Questions & Answers
RFP GMU-1429-17 – Athletic Marketing Services

1. May vendors outside of the state of Virginia participate?
   A. Yes

2. Can you outline what marketing strategies you have tried in the past in order to support the Intercollegiate Athletics Program?
   A. Geofencing, Pandora, youtube, Post+, IP Targeting, Retargeting, Social (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat), Pandora, Influencer, Print, Radio, Direct mail, email marketing, Sales calls

3. Please define what channels you would like to include as a part of the multi-platform marketing and new media strategies? For Example: Website redesign/Campaign landing pages; Search Engine Marketing; Email Marketing; Banner Advertising; Social Media Advertising.
   A. Cutting-edge 21st century social and digital advertising. We would like to see what you think are the best options for selling more tickets and building attendance with on campus community but we would want to be where the consumers are located. We believe mobile & digital (geo-fencing, retargeting, pre-roll video, web & mobile ads), email marketing, Social Media Advertising, and radio are our best chances for success.

4. Are there sport teams that you specifically want to promote as a part of the initiative?
   A. Men’s Basketball

5. What are the goals of the marketing program? Please outline specific KPIs (i.e. recruiting, event attendance).
   A. 1.) increased student attendance at men’s basketball 2.) increased overall attendance at men’s basketball 3.) increased ticket sales and revenue at men’s basketball 4.) increased student attendance and ticket sales at women’s basketball

6. How does the ICA generate revenue? Is it primarily through ticket sales for sporting events or advertising? Is there a donation component?
   A. Donations, Sponsorships and ticket sales

7. Do you currently drive revenue through advertising and sponsorships? How are these currently procured?
   A. In the past we have used sponsorships and advertising to drive revenue through our men’s basketball program. Some ads are trade deals secured via corporate sponsorships, others are purchased via our third party agency

8. Has the university worked with agencies in the past in order to drive marketing support? If so, who is the vendor?
   A. Leffler Agency and Sage

9. What are the unique selling points of the ICA program?
   A. Family-friendly affordable Division men’s college basketball. The competitiveness of the program continues to improve and our conference affiliation (the Atlantic 10) brings multiple teams that regularly
appear in the NCAA tournament. Our greatest asset to grow our program remains our people. Our Athletic Director and Associate Athletic Director are well known Redskins legends with one inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame. And our basketball coaching staff is engaged, affable and willing to be utilized to drive marketing and awareness of the program. All of the aforementioned are active and engaged on social media with substantial followings in the region.

10. Who are your key competitors?
   A. For students: Washington DC and its social and cultural options, local amateur & professional teams (Nationals, Wizards, Redskins, Capitals, DC United), other on-campus events, and general malaise. Non-students: Washington DC, professional teams and traffic

11. Why does the university feel it needs help on marketing initiatives now?
   A. Men’s Basketball is trending upward with an exciting new coach and it is imperative that we increase our attendance and revenue

12. Who will we be working with? A team? A board?
   A. 2-3 members of Mason’s ICA marketing staff

13. Is there a current agency of record? If so, will they be participating?
   A. Sage Communications – no.

14. Do you anticipate awarding the full scope of work to one agency, or is there a potential to award to multiple?
   A. One Agency but potential for multiple.

15. How many tickets are sold annually for men’s and women’s basketball games, men’s and women’s soccer matches and any state or national conference in any sport?
   A. MBB: 71,990 total attendance for 2016-17; WBB: 8,822 total attendance for 2016-17

16. How many tickets (on average) are sold per game for men’s and women’s basketball games, men’s and women’s soccer matches and any state or national conference in any sport?
   A. MBB: 4,235; WBB 679

17. Of the tickets sales per year/game what percentage is sold to students, alumni and the community?
   A. Students made up 11.1% of our attendance in 2016-17

18. What percentage increase in ticket sales does GMU expect to realize in year 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the contract and by sporting event?
   A. To be determined with vendor. 10% would be a minimum.

19. Does the university receive a percentage of revenue from the food & beverage sales in the Eagle Bank Arena?
   A. Not relevant

20. Is there any current ticket/group sales marketing done through the Alumni Association or University Advancement to drive tickets sales?
   A. Yes

21. Which department handles the Patriot’s Club and the tickets associated with the club?
   A. Marketing, Patriot Club and the ticket office all work very closely togeother

22. What vendor currently holds the contract for ticketing?
23. Has there been any direct advertising to the community at large?
   A. Yes

24. Does the $216,000 maximum spend include media placement cost, such as buying social media paid advertising or radio spot time, etc.? If not, what is the media placement budget?
   A. Yes

25. Is the Agency responsible for creating social content, or would the Agency also manage social posting and social community management?
   A. Hybrid of both to be determined in discussions with agency but a focus on content.

26. For which social platforms will the Agency be creating content?
   A. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat – perhaps most important is that the Agency be cutting edge and nimble to the point that we can develop effective and useful content for social platforms that do not yet exist.

27. What is the approximate breakdown of content to be created per month (i.e. photography, graphics, video, short form video (GIFs, Boomerangs, etc.))?
   A. TBD with agency

28. For which channels will the Agency run social advertising?
   A. TBD with agency

29. For which channels will the Agency run digital advertising?
   A. TBD with agency

30. Does Mason currently use a specific retargeting platform?
    A. Centro

31. For which channels (i.e., YouTube, Facebook, etc.) does Mason want to run pre-roll video advertisements?
    A. YouTube for sure. Others to be discussed with agency

32. Please detail the number per year and time length of the expected television/radio spots. Is the Agency expected to manage the production of these commercials?
    A. TV – likely n/a due to cost. Radio TBD with discussion from agency. No longer than :30 spots

33. Please detail Mason’s current email marketing strategy and how often Mason expects the Agency to send out emails.
    A. We expect the agency to send out emails as often as its deemed appropriate in discussions between Mason and the agency

34. Does the budget include paid advertising spend?
    A. Yes

35. Is the Agency responsible for away game coverage? If so, is travel covered in the total budget?
    A. No
36. Who are the key target audiences for this initiative?
   A. Mason Students, Faculty, Staff, Alums, NoVa residents

37. What higher education institutions, professional/collegiate sports teams, and/or entertainment options does GMU consider as competitors to its intercollege athletics program?
   A. For students: Washington DC and its social and cultural options, local amateur and professional teams (Nationals, Wizards, Redskins, Capitals, DC United), other on-campus events, and general malaise. Non-students: Washington DC, professional teams and traffic

38. What specific, measureable success criteria has GMU outlined for this initiative? Please provide all key goals and objectives as it relates to increasing ticket sales and game attendance.
   A. Student attendance, Ticket Sales, Ticket Revenue

39. What is the current state of the GMU Athletics brand? Does the organization have a brand platform, strategy, and messaging in place? If not, are you interested in brand exploration for this initiative?
   A. Yes we have brand platform, strategy and messaging.

40. What existing brand assets and research does GMU have in-place for this initiative? (e.g., brand guidelines, video/photography, collateral, fan data/surveys, etc.).
   A. Brand guideline: Yes. Fan data/surveys: Yes. Extensive photos and videos

41. What is GMU’s expectations as it relates to media planning, strategy, and buying? Should this be considered for this scope of work or do you currently partner with another firm for these services? What are your key media markets?
   A. GMU’s expectation is the agency will take lead for all media planning, strategy and buying

42. What internal capabilities does GMU possess in-house for this initiative? (e.g., graphic designers, content writers, web developers, etc.).
   A. 1 graphic designer, 1 content writer

43. What is the anticipated project timeline for this initiative? When will the contract commence and when should the work be completed? Please outline all key due dates and milestones.
   A. July 1 to have plans in-place for 17-18 season
     Aug 1 to have plans beginning to be put in place
     Sep 1 season ticket/group/mini plan sales efforts
     October 13 – Mason Madness unofficial start of basketball season
     Late October – single game tickets on sale
     November 10 – first home basketball game of 17-18 season
     March 15 – end of 17-18 basketball season

44. What are GMU’s expectations as it relates to SWaM Certification? Is this required for the selected vendor or for all RFP respondents? What if participating RFP respondents are not certified SWaM vendors?
   A. Please refer to section VII, SWaM Certification of the RFP. You are not required to be certified SWaM to respond to the RFP. If you qualify as a SWaM vendor as determined by the SBSD, http://egov1.virginia.gov/swamcert.html, and are awarded a contract, you must be certified within 90 days of contract execution.

45. What is the anticipated contract length for this initiative? Is GMU open to a multi-year engagement?
   A. TBD; Yes
46. Is the annual spend of $216K inclusive of all agency fees, production, media, overhead, travel, and eVA fees for this initiative?
   A. Yes

47. The RFP states marketing will be “primarily” for marketing of basketball, but “may also include” men’s and women’s soccer and other special athletic events. For the purposes of estimating, should we assume these additional needs will be included in your $216K budget?
   A. Unlikely

48. If not, what budget would you assign to these additional initiatives, either on a total or per-case basis?
   A. Per-case basis

49. Who does GMU Athletics consider to be its primary and secondary target audiences?
   A. Primary: Students and Mason Alumni within 25 miles of Mason. Secondary: NoVa residents

50. Does GMU Athletics have any baseline market research that details how the above mentioned target audiences currently perceive its brand? If yes, will GMU share that information with potential respondents are part of the RFP process?
   A. Yes. We will share with the agency who is awarded the contract

51. Who is the incumbent agency for this contract?
   A. Sage Communications

52. The RFP mentions GMU Athletics’ desire to drive ticket sales and increase game attendance. By what percentage is GMU seeking to increase game attendance and over what period of time? Is the primary goal to increase both men’s and women’s basketball ticket sales?
   A. TBD in discussion with agency. 10% increase in attendance and revenue for men’s basketball is a minimum.

53. The RFP mentions a maximum annual spend for this contract of $216,000. Does this amount cover just labor hours, travel and eVA fees? Or is paid media, creative development fees and creative production also included in this $216,000 amount?
   A. Number is all inclusive

54. There are many different types of emerging technologies in the marketing field. Is there a particular type of emerging technology you would like us to discuss in Section B, subsection 3? Please advise.
   A. Cutting edge digital media. We are trying to market our product to 18-22 year old college students who are always on the forefront with what’s popular or what’s “hot.” We need to get in front of all digital trends including those that do not yet exist and be prepared to change directions quickly as needed. But also reaching our non-student demographic.

55. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada).
   A. Yes

56. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?
   A. Yes

57. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)
   A. Some of them.

58. Can we submit the proposals via email?
   A. No