

001664-Oct2019

Author: Arun Casuba

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Request for Proposal for 001664-Oct2019

BASIC DETAILS

Event Name

Public Relations/Communications/Media Relations Request For Proposal

Description

The California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor (CO) is seeking a national public relations, communications and media relations agency with extensive expertise in higher education to develop and execute a communications strategy and campaign associated with Graduation Initiative 2025. The selected bidder will add additional capacity to employ a targeted campaign to maximize awareness about the Graduation Initiative among internal and external audiences and to further relationships for the CSU among national higher education influentials, nonprofits, higher education associations, and media outlets.

Event Type

Request for Proposal

Event Currency

USD

TIMELINE

Timeline	Start Date & Time	End Date & Time
Answers to Qs	11/9/2019 02:00:00 AM	11/23/2019 02:00:00 AM
Response Timeline	11/9/2019 02:00:00 AM	11/23/2019 02:00:00 AM

GUIDELINES

001664-Oct2019 - Event Summary

Guideline Name	Guideline Type	Accepted By	Accepted On
Supplier Bidding Guide for CalUSource	General Guidelines	Jack Brownes	11/12/2019 11:04:18 AM
CSU RFP General Provisions	General Guidelines	Jack Brownes	11/12/2019 11:04:18 AM
CSU: Services-General Provisions_10-15-2014	General Guidelines	Jack Brownes	11/12/2019 11:04:18 AM

QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire Name	Completion %	Last Modified By	Last Modified On	Questions
Company Information	0 %			19
Experience	0 %			7
Specialized Skills	0 %			13
Contract Flexibility	0 %			1

PRICE SHEETS

001664-Oct2019 - Event Summary

Price Sheet Name	Last Modified By	Last Modified On	Completion level
Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Labor			0 %
Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Labor			0 %
Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Labor			0 %
Fiscal Year Travel and Expenses			100 %
Hourly Rates			0 %

Attachments- Buyer

Attachments Name	Size
PR-Comms-MR Firm_Overview_Revision 1.pdf	240.0 KB

Public Relations/Communications/Media Relations Request For Proposal Event Overview

The California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor (CO) is seeking a national public relations, communications and media relations agency with extensive expertise in higher education to develop and execute a communications strategy and campaign associated with Graduation Initiative 2025. The selected bidder will add additional capacity to employ a targeted campaign to maximize awareness about the Graduation Initiative among internal and external audiences and to further relationships for the CSU among national higher education influentials, nonprofits, higher education associations, and media outlets.

This document provides an overview of the work to be performed by the winning bidder. Bids will be evaluated using the following selection criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Company Information	15%
Experience	25%
Specialized Skills	25%
Contract Flexibility	10%
Pricing	25%

Scope of Work

Public Relations/Communications/Media Relations

Purpose:

To assist the California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor (CO) with the development and execution of a communications strategy and campaign associated with [Graduation Initiative 2025](#). Graduation Initiative 2025 is the CSU's flagship effort to significantly improve graduation rates and close equity gaps among students. The Office of the Chancellor seeks to expand the consistency and clarity of communications across 23 campuses and occasionally to external constituents. This contract is intended to develop a comprehensive campaign to optimize various communication opportunities throughout the year. The campaign should also include capacity-building strategies to increase systemwide Graduation Initiative awareness and support. The CO is seeking a national public relations, communications and media relations agency with extensive expertise in higher education to add additional capacity to employ a targeted campaign to maximize awareness about Graduation Initiative among internal and external audiences and to further relationships for the CSU among national higher education influentials, nonprofits, higher education associations, and media outlets. The following outlines the scope of work for consideration by interested firms.

Key Deliverables:

1. Work collaboratively with the CO to develop and outline a yearlong communications strategy to deliver clear, consistent, and compelling messaging about Graduation Initiative 2025. Messaging should consider the diversity of key targets (e.g., campus faculty, campus leaders, non-profits/think tanks, private foundations, and the national higher education community). The strategy will be informed by available market research, media and social media analytics and qualitative input gathered by the selected firm through their pre-existing relationships.
2. Assist with the development of messaging, media outreach plans and related collateral for critical communications opportunities including but not limited to:
 - Release of annual graduation rate progress (January 2020 and beyond)
 - Marketing and promotion of the *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast series
 - Graduation Initiative 2025 and Executive Order 1110 progress evaluation and findings
3. Increase national visibility and awareness of Graduation Initiative 2025 through the development of a thought leadership plan incorporated into the overarching communications strategy. The plan would include potential storylines for internal communications as well as drafting written pieces and outreach for external media placements; introductions and outreach to think tanks, associations, nonprofits that provide grants in higher education, higher education leaders and other influencers in the college completion space; and op-ed topics and content to draft and pitch to national media outlets to assist with awareness of Graduation Initiative 2025. (The process and procedures for executing the thought leadership plan are outlined in Attachment 1.)

Additionally, the communications strategy would prioritize increasing the national visibility and awareness of the *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast when considering potential storylines for internal communications as well as outreach for external media placements including introductions and outreach to potential podcast participants from think tanks, associations, high profile higher education institutions and other influencers in the college completion space as necessary.

4. Advise the CO on the development of printed materials, website content, social media presence, infographics and/or other assets that might be developed internally or by other vendors. Insights on current collateral materials and potential materials will be included in the strategy document.

Minimum Requirements:

Consulting services to include, but are not limited to, higher education communications, public relations, media relations, strategy consulting, marketing and promotion of programs, ghost writing, digital and print content creation.

Experience Level

- 10+ years of experience working in communications, public affairs and/or media relations.
- 10+ years of professional experience in higher education settings, preferably in direct support of and with a public institution/system.
- Experience working with governing boards, executive-level campus/systemwide administrators, national higher education organizations/associations.
- Experience working with higher education nonprofits/granting organizations.
- Previously held leadership role at a public relations/affairs or communications firm.
- Familiarity with the CSU system and Graduation Initiative 2025 data, highly preferred but not required.

Titles – Certifications

- Master's degree in communication, public administration, public affairs, journalism, or in a related field.

Specialized Skills

- Expertise in investigating and analyzing problems with a broad administrative impact and implications.
- Excellent writing/editing skills to produce clear and concise content for internal/external university documents, academic journals, news outlets, press releases, op-eds, commentaries, blogs, social media, print and digital publishing.
- Demonstrated skills in storytelling and messaging skills using various tools and channels.
- Ability to analyze research data to compile, write, and present reports related prospect research findings.

- Ability to keep abreast of higher education policy, public policy and public affairs issues.
- Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the work of minority serving institutions as it relates to student success initiatives serving underrepresented minority students.
- Knowledge of student success initiatives nationally and the strategy, tactics and metrics used to demonstrate progress toward retention and graduation goals.
- Demonstrated skill in consensus building, negotiation, leadership, crisis management and strategic planning among a decentralized stakeholder base.
- Ability to use tact and diplomacy to effectively handle a broad range of high level and sensitive interpersonal situations with diverse personalities, and to respond appropriately to conflicts and problems.
- Ability to manage up and down in complex organizations.
- Knowledge of protocols and institutional etiquette related to public and media relations.
- Knowledge of applicable copyright and other laws pertaining to written materials, news media and confidentiality.
- Maintains an extensive network of ongoing relationships with higher education associations, media outlets, private foundations, think tanks and influencers.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The primary point of contact for a hired firm shall be Dr. James T. Minor, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Senior Strategist. Dr. Minor will generally liaise between the firm and the CO Department of Communications and Public Affairs, as appropriate, to coordinate communications strategies, as well as propose media outreach and placements as outlined by the firm in a monthly communications report.

Firm:

- Development, planning and execution of communications strategy, thought leadership plan, public relations and media outreach and plans including research, identification of objectives, development of themes and concepts, and overseeing creation of content and communication materials.
- Marketing and positioning Graduation Initiative 2025 to meet long-term media relations objectives and enter the national student success conversation.
- Serves as a consulting advisor for internal and external constituents and handles more sensitive and complex media contacts. Advises ASIE management on the handling of media issues.
- Engage various CO departments and CSU stakeholders as necessary in regards to the execution of outlined deliverables.

Academic Success and Inclusive Excellence (ASIE):

- Provide general timeline for critical communications opportunities.
- Draft content in partnership with selected firm and facilitate internal approval and routing procedures.
- Act as a liaison between selected firm and various CO departments and CSU stakeholders as necessary in regards to the execution of outlined deliverables.

- Monitor timely execution of key deliverables consistent with strategic timelines and communications plans produced by the selected firm.

CO Public Affairs:

- Share feedback for the thought leadership plan regularly to ensure message consistency between Graduation Initiative 2025 communications planned through CO Public Affairs team and the Department of Academic Success and Inclusive Excellence.

Term of Contract: January 3, 2020 through December 31, 2021 with annual renewals at CSU's option – additional tasking and Statements of Work may be added for renewals.

Compensation:

Bidder is being requested to provide a breakdown of project costs including labor and travel and expenses based on the schedule of deliverables defined below.

Payment Schedule: Monthly.

Payment Terms: Net 45, invoicing and contract payment are contingent on the named deliverables outlined herein.

Schedule for Deliverables:

I. Fiscal Year 2019/2020:

January 2020 – March 2020

Host a series of three virtual consultation meetings (the third to include Public Affairs team) to discuss strategy, communication opportunities, and plan development. Complete findings report with a yearlong communications strategy timeline for Graduation Initiative 2025 and *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast series. Including a compendium development of a content timeline and thought leadership plan.

April – June 2020

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Media coverage/public posting of annual graduation rate progress for 2018-19 (and/or West Ed report)
- Develop strategic approaches for *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast, season 2 media coverage

II. Fiscal Year 2020/2021:

July – September 2020

Convening ASIE team for a virtual meeting to discuss an outcomes report that evaluates the success of the first six months of the yearlong strategy with recommendations for the remaining six months

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Develop strategic approaches for release of annual graduation rate progress (2019-20)
- Media coverage for *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast season 2

October – December 2020

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Media coverage for 2019-20 academic year course outcomes and graduation rate update
- Prepare final outcomes report and assess communications strategy effectiveness

January 2021 – March 2021

Host a series of three virtual consultation meetings (the third to include Public Affairs team) to discuss ongoing strategy, communication opportunities, and plan development. Complete findings report with a yearlong communications strategy timeline for Graduation Initiative 2025 and *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast series. Including a compendium development of a content timeline and thought leadership plan.

April – June 2021

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Media coverage/public posting of annual graduation rate progress for 2019-20
- Develop strategic approaches for *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast, season 3 media coverage

III. Fiscal Year 2021/2022:

July – September 2021

Convening ASIE team for a virtual meeting to discuss an outcomes report that evaluates the success of the first six months of the yearlong strategy with recommendations for the remaining six months

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Develop strategic approaches for release of annual graduation rate progress (2020-21)
- Media coverage for *Higher Ed Rewired* podcast season 3

October – December 2021

Check-in meeting regarding upcoming critical communications opportunities:

- Quarterly op-ed and execution of thought leadership plan
- Media coverage for 2020-21 academic year course outcomes and graduation rate update
- Prepare final outcomes report and assess communications strategy effectiveness

The following list of materials may be produced as an outcome of the strategy and communication points listed above and annually thereafter. The selected firm and/or the CO will produce these materials on an ongoing basis throughout the period of the contract.

- a. Pitching story lines for key media placements
- b. Outreach contacts (External media, think-tanks, foundations, non-profits)
- c. Website content
- d. Social media content
- e. Digital and printed infographics
- f. Ghost writing for digital and print media placements or op-eds

Attachment 1

The following process outlines a proposed protocol for the execution of the thought leadership plan incorporated into the overarching communications strategy.

The plan can include potential storylines for internal communications as well as outreach for external media placements; introductions and outreach to think tanks, associations, higher education leaders and other influencers in the college completion space; and topics to pitch to national media outlets to assist with awareness of Graduation Initiative 2025.

Firm and the Department of Academic Success and Inclusive Excellence (ASIE) will generate a monthly report using the template below. The report will be shared by the primary contact in ASIE with the designated representatives from the CO Public Affairs team for feedback in regards to conflicting messaging in the context of other ongoing media relations efforts. The CO will address potential storylines and communications that arise between reporting periods on a case-by-case basis.

The approval process for proposed topics will be:

1. Firm generates monthly report of media topics and outlets for publishing
2. Michael Uhlenkamp/Toni Molle provide feedback and share communications priorities for the proposed topics/outlets in context of other ongoing media relations efforts
3. Firm/ASIE Team drafts the media placement
4. Share approved content with Public Affairs for any potential messaging tie-ins

Thought Leadership Plan
Communications Report/Strategic Timeline
(Month/Year)

Media Type	Topic/Storyline	Media Outlet	Publish Date