

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL # 2025-012
Higher Education Student Marketing Program
RESPONSE ADDENDUM #1
August 28, 2024

CLARIFICATION

Deadline for submission noted in RFP Section 1.3.1 is modified to September 11, 2024 on or before 11:59 pm EST.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the total budget (both ad spend and agency management fees) per year for this engagement? Agency fees are typically based on ad spend, so knowing this, even as a range, will help calibrate our response.

ANSWER: The approximate budget for this initial year may be between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000, though could be more.

2. If you have run campaigns in the past, can you provide a rough breakdown of how the digital marketing budget (including management fees) was spent per platform during past years?
 - Display Advertising
 - Social Media Paid Ads
 - Remarketing
 - SEO

ANSWER: Based on what was shared in the RFP, we're looking for what prospective vendors would suggest for these budget breakdowns. Display advertising, social media paid ads, and remarketing have all been part of past campaign work.

3. Is there an incumbent agency that currently manages your digital marketing? If so, can you share who it is?

ANSWER: Spark 451.

4. How many campaigns did you run during the last 12 months?

ANSWER: 4 with a number of ad refreshes.

5. What networks are you running paid advertising on? (Google Ads, Bing Ads, remarketing ads)

ANSWER: Over the past year, we have used Google Ads, FBIG, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Spotify, remarketing.

6. Are you currently running paid social campaigns? On what networks? (Instagram, Facebook, etc.?)

ANSWER: See question 5.

7. Regarding social media: Are there any expectations for the chosen vendor to manage organic social media account? Or are you just looking for management of paid social ads?

ANSWER: No.

8. Is the reason for the RFP because the contract with your current digital marketing agency is expiring?

ANSWER: Yes, alongside significant investment and expectations for growth.

9. What marketing technologies/platforms do you currently have in place? (i.e. analytics, CRM, marketing automation)?

ANSWER: Google Analytics, MS Clarity, Salesforce, Marketing Cloud.

10. Measurement is important to success. Who currently manages your Google Analytics account? When was the last time it was audited and enhanced?

ANSWER: The account is managed internally; auditing and enhancement work has been done within the last year.

11. What version of Google Analytics are you using? Do you have Google Analytics 4 set up?

ANSWER: GA4.

12. Data accuracy is imperative. Will the chosen vendor be allowed to make adjustments to Google Analytics in order to support benchmarking and results measurement?

ANSWER: Yes.

13. Do you have a preferred dashboard reporting product? We solely use Looker Studio - Will this be an acceptable platform?

ANSWER: No preference as long as the information is up to date and readily available. Looker Studio is certainly acceptable.

14. What is the expected reporting cadence? Monthly?

ANSWER: Yes, we expect a written analysis report at least monthly. We also want prior monthly reports retained for future reference.

15. What are some of your largest challenges/concerns with your current Digital Marketing campaigns?

ANSWER: The needs of our digital marketing campaigns have changed which is the reason we're doing this RFP. As stated in the RFP, our needs include identifying a marketing firm with significant experience in the adult learner space, specifically in competency-based education. Due to the growth of the program, there is increased expectation to continue growth and the successful firm will be a key player in this effort.

16. How do you plan to measure a successful campaign (or will you rely on the chosen vendor to help define this)?

ANSWER: We will rely in part on the chosen vendor helping to define this success; however, as stated in the RFP, we are looking for a specific number of conversions in the graduate and undergraduate space.

17. What are your overall indicators or KPIs that you will use to evaluate the success of the campaigns?

ANSWER: See question 16.

18. Is there a target percentage for increased traffic? What are the current website traffic numbers?

ANSWER: No. We would discuss website traffic numbers with the successful vendor.

19. Outside of campaign data, do you have access to intranet, website, and enrollment metrics?

ANSWER: Yes.

20. What are the primary and secondary target audiences for this initiative?

ANSWER: Adult learners with some college experience age 20-55, and then adult learners of any age over 20.

21. Do you have shared drives or media repositories for an agency to pull from?

ANSWER: Yes. We use Google Drive and a DAM (Canto).

22. Do you have shared drives or media repositories for an agency to pull from?

ANSWER: See question 21.

23. How far down the recruitment funnel can you currently track? Have applications been attributed to specific digital marketing efforts?

ANSWER: While we track all stages in the funnel, one of our biggest desires is to better connect marketing and admission data from inquiry to app to admit to enroll.

24. What are the enrollment targets for next year's cycle?

ANSWER: The expectation is for UMPI to double enrollment year over year.

25. What are the current conversion rates from inquiry to application?

ANSWER: 8% from inquiry to app for undergrad; 2% for grad.

26. Will you be supplying the actual creative (design and layout) as well as copywriting for all digital/social ads? Or will the vendor be expected to supply these services?

ANSWER: We will provide past creative and imagery; however, we expect the vendor to provide new ads, keywords, copywriting, etc. for all campaigns.

27. Search engine optimization can impact paid performance. Who manages the site's search engine optimization? Are SEO updates connecting to paid performance possible? Do you have a current SEO strategy?

ANSWER: UMPI staff manage the website and SEO efforts. This is an area where we expect our vendor to provide additional guidance and expertise.

28. What content management system (CMS) do you use to power the website?

ANSWER: WordPress.

29. How much control do you have over the content of the site and technical files?

ANSWER: Full control.

30. Making updates to site content, especially program content, is important to the success of Digital Campaigns. Who are the stakeholders who currently manage this content and how is the update process structured? Do you have a content governance strategy in place? Are there dedicated content owners? How long does it take to approve and publish changes?

ANSWER: The website is managed by UMPI's Digital Content Specialist in consultation with the Director of Marketing and Communications. Website changes can be made quickly and efficiently, typically within 24 hours.

31. Are site content and call to action updates possible to optimize conversions?

ANSWER: Yes.

32. Has keyword research been completed?

ANSWER: Yes, but we consider this a continuous process and expect our vendor to conduct keyword research.

33. Have student personas already been created? If so, can you share them in order to prepare a more complete strategy for RFP response?

ANSWER: Yes:

NAME AND BIO

Ashley, she/her/hers

- 35 years old - Millennial
- YourPace
- Biz - Management & Leadership Major
- 2 kids
- Has 38 college credits
- works full-time
- seeking job growth

- fulfilling life goal

PERSONALITY

- Responsible
- Empathetic
- Serious about their education

INTERESTS

- DIY projects
- Reading
- Movies
- Family

SKILLS

- Manages time well
- Hands-on learner
- Follows directions well
- Picks up new skills

TECH SAVVINESS

- Uses YouTube for tutorials
- Facebook to connect with family and close friends
- New media platforms can be overwhelming
- Comfortable with Office suite
- Has an HP laptop
- Reads on a tablet

GOALS

- Better myself.
- Get a promotion or raise with my current employer.
- Be a good example for my children.
- Fulfill a lifelong goal.

WAYS UMPI HELPS FULFILL GOALS

- Lots of support for adult learners
- Understanding and encouraging faculty & staff
- Affordable
- Convenience of YourPace (self-driven/self-paced)
- IT Services
- Personal Academic Success Coach to assist with Support, Pace, and Progress

VALUE PROPOSITION

Getting you to degree completion, fast and affordably with tons of support built in.

34. Can you describe the team the chosen vendor will be reporting to? Role and department?

ANSWER: The team will work with the Director of Marketing and Communications, the Vice President of Enrollment Services, the Executive Director of Competency-Based Education and Degree Completion, and an enrollment management consultant. Other UMPI team members will be brought into the conversation as needed.

35. Regarding your campaign expectations, you mentioned a total of 15,000 conversions for undergraduate programs and 1,300 conversions for graduate programs. Could you please confirm if these targets are intended to be achieved over the proposed 5-year contract period, or is that an annual number?

ANSWER: That is the number for 2024-2025. That number will change annually.

36. To better understand your goals, could you share your year-over-year conversion analytics for undergraduate and graduate programs for the last 3 years? Specifically, we are interested in 1.) website traffic, and 2.) leads generated, and 3.) subsequent enrollments from those leads.

ANSWER: We will discuss these numbers as part of the interview process.

37. Could you let us know which CMS platform you are currently using to manage your web properties? (i.e. Wordpress, Drupal, etc.)

ANSWER: See question 28.

38. What CRM system do you have in place for managing the enrollment processes? (i.e. Salesforce, Liaison, etc.)

ANSWER: Salesforce.

39. Which application systems do you utilize (i.e. Slate, Target X, etc.)?

ANSWER: The application was built internally and is managed by System IT and a shared processing center. The app data flows into Salesforce and MaineStreet (PeopleSoft).

40. Is it possible to submit the response with quotations for the insurance policies stated in the RFP and only acquire them once we've been selected as the marketing managers for the program?

ANSWER: Yes

41. Is it mandatory to have a vehicle liability insurance policy, given that we might not need a specific vehicle to perform the tasks described in the RFP?

ANSWER: If there is a need to be on campus this will need to be provided.

42. To better understand the potential budget for this new initiative, could you share the media spend budgets you have allocated in the past? Additionally, do you have a budget range in mind for this marketing program?

ANSWER: The media spend budget in the past is significantly lower than what is being looked at for this year (see question 1). On a total budget of about \$300,000, 40% was spent

on Google search for undergraduate, 30% on Facebook/Instagram for undergraduate, 20% on Google search for graduate, and 10% on FB/IG for graduate. We did spend budget on LinkedIn and Snapchat with poor results.

43. While we have already requested conversion analytics for your undergraduate and graduate programs, we would also like to know the current annual conversion rates for both segments. Furthermore, what annual growth rate do you expect in conversions beyond the current performance?

ANSWER: See question 25 for conversion rates. The expectation is that we get from 10-20% for both undergraduate and graduate.

44. How long have the YourPace programs been offered at UMPI?

ANSWER: Since 2017.

45. How much overlap is there between YourPace programs and other learning formats?

ANSWER: YourPace is a very different learning format than traditional programs, or even traditional online programs. As shared in the RFP, it is a competency-based education program, one that is completely asynchronous. It has 6 8-week sessions throughout the year. Because the focus is on adult learners, the program is open to individuals 20 or older.

46. Who do you consider to be your 3 main competitors?

ANSWER: We would discuss this with the successful vendor.

47. What key value propositions make the University of Maine at Presque Isle YourPace programs stand out to prospective students compared to your largest competitors?

ANSWER: Overall cost, personalization, and significant support through advisors and coaches.

48. What percentage of YourPace students enrolled last year were from outside the US?

ANSWER: 9%.

49. Which countries outside the US consistently contribute to YourPace enrollments, and where do you see the most growth potential?

ANSWER: For both questions, Canada, China, and Germany.

50. What is your current admissions process? How quickly does your team try to contact new leads, and what does the follow-up process look like?

ANSWER: Students move from stage to stage in typical fashion--inquiry to incomplete app to complete app to admission decision. Within the inquiry phase, there are three main intake types: RFI forms, phone inquiries, and email inquiries. When individuals complete an RFI form, it links to our CRM and an opportunity is created; prospective students enter an email journey. Phone inquiries are handled by Admissions Specialists, who answer questions

with the goal of getting them to apply. Email inquiries are routed to a central email address; again all questions are answered with the goal of getting them to apply. Additional personal outreach elements to our contact strategy are in development with the intention to launch in the next 3 to 6 months.

51. Page 5 of the RFP document says, "Campaign expectations: a total of 15,000 conversions for the undergraduate program and 1,300 for graduate." Are the numbers for conversion referring to leads generated?

- What are the start goals for the YourPace programs referenced in this RFP?
- How do these goals compare to historical performance for these campaigns?
- Page 3 of the RFP says, "YourPace has doubled its year over year enrollment every year for the past five years." What are the enrollment numbers by program behind this?
- Within what timeline do you expect to achieve a goal of 15,000 undergrad and 1,300 grad conversions?

ANSWER: Yes. We would discuss start goals, historical performance, and enrollment numbers with the successful vendor. Those conversion numbers in the last question need to be achieved within a year.

52. What were the inquiry rates, inquiry-to-application rates, and application-to-enroll rates for the individual YourPace programs over the past year?

ANSWER: See question 25 for inquiry to app rate. App to enroll rates were 39% for undergraduate, 40% for graduate.

53. Which of these channels were an effective part of the marketing program for achieving target enrollments last year?

- Digital Radio
- Traditional Radio
- Digital TV ads
- Digital OOH (Digital billboards)
- Traditional OOH (Billboards, bus wraps, etc)
- Print Publications
- Video Ads – YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo
- Display Ads
- Meta
- LinkedIn
- X
- Reddit
- Google Search Ads
- Microsoft Search Ads
- Affiliate (news, advice, and review websites)
- Email
- SEO

- Content creation
- UGC

ANSWER: Display ads, Meta, Google Search Ads, affiliate, and email.

54. What percentage of the inquiries relevant to your enrollment goals are collected by non-paid marketing channels (direct and organic traffic)?

ANSWER: More than 50%.

55. What is the projected budget for this marketing project, both in terms of in-market spend and overall budget? The RFP mentions that there will not be an opportunity to amend pricing therefore, as much information as possible will allow for the most accurate pricing to be submitted.

ANSWER: See question 1.

56. Last year, what was the annual digital marketing investment that delivered your target enrollment, broken down by awareness, consideration, and action budget percentages?

ANSWER: See question 42.

57. What has been your recent annual investment in SEO to secure high positions in organic search results for lower-funnel queries that deliver inquiries?

ANSWER: Over the last year, we have been working to launch a new website. Now that this effort has been complete, SEO is an area of focus moving forward.

58. Last year, approximately how many marketing creative flights were served, and how many ad designs with unique visuals and messaging per flight were tested?

ANSWER: About a dozen. A/B testing was not done.

59. Please provide information on the UMPI technology ecosystem, specifically what CRM, SIS, CMS, and LMS platforms UMPI is operating? Any additional technology/system information relevant to this RFP would be appreciated as well.

ANSWER: Salesforce CRM, PeopleSoft SID, WordPress CMS, BrightSpace LMS.

60. What is your current marketing campaign budget, and how is it allocated across different programs? Will this budget include agency fees as well?

ANSWER: See question 42. Yes.

61. How do you track and measure conversions from your marketing efforts?

ANSWER: We use Salesforce alongside a digital dashboard (provided by current marketing vendor)

62. Could you describe the typical profiles of students who enroll in your undergraduate, graduate, and other programs? Have you conducted persona work? If so, can you share it with us?

ANSWER: See question 33.

63. Do you wish an agency to handle the creative aspects?

ANSWER: Yes.

64. For the landing pages, are you looking for both design and development, or just one? If design, are you also looking for copywriting? If development, what CMS are you using?

ANSWER: Both. CMS is WordPress.

65. Are you currently partnered with any agency? Do you have access to a real-time performance dashboard?

ANSWER: Yes. Yes.

66. Does the university have 1st party data that we can leverage?

ANSWER: No.

67. What are your current marketing efforts internationally?

ANSWER: Very little at present; a future area of interest.

68. Who do you consider your main competitors in this space?

ANSWER: See question 46.

69. Does each program manage its own budget and scope, or are these handled centrally from one office?

ANSWER: This is handled centrally from one office.

70. How many other agencies are involved in this bidding process?

ANSWER: The final number is unknown, but at present 5 to 10.

71. What qualities do you seek in an ideal agency partner?

ANSWER: Experience in the adult learner space, transparency/clear communication, organization, initiative, innovation. Also, management of our account in such a way that it is clear you are highly engaged with us (our metrics, our conversion rates, etc.) as a client.

72. Can we provide an accompanying PowerPoint presentation in addition to the response packet?

ANSWER: Yes.

73. Outside of the required documentation listed within the RFP are there any bid response format restrictions we should be aware of i.e. word/page limits or a maximum number of attachments? In addition is it permissible to provide additional wider attachments to support our response such as a separate case study document?

ANSWER: No.

74. Can you confirm that Sections 1 - 4 outlined on the Submission Form Package provided are to be copied and addressed on a separate pdf file – not on the Submission form package itself?

ANSWER: A MS Word version is provided on the RFP website you are encouraged to use that submission form to answer the questions and provide the information requested.

75. Is there an incumbent(s) for this service and if so, can you advise who that is?

ANSWER: See question 3.

76. Who would you consider your top 5 competitors?

ANSWER: See question 46.

77. Can you confirm that adult learners are your primary focus for YourPace?

ANSWER: Yes.

78. Are there YourPace programs that the advertising should focus on?

ANSWER: All YourPace programs will be a primary focus of advertising efforts, but as new programs launch or we feel the need to grow particular programs, we may choose to focus on a given program or set of similar programs.

79. What are your priority DMAs (ranked if possible)?

ANSWER: We would discuss this with the successful vendor.

80. Are you currently using a CRM? If so, could you please specify which one?

ANSWER: See question 38.

81. Please confirm your annual budget for the services outlined in your RFP, alternatively can you provide your previous years spend?

ANSWER: See question 1, 42.

82. In Appendix G, Evaluation Questions – Q1. Please could you clarify what is meant by 'best practice consulting options'?

ANSWER: The question is requesting you respond with an implementation strategy to meet the solution requested based on your experience "best practice consulting option".

83. You've specified 15,000 UG conversions, and 13,000 PG conversions. Please could you clarify if these are annual goals or targets for the duration of the contract?

ANSWER: See question 51.

84. What would you define as the top qualities you are looking for in a partner?

ANSWER: See question 71.

85. Are you able to confirm your reason behind issuing this tender e.g. an existing contract coming to an end or a new initiative?

ANSWER: See question 15.

86. Is there any traditional media placement (terrestrial radio, TV, out of home, print media) part of this RFP?

ANSWER: We are open to traditional placement options if we believe they can increase our brand awareness, application rates, and/or lead generation.

87. Who is the incumbent and are they invited to respond?

ANSWER: See question 3. Yes, they have been invited to respond.

88. What is the estimated digital only marketing budget?

ANSWER: See question 1.

89. Is this an invitation only RFP or can anyone respond?

ANSWER: Anyone can respond. The RFP is a public process.

90. Would a business being headquartered in Maine (or not) make any difference in the evaluation and award?

ANSWER: The location of the business is not one of the primary criteria for evaluation.

91. Section 1.1.4 (2nd paragraph) states "... with and emphasis on animation". Can you explain? Is that referring to animated display ad units or something else?

ANSWER: Yes, this is referring to animated display ads in lieu of primarily static ads.

92. Does UMPI have any creative talent on staff?

ANSWER: We have a graphic designer and website administrator who can help to serve as subject matter experts, but will rely on the marketing vendor for creative.

93. Will the winner of this RFP be doing all the creative work?

ANSWER: Yes.

94. Does UMPI purchase any prospect lists (College Board for example)?

ANSWER: No. This program is aimed at degree completion and adult learners.

95. What CRM system (if any) does UMPI use?

ANSWER: See question 38.

96. Rider A. On Page 23 of 29. #2. Business and Performance Reviews: Mentions equipment specifications. Does that have any relevance to this RFP?

ANSWER: This is a standard clause that allows for equipment review if the Agreement covers equipment. In this case the language referencing equipment is not required.

97. Rider A. On page 23 of 29. #3. Campus Visits: Mentions "as needed" on "three-day notice". Can those visits be planned with more notice for scheduling purposes?

ANSWER: Yes.

98. Rider A. On page 23 of 29. #4. Toll-Free Access: Does this have to be an 800 number?? Would a call to Massachusetts from UMPI directly to a point of contact with a mobile phone be considered a "toll call"?

ANSWER: Yes, it is a 1-800 number. The campus may allow for a number that is not toll free. Just note that in your response to Appendix D1

99. On the Submission Form Package on page 6 and page 8 and the 04-2025-012-RFP-PS-CostTemplay-1.xls there is reference to hours and hourly rate. However, most digital media is purchased on a cost per ad (or 1000 ads) basis, or a percentage of media spend. How would I account for that in this RFP for a more accurate idea of costs?

ANSWER: The RFP notes that "if you charge by the hour...", you need to provide hourly rates. This type of contract does not generally rely on an hourly rate. You can use standard categories for digital spend amounts and also management, creative, etc., fees.

100. The RFP on page 4 of 29. 1.1.3 mentions "expertise with the adult learner population" and "real-time dashboard will be expected.", however there is no place in the RFP to mention, list or checkoff any of these details. How should I let UMPI know about our expertise in Higher ed marketing to adult learners? Section 3.1.4 states "The respondent may not provide additional Information..."

ANSWER: You can provide the information in the response to Appendix G.

101. Can you share a sense of the budget range available for this project, to help agencies develop a solution that best aligns with your expectations?

ANSWER: See question 1.

102. Does the University anticipate/expect this to be a nationwide or international campaign? This will impact the appropriate platforms and tactics we will recommend.

ANSWER: The primary intent is for this to be a domestic campaign but we are interested in an international component.

103. Does/Will the University have a robust email nurture/cultivation workflow(s) in place to support the results of the digital media campaign and drive funnel conversions from inquiry to application, etc? If not, is this something the University is looking for help with?

ANSWER: Yes.

104. Will UMPI be able to provide a highly produced TV asset, or are they open to a video being produced for them in an effort to market as widely as possible?

ANSWER: UMPI will utilize another party for video/photo production and if the chosen vendor has resources in this area, we may be willing to partner with them. These services are not part of this specific RFP or the amount noted in question 1.

105. Since we already have an existing Master Agreement in place with UMS, would a separate master agreement be necessary in this case?

ANSWER: Yes, it is required.

106. Are you looking for a PPC campaign primarily or are you open to other digital advertising channels such as social media?

ANSWER: We expect a diverse range of digital channels as part of this campaign.

107. What is your ad spend budget?

ANSWER: See question 1.

108. Can you confirm if the campaign results/expectations are over the course of the 5 year engagement or per year, semester, etc.

ANSWER: See question 35.

109. Can you share any benchmarks (for example, estimated monthly leads now or from previous campaigns)?

ANSWER: This information will be shared with the successful vendor.

110. Is there a total or annual budget for this campaign for creative and strategic services (excluding ad/media spend)?

ANSWER: The amount referenced in question 1 is for creative, strategic services, and ad/media spend.

111. Are there 3 close competitors we could look at for benchmarking and ideation?

ANSWER: Aspirational competitors would include schools with much larger student populations, but with competency-based programs.

112. Given the success and growth that YourPace has experienced to date, what is the University looking to change from its current partnership and campaign approach. What is working, and what is not working?

ANSWER: See question 15.

113. Will UMPI be tracking sourced leads throughout the funnel stages in their CRM, or will they need help establishing full funnel tracking within their internal environment(s)?

ANSWER: UMPI will be tracking sourced leads throughout the funnel stages in the CRM.

114. Are you able to share information on the current demographics of students who have enrolled in the YourPace program? Or will that information only be shared after the contract is awarded?

ANSWER: This detail can be provided after the contract is awarded, but a general student persona is provided in the answer to question 33.

115. Are you able to share information about the marketing strategies that have been used to date to drive enrollment in the YourPace program? Or will that information only be shared after the contract is awarded?

ANSWER: See question 53 for the marketing channels employed. We will share more information about prior strategies after the contract is awarded.

116. Section G, Page 15 requests respondents to "Provide at least three finalized Higher Education Student Marketing campaigns or similarly scoped Marketing plans developed by your company for a higher education institution specifically for online, competency-based, or other adult learner program." Can you provide more information about the desired level of detail and format for this information?

ANSWER: The intent of this question is for us to get a feel for how you will approach the campaign and also how you think strategically. In addition, this will give you a chance to share prior creative work so we can also get a feel for what this might look like. We are requesting three such plans so we can see how well the creative and approach adjusts for different clients.

117. Is this a new contract? If not, is the University at liberty to identify the incumbent on the contract?

ANSWER: See question 3.

118. Is there a specific budget allocated for this contract? If yes, is the University at liberty to share the max budget for the contract with respondents?

ANSWER: See question 1.

119. Can the University elaborate at all on its target demos and geos for this project? Are we targeting any individuals, interest groups or geographies outside of the US? If yes, what regions outside of the US is the University intending to target?

ANSWER: We would discuss this with the successful vendor. See question 102.

120. The RFP indicates incentives for multi-year buy-ins but does not explicitly state the intended contract term. Is there a minimum term intended for this contract? If yes, what is the intended seasonality (if any) for the campaigns in question?

ANSWER: The minimum term is one year (October 2024-September 2025). If the initial term is successful, additional contracts will be possible under the RFP through 2- and 5-year renewals.

121. Is the University hoping to promote or generate interest and applicants for graduate programs as well as undergraduate?

ANSWER: Yes.

122. Does the System have video assets available?

ANSWER: No. See question 104.