

DATE: July 10, 2026

TO: All Prospective Bidders

cc: Procurement File

FROM: David Clurman

RE: Institutional Brand Strategy, Identity Refresh, and Implementation,
BC-21527-C, ADDENDUM #1

The following amends the above referenced Solicitation documents. Receipt of this addendum must be acknowledged by completing the enclosed “Acknowledgement of Receipt of Addenda” form and submitting it along with your response to the University.

The due date and time for the response to be submitted to the University is **THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026 by 4:00 p.m.** (EDT) to the issuing office.

A. The following questions were submitted for a response.

1. Proposal due time - The cover page (page 1) and Exhibit J (page 63) state the technical proposal is due 11:59 pm ET, but the Key Information Sheet (page 2) states 4:00 pm EDT. Which time governs?

Answer: The Key Information Sheet is correct - technical proposals are due no later than 4:00pm EDT on Thursday, July 23, 2026.

2. Page limit and format - Is there a page limit for the technical proposal (Section III.C, page 14)? And given the 150MB cap, no-zip rule, and box.com submission (Section III.A.3, page 14), does UMBC prefer a single combined PDF, and how should an offeror proceed if creative samples push the total above 150MB across multiple permitted emails?

Answer: UMBC prefers a single combined file. If this is not possible, then files should be labeled appropriately (i.e. “Part 1”, “Part 2”).

3. Our client’s budgets are confidential. Can “contract value” be omitted from the references in our RFP response?

Answer: For clients that have deemed their budget confidential, share a range of the budget instead of a specific number.

4. Beyond the published evaluation criteria, are there characteristics or capabilities that distinguish exceptional proposals for this engagement?

Answer: All proposals will be evaluated on the established criteria as specified in the RFP.

5. Criteria weighting - Section II.F (page 12) lists five technical criteria in descending order of importance but assigns no weights or points. Will UMBC disclose the relative weighting, and the technical-to-price ratio (Section II.F.1 states technical outweighs price)?

Answer: UMBC will not share the relative weighting.

6. Is there a page limit for the technical proposal, and are there required font, font-size, or margin specifications? The submittal checklist confirms the required exhibits and transmittal letter, but formatting parameters for the narrative response are not specified.

Answer: There are no specifications for page limits, font, font-size, or margins.

7. Section III.D.6 refers to a 'Firm Experience Form (Exhibit G)' requesting identification of similarities and differences between past projects and the proposed engagement. The Exhibit G included in the solicitation is titled 'Reference Checks' and does not contain a distinct field for this narrative. Can you confirm whether the 'similarities and differences' narrative should be included within Exhibit G's description field, or should be submitted as a separate attachment?

Answer: This was a typo in the RFP. The Firm Experience Form is Exhibit F. However, Reference Checks (Exhibit G) has spots for this narrative information. If additional space is needed to provide the requested information, a separate attachment can be included.

8. Can UMBC please confirm the preferred electronic file format for the Technical Proposal (e.g., searchable PDF, Microsoft Word, or PowerPoint)? If no preference exists, is a professionally designed, searchable PDF acceptable?

Answer: UMBC prefers a searchable PDF.

9. If multiple files are submitted (e.g., Technical Proposal, Appendices, Required Forms), is there a preferred file naming convention or organizational structure UMBC would like offerors to follow?

Answer: UMBC prefers a single file. If multiple files are submitted, it is preferred that they are named in such a way that a connection would be easily seen (i.e. Company Name.Part1, Company Name.Part2).

10. Our firm is not located in Maryland. Is it acceptable to have workers' comp insurance based on the state requirements where employees are located?

Answer: This is acceptable.

11. In the RFP, the oral discussion attendance requirement states, "The proposed Key Personnel identified in the Technical Proposal must attend the Oral Discussion." Are all key personnel identified in the proposal required to attend the Oral Discussion? Or must oral presentation attendees be among the key personnel identified in the Technical Proposal, but not all are required to attend?

Answer: All key personnel identified in the proposal must attend the oral discussions, which are virtual. Additional staff from the firm may also participate in the oral discussions.

12. Under insurance requirements, "food product" insurance is listed. If we offer bottled water and packaged snacks for focus groups, would we be expected to purchase this type of insurance?

Answer: This type of insurance is only necessary if the firm is producing the food. Items that are pre-packaged do not require this insurance.

13. We are MBE (HUB) certified in North Carolina. Is there a reciprocal agreement with Maryland?

Answer: There is no reciprocal agreement. Firms must be registered with the [Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility](#) by the date of contract award.

14. On Form D1-A, you are asking for the percentage of business allocated to the MBE firms. Since the bid (at this point) does not require pricing, if we estimate percentages, will we be held to those if we are awarded the agreement?

Answer: The estimation of percentages is acceptable for this phase of the solicitation.

15. Our firm was registered in Maryland as a foreign corporation but withdrew several years ago when we no longer had clients in the state. Do we need to requalify prior to submitting our response, or can we submit the paperwork to requalify if we are awarded the contract?

Answer: Your firm can submit the paperwork to qualify if you are informed that you are reasonably susceptible of being awarded the contract.

16. Weight of MBE requirements – Does the 20% MBE requirement correlate to 20% weighting of your decisions?

Answer: The 20% is a goal and does not correlate to 20% weighting of a final decision.

17. Does UMBC anticipate that strategic brand consulting, research, creative development, UX, content strategy, and/or implementation support are all eligible scopes that can be subcontracted to satisfy the MBE requirement?

Answer: Strategic brand consulting should be conducted by the agency of choice. Some aspects of creative development and content strategy, as well as the other elements listed, may be subcontracted to satisfy the MBE goal.

18. If the prime contractor is located outside Maryland, are there any additional administrative or registration requirements beyond SDAT registration and the standard procurement requirements?

Answer: There are no additional requirements.

19. What is your definition of “mid-size” organization?

Answer: UMBC is a mid-sized university, meaning that at approximately 14,000 students, the population size would not be categorized as either a small or large institution.

20. Would you be willing to share why the previous RFP, #BC-21513-C, did not move forward and why was a second RFP deemed necessary?

Answer: The prior RFP’s scope of work was demonstrated to be unclear. The current RFP revised the scope of work and includes an “exclusions” section.

21. Can UMBC provide an anticipated governance structure for the project, including the size of the steering committee, primary decision-makers, and expected approval process for major milestones?

Answer: The governance structure for the project is under consideration and will be decided before the engagement begins and shared with the awarded agency.

22. Milestone Updates - Do you require progress updates at every step of the timeline, or only at major approval milestones?

Answer: UMBC will require updates at a cadence that complies with the overall timeline and goals of the project. This will be determined in partnership with the awarded agency.

23. Project Governance - Have you established a formal RACI or OARP matrix for this project?

Answer: Neither a formal RACI nor OARP matrix have been established.

24. The RFP references presentations and feedback sessions with: “selected campus stakeholders” and “focus groups across campus.” The size and decision-making structure of those stakeholder groups are not defined. Can UMBC provide additional guidance regarding project governance, including anticipated stakeholder participation, review groups, and final approval authority for strategy and creative decisions?

Answer: The governance structure for the project is under consideration and will be decided before the engagement begins and shared with the awarded agency.

25. Who holds final approval at each phase gate (e.g., strategy sign-off, creative direction, core creative/content approval) — UCM leadership, the President’s Cabinet, the President, or the Board of Regents — and how many formal approval gates fall within the four-week strategy and six-week creative-exploration windows?

Answer: The governance structure for the project is under consideration and will be decided before the engagement begins and shared with the awarded agency.

26. Governance Review Depth - Should the governance model recommendations focus purely on marketing workflow approvals and stewardship structures within UCM, or do they need to encompass decentralized, campus-wide compliance enforcement frameworks?

Answer: The governance structure for the project is under consideration and will be decided before the engagement begins and shared with the awarded agency.

27. Institutional Positioning - During the pre-proposal conference, leadership emphasized strengthening UMBC's distinct institutional identity. How does UMBC want proposers to think about balancing that individual brand positioning with UMBC's affiliation within the University System of Maryland?

Answer: Proposers should focus solely on UMBC’s distinct institutional identity.

28. Success Metrics & KPIs - Beyond search volume and social listening, are there specific institutional KPIs (application yield, prospect-to-visit conversion, giving conversion) that the brand refresh is expected to influence?

Answer: The goal of this project is modernization and refinement of the existing core brand identity, brand positioning and architecture including messaging, brand personality and voice. Success will be determined by receipt of creative/design and content that aligns with the desired positioning of the institution and that is adopted by the campus community as representative of the institution. KPI’s related to enrollment, donor engagement, brand perception, etc. will be evaluated after the campaign development/implementation phase which is not part of this specific project.

29. Aligned Institutional Initiatives - Beyond the strategic plan, are there other institutional initiatives currently in motion that the refreshed brand should align with, such as a fundraising campaign, academic reorganization, enrollment strategy, or campus master plan?

Answer: The refreshed brand should be applicable to any initiative targeting the audiences in the mentioned areas. Any specific initiatives will be shared with the selected agency during engagement.

30. Strategic Direction and Success Definition - What are the top measurable outcomes that UMBC expects from this engagement (e.g., increased applications, brand perception shift, donor engagement)? How will success be evaluated relative to UMBC's current market position in higher education?

Answer: The goal of this project is modernization and refinement of the existing core brand identity, brand positioning and architecture including messaging, brand personality and voice. Success will be determined by receipt of creative/design and content that aligns with the desired positioning of the institution and that is adopted by the campus community as representative of the institution. KPI's related to enrollment, donor engagement, brand perception, etc. will be evaluated after the campaign development/implementation phase which is not part of this specific project.

31. As the president leads the organization's new strategy, how much of this engagement is expected to focus on communicating the strategy versus helping the organization align around it? For example, are you looking only for messaging deliverables, or do you also anticipate work that translates the strategy into leadership communications, organizational behaviors, and decision-making principles?

Answer: This engagement is not related to communicating or creating organizational alignment with the new institutional strategic plan.

32. Right now, UMBC brand attracts a highly diverse student body. Do you have thoughts on what has made the school and the brand so attractive to a broad spectrum of students?

Answer: UMBC's commitment to inclusive excellence.

33. Should we think about this work primarily as a marketing initiative, or do you envision Institutional Advancement as an active partner in developing and carrying the narrative forward?

Answer: At this stage, the work is primarily a marketing initiative that partners from institutional advancement as well as other campus partners will have a voice in.

34. What are some measurable goals for the UMBC brand in the next 6-18 months?

Answer: The goal of this project is modernization and refinement of the existing core brand identity, brand positioning and architecture including messaging, brand personality and voice. Some measurable goals for the brand include increased branded keyword searches, homepage impressions, and improved university rankings. However, progress towards these goals will not be attributable to this specific project only.

35. Higher ed outcomes are being scrutinized more than ever by prospective applicants and their parents. How would you like to see UMBC's outcomes messaging evolve under a new positioning?

Answer: Messaging should align with the experience and outcomes that any target audience can expect from engagement with UMBC.

36. What prompted UMBC to pursue a brand refresh at this point? Were there specific research findings, market shifts, enrollment trends, or stakeholder feedback that influenced this decision?

Answer: The brand needs to align with new strategic priorities and direction of the institution.

37. Personas/audiences - Section I.D.2.1 (pages 7 & 9) leaves the number of audience personas "to be determined during engagement." Can UMBC provide an expected range so pricing is comparable across offerors? Also, which audiences should be prioritized across undergraduate, graduate, research, corporate, and government stakeholders?

Answer: There is no established range to share at this time. Audience prioritization will occur during engagement with the selected agency.

38. How many audience personas does UMBC anticipate the engagement will produce?

Answer: The number of personas will be determined during the engagement with the awarded agency.

39. Audience Structure: Do you already have a forward-looking, prioritized structure for your target audiences, or will the agency need to develop or evolve existing segments or personas?

Answer: Audience prioritization will occur during engagement with the selected agency.

40. What percentage of your alumni are local?

Answer: 70% percent of UMBC's alumni are in Maryland with about 17% in Baltimore County.

41. Existing research and social-listening tool - Section I.D.1 (pages 8–9) references prior university research and a social-listening tool "that may be leveraged." What baseline performance metrics (awareness, engagement, etc.) is UMBC currently tracking? Which existing research, surveys, and prior brand studies will be made available at project initiation (examples include brand perception studies, enrollment research, market research, website analytics, social listening data, admissions research, alumni surveys, etc.)?

Answer: All data that is in the possession of UMBC, legally shareable, and necessary for the success of this brand refresh will be shared with the selected agency upon engagement.

42. UMBC referenced prior brand-perception research (an internal campus survey and an external survey conducted with Hanover roughly nine months ago) that will be shared only with the awarded firm. For scoping the follow-up brand-perception study, can UMBC share the methodology, sample sizes, or audience segments used in that baseline so the post-launch measurement can be designed as a true comparison?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

43. Data Formats - What formats are these existing data packets stored in (e.g., raw SPSS/Excel files, summarized PDF decks, or tableau dashboards)?

Answer: Data is stored in various formats.

44. Baseline Metrics Access - Does the university already have established benchmarks for brand strength metrics (e.g., search volume trends, active social listening tools), or will the agency need to establish the initial data baselines?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

45. Approximately how many stakeholder interviews and focus groups does UMBC anticipate? Please provide expected participant counts by audience (faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, employers, etc.) and whether the University will recruit participants. Do you anticipate any specific obstacles in working with these groups?

Answer: The required number of stakeholder interviews and focus groups and the process for execution will be determined during engagement with the awarded agency.

46. Does UMBC expect the selected agency to conduct all quantitative research, or does the University anticipate leveraging existing survey data where appropriate?

Answer: UMBC is open to leveraging existing data where appropriate in addition to the agency conducting quantitative research where necessary.

47. Are there existing mechanisms for gathering community feedback (e.g., standing advisory groups, governance committees or campus councils) that the selected agency will be expected to leverage?

Answer: Yes, there are existing university groups that may be leveraged for gathering community feedback.

48. The RFP states that discovery and research may include: “in-depth interviews, focus groups, social listening, primary and secondary data analysis and competitive benchmarking.” It also notes that: “the engagement will include initial consultation to establish a research agenda.” The scope appears to leave open the possibility of additional research depending on findings during discovery. Can UMBC clarify whether any research activities should be included within the base proposal, or whether additional research requirements identified during discovery would be scoped and approved separately?

Answer: Any research activities should be included in the base proposal.

49. For planning purposes, can UMBC indicate target volumes for the research phase — approximate number of stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and survey audiences envisioned — so all offerors scope discovery consistently? (We understand UMBC will help coordinate access to campus stakeholders and groups.)

Answer: The required number of stakeholder interviews and focus groups and the process for execution will be determined during engagement with the awarded agency.

50. Stakeholder Map - Can you provide a comprehensive list or map of the key stakeholders involved?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

51. Decision-Making Culture - Does the university lean toward a highly data-driven approach, or does it rely more on institutional intuition and consensus?

Answer: Depending on the decision to be made, either data, institutional consensus or a combination of both may be utilized.

52. Research Balance - What are your expectations regarding the scale of the primary research? Should our methodology lean more heavily toward qualitative insights or quantitative data?

Answer: There are no expectations regarding the scale of primary research. Determination of how heavy to lean toward qualitative or quantitative is at the discretion of the agency to ensure that they have the data necessary to develop an effective brand strategy.

53. Audience Access - Will the university provide direct access to contact databases for current students, alumni, and faculty?

Answer: All data that is in the possession of UMBC, legally shareable, and necessary for the success of this brand refresh, will be shared with the awarded agency upon engagement.

54. Existing Surveys - Do you have active or recurring longitudinal surveys with your core audiences that the agency can tap into?

Answer: All data that is in the possession of UMBC, legally shareable, and necessary for the success of this brand refresh, will be shared with the awarded agency upon engagement.

55. Digital Signals & Platforms - Do you currently license or use any data platforms that track real-world digital signals (such as search trends, AIO, web intent data, or social listening) to serve as a proxy for traditional quantitative or qualitative research?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

56. What are some brands (inside higher ed and outside of higher ed) that you think are successful in what they're doing? Why are those your favorites?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

57. Peer Set & Aspirational Benchmarks - How does UMBC define its peer set for this refresh: other University System of Maryland institutions, national R1 public research universities, minority-serving institutions, or a curated aspirational set? Are there specific institutions or brands, in higher education or beyond, that UMBC leadership has cited as exemplars?

Answer: UMBC is unable to share the information requested prior to award.

58. Current Inventory - Does UCM maintain a centralized registry of all currently known official and unofficial department marks and taglines, or will the inventory process be more "investigative"?

Answer: The inventory process will be more investigative.

59. Logo/Identity Depth - The Summary (Section I.B, page 7) describes "subtle tweaks in color palette, type, or streamlining of the logo if necessary" and states "this is not a wholesale rebrand," yet Section I.D.1.1 (page 9) requires a full audit of all marks to determine what should be kept, optimized, and retired. Please clarify the maximum degree of identity change in scope — specifically, whether a redrawn logo or wordmark is in or out of scope. If research indicates that UMBC should modify some of its existing branding and/or marks, is UMBC open to that?

Answer: UMBC is open to updating the mark if the research deems it necessary.

60. Identity Latitude - The RFP references "subtle tweaks in color palette, type, or streamlining of the logo if necessary." How much latitude does UMBC want proposers to assume? Are refinements limited to the wordmark, lockup, and supporting elements, or is meaningful evolution of the shield mark also within scope if supported by research?

Answer: Refinements are not limited to the wordmark. If the research deems a meaningful evolution of the shield mark, UMBC is open to that. The [lockup system](#) could also be updated if research supports that.

61. Existing Style Guide - The current guide at styleguide.umbc.edu includes a substantive editorial layer, from writing standards and capitalization to inclusive language and web conventions. Should the refresh fully re-author that editorial guidance, evolve it, or leave it largely intact while the visual and messaging framework is refreshed around it? Are there specific sections leadership considers most in need of change?

Answer: The editorial layer could evolve if research deems it necessary.

62. Does the University envision this engagement as a refresh and refinement of the existing brand, or is it open to a more significant evolution of the University's positioning, messaging and visual identity if supported by research?

Answer: UMBC sees this as a refinement of their brand, but are open to updates to positioning, messaging, and identity if research deems them necessary.

63. Trademark Guardrails - Are there any specific unofficial or localized department marks that the university already knows are legally or politically off-limits for retirement beyond what is in the RFP?

Answer: No department marks are off limits.

64. Brand Strategy Framework - For the final Brand Refresh Strategy deliverable, does the university expect the structural framework and components to strictly mirror the current format found at styleguide.umbc.edu, or are you open to a completely different and more streamlined approach?

Answer: UMBC is open to a more streamlined approach.

65. Is the engagement expected to include a review and refinement of the University's institutional brand architecture, or is the scope limited to developing naming conventions and guidance within the existing architecture?

Answer: The goal of this project is modernization and refinement of the existing core brand identity, brand positioning and architecture including messaging, brand personality and voice.

66. We understand from the pre-proposal conference that sub-brand/college naming conventions are intentionally out of scope for this engagement; can UMBC confirm that nomenclature work is limited to the core institutional brand?

Answer: Work is limited to the core institutional brand.

67. Brand Architecture Scope - Does the university expect the agency to evaluate and revise the overarching corporate brand architecture (e.g., shifting between monolithic, endorsed, or house-of-brands models), or are we strictly mapping the refreshed visuals onto the existing organizational structure?

Answer: The best course of action will be determined in partnership with the awarded agency.

68. Are there known challenges with the current brand architecture (schools, colleges, institutes, centers, athletics, research entities, etc.) that UMBC hopes to address?

Answer: There are no known challenges with the current brand architecture.

69. Brand Weighting - How should we balance the core university brand against individual Colleges, Schools, and Departments?

Answer: The core brand is most important and could trickle down to the Colleges/Schools/and Departments, if appropriate.

70. Nomenclature Baseline - Do you have existing naming and nomenclature principles or guidelines for sub-brands and programs, or will the agency be expected to build this framework from scratch?

Answer: This information is available at: <https://styleguide.umbc.edu/college-division-and-office-logos/>.

71. Exceptions & Carve-Outs - Are there any donor-named colleges, specialized institutes, or co-branded entities (such as bwtech@UMBC) that are contractually or politically exempt from the standard brand architecture rules?

Answer: Yes, there are some entities that are affiliated with UMBC but may exist, for example, as a separate 501(c)(3), and therefore may be exempt from standard brand architecture rules. A list of these may be provided during engagement with the awarded agency if necessary.

72. Athletics vs. Institutional Boundaries - Given that the athletic logo and "True Grit" marks are protected, where exactly do the boundaries of the institutional naming conventions stop regarding club sports, student life, and spirit merchandise?

Answer: All of those items (club sports, student life, and spirit merchandise) are not a part of this engagement.

73. For the requested publication templates (3-6 formats across multiple publication types), can UMBC clarify whether this refers to 3-6 total template systems or 3-6 design variations for each publication category?

Answer: Three design variations for each publication category.

74. What role will the five schools and colleges within UMBC play when it comes to developing a positioning for the university?

Answer: Various stakeholders including the schools and colleges will be represented at levels determined during the engagement.

75. Messaging Development - What level of messaging should be developed to accompany the new brand positioning and visual identity?

Answer: UMBC is looking for a full message architecture not just a tagline. This should include a core positioning statement, brand pillars/differentiators, and tone of voice guidelines. UMBC would also like a message house showing how the core messaging translates for different audiences.

76. Print collateral count - Section I.D.2.1 (page 9) asks for "3–6 formats for each" of roughly seven publication types, then caps the engagement at "one fully executed piece ... per publication type not to exceed ten publications." Please clarify the distinction between "formats/templates" and "fully executed pieces," and confirm the total number of templates and the total number of finished pieces UMBC expects. Will UMBC provide final content for these pieces, or is content development expected to be included?

Answer: Three design variations for each publication category are expected. Fully executed piece to be determined with the awarded firm.

77. Digital design concepts. Section I.D.2.1 (pages 9–10) specifies "one design concept applied across 5 unique pages," listing Homepage, a paired Program Pages set, Life on Campus, and Giving. Please confirm whether the paired program pages count as one or two of the five and confirm the program pages are desktop-only while the others require both desktop (1440px) and mobile (390px).

Answer: The paired programs count as one. Program pages should also include both desktop and mobile.

78. The RFP states: "this engagement does not include a full website redesign" while also requesting five digital page concepts across desktop and mobile experiences. The expected level of design fidelity is not defined. Can UMBC clarify the expected level of fidelity for the requested digital concepts and whether these deliverables are intended primarily to demonstrate application of the refreshed brand system or to inform future website redesign efforts?

Answer: The website will need to reflect the brand refresh. Deliverables are intended to demonstrate application of the refreshed brand system. Application on other web pages will be carried out internally by UMBC staff.

79. For the Figma concepts, should agencies assume existing information architecture and page content, or are recommendations for revised page hierarchy and user experience expected as part of the deliverables?

Answer: Assume existing information architecture and page content.

80. Will UMBC provide existing design systems, UI standards, accessibility requirements, and analytics to inform the digital concepts?

Answer: UMBC will provide this information to the awarded firm.

81. The RFP requests: “social media post templates, email templates, digital advertising unit templates, and PowerPoint/Google Slides master templates.” However, the number of expected template variations is not specified. Can UMBC provide guidance regarding the anticipated number of template variations expected for social media, email, advertising, and presentation materials?

Answer: Social media post templates: 2-3 per each of the following channels - Meta (IG & FB), LinkedIn.

82. For the digital design deliverable (five Figma concept pages, explicitly not a redesign), is this limited to visual design concepts with no development handoff specifications, and will UMBC’s web team own all implementation?

Answer: Both visual design concepts and detailed specifications would be ideal. Yes, the UCM team will own implementation.

83. At the conclusion of the engagement, is the selected agency expected to develop a campaign platform and creative campaign concept, or provide the foundational brand strategy, messaging and creative assets to support future campaign development?

Answer: The awarded agency will the foundational brand strategy, messaging, and creative assets to support future campaign development.

84. Meeting Frequency - How many rounds of feedback and stakeholder meetings do you anticipate?

Answer: The required number of feedback and stakeholder meetings will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

85. Creative directions vs. tested concepts - Section I.D.2.1 (page 9) calls for "3 to 4 directions before refinement," and Section I.D.2.2 (page 10) calls for focus-grouping "selected (3–4) creative concepts." Are these the same 3–4, or is sequential narrowing expected (e.g., 4 directions → focus group → refine)?

Answer: Creative development in consultation with UCM and a team of division representatives from across campus leads to 3-4 creative directions/concepts. The 3-4 concepts will be shared with focus groups for feedback before refinement. Feedback from UCM, divisional representatives, and focus groups will be used to refine concepts for final selection.

86. Focus Groups & Recruitment - Section 2.2 references community focus groups on 3-4 creative concepts. Does UMBC have a target number of groups and participant mix in mind, or is the expectation that proposers recommend cadence and composition based on their own methodology? And will UCM handle participant recruitment, or is that agency-led?

Answer: The cadence and composition will be determined in partnership with the selected agency and may be based on agency methodology. Participant recruitment will also be handled in collaboration between UCM and the agency.

87. The RFP requires: “3 to 4 directions before refinement” along with stakeholder presentations and campus feedback sessions. The number of revision rounds is not specified. Can UMBC provide guidance regarding the anticipated number of review, feedback, and refinement cycles agencies should assume following presentation of initial creative directions?

Answer: The required number of review, feedback, and refinement cycles will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

88. Existing Student Panels - Does UCM possess pre-recruited student panels (undergraduate and graduate) for focus groups, or should the agency account for full participant recruitment, scheduling, and incentives?

Answer: Participant recruitment will be handled in collaboration between UCM and the agency.

89. Academic Representation - Does the university require dedicated feedback sessions for each of the three colleges and four schools to ensure cross-representation, or is a centrally unified campus panel preferred?

Answer: Make up and quantity of feedback sessions will be decided in consultation with the selected agency during engagement.

90. Research Approach Strategy - Is the university's preferred research methodology informative/exploratory (using stakeholders to shape an early, broader set of ideas) or validating/evaluative (using stakeholders to test a limited set of narrow, highly developed concepts)?

Answer: The most beneficial is a combination of both.

91. Focus Group Volume - To ensure accurate scoping, what is the university's baseline expectation for the total number of in-person and virtual focus groups to be conducted during the development window?

Answer: Required number of focus groups will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

92. Implementation responsibility - Section I.D.3 (page 10) states "application of provided templates and assets will be conducted by UCM." What level of execution support is expected beyond strategy and assets? Will UMBC need assistance with brand guidelines, brand rollout, production, and/or system-wide training on proper brand identity usage?

Answer: Please refer to section 3: Implementation Support, 3.1 Planning and Roll Out Strategy, and 3.2 Deliverables.

93. Approximately how many campus stakeholders or departments do you anticipate participating in training and rollout activities?

Answer: The required number of training sessions and rollout activities will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

94. The RFP requests: "extensive (on-site or virtual) training for all campus stakeholders." The size and scope of this audience are not defined. Can UMBC provide additional guidance regarding the anticipated scope of training, including expected audience size, delivery format, and number of sessions?

Answer: The required number of training sessions and roll activities will be determined in consultation with the selected agency.

95. How much will being a local agency influence your decision?

Answer: The location of the agency will not impact the award recommendation.

96. What level of on-site participation does UMBC anticipate throughout the project (e.g., discovery, workshops, presentations and training)?

Answer: On-site participation will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

97. What is the expectation for travel? Is travel expected for every phase of the project, or only key milestones/deliverables?

Answer: Travel requirements will be determined in consultation with the awarded agency.

98. On-Site vs. Remote - Do you expect presentations to be delivered live on-campus, or will virtual meetings be acceptable?

Answer: Virtual vs. on-campus meetings will be decided upon based on the best method for the objective of the meeting on a case-by-case basis.

99. Working Style - Do you prefer a collaborative co-creation process, or a traditional agency-style presentation model?

Answer: UMBC does not have a preference.

100. Internal Team Capabilities - Does the UMBC team have internal strategists and creatives who will be hands-on during the project?

Answer: Yes.

101. Content Generation - Will the agency co-create strategic ideas and creative assets with your internal team, or present finished concepts for review?

Answer: The agency will present finished concepts for review.

102. Training Scale and Delivery - What is the estimated total number of unique training sessions and primary stakeholder groups expected for the comprehensive change management and on-site/virtual training rollout?

Answer: Required number of training sessions and roll activities will be determined in consultation with the selected agency. Virtual vs. on-campus meetings will be decided upon based on the best method for the objective of the meeting on a case-by-case basis.

103. Leadership Presentation Dynamic - Will the internal brand launch presentation to the University Cabinet be delivered directly by the agency, or is the agency strictly responsible for developing the deck and talking points for UCM leadership to present?

Answer: The best approach will be determined by consultation between UCM and the selected agency.

104. What are some key things that you find to be critical to a successful partnership? What has been working well for the University? What has been challenging?

Answer: UMBC cannot provide further information beyond the published evaluation criteria.

105. What is your appetite for working with a small firm with decades of experience in research, strategy, and creative development?

Answer: UMBC cannot provide further information beyond the published evaluation criteria.

106. What does a successful partnership look like for you? What have been some challenges in working with other partners in the past?

Answer: UMBC cannot provide further information beyond the published evaluation criteria.

107. Given that UCM is a full in-house division that will apply and steward the assets itself, are there scope areas where UMBC specifically wants the agency to enable and train the internal team rather than execute directly?

Answer: There are no areas where the agency will need to enable or train the UCM staff beyond sharing required files/materials and rationale.

108. Will the selected firm have interview access to the digital and web teams during the Discovery phase?

Answer: Yes.

109. Post-delivery support window dates - The schedule (Section I.D.5, page 11) shows post-delivery support running October–November 2027 (8 weeks), but the price form (Exhibit C, page 28) defines it as September 2027–December 2027. Which window should pricing reflect?

Answer: The post-delivery support window will be October - November 2027.

110. Milestone flexibility - Section I.D.5 (page 11) states the June 2027 asset delivery is a hard deadline for the recruitment cycle but that other timelines have "some flexibility." Please confirm interim milestones can shift by mutual agreement so long as June 2027 holds.

Answer: There will be some flexibility.

111. The June 2027 asset-delivery date is described as a firm deadline tied to the recruitment cycle. If upstream approvals run long, is there flexibility on the earlier milestones, or would UMBC compress a later phase to protect the June 2027 date?

Answer: There will be some flexibility.

112. Is there a timing contingency if project workflows push our completion date past the desired deadline due to unforeseen project delays, like additional stakeholder review and input that needs to be addressed?

Answer: There will be some flexibility.

113. Strategic plan availability - Contract award is September 2026 and discovery begins October 2026 (Section I.D.5, page 11), but the brand refresh must "align with the University's forthcoming strategic plan." Will the final strategic plan be delivered to the selected agency at kickoff, or will the agency be working in parallel with a plan still being finalized?

Answer: The strategic plan will be delivered to the awarded agency when it is released to the public (anticipated in September 2026).

114. Budget range - Will UMBC share an anticipated budget range or not-to-exceed for the engagement to calibrate scope and level of effort?

Answer: UMBC does not have an anticipated budget for this project.

115. Line A scope - The price form (Exhibit C, page 28) asks for a "Maximum lump sum fixed fee for the initial engagement (through completion of initial deliverable)." Given the engagement spans multiple deliverables over 16 months, should we price the contract by defined phases? This materially affects how the fixed fee is structured.

Answer: The price form included in the RFP is a sample and the final version will be different. No pricing is to be submitted at this time and will only be requested of Offerors that are shortlisted.

116. What reimbursable expenses does UMBC allow (e.g., focus-group incentives, on-site travel, stock photography/fonts/licensing, third-party research panels), and which of these are expected to sit inside the fixed fee versus be billed as pass-through costs?

Answer: UMBC permits the expenses that are described above. What specifically will be included in the fee versus billed as a pass-through will be negotiated with the awardee.

END OF ADDENDUM #1, DATED 07/10/26
(Original with enclosures were not mailed)

SOLICITATION NO.: BC-21527-C**SUBMISSION DUE DATE:** THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. EDT**BID FOR:** Institutional Brand Strategy, Identity Refresh, and Implementation**NAME OF OFFEROR:** _____**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF ADDENDA**

The undersigned, hereby acknowledges the receipt of the following addenda:

Addendum No. <u> 1 </u>	dated <u> 07/10/26 </u>
Addendum No. <u> </u>	dated <u> </u>
Addendum No. <u> </u>	dated <u> </u>
Addendum No. <u> </u>	dated <u> </u>
Addendum No. <u> </u>	dated <u> </u>

As stated in this Addendum, this form is to be returned with your response.

Signature_____
Printed Name_____
Title_____
Date

END OF FORM