

**Board of Regents
State of Iowa**

Request for Qualification

**For
CONSULTING SERVICES FOR EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES
TO EXPAND DISTANCE EDUCATION AND DIGITAL
DELIVERY OF EDUCATION**

**Board of Regents
State of Iowa
11260 Aurora Avenue
Urbandale, IA 50322**

Request for Qualification
for
Consulting Services for exploring opportunities to expand distance education and digital delivery of education
for
The Board of Regents, State of Iowa

1. GENERAL

The Board of Regents, State of Iowa (Board) located in Urbandale, Iowa, intends to retain the services of a qualified consulting Firm with a national perspective to conduct a study of the market, context, and opportunities for expanded distance education and digital academic delivery by Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa in a timely, accurate and professional manner.

The required documentation of expertise and qualifications outlined in this request is intended to serve primarily as a general guide for each statement of qualifications, with the minimum requirements listed. Each Firm is expected to submit a fully detailed statement of qualifications, which adequately describes the advantages and benefits the Board would realize by selecting the Firm.

Representatives of the Board, the Board Office and/or other appropriate personnel will screen written proposals. A limited number of Firms may be selected to make oral presentations to a representative group of Regent and other appropriate personnel. Based upon the initial submittals and oral presentations, a single Firm will be selected to provide these services.

Interested Firms are invited to submit qualifications for the Firm and the Firm's representatives designated as key personnel that would be assigned to the Regents if selected as the successful Firm, as described in the attached Request for Qualifications.

Firms invited to participate in an interview should be prepared to discuss fully and substantiate any aspects of the proposal.

The Board will select the successful Firm based on experience, reputation, price and ability as well as responses to the questions listed in section 5. Firm's submission of a proposal constitutes acceptance of the evaluation technique and the Firm's recognition and acceptance that subjective judgments will be used during the evaluation process.

Tentative Schedule of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
June 4, 2021	RFQ Issued
June 18, 2021	Firm's Questions Due
June 23, 2021	Responses to Firm's Questions Issued
July 7, 2021	RFQ Responses Due
July 8-13, 2021	Interview Process of Firms
July 14, 2021	Award of Contract
September 10, 2021	Completion of Work

2. BACKGROUND

The Board of Regents, State of Iowa governs the three public universities in Iowa – the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa -- as well as the Iowa School for the Deaf and Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Board comprises nine members who are appointed by the Governor on a bipartisan basis and confirmed by the Iowa Senate. The members serve six-year staggered terms. The President of the Board is elected by the members of the Board.

The universities governed by the Board of Regents each has unique approach to online and distance education, though significant alignment and collaboration occurs in several ways. The key leadership for this work have monthly meetings with the chief academic officer of the Board to share information, identify areas for joint training, and collaborate on ad hoc issues. In addition, the Board requires an annual report on distance education that is collaboratively compiled. Over the past several years this report has provided evidence of continuous growth in distance education participation, including distance ed program enrollment of students from all 99 counties in the state. The largest area of growth in enrollment is consistently found among students who are also enrolled in face-to-face courses. This is known to be a popular option for many students who have part-time jobs or internships, be in athletics or other high-demand activities, or have other health-related reasons the make the flexibility of some online courses beneficial.

In addition, the universities have all expanded the number of graduate-level programs available fully online. Many working professionals and employers have indicated a strong preference for this type of flexibility as technology access is ubiquitous and the universities are well regarded for the quality of their graduate programs across many disciplines and fields.

Even with this continuous growth and expansion, the Board and the universities are aware that the market for distance education has changed even more rapidly. Along with that, the expectations of students at all levels, and potential students not yet reached by our programs, have shifted as well. The range of opportunities is vast, and the changes brought by the Covid-19 pandemic opened up even more questions about the most advantageous way for the universities to consider individual and collective change in how they approach digital platforms and academic delivery opportunities.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective in requesting proposals is to acquire the services of a reputable and proven consultant with a demonstrated ability to provide services in an efficient and professional manner, while complying with State and Federal laws and regulations and Board Policies.

4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful Firm will be expected to fulfill the following scope of services in exploring opportunities to expand distance education and digital delivery of education including, but not limited to:

1. Identify underserved populations (undergraduate, graduate, professional)
2. Methods to best serve underserved populations
3. Market saturation and gaps in distance and digital delivery
4. Tuition and pricing models
5. How to serve Iowa's workforce needs
6. Faculty and staff considerations

5. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SUBMITTALS

Any Firm submitting a response must meet the following requirements to be considered.

1. It must subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and principles of quality, diversity, equity, and ethical practice.
2. It must be committed to embedding appropriate consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion concerns into any research or recommendations.
3. It must provide adequate information to demonstrate understanding of the current environment for distance education and digital academic delivery, including technology needs, price and cost strategies, range of models for delivery, and staffing and development needs.
4. Firms must be knowledgeable of the requirements of Iowa Code Chapters 21 and 22, the Iowa Open Meetings and Open Records Acts.

Each Firm must provide written responses to each of the following submittals. Responses must be in the order shown below and numbered accordingly. Failure to respond to any question or follow the instructions herein may result in disqualification.

5.1 SUBMITTALS

Firms must clearly demonstrate and provide documentation substantiating that they are compliant in each of the following areas. The Board reserves, solely, the right to reject any submittals if the evidence or references submitted by such Firm fails to satisfy the Board that said Firm is properly qualified in any of these areas. It shall not be the responsibility of the Board to request additional information to satisfy these requirements, if such information is not provided with the submitted response.

5.1.1. Executive Summary. Provide an executive summary briefly summarizing the consultant's process to be used in responding to the following questions:

- What are typical tuition and pricing strategies used for programs relying on digital academic delivery? Include the extent to which these vary among public institutions and private institutions, or on other institutional or program characteristics.
- What are the current capacities for development or expansion in digital academic delivery at universities governed by the Board of Regents?
- What resources (e.g. financial, human, technology) are necessary to be successful?
- Analyze existing models in other states (successful or unsuccessful) for lessons learned on partnerships, management models or other factors.

The summary should clearly indicate any major requirements that cannot be met by the Firm and highlight the major features of the proposal to assist the reader in determining generally how the qualifications of the Firm and the proposal meets and exceeds the requirements proposed by the Board.

5.1.2. A listing of any colleges, universities or systems for which the Firm has provided similar services.

5.1.3. The name of a single point managerial-level contact for the Board to coordinate all requirements and to be the point of contact for any problems/questions that may arise.

5.1.4. Three (3) references must be included detailing experience in providing this type of service.

5.1.5. Schedule/Time Commitment – Include a schedule of events, including site visits, for the term from contract award date to completion date. Include a proposed sequence of events and timeline necessary to meet the requirements of this RFP.

5.1.6. Stakeholders Involvement – Include your approach to involving stakeholders throughout the processes. Based on your experience, identify the individuals and groups that you believe should be informed of the process, and/or those that should provide input, and explain your rationale for including those groups in this process.

6. FEE STRUCTURE

Submit in detail, your Firm's service fee structure for these services including, but not limited to, reimbursable and non-reimbursable items.

7. RESPONDENT INSTRUCTIONS

No oral interpretation will be made to any Firm as to the meaning of the RFQ documents. Should a Firm find discrepancies in, omission from, or be in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of the RFQ documents, the Firm should submit a written request for an interpretation to Rachel Boon at rachel.boon@iowaregents.edu. All requests must include the RFQ Title on the face of the correspondence. Requests received less than 72 hours before bid closing may not be answered at the discretion of the Board office.

The Board reserves the right to amend this RFQ without altering the timing requirements indicated. Any changes or addenda to these documents will be communicated in writing to all Firms as quickly as possible.

This RFQ does not commit the Board to award a contract to any Firm, or to pay costs incurred by Firm in the preparation, submission, presentation or any other action connected with proposing or otherwise responding to this RFQ. The Board may accept other than the lowest pecuniary proposal, waive minor irregularities, and award a contract based only on the written proposal without any discussions with Firm.

Answers to Firm's questions that impact scope, timetable, etc., will be communicated in writing to all Firms as quickly as possible.

If the Board awards a contract to a proposing Firm, the Firm's responses to this RFQ may become part of the executed contract. Therefore, all questions must be answered in an honest and straightforward manner.

The successful Firm shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws. Documentation of such compliance shall be provided to the Board upon request.

PUBLIC RECORDS. As an agency of the State of Iowa, the Board is subject to the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 22, the Iowa Open Records Act. Firms are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting a proposal. The Board will treat all information submitted by a Firm as public information following the conclusion of the selection process. A Firm shall conspicuously identify information provided in response to this RFQ which the Firm

reasonably believes represents confidential information that may fall within one of the exceptions identified in Iowa Code section 22.7. The Board will make a reasonable effort to provide the Firm with written notice seven calendar days in advance of the release of information identified by the Firm as confidential. However, the Board may release all or a portion of the proposal immediately, without providing notice to the Firm, if the Board determines there is no reasonable basis for a claim of confidentiality.

SUBCONTRACTORS. The Firm is specifically advised that the use of subcontractor(s) to perform any portion of the services requested under this RFQ must receive advance written approval of the Board of Regents. The Firm shall be responsible for all acts of its approved subcontractors as well as the performance of subcontracted responsibilities. Firm shall be solely responsible for payment to all subcontractors or secondary suppliers that the firm may engage for the completion of any of the services required by a contract with the Board.

LAWS. Terms and provisions of this proposal and any agreement resulting from this proposal shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Iowa, and any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this proposal or agreement resulting from this proposal shall be instituted in the appropriate courts of the State of Iowa.

COPYRIGHTS. By submitting a proposal, the Firm agrees that the Board may copy the proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the proposal or to respond to requests for public records. Firm consents to such copying by submitting a proposal and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party. The Board shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the proposals.

TAXES. The Board is exempt from Federal Excise Taxes, and no payment will be made for any taxes levied on Firm's employee's wages. The Board is exempt from State and Local Sales and Use Taxes on the services. Tax Exemption Certificates will be furnished upon request.

NONDISCRIMINATION. The Board does not discriminate in the contract award process on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected status.

8. FIRM'S QUESTIONS AND BOARD RESPONSES

Questions regarding this Request for Qualification must be sent by email on or before June 18, 2021 to the attention of: Mark Braun, mark.braun@iowaregents.edu

The Board will respond to submitted questions and issues, in the form of a written addendum, those responses to all Firms via email on or before June 23, 2021.

With all questions submitted, please indicate your complete company name, address, the name, phone number, fax number, and email address of the person(s) submitting questions regarding this RFQ.

9. SUBMITTAL OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION MATERIALS

ATTACHMENT A – PROPOSAL CERTIFICATION FORM

A copy of the requested materials and Attachment A should be emailed to the address below

Mark Braun
Executive Director
Board of Regents, State of Iowa
mark.braun@iowaregents.edu

All materials must arrive no later than 4:30 p.m. July 7, 2021. Firms will be contacted if additional information is needed. All Firms expressing an interest in providing these services will be notified of the Board's selection when a decision is reached. The Board reserves the right, in its discretion, to accept for consideration proposals submitted after the submission deadline.

**ATTACHMENT A
PROPOSAL CERTIFICATION FORM**

The undersigned certifies that to the best of her/his knowledge: (check one)

There is no officer or employee of the Board of Regents who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract award subsequent to this proposal.

The names of any and all public officers or employees of the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Northern Iowa or the Board of Regents who have, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract award subsequent to this proposal are identified by name as a part of this submittal.

The undersigned further certifies that their firm (check one) **IS**, or, **IS NOT** currently debarred, suspended, or proposed for debarment by any federal or state entity. The undersigned agrees to notify the Board of Regents of any change in this status, should one occur, until such time as an award has been made under this procurement action.

In compliance with the Request for Qualification for "EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND DISTANCE EDUCATION AND DIGITAL DELIVERY OF EDUCATION" after carefully reviewing all the terms, conditions and requirements contained therein, the undersigned agrees to furnish such goods/services in accordance with the specifications/scope of work.

(firm)

(phone number)

(address)

(fax number)

(by)

(Federal ID Number)

(title)