

SOLICITATION BC-21120-M
ENROLLMENT MARKETING CONSULTANT
November 1, 2018

SCOPE OF SERVICES

DESCRIPTION: The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) seeks proposals from qualified consultants to provide strategic market analysis, intelligence, and market recommendations, as well as digital marketing communications execution. The work performed by the selected firm will support several related projects throughout the current academic year. Specifically, UMBC is attempting to open several new domestic markets for undergraduate enrollment. The consultant will provide guidance and digital marketing execution support for this project, as well as execution support for current markets. UMBC is also focusing on the recruitment of international undergraduate and graduate students. The selected firm shall provide digital marketing execution support for this effort.

UMBC BACKGROUND: Founded in 1966, UMBC is a selective mid-sized public research university offering academic programs in arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, technology, and engineering. The University currently has 13,767 students (11,260 undergraduates and 2,507 graduate students, including master's and doctoral).

Undergraduate enrollment goals in recent years have focused on moderate overall growth with an emphasis on shaping the class by bringing in more women, non-STEM majors, students from out of state, and international students, while still maintaining the balance between first-time freshmen and transfer students.

The University has steadily grown the applicant pool of undergraduate women and non-STEM majors but has had challenges in yielding these applicants to matriculate and enroll. UMBC's new brand messaging takes this obstacle into account, and it is anticipated that more targeted, efficient, and timely digital marketing, as well as strong storytelling media partners, will have a beneficial impact. In the past two years, there have been results from pilot programs that shift more financial awards to out-of-State students, even though the University has not specifically marketed to out-of-State students and still needs to develop a scalable strategy to cultivate and recruit potential out-of-State applicants for the long-term.

UMBC has improved many internal processes for international admissions, as well as developed relationships with embassies, made overseas visits, and recently entered into an agreement with EduCo to recruit graduate students. Additionally, the University's English Language Institute (ELI) conducts some digital marketing to recruit students to enter the ELI program, with awareness that the ELI students may later enroll in an academic program at UMBC. The University has recently renewed the commitment to focus on the recruitment of international students. As a result, there is a need to develop a deliberate, coordinated effort for recruitment, with the recognition that a great deal of knowledge is necessary to identify the market opportunity and appropriate and effective message and channels for each individual country.

There has never been a better time for UMBC to focus on building brand awareness. This past spring’s NCAA men’s basketball Cinderella story, where UMBC was thrust into the national spotlight after a 16-seed-over-1-seed upset, brought the University’s name and focus on academic excellence to the attention of millions around the world. The University now has the opportunity to reinforce and deepen these powerful, positive first impressions through expanded geographic marketing reach and storytelling tied to our value proposition and brand themes.

GOAL FOR THE PROJECTS: The next phase of undergraduate enrollment marketing should build on UMBC’s strong regional position as a campus of choice for high-achieving students and expand the geographic reach of marketing communications, while continuing to focus on the identified targets.

Over the next 3 years, it is the University’s goal to grow out-of-State and international student enrollment by 7-10% annually, equaling 45 - 68 additional students (*fall 2018: 14-21 new students; fall 2019: 15-22 new students; and fall 2020: 16-25 new students*).

NEW FRESHMEN		FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Applicants	Total	10,629	10,812	11,201	11,724
	Out-of-state		2,748	2,925	2,880
	International		695	770	703
Admitted	Total	6,316	6,144	6,744	6,794
	Out-of-state		1,179	1,329	1,215
	International		213	238	391
Enrolled	Total	1,555	1,538	1,772	1,794
	Out-of-state	121	97	146	134
	International	80	55	55	61

Domestic student recruitment

The visibility stemming from UMBC’s NCAA run has provided an excellent opportunity to introduce and establish UMBC as an attractive option in selected out-of-State domestic markets beyond the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, allowing the University to raise external awareness of UMBC as a campus that offers both academic excellence and a culture of community. The University plans to leverage the increased visibility through informed list-buying tactics and targeted digital marketing over the next several years.

International student recruitment

UMBC is working closely with international student and admissions campus partners to develop print materials and enhance the University’s on-line presence to increase visibility among international students, with the goal of elevating engagement through targeted digital marketing over the next few years.

WORK TO BE PERFORMED: The work to be performed under this solicitation shall consist of the support for three University marketing projects as follows:

1. Open several new markets for out-of-State recruitment:

- Based on the selected firm’s research and knowledge about mobility, applicant pool qualifications, awareness of UMBC, and other factors as appropriate, make recommendations for 2-3 domestic markets outside of the mid-Atlantic region from which UMBC could successfully recruit undergraduate students;
- Make list-buying recommendations for identified markets; and
- Create and execute digital marketing campaigns in identified markets.

2. Provide digital marketing support to ongoing recruitment and yield efforts:

- Collaborate with the University’s internal team to determine appropriate channels (e.g., search, paid social, display, retargeting, etc.) to be used in support of ongoing print and email marketing;
- Provide guidance and support in determining appropriate demographic targeting and keyword strategy;
- Provide support as needed throughout the year for multiple audiences and communications campaigns depending on the particular outreach events (e.g. prospective juniors v. prospective seniors, or applied students v. admitted students);
- Set up and manage campaigns on a daily basis, optimizing to ensure that UMBC is effectively and efficiently using the marketing budget to reach right-fit students, with a focus on the quality of leads generated; and
- Provide ongoing campaign reporting and analysis through a dashboard or metrics snapshot every two weeks, with more robust campaign reports every other month. These reports shall provide sufficient information to ensure that the University teams the status of each campaign, reason for the results, and opportunities for improvement and growth.

3. Provide marketing support to recruit international students

- Provide guidance and support for the recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students; and
- Develop and execute armchair recruitment techniques such as social media marketing tactics appropriate for target countries.

The selected firm will provide a single point of contact at the firm to serve as the firm’s liaison to the University. Meetings shall be held on a weekly basis to provide status updates. At least 3 meetings shall be in person on campus; other meetings may be held virtually.

UMBC will provide in-house creative design for all campaigns.

PROJECT SCHEDULE: The projects are intended to be completed by June 30, 2019. Services will begin immediately after award of this solicitation.

CONTRACT TERM: Contract is to be issued for a period of one (1) year from date of award. There will be one (1) one-year renewal option solely at the University's option.

AWARD: Given the specialized nature of international recruitment, the University may award two contracts. The work is to be performed for a fixed hourly rate. UMBC will not pay in advance for any services, however, it may consider progress payments as milestones are met and deliverables are approved by UMBC.

FIRM'S RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Firms shall submit the following information:

1. A cover letter signed by an officer or member authorized to bind the firm to the proposed fees, rates, and terms. The cover letter shall include the name, address, phone number, and email address for the contact for the solicitation.
2. Summary of the qualifications and experience of the firm. Provide brief narrative describing your firm's experience providing enrollment strategic marketing and market research for Higher Education institutions, including the number of years that your firm has been providing these services. Provide information for at least two (2) strategic marketing projects and two (2) market research projects that have been performed with a similar scope. Describe the scope of work that was performed, the dates of the work, and the support that was provided to the institution. Include information to indicate whether the strategies were successful. Provide contact information for each of these Institutions including the name of the Institution, contact name, contact phone number, and contact email address. References may be contacted at any time during this process to determine an offeror's responsibility.
3. International expertise. Provide your firm's experience in recruitment in the international market, if applicable. As this is a very specialized field, the University recognizes that firms may not have experience in both domestic and international markets. The University will only award this section of the scope of work to a firm that has international experience. If your firm does not have this experience, simply include a note that your firm is not proposing for this aspect of the scope of work.
4. Lead consultant/Key staff. Provide a resume for the lead consultant and, if applicable, any other key staff proposed, detailing qualifications and experience suitable for the project and describing how the Offeror's team will interface with UMBC.
5. Workplan/Timeline. Provide information regarding the approach that the firm will take and the tools to be utilized to perform the scope of work. Provide a recommended schedule/level of effort for the engagement. The schedule/level of effort should be resource loaded so that UMBC is able to understand the anticipated level of effort for each member of the Offeror's team, as well as the required level of effort for UMBC staff. Include a timeline to accomplish the work as well as narrative indicating whether the timeframe in the proposed UMBC schedule is a sufficient amount of time for this project. Provide critical milestones for any recruitment campaigns.
6. Subconsultants/Partners. There may be areas for use of subconsultants or partners in this Project. UMBC encourages the use of small businesses and MBE firm whenever possible. If a firm is utilizing a subconsultant or partner, the firm shall list the subconsultant/partner, the area of expertise of the subconsultant/partner, and all other applicable information regarding key personnel for that firm.

7. Sample reporting and analysis. Provide a sample dashboard or analysis demonstrating your firm's experience with providing ongoing campaign reporting and analysis. This sample may be one of the proposals described in the qualifications section. The dashboard or analysis may be submitted as a separate document, but should clearly indicate the Offeror's name.

All responses shall be provided electronically by November 27, 2018 by 11:59 pm Eastern Time to: Technic.gdvk0t5ihznm83zs@u.box.com. Proposers should receive an automatically generated verification from Box when the file has successfully uploaded. Proposers that do not receive verification should immediately contact the Procurement office to confirm that their response has been received.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Firms shall be shortlisted based on their proposal responses. Shortlisted firms may be required to attend an interview either in person or via Skype. These sessions are anticipated to be held on December 14, 2018. The Lead Consultant and Key Personnel are to set aside this date on their calendar to avoid conflicts.

Additionally, shortlisted firms shall provide a price proposal on December 20, 2018. This shall include fixed hourly rates for the engagement.

If you have any questions regarding this solicitation, please contact Elizabeth Moss, Executive Director of Procurement and Strategic Sourcing at emoss@umbc.edu. It is preferable that questions be provided in writing via email for ease of distribution within UMBC. Responses shall be provided to all other proposers, but without identification of the inquiring firm. All questions shall be submitted by November 16, 2018 to allow for sufficient time to respond before proposals are due. To maintain the integrity of the procurement, Elizabeth Moss shall be the sole point of contact for this solicitation.