

Sterling College

Working Hands. Working Minds.

PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

September 4, 2015

To: Craftsbury School Board
Fr: Matthew Derr, President
Re: Collaboration

Over the course of the past three years, there have been a number of conversations between Sterling College and Craftsbury Schools; specifically, Craftsbury Academy, regarding opportunities for programmatic and facilities collaboration.

Based on those conversations, it has become apparent that there is an opportunity for both institutions to share the use of some instructional spaces and thereby strengthen the quality of education for our students and the teaching experience of our faculty.

Specifically, Sterling College seeks to outline a plan for shared use for a new center for the visual arts that is planned for Paradise Hall. This project will include wholly renovated instructional spaces for woodworking, fiber, ceramics, and drawing. Acknowledging that our calendars and daily schedules create both opportunities and challenges, we propose that College and Academy leaders continue to meet in the coming months to detail how exactly this new facility could meet the needs of both institutions and student populations.

As one element of its current comprehensive campaign, Sterling College is raising funds for the Jed & Perry Williamson Center for Outdoor Education. To reduce the need for building new structures in Craftsbury Common, Sterling is looking at existing structures as a possible home for the new center. It is understood that Craftsbury Schools are interested in conveying its Industrial Arts Building to Sterling College in exchange for a long term use agreement for the instructional purposes now located in the building.

Sterling College is eager to move forward with a plan that includes this emerging partnership as one argument for funding both projects. Donors and foundations have already been approached, but a formal memorandum of understanding would be useful evidence of our planned collaboration. The College does not seek to take possession of the Industrial Arts Building until such time as it has completed all, or nearly all, of the fundraising necessary for it to serve as the Williamson Center.

If it were the will of your board to take action on this proposed agreement, to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Sterling College, the College leadership would also be willing to do so. During the course of the next twelve months, during which Sterling is advancing its fundraising effort, the exact details of the facilities use can be negotiated. If at anytime either party no longer feels its best interests are served by this partnership the agreement can be dissolved.

This is a remarkable community, one fortunate enough to have pre-kindergarten through post-baccalaureate educational opportunities. The residents of Craftsbury have shown great support for the public schools and Sterling College remains an integral part of the community and its economy. We believe the facilities collaboration described in this letter is only a first step in our effort to coordinate our resources to better serve our community.