

Sterling College

Working Hands. Working Minds.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Dean of Finance & Operations

The Dean of Finance and Operations reports to the President and is responsible for direct oversight and leadership of key operational areas of the College. Direct reporting lines include finance and budgeting, technology, institutional research, buildings & grounds, campus sustainability, auxiliary services, human resources, and legal relations. As a very small institution, the Dean of Finance and Operations must be able to move seamlessly between leadership, management and hands-on engagement.

Professional Qualifications

Desired qualifications include demonstrated experience in each of the areas of responsibility, including finance, facilities management and operations and human resources whether achieved in higher education or through work in non-profit or for-profit organizations; an ability to develop strong, effective working relationships with faculty, staff and students; a desire to engage deeply in the community life of students, faculty, and staff; and an appreciation for and interest in life and the outdoors in spectacular rural northeastern Vermont.

Competitive candidates will have a Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting or equivalent and five or more years of related work experience. Experience in a private higher education setting is strongly preferred.

The successful candidate will have:

- A commitment to the ecological thinking and action mission of the College;
- Exceptional financial, operational and administrative management skills;
- A deep understanding of risk management techniques, policies and procedures and the importance of ensuring and sustaining a strong risk management culture at the College
- A “can do” attitude, strong work ethic and a desire to “roll up one’s sleeves” when necessary and to lead by example;
- Curiosity, and a willingness to stay current on the issues confronting higher education and the ability to brainstorm innovative alternatives;
- Strong leadership and human relations abilities including the capacity for effective communication with all the College’s stakeholders;
- Ability to organize, coordinate and direct multiple projects and a desire to roll up one’s sleeves;
- Advanced analytical and systems thinking skills;
- Thorough knowledge of financial, operational and administrative practices and procedures;
- Understanding of federal and state laws that govern higher education and reporting requirements; and
- Integrity and a commitment to service leadership by example.

Specific Duties include:

- Designing, implementing and monitoring annual budgets and multi-year forecasting models
- Designing, documenting and implementing policies and procedures which result in timely and accurate financial reporting and budgeting information;
- Overseeing all aspects of human resources including employee policies and procedures, benefits and handling of personnel matters;
- Chairing the Risk Management Committee and ensuring that all committee recommendations are acted upon in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that the information technology needs of the College are met and monitored and that system and software safeguards and user support services are in place;
- Conducting institutional research including the collection and analysis of peer-college data and information;
- Managing facilities use and their construction and development including master and sustainability planning, public safety, transportation and parking;
- Performing other related duties as requested by the President

The College & President

Founded in 1958 in Craftsbury Common, Vermont, Sterling College advances ecological thinking and action through affordable experiential learning, preparing knowledgeable, skilled and responsible leaders to face the ecological crises caused by unlimited growth and consumption that threatens the future of the planet. Enrollment is limited to 125 students. Sterling is home to the School of the New American Farmstead and the Wendell Berry Farming Program, is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education and is one of only nine colleges and universities recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a “Work College.”

The College has received national attention for becoming one of the first institutions in the U.S. to divest from fossil fuels. Sterling has been recognized for its sustainability initiatives by Sierra Magazine and has earned a STARS Gold Rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education for four consecutive years.

Matthew Derr was appointed the 11th President of Sterling College in 2012 and has recently committed to lead the College through 2023. In December 2010, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education awarded Derr with the organization's Chief Executive Leadership Award and the Great Lakes Colleges Association recognized his efforts on behalf of liberal education with a visiting fellowship. Under his leadership, Sterling has experienced a period of rapid growth in student enrollment and philanthropic support, with the largest successful fundraising campaign in institutional history. Sterling expanded its emphasis on field studies in 2016 with support from the Endeavor Foundation and also launched the Rian Fried Center for Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems.

Prior to Sterling, President Derr served as an alumni leader and Interim President of his alma mater, Antioch College, where he is credited with successfully leading the effort to revive the institution. Derr was born in Flint, Michigan. His grandparents and parents were autoworkers. He attended public schools before earning a Bachelor of Arts in History from Antioch and MSW in Community and Organizing and Social Systems from the University of Michigan. He has also studied at the George Heyman Center for Philanthropy at New York University. President Derr is one of a handful of openly gay college presidents in the United States. He lives on campus with his partner Julian Sharp who serves as the Director of Community Outreach.

Application Instructions

Position remains open until an appointment has been made. Candidates should send the following materials electronically: cover letter, curriculum vitae/resume, and contact information for three references. References will not be contacted without candidate permission.

Application letters should be addressed and emailed to Peter Merrill, Vice President at pmerrill@sterlingcollege.edu.

Sterling College is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, national origin or sex in violation of Title VII. Sterling College prohibits discrimination against employees, applicants for employment and students on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or veteran status.