

Sterling College

Working Hands. Working Minds.

April 25, 2016

To: The Faculty

Fr: Matthew

Re: PODS Assessment Taskforce

Every aspect of the Sterling College educational program must be conducted without discrimination on the basis of the following diversity dimensions: ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Among our faculty approved competencies is a commitment that Sterling graduates understand the historical and global cultural context of social dynamics. To ensure that our students gain this competency they must be exposed and encouraged to become competent with regard to issues associated with privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice (PODS). * These social dynamics are interrelated, multidimensional, and essential to any thorough and rigorous definition of environmental stewardship education.

Our recent visit from the NEASC team revealed an expressed concern about our commitment to learning outcome assessment across the academic curriculum. Therefore, I ask the faculty, led by this taskforce, to begin to address this concern by assessing the effectiveness of the Sterling curriculum in furthering student understanding of the historical and global cultural context of social dynamics.

The work of this taskforce is critical to several key goals found in the strategic plan and the concerns raised by NEASC. It is also important that, along with an effort to encourage greater diversity and inclusion at all levels of the institution, that we address the most fundamental expression of our identity and values: the academic curriculum.

Carol Dickson has agreed to chair the PODS Assessment Taskforce and to identify a representative of each instructional team to participate. She will also actively and regularly engage students in the work of the taskforce, with membership reserved to the full-time academic faculty, as the academic curriculum is solely the responsibility of the faculty. The taskforce will have a budget that will support external consultation, professional development, and travel expenses.

The taskforce will report back regularly to the faculty and to me on Monday, October 10 with a final report and recommendations to the faculty and to me on Monday, December 5, 2016.

*"PODS" is a educational outcomes concept developed by the faculty at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.