October 10, 2023

**Clarification I: Question and Answer**

**Ref: Bid #224-28 –** **Advertising Strategy and Media Placement Services**

Grand Valley State University has received the following questions in regard to our request for proposal(s) for Advertising Strategy and Media Placement Services. Please reference questions and answers listed below.

**Question 1** We are interested in submitting a bid for the RFP mentioned above. Is our eligibility to bid still valid under this new company name?

**Answer:** All of our RFPs are open to the public and posted publicly so all potential suppliers have an opportunity to submit a proposal under whatever business name they currently operate under.

**Question 2** {Agency name} is a 100% African American Woman-Owned business. While obtaining official certification for this status, we are committed to fulfilling the requirements. Given our current situation, are we still eligible to participate in the RFP #224-28 bidding process?

**Answer:** There is no reason one’s status in seeking certification as a 100% African American Woman-Owned business would affect one’s eligibility to bid.

**Question 3** When we submit the RFP do you expect to see a sample media plan utilizing the approximate budget of $950,000? Our impression is that GVSU wants to know how we charge, rather than see an actual media plan.

**Answer:** Yes, the purpose of including the budget in the RFP was to give prospective agencies an idea of the total amount we expect to spend annually. There is no expectation of a media plan being included.

**Question 4** We’d like to confirm that questions are due on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, not Monday, October 2.

**Answer:** Yes, the deadline for questions is Wednesday, October 4.

**Question 5** Is the selected agency being asked to develop an ad campaign strategy as well as creative to support this strategy? Or to develop the campaign strategy with creative provided?

**Answer:** The selected agency will develop campaign strategy only. The campaign creative will be provided by GVSU.

**Question 6** If the selected agency develop creative, does the $950,000 budget include only the media strategy, media buys, and media analysis, or does it also include the development of messaging and creative?

**Answer:** The $950,000 does not include development of messaging and creative

**Question 7** Will the GVSU brand refresh be ready to review before the fall of 2024 so that appropriate planning can take place for a December 1, 2024, campaign launch?

**Answer:** Yes, the brand refresh is scheduled to be ready for a Fall 2024 campaign launch with concepts available to the selected agency early 2024

**Question 8** What information are you hoping to gather through lead generation?

**Answer:** We collect names, email, phone and other prospective student information needed for our Slate CRM system.

**Question 9** Does GVSU have data available on recent student demographics to allow for targeted messaging to each of the segments (undergraduate, graduate, and adult learners)?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question 10** Will GVSU share their history of advertising buys by market along with the analytical data?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question11** Per the RFP page 2 “The university is currently undertaking a comprehensive brand assessment and evolution which will result in a new advertising campaign and updated messaging. The strategic campaigns that result from this RFP are expected to drive our enhanced brand beginning Fall 2024.” However, page 5 states” The specific team members must be available to work on this project as described for the full time of the project schedule (December 1, 2024-November 30, 2025)” Can you confirm the actual start date.

**Answer:** There will be a soft launch of our new advertising campaign and updated messaging in Summer 2024, with a full launch in Fall 2024. The actual engagement date of the agency chosen for this project will likely be late winter 2024.

**Question12** Page 3 #5 states “Grand Valley State University is requesting that you limit the number of pages in the proposal to five.” Page 5 #3 states “State the specific team members that will be

committed to this project with the specific role and level of involvement for each. Include links or equivalent description of experience”. With identity theft being a large concern for many,

{agency name} does not put resumes with information on their website. Can the resumes not be included in the page count?

**Answer:** We will accept proposals up to 10 pages. We expect links or equivalent descriptions of specific team members that will be part of the project to be part of those 10 or fewer pages.

**Question 13** Since you are asking for a creative marketing proposal response, is the University allowing for full creative freedom in the response or is there a standard you are expecting.

**Answer:** There is no set standard required for the bid if all proposal requirements are met.

**Question 14** Are there any additional submission requirements?

**Answer:** No

**Question 15** What is the maximum file size email that can be submitted?

**Answer:** Grand Valley does not have a size limit on emails sent to us.

**Question 16** What is Grand Valley State University’s expectation of in person meetings or do you expect most to be virtual?

**Answer:** We expect one annual campaigns review in-person meeting. It is possible we may request others if deemed necessary.

**Question 17** How would Grand Valley University want the links set up? Could it be done in a google drive or drop box that the link goes to?

**Answer:** Yes, links to a Google Drive or Drop Box are fine.

**Question 18** Historically, what has Grand Valley State University’s allocation of media budget been between traditional and digital ad platforms? (Example: 40% of media budget to traditional media, 60% to digital media.) And is there an expectation that the distribution will be similar when working with the partner selected for this RFP?

**Answer:** We’re currently at approximately 25% traditional and 75% digital for our undergraduate traditional student campaign, and that has been consistent for some time. Graduate and undergraduate adult campaigns have been nearly 100% digital. The mix going forward for each campaign will depend on the agency’s recommendations to meet our specific goals for each.

**Question 19** Is it correct to interpret that the $950,000 total annual advertising budget referenced in the RFP should be inclusive of both paid media expenses and agency services?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question 20** The RFP states “the full time period of the project schedule” is December 1, 2024-November 30, 2025, but also that “implementation” would be Summer 2024 and that “campaigns that result from this RFP are expected to drive our enhanced brand beginning Fall 2024.” Can you help clarify the timeline for this engagement? When would the selected partner begin working on the engagement and when would campaigns be expected to be in market?

**Answer:** There will be a soft launch of our new advertising campaign and updated messaging in Summer 2024, with a full launch in Fall 2024. The actual engagement date of the agency chosen for this project will likely be late winter 2024.

**Question 21** Will the selected partner be expected to maintain and/or potentially optimize any existing Grand Valley State University advertising campaigns pending the launch of new campaigns?

**Answer:** Yes. The engagement will begin late winter or early spring 2024 and will include continuation of all our current campaigns.

**Question 22** Are you currently using Google360?

**Answer**: Yes

**Question 23** Do you have any existing landing pages for campaigns, or would you be looking for a partner to provide at any point within the agreement?

**Answer:** We do have existing landing pages. We would not expect creative help with any landing pages for this engagement.

**Question 24** Do you have any specific enrollment goals we should be aware of?

**Answer:** We have specific enrollment growth goal for all three areas: undergraduate traditional, graduate, and undergraduate adult. Those goals will be shared with the chosen agency.

**Question 25** Which CMS is the current website on? Which CRM does the marketing team use?

**Answer:** Our CMS is a custom CMS created by our internal web team. We use Slate for CRM.

**Question 26** We assume GVSU is responsible and capable of producing creative, is this an accurate assumption or would you need the selected partner to provide?

**Answer:** That’s an accurate assumption. We have a full internal creative staff.

**Question 27** In which ways do you currently engage with leads? i.e., open houses

**Answer**: We use leads collected from our ads for our Slate CRM.

**Question 28** If we have a client in the higher education space that is in the state of Michigan, is that considered a conflict of interest?

**Answer:** GVSU is seeking agencies without a current conflict of interest with any other West Michigan public or private university.

**Question 29** Are there specific enrollment goals that GVSU is trying to achieve?

**Answer:** We have specific enrollment growth goal for all three areas: undergraduate traditional, graduate, and undergraduate adult. Those goals will be shared with the chosen agency.

**Question 30** Will GVSU give preference to minority-owned and woman-owned businesses?

**Answer:** We cannot give preference to a minority-owned or woman-owned business.

**Question 31** Does GVSU have an incumbent or preferred vendor in mind for this project?

**Answer:** The incumbent agency has expressed interest in continuing their relationship with us and we expect to receive a bid from them. We do not have a preferred vendor.

**Question 32** “Our total annual advertising budget is approximately $950,000” Does this include agency services?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question 33** Fixed price - For services relating to media buying will you accept a fixed management % fee that covers all related services? With fluctuation to the fixed price only occurring if your budget allocated for media buying changes.

**Answer:** Yes, with the understanding that our total budget is not exceeded.

**Question 34** Creative services - under this contract will your appointed media buying provider also be responsible for the creation of the assets within campaigns?

**Answer:** No

**Question 35** We note that out-of-state providers must disclose travel costs. Will you still have a preference for West Michigan or Michigan based firms if an out of state provider commits to not charging for travel costs for regular visits?

**Answer:** Yes, all things being equal, as a state university committed to the growth of our state, an in-state or West Michigan-based provider is preferred.

**Question 36** Do you have an anticipated budget split between digital and traditional media?

**Answer:** We’re currently at approximately 25% traditional and 75% digital for our undergraduate traditional student campaign, and that has been consistent for some time. Graduate and undergraduate adult campaigns have been nearly 100% digital. The mix going forward for each campaign will depend on the agency’s recommendations to meet our specific goals for each.

**Question 37** Do you intend to allocate budget to specific courses/programs or will campaigns purely be to promote Grand Valley State’s overall offering?

**Answer:** The overall budget is allocated to three main campaigns: undergraduate traditional, graduate, and undergraduate adults. There are some specific categories and programs of focus within each campaign, but overall the budget is allocated by campaign, not program.

**Question 38** Can you please divulge what your recruitment targets are for the next 1-3 years? Would you like to target any particular age or geographic groups?

**Answer:** We expect to continue to grow recruitment in all three categories: undergraduate traditional, graduate, and undergraduate adults. Primary markets for advertising will be West Michigan (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan counties) and Southeast Michigan (Oakland, Wayne, Macomb counties). We also target select ZIP codes in the greater Chicago area. Secondary markets, where we have regional centers or campuses: Battle Creek, Holland, Muskegon, Traverse City, and Detroit. We attract students from across the state and occasionally advertise statewide. In addition, we may expand our advertising to other markets in the Midwest, including Toledo and Cleveland, Ohio; Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne, and Northwest Indiana; and other markets in northern and central Illinois and into Wisconsin. We may also explore other large markets across the country.

**Question 39** Why have you decided to tender for this opportunity now? Can you confirm what the trigger was e.g. new budget/marketing initiative or a contract coming to an end with the incumbent agency/agencies?

**Answer:** The original contract and extension with our current agency is ending.

**Question 40** Are you able to confirm who your incumbent agency is, how many agencies you work with and whether they will be tendering for this opportunity? In addition, it would be good to understand if the successful agency in this tender will be working with any of your existing third parties/agencies.

**Answer**: Media Place Partners was selected as our agency in November 2019. We can’t speak to whether they will bid but they have expressed interest. We do work with other agencies for creative occasionally and this partner may have some contact with those agencies.

**Question 41** What CRM do you currently use to manage activity?

**Answer:** Slate

**Question 42** What are your priority DMAs (ranked if possible)? Are there any specific geographies you've identified as opportunities?

**Answer:** Primary markets for advertising will be West Michigan (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan counties) and Southeast Michigan (Oakland, Wayne, Macomb counties). We also target select ZIP codes in the greater Chicago area. Secondary markets, where we have regional centers or campuses: Battle Creek, Holland, Muskegon, Traverse City, and Detroit. We may also explore other large markets throughout the Midwest and across the country.

**Question 43** Who would you consider your five main competitors?

**Answer:** Michigan State University, Central Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Oakland University, Wayne State University

**Question 44** With the university currently undertaking a comprehensive brand assessment and evolution, do expect more traditional media being used than the past few years with the strategic campaigns, to drive GVSU’s enhanced/refreshed brand?

**Answer:** We understand the primary goal of GVSU’s advertising campaigns is lead generation, and awareness and branding are important secondary goals. We’re thinking about the importance of reaching CEOs to ensure GVSU graduates get hired and the various prospective student populations who we need to reach and show that GV is leading the way with where higher ed is going. We believe there may be a shift in media strategy when we launch the new campaign and expect the chosen agency to help advise on that front based on the factors stated as well as other goals and opportunities.

**Question 45** Does the 5-page limit include the cover letter and references? We will provide online links for company/agency background information and work samples but curious if the cover letter and references count towards the 5-page limit request.

**Answer:** We will accept proposals up to 10 pages, including cover letter and references.

**Question 46** Is the advertising budget of $950,000 inclusive of agency fees?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question 47** Will the prior media spend and performance reports be made available to the successful

agency partner?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question 48** Approximately how much of your media budget do you anticipate being traditional

media vs digital?

**Answer:** We’re currently at approximately 25% traditional and 75% digital for our undergraduate traditional student campaign, and that has been consistent for some time. Graduate and undergraduate adult campaigns have been nearly 100% digital. The mix going forward for each campaign will depend on the agency’s recommendations to meet our specific goals for each.

**Question 49** Who will be responsible for producing the creative (e.g., video, images, radio scripts,

etc.), GVSU or your outside agency?

**Answer:** We have a full creative staff in-house including print, social media, and TV and radio production.

**Question 50** Is there an expectation for SEO work (e.g., content strategy, keyword optimizations,

etc.) under this SOW? Please describe.

**Answer:** We do have a full-time SEO person on staff but expect the agency to be familiar with best practices and to help advise on SEO tactics and opportunities.

**Question 51** Is there any expectation for organic social media support to optimize algorithm

performance under this SOW?

**Answer:** No

**Question 52** Do you have campaign landing pages? Can you clarify expectations for the vendor with

respect to landing pages? (e.g., design, host, advise, etc.)

**Answer:** We have campaign landing pages that we create and manage in-house. We expect the agency to advise as appropriate.

**Question 53** From a project management perspective, will University Marketing be the sole point of

contact, or is there an expectation to interact with other departments in the University?

**Answer:** GVSU University Marketing will be the main point of contact.

**Question 54** In addition to the UG marketing, can you provide an estimate of the number of graduate and

other programs you will be supporting through specific media campaigns?

**Answer:** Our graduate campaign supports all 45 of our graduate programs. Our undergraduate adult campaign supports approximately 10 applicable programs as well as certificates, etc.

**Question 55** You have requested hourly rates for services. Are you only accepting bids on an hourly

basis, or will you accept fixed price bids for a defined SOW with hourly rates submitted

for variable work outside the SOW?

**Answer:** We will accept fixed price bids with hourly rates submitted for variable work outside the SOW.

**Question 56** Does the SOW include drafting email content for lead nurturing or other applications of

direct email prospecting?

**Answer:** No, we have internal resources for all creative, including email and direct mail.

**Question 57** For purposes of estimating potential travel expenses, does 4 on-site meetings per year

align with your expectations?

**Answer:** We expect one annual campaigns review meeting in person, with the possibility of additional in-person meetings, as necessary. We don’t expect that to exceed four total.

**Question 58** Are you seeking an agency partner who can also provide on-going primary market

research as needed?

**Answer:** Not necessarily though we will expect media market research.

**Question 59** For Media Planning, Negotiating, Administration, and Execution, is the expectation that the selected agency will also develop all creative assets associated with the desired modes of advertising (i.e., print, radio, television, outdoor, transit, digital, mobile, social media, radio/audio, and other media)?

**Answer:** No, we have in-house creative.

**Question 60** To clarify, is your ~$950,000 annual advertising budget designed to cover only media buying, or is it also intended to cover the other services (i.e., Research, Strategy, Project Management, Graphic Design, and Copywriting)?

**Answer:** The $950,000 includes all agency fees. Graphic design and copywriting will not be needed.

**Question 61** If the ~$950,000 annual advertising budget is inclusive of the costs associated with covering the new partner, what do you envision as the ideal percentage breakdown between media buying and other services (i.e., Research, Strategy, Project Management, Graphic Design, and Copywriting)?

**Answer:** We do not have a target percentage for agency costs. All agency fees will be included in the $950,000.

**Question 62** Would you like the proposal to include a detailed, recommended budget that is separate from the hourly cost breakdown on pages 11 and 12 of the RFP?

**Answer:** No, we do not expect a detailed budget.

**Question 63** To clarify, for Question IV on page 11, is it a requirement that the agency applying be at least 51% owned, controlled, and actively managed by one or more of the groups/identities listed? If the agency is not, should that question be left blank?

**Answer:** It is not a requirement and may be left blank.

**Question 64** We assume the $950,000 total annual budget includes all services rendered (e.g., market analysis, strategy, project management, media planning, negotiating, administration, execution) and the in-market spend outlined in your RFP. Please confirm.

**Answer**: Yes

**Question 65** Can you provide additional detail around these two statements in the RFP:

**Answer:** Page 4: “Implementation summer 2024.”

Page 5: “The specific team members must be available to work on this project as described for the full time period of the project schedule (December 1, 2024-November 30, 2025).”

There will be a soft launch of our new advertising campaign and updated messaging in Summer 2024, with a full launch in Fall 2024. The actual engagement date of the agency chosen for this project will likely be late winter 2024.

**Question 66** For overall timing, can you confirm the agency awarded this business will kick the project off in the summer of 2024 (for strategy, research, planning phases, etc.) and that paid media will begin in December of 2024?

**Answer:** There will be a soft launch of our new advertising campaign and updated messaging in Summer 2024, with a full launch in Fall 2024. The actual engagement date of the agency chosen for this project will likely be late winter 2024.

Per the RFP statement, “GVSU is seeking agencies without a current conflict of interest with any other West Michigan public or private university. Marketing and overall strategy.”

As you likely realize, it’s a challenge to have:

1. A local West Michigan agency with a media team that has appropriate digital and traditional media experience, expertise, and capacity to handle GVSU media strategy and placement…

2. With strong higher education experience…

3. That also has no conflicts with other West Michigan public or private universities

We understand this presents challenges. We expect bidders to disclose any potential conflicts.

**Question 67** Can you provide any additional information on how much detail you would like to see?

**Answer:** We will accept fixed price bids with hourly rates submitted for variable research, strategy, project management, and media buying work outside the scope of work.

Can you provide any high level detail on the allocation of recent media plans based on channel, geography, etc.?

**Question 68** We’re currently at approximately 25% traditional and 75% digital for our undergraduate traditional student campaign, and that has been consistent for some time. Graduate and undergraduate adult campaigns have been nearly 100% digital. Primary markets for advertising are West Michigan (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan counties) and Southeast Michigan (Oakland, Wayne, Macomb counties). We also target select ZIP codes in the greater Chicago area.

Do you require suppliers to conform to any specific data compliance/security/privacy standards?

**Answer:** Yes, Grand Valley has data privacy policies that will be shared with the chosen vendor as appropriate.

**Question 69** Do you have any existing partnerships with direct mail or other media providers that we would be expected to utilize?

**Answer:** No

**Question 70** Do you currently work with any OPM providers? If so, can you provide any detail on any marketing support that they may provide?

**Answer:** No

**Question 71** In addition to external media investment, does the $950,000 budget also cover agency fees for strategy/placement?

**Answer:** yes

**Question 72** Does the budget also include any additional costs for creative, production, etc. that may need to be accounted for?

**Answer:** No

Thank you for your participation,

Valerie Rhodes-Sorrelle, C.P.M.

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