making solutions and buffer, DNA amplification, Measuring pH, Transfer solution, Mixing DNA and solution, Enzyme digestion, chemical reaction, Using software to analyze DNA	2003, 2006–2007
Math/Physics	TI- 84 graphing calculators, TI-89 graphing calculators, TI- Presenter, LCD Projector. Resistors, Capacitors, Rheostats, Ammeters, Voltmeters, Inclined Planes, Force Tables, Free Fall Apparatus, Wave Generators, Linear Expansion Apparatus, Hooke's Law Apparatus	Faculty use in class demonstrations. Display output of TI products on projectors Class demonstrations and Physics laboratory experiments	2006 – 2008
Education	Digital video cameras, Fire wires Inspiration Software 4 Projectors Digital still camera DVDs	Clinical teaching and micro teaching Instruction and Assessment class, Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum class, STEP Online 3 for student use, 1 for classroom Document classroom interaction Math Methods, reading strategies, instructional strategies, assessment, differentiated instruction, teacher in-services	2004 – 2008

Appendix F

List of Annual Assessment Responsibilities

Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Receive data from all end-of-course surveys within a month of the courses being completed.
- Receive annual program assessment reports from Director of Institutional Assessment on or by August 15.
- Receive annual GE assessment report from Director of Institutional Assessment on or by August 15.
- Receive the Summary of Assessment of School Objectives from associate deans on or by August 31.
- Compose the Summary of Assessment of College Objectives and submit to the Director of Institutional Assessment by September 15.
- Implement changes proposed in the Summary of Assessment of College Objectives report.

Associate Deans

- Receive annual program assessment reports from Director of Institutional Assessment on or by August 15.
- Compose the Summary of Assessment of School Objectives and submit to the Director of Institutional Assessment by August 31.
- Implement changes proposed in Summary of Assessment of School Objectives report.

Program Chairs

- Choose the course in which the national field test will be given (if applicable).
- By the end of the second week of courses each semester, inform the Director of Institutional Assessment of the time, date, and course for the national field test. Also notify Director of Institutional Assessment if no test is to occur.
- Be present for the administration of the national field test.
- Coordinate the creation and maintenance of the end-of-program exam.
- Choose the course in which the end-of-program exam will be given.
- By the end of the second week of courses each semester, inform the Director of Institutional Assessment of the time, date, and course for the national field test (should be the same as the end-of-program exam). Also notify Director of Institutional Assessment if no test is to occur that semester.
- Be present for the administration of the end-of-program exam.
- Organize and facilitate the *assignment review* for each graduate by all faculty teaching full time in the program (creative product may be used) by May 31 of each year.
- By May 31 of each year, collect from instructors course-objective reviews to be included with annual program assessment report.
- Review Alignment Matrices with Director of Institutional Assessment in May of each year.
- Complete the Annual Program Assessment Report.
- Submit Annual Program Assessment Report to the Director of Institutional Assessment by August 15.
- Implement changes proposed in Annual Program Assessment Report.

Director of Institutional Assessment

- Form and chair College Assessment Committee.
- Organize and conduct end-of-course objective evaluations.
- Distribute uniform set of evaluation standards.
- Assist faculty with assessment of course objectives.
- Send annual program assessment reports to associate deans on or by August 15.
- By the end of the second week of courses each semester, solicit and record the time, date, and course for the national field test. (Notification should come from each program chair.)
- Assist program chairs in coordinating the administration of the national field tests.
- Assist program chairs in coordinating the creation and maintenance of the end-of-program exam.
- By the end of the second week of courses each semester, solicit and record the time, date, and course for the end-of-program exam. (Notification should come from each program chair.)
- Assist program chairs in coordinating the administration of the end-of-program exam.
- Assist program chairs with the assignment review for each graduate.
- Assist program chairs with the annual program assessment report.
- Review Alignment Matrices with program chairs in May of each year.
- Receive the annual program assessment report from each program chair by August 15.
- Assist program chairs with the implementation of the changes proposed in the Annual Program Assessment Report.
- Assist GE Chair in conducting national standardized GE test in GD105 and RP440 each time each course is taught.
- Assist GE Chair in administering Sterling GE Exam in GD105 and RP440 each time each course is taught.
- Assist the GE Chair with the Annual GE Assessment Report.
- Receive the Annual GE Assessment Report from the GE Chair by August 15 of the following academic year.
- Assist the GE Chair with the implementation of changes based on assessment recommendations.
- Assist those in charge of non-academic programs with the assessment of non-academic program objectives.
- Meet with those in charge of non-academic programs to develop proper objectives and assessments for their objectives.
- Assist those in charge of non-academic programs with the completion of the Assessment of Non-academic Programs worksheet. The Director of Institutional Assessment should meet with those in charge of non-academic programs by September 30 of each year.
- Write Annual Sterling College Assessment Report by October 31 of each year and submit to the College Assessment Committee.
- Implement the recommended Assessment Plan changes proposed by the College Assessment Committee.
- Update Annual Assessment Report and Sterling College Assessment Plan after input from the College Assessment Committee by November 30.

Faculty

- Receive and review all survey data on each course within three weeks of the course being completed.
- Complete course-objective review by May 31 for each course taught in the academic year. Submit to appropriate program chair.
- Implement course-based assessment recommendations.
- Assist program chair with Annual Program Assessment Report.
- Assist in the implementation of programmatic changes based on assessment recommendations.

GE Program Chair

- Administer standardized test in RP440 each time the course is taught. (Coordinate with instructor.)
- Compose and conduct Sterling College GE Exam in GD105 and RP440 each time each course is taught. (Coordinate with instructor.)
- Receive and review all survey data on each GE course within three weeks of the course being completed.
- By May 31 of each year, collect from instructors teaching GE courses course-objective reviews to be included with Annual Program Assessment Report.
- Complete the Annual General Education Assessment Report.
- Submit Annual GE Assessment Report to the Director of Institutional Assessment by August 15 each year.
- Coordinate the implementation of changes based on assessment recommendations.

Chairs of Non-Academic Programs

- Work with Director of Institutional Assessment to develop program objectives and assessments.
- Meet with Director of Institutional Assessment by the end of September each year to complete the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet.
- Execute assessment plan indicated in the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet.
- Make assessment based changes indicated in the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet.
- Record impact of changes in the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet.

Office Staff

- Assist program chairs and Director of Institutional Assessment with national field test if necessary.
- Assist GE Chair with national standardized test if necessary.

College Assessment Committee

- Review and approve Annual Assessment Report by November 15.
- Make recommendations for changes to the Sterling College Assessment Plan. (To be added to the Annual Assessment Report by the Assessment Director by November 15)
- Review effectiveness of previous changes to the Sterling College Assessment Plan and add to the Annual Assessment Report by November 15.

Appendix G

Yearly Assessment Calendar

A Week Before the End of Each Course

- End-of-course objective evaluation links are sent from the Director of Institutional Assessment to the faculty.

Within Two Weeks After the End of Each Course

- Director of Institutional Assessment distributes the results of the end-of-course objective evaluations to faculty.

By April 31

- Director of Institutional Assessment distributes uniform set of evaluation standards.

By May 31

- Director of Institutional Assessment reviews alignment matrices with program chairs.
- Program chairs collect course objective reviews from instructors.
- GE program Chair collects course objective reviews from program chairs.
- VPAA receives Annual Program Assessment Reports and the Annual GE Assessment report from the Director of Institutional Assessment.

By August 15

- Program chairs submit Annual Program Assessment Reports to the Director of Institutional Assessment.
- GE Chair submits the Annual GE Assessment Report to the Director of Institutional Assessment.
- VPAA receives Annual Program Assessment Reports and the Annual GE Assessment Report from the Director of Institutional Assessment.
- Associate deans receive Annual Program Assessment Reports from the Director of Institutional Assessment.

By August 31

- Associate deans submit the Summary of Assessment of School Objectives to the Director of Institutional Assessment.

By September 15

- VPAA submits the Summary of Assessment of Institutional Objectives to the Director of Institutional Assessment.

By September 30

- Non-Academic program chairs meet with the Director of Institutional Assessment to complete the Assessment of Non-Academic Programs Worksheet.

By October 31

- Director of Institutional Assessment writes Annual Sterling College Assessment Report and submits to the College Assessment Committee.

By November 15

- College Assessment Committee reviews and approves Annual Assessment Report.
- College Assessment Committee makes recommendations for changes to the Sterling College Assessment Plan to the Director of Institutional Assessment for inclusion with the Annual Assessment Report.
- College Assessment Committee reviews effectiveness of previous changes made to the Sterling College Assessment Plan for inclusion with the Annual Assessment report.

By November 30

Director of Institutional Assessment updates the Annual Assessment Report and Sterling College Assessment Plan after input from the College Assessment Committee.

Appendix H

Professional Organizations Represented by Faculty Members

American Academy of Religion	Kansas Library Association
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance	Kansas Music Educators Association
American Association for the Advancement of Science	Kansas Music Teachers Association
American Association of University Women	Kansas Speech Communication Association
American Chemical Society	Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association
American Choral Directors Association	Mathematical Association of America
American Psychological Association	Midwest Athletic Trainers Association
American Red Cross Instructors	Music Educators National Conference
American Society of Mammalogists	Music Teachers National Association
American Society of Plant Biologists	National Academic Advisors Association
American Volleyball Coaches Association	National Association of Music Education
Associated Collegiate Press	National Athletic Trainers Association
Association of College and Research Libraries	National Communication Association
Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Association of Theatre in Higher Education	National Education Association
British New Testament Society	National Forensics League
Christians in the Visual Arts	National Parliamentary Debate Association
College Art Association	North Dakota Natural Science Society
College Music Society	Pi Kappa Delta
Institute of Biblical Research	Private Academic Libraries Section
International Tuba/Euphonium Association	Rice County Art Council
Kansas Academy of Science	School Science and Mathematics Association
Kansas Associated Collegiate Press	Sigma Tau Delta
Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance	Sigma Xi
Kansas Association of Colleges of Teacher Education	Society of Biblical Literature
Kansas Association of Private Colleges of Teacher Education	Society of Pentecostal Studies
Kansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development	Southwestern Psychological Association
Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics	The Nature Conservancy
Kansas Athletic Trainers Society	The Wildlife Society
Kansas Bandmasters Association	United School Administrators of Kansas
Kansas Choral Directors Association	

Appendix I

Staff Member Professional Involvement and Development

Professional Organizations

Kansas Association of Masters in Psychology	Central Kansas Planned Giving Roundtable
National Association of Masters in Psychology	KASFAA
Surface Navy Association	NASFAA
Navy League	National Association of College Stores
Naval Institute	Kansas Association of Colleges and Employers
Veterans of Foreign Wars	KACRAO
American Legion	National Fastpitch Coaches Association
Rice County Arts Council	National Soccer Coaches Association of America
Studio 96	American Baseball Coaches Association
Main Street Sterling	United States of American Track and Field Association
Sterling Chamber of Commerce	College Sports Information Directors Association
Sterling Historic Preservation Society	Kansas Basketball Association
American Football Coaches Association	Christian Leadership Alliance

Professional Development Activities, 2004–2009

Campus counselors' certification maintenance involving College credit hours	Summer Institute for the Rocky Mountain Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators
Campus counselor's work toward graduate clinical hours for independent practice licensing exam	United States of America Track and Field Association Level 1 Certification
Training tapes in Housekeeping	United States of America Track and Field Association National Podium Clinic on Sprints
Grant writing workshops	United States of America Track and Field Association National Podium Clinic on Endurance
National Conference of Planned Giving	Wichita State Track and Field Clinic
Planned Giving Internet Marketing Conference	Customer Service Workshop sponsored by the National Association of College Stores
InDesign Seminar about Planned Giving Printed Materials	American Baseball Coaches Association National Convention and Clinic
Gift Annuity Administration Conference	Kansas Baseball Coaches Association Convention
KASFAA Conference	NAIA National Convention
Specific KASFAA training workshops	American Football Coaches Association Conference
KACROA Conferences	International Institute of Christian Studies Conference on Worldviews
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities Alumni Directors Conference	Various Training Sessions Coordinated by the IT Department (CC4A??—Faculty Training by IT Department)
Kansas Independent College Association Alumni Directors Training	Christian Stewardship Association Annual Conference
Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference	

Appendix J

General Education Student Learning Objectives

Knowledge Objectives:

As students meet **Science** objectives they will:

- Appreciate the historical development of scientific knowledge.
- Understand the scientific method for exploring the world.
- Understand foundational principles that the scientific method has revealed.

As students meet **Math** objectives they will:

- Appreciate how mathematics is a tool for exploring our world.
- Understand basic mathematical relationships.

As students meet **Social Science** objectives they will:

- Understand the nature and limitations of the human mind.
- Understand historical development of inequality in social life.
- Understand how social institutions organize and regulate social life.

As students meet **Literature** objectives they will:

- Know literary works from various cultures.
- Appreciate literature as a reflection of diverse cultures.
- Use basic vocabulary and techniques to discuss literature.

As students meet **Religion** objectives they will:

- Understand themes and contexts of the Bible.
- Understand the basic teachings of the Christian church.

As students meet **Philosophy** objectives they will:

- Understand foundational philosophical thinkers.
- Use basic vocabulary and categories of philosophical thought to explore basic questions about life, knowing, and meaning.

As students meet **History** objectives they will:

- Understand history and interaction of western and non-western cultures.

As students meet **Fine Arts** objectives they will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of significant works, styles and structures in the fine arts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic issues of fine art theory and aesthetics.
- Demonstrate knowledge of materials, processes and methods of fine arts.
- Use terms, analysis, and criticism in response to experiencing works of art.

Skills Objectives

As students meet **Inquiry and Reflection** objectives they will:

- Use investigative skills to explore issues.
- Think about their thinking as they analyze their own positions and actions

As students meet **Critical and Creative Thinking** objectives they will:

- Identify logical issues within source materials.
- Identify implicit and explicit assumptions in source materials.
- Solve problems creatively.

As students meet **Communication** objectives they will:

- Apply proper conventions of standard written English.
- Express verbal messages competently and confidently.
- Adapt communication to the nature of the message and the audience.
- Use source information ethically and effectively.
- Use tools of persuasion ethically and responsibly.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the development of reasoned arguments.

As students meet **Quantitative Literacy** objectives they will:

- Apply basic mathematical concepts in solving problems.

As students meet **Information Literacy** objectives they will:

- Locate relevant information effectively.
- Evaluate information proficiently.

As students meet **Teamwork and Problem Solving** objectives they will:

- Work effectively in teams.
- Apply fundamental concepts of team dynamics.

Responsibility Objectives

As students meet **Civic Knowledge and Engagement—Local and Global** objectives they will:

- Understand civic engagement as a necessary ingredient of a vital society.
- Experience how professional and intellectual skills benefit society.
- Understand that one's choices and behaviors may have profound effects for people of all cultures and places.

As students meet **Intercultural Knowledge and Competence** objectives they will:

- Develop understanding and respect for their own culture.
- Develop understanding and respect for different cultures.
- Explore cultural diversity through literature and the arts.

As students meet **Ethical Reasoning and Compassionate Action** objectives they will:

- Use information to act in ways that respect the physical universe.
- Use knowledge to address contemporary problems produced by social inequalities.
- Demonstrate appreciation for the religious and cultural beliefs of others.

As students meet **Life-long Learning** objectives they will:

- Develop self-generated habits of learning about ideas, events, and technologies.
- Seek quality information relevant to life choices.
- Apply skills for effective participation in personal, work-related, and civic commitments.

Integrative Learning Objectives

As students meet **Synthesis of General/Special Studies** objectives they will:

- Demonstrate ability to connect discipline knowledge with larger issues of life.