



For EcoGather
to grow into a
collaborative
transformative
learning network,
we must
co-create conditions
that nurture trust
& share our knowledges
in a environment of
supported courage &
grounded hope.

"The word mycelium means 'more than one.' The mycelium organism is a dynamic root system of mushrooms that utilizes **trust** as a mechanism to build and sustain a vast, reciprocal, underground network that connects the roots of trees and plants and skillfully shares nutrients and resources to support the health of the entire ecosystem with which it moves. This mycelial network cannot exist without trust. ...The mycelium communication highway recognizes and believes in the collective ability to channel and receive nutrients where needed, protect against parasites, and expand roots into necessary sites of growth. The network process also fosters intergenerational relationships that welcome the myriad of ancient wisdom and connections that reside in older trees to benefit younger trees. These mushrooms affirm a commitment to building relationships of trust that encourage all life to bloom."

—Adaku Utah,
*Cultivating Trust As An Organizing
Strategy: Lessons From Mycelium*



EcoGather's Online Community Guidelines

EcoGather at Sterling College aims to ensure the safety, security and well-being of our community and its members. To this end, this Code of Online Conduct details both the appropriate and inappropriate conduct that influences the virtual, as well as physical, spaces we inhabit together.

This Code of Online Conduct represents Sterling College's expectations of undergraduate students, participants in EcoGather lifelong learning programming, faculty, staff, instructors and/or facilitators in virtual (online) environments.

Note that the Code of Online Conduct is incorporated into and has been excerpted from Sterling College's Student Handbook and Employee Handbook and dovetails with the Community Behavioral Guidelines.)

Expectations and Agreements

By affirmatively selecting to participate in any Sterling College-sponsored or affiliated virtual interaction, including without limitation undergraduate, continuing education courses or EcoGather offerings in remote or hybrid modalities, workshops, webinars, online discussion fora and community hubs, chats, or messaging services, you agree to do the following:

- Help to establish and maintain a safe and compassionate learning environment;
- Treat all program participants, instructors and/or facilitators, administrative staff and their perspectives with respect and cultural sensitivity;
- Be responsive and participate in courses to the best of your ability;
- Make contributions to the course or session that are germane to the topic being discussed.
- Be open to receiving and giving constructive feedback to other program participants, instructors and/or facilitators and administrative staff; and
- Comply with all policies designed to secure and protect our digital spaces, including, without limitation, EcoGather's prohibition on the use of AI-Powered Tools and Bots.

You also agree to refrain from the following behaviors or scenarios:

- Intimidation, bias-based behavior, bullying/cyberbullying, harassment, threatening behavior directed toward instructors, fellow program participants or administrative staff;
- Inappropriate or repeated disruption of teaching, learning, or idea generation and exchange;
- Disorderly conduct and/or disruptive behavior;
- Sexual misconduct of any kind.
 - "Sexual misconduct" means any type of sexual behavior that occurs in the absence of consent or that uses control or intimidation to cause harm to another person. Consent must be affirmatively given and not implied. Types of sexual misconduct include but is not limited to sexual harassment, sexual violence, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual contact, stalking. Sexual misconduct in the online environment includes unwanted sexual advances, sexualization of participants, and the sharing of lewd, sexually suggestive, or pornographic materials in any form.
- Violation of Sterling College Student Handbook policies or EcoGather Handbook policies;
- Violation of instructor's parameters for course conduct, as stated in a syllabus, course description, or explained in classroom settings;
- Inappropriate use of learning and social platforms, discussion fora, and/or audio/video conferencing tools, (e.g. spam messages, unauthorized advertising, repeated dissemination of promotional material);
- Plagiarism and academic dishonesty; and
- Dissemination of any Sterling-exclusive content outside of closed social or learning platforms.



Online Étiquette (“Netiquette”)

To support the co-creation of an inclusive and inviting virtual learning environment, Sterling College and EcoGather have established clear online communication expectations rather than presuming shared norms. These guidelines should inform how program participants and instructors or facilitators communicate with each other on online learning and social platforms. Above all, we seek to create an environment in which everyone is treated with respect while also generating conversations that have “good heat” (to borrow a term from Priya Parker), and increasing our tolerance for generative discomfort and respectful disagreement. If this seems less than clear to you, choose kindness in the moment and reach out to a member of the EcoGather team to further discuss or unpack the interaction.

Above all we seek to create an environment in which everyone is treated with respect. When in doubt, choose kindness.

- Use a person’s preferred name when addressing or referring to them. If unsure, check in with them;
- If using pronouns, ensure that you are using a person’s correct pronouns;
- Use clear, concise and respectful language;
- Use humor or sarcasm cautiously, as these may be misinterpreted unless you affirmatively indicate your tone or intent;
- Share your own personal information with discernment;
- Do not share the personal information of other program participants, instructors and/or facilitators;
- Make posts or provide comments that are responsive to structured conversations, within the scope of the course, or closely related to course topics and themes;
- Read all of the messages within a thread before responding;
- Be respectful of the opinions of others, even -- and especially -- when they diverge from your own ideas;
- Never use racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, abusive or offensive language when communicating; and
- Cite your sources when sharing information that originated elsewhere. (For guidance on how to do this outside of formal scholarly contexts, see the EcoGather Handbook section on *Honoring Our Inspiration & Moving Toward Thought-Relationship.*)

