Addendum Number

Date: May 21, 2025

Reference Request For Proposal Number:	R25-004
Commodity:	Strategic Marketing and Media Placement
Dated:	April 4, 2025
For Delivery To:	Radford University Agency, Commonwealth of Virginia 501 Stockton Street Radford, Virginia 24142
Proposal Due Date/Time:	June 4, 2025, by 3 PM

The following attachments are included with this addendum:
Attachment G – Radford University Brand Guide

RFI Responses follow below:

1. Is there an overall estimated budget for this one-year contract?

    Radford Response: The current budget is not available to be shared; however, the average spend for Radford's Marketing contract over the last three years has been 1.2 million dollars per year.

2. Do you have a preference for the percentage of budget devoted to paid media versus agency fees, creative, etc.?

    Radford Response: General preference is for 70%-75% of the marketing/advertising budget to be allocated to **media buy**, with 15%-20% allocated to **agency fees** (strategy, planning, account management, campaign management, optimization, reporting, etc.) and between 10%-15% for **creative fees** (copywriting, design, production, etc.).

3. Can you provide a breakdown for professional fees and media spend?

    Radford Response: General preference is for 70%-75% of the marketing/advertising budget to be allocated to **media buy**, with 15%-20% allocated to **agency fees** (strategy, planning, account management, campaign management, optimization, reporting, etc.) and between 10%-15% for **creative fees** (copywriting, design, production, etc.).

4. Is there a requirement or preference for offices in the state of Virginia?

    Radford Response: No. However, vendors must be registered in eVA to be awarded a contract with Radford University or any entity of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

5. Can you share a breakdown of student body demographics and how they have changed over the past decade?

Radford Response: Please see the table below:

Term	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Undergraduates	8,880	8,453	8,418	7,926	7,967	7,307	6,513	6,008	5,704	6,161
Undergraduates Male	3,872	3,651	3,591	3,405	3,133	2,799	2,529	2,262	2,009	2,214
Undergraduates Female	5,008	4,802	4,827	4,521	4,834	4,508	3,984	3,744	3,682	3,929
Undergraduates Gender Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	18
Undergraduates Ethnicity Unknown	100	74	140	177	228	240	219	185	156	163
Undergraduates Hispanic	577	590	563	556	557	548	520	542	476	700
Undergraduates American Indian or Alaska Native	20	19	20	22	21	18	22	19	14	11
Undergraduates Asian	127	123	123	123	138	118	102	91	93	103
Undergraduates Black or African American	1,184	1,282	1,400	1,333	1,385	1,282	1,097	900	811	830
Undergraduates Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	15	14	10	11	6	4	5	6	5	4
Undergraduates White	6,313	5,858	5,620	5,193	5,110	4,624	4,138	3,891	3,792	3,949
Undergraduates Two or more races	461	415	449	427	455	428	360	326	299	336
Graduates	863	948	1,000	1,409	3,903	3,388	2,485	1,710	1,827	1,651
Graduates Male	200	222	230	252	557	461	390	293	382	329
Graduates Female	663	726	770	1,157	3,346	2,927	2,095	1,415	1,433	1,311
Graduates Gender Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	11

Graduates Ethnicity Unknown	24	21	14	22	693	1,376	369	152	70	46
Graduates Hispanic	27	22	36	22	61	57	60	61	68	147
Graduates American Indian or Alaska Native	3	3	0	3	7	6	8	2	3	2
Graduates Asian	14	13	13	14	33	38	38	37	43	37
Graduates Black or African American	57	70	78	84	162	181	220	157	158	138
Graduates Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Graduates White	711	786	816	1,219	2,891	1,682	1,740	1,235	1,431	1,212
Graduates Two or more races	14	18	23	28	42	33	38	48	42	51
Total	9,743	9,401	9,418	9,335	11,870	10,695	8,998	7,718	7,531	7,812
Total Male	4,072	3,873	3,821	3,657	3,690	3,260	2,919	2,555	2,391	2,543
Total Female	5,671	5,528	5,597	5,678	8,180	7,435	6,079	5,159	5,115	5,240
Total Gender Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	25	29
Total Ethnicity Unknown	124	95	154	199	921	1,616	588	337	226	209
Total Hispanic	604	612	599	578	618	605	580	603	544	847
Total American Indian or Alaska Native	23	22	20	25	28	24	30	21	17	13
Total Asian	141	136	136	137	171	156	140	128	136	140
Total Black or African American	1,241	1,352	1,478	1,417	1,547	1,463	1,317	1,057	969	968
Total Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	16	16	11	11	6	5	6	7	5	4
Total White	7,024	6,644	6,436	6,412	8,001	6,306	5,878	5,126	5,223	5,161
Total Two or more races	475	433	472	455	497	461	398	374	341	387

6. Is there a desire to enhance or increase diversity in your student population through this campaign?

Radford Response: Radford University is committed to creating an inclusive and engaging student experience. We embrace and honor the diversity of the communities we serve—from Southwest Virginia throughout the commonwealth and beyond. We will work with the selected vendor to identify and define targeted audiences for our undergrad, graduate and non-degree/certificate campaigns.

7. Are you primarily seeking an agency with extensive experience in Higher Education?

Radford Response: Extensive experience in higher education or lack thereof will not be held for or against any prospective vendor.

8. Is SWaM required, or are vendors penalized in scoring if all work is done in house?

Radford Response: No, SWaM is not required. However, the scoring criteria does include a SWaM category that allots 10 percentage points that can only be fully attained through providing certification of SWaM registration with Virginia's SBSD. Vendors can earn partial points through including a SWaM subcontracting plan.

9. How has the university accomplished this work previously?

Radford Response: Radford University has historically utilized negotiated contracts to obtain and maintain these services.

10. Why is now the right time to identify a partner for marketing and media buying?

Radford Response: Radford University's current Strategic Marketing and Media Placement contract is due to expire on September 31, 2025. Such is the case; Radford University seeks to obtain a new contract through competitive solicitation.

11. Will finalists be given an opportunity to present in person or virtually?

Radford Response: Yes. Vendors scored and selected for negotiations will be given an opportunity to present in person or virtually.

12. What is the estimated start date for this contract?

Radford Response: The start date for this contract will be negotiated to support implementation and an effective date of October 1, 2025.

13. Is there an incumbent vendor and will they be invited to participate in this RFP?

Radford Response: The current Marketing contract at Radford University is held by VisionPoint Marketing. They and all prospective vendors are encouraged to participate in this RFP.

14. What are your measurements for the success of this contract?

Radford Response: Radford University will use several quantitative and qualitative measures across digital and traditional/OOH platforms to determine the success of this contract.

Following are our three primary _quantitative measures_:

1. Increase brand awareness
   - Increase top-of-funnel awareness of Radford University in state and out of state and build Radford's reputation with the new brand and campaign creative.
   - KPIs: impressions, clicks, click-through rates, cost-per-click
2. Generate leads
   - Increase leads by attracting prospects and converting them into leads.
   - KPIs: conversions, conversion rate, cost-per-acquisition
3. Drive applications and enrollment from 2025-26 academic year to 2026-27 academic year
   - Increase quality applications

- Increase student enrollment.
  - First-year undergraduate by 1.5%
  - Transfer undergraduate by 1.5%
  - Graduate by 3%
  - Continuing education enrollment non-degree/certificate by 5%
- KPIs: applications, melt, yield rate, student enrollment

Note: We think of KPIs as measuring three different things:
- Volume
  - Impressions: the number of times an ad was displayed and viewable by users.
  - Clicks: the number of people who have clicked on an ad.
  - Conversions: the number of people who have submitted (e.g., RFI/inquiry form submission or button
  - click).
- Efficiency
  - Click-Through Rate (CTR) or Swipe-Up Rate (SUR): the percentage of people who saw an ad, email, or other touchpoint and clicked on a link from it.
  - Conversion Rate (CVR): the percentage of people who clicked on an ad or landing page and completed a desired action.
  - Cost Per Acquisition (CPA): the metric that measures the effective cost of a customer completing a specific action, such as submitting an RFI on the landing page or through an in-platform form.
- Value
  - Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM): the cost for every thousand impressions delivered.
  - Cost Per Click (CPC): the price paid for each ad that was clicked on.
  - Cost Per Conversion: the effective price paid for each lead that was generated.

Additional quantitative measures include increasing:
- # of visits to campus by prospective students, including self-scheduled campus tours, attendance at open houses in the fall and spring and attendance at Highlander Day events in the spring.
- # of high school students who attend one of our Admissions Office visits to schools throughout Southwest Virginia.

Qualitative measures include:
- Quality of brand engagement by prospective students/families at open houses and Highlander Day events, as well as at sponsored events throughout Southwest Virginia (e.g., Strawberry Festival in May and Party in Elmwood Park in July in Roanoke, Radford Community Fest in August and Highlander Festival in October in Radford, Steppin' Out in August in Blacksburg).
- Strength of relationship with selected marketing services vendor, based on level of trust, responsiveness and depth of institutional knowledge exhibited by quality of creative (messaging, image-selection, CTAs, etc.)

15. Which digital platforms have had the most success meeting your KPI's?

Radford Response: Following is an overview of most effective platforms, listed in order. Strategic Marketing will provide the selected vendor with more details results reports for the current FY campaigns.

Most effective platforms:
- Impressions: Meta, Reddit, Google display, programmatic display, Shapchat
- Conversions: Meta, Google search, Google display, Meta retarget, Google display retarget
- CPA: Google display, Meta, Meta retarget, Google display retarget, Google search

16. What are the top three qualities that Radford University seeks in an agency partner?

Radford Response:
- Reliable (focused on meeting deadlines, honoring commitments, communicating in a timely and transparent manner, keeping us informed of results and recommending optimizations)

- Responsive (attentive to our requests, attuned to market trends that require changes in direction, flexible and agile enough to turn on a dime)
- Committed to excellence (developing strategic plans and creating high-quality assets requires a vendor that is committed to excellence—willing to develop a deep understanding of who Radford is, what we do and what makes us distinctive among our competition in today's higher ed marketplace)

17. What are the top three qualities that Radford University does not seek in an agency partner?

   Radford Response:
   - Unresponsiveness
   - Unreliability
   - Apathetic

18. Do you have any first party targeting data that will be used?

   Radford Response: Yes, we will provide look-like audiences, details for geofencing (zip codes, counties, campuses, buildings), audience demographics/psychographics, etc.

19. Are you currently using any CRM system?

   Radford Response: Yes, our Admissions team uses Slate. The Office of Marketing and Communications manages marketing and advertising campaigns focused on attracting prospects into the recruiting funnel. We compel prospects from the top of the funnel through the middle to the bottom of that funnel in an effort to generate qualified leads (individuals who complete an RFI form served in platform or on our website), at which time we hand them off to the Admissions team, which then manages relationships/communications with the qualified leads through Slate and other means.

20. Should pricing be all inclusive of media costs, creative design and development, resources, materials, etc.?

   Radford Response: Pricing should encompass all costs (media buy, agency fees, creative work, etc.). We would like vendors to also provide a rate sheet for any individuals/job titles who will be working on the account, including their hourly fee.

21. Will the awarded vendor have access to social media accounts, GTM, Google Analytics, and conversion data?

   Radford Response: Yes.

22. Will there be any need for landing pages to be built?

   Radford Response: While the university may repurpose and/or update special landing pages from previous campaigns, there is potential that new landing pages will be needed. This will be negotiated at a later date with the selected vendor.

23. Are vendors allowed to include URLs/links to online videos that provide further information and demonstrate our services?

   Radford Response: Yes.

24. To what extent does Radford University expect new creative asset development versus repurposing existing, in-house assets?

Radford Response: Radford University expects new creative every year as we enter new recruiting cycles to avoid stagnation in the market. Some of this could entail refreshing existing creative assets. But the vendor will be expected to generate much of the new creative as part of the contract. We will work with the selected vendor to identify opportunities to repurpose and/or update existing assets, as necessary.

25. What specific KPIs or performance benchmarks, if any, are most important in measuring campaign success?

Radford Response: Radford University will use several quantitative and qualitative measures across digital and traditional/OOH platforms to determine the success of this contract.

Following are our three primary <u>quantitative measures</u>:

1. Increase brand awareness
   - Increase top-of-funnel awareness of Radford University in state and out of state and build Radford's reputation with the new brand and campaign creative.
   - KPIs: impressions, clicks, click-through rates, cost-per-click
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3. Drive applications and enrollment from 2025-26 academic year to 2026-27 academic year
   - Increase quality applications
   - Increase student enrollment.
      - First-year undergraduate by 1.5%
      - Transfer undergraduate by 1.5%
      - Graduate by 3%
      - Continuing education enrollment non-degree/certificate by 5%
   - KPIs: applications, melt, yield rate, student enrollment

Note: Strategic Marketing thinks of KPIs as measuring three different things:
   - <u>Volume</u>
      - Impressions: the number of times an ad was displayed and viewable by users.
      - Clicks: the number of people who have clicked on an ad.
      - Conversions: the number of people who have submitted (e.g., RFI/inquiry form submission or button
      - click).
   - <u>Efficiency</u>
      - Click-Through Rate (CTR) or Swipe-Up Rate (SUR): the percentage of people who saw an ad, email, or other touchpoint and clicked on a link from it.
      - Conversion Rate (CVR): the percentage of people who clicked on an ad or landing page and completed a desired action.
      - Cost Per Acquisition (CPA): the metric that measures the effective cost of a customer completing a specific action, such as submitting an RFI on the landing page or through an in-platform form.

   - <u>Value</u>
      - Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM): the cost for every thousand impressions delivered.
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Additional <u>quantitative measures</u> include increasing:
   - # of visits to campus by prospective students, including self-scheduled campus tours, attendance at open houses in the fall and spring and attendance at Highlander Day events in the spring.
   - # of high school students who attend one of our Admissions Office visits to schools throughout Southwest Virginia.

<u>Qualitative measures</u> include:

- Quality of brand engagement by prospective students/families at open houses and Highlander Day events, as well as at sponsored events throughout Southwest Virginia (e.g., Strawberry Festival in May and Party in Elmwood Park in July in Roanoke, Radford Community Fest in August and Highlander Festival in October in Radford, Steppin' Out in August in Blacksburg).
- Strength of relationship with selected marketing services vendor, based on level of trust, responsiveness and depth of institutional knowledge exhibited by quality of creative (messaging, image-selection, CTAs, etc.)

26. How does Radford University envision the working relationship with the awarded partner, as a fully embedded extension of your team, or as an independently led entity?

Radford Response: Radford University would like its partner to serve as a seamless extension of our team so that external advertising creative and messaging aligns with our established branding guidelines and internal communications. The partner would be expected to develop strong working relationships with our key team members and develop deep institutional knowledge over time.

27. Are there any specific peak seasonal or programmatic enrollment cycles or deadlines that vendors should be aware of when developing campaign schedules?

Radford Response: Following are the key deadlines that were used this year for undergraduate programs for the 2025-26 recruiting cycle. Graduate deadlines vary slightly from these. The University will provide the selected vendor with updated undergrad, graduate and certificate/non-degree deadlines for future recruiting cycles.
- Aug. 1 - application opens
- Nov. 1 – freshman early action admission (non-binding)
- Feb. 1 – freshman regular admission
- March 1 – transfer priority deadline
- Date range – rolling admission
- Open House dates
    - Oct 19 (Main Campus)
    - Oct 26 (RUC)
    - Nov 16 (Main Campus)
- Highlander Days dates
    - March 22 (Main Campus)
    - April 6 (RUC)
    - April 12 (Main Campus)
- May 1 – Freshman Deposit Deadline
- June 1 – Transfer Deposit Deadline

28. Where does increasing diversity rank amongst the list of marketing priorities?

Radford Response: Please see above responses for details on Radford University's advertising/marketing priorities, goals and KPIs. The university is committed to creating an inclusive and engaging student experience. We embrace and honor the diversity of the communities we serve—from Southwest Virginia throughout the commonwealth and beyond. We will work with the selected vendor to identify and define targeted audiences for our undergrad, graduate and non-degree/certificate campaigns.

29. Do you have in-house creative department? If so, to what extent does your creative in-house creative department get involved with various campaigns and executions?

Radford Response: Our in-house creative team will work closely with the selected vendor to onboard them to our branding and graphic guidelines. The in-house team may help develop select creative assets for digital and OOH campaigns, which could include shooting new photos and videos at the direction

of the vendor; but the marketing vendor will bear responsibility for developing the large majority of campaign creative.

30. Is creative work (concepts and executions) part of a separate budget?

Radford Response: No. Please refer to the responses above regarding which costs vendor proposals should encompass, including the approximate percentages of media buy, agency fees and creative fees within the total cost.

31. Does your creative department provide the selected agency with creative assets, such as photo images and stock footage for digital, print and video campaigns?

Radford Response: Yes. Our in-house creative team will work closely with the selected vendor to onboard them to our branding and graphic guidelines. The in-house team may help develop select creative assets for digital and OOH campaigns, which could include shooting new photos and videos at the direction of the vendor; but the marketing vendor will bear responsibility for developing the vast majority of campaign creative.

32. Can you approximate how many executions you will need for digital display, video, banner ads, social media graphics?

Radford Response: Radford University expects a sufficient number of creative executions for digital, OOH and other traditional platforms so that campaigns feel fresh throughout each annual recruiting cycle. For our undergraduate, graduate and continuing education non-degree/certificate campaigns, multiple creatives will be needed per digital platform per audience to allow for A-B testing, different CTAs during the course of the recruiting cycle and ongoing optimization based on performance. In addition, there will be "special" time-bound creatives that are run to promote open houses, Highlander Days, approaching application deadlines, etc.

33. Can we separately send in a separate "redacted" version of our response in order to protect our proprietary information?

Radford Response: Yes, you may submit a redacted copy for proprietary information. See *Section 12.A.1-2* for requirements to do so.

34. If yes to question 32, can we send it at a later date after submitting our RFP response?

Radford Response: No. As stated in the solicitation under General Information, all submissions must be made by the **June 4, 2025, 3:00 PM EST.** deadline.

35. What's worked well so far when it comes to attracting students? And where have you felt like there was still room to improve?

Radford Response: Radford University expects the selected vendor to produce clear, compelling, distinctive ads that rise above the noise in each platform/channel being used. Powerful, authentic, emotionally evocative storytelling (where the platform allows) has been successful. Visuals, messaging and storytelling that bring our five brand pillar messages, competitive strengths and core values to life have resonated strongly with our targeted audiences. Ensuring that campaigns feel fresh throughout annual recruiting cycles is always challenging but essential.

36. If Radford University could be known for three things as an institution, what would they be?

Radford Response: Radford University is committed to creating an inclusive and engaging student experience that is accessible to and affordable for all the communities we serve—from Southwest Virginia throughout the commonwealth and beyond.

Radford University's small size, emphasis on outstanding teaching and commitment to student-centered learning foster a strong sense of belonging among our students.

The Radford educational experience is distinguished by the innovative and active ways that learning occurs, inside and outside the classroom. From student-faculty research, study abroad programs and internships, to consulting projects conducted in conjunction with local communities/businesses, this experience facilitates students' personal and professional fulfillment.

37. How are you currently dividing your marketing budget across channels?

Radford Response: Our digital spend constitutes about 80% of our overall marketing/advertising budget, with the balance (about 20%) allocated to OOH and traditional platforms. Within digital, about 40% is allocated to top of funnel platforms, 45% is allocated to middle of funnel platforms and 15% is allocated to bottom of funnel platforms.

38. What does an ideal agency partnership look like from your perspective

Radford Response:

- Reliable (focused on meeting deadlines, honoring commitments, communicating in a timely and transparent manner, keeping us informed of results and recommending optimizations)
- Responsive (attentive to our requests, attuned to market trends that require changes in direction, flexible and agile enough to turn on a dime)
- Committed to excellence (developing strategic plans and creating high-quality assets requires a vendor that is committed to excellence—willing to develop a deep understanding of who Radford is, what we do and what makes us distinctive among our competition in today's higher ed marketplace)

39. Is it okay to submit a proposal that focuses solely on digital advertising? If so, is there a particular section where we should note that?

Radford Response: See *Section's 10 and 11* of the RFP Document for proposal requirements. Radford University cannot advise you on your specific proposal approach to this solicitation.

40. What are your goals for the first 3, 6, and 12 months of this campaign?

Radford Response: Radford University will work with the selected vendor to clearly define goals and corresponding KPIs for the first 3, 6 and 12 months of the campaign. Please see answers above related to goals/KPIs and key deadlines in the recruiting cycle for undergrad, graduate and non-degree certificate programs.

41. For your website, is everything managed in-house, or do you work with an outside partner for updates and maintenance?

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website. These employees will work with the selected marketing vendor, as appropriate, to ensure marketing/advertising campaigns work seamlessly with the new website.

42. Can you please confirm that media agencies can be awarded without a creative agency partner?

Radford Response: See *Section's 10 and 11* of the RFP Document for proposal requirements. Radford University cannot advise you on your specific proposal approach to this solicitation.

43. What information does your ideal media performance dashboard include? How will this reporting be used?

Radford Response: Please see above responses regarding the goals and KPIs for the marketing/advertising campaign. The selected vendor would be expected to work with the university to create and maintain a media performance dashboard tracking those measures.

44. Will Radford be doing a brand lift study in 2026?

Radford Response: The current marketing vendor helped Radford complete a rebranding initiative in 2023. As noted in above responses, the selected marketing vendor will be expected to implement an annual brand perception survey, using similar methodology, target audiences, questions, etc. as the survey the university has conducted for the past two years. This is part of the university's ongoing effort to measure brand awareness, understanding, acceptance and engagement by key audiences.

45. You have listed multiple target audiences – traditional prospective students and their families and first-generation and Pell-eligible prospective students. Will you have creative for each of these audiences?

Radford Response: The selected vendor should expect to work with the Marketing and Communication team to develop customized creative assets that appeal to our different audiences, suited to the platforms on which the creative is being served. We would provide the selected vendor with demographic data and other details about each target audience that should be considered in developing these assets.

46. How does the finance/FAFSA team share feedback and data regarding Pell-eligible prospective students?

Radford Response: Radford University will provide the selected vendor with demographic data and other details about each target audiences—including undergrad and graduate prospects; in-state and out-of-state prospects; and Pell-eligible, first-generation, rural and full-pay prospects—that should be considered in developing assets for each audience.

47. Will federal funding or changes mentioned in the news regarding Pell grants change any efforts by Radford for this audience?

Radford Response: Radford University will inform the selected vendor of any changes to our target audiences based on any changes in the external environment at the regional, state or federal level.

48. What have been the past pain points with prior agencies?

Radford Response: Please see answers above about the desired qualities we look for in our next marketing vendor and the type of relationship we seek to establish with that vendor. Those answers do not in any way reflect on our relationships with any current or past vendor.

49. What have been the barriers to success with past paid media efforts?

Radford Response: Overall awareness and strength of awareness in Radford has improved significantly. Opportunities going forward include elevating prospective students' perceptions of Radford in terms of academic excellence, relevance/applicability of educational experience and quality/unlimited potential of career outcomes.

50. Radford noted increased enrollment in the Fall of 2024, with both freshman and transfer students increasing over prior years. What do you attribute that success to? What learnings are there from this growth that can be applied moving forward?

Radford Response: Overall awareness and strength of awareness in Radford has improved significantly. The Radford Tuition Promise, Direct Admission and Tartan Transfer programs played a key role in enrollment increases, along with a strong rebranding in 2023 and effective brand rollout since that time. We also increased the number of prospects who came to campus for tours, open houses and Highlander Day events. Opportunities going forward include elevating prospective students' perceptions of Radford in terms of academic excellence, relevance/applicability of educational experience and quality/unlimited potential of career outcomes.

51. How has organic search been valuable to your business as a marketing channel?

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. This effort included revising web content for academic program pages and others to achieve better SEO performance. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website, including continuously looking for opportunities to optimize for SEO. As a result of this effort, organic search has become a more effective marketing channel.

52. What pain points have your business experienced with SEO projects in the past, if at all?

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. This effort included revising web content for academic program pages and others to achieve better SEO performance. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website, including continuously looking for opportunities to optimize for SEO. As a result of this effort, organic search has become a more effective marketing channel.

53. Has your team engaged in any SEO work within the last year?

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. This effort included revising web content for academic program pages and others to achieve better SEO performance. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website, including continuously looking for opportunities to optimize for SEO. As a result of this effort, organic search has become a more effective marketing channel.

54. Are there any plans in 2026 for the website? (A redesign, domain migration, or overhauled content? Other?)

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website. These employees will work with the selected marketing vendor, as appropriate, to ensure marketing/advertising campaigns work seamlessly with the new website.

55. Why is the RFP being posted?

Radford Response: See *Section 1. Purpose*, of the RFP Document.

56. The RFP requests the vendor "Identify a projected timeline for delivery of services relative to the award date of the contract." There is no projected award or start date in the RFP. Is there a project award or start date?

Radford Response: The start date for this contract will be negotiated to support implementation and an effective date of October 1, 2025.

57. How would you describe Radford University's current marketing and media strategy? Where is it most effective, and where is there room for improvement?

    Radford Response: Radford University has a robust marketing and media strategy that is aligned with the university's strategic priorities. Marketing and Communication has been successful in creating awareness and moving prospects down the funnel to become qualified leads. We then hand off those leads to our Admissions team, which cultivates those leads through a variety of F2F, phone and email touchpoints using Slate and a variety of recruiting events. We have an opportunity to connect these two stages of the recruiting process in a more seamless way to improve the overall "customer experience" and yield greater applications, deposits and enrollment.

58. Can you confirm that page 4 is the only page needed to return as the cover sheet for the proposal? If not, what pages need to be provided back as the cover sheet of the proposal submission.

    Radford Response: Page 4 is required to be returned, as are Attachments D and E. Please see *Section 18: ATTACHMENTS* in the RFP Document. Attachments A, B, and F are not required to be filled out and submitted. Attachment C is only required if the vendor intends to provide pricing for additional zones supporting VASCUPP Member Schools.

59. If an addendum should be provided, should this be included in the submission of the proposal? If so, where in the organization of the proposal should that be placed?

    Radford Response: Please see *Page 4 of the RFP Document*, where vendors are advised to indicate confirmation of receipt of posted addenda.

60. Suppose that we are SWaM certified in another state or have applied for certification and are willing to proceed with the VA SWaM certification. If we are considered finalists, will the point scoring accept this scenario in the RFP?

    Radford Response: In order to receive full or partial credit for SWaM status, a vendor must be registered with the SBSD before the deadline of submission for the solicitation.

61. Are there any needs beyond creative and media, such as research, web development, or public relations, considered within the RFP submission?

    Radford Response: While the University does not have any stated needs for the provided examples, vendors are encouraged to provide the full spectrum of their capabilities as it serves to the purpose of the RFP document, at their own discretion.

62. Are there internal review cycles or blackout dates that the selected vendor should plan around (e.g., board meetings, semester starts)?

    Radford Response: Radford University will work with the selected vendor to account for any such dates as we finalize the plan for the first year.

63. What is the expected date for launching any creatives designed by the awarded agency?

    Radford Response: Radford University would expect some new creative produced by the selected vendor to be launched as soon after the October 1, 2025 contract implementation as is feasible. We would work closely with the selected vendor to determine reasonable dates for this timeline.

64. What level of creative development/services will be required? (Full visual development, spec development, etc.?

Radford Response: Radford University expects the selected vendor to present creative look/feel options for an overall campaign initially, followed by full creative development to support the chosen option.

65. Has Radford University conducted any perception surveys in the past? If so, is there benchmark data available for future measurement efforts?

Radford Response: Yes, we will provide the selected vendor with results from annual brand perception surveys conducted in 2023 and early 2025.

66. What level of research is required for your brand perception surveys?

Radford Response: The current marketing vendor helped Radford complete a rebranding initiative in 2023. As noted in above responses, the selected marketing vendor will be expected to develop and execute a plan to continue increasing brand awareness among primary and secondary audiences, as well as implement an annual brand perception survey, using similar methodology, target audiences, questions, etc. as the survey the university has conducted for the past two years. This is part of the university's ongoing effort to measure brand awareness, understanding, acceptance and engagement by key audiences.

67. Will historical marketing data, performance metrics, or past campaign results be made available to review at the start of the engagement?

Radford Response: Yes.

68. Can you share the split (or percentage allocation) between online and on-campus enrollment goals by school? Are there dedicated budgets associated with each?

Radford Response: This data will be shared with the selected vendor.

69. How would you prioritize the breakout of lead gen and awareness goals across the school or program?

Radford Response: In our advertising campaigns this year, we began to shift weighting from awareness to lead generation, moving more dollars from the top of the funnel platforms to middle of funnel platforms. We will discuss any further shifts with the selected vendor.

70. Are there current or past marketing efforts/results that should inform our approach or be built upon?

Radford Response: Please see responses above regarding our goals and KPIs, as well as tactics and other approaches that have worked well thus far.

71. What is Radford's current enrollment tracking system?

Radford Response: Banner is our student information system. It tracks enrollment.

72. What are your key strategic regions/feeder markets by school, and how does that vary for on-campus vs online?

Radford Response: Radford University will provide the selected vendor with more detailed data on specific high schools/feeder markets. Our primary market is Southwest Virginia; secondary markets are throughout the commonwealth include Northern Virginia, Tidewater/Hampton Roads, Southern Virginia and Central Virginia; tertiary markets are selected zip codes and counties in North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

73. Are there particular academic programs or geographic markets that should receive priority focus in the media strategy?

Radford Response: Please see answer above about primary, secondary and tertiary geographic markets. Our healthcare programs, with emphasis on nursing, and education programs have historically been strongest, followed by business, criminal justice, psychology, biology, dance, music, design, theatre; but vendors' RFP proposals do not need to focus in on specific academic programs within the undergraduate, graduate and non-degree-certificate areas.

74. Will Radford University provide existing market research or student persona data to inform audience targeting?

Radford Response: Yes, the selected vendor will be provided with this kind of data.

75. Who is Radford University's biggest competition for student recruitment or brand visibility?

Radford Response: Radford competes with Virginia State, James Madison University, Liberty, Longwood, Hampton, Old Dominion and Virginia Commonwealth University.

76. Will there be an additional budget for new assets (video, photography, etc.) for new campaign development?

Radford Response: No, there is no additional budget for new assets such as photos and videos.

77. Should a recommended media spend be included in our pricing proposal?

Radford Response: Yes, media buys should be included in proposals.

78. How many concepts for creative campaigns are expected in the initial year, and how often would they need to be updated in the following years?

Radford Response: Radford University expects new creative every year as we enter new recruiting cycles to avoid stagnation in the market. Some of this could entail refreshing existing creative assets. But the vendor will be expected to generate much of the new creative as part of the contract. We will work with the selected vendor to identify opportunities to repurpose and/or update existing assets, such as special landing pages created for past campaigns. In addition, the university will provide photos and videos for new campaign creative as necessary. This might require university photographers to shoot new photos/videos at the direction of the vendor.

79. Have initiatives supporting your top 5 priorities started? What are the KPIs for year 1 and year 4?

Radford Response: Please see answers above regarding which our goals and KPIS, which platforms we are using, and which ones have been most effective thus far. We will share more detailed performance results with the selected vendor.

80. Will the University be able to provide materials for the development of creative assets such as video footage/b-roll etc.?

Radford Response: Radford University expects new creative every year as we enter new recruiting cycles to avoid stagnation in the market. Some of this could entail refreshing existing creative assets. But the vendor will be expected to generate much of the new creative as part of the contract. We will work with the selected vendor to identify opportunities to repurpose and/or update existing assets, such as special landing pages created for past campaigns. In addition, the university will provide photos and videos for new campaign creative as necessary. This might require university photographers to shoot new photos/videos at the direction of the vendor.

81. The university has expressed an interest in a dashboard that includes real time analytics on the campaign KPIs. Is this something that should be priced by the vendor?

Radford Response: Radford University does not expect the selected vendor to build a real-time analytics dashboard that we can access 24x7x365. We would expect to work with the selected vendor 1) to build a dashboard that shows progress toward overall goals and KPIs and 2) to report the results/share the dashboard with us in a biweekly manner.

82. What role do you envision the vendor having in its (the dashboard's?) development and management?

    Radford Response: Radford University does not expect the selected vendor to build a real-time analytics dashboard that we can access 24x7x365. We would expect to work with the selected vendor 1) to build a dashboard that shows progress toward overall goals and KPIs and 2) to report the results/share the dashboard with us in a biweekly manner.

83. Is the goal for the dashboards to integrate data provided by the University related to inquiries and completed applications, or for the dashboards to include media data only?

    Radford Response: Radford University does not expect the selected vendor to build a real-time analytics dashboard that we can access 24x7x365. We would expect to work with the selected vendor 1) to build a dashboard that shows progress toward overall campaign goals and KPIs (media data only) and 2) to report the results/share the dashboard with us in a biweekly manner.

84. If the former, what data agreements/requirements will need to be in place in order for the selected agency to gain real-time access to that information?

    Radford Response: Radford University does not expect the selected vendor to build a real-time analytics dashboard that we can access 24x7x365. We would expect to work with the selected vendor 1) to build a dashboard that shows progress toward overall campaign goals and KPIs (media data only) and 2) to report the results/share the dashboard with us in a biweekly manner.

85. Has the University previously leveraged the kind of real-time dashboards it is envisioning in previous campaigns, or will the selected agency be implementing for the first time?

    Radford Response: Radford University does not expect the selected vendor to build a real-time analytics dashboard that we can access 24x7x365. We would expect to work with the selected vendor 1) to build a dashboard that shows progress toward overall campaign goals and KPIs (media data only) and 2) to report the results/share the dashboard with us in a biweekly manner.

86. What CRM/data system do you currently use? What tools do you use to track marketing leads?

    Radford Response: Radford University's Admissions team uses Slate as its CRM. The Office of Marketing and Communications manages marketing and advertising campaigns focused on attracting prospects into the recruiting funnel. We compel prospects from the top of the funnel through the middle to the bottom of that funnel in an effort to generate qualified leads (individuals who complete an RFI form served in platform or on our website), at which time we hand them off to the Admissions team, which then manages relationships/communications with the qualified leads through Slate and other means. We work with our Admissions team to evaluate quality of leads and determine ways we can improve our recruiting funnel activities to continuously improve the quality of those leads.

87. Will the University provide access to existing campaign performance data, CRM/enrollment funnel data, or media performance reports to inform media planning and campaign optimization?

    Radford Response: Yes.

88. Is there a preferred media measurement model or platform (e.g., Google Analytics, Tableau, Salesforce, Slate) that the selected vendor will be expected to integrate with or report from?

Radford Response: Radford University will work with the selected vendor to determine the best model/platform to use in reporting results.

89. Will Radford University require the selected vendor to handle media invoicing and reconciliation directly with vendors, or will that process be managed through the University's procurement/accounts payable team?

    Radford Response: Radford University would prefer for the selected marketing vendor to handle media invoicing and reconciliation directly with media platform vendors/owners.

90. Beyond those listed (OOH, radio, digital, TV, sponsorships), are there any emerging channels (e.g., influencer marketing, CTV, podcasts) Radford is particularly interested in exploring?

    Radford Response: Radford University does not have any expectations for vendor proposals to include emerging channels, but vendors are encouraged to present additional information regarding such, at their own discretion.

91. Are there key brand pillars or messages we must build from, or is there room for creative message evolution?

    Radford Response: The rebranding initiative in 2023 produced several brand pillar messages. These pillars focus on what Radford University delivers, the value it offers and the characteristics that make it distinct. These pillars are like chapters of our brand story.
    - Excellence that is easily accessible
    - Centered on those we serve
    - Freedom to learn from experience
    - Active learning and active doing
    - Ready for all life's roles

The recent brand perception survey found that these pillar messages are credible among our target audiences and have strong appeal to those audiences. Advertising/marketing campaign messaging should draw upon these messages, along with other key strengths, core values, etc. in a way that evolves organically and appropriately over time while staying true to their essence.

92. May we add hyperlinks to the proposal to direct the University to examples of our work on the web?

    Radford Response: No. Please provide all example documents as stated in *Section's 10 and 11.*

93. Does the University have a preference for how work examples are provided? Are standalone case studies, provided as attachments, acceptable or does the University prefer to have them provided under "B: Experience and Qualifications"?

    Radford Response: Please provide them as a part of your Experience and Qualifications.

94. Is multilingual messaging a requirement or priority for the university? If so, are there specific languages of interest and internal resources available to support translation or review?

    Radford Response: There may be some messaging produced in Spanish for certain audiences in specific contexts.

95. Can you provide more specific enrollment goals broken down by audience segment (traditional, graduate students, first-generation, non-traditional, military-affiliated)?

    Radford Response: Radford University will use several quantitative and qualitative measures across digital and traditional/OOH platforms to determine the success of this contract.

Following are our three primary quantitative measures:

1. Increase brand awareness
   - Increase top-of-funnel awareness of Radford University in state and out of state and build Radford's reputation with the new brand and campaign creative.
   - KPIs: impressions, clicks, click-through rates, cost-per-click
2. Generate leads
   - Increase leads by attracting prospects and converting them into leads.
   - KPIs: conversions, conversion rate, cost-per-acquisition
3. Drive applications and enrollment from 2025-26 academic year to 2026-27 academic year
   - Increase quality applications
   - Increase student enrollment.
     - First-year undergraduate by 1.5%
     - Transfer undergraduate by 1.5%
     - Graduate by 3%
     - Continuing education enrollment non-degree/certificate by 5%
   - KPIs: applications, melt, yield rate, student enrollment

Note: We think of KPIs as measuring three different things:
- Volume
  - Impressions: the number of times an ad was displayed and viewable by users.
  - Clicks: the number of people who have clicked on an ad.
  - Conversions: the number of people who have submitted (e.g., RFI/inquiry form submission or button
  - click).
- Efficiency
  - Click-Through Rate (CTR) or Swipe-Up Rate (SUR): the percentage of people who saw an ad, email, or other touchpoint and clicked on a link from it.
  - Conversion Rate (CVR): the percentage of people who clicked on an ad or landing page and completed a desired action.
  - Cost Per Acquisition (CPA): the metric that measures the effective cost of a customer completing a specific action, such as submitting an RFI on the landing page or through an in-platform form.
- Value
  - Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM): the cost for every thousand impressions delivered.
  - Cost Per Click (CPC): the price paid for each ad that was clicked on.
  - Cost Per Conversion: the effective price paid for each lead that was generated.

Additional quantitative measures include increasing:
- # of visits to campus by prospective students, including self-scheduled campus tours, attendance at open houses in the fall and spring and attendance at Highlander Day events in the spring.
- # of high school students who attend one of our Admissions Office visits to schools throughout Southwest Virginia.

Qualitative measures include:
- Quality of brand engagement by prospective students/families at open houses and Highlander Day events, as well as at sponsored events throughout Southwest Virginia (e.g., Strawberry Festival in May and Party in Elmwood Park in July in Roanoke, Radford Community Fest in August and Highlander Festival in October in Radford, Steppin' Out in August in Blacksburg).
- Strength of relationship with selected marketing services vendor, based on level of trust, responsiveness and depth of institutional knowledge exhibited by quality of creative (messaging, image-selection, CTAs, etc.)

96. Can you tell us more about the geography of your key audience(s)? For example, what are the focus geographies for research recruitment efforts? The RFP says throughout Virginia but also contiguous states. What are these states? Is there any interest in international, if so, what countries?

Radford Response: Radford University will provide the selected vendor with more detailed data on specific high schools/feeder markets. Our primary market is Southwest Virginia; secondary markets throughout the commonwealth include Northern Virginia, Tidewater/Hampton Roads, Southern Virginia and Central Virginia; tertiary markets are selected zip codes and counties in North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

97. Does Radford University anticipate a need for paid media placements in contiguous states beyond Virginia to reach military-affiliated students or non-traditional audiences? If so, are there specific target geographies we should plan around?

    Radford Response: Radford University will provide the selected vendor with more detailed data on specific high schools/feeder markets. Our primary market is Southwest Virginia; secondary markets throughout the commonwealth include Northern Virginia, Tidewater/Hampton Roads, Southern Virginia and Central Virginia; tertiary markets are selected zip codes and counties in North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

98. Are there specific current or upcoming Radford University initiatives (e.g., program launches, capital improvements) that should be reflected in messaging or outreach?

    Radford Response: Any details of such initiatives will be shared with the selected vendor.

99. What differentiates Radford's brand in the higher ed space today, and what brand perception shifts are you hoping to achieve through this engagement?

    Radford Response: The rebranding initiative in 2023 produced several brand pillar messages. These pillars focus on what Radford University delivers, the value it offers and the characteristics that make it distinct. These pillars are like chapters of our brand story.
    - Excellence that is easily accessible
    - Centered on those we serve
    - Freedom to learn from experience
    - Active learning and active doing
    - Ready for all life's roles

The rebranding initiative produced a comprehensive set of brand guidelines, which can be found at https://www.radford.edu/marketing-communication/_documents/radford-brand-guide.pdf

The recent brand perception survey found that these pillar messages are credible among our target audiences and have strong appeal to those audiences. Advertising/marketing campaign messaging should draw upon these messages, along with other key strengths, core values, etc. in a way that differentiates Radford from the competition.

Following are three additional statements that—in concert—differentiate us from competitors.

- Radford University is committed to creating an inclusive and engaging student experience that is accessible to and affordable for all the communities we serve—from Southwest Virginia throughout the commonwealth and beyond.

- Radford University's small size, emphasis on outstanding teaching and commitment to student-centered learning foster a strong sense of belonging among our students.

- The Radford educational experience is distinguished by the innovative and active ways that learning occurs, inside and outside the classroom. From student-faculty research, study abroad programs and internships, to consulting projects conducted in conjunction with local communities/businesses, this experience facilitates students' personal and professional fulfillment.

100. Are there existing consultants (e.g., creative production, media buying, market research) that the selected vendor will be expected to coordinate with or defer to?

Radford Response: If a new marketing services vendor is selected, the selected vendor will be expected to work collaboratively with the incumbent to ensure a smooth, seamless transition. Aside from that possibility, the selected vendor will not need to coordinate with any other vendors.

101. What are your current top-performing recruitment channels?

Radford Response: Following is an overview of most effective platforms, listed in order. We will provide the selected vendor with more details results reports for the current FY campaigns.

Most effective platforms:
- Impressions: Meta, Reddit, Google display, programmatic display, Shapchat
- Conversions: Meta, Google search, Google display, Meta retarget, Google display retarget
- CPA: Google display, Meta, Meta retarget, Google display retarget, Google search

102. What is the review and approval process for content and strategy, and who/how many stakeholders would be involved across levels and departments? Who will be the final decision maker with awarded agency?

Radford Response: The review and approval process will include 4 people concurrently: VP of Enrollment Management, AVP of Strategic Communications, Director of Strategic Enrollment Communications and the Marketing Manager. In tight turnarounds, the AVP will be final approval.

103. There is some duplication of information requested in these sections—does the university intend resumes, for example, to be included in both sections, or should the vendor just ensure that each requested piece of information is presented once?

Radford Response: Provided that all requested information is presented, the format of the proposal falls to the discretion of the vendor.

104. Will there be one central contact for all marketing initiatives, or will each school have a lead member?

Radford Response: This contract will have a Contract Administrator who will oversee the utilization of the contract through its life. This Contract Administrator may designate certain University personnel as necessary to execute different initiatives to maximum effectiveness.

105. Is there a preferred pricing structure?

Radford Response: See Attachment E in the RFP Document. If there is any additional pricing that you feel should be included, please do so at your own discretion.

106. Is the university seeking a collaborative strategic partner to guide long-term marketing vision, or primarily executional support for pre-defined campaigns?

Radford Response: Radford University would like its vendor to be a collaborative strategic partner, serving as a seamless extension of our team so that external advertising creative and messaging aligns with our established branding guidelines and internal communications. We would expect the partner to develop strong working relationships with our key team members and develop deep institutional knowledge over time.

107. What is the decision-making process for each school and campaign, and who will be the final decision maker with the awarded agency?

Radford Response: All decision making will be led by the Contract Administrator, supported by their designated personnel.

108. Is the university seeking an integrated media strategy combining traditional, digital, and emerging platforms?

Radford Response: Yes, Radford University expects the selected vendor to help us plan for, buy and develop creative assets for any of these platforms that would be effective in achieving our goals/KPIs.

109. Does the recruitment marketing and advertising plan need to be developed with the university communications strategy in mind? If yes, can you share that communications strategy?

Radford Response: Radford University will share the university communication plan/strategy with the selected vendor.

110. What are your expectations regarding campaign concepting? Do you envision us pitching campaign platforms or executing university-provided creative direction?

Radford Response: Radford University expect the selected vendor to develop overall campaign concepts, a proposed media plan and specific creatives in close collaboration with our Marketing and Communications team.

111. How many internal stakeholders will be involved in approvals and reviews, and is there a committee we'll collaborate with regularly?

Radford Response: The review and approval process will typically include 4 people concurrently: VP of Enrollment Management, AVP of Strategic Communications, Director of Strategic Enrollment Communications and the Marketing Manager. In tight turnarounds, the AVP will be final approval. The selected vendor will collaborate with these employees on a regular basis.

112. Will this engagement support centralized university-wide marketing only, or also extend to individual colleges, programs, or departments?

Radford Response: This engagement will be directed by centralized Enrollment Management and Strategic Communication leadership, focused on supporting university-wide enrollment goals. In some instances, we will focus on academic program areas (healthcare, education), as well as promote specific programs online RN to BSN or online MBA. But the selected vendor will not be supporting individual colleges, programs, etc.

113. Because of the different needs and motivations of undergraduate, graduate, and transfer students do you envision one comprehensive plan or a plan that speaks to each target audience?

Radford Response: We can envision three plans focused on promoting university strengths and relevant programs to the three audiences. But these plans should be integrated in terms of general look and feel, pull through some broad university-wide messaging and be executed in a coordinated manner.

114. What are the number of programs (or expected campaigns) across Radford's portfolio that will require advertising promotion?

Radford Response: This engagement will be directed by centralized Enrollment Management and Strategic Communication leadership, focused on supporting university-wide enrollment goals. In some instances, we will focus on academic program areas (healthcare, education), as well as promote specific programs online RN to BSN or online MBA. But the selected vendor will not be supporting individual colleges, programs, etc.

115. For executive communications support, how often are executive communications provided and in what format?

Radford Response: The selected vendor will not be involved in executive communications.

116. What reporting frequency is expected?

Radford Response: Radford University would like to receive biweekly reporting on the results of campaigns across platforms, including recommendations for optimizations.

117. Does the Office of Marketing and Communication have existing relationships with media (radio, broadcast, cable, etc.) and/or events already in mind? Or will these need to be developed?

Radford Response: Radford University expects the selected vendor to develop a comprehensive marketing/advertising plan in collaboration with Radford University, focused on achieving the goals and KPIs stated above. This new plan will be informed by current and past plans we have executed and our existing media relationships.

118. Will we be responsible for resizing/formatting all assets for all placements, or will internal teams handle some versioning?

Radford Response: The selected vendor will need to size and format all assets for placement and work with the platform owner to place the assets.

119. Does the University have an existing marketing and advertising plan focused on recruiting or will this need to be developed?

Radford Response: Radford University expects the selected vendor to develop a comprehensive marketing/advertising plan in collaboration with Radford University, focused on achieving the goals and KPIs stated above. This new plan will be informed by current and past plans we have executed.

120. What is Radford University's typical timeline for its annual recruitment efforts?

Radford Response: Following are the key deadlines we used this year for our undergraduate programs for the 2025-26 recruiting cycle. Graduate deadlines vary slightly from these. We will provide the selected vendor with updated undergrad, graduate and certificate/non-degree deadlines for future recruiting cycles.
- Aug. 1 - application opens
- Nov. 1 – freshman early action admission (non-binding)
- Feb. 1 – freshman regular admission
- March 1 – transfer priority deadline
- Date range – rolling admission
- Open House dates
  - Oct 19 (Main Campus)
  - Oct 26 (RUC)
  - Nov 16 (Main Campus)
- Highlander Days dates
  - March 22 (Main Campus)
  - April 6 (RUC)
  - April 12 (Main Campus)
- May 1 – Freshman Deposit Deadline
- June 1 – Transfer Deposit Deadline

121. Do you have any recent student success stories or testimonials we can leverage?

Radford Response: Yes, we will provide the selected vendor with a range of success stories, testimonials, etc. (in video and for print/web) that could be leverage into compelling advertising and storytelling efforts. We would also expect to work with the vendor to produce new content for these purposes.

122. What flexibility will the marketing partner have to optimize advertising performance including digital campaign copy and assets (e.g., pay-per-click advertising) mid-flight?

Radford Response: We are looking for a marketing vendor that embodies the following three qualities. This includes reporting campaign results in a timely manner along with recommendations for optimizations mid-flight.
- Reliable (focused on meeting deadlines, honoring commitments, communicating in a timely and transparent manner, keeping us informed of results and recommending optimizations)
- Responsive (attentive to our requests, attuned to market trends that require changes in direction, flexible and agile enough to turn on a dime)
- Committed to excellence (developing strategic plans and creating high-quality assets requires a vendor that is committed to excellence—willing to develop a deep understanding of who Radford is, what we do and what makes us distinctive among our competition in today's higher ed marketplace)

123. We see Radford University uses Slate – do you intend to continue with Slate? Do you have a Slate captain?

Radford Response: Yes, our Admissions team uses Slate and have experts in using it. The Office of Marketing and Communications manages marketing and advertising campaigns focused on attracting prospects into the recruiting funnel. We compel prospects from the top of the funnel through the middle to the bottom of that funnel in an effort to generate qualified leads (individuals who complete an RFI form served in platform or on our website), at which time we hand them off to the Admissions team, which then manages relationships/communications with the qualified leads through Slate and other means.

124. How much is recruitment using Slate queries for lead quality, scoring and speed to lead?

Radford Response: The Office of Marketing and Communications manages marketing and advertising campaigns focused on attracting prospects into the recruiting funnel. We compel prospects from the top of the funnel through the middle to the bottom of that funnel in an effort to generate qualified leads (individuals who complete an RFI form served in platform or on our website), at which time we hand them off to the Admissions team, which then manages relationships/communications with the qualified leads through Slate and other means. We work with our Admissions team to evaluate quality of leads and determine ways we can improve our recruiting funnel activities to continuously improve the quality of those leads.

125. Does Radford University currently have a lead quality issue?

Radford Response: No.

126. What are Radford University's current enrollment goals? Does this include any benchmarks?

Radford Response: In the past two recruiting cycles, the university has been able to stabilize enrollment through measured growth. We will use benchmarks from those two years in evaluating future performance.

We will use several quantitative and qualitative measures across digital and traditional/OOH platforms to determine the success of this contract.

Following are our three primary <u>quantitative measures</u>:

1. Increase brand awareness
   - Increase top-of-funnel awareness of Radford University in state and out of state and build Radford's reputation with the new brand and campaign creative.
   - KPIs: impressions, clicks, click-through rates, cost-per-click
2. Generate leads
   - Increase leads by attracting prospects and converting them into leads.
   - KPIs: conversions, conversion rate, cost-per-acquisition
3. Drive applications and enrollment from 2025-26 academic year to 2026-27 academic year
   - Increase quality applications
   - Increase student enrollment.
     - First-year undergraduate by 1.5%
     - Transfer undergraduate by 1.5%
     - Graduate by 3%
     - Continuing education enrollment non-degree/certificate by 5%
   - KPIs: applications, melt, yield rate, student enrollment

Note: We think of KPIs as measuring three different things:
- Volume
  - Impressions: the number of times an ad was displayed and viewable by users.
  - Clicks: the number of people who have clicked on an ad.
  - Conversions: the number of people who have submitted (e.g., RFI/inquiry form submission or button
  - click).
- Efficiency
  - Click-Through Rate (CTR) or Swipe-Up Rate (SUR): the percentage of people who saw an ad, email, or other touchpoint and clicked on a link from it.
  - Conversion Rate (CVR): the percentage of people who clicked on an ad or landing page and completed a desired action.
  - Cost Per Acquisition (CPA): the metric that measures the effective cost of a customer completing a specific action, such as submitting an RFI on the landing page or through an in-platform form.
- Value
  - Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM): the cost for every thousand impressions delivered.
  - Cost Per Click (CPC): the price paid for each ad that was clicked on.
  - Cost Per Conversion: the effective price paid for each lead that was generated.

Additional quantitative measures include increasing:
- # of visits to campus by prospective students, including self-scheduled campus tours, attendance at open houses in the fall and spring and attendance at Highlander Day events in the spring.
- # of high school students who attend one of our Admissions Office visits to schools throughout Southwest Virginia.

Qualitative measures include:
- Quality of brand engagement by prospective students/families at open houses and Highlander Day events, as well as at sponsored events throughout Southwest Virginia (e.g., Strawberry Festival in May and Party in Elmwood Park in July in Roanoke, Radford Community Fest in August and Highlander Festival in October in Radford, Steppin' Out in August in Blacksburg).
- Strength of relationship with selected marketing services vendor, based on level of trust, responsiveness and depth of institutional knowledge exhibited by quality of creative (messaging, image-selection, CTAs, etc.)

127. What ad tactics are Radford University running now?

Radford Response:

Digital
- Top of Funnel: Google display, programmatic display, Hulu, Reddit, Snapchat, Spotify, YouTube

- Middle of Funnel: Google search, Meta
- Bottom of Funnel: Google display retarget, Meta retarget, programmatic display retarget, YouTube retarget

OOH/Traditional
- 8 roadside billboards throughout Southwest Virginia (6 static, 2 digital).
- 1 static board in American Airlines terminal at Roanoke Regional Airport, several ads in rotation on 2 digital screens in the baggage claim.
- Event sponsorships throughout Southwest Virginia (e.g., Strawberry Festival in May and Party in Elmwood Park in July in Roanoke, Radford Community Fest in August and Highlander Festival in October in Radford, Steppin' Out in August in Blacksburg).

128. What opportunities do you see to improve the recruitment and brand-building work done for and by the University to date? Or more broadly, what opportunities do you see to take the University to a new level over the term of this contract?

Radford Response: Radford University completed a rebranding initiative in 2023 and are in the second year of rolling it out to various internal and external audiences. The new brand is fully integrated into our marketing/advertising efforts. We will work with the selected vendor to identify opportunities to continuously improve our recruiting efforts through a variety of digital, traditional, OOH and other tactics/platforms.

129. What are the University's desired outcomes for the brand-building efforts that will be supported by the chosen firm? Are these efforts to be focused on the secondary audiences you list in your solicitation?

Radford Response: The current marketing vendor helped Radford complete a rebranding initiative in 2023. As noted in above responses, the selected marketing vendor will be expected to develop and execute a plan to continue increasing brand awareness among primary and secondary audiences, as well as implement an annual brand perception survey, using similar methodology, target audiences, questions, etc. as the survey the university has conducted for the past two years. This is part of the university's ongoing effort to measure brand awareness, understanding, acceptance and engagement by key audiences.

130. Should the recruitment tactics vary for the main campus vs. the Roanoke campus?

Radford Response: Many of the recruiting tactics for the main campus in Radford and the campuses in Roanoke will be the same, albeit with imagery, messaging and CTAs customized to programs and audiences offered at each location. However, the distinctive campuses and program offerings present opportunities for some unique tactics per location.

131. You mentioned that you are looking for support for your continuing education programs. Could you please clarify the type/amount of programs the selected vendor would be expected to provide support for?

Radford Response: Radford University has several continuing education audiences and offerings that will require unique ads, including the following. We will work with the selected vendor to determine timing, messaging, CTAs and platforms, as well as the percentage of overall budget that should be allocated to this segment.
- Cybersecurity Professionals
    - Focus: Career advancement, skill-building for staying relevant in an evolving industry, certifications to meet compliance standards.
- Data Science Professionals
    - Focus: Flexibility in learning cutting-edge technologies, certifications, and data science applications relevant across industries.

- K-12 Educators
  - Focus: Professional development, flexible learning for working teachers, improving classroom effectiveness, and meeting state licensure requirements.
- K-12 Provisional Licensure Candidates
  - Focus: Licensure alignment, flexibility for individuals transitioning into teaching careers, working while studying.
- Government and Corporate Professionals (Cybersecurity, Data Science)
  - Focus: Aligning with professional and organizational goals, skill enhancement, certifications relevant to industry demands.
- Mid-Career Professionals Seeking Upskilling
  - Focus: Flexibility, career advancement, aligning with personal and professional growth, tailored for individuals with existing work commitments.

132. Could you please provide clarification of expectations regarding sponsorships?

Radford Response: Radford University will expect the <u>selected vendor</u> to recommend event or other sponsorships that would help the university achieve our stated goals for advertising/marketing, if such sponsorships are among the most effective means of doing this. In their proposals responding to the RFP, vendors do not need to develop a full-fledged event sponsorship plan but should explain the rationale they would use to develop such recommendations along with an example or two of opportunities that might make sense.

133. The website was not mentioned in the RFP document. If campaign performance suggests website updates are necessary, does the Office of University Marketing and Communications have the authority to implement changes?

Radford Response: Radford University recently worked with two outside vendors to redesign our website and implement a new CMS: NewCity and Modern Campus. Following this effort, two teams of Radford employees from Marketing and Communication and ITS work collaboratively to maintain our website. These employees will work with the selected marketing vendor, as appropriate, to ensure marketing/advertising campaigns work seamlessly with the new website.

134. For managing crises and reputational risks, are you asking for an hourly rate for these services that would be negotiated based on a specific event or situation that occurs?

Radford Response: No.

135. For certain services, particularly creative deliverables where scope and production needs may vary, would it be acceptable to submit fully burdened hourly rates in lieu of fixed pricing? We want to ensure our pricing remains accurate and scalable to Radford's evolving needs.

Radford Response: Vendors are free to provide additional pricing information extending beyond Attachment E as they see fit to support their proposal.

136. Will full points be awarded only to certified SWaM vendors, or are partial points available for firms that subcontract to SWaM-certified partners or have certification pending?

Radford Response: Partial points will be awarded to those with a SWaM subcontracting plan. Please see *Section 10.D* of the RFP Document.

137. The RFP asks for a plan to utilize SWaM subcontractors if we're not classified as SWaM ourselves. Since we're able to perform all services in-house, could you clarify whether it's acceptable to explain that, or is there an expectation to identify potential SWaM partners regardless?

Radford Response: It is not a requirement to submit a SWaM plan. **Please see *Section 10.D* of the** RFP Document.

138. Additionally, can you confirm if documentation of intent to partner with a SWaM vendor is sufficient at the time of submission?

Radford Response: Yes. This would satisfy the request in Section 10.D for a SWaM subcontracting plan.

139. We would appreciate the opportunity to review any materials from the April 22 pre-proposal Zoom meeting. Will a recording, transcript, or meeting notes be made available to vendors who were unable to attend live?

Radford Response: This information can be found on eVA's VBO website, and on Radford University's Procurement Website, under R25-004 Strategic Marketing and Media Placement Addendum 01.

140. Are there internal brand guidelines or personas already developed, or would your team be open to a brand positioning refresh as part of this scope?

Radford Response: Please See *Attachment G.*

141. Does the University have an idea of what it is looking for with "grassroots marketing?"

Radford Response: Radford University will expect the <u>selected vendor</u> to recommend grassroots marketing opportunities that would help the university achieve our stated goals for advertising/marketing, if such opportunities are among the most effective means of doing this. In their proposals responding to the RFP, vendors do not need to develop a full-fledged grassroots marketing plan but should explain the rationale they would use to develop such recommendations along with an example or two of opportunities that might make sense. This is an area where vendors should apply creativity and imagination in developing ideas.

142. The RFP notes that Radford University may award multiple contracts. Could you share more about the criteria that would lead to splitting the award among different agencies? For example, would that be based on service specialization, capacity, or pricing? Additionally, if the award is split, would the selected agencies be expected to collaborate during the media planning and execution process?

Radford Response: In the event of a multi-award, Radford University will negotiate with each individual vendor selected, a contract that specifies services to be performed, pricing relative to those services, and any necessary additional terms and conditions. Collaboration may be posed but would not necessarily be a required expectation of any awarded party, unless otherwise negotiated.

143. Are there any automated email campaigns in place that align with prospective student lifecycle stages? If so, what platform supports these campaigns?

Radford Response: Yes, our Admissions team uses Slate to execute automated email campaigns for qualified leads generated by our advertising campaigns. The Office of Marketing and Communications manages marketing and advertising campaigns focused on attracting prospects into the recruiting funnel. We compel prospects from the top of the funnel through the middle to the bottom of that funnel in an effort to generate qualified leads (individuals who complete an RFI form served in platform or on our website), at which time we hand them off to the Admissions team, which then manages relationships/communications with the qualified leads through Slate and other means.

144. Would Radford be open to optional add-ons (e.g., audience persona development, campaign video production) that enhance campaign effectiveness?

Radford Response: Vendors are welcome to provide additional information as it relates to services and pricing not specifically stated in the RFP Document.

145. Can you provide a current branding guide?

Radford Response: Yes. See Attachment G.

146.   Will there be any on-site meetings and events? Can Travel be billed separately?

Radford Response: If awarded the contract, there will be potential for the need of in-person presence. In the event of any travel expenses incurred as it relates to this contract, reimbursement for said travel expenses will be subject to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Travel, lodging, and per diem Regulations.

147.   Will the University be looking for in-person support for additional events?

Radford Response: No, the university will provide all in-person support for any sponsored events or grassroots marketing efforts.

148.   May potential price increases be negotiated during the time of subsequent renewal years?

Radford Response: Yes. Pricing increases are allowed to be negotiated during renewal discussions.

End of Addendum 02.

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