1. **Q:** The submission deadline is March 22, 2021. Since the timelines are a bit stringent, would you please allow for email submission?  
**A:** Yes, and an addendum was added to the RFP on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, to allow vendors to submit proposals via email only. The same deadline for receiving final proposals still applies.

2. **Q:** Your RFP requirements state you are considering WordPress as the CMS for the upcoming redesign. Are those the only submissions you will be accepting/reviewing?  
**A:** Through our discovery and design project phases, WordPress was the strong recommendation for a CMS solution to meet our specific needs, however, we will review and consider all proposals.

3. **Q:** What is driving the aggressive timeline? In our experience, a typical college/university website redesign project requires approximately 9-12 months. Is there a specific reason a roughly 5-month timeframe has been determined? Is there room for negotiation on the delivery/launch date?  
**A:** We feel confident that a development phase can be completed within the timeframe considering a full project discovery was already completed during project phase 1 and a complete design system and documentation was completed during project phase 2. This includes a comprehensive Data Modeling documentation to help inform the dev team on how to build the website in a CMS, Sketch design file containing all designed pages, elements, components, and modules, Style Guide design elements outlined in the InVision prototypes (desktop and mobile), and a Style Guide documented in Zeplin. The agency will be bidding strictly on development and CMS integration using the previous phases of the project (discovery and design) as the blueprint for the build. See RFP addendum from Wednesday, March 17 for more details.

4. **Q:** Please confirm the approximate number of pages of content on the current .edu site (including any subdomains and/or microsites).  
**A:** We will be handling all content migration.
5. Q: Given that the college is moving to a CMS, what is the desired number of pages for the new site? Is there any expectation that content from any current pages will be carried over to the new site or will all content be new? Note that any existing pages that are considered salvageable will require reformatting to the new template structure and likely optimization.
   A: Several existing and new marketing/admissions critical web pages were reformatted and new content developed for during project phase 2. An internal team is currently working with individual departments with mapping pages and categorizing them for a rewrite, deletion, archive, or merge. Our goal is to condense down the number of pages and rewrite/reformat pages for migration to the new website.

6. Q: Content development is a critically important, and time-consuming, component of a website design. Approximately how many pages of new content will the selected agency be expected to create?
   A: We are not requiring the select vendor to create new content. An internal team is currently auditing the existing website and will salvage or rewrite content for pages that will migrate to the CMS. Guidance for content migration may be required.

7. Q: What is the estimated/allocated budget (or alternatively, range or not-to-exceed amount) for the entire comprehensive initiative? This is particularly important for vendors to know when cost represents 30% of the evaluation criteria.
   A: We want a proposal that meets our needs and not a proposal that is written to a budget. Please respond accordingly.

8. Q: Do you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency to do this work for you as we have for other clients in the US?
   A: Agencies outside of the United States may submit a proposal.

9. Q: For the multilingual support, would you need it to be through a tool like Google Translate or would you be translating the site content and requiring language-based versions of the site?
   A: We are interested in machine translation. The functionality should be possible across all pages.

10. Q: Would your new hosting provider for production and staging environments?
    A: Our goal is to utilize the state system servers for hosting. In our initial discussions this would include production and staging environments. We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.
11. Q: For the Web Governance Policy and possible Framework, would you like us to build that for you and implement on the CMS or ..?
   A: Yes, we are expecting guidance and support for this process and also implementation onto the CMS. We do not have any type of governance structure currently. There is no sustainable foundation for what or how things happen on the website. We are looking for a vendor to assist the campus in creating a structure for sustainable governance moving forward.

12. Q: For the integrations, could you list out all the applications with their version numbers and if each have a well defined API that has an endpoint to be integrated with?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

13. Q: The designs to be provided, are they to be for all the major cut points for the various devices, or would we be provided with a desktop version along that we would need to extrapolate for smaller form factor devices?
   A: Yes, the already completed design system will provide both desktop and mobile versions and detailed documentation on development and CMS integration.

14. Q: For the custom code and databases, could you once again identify what those are built on and what level of integration would be required?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

15. Q: For Northland Today could you identify all the sources the information needs to pull in and in what form would they be available (RSS, XML, etc.)?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

16. Q: Could you identify how much content would need to be migrated from the old to the new?
   A: We will be handling content migration.

17. Q: As all delivery guarantees have been lifted by the various courier companies, we are requesting a digital (email or upload) submission only.
   A: Yes, and an addendum was added to the RFP on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, to allow quotes via email only. The same deadline for receiving final bids still applies.

18. Q: How many stakeholders need to provide direction or approval/sign-off?
   A: The selected vendor will be working primarily with a small team from the marketing and college/state office IT teams on direction and stage approvals. The vendor will need to deliver a final presentation to the administration for final approval.
19. Q: WordPress is the recommended CMS platform per the RFP. What considerations were used for this selection? What other platforms were reviewed?  
A: Our evaluation was based on what CMS would meet our specific needs. We audited the Minnesota state system of colleges and found that WordPress was the most widely used/supported CMS. We had conversations with other college website teams to weigh the pros and cons of CMS solutions used in the state system.

20. Q: One of the goals of the site is to redevelop the site into a marketing hub to attract prospective students. Since the selected development vendor for this phase had no input in the design or UX phase, will they be held accountable for this?  
A: No, our expectation for this phase of the project is for the development, UX, and functionality of the new website to match the high-end level of the design system developed in phase 2.

21. Q: To add on to #3, the RFP states “The Vendor is expected to test the effectiveness of the site post-launch by repeating the usability testing conducted in Analysis to confirm the success of the design.” Wouldn’t it make more sense for the design vendor to repeat the usability testing versus the development vendor?  
A: Our thought here is to confirm the success of functionality and UX intent provided by the visual designs. Additionally, to identify any usability scenarios not captured in the design phase.

22. Q: Is information architecture part of this phase or was it completed in Phase II? If it wasn’t completed as part of Phase II, was any user research done during the design phase or previously? If so, can you provide more information on what has been done?  
A: Yes, significant work was completed with IA and master navigation during project phase 2. We are now working on completing the entire IA of the website during our internal audit.

23. Q: Can you confirm that a sitemap was not completed as part of Phase II and is a deliverable of this phase?  
A: Yes, a sitemap was created for high-impact pages. We will be working internally on content creation and additional sitemap additions.

24. Q: What type of data modeling was done?  
A: Data modeling documentation was added to the RFP in the addendum posted Wednesday, March 17, 2021. This primarily focuses on content modeling and how it will integrate with WordPress/CMS. Data modeling in the form of data connections will be evaluated and determined with the selected vendor.
25. Q: Requiring the site to support IE 11 while also being cutting edge are a bit on opposing sides. Which one is the priority?
A: Cutting edge is the priority with support for the latest browser versions of Chrome, Edge, Android, Safari. IE 11 (2% of our traffic) support is graceful degradation without compromising the intended experience outlined in Phase II of design and UX.

26. Q: Your RFP has some significant requirements so we’re wondering if you can help shape a direction for us based on your comfort level for the budget. Does it fall in the lower bucket ($100,000 or less), medium bucket ($100,000-$150,000) or large bucket ($150,000+)?
A: We want a proposal that meets our needs and not a proposal that is written to a budget. Please respond accordingly.

27. Q: Will the agency used for the design phase also be bidding on the development phase?
A: We expect them to respond to this phase.

28. Q: Does the ongoing SEO optimization and Open Graph need to be included in the web development budget? If so, we will need requirements around what type of optimization is required.
A: We’re looking for the development vendor to help accommodate with SEO best practices integrated into the CMS, but are not requesting an SEO content optimization strategy.

29. Q: Can anything be shared to reflect the design direction before vendors provide bids?
A: Yes, the new data-modeling in the form of content modeling in the CMS, styleguide, annotations on interactions and functionality, and the entire design library of templates, components, utilities for vendors to scope the work off of is available for review in the new RFP addendum posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

30. Q: Is the identified workflows in the RFP what you are seeking for website governance or the Web Policy? If not, can you provide more information about what you are seeking?
A: See question #11.

31. Q: The last bullet on page 9 states there are integrations on the current site that must be considered as part of the proposed effort. A list is included but not limited to just this list. For us, that’s like saying you’d like to buy a fleet of cars but not sure how many, the size, features, style, etc. and without knowing what
you plan to do with each vehicle. We could estimate costs for an economy car when you really need a 4x4 truck - huge cost difference. Can you either provide more definition for each integration or an option on how we can estimate this for you? An example of this would be: What specific information is to be captured and passed to Oracle CRM and does any of the information need to flow bi-directional?

A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

32. Q: RFP states you are seeking testing on specific devices. Will you be supplying these devices for the vendor to test with?
A: The expectation is that the vendor should be able to test on physical devices. The vendor should already have access to them.

33. Q: The RFP is requesting a level of optimization that is not standard for most web development projects (CDN, caching, minifying, lazy load). Does this need to be included in our estimate or can this be done once the requirements are more clearly defined?
A: This can be done once we finalize requirements with the selected vendor.

34. Q: In working with vendors in the past, what have you liked best/ worst?
A: Developing a strong rapport and communication cadence with a vendor is extremely important for our very small team. Also, availability, flexibility, and timeliness for receiving responses to questions and getting updates. Our best work is a collaborative process. The vendor should operate as a team with the campus and not in a creative silo. A strong understanding of our new college brand system has also been extremely beneficial.

35. Q: What does a successful outcome of working with a vendor look like to you?
A: The site is launched on-time, on-budget, and the campus stakeholders are satisfied with the outcome. A website fully integrated into a new CMS and hosting platform that functions and operates at the same high level as the design system developed in project phase 2.

36. Q: Will the SEO, maintenance of CMS a multi-year requirement or only for the first year?
A: For SEO we’re looking for best practices implementation into the CMS. Maintenance of the CMS can be bid based on your recommendation and finalized during contract negotiations.

37. Q: Infrastructure management and CMS will vary widely on actual traffic and needs. Please provide additional information on actual website traffic. Total Current visitors/traffic per month and per year.
A: 17K Visits/month, 205k Pageviews/month, 202K Visit/year, 2.5M Pageviews/year

38. Q: Do you already have photos/videos you’d like to be used on the pages/app? Or would you like us to provide them?  
A: Northland will provide all required media assets for development.

39. Q: Are there any specific security requirements?  
A: HTTPS encryption and any other security measures we will look to finalize those technical requirements with the selected vendor.

40. Q: Are you looking for any specific third-party plugins for error checking, spellings, broken links, and accessibility?  
A: Yes, we are currently exploring tools to meet these needs. We would welcome recommendations from the selected vendor on tools and plugins.

41. Q: Are you looking for developing any workflows for tracking of all content changes and editor activities?  
A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

42. Q: Are you looking for any Web Ops platform to move the sites from development instance to production instance?  
A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

43. Q: Are you looking for an internet-based training or on-premises training in the client location?  
A: Internet-based training.

44. Q: Are you looking for any online course catalog with an application for a course to enroll with payment features?  
A: Yes, we are requiring an online course schedule system to display courses similar to our current dynamic class schedule system. No, we are not requiring a payment feature.

45. Q: Do you have any inputs on the overall site navigation of the website? Yes, a master site navigation system was developed in project phase 2.
A: Yes, designs and documentation of the new navigation system are available for review in the new RFP addendum posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

46. Q: Please provide information on any automated workflows required as part of CMS.
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

47. Q: Will the content in the CMS be monitored by any external agencies?
   A: No, but guidance and recommendations for content migration will be expected.

48. Q: What are the key features you anticipate in the proposed complementary marketing engagement tool? Since such tool requirements are based on the volume of the data being considered, can you give us an estimated amount of form fills and email sends expected in a month?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

49. Q: Is NCTC open to select a 3rd party engagement tool to be integrated into the CMS system?
   A: Potentially, we would want to discuss what the engagement tool is meant to accomplish and what is the impact on effort and cost.

50. Q: For SEO, what are the key target/focus markets? Is the current focus only on the Minnesota region?
   A: A majority of our site traffic comes from the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

51. Q: What is the extent of content personalization required? Are you keen on having landing pages customized based on visitor behavior at an additional cost?
   A: No, the design is being built to support multiple personas at this time.

52. Q: Does the university expect CMS only for registered students or for prospective students also?
   A: Only college employees will be given access to update the site via the CMS. No front-facing accounts will be created for users of the site. Only users that can author, edit, and publish content from the CMS.
53. Q: Do you have IT team to manage the integrations with existing CMS and other third-party systems?
   A: Yes, with potential third-party systems non-CMS related.

54. Q: Do you have a simplified functional flow diagram of the existing systems?
   A: We currently do not have a functional flow diagram of the existing system. The existing system is going to be reimagined with a new CMS and website experience. This will require remapping flows and integrations to accomplish our desired needs.

55. Q: The current website is hosted in any CMS platform or static HTML web pages?
   A: A mix of static and dynamic pages developed and managed through Dreamweaver.

56. Q: Can you share the design files to view the overall layout of the website? It will help to understand the complexities of the design and templates.
   A: Yes, the new design system and documentation are available for review in the new RFP addendum posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

57. Q: Could you please provide a rough count of design templates, modules, and components/widgets?
   A: Yes, the new design system and documentation are available for review in the new RFP addendum posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

58. Q: Help us to understand more on the integration with the list of sites such as Oracle CRM, Class scheduling system, Library database, Emergency alerts, and notifications. Can you help us with data integration points for each of the systems?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor. Our goal is to have the new CMS manage as much of the data as possible (alerts, notifications) and then connect to services that currently are not scoped to rebuild (Oracle CRM, Library databases).

59. Q: Any external agency will do the WCAG 2.0 AA standard for accessibility evaluation?
   A: Currently no, but we look for a vendor to help us adhere to AA compliance.
60. Q: Hope the graphical assets required for the development of the website should be provided by Northland?
   A: Yes, graphical, photography, video, and other media assets will be provided by Northland.

61. Q: Northland will provide the complete visual designs/in vision required for the website or just a few templates designs?
   A: Yes, a full design system and documentation were developed and completed in project phase 2. This work was completed in February 2021.

62. Q: Does the website have any integration with the payment gateway? RFP talks about fundraising.
   A: No, we have no plans for integration of payment gateway during this project phase.

63. Q: Who is responsible for providing the integration APIs for the website from third-party applications?
   A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

64. Q: Will the design agency be involved at all in the process beyond the completion of the design files or will all communication/direction be handled through the NCTC marketing department?
   A: We don’t expect involvement during phase 3 development unless it is required for the success of the project. All communication/direction will be handled through the Northland marketing team.

65. Q: How many stakeholders do you envision being involved in this project beyond the NCTC marketing team?
   A: The Northland and State Office IT teams and members of the President's Council.

66. Q: Will the NCTC team have any web developers contributing to the project outside of the selected vendor?
   A: No, Northland does not have a web developer on staff.
67. Q: Can you share at this time the newly launched Northland Brand details and assets?
A: Yes, the new data-modeling in the form of content modeling in the CMS, styleguide, annotations on interactions and functionality, and the entire design library of templates, components, utilities for vendors to scope the work off of is available for review in the new RFP addendum posted on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

68. Q: Have there been any user studies on what the user base would like to see from the new site?
A: Yes. A full project discovery was completed during phase 1 which includes surveys, interviews of various stakeholder groups. That content can be made available after the RFP is awarded.

69. Q: How much technical oversight will there be in place and are there any coding standards in place that should be accounted for?
A: We will look to finalize these technical requirements with the selected vendor.

70. Q: In the RFP it states that WordPress CMS was chosen based on price, features and stakeholder conversations. Can you please share which features were a big component to why WordPress was chosen?
A: Our evaluation was based on what CMS would meet our specific needs. We audited the Minnesota state system of colleges and found that WordPress was the most widely used/supported CMS. We had conversations with other college website teams to weigh the pros and cons of CMS solutions used in the state system.