The following questions were received by 4pm on September 28, 2020 in response to the Metropolitan State University Rebrand Project. Questions have been organized by topic and theme.

Q. (Question)
A. (Answer)

The most commonly asked questions were addressed.

Questions and Answers

RFP Process and Contract

Q. Whether companies from outside the USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada) / Would you be open to a Canadian agency to do this work for you or do you have a local preference? Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside the USA? (like from India or Canada) Is the proposing firm required to have a presence in Minnesota? Is there a preference for in-state vendors?

A. Location in Minnesota is not a requirement. The evaluation criteria include:
   Awareness and understanding of Metropolitan State University, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the competitive higher education environment in the Twin Cities region.

Q. Do you have a budget identified for this work? Is there a proposed budget for this RFP? If so, how are the funds being allocated? Can you share your marketing budget allocated for this effort? Can you provide your anticipated budget for this project (either in total or by phase) so we can provide a thorough and realistic proposal?

A. We are looking to the agency/firm/contractor to price out what they believe the project to be valued at for the work that will be done to achieve our desired deliverables. The process is competitive and we plan to choose a vendor who can give us the best ROI. No specific budget or budget cap has been defined.
Q. Would you be open to foregoing the printed/delivered submission considering all delivery guarantees have been removed by all the courier companies? Can we submit the proposals via email? Would you be open to foregoing the printed/delivered submission considering all delivery guarantees have been removed by all the courier companies? Can you confirm your submission process for this RFP? In light of current remote working circumstances will you accept PDF proposals in lieu of printed and shipped proposals?

A. Per the RFP, the requirements are:
   Sealed proposals must be received at the following address not later than 2:00 p.m. CT, **October 13, 2020**.
   METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY
   Attn: Margaret Soukup, Marketing, St. John’s Hall 272
   700 East Seventh St, St. Paul, MN 55106-5000
   The responder shall submit [3] hard copies of its RFP response, and electronic files on USB flash drive in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint format, or as a Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. Proposals are to be sealed in mailing envelopes or packages with the responder’s name and address clearly written on the outside. One copy of the proposal must be unbound and signed in blue or black ink by an authorized representative of the vendor. Proof of authority of the person signing must accompany the response. Proposals received after this date and time will be returned to the responder unopened.
   Fax and e-mail responses will not be considered.
   Proposals made in pencil will be rejected. Alterations in cost figures used to determine the lowest priced proposal will be rejected unless initialed in ink by the person responsible for or authorized to make decisions as to price quoted. The use of “white out” is considered an alteration.

Q. Will in-person meetings be required? If so, what is the frequency? Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

A. The RFP states that the firm/agency/contractor will provide presentations to various groups on campus, including one presentation given at all four main locations. However, we did state that Zoom could be an option if the pandemic does not allow for in-person presentations. Depending on timing and safety considerations, in-person presentations may be required.

Q. Is there an incumbent firm / vendor who will potentially be responding to this RFP as well?

A. We currently do not have a contract with a design/branding firm as we have our own in-house marketing/creative department. The successful firm will be selected from among the applicants who respond to the RFP. Agencies/vendors who have completed previous work for Metro are eligible to respond to this RFP.
Q. Do you have your own legal counsel that would vet naming or trademarks if that is needed? Is the awarded vendor responsible for securing trademark rights as well as the research for trademark availability?
   
   A. The Minnesota State system office legal counsel well vet the naming and trademark. The firm is responsible for researching trademark availability.

Q. What constitutes an acceptable proof of authority when providing an authorized signature?
   
   A. This will vary by vendor. If your company has an internal signature authorization process, please provide documentation. Otherwise, typically this is a CEO, President or Owner.

Q. You describe a Problem Resolution Process on page 10, section 4, subsection “Problem Resolution Process” Does our recommended process need to be included in the proposal? Or will it be defined by the Client, or it is part of the negotiation phase for the chosen vendor for award?
   
   A. Per the RFP, the process does not need to be included in the proposal. This will be defined in the contract negotiation phase of the project.

Q. On page 13, section 4, subsection “Reimbursements”, is travel from vendors office’s outside of MN to the client’s meetings or project activities within the State of MN considered a reimbursable expense if deemed necessary up to the amount set forth in “Commissioner’s Plan”?
   
   A. If necessary to complete the project, reimbursements and travel will be defined in the contract negotiation stage.

Q. On page 10, section 3, subsection “Affirmative Action Certificate of Compliance,” is a certificate of compliance required for businesses operation with less than 40 employees?
   
   A. Refer to RFP instructions.

Q. On page 13, section 4, subsection “Submission,” you state one copy of the proposal must be unbound. Can you define what you mean by ‘bound’ and ‘unbound’?
   
   A. Unbound means no physical document binding.

Q. Of the criteria identified, what weight is given to each criterion? How are you scoring RFP submissions?
   
   A. Per the RFP: The following criteria and assigned weights will facilitate proposal evaluation:
      
      Adequacy and strength of the proposal (30%)
      Cost, service and value to Metropolitan State University (30%)
      Evidence the vendor can carry out the project (15%)
      Targeted business inclusion, veteran, minority, women (up to 10%)
Relevant experience and references including prior experience with four-year universities or comparable postsecondary institutions (10%)
Awareness and understanding of Metropolitan State University, Minnesota State and the competitive higher education environment in the Twin Cities region (5%)

**Deliverables**

Q. On page 4, section 1, paragraph 1, you state that: “the selected firm will prepare a complete implementation plan along with supporting materials, documentation and creative collateral”

Does this statement refer to the requirements of the RFP response itself, or is it meant as a general reference to a group of deliverables required upon reward of the contract?

A. The quoted sentence above refers to the previous sentence:
   This proposal includes assessing and updating the primary branding elements including the University’s name, the development of a logo (or logos), graphics, color and font specifications, usage guidelines, graphic standards, positioning statements, and key messages. An implementation plan will be required for all subjects included this statement. The RFP deliverables are the anticipated requirements for the project. We welcome recommendations to provide the university with a comprehensive verbal and visual brand identity system.

Q. What, if any, are your current plans and timing for any website updates post identity approval? If so, would this project take place concurrent or after this rebranding effort? Are you looking for vendors to include web recommendations in their RFP responses? Is there a website update that’s underway? Or would this come following the brand project? You state, “The Brand Identity System should integrate seamlessly with a website graphic update”. Can you tell us more about the plan for this? Do you have internal resources to complete this work, or do you need support for this as well? When was the website last significantly updated? To what extent are you planning to update the website - reskin (update logo/colors, but no update to navigation or content), complete rebuild (update branding, navigation, content) or something in between?

A. A web project may take place after the rebranding effort however, we expect to update the look of the website’s homepage and main secondary pages to match the rebrand rollout. Per the RFP, The Brand Identity System should integrate seamlessly with a website graphic update. Recommendations through the RFP process are welcome, but not mandatory.

Q. Are there any specific pain points you are experiencing with the website that you are hoping branding will help solve?

A. No.

Q. How well is the website working for you within recruitment efforts?

A. More analysis is needed. A full website review is not part of this project.
Q. On page 9, section 3, subsection “Project Plan and Visual Identity Rollout”, the recommended collateral material includes “website homepage and two secondary pages.”
Are these secondary pages related to specific content development or general templates?
   A. Both

Q. Are these pages intended to be treated as visual templates within the existing website architecture/information hierarchy or something different?
   A. To be treated as visual templates within the existing website.

Q. Are these pages expected to be coded and if so, what are the technology requirements for these pages?
   A. We use Drupal, but coding will not be required. Design only.

Q. What vehicle types or specific make and models are in MSU’s fleet? For fleet graphics, can you share more about how many vehicle types you have and what they are?
   A. Our fleet includes a smart car, minivans, transit work vans, and a four-door sedan

Q. The “Brand Standards” PDF linked to in the proposal does not discuss explicitly MSU’s brand architecture. How does MSU define brand architecture?
   A. We do not have a defined brand architecture.

Q. Is “architecture” here meant more as “the discrete components of the visual identity system,” or rather the sub brand, i.e. colleges, that constitute the MSU brand hierarchy?
   A. Yes. Sub-brand with colleges throughout, as well as the Foundation.

If the latter, can MSU provide any additional documents that outline its existing brand architecture?
   A. No.

Q. Do any style rules exist that form the expression of one college or department from another?
   A. No.

Q. Does any additional brand compliance documentation exist beyond the co-branding slides in the ‘Brand Standards’ guide link provided?
   A. As noted in the RFP, we must comply to the Minnesota State brand standards.
Q. On page 8, section 3, subsection “Project Plan and Visual Identity Rollout”, you request a phased, prioritized approach with difference options regarding price. What are the specific aspects or phases of delivery for which you hope to see options? i.e., research, visual identity systems, collateral development, training/rollout, etc.?

A. We look to the firm to make recommendations. Specific elements of the visual identity rollout, attached priorities, and timelines need to be informed by the proposed design and may vary by vendor. We would like to see a prioritization by distinct elements in the rollout plan. Timing will be determined by the work plan of the selected firm. Actual dates will be specified during the contract phase.

Q. Do you have benchmark dates inside the 12-month timeframe for the work being performed?

A. Timing will be determined by the work plan of the selected firm. Actual dates will be specified during the contract phase.

Q. Have any survey(s) been conducted among local employers, students, potential students, regarding the institution’s reputation?

A. No. Research will be completed as part of this project.

Q. You state, “The University is not well known in the region”. What do you attribute this to? Do you have research that supports this statement? You state, “The University does not have a strong reputation in the employment market”. Tell us more. How would you describe the University’s reputation in the employment market?

A. We do not have research to back this up. Only anecdotal information from students, faculty and staff. We’ve had prospective students tell us they thought we were a community college.

Q. The RFP mentions a new “naming structure” and a desire to “update existing or develop a new name.” Is Metropolitan State considering a “true” name change in the sense of an entirely new name or a revised approach to the University’s current name today? Why are you considering a name change for the University? Is there research conducted that supports the need, some instigating factor, or just wanting to keep all options on the table? What is the current sentiment around this with internal stakeholders (strongly in favor, just considering as an option, strongly opposed)? Is there research that has led to the decision to re-create the brand and re-name their university?

A. We hope to study the usage of the University’s name. If necessary, a revised approach to naming conventions will be considered. We do not anticipate an official name change, however we would like it included in the study. Numerous variations of the name are used regularly: Metro, Metro State, Metro State University, Metropolitan State University, etc. We hope to define the way the name should be used. If we were to change the name, per the Minnesota State Board Policy the name would need to start with “Minnesota State University.” Metropolitan State University is subject to all state policies
and guidelines set by the State Board of Trustees and the Chancellor of the Minnesota State System.

Q. Is there existing market research available? If not, are there financial resources available for market research? Can you share any existing research on market attitudes and perceptions toward Metropolitan State University? Have you conducted research in the past? If so, will you share the findings with the awarded vendor? Have you done any previous brand research? If yes, will you be able to share it?

A. We do have previous research, but it is several years old. Resources for marketing research are included in the overall branding project budget. Firms responding to the RFP are expected to recommend audience-centric research. Recommendations may include research partnership options as deemed appropriate. We will share anything we have available with the contracted firm. We will also have some internal resources available to help with research.

Q. The RFP mentions a need for “research” (evaluations of current communication, audiences, and trademark research) and a need for re-branding, but we’re not clear if you want true audience research to help define the audiences, influences, and brand opportunities. Can you clarify what research (qualitative, quantitative, other) you expect, and then what research you will and won’t consider beyond that?

A. We are looking for the agency to recommend what types of research would help us to achieve our objective and deliverables.

Q. Will we have access to resources such as brand studies, audience research, enrollment data, personas, etc.? If so, can you describe what is available?

A. The contracted firm will have access to any resources we have available. In 2019, the University completed a Situation Analysis as part of our Strategic Enrollment Management Planning Project. We also have numerous data that can be accessed through Metro’s Power BI.

Q. Can you expand on the expectation for testing the brand platform? Do you see this for the brand strategy/positioning or the brand identity/elements, or both?

A. The selected firm is expected to develop and present positioning options, design concepts, and messaging based on audit and research results. Firms are to recommend and execute a protocol for testing these options with key stakeholders.

Q. Are you looking for digital marketing as part of this effort? If so, can you provide further direction and/or clarification on your target markets, goals, and anticipated media spend?

A. Per the RFP:
Design of communications collateral materials including: Social media graphics
Q. In the design of communications collateral materials deliverables section, are these designs all expected as final files or as designed examples within the brand guidelines only, or both?
   A. Both.

Q. Signage is listed. Can you provide more specific information? Is this external monument signage? Interior building wayfinding signage? Both? More?
   A. Both. Specifics can be defined in negotiation process.

Q. You list a tagline in deliverables. Why is this important to you (as opposed to a positioning statement)? Is there a specific purpose you want this to fulfill?
   A. This proposal includes assessing and updating the primary branding elements including the University’s name, the development of a logo (or logos), graphics, color and font specifications, usage guidelines, graphic standards, positioning statements, and key messages.

Q. Regarding the Project Plan and Visual Identity Rollout item, “Phased, prioritized approach with different options regarding price.” Can you clarify or expand upon what options would be required from the winning bidder?
   A. All options the winning bidder puts forward will be negotiated in the contract phase.

**Project Stakeholders**

1. Q. Who are the key MSU decision makers and stakeholders for this project? What are their roles with regard to this project? Are there any additional stakeholder groups not listed as decision makers but who are seen as critical to project success, or would need to be kept updated on the project prior to rollout? Will the key stakeholders be involved in the branding process, and if so, how accessible will they be during strategic phases of work for the brand? Will there be a brand advisory group that we are working with on a consistent basis? If so, can you share how many people are involved and what their titles are? If not, who would we be working with on this project? Can you describe your approval process (for the actual rebranding work) and who will be involved? For example, does it start with approval from a brand advisory group, then presented to leadership for approval, then to legal? Approximately how many and what kind of decision-makers/stakeholders could we anticipate being involved throughout the project? Page 9 references a steering committee – is this group responsible for oversight and facilitation of the process with the selected vendor? If so, what roles are represented on this committee?

   A. The project has a Steering Group including Audrey Bergengren, VP of Marketing, Communications and Recruitment – Chair; Rita Dibble, VP of Advancement – Chair; Diane DeRosier, Creative Services Director; and, Kristine Hansen, Alumni Director. The purpose of this group is to manage the project and bring recommendations
forward to the President’s Executive Council.

The University Strategic Integrated Marketing Council will serve as the University’s Advisory Group for the implementation of the Institutional Brand Project, but is not a decision-making group.

Ultimately the President will make decisions in collaboration with the Vice President of Marketing, Communications and Recruitment. We have many stakeholder groups including the President’s Executive Council, Cabinet, faculty and staff, students, union groups, Minnesota State, etc.

Q. Will there be a single point of contact?
   A. The VP of Marketing, Communications and Recruitment will be the primary contact. Additional team members may be added as necessary as the project develops.

Q. In addition to the Board of Trustees, is the President’s Executive Council seen as a primary and separate stakeholder group?
   A. These are separate stakeholder groups.

Q. What is the size of each stakeholder group respectively?
   A. The president’s executive council can be found here: https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/leadership

   • Strategic Integrated Marketing Council has 17 members, including the Brand Steering Group
   • We serve approximately 10,000 students
   • We employ approximately 900 faculty and staff
   • We have nearly 40,000 alumni

Q. Do these groups currently intersect or interact?
   A. Yes. These groups interact in numerous ways.

Q. If so, how often or regularly do these stakeholder groups interact?
   A. The groups interact regularly. The university has a shared governance system made up of cross functional teams. Decisions at the university follow the RACI system of deliberation and communication.

Q. Or will this process of collaboration need to be defined and implemented for the purpose of this project?
   A. The process of collaboration will need to be defined as we implement the rebrand project. Project implementation will need functional definitions, which will have to include the collaborative structure currently in place.
Q. On page 9, section 3, subsection “Detailed reports and compelling presentations to University leadership groups….” Do you see these presentations as part of the RFP response and/or oral presentations, or is the intent that this information is part of a rollout/implementation/launch phase of the project?

A. Presentations will be required as part of the RFP process for the finalists. The firm/agency selected, will also be required to give numerous presentations throughout the project.

Q. How would you prioritize your key audiences?

A. Prospective Students
   Current Students
   Faculty/Staff
   Alumni/Donors/Local Employers
   Grant Makers
   Government Leaders/Policy Setters
   Former Faculty
   Media
   Regional Employers
   Multinational Employers

Q. What kind of access will we have to the various players involved in the branding process? Boards and Committees?
   Faculty and Staff?
   Students?
   Government Officials?
   Employers?
   Alumni/Donors/Grant Makers?

A. Access will be determined in the negotiation phase of the contract. Metro State will provide the necessary access or gather information as needed. Firms responding to the RFP are expected to present a recommended program of analysis and research that addresses the identified audiences in the RFP. Recommendations may include suggested alternative approaches for each audience as appropriate. Metro State will work with the selected firm on approaches for reaching key audiences.

Misc. Questions

Q. How do you define “most affordable?”

A. Excellent education students can afford. The lowest university undergraduate tuition in Minnesota.

Q. Least expensive “sticker price?”
A. Yes.

Q. Best aid packages
   A. No.

Q. Who do you consider as your primary competitors? Who are your secondary competitors? Who is your competition and how would you rank them from most significant competitor to least significant competitor? Which peer/competitive schools do you most commonly compete with for students? Regarding your “competition” and other area choices that your students have, which Minnesota State, University of Minnesota, or Wisconsin schools do your students consider attending?
   A. Private colleges and universities in Twin Cities
      University of Minnesota main campus
      Private colleges and universities in-state
      Online colleges and universities
      For-profit institutions
      Other institutions within the Minnesota State system
      University of Minnesota outstate institutions
      Private colleges and universities out-of-state

Q. Are there any organizations or school brands in particular that you admire? If so, why? Are there any organization or school brands in particular that you admire? If so, why?
   A. Firms responding to the RFP are expected to include evidence of the benefits resulting from their branding work for other clients, preferably showing a variety of recommended positioning strategies.

Q. What would you say are the greatest barriers to your awareness and recognition in the region?
   A. We’re hoping this project will help to define this. However, unlike many traditional universities, we do not provide housing or actively recruit in high schools. We do not have many competitive extracurricular activities or sport teams like other colleges and universities that often builds in recognition and awareness.

Q. Who are the top ten employers of Metropolitan State University graduates?
   A. Wells Fargo, US Bank, 3M, Alina, Target, Medtronic, Fairview Health, United Health Group, Health Partners, Best Buy

Q. Which community colleges are your top feeder schools?
   A. Century College, Minneapolis College, Normandale, Saint Paul College

Q. What have historically been the top 10 programs by enrollment?
   1. Individualized Studies
2. Psychology  
3. MANE Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
4. Business Administration  
5. Accounting  
6. Human Services  
7. Computer Science  
8. Social Work  
9. Alcohol and Drug Counseling  
10. Criminal Justice

Q. What are the 5 newest programs?  
   RN-BSN online, MS/MA in Individualized Studies, Studio Arts, MS Cyber Security, Chemistry/Biology BS,

Q. Are there specific growth areas that have been identified at this point?  
A. IT, Cybersecurity, Sciences, Data Analytics, Healthcare, Business

Q. Why does Metropolitan State feel this rebranding is needed at this time? What is your timeline for completion of this work? Are there any other initiatives, projects or deadlines that are dependent on completion of this work that we should take into account when developing our proposed schedule? Why are you looking to rebrand at this time? Is there a particular factor that made this a strategic priority at this time?

A. Our rebranding initiative seeks to align us better within the current higher education marketplace and better define our distinctive identity. We are also approaching the semi-centennial year of our founding. Metropolitan State University would like to rollout the new brand at the end of its 50th anniversary in spring of 2022. The current logo/mark does not mirror the university’s mission and goals. Equity, inclusion, diversity, anti-racism and social mobility are at the center of all we do and this must be brought into the brand more intentionally. The mark as it stands now, is a building feature that is located on Metro State’s Saint Paul main campus. Metro has three other main locations around the Twin Cities. For years, a tag line of education without walls was used, and a building does not visually project its essence. Metro State is looking for something updated, modern, but also very classic and timeless – in addition to being memorable. The current logo is difficult to use in many applications, which results in dropping it all together. Metro State’s reputation in the Twin Cities is not nearly what it should be for its size, program offerings, and affordable price. We will use the new brand as a launch of a campaign Twin Cities wide, and beyond. The current visual and verbal identify does not showcase Metro State’s excellence and strong academic programs. In addition, rebranding will support Metro State’s need to unify the look, feel and language around the university, internally, various locations and the website.
Q. Do you have any specifics regarding your stated goal of improving enrollment and retention?
A. We have specific goals for enrollment in our Strategic Enrollment Plan and Strategic Plan. The Strategic plan can be found here: https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning

Q. How will you measure success of this re-branding?
A.  
- Measurable increase in name recognition, locally and regionally
- Increased affiliation with desired partners
- Increased awareness among prospective students, and donors; measured by increased enrollment and number of donors
- Greater affinity among alumni and supporters; measured by an increase in the affinity score
- Increased participation in university led initiatives by corporate partners and regional employers
- Measurable increase in the placement/employment metrics of Metro State graduates

We also will expect the firm will help us to define measurable goals based off of their experience.

Q. The list of expectations from this work includes improved enrollment, retention, fund-raising, and multi-audience awareness. At the same time, most of the requested deliverables relate to visual identity systems and corresponding rules with a list of pre-determined design needs. Can you clarify whether you are seeking a full creative campaign of depth, breadth, detailed storytelling, and overall substance or more of a set of tactical design improvements for the University’s current brand?
A. Given the distinct identity of the institution, we want to begin with a refresh of the visual identity systems to better depict our mission, cause and purpose. We expect the successful project to be able to seamlessly incorporate the stories and examples that best illustrate the Metro State experience. We reserve the option to extend the project to include a full creative campaign.

Q. How are enrollment trends influencing your priorities?
A. We just completed the University’s first Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that includes 12 focused strategies.

Q. Will you continue to prioritize the adult-learner audience?
A. Yes.
Q. You state, “The University does not recruit traditionally aged high school graduates because of its partnerships with the two-year community colleges.” Will this continue to be the strategy moving forward, or are you looking to increase recruitment of traditionally aged high school graduates?

A. While we do have some traditional age students, our focus is on adult learners. This will remain a focus. We partner with local community college partners who recruit high school students. We focus on transfer from those institutions.

Q. The scale and complexity of original qualitative or quantitative research can impact costs dramatically. Can you provide additional context for the depth of insight you’re hoping to achieve? For example, are we seeking inputs from “current and prospective students, in general” or would you like to sub-segment the audiences? The same would be true for external stakeholders (employers, donors, alumni, etc.). How broadly should we be thinking about the considered sets?

A. We are looking to the firm/agency to provide recommendations.

Q. Should items listed under "design of communications collateral materials" on page 9 of the RFP be developed to be production-ready assets that would be ready for implementation?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any specific implementation milestones that should be accounted for in our proposed timeline?

A. TBD

Q. Is a writing style guide needed as part of the project?

A. Yes.

Q. Does the University have or offer extra-curricular activities that would require a separate and distinct logo?

A. No.

Q. Can you share samples of any of your marketing materials (i.e. brochures, digital ads, direct mail, etc.)

A. Yes. Here are examples of marketing collateral.

Q. How has COVID-19 impacted Metropolitan State in regards to online/offline, enrollment, programs, etc.?

A. Summer enrollment was up 6%, fall enrollment was down 3%. For a decade, the demand for online courses has increased at Metro each year. Pre-pandemic, our course schedule was at about 30 percent online courses. For Fall semester, to keep everyone safe, we’ve moved a significant number of courses completely online.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2020 Course Type</th>
<th>Number of Sections</th>
<th>Percent of Total Offerings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully Online-- Synchronous or Asynchronous</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Online</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid/Blended</td>
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<td>8.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-person</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Designed Independent Studies (online or mostly online)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Designed Independent Studies, Individualized Internships, Individualized Independent Studies, Correspondence Independent Studies</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What are the University’s top 3 strategic objectives currently?
A. The Strategic plan can be found here:
   [https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning](https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning)

Q. What will most hold you back from achieving those objectives?
A. Lack of resources, pandemic, enrollment decline, state allocations

Q. Has enrollment been trending up, down or flat in the last three years? Is the rebrand tied to enrollment declines in line with the Higher Ed mega-trend decline projected as a result of economic recession?
A. We’ve seen slight enrollment declines. The project is to strengthen enrollment and build Metro State’s reputation.

Q. What are your growth goals? Are there specific KPIs you will be tracking as you pursue those goals? Are there specific enrollment, retention and/or philanthropic goals you can share?
A. Goals and KPIs are defined in the strategic plan.
   [https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning](https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning)
Q. As an institution, what are your biggest growth opportunities? To the extent that can be shared, what strategic models/initiatives has Metropolitan State University been employing to help differentiate itself in today’s competitive higher education market? Has MSU adopted academic laddering as an option for students, placed a higher emphasis on transfers in/out, etc.?
   A. Employer cohorts, community college transfer, retention, adult learner market

Q. What are the top 3-4 KPIs you are looking for the branding work to impact? In other words, how will you measure success of the branding work once complete?
   A. Recommendations should include metrics/KPIs based on the firm’s branding experience.

Q. We would typically ask what is trending up/down in your category, and what is the most significant industry trend you’re concerned with, however, given the number of recent events that have taken place in 2020 from the pandemic to the killing of George Floyd to name only two, we’d instead like to ask- of all the recent trends impacting higher education, what most keeps you up at night?
   A. Funding, race and social justice issues, making excellent higher education options accessible for all people to improve our communities

Q. How effective do you think your current brand is at differentiating Metro State and communicating your unique value propositions?
   A. Needs improvement.

Q. How effective do you think your marketing is at differentiating your brand? At converting prospective students? At converting prospective donors?
   A. Needs improvement.

Q. Tell us more about “the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of Metro students and alumni”.
   A. The cornerstone of Metro State has been its "First College", Individualized Studies programs, which allow students to get credit for what they already know. Students are able to design their own approach to attaining their degree. Given that opportunity, many of our degree programs allow for students to achieve their goals of furthering their education and to go farther than most on their career’s journey. We have a number of alumni business owners, executives, and entrepreneurs who are innovative and mindful.

Q. What is the geographic makeup of your student body? Regarding student demographics, can you share data indicating, generally, where Metropolitan State students typically live?
   A. Primarily Twin Cities Metro area.
Q. How consistent is adherence to current brand standards throughout the University? Tell us more about brand application—are most marketing materials created by the marketing department, or does each University department create their own materials?

A. The brand standards are not used widely across the university. We have made great strides in getting departments and colleges to adhere and filter items through the marketing department, but still remain inconsistent. This will be a huge part of the implementation plan.

Q. Metro State defines a commitment with anti-racism. Does the University also have a commitment to equity and inclusion? If so, could you share that statement?

A. Yes. https://www.metrostate.edu/about/mission

The Strategic plan can be found here: https://www.metrostate.edu/about/president/strategic-planning

Q. How do you envision incorporating anti-racism, equity and inclusion into the branding process?

A. Anti-racism, equity and inclusion must be at the core of the work we do. Think of it as the ground and air, everything else must be built on it and in it, we can’t live without it. We will engage individuals and groups from across the entire Metro State community and all stakeholder groups.

Q. What internal work has been done to increase cultural competence for the faculty, staff, senior leadership, etc.? For example, have you implemented training in the areas of multicultural competence, unconscious bias, leading in multicultural environments, and/or used tools such as the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory)? If so, would key stakeholders leading these efforts at Metro State be a part of the branding process?

A. Yes. We have an equity, inclusion and affirmative action plan that includes training at the university and system level. Yes. These stakeholders will be part of the process.

Q. How have recent events in the Twin Cities and around the nation related to racial and social justice changed or influenced your mission, vision and/or brand? Will exploring this more fully be a part of this assignment, or is there research and an informed perspective already in progress/completed that can be shared as part of the strategic process?

A. We have reaffirmed our commitment to these efforts, and continuously increase our focus and efforts to eliminate racism and promote social justice. We will be more fully exploring this as part of this project.
Q. Have you worked with agencies in the past? If so, where have your partners most underperformed and what have you most appreciated about past partners?
   A. The university has worked with agencies in the past. It is critical that an agency’s values align with Metro State’s values.

Q. What types of digital demand-generation activities has/is Metropolitan State using to bolster recruitment?
   A. PPC and email marketing are the two major activities we currently engage in. SEO and content marketing are two areas that are used, but are areas of improvement that we want to focus on.

Q. Is your budget tied to the number of satellite schools within the system that participate in this RFP?
   A. No other satellite schools within the system will participate in the RFP. This is for Metropolitan State University only.