Sterling College

THE STERLING CIRCLE OF SUPPORT STRATEGY

"No Student is a Spectator"



WHAT IS STRATEGY?

Strategy is the focused set of choices that defines who Sterling will serve, what value it will provide, and how it will organize its work differently to deliver that value at an appropriate price.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

CLARITY
Where are you now?

CLARITY PHASE

SITUATIONAL URGENCY

GAPS & OBSTACLES

OPPORTUNITIES

↓

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD CURRENT STATE

FOCUS
Where are you going, and why?

FOCUS PHASE

STRATEGIC CHOICES

DEFINED FUTURE STATE

STRATEGIC GOALS

↓

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A COMPELLING FUTURE STATE

ALIGNMENT
How are you going to get there?

ALIGNMENT PHASE

OBJECTIVES

ACTION PLANS

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

↓

STRATEGIC PLAN

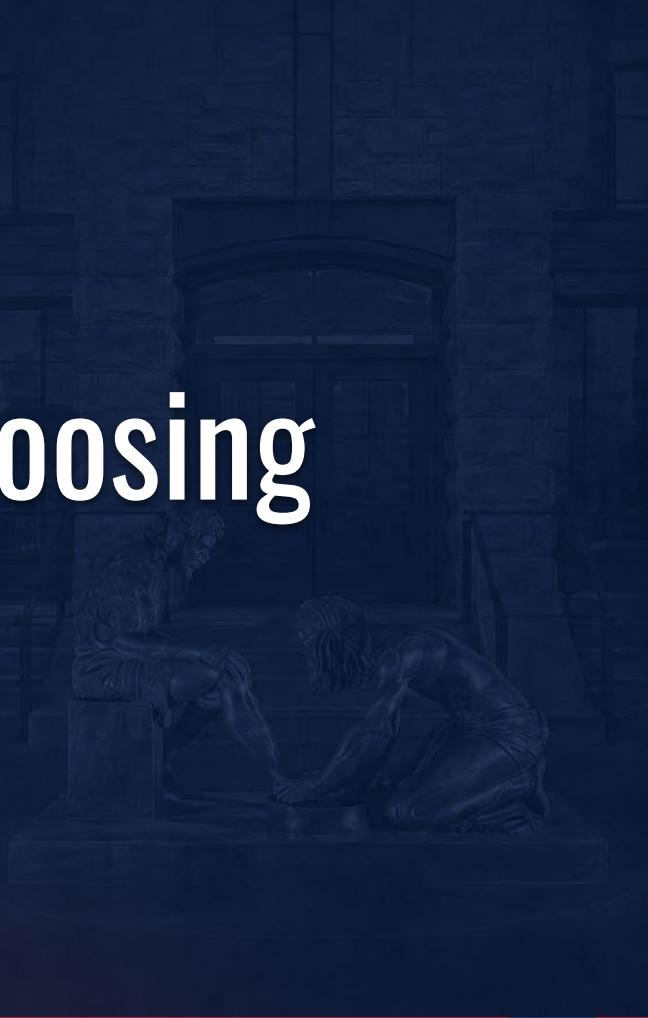
A TEAM ALIGNED AROUND THE WAY FORWARD

KEY INSIGHT

The Divine Servant reveals the posture of the Sterling College community: humble, welcoming, and committed to each student's growth.



Who is Sterling Choosing to Serve?



WHO IS STERLING CHOOSING TO SERVE?

Sterling College is choosing to serve students who desire a relational, Christ-centered, community-driven college experience in a safe, small-town environment.

These are students who want to be known personally, grow spiritually, and thrive in a setting where support, belonging, and character formation matter as much as academic content. Being involved, feeling safe, and never feeling lost are important factors in their decision.

STUDENT SEGMENTS



Faith-Oriented Students Seeking Spiritual Growth



Students Who Thrive in Small, Relational Learning Environments

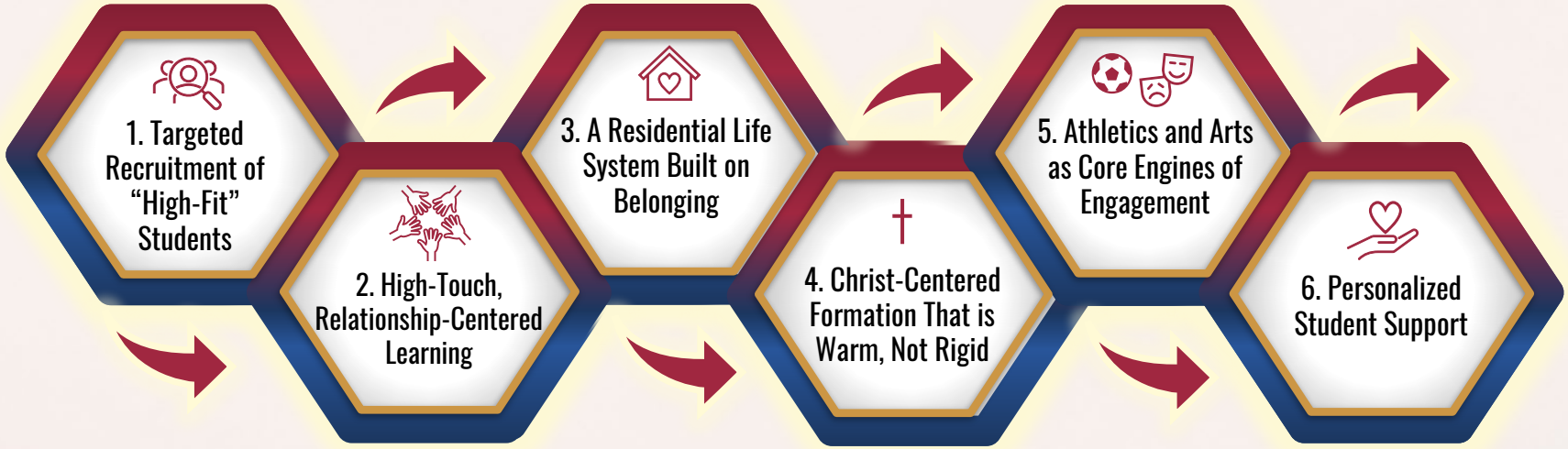


High-Engagement Students Seeking Participation and Campus Involvement

What strategic actions is Sterling positioned to pursue?

STERLING'S VALUE CHAIN

Strategic fit occurs when key activities reinforce each other resulting in a competitive advantage.



Targeted recruitment brings students who are more likely to value and engage in the Sterling experience.

Relationship-centered learning makes the promise of personal connection tangible.

Residential life extends belonging beyond the classroom.

Christ-centered formation provides coherence across academic, residential, and co-curricular life.

Athletics and the arts serve as engines of engagement, identity, and community.

Personalized support ensures each student connected to the resources needed to persist and thrive.

CORE CONCEPT

The Sterling Circle of Support:
No Student is a Spectator



- The **Sterling Circle of Support** is Sterling's distinctive system of engagement that surrounds each student with relationships, opportunities, and support by aligning the college's people, resources, and time around full involvement and personal formation. **No student is a spectator** becomes the organizing principle.
- Sterling aligns every major activity of the college so students do not have to choose between belonging and achievement, faith and formation, academics and involvement, campus life and community impact.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

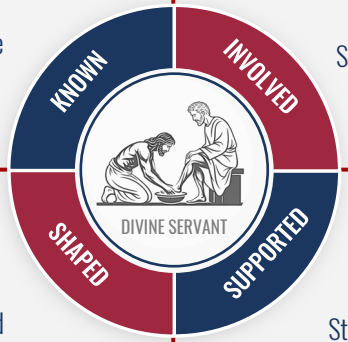
STRATEGY: BUILD THE STERLING CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

GOAL
Build relational capacity to ensure students experience deep connection and support.

Pillar 1
Relational Connection
Sterling surrounds students with people who know them and invest in them.

Pillar 2
Visible Pathways
Sterling ensures students can be actively involved rather than passively attend.

GOAL
Expand visible pathways for involvement so students can actively engage, contribute, and belong.



GOAL
Advance whole-person formation by integrating faith and community engagement with academics.

Pillar 3
Integrated Formation
Sterling integrates academics, faith and community tightly together.

Pillar 4
Institutional Alignment
Sterling aligns its people and resources so students experience a supportive journey.

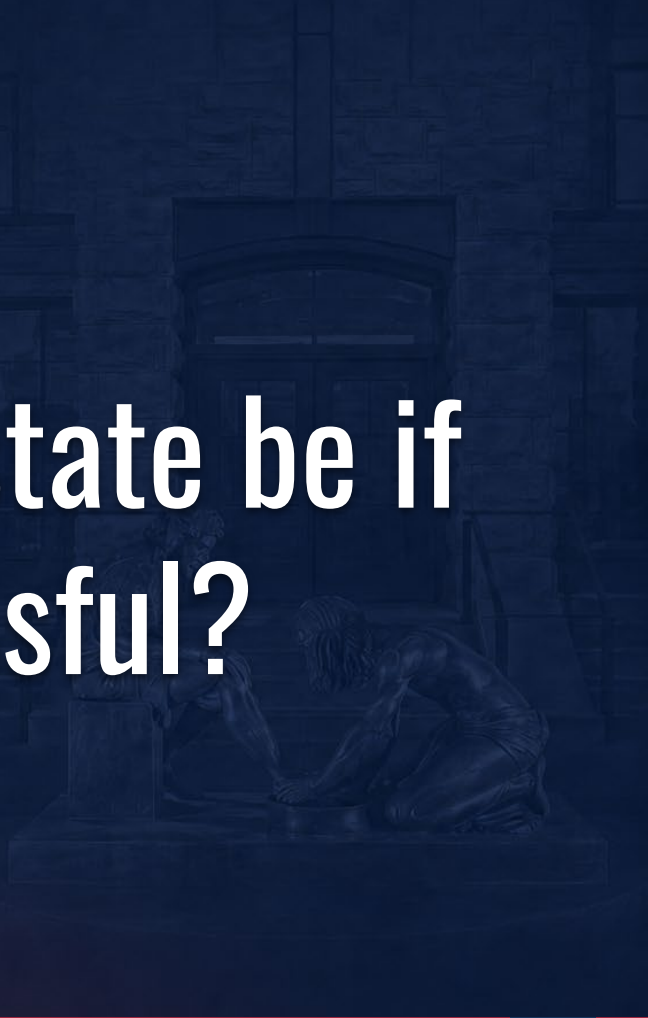
GOAL
Align resources around a coherent student experience that reinforces involvement, belonging, and personal support.

"No Student is a Spectator"

STRATEGY STATEMENT

Sterling's strategy is to serve high-engagement students who want to be known, involved, and shaped by creating the Sterling Circle of Support. This is a distinctive Christ-centered system of relational learning, campus involvement, spiritual formation, and personalized support that aligns the college's people, resources, and time around full student engagement.

What will the future state be if Sterling is successful?



FUTURE STATE

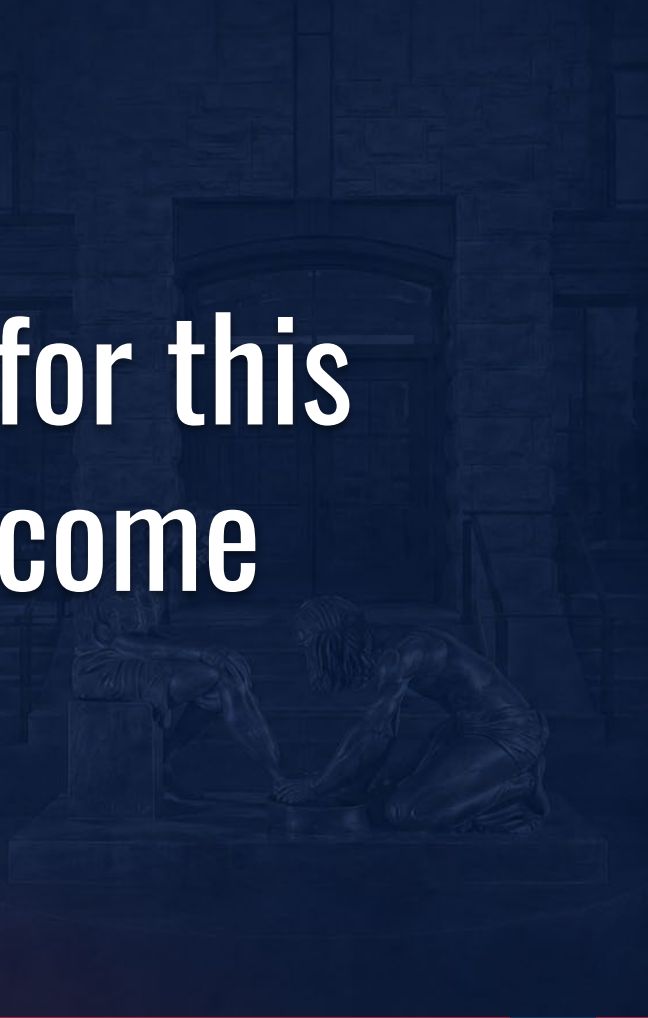
- Sterling College will be known as the Christ-centered college where no student is a spectator.
- Through the Sterling Circle of Support, students will be intentionally surrounded by mentors, programs, and opportunities that help them belong, be involved, grow spiritually, and prepare for lives of leadership and service.
- By aligning its people, resources, and time around this experience, Sterling will create a more distinctive student journey, stronger retention and enrollment fit, deeper community connection, and a more durable strategic position.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

As a result of this strategy, Sterling College will:

- **Establish a distinct market position.** Sterling will be clearly differentiated in the regional college market through a specific kind of Christ-centered student experience (curricular and co-curricular) that competitors cannot easily replicate.
- **Attract and retain more students.** By targeting students who want what Sterling uniquely offers, the college will see increased interest, stronger persistence, and a student body that is well-matched to its mission.
- **Ensure a stable fiscal position.** Stronger recruitment pipelines, better retention, and a clear brand will focus the expense of enrollment activities and improve the financial predictability the institution needs to invest with confidence.
- **Enhance program uniqueness and community connection.** Differentiate Sterling's curricular and co-curricular offerings by weaving meaningful community engagement and faith-based leadership into the programs.
- **Achieve stronger organizational alignment.** Every major function (admissions, academics, student life, advancement, and operations) will be oriented around the same strategy, reducing drift and improving the consistency of the student experience.
- **Deepen affinity for the institution.** Foster a student experience that builds lasting pride and loyalty that extends beyond graduation.
- **Strengthen its strategic position in the region.** Stronger community ties and a more visible local presence will expand Sterling's relationships, support its mission, and reinforce its long-term relevance in the communities it serves.

What must be true for this future state to become a reality?



PILLAR 1: RELATIONAL CONNECTION

GOAL

Build relational capacity so students experience deep connection and support.

OBJECTIVES



01 By Fall 2027, implement an approved faculty model that reduces the standard teaching load for full-time faculty and establishes clearly defined expectations for student advisor-mentors.

02 By Spring 2028, design, approve, and implement a coordinated campus schedule that provides protected time for involvement, mentorship, formation, and community engagement, ensuring every student can engage beyond the classroom.

PILLAR 2: VISIBLE PATHWAYS

GOAL

Expand visible pathways for involvement so students can actively engage, contribute, and belong.

OBJECTIVES



01 By Fall of 2028, design and launch the Circle of Support as a campus-wide system that assigns every student a designated relationship owner, connects them to campus involvement, provides coordinated support resources, and establishes intervention processes for students identified as at risk.

PILLAR 3: INTEGRATED FORMATION

GOAL

Advance whole-person formation by integrating faith and community engagement with academics.

OBJECTIVES



01 By Fall 2027, implement a campus-wide student formation and belonging model that defines the leadership, service, spiritual, and community experiences students are expected to complete before graduation.

02 By Spring 2028, implement required engagement experiences across five priority programs that connect students to meaningful service, leadership, internship, or community partnership opportunities in Sterling and the surrounding region.

PILLAR 4: INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

GOAL

Align resources around a coherent student experience that reinforces involvement, belonging, and personal support.

OBJECTIVES



01 By Spring 2027, redesign financial aid packaging and student support systems at Sterling College to better identify, enroll, and support high-fit students, resulting in improved enrollment yield, retention, and student academic performance.

02 By Fall 2027, establish 20 active partnerships and recruitment pipelines with schools, churches, and community organizations that create sustained prospective student engagement and contribute to increased enrollment yield.

03 By Fall 2028, conduct a campus-wide resource and staffing review that identifies strategic recommendations to invest, reduce, stop, or restructure programs, positions, spaces, and systems in alignment with the Circle of Support and the college's student engagement priorities.

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