



May 9, 2024

**Request for Qualifications # 240016
Marketing and Communications Brand and Media Strategy**

Please see the following questions and answers below:

Is the \$50,000 mentioned separate from the \$200,000 for marketing? Is that allocated to brand?

The \$50,000 is the budget limit for providing the annual plan for brand and media buying strategy with the objective of increasing enrollment for the 2024-25 academic year. The \$200,000 is the media buying budget that is recommended within the brand and media buying strategy.

How have you previously allocated digital vs. traditional spends? What do you anticipate for this RFP? What percent of your current budget would be traditional?

The ratio between digital and traditional spends has not been calculated, but the trend has been increasing digital over traditional spends. This RFQ process is looking for an agency/firm to provide or recommend the allocation of spends between traditional and digital. During the past 10 years or so, the College has experienced a decline in enrollment, so providing historical spend information may not be material to recommending a strategy to increase enrollment.

What are you envisioning in terms of comprehensive brand strategy? What types of deliverables?

The College is looking for a long-term brand strategy to employ across the enterprise that would communicate a position in our community that is compelling, differentiating, and true. This position should be grounded in our long-term strategic plan and provide the style for all our communications and promotions. This effort is intended to position the College in its entirety, and not for a specific event or annual occurrence.

Is SEO included in the scope of work here?

The College is interested in any recommendation to improve its SEO.

What do you mean by leveraged buying?

The College is looking for an agency/firm that has experience in high education media spends, and with that experience there may be buying strategies that produce cost-reductions from media relationships, volume discounts, price negotiations, and other factors.

What do you mean by soft rebrand vs. full rebrand?

This process is intentional in getting an outside assessment of its overall brand, and there may be value in the current brand that could be made stronger and better to communicate. However, there may also be factors that favor a complete re-branding of the College. The brand must add value to the mission statement and strategic plan, and it may be either “sharpening the edge” versus repositioning the College.

The first deliverable is brand strategy and the RFQ describes it as “comprehensive brand strategy, both long and short-term, based on research and data that is unique to JC and communities it serves which may include creative content to support the brand including digital and traditional platforms:

A couple of questions:

Does this mean we have to conduct primary research or that we can rely on third part research or existing research that’s been done?

Jefferson College is one of 11 community college districts in Missouri and possesses unique aspects compared to other higher education institutes. Preference will be given to those agency/firms that have experience serving higher education institutes, along with data that is unique to Jefferson College.

When you mention comprehensive brand strategy, that suggests to us we would develop a brand positioning statement and develop key messaging to support that positioning. Is that in line with what you are envisioning?

Yes, along with the tactics and initiatives that incorporate the College’s position to support enrollment growth.

When it mentions “creative content to support the brand”, is this creative concept meaning showing headlines and visual looks for particular pieces? If so, about how many pieces?

The extent or quantity of pieces would be recommended by the agency/firm, and all creative content must promote the overall brand strategy.

The second deliverable is media planning and buying and states that the vendor would “assist the Marketing and Communications office in a planning and buying media strategy...”

Does this mean agency will develop plan with client input/approval, negotiate buy, and actually place/contract the media? Or is the client executing the actual buy?

The College has always managed its media spends and has used several media firms to produce a mix of spends across various communication channels. The agency/firm may assess those media firms and make recommendations that support or avoid the College’s past media experience. The College will execute the purchases and/or any agreements with outside agencies.

While it is easy to estimate media planning, we would need to know approximately how many mediums (i.e. digital, paid social, connected TV, radio, outdoor, etc.) we would be buying. Can you provide us what mediums you have bought in the past?

The College has experience is almost every media channel available in the community, both digital and traditional. We are seeking an agency/firm to make recommendations on media channels that are most effective with our target audience to help grow enrollment.

The third deliverable Media Relations which is ongoing PR efforts in our minds:

We do PR as an ongoing retainer basis; would you be open to having the PR effort run only through key enrollment period times for Summer/Fall /winter? So maybe 8 months out of the year

The award will be given to an agency/firm that the College believes will be the most effective at achieving higher enrollment growth.

Our Missouri -based Higher Ed clients include [another Missouri higher education institute], would you consider that a direct conflict?

No, and in fact, preference is given to an agency/firm with higher education experience.

Target Audiences: Is there more detailed information per specific audience available?

- traditional post-secondary
- adult potential students
- community members
- current students
- employees
- donors
- business and industry

The RPQ packet provided information on the College's primary target audience, along with several secondary targets.

Target Audiences: Have decision-maker personas been created for each audience?

No.

Target Audiences: Has any market research been conducted to better understand the marketing challenges Jefferson College is facing? If so, is that data available for review?

No, nothing formal.

Project Description: Is this primarily a brand awareness initiative? Or, is this primarily an enrollment campaign? Each initiative is measured differently.

The overall objective is to increase enrollment for the 2024-25 academic year.

Project Description: If this is an enrollment-focused campaign, is there data that identifies what the enrollment has been over the past (10+) years per year, per semester? Are there any other KPIs available over that same time frame? Is it available broken out by target audience?

Enrollment at Jefferson College has experienced a trend of decline in the past 10 years. The goal for this RFQ is to engage with an outside agency/firm to reverse that trend to provide growth relative to the trend of decline.

Branding: Does Jefferson College have a current Brand Standards Guide? Can a copy be forwarded? Is redoing the Brand Standards Guide a part of this proposal?

The College manages a basic style guide that contains the red and blue colors, logos, and use of the mission statement. These assets are used in conjunction with our Strategic Plan when developing promotions and initiatives.

Branding (Creative Content): where is the line drawn between developing creative content as a part of the branding phase and developing creative content on an ongoing basis as a part of the media buying phase?

The development of creative content may be accomplished by the College as recommended by the agency/firm in direct support of the brand and media buying strategy.

Media Buying and Planning: For the media buying, we would be creating the plan and strategy for the media selection, but JC would be doing the actual buying process, correct?

Most likely yes. The College is interested in the media relationships the agency/firm may have, and there may be instances where media purchases are more efficient or less costly if made through the agency/firm as a pass-through cost to the College.