

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # 2020-037**  
**Strategic Planning Services for UMF**  
**RESPONSE ADDENDUM # 6**  
**April 9, 2020**

**CLARIFICATION**

**QUESTIONS**

**Q1:** Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

**A1:** There are no geographical restrictions on Respondent's responding to this RFP.

**Q2:** Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

**A2:** At this time, the University does anticipate in person meetings once there has been a determination by the University and State of Maine that campuses will re-open.

**Q3:** Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

**A3:** Please refer to answers 2 & 3.

**Q4:** Can we submit the proposals via email?

**A4:** All proposals should be submitted via email to [UMSResponses@maine.edu](mailto:UMSResponses@maine.edu). per RFP cover page.

**Q5:** While this project is for Farmington, we see the expectation that this same planning process (and fee?) could be applied to other campuses. The scope of this project could potentially change dramatically if UMaine Orono, for example, were to determine that they want to use the same process and fee. Would there be an opportunity to renegotiate if the scope changed dramatically?

**A5:** The intent of this solicitation is to create a Master Agreement (MA) for these services, with UMF being the lead campus. The Multi institutional clause allows for other University campuses and Maine Public Universities to utilize the MA through an amendment, detailing their specific SOW. It is expected that costs may differ as SOW and project size may vary.

**Q6:** Is this effort being led by and fully supported by the President's office at UMF, or is some other office or entity providing leadership?

**A6:** This effort is fully supported by the President's office at UMF.

**Q7:** Is there any way to estimate how large the Strategic Planning Committee might be? Would we have some voice in shaping that committee (and its size)?

**A7:** The selected vendor would have a voice in shaping both the size and composition of the Strategic Planning Committee.

**Q8:** The RFP indicates that the consulting firm would "recommend and administer activities to solicit input from internal and external stakeholders." A significant variable in scoping and pricing this work depends upon who does the work of actually conducting the stakeholder outreach (and expectations re: the magnitude of that work). Is it anticipated that the consultants will conduct the interviews, discussion groups, etc., that might normally be part of this process, or would our primary role be to guide others in this work? Clarity about this will be very helpful in shaping an appropriate process and proposal.

**A8:** The University would prefer that the consultant facilitate stakeholder outreach, discussions etc. with coordination and input from the University. Pricing out both options is also a way to discern the differences in SOW.

**Q9:** The anticipated start date is April 15. Is there a goal/date for when UMF hopes to have a finished product in hand?

**A9:** A finished product would need to be delivered no later than December 1, 2020.

**Q10:** How do you expect consulting services will help with development of your Strategic Plan?

**A10:** Functional expertise in strategic planning and stakeholder group facilitation.

**Q11:** What is the budget for the engagement?

**A11:** At this time the University will be considering the best VALUE proposal for the SOW described in the RFP.

**Q12:** Can we get a copy of the current Univ. of Maine – Farmington Strategic Plan?

**A12:** The current copy of the UMF Strategic Plan will be provided to the selected consultant. However, the prior plan has little relevance on the University moving forward.

**Q13:** Did a consultant help develop the previous Strategic Plan and are they being considered for this opportunity? If yes, is the previous consultant still working for the University?

**A13:** No.

**Q14:** What's the anticipated completion date for the final Strategic Plan?

- a. The Agreement is for 5 years, with option for 4 one-year renewals; is there an expectation that the development will require a year, and that Plan refreshes will occur once a year thereafter, or are there other duties that you expect beyond the original Plan?

**A14:** November 30, 2020.

**Q15:** Are you open to different strategic plan development approaches?

**A15:** Yes.

**Q16:** What staff resources will be devoted to provide support to the consultant in this engagement?

**A16:** General administrative support for the scheduling of meetings will be provided.

**Q17:** Do you anticipate diverse stakeholder input for this process--for example faculty, community, and student body representatives -- and how do you plan to include their input?

**A17:** Yes. I expect the vendor to propose a plan for capturing input from these stakeholders and synthesis it into the final report.

**Q18:** On p. 5 of the RFP, it states that all System institutions “must be afforded the use of this solution, with all the same terms and conditions.” Similar language on p. 26 appears to obligate the consultant to work with the other System institutions, plus the Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy, to provide services. Yet we assume that a strategic planning exercise at each institution would take a different form and may require a different approach. And such an obligation to extend the provision of services to other System institutions could potentially conflict with other commitments. So how should we think about our services being available to other campuses in the System?

**A18:** The Multi Institutional Clause allows those listed to utilize the eventual Master Agreement with the awarded vendor of this RFP. There is no obligation for the vendor work with other institutions. The terms and conditions of the contract are what remain consistent. A new SOW would obviously be required for any amendment outside of UMF. See A5.

**Q19:** What is the timeline under which UMF expects the Strategic Plan to be completed?

**A19:** November 15, 2020.

**Q20:** Is there an expectation for ongoing support in implementing the Strategic Plan, once adopted? If so, should we be including that in the bid and the estimation of costs?

**A20:** No. Implementation will be the responsibility of the University.

**Q21:** Will the consultant be expected to do the actual drafting of the Strategic Plan, or will that be the responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee, with support and facilitation from the consultant?

**A21:** The Strategic Planning Committee will be responsible for drafting the Strategic Plan with support and facilitation from the consultant.

**Q22:** It may not always be easy for us to make campus visits on three-days’ notice, as required on p. 28, although we would certainly work to make timely visits as required at a mutually agreeable time. Is it reasonable to interpret that this requirement is boilerplate language that is more relevant for procurements that are likely to have greater urgency, e.g., an information technology solution, than for this project?

**A22:** That is reasonable.

**Q23:** For the cost evaluation section, is it expected that respondents will provide any detail other than a single total cost for the project along with a breakout for travel and related expenses separately listed?

**A23:** Any assumptions should be identified as applicable.

**Q24:** The cost evaluation section requires costs to be identified by year. Should we use a calendar year, a fiscal year, or a project year, e.g., starting on or about April 15 and running for 12 months?

**A24:** Assume year one begins upon contract signing. This section is to identify any escalators. If there are none, please indicate that.

**Q25:** Will the Strategic Planning Committee be available for meetings during the summer months? If not, what is the period during which they cannot meet?

**A25:** Yes, although in person will be dictated by the evolving COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Q25:** We presume that the format of the response should be that indicated on Page 16 of 44 in the RFP with numbering as indicated. Correct?

**A25:** Yes.

**Q26:** Concerning Appendix G Item 8, is this requirement to report recent clients? Our organization has a 50+ year history of working with higher education. There is no way to recount the entirety of the client list. What would be considered a reasonable response?

**A26:** The expectation is not to list ALL clients, rather focus on clients who are similar in size and complexity as the University of Maine at Farmington and who had SOW similar to what we are seeking.

**Q27:** With respect to Rider F, what is meant by Service Level Agreement? Is there a format we should use to submit this?

**A27:** Rider F is part of the SAMPLE Contract for Services that is included in the RFP. There is no action requested of the Contract other than to indicate your agreement to all terms and conditions

or note areas where there is concern and supply alternative language for considerations per section Appendix E.

**Q28:** Is it expected that the information to be supplied in Rider E is identical to the response provided under item 1.D. in Appendix H?

**A28:** Please refer to A27. Appendix H is where you indicate Timeline. Do not fill out the Contract for Services Section – it is listed for reference only.

**Q29:** Is it acceptable for proposals to include the utilization of a consulting partner or subcontractor for a portion of the consulting work under consideration?

**A29:** Please refer to the RFP Section Appendix G question 2.

**Q30:** What factors are driving the RFP at this time?

**A30:** The last strategic plan was developed in 2014. The University requires a new strategic plan that more accurately reflects the institution's current operating environment.

**Q31:** Are there key priorities in developing this strategic plan?

**A31:** Yes. They will be discussed with the selected awardee.

**Q32:** Has a strategic plan been in place previously or in place currently?

**A32:** Yes. Please see A12.

**Q32:** What percentage of faculty and what percentage of staff are represented by unions?

**A32:** 100%.

**Q35:** How would University of Maine at Farmington leaders describe the current campus client related to their attitudes toward strategic planning or the development of a strategic plan?

**A35:** Based on the fact that the last strategic plan was not used to drive investment decisions or tracked in any meaningful way, there is some skepticism. However, I believe there is cautious optimism that the current leadership team is committed to this process and leveraging the Strategic Plan more effectively.

**Q36:** Are the University's key stakeholders (i.e., faculty, faculty senate, board of trustees, key staff representatives or staff advisory groups) in agreement that your institution needs a strategic plan? If not in full agreement, where is/are the potential barriers to the development of a strategic plan?

**A36:** They are in full agreement.

**Q37:** When was the last time the University had a strategic plan, or worked to develop a strategic plan?

**A37:** 2014.

**Q38:** What are the current pressing concerns and challenges facing the University?

**A38:** The most pressing concern for the University is the decade long enrollment decline that has resulted in a structural budget deficit.

**Q39:** Is there an agreed-upon sense of urgency for the need for a plan? If not, which group or groups, if any, have concerns about or have expressed a need for a strategic plan?

**A39:** Yes, the campus stakeholders understand that there is a need for a new strategic plan.

**Q40:** What are the current identified, specific strengths and/or distinctive features of the University that would drive strategic priorities?

**A40:** Excellent national reputation (rankings), leader in teacher education in Maine and across New England, significant value for tuition and fees, geographic location in Western Maine with proximity to outdoor recreation.

**Q41:** What are the University's most significant aspirations today (e.g., grow enrollment, increase research output, increase research support, improve rankings, manage costs, grow endowment)?

**A41:** Primary aspiration is to stabilize FTE enrollment back to 2,000. Additional aspirations are to address our cost structure and increase fundraising.

**Q42:** How strong (or weak) is the current sense of confidence and trust in institutional leadership among faculty and staff?

**A42:** UMF has a new president who began on July 1, 2019. There is a general sense that things must change at the University but a great deal of anxiety about how that will impact employees. While progress has been made with building trust in the new leadership team, it remains a work in progress.

**Q43:** What challenges and/or opportunities does the University believe it faces as a result of the state of Maine's current fiscal climate?

**A43:** Like many regional state institutions in rural states, we face significant enrollment pressure from the demographic shift resulting in fewer high school graduates. The impact of COVID-19 has also created a significant challenge and a great deal of uncertainty regarding our level of state financial support.