



**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**Valdosta State University**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**For**  
**Brand Perception Research and**  
**Brand Positioning Development**

**RFP NUMBER 012-02-A521**

For all questions about this RFP,  
please contact the Issuing Officer  
identified in Section 1.5

**RELEASED ON:**

**5/22/2012**

**DUE ON:**

**6/05/2012, 3:00 P.M. Eastern Time**

SPD-SP015

## **REQUIRED FORMS FOR PROPOSAL**

The attach list of forms must be completed and returned with Proposal. Forms not included will disqualify bidder from further process.

- Mandatory Scored (Appendix A),
- Supplier General Information Worksheet (Appendix B),
- Sales and Use Tax Registration form (Appendix C)
- Certificate of Non-Collusion (Appendix D)
- Cost Proposal (Appendix E)
- Cost Proposal (Appendix E-2)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of Procurement

Pursuant to the State Purchasing Act (Official Code of Georgia Annotated §§50-5-50 et seq.), this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is being issued to establish a contract with a qualified supplier who will provide Brand Perception Research and Brand Positioning Development to the Valdosta State University (hereinafter, “the State Entity”) as further described in this eRFP.

Valdosta State University is soliciting proposals from professional consultants with documented experience in the field of higher education to conduct Brand Perception Research and provide Brand Positioning Development services. The research results will serve dual purposes: (1) as input to the VSU strategic planning process and (2) as input into brand positioning development. Our research objective is to determine the position and value of VSU in the minds of our key constituencies, the most important being prospective students and their parents. VSU seeks to better understand how it is perceived among internal and external audiences and to compare those perceptions with desired perceptions and institutional goals. Our goal is to enhance VSU’s visibility, distinctiveness, and appeal. Work products include research results, detailed and summary with analysis, a tested and finalized brand statement/key messages and a high-level brand strategy.

### Background

Valdosta State College became a Regional University within the University System of Georgia on July 1, 1993 when its name officially changed to Valdosta State University. The University serves a 41-county region. However, in recent years, approximately 50% of incoming freshmen have come from the metropolitan Atlanta area. Located equidistant from Atlanta and Orlando on I-75, the Valdosta State University campus boasts beautiful Spanish Mission architecture nestled among pines and palms. Its campus lies at the heart of metropolitan Valdosta, a city of approximately 100,000 with true southern charm and forward-thinking leadership.

The five colleges within the University are:

College of Arts and Sciences,  
Langdale College of Business Administration,  
Dewar College of Education,  
College of the Arts,  
College of Nursing.

VSU’s Graduate School includes the Divisions of Social Work, and Library and Information Science. VSU offers three associate programs, fifty-four bachelor programs, thirteen certificate programs, seven endorsements, one diploma seal program, thirty-four master programs, six education specialists programs, and four doctoral programs.

In the fall of 2011, VSU achieved a milestone enrollment exceeding 13,000 students. Other key constituencies include approximately 46,000 alumni and 1700 faculty and staff. VSU

is a premier residential institution, with approximately 2900 students (28% of undergraduates) living on campus.

Remote campuses include Kings Bay and Moody Air Force Base locations. VSU also offers selected undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs in online versions.

The mission of Valdosta State University is to:

- Prepare our students to meet global opportunities and challenges through excellence in teaching and learning.
- Expand the boundaries of current knowledge, and explore the practical applications of that knowledge, through excellence in scholarship and creative endeavors.
- Promote the economic, cultural, and educational progress of our community and of our region, through excellence in service outreach.

The expanded mission statement is available at

[www.valdosta.edu/sra/documents/VSU\\_Mission.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/documents/VSU_Mission.pdf).

For additional information about Valdosta State University, see “About VSU” on our website at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vsu/about/> and the website in general. The 2010-11 University “Fact Book” can be found at

<http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/documents/FactBook2010-11.pdf> .

Printed recruiting and alumni materials are also available.

As input available to the project, surveys completed or facilitated by VSU Strategic Research & Analysis are listed below:

Survey	Population	Frequency
<b>Student Surveys</b>		
Alumni Survey	VSU Alumni who are 1 year out and 5 years out of college	Every Other Year
Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) <i>through a third party</i>	VSU undergraduate adult learners (age 25 and older)	As requested by the Office of Adult and Military Programs (2010 & 2012, so far)
Graduate Exit Survey	Students graduating from a graduate program	Annually
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) <i>through a third party</i>	VSU freshmen and sophomores	Every three years
Orientation Survey	Students and parents attending summer regular orientation sessions	Annually, approximately 12 times per summer
Senior Exit Survey	Graduating Seniors	Annually
Student Health Survey	Students visiting the Student Health Center	Students are surveyed continuously, as services are received, analysis occurs monthly and annually
Student Opinion of Instruction	All VSU enrolled students	Every semester (online)
<b>Faculty/Staff Surveys</b>		
Academic Administrator	Faculty rate department heads,	Annually

Evaluations	deans, VPAA, and president.	
Candidate Evaluations	VSU Faculty and Staff attending presentations of candidates for executive positions at VSU	As needed, 2-4 times/year
Employee Exit Survey	Employees separating from VSU	Employees are surveyed continuously, analysis occurs annually

### **Objectives**

The objective of this RFP is to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced brand research and brand development consulting firm, with extensive experience in the higher education field, to perform the following services:

#### **I: Perception/Reputation Research**

Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to create a baseline from which to measure success and provide analysis of collected data. Methods could include focus groups, surveys, interviews, discussion groups among others.

Constituencies could include:

Prospective undergraduate and graduate students

Parents of prospective undergraduate students

Alumni & Donors

Faculty & Staff

Current students

University leadership

Local Community Leaders

The community or state at large

Perhaps other constituencies as recommended by the firm to be strategically required

Constituencies may be further segmented as recommended by the offeror and/or desired by VSU.

Research goals include:

- Identify the features and benefits that are most important to key constituencies in the in-state market.

- Reveal how constituencies view VSU on those features and benefits that are important to them.
- Evaluate market position of top competitors and learn what space they occupy in the market.
- Determine perceived key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of/for VSU.
- Other research as recommended as necessary for the development of the university's brand.

## **II: Brand Clarification/Development and Consumer Validation Testing**

Define and articulate the university's brand positioning platform. This process will involve (1) analyzing the research data, (2) leading the university through the development of a brand platform that will clarify and communicate the institution's core values and (3) crafting a unique and compelling brand platform that will enable the entire campus to have consistent, coherent, cohesive messaging.

It is anticipated that a small number of brand positioning statements, including brand promises and supporting key marketing messages will be developed based on the research findings. Each of these brand positioning statements and key marketing messages will be tested with target constituencies to assist in selecting the correct platform for the university to build on its strengths and differentiate it positively in the higher education marketplace.

The scope of this project does not include creative work such as logo/identity creation or marketing designs.

Offeror will provide presentations to executive level university leadership of findings, analysis and recommendations at the end of each of the two stages in the process.

### **Timeframe**

It is hoped that both phases could be completed in an approximate six to nine month time period from award date. For planning purposes, the first day of class for fall semester, 2012 is Monday, August 13. At this time, all faculty and students will have returned to campus from summer break.

## **1.2 Proposal Certification**

RFQs, RFPs, RFQCs, must contain a certificate of non-collusion which must be signed by an authorized representative of the bidder/offeror. Such person shall include his or her title, and if

requested, shall supply verification of authority to bind the company in contract. This certificate is required by law and failure to sign and submit it with the bid/proposal may result in its rejection. The certificate of non-collusion states:

"I certify that this bid (proposal) is made without prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a bid (proposal) for the same materials, supplies, or equipment, and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. I understand that collusive bidding is a violation of State and Federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards. I agree to abide by all conditions of this bid (proposal), and certify that I am authorized to sign this bid (proposal) for the bidder (offeror). (O.C.G.A. 50-5-67). I further certify that the provisions of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 45-10-20 et. seq. have not and will not be violated in any respect."

### 1.3 Schedule of Events

The schedule of events set out herein represents the State Entity's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed. However, delays to the procurement process may occur which may necessitate adjustments to the proposed schedule. If a component of this schedule, such as the close date, is delayed, the rest of the schedule may be shifted as appropriate. Any changes to the dates up to the closing date of the RFP will be publicly posted prior to the closing date of this RFP. After the close of the RFP, the State Entity reserves the right to adjust the remainder of the proposed dates, including the dates for evaluation, negotiations, award and the contract term on an as needed basis with or without notice.

Description	Date	Time
Release of RFP	As Published on the Georgia Procurement Registry ("GPR")	See GPR
Deadline for written questions sent via email to the Issuing Officer referenced in Section 1.5.	05/30/12	5:00 p.m. ET
Responses to Written Questions	06/1/12	5:00 p.m. ET
Proposals Due/Close Date and Time	06/05/12	3:00 p.m. ET
Proposal Evaluation Completed (on or about)	[2] to [3] Weeks after Closing	N/A
Negotiations Invitation Issued (emailed) (on or about); discretionary process	TBD	TBD
Negotiations with Identified suppliers (on or about); discretionary process	TBD	TBD
Final Evaluation (on or about)	TBD	TBD
Finalize Contract Terms	TBD	TBD
Notice of Intent to Award* [NOIA] (on or about)	TBD	TBD
Notice of Award [NOA] (on or about)	10 calendar days after NOIA	TBD

\*In the event the estimated value of the contract is less than \$100,000, the State Entity reserves the right to proceed directly to contract award without posting a Notice of Intent to Award.

### 1.4 Restrictions on Communications with Staff

All questions about this RFP must be submitted in the following format:

Company Name

1. Question  
Citation of relevant section of the RFP
2. Question  
Citation of relevant section of the RFP

Questions must be directed in writing to the Issuing Officer:

**Official Issuing Officer (Buyer)**  
**JoAnn Bryant**  
1500 N Patterson St  
Valdosta, GA 31698  
e-mail: [jbryant@valdosta.edu](mailto:jbryant@valdosta.edu)  
Fax 229-333-2159

Questions must include the company name and the referenced RFP section.

From the issue date of this RFP until a contractor is selected and the selection is announced, Offerors are not allowed to communicate for any reason with any State staff except through the Issuing Officer named herein, or during the Offeror's conference, or as provided by existing work agreement(s). The State reserves the right to reject the proposal of any Offeror violating this provision. All questions concerning this RFP must be submitted in writing (fax or email may be used) to the Issuing Officer. No questions other than written will be accepted. No response other than written will be binding upon the State.

### **1.5 Definition of Terms**

**Agency** – office, agency, department, board, bureau, commission, institution, authority, or other entity of the State of Georgia

**DOAS** – Department of Administrative Services

**Georgia Vendor Manual** – Information and instructions for conducting business with the State of Georgia Located at:  
[http://statepurchasing.doas.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit\\_11783501/37106725vendormanual.pdf](http://statepurchasing.doas.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_11783501/37106725vendormanual.pdf).

**OCGA** - Official Code of Georgia Annotated (State Statute)

**Offeror** – Respondent to this Request for Proposals

**RFP** - Request for Proposals



**1.6 Contract Term**

The initial contract term is one (9 months to 1) year, or less, from contract award.

**1.7 Background**

## 2.0 **MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS**

As specified with each requirement listed in the **Mandatory Response Worksheet**, the Offeror must indicate whether its proposal meets the individual requirements by marking either a "YES" or "NO" in the response block provided. A Pass/Fail evaluation will be utilized for all mandatory requirements. Ordinarily, to be considered responsive, responsible and eligible for award, all questions identified as mandatory must be marked "YES" to pass. There may be rare instances in which a response of "NO" is the correct and logical response in order to meet the mandatory requirement (e.g. responding "NO" that the Offeror does not possess any conflicts of interest). Otherwise, any mandatory questions marked "NO" will fail the technical requirements and will result in disqualification of the proposal.

- Offeror agrees to present research findings, analysis and recommendations to university executive leadership and the branding committee at the culmination of both stages of the project, with delivery of full documentation/reports.
- Research reports will include (but not be limited to) analysis of statistically significant VSU strengths and weaknesses overall and, where statistically significant by constituency and or segment.
- Research reports will include (but not limited to) VSU differentiators exclusives relative to our competitor and peer institutions.
- Research data will be collected on the perceptions of key visual VSU images such as the mascot, logo, iconic architecture and front lawn.
- VSU retains ownership of all data, detailed and summary, as well as all analysis and recommendations.
- Other standard items as recommended by the state process from J. Bryant and B. Filtz.

## 2.1 **Mandatory Scored Requirements**

As specified with each requirement listed in the Mandatory Scored Response Worksheet, the Offeror must indicate whether it will meet the individual requirement (if any) and provide a supporting narrative in the space provided. To be considered responsive, responsible and eligible for award, any and all requirements, identified in the Mandatory Scored Response Worksheet must be met. There may be rare instances' which an item within the Mandatory Scored Response Worksheet does not create an individual requirement which must be met, but, instead, merely requires a response. All requirements labeled "Mandatory Scored" must be met by the Offeror. Failure to meet any mandatory scored requirements may result in disqualification of the proposals. The narrative description, along with any required supporting materials, will be evaluated and awarded points in accordance with Section 6 "Proposal Evaluation, Negotiations and Award."

## **2.2 Submission Requirements**

1. The Offeror must submit the Certificate of Non-Collusion with original signature (Appendix A).
2. The Offeror must submit a completed Small or Minority Business Form (Appendix B).
3. Any exceptions to the State's Sample Contract (Appendix D) must be clearly identified and submitted with the Offeror's Technical Proposal. Proposed exceptions must not conflict with or attempt to preempt mandatory requirements specified in Section 2.0.
4. The Offeror must submit a Technical Proposal detailing the proposed approach to performing all of the services requested under Section 3.0. The Offeror will submit two hard copy of the Technical Proposal with original signatures, and four CDs.
5. The Offeror must submit a completed Financial Proposal (Appendix E). The Offeror will submit two hard copy of the Financial Proposal with original signatures, and four CDs.
6. The Offeror must submit a Guide to Mandatory Requirements referencing the page(s) of the Technical Response where satisfaction of the Mandatory Requirements is substantiated.

NOTE: If there is a discrepancy between a hard copy submission and the companion CD submission, the CD will take precedence.

### **3.0 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL**

This section contains the detailed technical requirements and related services for Brand Perception Research and Brand Positioning Development. Offerors are required to download, complete and then submit the following worksheets with their responses: the Worksheets titled "Mandatory Response Worksheet" and "Mandatory Scored Requirement Worksheet" and possibly "Additional Scored response Worksheet" found as attachments to this RFP. Although many solicitations will contain all of the worksheets noted above, it is possible that a solicitation will not contain all of the worksheets.

#### **3.1 Technical Proposal Introduction**

All of the items described in this section are service levels and/or terms and conditions that the State Entity expects to be satisfied by the selected Offeror. Each Offeror must indicate its willingness and ability to satisfy these requirements in the appropriate worksheets. The following are examples of services the Offeror will be expected to perform in collaboration with appropriate university officials and constituents:

- Advise and assist the university administration and the brand committee in designing and launching a comprehensive brand perception research program that will guide and inform VSU institutional branding strategy.
- Manage all aspects of the market research programs.
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative research regarding the university's perception with multiple audiences. Employ a comprehensive range of most appropriate research techniques and survey delivery methods.
- Provide analysis of research data.
- Identify the features and benefits that are most important to key audiences in the instate market.
- Reveal how constituents view VSU on those features and benefits.
- Evaluate market position of top competitors and learn what space they occupy in the market.
- Determine key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of/for VSU.
- Lead the university in brand clarification and development.

Define and articulate the university's brand positioning platform. This process will involve (1) analyzing the research data, (2) leading the university through the development of a brand

platform that will clarify and communicate the institution's core values and (3) crafting a unique and compelling brand platform that will enable the entire campus to have consistent, coherent, cohesive messaging.

It is anticipated that a small number of brand positioning statements, including brand promises and supporting key marketing messages will be developed based on the research findings. Each of these brand positioning statements and key marketing messages will be tested with target constituencies to assist in selecting the correct platform for the university to build on its strengths and differentiate it positively in the higher education marketplace.

The scope of this project does not include creative work such as logo/identity creation or marketing designs.

- Finalize brand promise and attributes. Define next steps.
- Progress and final reports. Oral presentation to university executives at the end of each of the two project phases.

### **3.1.1 Company Background and Experience**

Offeror will describe their background, relevant experience and qualifications, including, but not limited to the following:

### **3.1.2 Company Structure**

The Offeror will include in the proposal the legal form of their business organization, the state in which incorporated (if a corporation), the types of business ventures in which the organization is involved, the office location that will be the point of contact during the term of any resulting contract, and a chart of the organization structure, including the reporting relationships, as they relate to this RFP.

### **3.1.3 Experience**

Must provide a background of the firm including the firm history, number of years of experience with market research and branding, and an overview of the firm's philosophy and approach to providing services to clients in higher education.

Must describe documented experience advising and assisting medium to large colleges and universities (6000 – 30,000 students) in developing and delivering comprehensive brand perception research with multiple constituencies.

Must describe documented experience advising and assisting medium to large colleges and universities (6,000-30,000 students) in developing and delivering such institution's brand positioning platforms and brand promises/messages and in performing consumer validation testing of those platforms.

Must provide at least three examples of planning documents prepared for such prior client institutions.

Must provide samples of brand platform recommendations made to prior clients. If these are unavailable due to confidentiality or other legal reasons, provide the structure and format in which the VSU results will be delivered.

Must provide a list of at least three higher education institutions for which strategic planning research and/or branding consulting services were provided in the last 5 years. More are welcome as proof of experience. Additionally, University System of Georgia institutions are of particular interest and may span the last ten years.

Specify:

- name(s) of institutions
- services provided
- dates of service
- name of contact person
- title of contact person
- phone number of contact person

Must provide at least three executive-level references at client institutions for which the offeror provided services similar to those proposed for VSU. Give client's name, project name, objectives, start and end dates, contact name, contact telephone number and contact email address.

### **Staffing**

Must describe the proposed staffing plan to be used to ensure full and continuous engagement in consulting services with VSU by one or more of the most experienced, senior members of the consulting firm.

Must provide resumes of any key staff who will be assigned to this project. Indicate specific role of each and work to be performed.

### **Project**

Must provide a description of the overall solution and methodology for both phases of the proposed brand development project. Include a high level description of the steps of the work and how it will be executed. Include a proposed timeline and schedule.

Must describe the client relationship management approach ( e.g., steering committee, status reporting).

Must provide a detailed explanation of services to be delivered and an outline of the steps to be taken for completion of the VSU brand research phase of this project. Describe research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and presentation.

Must provide a detailed description of the method used for conducting research with each constituency and the sample size needed for each. Provide survey instrument and focus group agenda samples. Include a prioritization of constituent groups and recommended group segmentation if deemed appropriate.

Must provide a detailed explanation of services to be delivered and an outline of the steps to be taken for completion of the VSU brand platform development phase of this project, including the methodology to be used for validation testing, and the resultant reporting and presentation.

#### **3.1.4 Additional Scored Responses.**

None.

#### **3.1.5 Cost Proposal**

Each Offeror is required to submit a cost proposal as part of its response. The cost proposal will be evaluated and scored in accordance with Section 6 “Proposal Evaluation, Negotiations and Award”.

NOTE: Recognizing that budget constraints may limit the number of groups that can effectively be engaged in the data accumulation phase of this study, VSU will work with the successful Offeror if a reduction in the number of potential targets is required. The prioritizing of these potential targets will be done with the input of the successful Offeror.

#### **3.1.6 Financial Stability**

The Offeror will provide financial information that would allow proposal evaluators to ascertain the financial stability of the firm.

- If a public company, the Offeror will provide their most recent audited financial report.
- If a private company, the Offeror will provide a copy of their most recent internal financial statement, and a letter from their financial institution, on the financial institution’s letterhead, stating the Offeror’s financial stability.

#### **3.1.7 Business Litigation**

The Offeror will disclose any involvement by the organization or any officer or principal in any material business litigation within the last five (5) years. The disclosure will include an explanation, as well as the current status and/or disposition.

## **3.2 Proposed Solution**



## 4.0 **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION**

### 4.1 **Process for Submitting Proposals**

#### 4.1.1 **Preparation of Proposal**

Each proposal should be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide a complete presentation. If supplemental materials are a necessary part of the technical proposal, the Offeror should reference these materials in the technical proposal, identifying the document(s) and citing the appropriate section and page(s) to be reviewed.

#### 4.1.2 **Packaging of Proposal**

The Offeror's proposal in response to this RFP must be divided into two appropriately labeled and sealed packages - a Technical Submission and a Financial Proposal.

The contents of each package will include:

1. Technical Submission
  - Proposal Certification (Appendix A)
  - Small or Minority Business Form (Appendix B)
  - Contract Exceptions (Appendix D)
  - Technical Proposal, addressing all requirements in Section 3.0
  - Guide to Mandatory Requirements
2. Cost Proposal
  - The Offeror must use the Cost Proposal form (Appendix E)

#### **Do not include cost information in the Technical Proposal**

Mark the outside of shipping package as follows:

Name of Company  
Phone Number and Point of Contact for Company  
RFP # 012-020  
Due **no later than** 4/25/12, 3:00 P.M. Eastern Time

#### 4.1.3 **Number of Proposal Copies**

1. Technical Proposal
  - an original (marked "Original")
  - four (4) CDs (in Microsoft Office format, Windows 2000 version or more recent)

## 2. Financial Proposal

- an original (marked “Original”)
- four (4) CDs (in Microsoft Office format, Windows 2000 version or more recent)

Offerors who do not have the capability of providing CDs may substitute 3.5” diskettes.

Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal CDs or diskettes must be labeled and packaged separately.

### 4.1.4 Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted to:

Valdosta State University  
1500 N Patterson St.  
Valdosta, GA 31698  
Atten: JoAnn Bryant

**Any proposal received after the due date and time will not be evaluated.**

## 4.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation of proposals received on or before the due date and time will be conducted in the following phases.

### 4.2.1 Administrative Review

The proposals will be reviewed by the Issuing Officer for the following administrative requirements:

1. Submitted by deadline
2. Separately sealed Technical Submission and Financial Proposal
3. All required documents have been submitted
4. Technical Submission does not include any information from the Financial Proposal
5. All documents requiring an original signature have been signed and are included

#### 4.2.2 Mandatory Requirements Review

Proposals which pass the administrative review will then be reviewed by the Technical Evaluation Team to ensure all requirements identified in Section 2.0 are addressed satisfactorily.

#### 4.2.3 Technical Proposal Evaluation

Proposals which pass the Mandatory Requirements Review will be reviewed by the Technical Evaluation Team for quality and completeness. Technical proposals will be evaluated and scored in categories and may receive a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ points.

The following are the maximum possible points of each category:

The evaluation is comprised of the following:

Background, Experience, Expertise, Staffing	300	
Methodology	300	
Oral Presentation (Only highest scoring offerors)	200	
Cost	200	TOTAL 1000

The Technical Proposal with the highest technical score will be adjusted up to \_\_\_\_\_ points. All other Technical proposals with \_\_\_\_\_ or more points (75% of maximum points available) will receive a prorated technical score calculated using the following formula:

$$P/H \times (\text{Maximum points available for Technical Proposal}) = V$$

Where: P = Technical score of the proposal being adjusted  
H = Original technical score of the highest ranking proposal  
V = Assigned points for proposal being adjusted

#### 4.2.4 Site Visits and Oral Presentations

The State reserves the right to conduct site visits or to invite Offerors to present their technical solution to the Technical Evaluation Team. The Financial Proposal must not be discussed during the oral presentation.

#### 4.2.5 Financial Proposal Evaluation

Offerors will use only the Financial Proposal Forms provided with the RFP (Appendix E) & (Appendix E-2).

Only those Technical Proposals which pass the technical review with a score of \_\_\_\_\_ (75% of the maximum available technical score) or higher will have their Financial Proposals reviewed by the agency's Issuing Officer. Financial Proposals can receive a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ points (the number of points difference in the maximum technical score and 1000 points). The Financial Proposal with the lowest cost to the State will be awarded the full \_\_\_\_\_ points. All other Financial Proposals deemed to be acceptable will receive a prorated score calculated using the following formula:

$$L/P \times (\text{Maximum number of points available for Financial Proposal}) = V$$

Where:        L = Total Cost of the proposal with the lowest cost to the State  
                   P = Total Cost of the proposal being adjusted  
                   V = Assigned points for proposal being adjusted

#### **4.2.6 Identification of Apparent Successful Offeror**

The resulting Financial Proposal scores will be combined with the Technical Proposal score. The Offeror with the highest combined technical and financial score will be identified as the apparent successful Offeror.

#### **4.3 Rejection of Proposals/Cancellation of RFP**

The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any irregularity or informality in a proposal, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items, when to do so would be to the advantage of the State. It is also within the right of the State to reject proposals **that do not contain all elements and information requested in this document**. The State reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time. The State will not be liable for any cost/losses incurred by the Offerors throughout this process.

## **5.0 TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **5.1 Vendor Registration System**

Vendors must be registered in the web-based Vendor Registration System in order to do business with the State. This system also allows vendors to receive automatic electronic notification of bid opportunities from the State of Georgia and other governmental entities within Georgia through the Georgia Procurement Registry. Vendors may register at: <https://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/VendorDB/mainframe.jsp>.

At the time of registration, vendors must select the products and services they provide using the appropriate NIGP Codes. Vendors are responsible for updating and maintaining key company, contact, and product information in the system. All inquiries about the Vendor Registration System should be addressed to: [vendoradm@doas.ga.gov](mailto:vendoradm@doas.ga.gov).

### **5.2 RFP Amendments**

The State reserves the right to amend this RFP prior to the proposal due date. All amendments and additional information will be posted to the Georgia Procurement Registry, located at: [http://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR\\_index.jsp](http://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR_index.jsp). Offerors are encouraged to check this website frequently.

### **5.3 Proposal Withdrawal**

A submitted proposal may be withdrawn prior to the due date by a written request to the Issuing Officer. A request to withdraw a proposal must be signed by an authorized individual.

### **5.4 Cost for Preparing Proposals**

The cost for developing the proposal is the sole responsibility of the Offeror. The State will not provide reimbursement for such costs.

### **5.5 Sample Contract**

The Sample Contract, which the Agency intends to use with the successful Offeror, is attached to this RFP and identified as Appendix D. Exceptions to the Contract should be identified and submitted with the Offeror's proposal. Proposed exceptions must not conflict with or attempt to preempt mandatory requirements specified in Section 2.0.

Prior to award, the apparent winning Offeror will be required to enter into discussions with the State to resolve any contractual differences before an award is made. These discussions are to be finalized and all exceptions resolved within one (1) week of notification. Failure to resolve contractual differences will lead to rejection of the Offeror's proposal.

The State reserves the right to modify the Contract to be consistent with the successful offer and to negotiate with the successful Offeror other modifications, provided that no such

modifications affect the evaluation criteria set forth herein, or give the successful Offeror a competitive advantage.

### **5.6 Conflict of Interest**

If an Offeror has any existing client relationship that involves the State of Georgia, the Offeror must disclose each relationship.

### **5.7 Minority Business Policy**

It is the policy of the State of Georgia that minority business enterprises shall have a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the State purchasing process. Therefore, the State of Georgia encourages all minority business enterprises to compete for, win, and receive contracts for goods, services, and construction. Also, the State encourages all companies to sub-contract portions of any State contract to minority business enterprises. For information, contact the Vendor Relations Coordinator referenced in section 5.9.

### **5.8 Georgia Income Tax Incentive**

Offerors interested in taking advantage of the Georgia income tax incentives provided for by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 48-7-38, relative to the use of minority subcontractors in the performance of contracts awarded by the State of Georgia, should contact the Vendor Relations Coordinator referenced in section 5.9.

### **5.9 Vendor Relations Administrator**

The Vendor Relations Coordinator may be contacted at the following address:

Vendor Relations Administrator  
Department of Administrative Services  
200 Piedmont Avenue, S.E.  
Suite 1308, West Tower  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-9010  
Telephone: (404) 657-6000  
Fax: (404) 657-8444

### **5.10 Reciprocal Preference Law OCGA 50-5-60(b)**

For the purposes of evaluation only, Offerors resident in the State of Georgia will be granted the same preference over Offerors resident in another State in the same manner, on the same basis, and to the same extent that preference is granted in awarding bids for the same goods or services by such other State to Offerors resident therein over Offerors resident in the State of Georgia. NOTE: For the purposes of this law, the definition of a resident Offeror is one who maintains a place of business with at least one employee inside the State of Georgia. A post office box address will not satisfy this requirement.

### **5.11 ADA Guidelines**

The State of Georgia adheres to the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Offerors should contact the Issuing Officer at least one day in advance if they require special arrangements when attending the Offeror's Conference. The Georgia Relay Center at 1-800-255-0056 (TDD Only) or 1-800-255-0135 (Voice) will relay messages, in strict confidence, for the speech and hearing impaired.

### **5.12 Sales and Use Tax Registration**

In Compliance with section 48-8-59 of the OCGA, every company or individual doing business within the State of Georgia is required to file an application for a certificate of registration with the State Revenue Commissioner. Prior to award of this Contract, the apparent successful Offeror will be required to complete and submit to the Agency the Sales and Use Tax Registration form (Appendix C). If the completed Sales and Use Tax Registration form is not received by the Agency within one week of the issuing of the Notice of Award, the Agency may, at its sole discretion, eliminate the apparent successful Offeror from consideration and award the Contract to another Offeror.

### **5.13 Compliance with Laws**

The Contractor will comply with all State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations.

### **5.14 Protest**

Offerors should familiarize themselves with the protest procedures set forth in Section 3.8 of the Georgia Vendor Manual, located at:  
[http://statepurchasing.doas.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit\\_11783501/37106725vendormanual.pdf](http://statepurchasing.doas.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_11783501/37106725vendormanual.pdf).



## Q & A

RFP Number: 012-02-A521	RFP Title: <b>Brand Perception Research and Brand Positioning Development</b>
Requesting State Entity: Valdosta State University	Date: 05/22/2012
Issuing Officer: JoAnn Bryant	Canceled RFP Questions Posted
eMail Address: jbryant@valdosta.edu	Telephone 229-333-5702

**The purpose of this document is to provide answers to vendor questions asked in the previous RFP. Please see Questions and Answers included herein.**

Note: This document is intended for informational purposes only. Any changes to the RFP must occur through a published addendum (or through publication of a new version of the RFP in Team Georgia Marketplace). If multiple Q & A documents are posted, the most recent Q & A shall govern in the event of a conflict.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
1.	What driving forces have prompted VSU to pursue this body of work at this time (e.g., declining enrollment, change in strategic direction, competitive dynamics)?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	VSU realizes that its brand is less than clearly defined and feels the need to verify perceptions and create a new brand which will resonate with its constituencies.
2.	How should we think about the five colleges within VSU in terms of project participation, input considerations, application of recommendations, etc.?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	At this time, we are pursuing a university-wide brand, not brands by college. All colleges should have equal input to the process. .
3.	Is there an ingoing prioritization between the various stakeholder groups identified in the RFP?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	No, We are looking for a recommended prioritization based on the bidder's experience in such branding studies in higher education.
4.	Whom does VSU consider to be its most direct competition (either	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement:</b>	N/A The research will be an additional tool for the strategic planning committee to use in their





#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	in terms of specific colleges, universities, or broad classifications of institutions)?	<b>Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	process.
5.	Do any of the input sources referenced in the RFP provide insight into how the VSU “brand” is perceived / positioned today?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	It is the intent of the university that today’s perceptions are to be verified by the research study.
6.	How important is the quantification of stakeholder research in Phase 1? More broadly, is there any leeway to modify the project approach based on our ingoing perspectives on how best to approach the engagement?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution : Background (p.15 of RFP)</b>	The university does not have any preconceived positioning goals and looks forward to developing them in the branding development process. We welcome your recommendations.
7.	Will VSU be able to assist in the recruiting of stakeholder respondents for either qualitative and/or quantitative research, in either Phase 1 and/or Phase 2?”	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution : Background (p.15 of RFP)</b>	Yes, we will assist with some constituencies. Please state where this is assumed. The company that receives the proposal to guide us in this since they will be the research experts.
8.	Are there milestones over next 9-12 months that we should know about which may impact project timing (needing interim information, final recommendation, etc.)?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution : Background (p.15 of RFP)</b>	In the 9-12 months we will look to guidance from the company that receives the proposal to guide us in developing the timeline needed to build the brand platform.
9.	What is the makeup of the core team from VSU for this project (e.g., number of people, roles on project, percent dedication)?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution : Background (p.15 of RFP)</b>	We will look to guidance from the company that receives the proposal to guide us on the makeup of the committee that will oversee the brand development.
10.	During delivery, what is the makeup of the steering committee or governing body that will guide project direction and approve	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution : Background (p.15 of RFP)</b>	We will look to guidance from the company that receives the proposal to guide us on the makeup of the committee that will oversee the brand development.



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	interim and final recommendations?		
11.	How many other firms will be bidding on this project?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	It is Unknown to the University as to how many firms will participate in this RFP until the RFP has concluded.
12.	Does the proposal need to be in a certain format (e.g., PowerPoint, Word), or is there flexibility?	<b>2.2 Submission Requirements: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	See Section 2.2 Submission Requirements.
13.	This work is to message communication and brand positioning. Is this also intended to inform broader strategic areas of VSU such as curriculum development, student life experience, community engagement, identity marketing, etc? Or is this intended to be primarily an effort to optimize communications of what VSU already offers?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	Brand and identity marketing only.
14.	Is there an educational institution(s) that you admire or are seeking to emulate in the areas you are seeking to improve?	<b>1.1 Purpose of Procurement: Background (p.2 of RFP)</b>	Such institutions may be named after award.
15.	Is there any specific format for submitting response to the RFP / proposal? The RFP mentions Appendix D containing a sample contract. However, we do not see this appendix in the RFP.	<b>5.5 Sample Contract (p.20-21 of RFP)</b>	The format needs to be consistent with the mandatory requirements.
16.	Can the bidding for the RFP be submitted by two companies	<b>3.1.2 Company Structure Officer (p 12)</b>	No, The winning company can subcontract the project but is still responsible for the project and all the



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	collaboratively? If yes, then would you prefer to have contracts with both companies or would you prefer one to act as the contracted Solution Integrator and to own the sub-contract with the other?	of RFP)	components of the project. The company will include in the proposal the legal form of their business organization, the state in which incorporated (if a corporation), the types of business ventures in which the organization is involved, the office location that will be the point of contact during the term of any resulting contract, and a chart of the organization structure, including the reporting relationships, as they relate to this RFP.
17.	Is it mandatory to cover all the constituencies mentioned in the RFP? Can we shortlist the key constituencies based on our experience?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution (p 15 of RFP)</b>	You may recommend constituencies in priority order or groups. See notes at bottom of cost proposal sheet.
18.	After the award of the project, will the University provide us a list of prospective respondents for all the constituencies that need to be covered in the study? Will this list contain the contact information (i.e. email and telephone no)?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution (p 15 of RFP)</b>	The company that is awarded the proposal will be provided with University accessed information.
19.	Will we be allowed to recruit the respondents from the University or College campus?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution (p 15 of RFP)</b>	The company that is awarded the proposal will be provided with this opportunity if it is part of the requirements.
20.	Will we be allowed to offer incentives (in form of gift certificates) to the respondents for the interviews?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	The winning bidder can handle the interviews in the manner they deem appropriate within the parameters set by Georgia State Laws.
21.	Will it be possible for the University to issue a letter to the prospective respondents requesting their participation in	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	Such requirements should be explained in your methodology.



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	this study?		
22.	Can we disclose the name of the University to the respondents?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	Yes
23.	Would you like us to interview competition universities / education institutes' constituencies also as a part of competitive benchmarking?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	The university is looking for a fully developed brand platform that will clarify and communicate the institution's core values and create consistent, coherent, cohesive messaging across campus. We will be evaluating the various methods that different companies propose to comprehensively complete this objective. Please refer to the current mandatory requirements or suggestions by the winning bidder.
24.	Will the brand positioning platform be developed at the University level or would you like to develop separate platforms for any other level (such as College, course level)?	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	University level only at this time.
25.	Would VSU want to restrict 'Prospective undergraduate and graduate students' to VSU (primarily in Georgia, Atlanta and Orlando), or would you like us to cover prospective students in other similar Universities as well?	section 1.1	Assume "prospective students" is limited to in-state, VSU only.
26.	Would 'Prospective students' be for full courses only or part time and online courses as well?	section 1.1	The emphasis is fulltime students.
27.	Will the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) be performed at the University level or would you it to be performed	section 3.2	University level.



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	for other levels (such as College, course level)		
28.	<p>What contact lists (and associated numbers of each type of contact) will be provided by the University for each of the following target audiences. Please indicate if a list is not currently available from the University.</p> <p>a. Prospective undergraduate students (# emailable; # phoneable)</p> <p>b. Prospective graduate students (# emailable; # phoneable)</p> <p>c. Parents of prospective undergraduate students (# emailable; # phoneable)</p> <p>d. Valdosta alumni (# emailable; # phoneable)</p> <p>e. Valdosta donors (# emailable; # phoneable)</p> <p>f. Faculty/staff (# emailable)</p> <p>g. Current students (# emailable)</p> <p>h. Local community leaders (# emailable; # phoneable)</p>	<b>Section 1.1</b>	Bidder should outline their methodology for accessing such groups.
29.	<p>Are you seeking one or two original technical proposals (along with the 4 CDs)?</p> <p>Page 10 indicates “two hard copy (sic)” and page 16 asks for “an”</p>	<b>4.1.3 Number of Proposal Copies</b>	The Offeror will submit two hard copy of the Technical Proposal with original signatures, and four CDs



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	original technical proposal		
30.	Please describe what is meant by the “planning documents” requested (three examples) on page 13.  Top of page 13 (3.1.3.)	<b>2.2 Submission Requirements</b>	We will look to guidance from the company that receives the proposal to guide us in this since they will be the research experts.
31.	What do you seek for Section 3.2 “Proposed Solution” that hasn’t already been addressed in Sections 3.1-3.2 Technical Proposal (and more specifically in the Project section of 3.1.3)?  Page 15; 3.2 Proposed Solution	<b>3.2 Proposed Solution</b>	We will look to guidance from the company that receives the proposal to guide us in this since they will be the research experts.
32.	What is the anticipated / approximate budget, budget range, or not to exceed dollar amount for this project?	<b>Section 1.1</b>	A budget isn’t set and will be determined dependant upon chosen proposal.
33.	What is the current student makeup at the University?	<b>Section 1.1</b>	Pages 2 & 3 tell of the student make up and offer weblinks to more information about the student population.
34.	When looking at perspective students and parents, are we looking specifically at respondents in Georgia?	<b>Section 1.1</b>	See # 25 Question and answer
35.	What geographical regions is VSU looking at for perspective students?	<b>Section 1.1</b>	See #25 question and answer.
36.	Will VSU consider out of state marketing research firms with relevant higher education	<b>Section 1.1</b>	Yes



#	Questions	Referenced RFP Section	Answers
	research experience?		
37.	Was any of the text in the RFP taken from the work of a consultant with a previous or current working relationship with the University, or developed with the help of such a consultant?		No, it was not.