

RFP Questions and Answers

Software and Tooling Questions

1. What technologies is your current site using? | What is the current CMS in use, and do you have a preference towards any CMS? | Do you have a preference for the CMS platform (e.g., open-source, proprietary)? | Are you interested in a WordPress platform? | What is your current CMS? | Do you have a desire to stay on your current CMS? | Are you looking for a CMS recommendation in the RFP response? | Are there any CMS platforms that you do not prefer? | What is your current CMS? Do you have a preference for the new CMS to be implemented? | Is it the intention of UNA to evaluate multiple Content Management Systems? | We have experience in multiple CMS platforms, but primarily work in Drupal which is a standard platform used through the higher education sector. Is UNA open to Drupal, or should we build an evaluation and selection process that includes demos of multiple platforms into our approach and timeline? | Do you have any CMS preferences? What is your current CMS, and are you open to transitioning to a new open-source CMS? | Is there a preferred CSS framework, or is the CSS selection entirely open?

Answer: Our current site is built with Cascade CMS and Bootstrap. We are not committed to Cascade or Bootstrap and are open to suggestions regarding what CMS and CSS framework would best suit the University. This includes WordPress and other open-source and proprietary content management systems with a proven track record in Higher Education. Ideally, the agency making a proposal will include their preference for a specific CMS and CSS framework in their proposal.

2. Where is your site hosted? Do you plan to remain with the current hosting provider? | Is hosting in scope for this project? | Do you need hosting services and ongoing website management/maintenance? Do you need hosting for beta.una.edu as well? | Is beta.una.edu meant to be a staging site? | Where will the new system be hosted? If you are providing hosting, what operating system, scripting languages, and databases will be available on the hosting server? Please describe other pertinent details about the hosting environment.

Answer: We currently manage our own hosting. Our default approach will be to continue this practice. However, we are open to other suggestions for hosting the marketing site. In addition, we have an internal team of web developers who manage the site on a day-to-day basis. We will have the ability to manage the

servers as needed and will be able to configure them to address the needs of the chosen CMS.

The goal of a beta.una.edu site is to host the incomplete or in-progress new site as we port content and finalize details of the implementation. Our intention is to host this in exactly the same way we will ultimately host the new site. The intention is that it will be a staging site for the duration of the project. Ideally, when we are ready, we will remove the subdomain 'beta' and point the root domain there. We are open to input from our partner(s) if they ultimately determine that a different process here is preferable.

3. What are key integrations that you would like to continue to use? | Are there any third-party databases that the site needs to pull content in from and display on the site through an API or some other method? For example, is the Directory or any other listing powered by an outside database? | What CRM do you use? | Which of the following should be included in the proposal? (Events Calendar, Resource Library, Staff Directory, Blog/Newsroom, Single sign-on, Members only content) | Does the Directory (<https://una.edu/directory/>) require any data integration with third-party software such as a Colleague? | What is your current Admissions CRM?

Answer: We currently use Slate as our CRM. We also use Slate to collect data through embedded forms and in a few select instances embedding Slate portals. Slate will be our primary integration. In addition, we have a 3D map in a few places which we intend to maintain. The Directory will require calls to a REST API. Our team will be available to help clarify and implement some of these integrations. We will need a calendar feature, a blog, and the ability to make site-wide, banner-style announcements.

Most other integrations will operate as links to other resources hosted and accessed independent of the marketing site.

4. Would the Athletics site remain separate at roarlions.com? | Will the application services still continue to run through the subdomain of go.una.edu and be hosted separately from the main site? | Will you continue to link off to the catalog.una.edu site for some of the programs or is there a goal to move that over? | It appears that the Donate function links out to a third-party hosted form. Is that still the plan for the new site? | And who are you using for donations and are you happy with them? | Are the following links part of the scope of this RFP (we assume they are not)? (Canvas, Portal, Library, University Athletics, Online Application) | Is the Shine On Gold website (<https://una.edu/shineongold/>) part of this scope of work?

Answer: All external systems will remain in place. We will link to them from the website, but they will continue to be hosted and managed independent of the marketing site. If it is on a different domain or subdomain than the existing “una.edu” site, it is outside the scope of this project.

5. Are there any specific interactive features (e.g., an interactive map) or new functionality you've seen that you would like included in the new site? What other functionality will the new site need to include? Besides those described in the RFP, are there any features or functions on the current site that need to be available on the new site? | What third-party or legacy applications must the new system interface with? How deep of an integration does each one need?

Answer: At least one template developed for the CMS must allow for embedding an iframe. We currently include an interactive map on the site at <https://www.una.edu/map/>. This map will continue to be used on the new site. Further, we will embed Slate forms and portals in some areas of the site. Both currently work as an iframe embed which is hosted elsewhere. The site will need to have the capability to interact with a REST API for Directory search.

6. Will content need to be presented in languages other than English? If so, which ones? | If multiple languages are needed, who will provide the translated content and should the translated content be human-translated or will a machine translation (such as Google Translate) suffice?

Answer: Due to the constraints created by having primarily user-generated content, we will only target English. Content must be able to be updated and modified through the CMS by non-technical, but trained, content managers.

7. How many unique content types or page layouts should be included in the scope? If you don't know for sure, even a ballpark guess would be helpful. A simple site will consist of 4-6 unique page layouts, a site of medium complexity will consist of 6-12 unique page layouts, a complex site will consist of 12-20+ unique page layouts.

Answer: The CMS must service the entire university as a marketing tool. As a result, there will be more than 12 unique layouts. We do, however, have an internal team who will be expected to maintain and extend the site further. So, site extensibility and documentation are more important than getting all possible templates built.

Development Process Questions

8. Do you require any on-site meetings/work to be conducted?

Answer: None are required, but we are open to holding in-person meetings if that is part of the process of the Agency or Agencies who are awarded the contract.

9. Do you currently work with any external vendors for these services? If yes, are they invited to bid on this project? Is there someone who could be considered an incumbent on this project? Is there another company that you've worked with before, or any other company that would receive preference for winning this project?

Answer: We have some external vendors that we work with on our existing site for hosting and ongoing licensing. They are welcome to offer a proposal. Any proposals submitted by existing vendors will be evaluated by the same criteria as all other proposals.

10. Do you have an estimate for how much net new content you're planning to create/write for the new site? For example, do you anticipate keeping roughly 80% of the existing content and just reorganizing it and optimizing it for search engines better? Or do you think you'll create a substantial amount of new content? | For the content migration portion of the scope, do you anticipate all content will be migrated over? | Are there specific sections that make up the majority of the content? | Will this project require a substantial amount of data or content migration from the old system to the new one? Please estimate how much content, and what types of content, should be migrated over. | What is the scope of content migration? Will UNA provide guidance on prioritizing content for migration, or is the expectation that the selected vendor will handle all migration decisions independently? If so, can you provide an estimate of the total number of current pages, including all content types?

Answer: We are looking to our partner agency to help us define what content should be ported to the new site and how it should be structured as part of the Strategy and Discovery phase of the project. The goal of the site is to be a specifically marketing-forward site. As a result, much of the existing content is likely not needed. Our internal team will be actively involved in the project's content migration portion. We also plan to develop additional content using our in-house copywriter and marketing team who will be active throughout the process. The content migration phase will be particularly collaborative as we have in-house

resources who can own or supplement this task in whatever way we determine based on the accepted proposal.

11. A quick Google site index search shows ~13,000 pages. It can be inflated sometimes due to PDFs, old pages, or other things caught in Google's archive. Does that count seem right to you or do you know how many pages are managed on your current site?

Answer: This number is massively inflated due to numerous factors including the age of the site and the way the website has been used as a content repository for various departments within the University.

12. Should the content hierarchy be reorganized as a part of the rebuild?

Answer: As needed, yes. We want to be intentional about how we build and organize content with an eye toward the user experience of our target demographic.

13. Are there any sites out there you think serve as a model for the overall look and feel you're trying to achieve? | Are there aspirational websites that represent a future experience you are looking to achieve?

Answer: There are several regional universities who have sites that might be used for comparison. We anticipate that this will become clearer through the discovery phase of the process. We are also open to input from our chosen partner here.

14. Do you have a goal timeline for launch? | What are your timeline expectations for the project? | When should the project be complete? Is this a critical due date? What event is driving the due date?

Answer: Our chosen partner agency will help us define the timeline, but our initial goal would be to go live by November, 2025.

15. Have you previously conducted any user experience research? | Have you recently conducted any market or user research that might influence the approach for this project? If not, would you be interested in seeing pricing for user research as part of our proposal? | You mention four primary audiences; prospective students, parents, alumni, and peer institutions (recruitment of candidates). Has any research or work been done previously during your recent rebranding around user journeys for these audiences?

Answer: Our marketing team and marketing agency partners are regularly involved in user research to assist the University in understanding our students and

prospective students' profiles. However, to our knowledge, there has not been UX research done on the current site, or a potential redesign. We would expect some of this to be completed in partnership with our Marketing department and the chosen agency during the Strategy and Discovery and Design phases of development.

16. Does the university have a brand platform (messaging and visual identity) currently defined, or in the process of being developed? | Is there an existing UNA design system or UI kit within Figma, Sketch, or other software that can be used and iterated upon for the new website?

Answer: Yes. We have a well-established platform. There is some movement being taken independent of this project to update our style guides and branding; however, a new branding guide will be in place by the time this project starts, or we will move forward with our existing brand identity.

17. Can you say more about the “varied marketing & advertising model”? What is the role of the central marketing team versus school/college/program-based marketing teams?

Answer: Our central marketing team will be a stakeholder in this process. The primary campaigns being run by the university presently are branding campaigns. For the immediate future, it is these branding campaigns that we want to cater to with the site redesign. Most of our school, college, program marketing is done by way of custom landing pages which we develop internally or in partnership with other marketing agencies.

18. Would you be open to meeting with our team to review our questions on a call?

Answer: To ensure equity, as stated in the RFP, all questions and answers are to be written and will be responded to through this addendum to the RFP.

19. How would you characterize the current status of consistent, unified brand expression across the university's digital properties?

Answer: Inadequate. Our marketing team has developed a more unified identity which we are slowly rolling out. The full rollout of our newly developed unified standards would happen through the site redesign process.

20. Do you have a current external partner who manages your website?

Answer: No. Our site is managed by an internal team of developers and content specialists.

21. Does the University currently work with a digital marketing partner(s)? Will that work influence or overlap with that of the selected vendor on this website project?

Answer: Yes. They will be kept abreast of our progress but will not be actively involved in the process. Throughout the development of the new site, we will continue running campaigns to drive engagement to our current site with the goal of increasing enrollment.

22. Would the university be interested in a competitor/peer website analysis and audit as part of the Strategy & Discovery phase of the engagement?

Answer: We are open to the established processes of the agency submitting a bid. Part of the reason we are seeking bids for this project rather than attempting an internal buildout is to fill gaps in expertise. We look forward to working with an agency who has developed a "paved road" for project management through experience on similar projects.

23. Will you need content development support as part of this engagement? If so, how much support do you anticipate needing? | Do you have a need for any website content/copywriting (either net new or re-work of existing), or will you plan to supply content (or only use existing migrated content)? | Will new content need to be written for the new site? If so, how much help are you expecting from your chosen partner? Do you need content strategy, copywriting, or copy editing services?

Answer: We will develop content internally. This content will be a combination of new content which we create for the new website and ported content from our current site. We will, however, be open to input from our chosen partner or partners.

24. What is the composition of the team that will be charged with maintaining this site? (both technical and content/marketing needs)

Answer: We maintain a team of web developers, a marketing team, and a university-wide "Web Lion" network of content editors.

25. Can you briefly characterize your current web governance model? Is it working well for you? How many website editors do you currently have?

Answer: We operate with a combination model which serves us well. We have partners in different departments throughout the University who can maintain the content for their respective departments. Our web team regularly handles larger requests including new pages, integrations, and custom functionality.

26. When was the last time the university website was redesigned? | When was the website last redesigned/updated?

Answer: Over 10 years ago.

27. Do you have any in-house SEO or analytics expertise? Do you desire any recommendations or strategies in these areas?

Answer: Yes. We are open to recommendations from the agency who is awarded the contract.

28. What roles will be represented on the client's core team for this project? | What are the roles of the project stakeholders at UNA? | Once the project has started, what will the makeup of the decision-making committee be like? Will decisions be made by a large group, a small committee, or a single person? | Can you describe the roles of the core team (the day-to-day team) and other stakeholder/steering committee teams that will be involved or provide approvals throughout the process? | The RFP mentions stakeholder interviews during the strategy and discovery phase. Have you identified these stakeholders, and if so, can you provide a range of expected interviews? | Can you elaborate on the specific stakeholders we will work with during the Strategy and Discovery phase?

Answer: The point of contact throughout the project will be Brandon Blaylock, Director, Web Development. We may at our discretion request a meeting with a potential partner agency. This call could be conducted by Teams or Zoom and the content of the discussion would depend on the specifics of that agency's proposal. Our core stakeholders will be 5 – 10 people representing the following areas and specialties:

- Enrollment Marketing and Digital Communications
- Department of Communications

- Information Technologies
- Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs
- Data Analytics
- Accessibility Specialist
- Admissions/Enrollment Management
- Faculty or staff from Computer Science and Information Systems

29. You reference "other marketing services" on Page 10 (2. Q). Can you expand on what types of services you might be interested in?

Answer: We do not anticipate needing additional marketing services outside of those explicitly enumerated in the RFP. However, we are open to ongoing conversations with our chosen partner if they possess a specialty that will benefit the recruiting and retention efforts of the University.

30. What project management process will work best for this project: waterfall, agile, a hybrid of those, or something different? | For major milestone reviews/approvals, what is a comfortable amount of time for your team to provide consolidated, actionable feedback (for example, we usually assume 48 hours)? | Will [stakeholders] be available for regular check-ins throughout the project to ensure alignment with evolving goals and need?

Answer: We are open to the processes recommended by the agency that is awarded the contract. We expect that we will maintain at least weekly meetings between the development team and UNA.

31. Related to accessibility, is general adherence to WCAG and Section 508 guidelines acceptable, or do you need formal accessibility testing and/or a WCAG conformance certification (for example, WCAG 2.1 AA certification)? | Could you clarify which specific accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1 AA) are required for the website? Are there any existing challenges related to accessibility that you would like addressed during development?

Answer: General adherence to WCAG 2.1 AA and Section 508 guidelines will be sufficient. We have in-house experts who can validate and modify the code as needed.

32. Besides current and prospective students, who are the key audience groups that will use the new system? What needs will they have that must be fulfilled?

Answer: Key audience groups will include faculty, staff, alumni, and prospective students. Their needs will vary from accessing university resources to understanding the scope of academic programs.

Financial Process Questions

33. What is the budget for the project? | Do you have a rough budget? Even a range can be helpful for us to figure out if we're a good fit and help us align our recommendations with your resources. | What are your budget expectations for the project? | Please provide general budget guidelines. Even a rough ballpark estimate or range would be very helpful. | Do you have a budget range planned for this initiative? Can you share the target budget goal so that we can craft an approach to meet your branding and budgetary requirements?

Answer: Our budget will remain confidential.

34. We wanted to know if our company, based in Florida, could apply to the bid?

Answer: Yes.

35. Are you accepting proposals from Canadian Vendors? | Are you open to non-US vendors completing this work? | We have a registered office in London, UK, and have offshore development centres in India. We will be able to deliver this project from Offshore and our onshore account manager will provide local support, as required. Please confirm whether we can bid for this RFP.

Answer: Anyone may bid, but all transactions must be done in USD (Dollar), and we operate in Central Time (CDT/CST/UTC-5). The selected agency must be available for meetings between 8 and 4 Central Time.

36. Do you have a preference for local vendors?

Answer: All vendor's bids will be evaluated by the same criteria.

37. Would you be able to clarify for me - will our company need to register to do business in the State of Alabama in order to bid/submit a proposal? Or do we only

need to register if awarded the contract? | Are there any other registrations that we will need to complete in order to submit our proposal for this project? | Could you please confirm whether a business license is mandatory for submitting a bid for this RFP, or if our current certifications and authorizations are sufficient to meet the requirements?

Answer: There is no requirement that you be licensed in the state of Alabama to submit a proposal. However, the chosen agency must comply with all Alabama state laws, which may require submission of additional paperwork, such as completing a disclosure form.

38. Will you accept a digital proposal submission? | Please confirm the due date, time, and preferred submission method of the proposal

Answer: The due date is on page 2 of the RFP, and the submission instructions are on page 3.

39. Do you require pricing to be separate from the technical response, or can they be submitted together in one document/envelope?

Answer: They may be submitted together in the same document/envelope provided that the information is clearly differentiated.

40. How many potential partners submitted questions for this RFP?

Answer: As required by law a tabulation of the number of submitted proposals will be released at the time the contract is awarded.

41. How will the RFP responses be scored/evaluated? What is the most important part of the response for UNA?

Answer: An evaluation process involving university stakeholders will determine who the university moves forward with. Proposals will be judged based on the degree to which the proposal is detailed and addresses the areas outlined in the RFP.

42. Is there anything about your organization that might make this project difficult?

Answer: When working with a university of any size, the number of stakeholders

impacted by any changes poses a potential challenge. We hope we have mitigated this by limiting the primary point of contact throughout the engagement to Brandon Blaylock.

43. In order to better respect our client's privacy, will a dollar value range be acceptable in reference to RFP section: Proposal Instructions 3.B.iii, the dollar volume of previous contracts? | We noticed that you are requesting a sample contract from a similar-sized project. We are happy to provide a copy of a sample project, but we will need to remove confidential information (contact, pricing, etc). We are a small independent, privately owned design studio, and we are unable to release certain details due to privacy and confidentiality in MSAs with our clients. We will list references for you to gather information about our commitments and relationships directly.

Answer: An exact number is not required, but the number submitted must be meaningful. You may also clearly mark pages "CONFIDENTIAL" and those pages will remain privileged.

44. On page 19, it's stated that any changes to the scope of work during the BA session could result in additional expenses. Does this mean we'll be able to include these extra costs on a monthly basis as the project progresses?

Answer: As specified in the RFP, additional cost is only acceptable as requested by UNA.

Miscellaneous Questions

45. As part of your future vision for the organization, are you actively planning any new experiences (beyond the website redesign) that should be considered in evolving your overall branding and story?

Answer: We are always looking for new ways to increase engagement and drive enrollment.

46. Could you describe the type of research and or strategy work that was completed during your recent rebranding that we could leverage as inputs for the redesign?

Answer: We are not certain what recent “rebranding” this question refers to.

47. What analytics and/or user tracking data do you have that would be accessible to our team for review and analysis?

Answer: We have data stored in Slate our CRM and we use GA4 for analytics.

48. Is a copy of the actual RFP with initials marked in the bottom right corner required as part of our response?

Answer: It is not necessary to include an initialed copy of the RFP with a proposal.

49. What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will define the success of the new website post-launch? Are there specific metrics you will monitor to evaluate user engagement, enrollment conversions, or accessibility improvements?

Answer: We will work with our marketing partners to define successful metrics, but generally, we track click-through rates on campaigns, overall applications, and specific program applications.

50. Will faculty have bio landing pages on the new website?

Answer: Yes.

51. Could you specify what level of ongoing support and maintenance you expect after the website is deployed? Is there a preferred duration for post-launch training or support services?

Answer: We have a team of developers who can maintain the site after deployment. Depending on the CMS that is recommended, additional support might be helpful. However, a contract for ongoing training could be worked out after the current engagement.

52. Are there any cutting-edge technologies or interactive features UNA is particularly interested in exploring to enhance user engagement, such as chatbots, AI-driven content recommendations, or immersive storytelling features?

Answer: We are open to recommendations; however, no additional features are

required as part of this RFP.

53. On page 13, it mentions that any deviations from the form of contract must be clearly stated in the proposal. Do we understand correctly that these deviations will be included in the final contract as long as they don't conflict with the main points of the RFP?

Answer: That is the intention.

54. We also need to clarify how we'll work together, as we take a personalized approach to every client. We noticed on page 12 of the RFP that the contract is set for one year. Given this, we'd like to discuss the format of our cooperation. We can offer different types of contracts, including: Fixed price (based on the budget), Outstaffing model
However, we see some risks related to Scope Creep after the BA session. Should we prepare a contract based on the scope defined in the RFP? And for any additional work, will there be a separate budget and agreement added to the main contract?

Answer: To be considered, proposals must be based on the scope defined in the RFP or explicitly specify where the proposal goes beyond the scope of the RFP.

55. There are notes about the agency paying for any necessary 3rd party tools and then being reimbursed. Is this a hard requirement, or are you open to making those payments directly to the 3rd party service?

Answer: On page 13, we state that UNA may reimburse costs for additional items. This is not a requirement.

56. Is any content behind a login gate included in scope? If so, what are the requirements for access?

Answer: We do not require proposals to include login-protected content, except for CMS administration access.

57. For key personnel resumes, we can provide the profiles for the Account Manager and Delivery Manager at RFP stage. The remaining project team members' details will be shared at a later stage, following confirmation of the RFP award. Please

confirm if this will suffice for your current requirements.

Answer: Proposals should include the information requested in the RFP. The RFP requires information on the Executive-in-Charge and the Account Manager.

58. Will you update the URLs for every page or will keep them as they are?

Answer: URLs will likely change as a result of this project.

59. There are redirections at some points to different domains. Will you keep them as it is or are open to make changes there?

Answer: Redirects are outside the scope of this RFP. We will handle DNS and subdomain management internally.