

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) ADDENDUM

FAILURE TO RETURN THIS ADDENDUM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW MAY SUBJECT YOUR PROPOSAL TO REJECTION

RFP Number: RFP09262025VLG

Title: WordPress Hosting Solution

Addendum Number: 01

Addendum Date: October 24,2025

RFP Opening Date / Time: November 7,2025 at 12:00 PM Easter Time (ET)

Instructions: Return one properly executed copy of this addendum prior to the RFP Opening Date / Time specified above. This addendum **may be included with your proposal**, or it may be emailed separately to Veronica Green at Veronica.Green@unc.edu

Execute Addendum:

Vendor Name _____

Authorized Signature _____ Date. _____

Name and Title _____

Email Address _____

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Please see the following University responses to all questions received by the deadline to submit written questions of October 10, 2025 at 3:00 PM ET:

#	Question	Answer
1.	Current Hosting Environment - Can UNC confirm whether the current WordPress hosting platform is Pantheon or another provider?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
2.	Scope Boundaries - Does the RFP scope include both enterprise-managed sites and student/department self-service sites?	Yes
3.	Multisite Architecture - How many distinct multisite networks currently exist, and what are their approximate sizes?	Refer to Attachment D of the RFP document. This information is included there.
4.	Migration Expectations - Is the selected vendor expected to perform full-site migrations (database, files, DNS coordination), or will UNC provide exports from the current environment?	Refer to Section 3.5.7 of the RFP document. "The vendor must handle all aspects of the migration, including DNS coordination, configuration and URL preservation, staging and production validation, and collaborative testing with ITS Digital Services."
5.	Security Compliance - Would UNC accept inherited compliance from a partner host's SOC 2 Type II or ISO 27001 certification, or must the prime vendor also maintain these credentials?	Options for satisfying the security requirements for this RFP can be found in Section 3.3 of the RFP document. The prime vendor must also maintain these credentials in order to satisfy this requirement with SOC 2 Type II or ISO 27001 certification. There are other options listed in this section of the RFP document.
6.	SSO Integration - What identity provider (IdP) is currently used (CAS, Shibboleth, Azure AD, etc.), and should SSO apply to all WordPress sites or only select networks?	Shibboleth. Should be applied to all live site
7.	Monitoring & Reporting - Are there existing performance monitoring tools (e.g., New Relic, Datadog) UNC prefers vendors integrate with?	New Relic and Splunk

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8.	Support Model - Will UNC require 24/7 live support, or is continuous monitoring with business-hours escalation acceptable?	UNC requires 24/7 platform monitoring with guaranteed uptime SLAs. Live support response outside business hours is only required for critical incidents affecting service availability or security. Standard support requests (non-critical) may follow business-hours escalation
9.	In Section II, UNC mentions the need for a “more stable foundation.” Can you elaborate on the primary drivers behind this decision — whether they are economic, technical, or related to vendor support for the digital services team, university departments, and end users?	This RFP is part of a standard procurement cycle to ensure continued value, performance, and alignment with UNC’s security, compliance, and service requirements.
10.	The RFP references a need for a “more stable foundation” and “meaningful improvements.” Beyond technical delivery, how much emphasis does UNC expect the selected partner to place on ongoing digital strategy, for example, governance planning, site architecture recommendations, and long-term optimization? Does UNC envision the vendor playing a continuing advisory role after launch, such as quarterly roadmap planning, governance reviews, and performance optimization recommendations, or should the strategic engagement conclude once migration and stabilization are complete? How does UNC define “strategic partnership” in this context? For instance, should the selected vendor proactively propose improvements to site governance, editorial workflows, and platform sustainability, or focus primarily on infrastructure and migration execution?	ITS Digital Services is seeking a strategic hosting partner that can provide proactive recommendations on how to structure and evolve our web environment for long-term sustainability throughout the term of the contract. RFP responses should clearly define how the vendor would propose to approach this and areas in which the vendor has expertise and can advise on.
11.	What ongoing strategic consultation or advisory role is expected for the selected vendor after major launches? Should proposals include quarterly roadmap reviews, governance sessions, or continued optimization recommendations?	See response to question number 10.
12.	Is the vendor expected to proactively suggest improvements to site governance, editorial workflows, and platform sustainability throughout the contract?	Yes. See response to question number 10.
13.	Can UNC give more detail on “self-service capabilities for large client sets with independent logins/sites”? Is the self-service process fully	The self-service process is fully automated. Users must be authenticated against SSO to create a site.

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	automated, or does it require digital services team approval and workflow?	
14.	Who are the anticipated users of the self-service system (departments, faculty, IT staff), and what governance controls are expected?	Faculty, staff, students and any UNC affiliated unit may use the self-service system.
15.	What are UNC's expectations for incident response SLAs in the event of a security event or vulnerability disclosure?	UNC expects immediate acknowledgment and prompt remediation of any security event, with clear communication and coordination with the Information Security Office and ITS Digital Services until resolution
16.	Who will be responsible for plugin and theme security vetting and ongoing updates — the vendor, UNC ITS, or a shared model?	A shared model. UNC ITS DS currently vets any new plugin with a code review. Vendor scans (like wpscan) are used to find vulnerabilities that exist in current plugins.
17.	Are there additional security requirements or university-specific governance rules that must be observed beyond SOC 2/HECVAT/ISO? If applicable, could you share internal university security policies or governance requirements relevant to the hosting solution?	See UNC's published Information Security Controls Standard at https://policies.unc.edu/TDClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=131245 .
18.	Are there existing Git workflows or CI/CD pipelines that UNC expects the new hosting environment to preserve or enhance?	UNC expects to be able to push to a repository and have the code pushed to a testing or staging server
19.	Reserved	Reserved
20.	Is a staging environment required for each WordPress site, and if so, what level of parity with production is expected?	Yes, more than one staging environment per site is expected. Site files, database, and code should be able to be synced independently from any staging environment to any other staging environment
21.	What is the current backup frequency and retention policy, and are there specific expectations for improving recovery time (RTO) or recovery point objectives (RPO)?	UNC prefers daily backups with a minimum 30-day retention period, and expects recovery time (RTO) and recovery point objectives (RPO) consistent with industry best practices for enterprise WordPress hosting.
22.	The tarheels.live instance with ~72,399 database tables appears to serve a unique purpose. Can you clarify its function (e.g., student sites, coursework, departmental use) and whether it is expected to migrate as-is or be rearchitected? What is the growth rate of student sites on tarheels.live year-over-year and any retention limits for inactive sites?	Anyone with a valid, active UNC account can create a basic WordPress site, similar to WordPress.com, but with additional approved plugins. The growth rate of tarheels.live varies annually, as some years see more sites removed than created and vice versa. Retention policies are in place to manage inactive sites and maintain platform stability.
23.	The RFP requests "root cause analysis tools." What types of operational issues or failure modes are most important for UNC to diagnose (e.g., PHP errors, database performance, rogue plugins)?	Capture PHP errors with full stack traces and alert when error volume exceeds a defined threshold. Track slow PHP executions, long-running SQL transactions, and application-layer throughput to identify latency or bottlenecks. Provide insight into the application and caching layers to diagnose performance issues. Enable correlation of anomalies with potential causes such as plugin malfunctions, security breaches, or resource exhaustion.

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		These tools will be used to find the root cause of any type of issue that could cause a web site to be less performant.
24.	The media library is cited at 1.71TB. Can you share its average growth rate and whether policies exist for archiving or removing inactive assets? Should S3 offloading be implemented across all sites, or only select networks? And will the S3 bucket(s) be managed by UNC or the selected vendor?	<p>We do not have growth rate data to share at this time. In previous years the number of sites and required storage have both grown and shrunk. Sites are removed periodically based on established criteria.</p> <p>The media library is not currently being offloaded, but UNC is interested in exploring media offloading to help streamline the process and address existing backup and storage limitations.</p>
25.	Are videos served directly from S3 or through a third-party platform?	Videos are mostly served from third party platforms currently.
26.	The RFP references both migration and "architecture." Should vendors assume a direct move of existing sites, or does UNC expect recommendations for rearchitecting, consolidating, or restructuring the environment?	A migration creates an opportunity for rearchitecting. We are specifically interested in placing our media uploads on a more manageable platform.
27.	Is UNC seeking guidance on whether certain sites should be consolidated into new multisite networks or converted to standalone instances for performance and governance reasons?	UNC would appreciate guidance on this question and other improvements that would reduce our costs and/or increase scalability, performance, and maintainability of our multisite networks and standalone sites.
28.	Does UNC have a preferred migration sequencing approach (e.g., departmental grouping, critical sites first, phased rollout)?	UNC does not have a preferred migration sequencing approach at this time.
29.	What is the acceptable downtime tolerance per site during migration, and does this vary by site type or audience?	Acceptable downtime and timing of migrations will vary across sites and multisite networks. UNC expects minimal service disruption during migration and cutover, with any downtime kept to the shortest duration necessary for DNS propagation and verification.
30.	Are there blackout periods during which migration work should be avoided (e.g., admissions season, commencements, giving campaigns)?	There are likely to be periods of time when UNC would prefer not to conduct site migrations. This list is also likely to be specific to the site or multisite network to be migrated. There is not a list of those specific time periods available currently.
31.	Who manages DNS today, and how many providers or registrars are involved?	DNS for the unc.edu domain is primarily managed by ITS Networking, with a small subset of third-party domains also in use. Most of these third-party domains are managed through delegated access by UNC Digital Services
32.	The RFP references a new hosting solution but does not state a target go-live date. Are there any key milestones or immovable dates tied to the academic calendar, fiscal year, or existing contract expiration?	Our current contract expires on April 30, 2026. The new contract and site migration projects will need to be completed in advance of this date.

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33.	How long does UNC expect post-migration support to continue before the platform is considered in “steady state” operations (e.g., 90 days, 6 months, 1 year)?, Do you require support after that time?	UNC expects migration support until steady state and stability of all site and multisite networks can be confirmed. We do expect ongoing support for the term of this contract.
34.	How many staff will require training, what delivery formats are preferred (in-person, virtual, asynchronous), and what level of documentation is expected?	Training will focus on the ITS Digital Services team (5), delivered virtually or asynchronously, with supporting documentation provided
35.	The RFP does not specify a total project value. Can you share the anticipated budget range for this engagement and whether separate allocations exist for hosting, migration, and ongoing strategic services?	Not at this time.
36.	Are migration costs expected to be treated as a one-time implementation expense, or bundled into the ongoing hosting and support contract?	Vendors may choose to propose multiple options for how implementation expenses are paid. Proposals should be clear about what the implementation expenses include and how those will be invoiced to UNC.
37.	What cadence of ongoing consultation does UNC expect after launch (e.g., monthly, quarterly), and what topics should those sessions prioritize (e.g., performance, cost optimization, feature planning)?	Refer to the response to question number 10
38.	Who will be the ultimate owner of ongoing optimization recommendations — UNC or the vendor — and how will decisions be made?	UNC expects that vendors would propose optimizations and that decisions will be made collaboratively between the UNC team and the vendor representatives.
39.	Approximately how many site owners will the vendor need to coordinate with directly during migration?	Vendors will not be expected to coordinate directly with site owners. All migration activities will be managed through the UNC Digital Services team, with potential collaboration from other ITS units such as Identity Management, Security, and Networking as needed.
40.	What communication cadence and format does UNC expect during migration (e.g., weekly syncs, executive updates, stakeholder demos)?	During migration, communication will be driven by site importance and activity, focusing on data sync checkpoints and performance testing to ensure stability and load balancing, with updates provided as needed or at key milestones.
41.	Will UNC consider a proposal from a vendor-agency partnership (e.g., hosting provider + strategic implementation partner) as a single bid, or must all services be provided under one entity?	Yes, we will consider
42.	Upcoming Projects: Please outline any planned website launches, migrations, or large-scale initiatives that may require additional environments or resources. This will help us future-proof capacity and deployment planning.	We are not aware of any upcoming large-scale projects that would change the scoped capacity outlined in Attachment D.

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43.	User Access for Standalone Sites: How many team members require backend access to publish or manage content across standalone sites? Understanding the access model helps us tailor permissions, workflows, and governance appropriately.	We do not have a count of users who have the role of editor or above.
44.	Bandwidth Usage: Please confirm bandwidth per site to help us plan capacity and ensure consistent performance.	
	web.unc.edu	Peak usage across UNC's site networks typically occurs during high-traffic academic periods, averaging around 1 TB of daily bandwidth and 10–12 million requests at the edge layer. These figures provide a general benchmark for expected load and scalability needs.
	sites.unc.edu	
	tarheels.live	
	www.med.unc.edu	
	unc-ds-sb	
	www.unc.edu	
	alertcarolina.unc.edu	
	kenan-flagler.unc.edu	
	executive-dev.unc.edu	
	research.unc.edu	
45.	Media Library and Offloading: For accuracy in sizing and billing, could you clarify whether reported disk usage includes media assets that are offloaded to external storage (e.g., AWS S3 or similar), or only assets stored locally? Which solution are you currently using for offloading your media, in terms of service (S3, or equivalent) and automation (plugin, custom code)?	Refer to the response to question number 24
46.	Multi-site Growth: To plan resources effectively, we'd like to understand how your Multisite network has evolved year over year, both in the number of subsites and overall disk utilization. This ensures the proposed architecture supports current performance and anticipated growth.	Refer to the response to question number 24
47.	Reverse Proxy Configuration: Please describe your existing reverse proxy setup and how it supports routing or content delivery across subsites or domains. This context allows us to design an integration that complements your current network	A reverse proxy is used for selective traffic routing. Additional configuration details will be provided later in the RFP process.

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	topology. Please also specify how many subsites are involved. (See the per-network subsite totals, p.40–41).	
48.	Redis Caching: If Redis is part of your performance stack, we'd like to confirm its current scope, including which environments leverage it, to align caching layers and avoid redundancy.	All sites use redis caching.
49.	Can UNC provide references or examples of service gaps or advanced support needs lacking in the current provider, to help inform the proposal? Are there specific services you wish to see improved or newly added?	Refer to the response to question number 1
50.	Staging and Development Environments: How are staging and development workflows currently structured? We'd like to know how many environments are used and whether they mirror production for testing and QA.	For each site we have <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Site that mimics SSO to a dev IdP 2. A site for testing new code and sometimes getting user input 3. A staging area for updates
51.	Cloudflare and Bot Management: Assuming Cloudflare or a similar service is already in use, could you share how bot mitigation, WAF policies, and traffic filtering are currently structured? Our goal is to ensure full compatibility with your security and performance strategy.	Refer to the response to question number 1
52.	What hosting platforms currently support the university's WordPress environment, and are all sites hosted on the same platform or distributed across multiple solutions? To better estimate the migration, can you clarify platform distribution and legacy architecture?	Refer to the response to question number 1
53.	Is there a list of plugins/services that you want to use or continue to use?	Yes. this list will be provided to any vendor later in the process
54.	Will one school be piloting this project or will all universities and sites be ready to migrate at once?	The migration will be segmented and completed in batches, prioritized by site complexity and visibility, rather than launched by a single school or all sites at once.
55.	Who will manage the DNS? The RFP states the selected vendor will coordinate. Will the selected vendor need to coordinate with each university or will there be a central manager for the DNS?	Refer to the response to question number 31
56.	It is stated "The vendor must provide annual invoices itemized by line item, including site plans, features, and associated services." However for the RFP pricing, do you prefer annual pricing for	UNC requires annual pricing to support budgeting, including clear cost adjustments if additional services are added or removed during the contract term.

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	monitoring & maintenance services or monthly estimates?	
57.	Please provide a breakdown of the ~5,300 websites currently hosted: how many are standalone WordPress installs vs. multisite networks and subsites?	Refer to Attachment D of the RFP document. This information is included there.
58.	Can UNC provide an overview of the current WordPress hosting environment (platform, PHP version, database type, caching method, plugin/theme management)?	Refer to the response to question number 1
59.	Does UNC anticipate all sites will migrate simultaneously, or will migrations be phased (e.g., pilot group followed by broader rollout)?	UNC would expect each WordPress instance, single site or multi-site, to migrate one at a time. We are open to other strategies that the vendor might suggest.
60.	What is the expected level of administrative autonomy for individual site owners (e.g., plugin installation, code access, theme customization)?	Site owners can manage settings in the WordPress admin. They cannot push code at all
61.	Can UNC provide total current data volume (GB) across all hosted sites, including database, media uploads, and backups?	Refer to Attachment D of the RFP document. This information is included there. Backups are just the site upload plus db size
62.	What is the approximate size of the largest individual site (database + media assets)?	Refer to Attachment D of the RFP document. This information is included there.
63.	Will the awarded vendor be responsible for migrating all 5,300 sites, or a subset?	Refer to the response to question number 4
64.	What is the acceptable downtime threshold during migration and cutover activities?	Refer to the response to question number 29
65.	Who will manage DNS record updates during migration and launch?	Refer to the response to question number 31
66.	Who currently manages SSL certificate issuance and renewals? Should SSL certificate management be included in the scope?	SSL certificates are automatically provisioned and renewed through the hosting platform. Certificate management should be included in the vendor's scope of services
67.	Does UNC require staging environments for QA prior to production cutover? If so, how many?	Yes, at least 8 at the moment. The multi-sites will need the ability to have at least one staging environment that copies the domain scheme of the live site. like: admissions.unc.edu -> admissions.test.unc.dev med.unc.edu/podiatry -> med-test.unc.edu/podiatry
68.	Does UNC require the awarded vendor to provide temporary hosting or testing environments during migration?	Yes
69.	Please confirm the minimum required uptime percentage and how uptime will be measured (monthly, quarterly, annually).	UNC requires a minimum uptime of 99.95%, with a preferred target of 99.99%, measured on a monthly basis and excluding scheduled maintenance windows.

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70.	What performance metrics are most important to UNC (page load time, concurrency, TTFB, request throughput)?	Key performance metrics for UNC include page load time, and request throughput, with the platform expected to support high concurrency while maintaining consistent performance across all hosted sites.
71.	Are there expected traffic bursts (e.g., start of semester, admissions announcements)? If so, what scale factor should the environment support?	We typically observe a decline in activity from Friday through Monday, with weekends being especially quiet. Over the course of the semester, traffic spikes tend to be less severe. The most significant surges occur during campus emergencies. For example, the largest spike recorded jumped from approximately 10 users per minute to 10,000 users per minute within just 10 minutes, followed by a sustained rate of around 5,000 users per minute for one to two days.
72.	Is geographic redundancy required (multi-region or data center replication)?	Yes
73.	What are the required RTO (Recovery Time Objective) and RPO (Recovery Point Objective) targets for disaster recovery?	Refer to the response to question number 21
74.	What are UNC's expectations for backup frequency, retention period, and restore times?	Refer to the response to question number 21
75.	Does UNC require direct access to system monitoring or alert dashboards (e.g., uptime, bandwidth, CPU utilization)?	Yes
76.	Please confirm which certifications are required (SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, or equivalent). Will documentation suffice if certification is pending?	Refer to Section 3.3 of the RFP document for options to satisfy the security requirements for this RFP. We require a recent (within two years) SOC 2 Type II report, an ISO 27001 certification, OR a HECVAT (Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit).
77.	Will UNC accept vendor reliance on compliant third-party cloud infrastructure (e.g., AWS) for underlying certifications?	Refer to the response to question number 5
78.	Please specify expectations for incident response SLAs (notification time, remediation time, escalation procedures).	Refer to the response to questions number 8 and 15
79.	Are periodic vulnerability assessments or penetration tests required post-deployment? If so, how often?	ISO Yes, please see section V in the Information Security Controls Standard (https://policies.unc.edu/TDClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=131245) AND the Vulnerability Management Standard for Information Technology (https://policies.unc.edu/TDClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=131251) for additional details.
80.	Please confirm if UNC requires encryption of data both at rest and in transit.	Yes, to both. See Section VII in the Information Security Controls Standard.
81.	Are there data residency requirements (e.g., all data must remain within the continental U.S.)?	Currently there are no data residency requirements for data hosted in our WordPress environment.

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82.	Does UNC require SSO integration (e.g., Shibboleth, CAS, SAML)? If so, will this be centralized or vary by department/unit?	Yes. Centralized Shibboleth.
83.	How many user roles and permission levels are expected across the environment?	The environment follows standard WordPress user roles and permissions.
84.	Are there specific WordPress plugins or themes that must be retained or deprecated as part of this migration?	All retained, nothing deprecated due to this migration
85.	Who assumes the cost for paid plugins or third-party services during migration and post-launch? Is there a charge model that we should consider where each university pays to use the enterprise system and pays for the plug-ins?	UNC assumes the cost of paid plugins
86.	Will UNC provide an inventory list of all current plugins, integrations, and dependencies?	Refer to the response to question number 53
87.	Are there any integrations with other campus systems (e.g., Banner, PeopleSoft, Salesforce, etc.)?	Yes. Integrations with campus systems are handled through secure REST API connections to UNC-managed services. Additional integration details will be provided later in the RFP process.
88.	Are there any existing performance benchmarks UNC would like proposers to meet or exceed?	Not currently. Please include any benchmarks in your RFP response that your proposal will meet or exceed.
89.	Does UNC require accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA) or a VPAT submission?	UNC's content is required to meet WCAG 2.1 AA compliance. A VPAT or an acceptable alternative is requested as part of the proposals from vendors in response to this RFP.
90.	What version control or deployment processes are currently in use (e.g., GitHub, Bitbucket, CI/CD pipelines)?	UNC currently uses GitLab and Bitbucket for version control, with CI/CD processes managed by the hosting provider.
91.	Should pricing be presented per-site, per-resource tier, or as a flat annual fee?	Pricing should be itemized per site, instance, or service add-on, but presented as a total annual fee to support predictable budgeting and contract management.
92.	Will the pricing evaluation include both base hosting and optional add-ons (e.g., AGCDN, WAF, staging environments)?	Yes
93.	Should proposers assume pricing for unlimited data transfer or specify bandwidth tiers?	Unlimited
94.	What are the anticipated billing terms (monthly, quarterly, annually)?	Annual
95.	Are volume-based or growth-tier discounts preferred?	UNC prefers volume-based or growth-tier discounts that provide cost efficiency while maintaining predictable annual pricing.
96.	Does UNC anticipate additional sites being added each year? If so, what growth rate should be assumed for pricing scalability?	Refer to the response to question number 24
97.	Are proposers expected to include estimated migration costs in the same pricing section or submit separately?	Submit as separately

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98.	Please confirm if UNC requires a detailed Gantt-style project plan with key milestones.	UNC requires a detailed, milestone-based project plan; a Gantt chart is not mandatory if an equivalent structured timeline is provided.
99.	How many UNC staff will be involved in migration and testing?	Approximately 5-8 UNC staff will be involved in the migration and testing.
100.	Will UNC provide staging credentials and test data prior to migration?	Yes, UNC will provide staging credentials and representative test data prior to migration to support environment setup, validation, and performance testing.
101.	What is the preferred communication cadence (weekly status, biweekly calls, etc.) during implementation?	The communication cadence will adjust based on the project phase, with more frequent check-ins during critical migration periods and reduced frequency during stable phases.
102.	What is the expected go-live date following award announcement?	That's still to be determined, but the approximate go-live (migration complete) date is projected to be in early April 2026 or sooner.
103.	Will the awarded vendor be required to support post-launch training sessions or documentation for campus stakeholders?	The awarded vendor may provide limited post-launch training for the ITS Digital Services team, who will support campus users directly.
104.	Does UNC expect vendors to include onboarding sessions for Digital Services staff?	Yes. UNC expects vendors to include onboarding sessions for the ITS Digital Services team to ensure a smooth handoff and ongoing platform management.
105.	Will UNC require proposers to include additional service terms or clarifications (e.g., cloud SLAs, data retention)?	Yes. UNC may require proposers to include additional service terms or clarifications such as cloud SLAs, uptime guarantees, and data retention policies to ensure compliance with university standards.
106.	Is there an existing list of "mission-critical" or "high-visibility" sites that require prioritized migration and support?	Yes. A list of mission-critical and high-visibility sites will be provided. Priority will be given to sites such as alertcarolina.unc.edu, www.unc.edu, and other high-profile networks hosting departmental sites.
107.	What is the current annual cost of hosting and support for UNC's WordPress environment (for benchmarking)?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
108.	How many concurrent administrators and editors currently access the WordPress environment across all sites?	Refer to the response to question 43
109.	Does UNC anticipate consolidating any existing WordPress sites prior to or during migration?	UNC conducts an annual review to identify and archive abandoned sites to manage growth. Some consolidation or re-architecting may occur during migration as needed or recommended.
110.	What is the current vendor's scope of services (hosting, monitoring, plugin updates, etc.) for comparison purposes?	The current vendor provides hosting and platform-level management, including monitoring, backups, Web Application Firewall (WAF) tuning, rate limiting, and related middleware services. UNC manages the application layer, including WordPress core updates, code deployment, and plugin management.
111.	Will the awarded vendor be responsible for backup verification and periodic restore testing?	Yes. The awarded vendor will be responsible for performing and verifying backups, as well as conducting periodic restore tests to ensure data integrity and disaster recovery readiness.

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112.	Should the proposed hosting include built-in CDN (content delivery network) services, or will UNC manage CDN separately?	The proposed hosting should include a built-in CDN service for optimized performance and reliability. UNC does not plan to manage a separate CDN.
113.	Are there any preferred data center regions (e.g., US-East, US-West)?	UNC prefers data centers located within the continental United States, ideally in the U.S. East region, to ensure low latency.
114.	Does UNC expect the awarded vendor to manage WordPress version updates, plugin updates, or both?	Refer to the response to question 110
115.	Should pricing include support for 24/7 emergency response and critical incident resolution?	Yes
116.	Does UNC anticipate requiring training materials, knowledge base documentation, or support for internal training efforts?	Yes. UNC expects vendors to include onboarding sessions for the ITS Digital Services team to ensure a smooth handoff and ongoing platform management.
117.	Will the vendor work with UNC on migrating these sites, or directly with the secondary University?	In most cases (approximately 95%), the vendor will work directly with UNC ITS Digital Services to coordinate migrations. A few exceptions may involve direct collaboration with secondary university units as approved by UNC.
118.	Will features to attract a global market be considered? Items like translations, GDPR compliance, etc.	Features supporting a global market (e.g., translations, GDPR compliance) are not prioritized but will be considered based on substantial conformity with the specifications and requirements outlined in this RFP.
119.	Will any of these sites store sensitive information of users and have to comply with HIPAA compliance?	No
120.	Can you describe the current hosting setup for the university's WordPress sites, including any existing limitations or pain points with the infrastructure?	Refer to Attachment D of the RFP document
121.	What hosting provider are you currently using, and what specific challenges have you encountered with the current solution in terms of performance, scalability, or support?	Refer to the response to question 1
122.	Are there any existing issues with uptime or availability that have impacted critical services? If so, can you provide specific instances where performance did not meet expectations?	Refer to the response to question 1
123.	What specific hosting performance benchmarks (e.g., response times, maximum concurrent users) should the new solution meet, and how are these currently being tracked?	Refer to the response to question 88
124.	The RFP mentions a need for high availability and scalability. Can you clarify the specific hosting environment and infrastructure you envision (e.g., cloud, hybrid, on-premise)?	UNC envisions a cloud-based, vendor-managed environment. Vendors should propose the architecture that best meets the requirements and SLAs outlined in the RFP.

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125.	Do you have any preferred cloud providers (e.g., AWS, Azure, Google Cloud), or is the choice of provider flexible based on the best performance and cost-efficiency?	AWS for media storage
126.	What are the key scalability requirements for the new hosting solution? Specifically, are there any expected traffic spikes during certain events (e.g., semester starts, special events, or promotions) that would require additional resources?	We typically observe a decline in activity from Friday through Monday, with weekends being especially quiet. Over the course of the semester, traffic spikes tend to be less severe. The most significant surges occur during campus emergencies. For example, the largest spike recorded jumped from approximately 10 users per minute to 10,000 users per minute within just 10 minutes, followed by a sustained rate of around 5,000 users per minute for one to two days.
127.	Do you have specific security features or protocols (e.g., SSL certificates, WAF, DDoS protection) that you would like to be included with the hosting solution? What current security challenges are you facing with the existing hosting setup?	All required security features and protocols, including SSL certificates, WAF, and DDoS protection, are defined in the RFP requirements section. Vendors should ensure full alignment with those requirements. UNC does not disclose current security challenges.
128.	Is the hosting environment expected to support multi-factor authentication (MFA) for admin access or integrations with existing security systems like Single Sign-On (SSO)?	Yes, UNC would prefer a hosting environment that supports MFA and integrations with SSO.
129.	Could you clarify the current backup strategy for your hosted WordPress sites? Is there a preference for specific backup intervals (e.g., daily, weekly), and do you require both on-site and off-site backup solutions?	We currently have weekly backups. We would like to create an approach when we migrate the media uploads to a object storage service. The backups for the large uploads would be handled on the storage service, while the backups of code and database should be handled by the vendor
130.	What are the disaster recovery expectations? Specifically, are there any required recovery time objectives (RTO) or recovery point objectives (RPO) that the vendor must meet in the event of a major outage?	Refer to the response to question number 21
131.	What is the preferred method for handling data redundancy and ensuring high availability across all WordPress sites, particularly for mission-critical sites?	UNC expects a high-availability solution with built-in redundancy and failover for all sites, especially mission-critical ones. Vendors should outline their approach.
132.	Since you support multiple WordPress multisite networks, are there any specific multisite hosting performance optimizations (e.g., load balancing, content delivery networks) that should be incorporated into the hosting solution?	UNC welcomes vendor-proposed optimizations to meet the performance requirements outlined in the RFP.

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133.	Are there any unique hosting needs for specific sites within your multisite environment, such as custom configurations, caching, or database optimization for certain high-traffic sites?	Our entire multi-site setup is a unique hosting need due to the scale of the multi-sites. The large multi-sites require fine tuning to make them performant.
134.	Can you provide additional details on the expected bandwidth usage, including monthly data transfer, peak usage times, and any current limitations regarding bandwidth or network congestion?	Refer to question 44
135.	How do you expect the hosting solution to handle unexpected traffic spikes, particularly during events or seasonal surges in visitors? Is auto-scaling a preferred option?	Yes, auto-scaling is preferred. The platform should absorb unexpected surges without degradation using edge/CDN caching, elastic scaling, and WAF/DDoS protections, with no unexpected overage charges beyond the agreed annual price. Vendors should provide surge playbooks and pre-launch load testing to validate capacity.
136.	What level of support will be required for the hosting solution? Do you need 24/7 support or just business hours support? Should this support include dedicated personnel or a ticket based system?	UNC requires 24/7 support for critical incidents and business-hours support for standard requests. A ticket-based support system is acceptable, provided it includes clear escalation paths and timely communication for high-priority issues.
137.	How do you currently handle software and plugin updates for your WordPress sites, and will the new hosting solution be expected to automate updates or provide assistance with updates?	We currently use composer to update our codebase. We do not require assistance.
138.	Can you specify the expected response times for support inquiries, particularly during critical issues like downtime or performance degradation?	For critical issues such as downtime or severe performance degradation, UNC expects an initial response within 15 minutes and continuous updates until resolution. For non-critical inquiries, responses should follow standard business-hour SLAs as defined in the contract.
139.	Can you provide more details about the pricing structure you prefer for the hosting solution? Would you prefer a pay-per-use model based on actual resource consumption, or a fixed-price model for predictable budgeting?	UNC prefers a fixed annual pricing model to support predictable budgeting. However, vendors may propose tiered or scalable options if they maintain cost transparency and consistency throughout the contract term.
140.	What is the expected annual budget for hosting, maintenance, and support services, and how do you foresee this budget evolving over the course of the contract term?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC..
141.	What kind of monitoring tools would you require for the hosted environment? Should the vendor provide custom dashboards or alerts for performance, traffic, and security metrics?	The vendor should provide comprehensive monitoring and alerting tools covering performance, traffic, uptime, and security metrics. Custom dashboards or reporting options are preferred but not required, as long as they offer clear visibility into platform health and incident response.
142.	Are there any specific reporting capabilities you expect from the hosting solution, such as	Any monitoring platform provided by the vendor should offer comprehensive visibility into the hosting infrastructure, enabling the

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	usage reports, security scans, uptime reports, or resource consumption?	identification of potential issues at the application layer—particularly when managing WordPress Multisite environments. It should also facilitate end-to-end monitoring of data flows into and out of the hosting system, while delivering holistic insights into overall system health and performance.
143.	Is there any need to integrate the hosting solution with other UNC systems, such as directory services for user authentication, or email platforms for notifications and alerts?	Refer to question 87
144.	Are there any specific API or integration capabilities required to synchronize hosting with other IT infrastructure or software solutions used by UNC?	Refer to question 87
145.	What specific SLAs (Service Level Agreements) do you require regarding uptime, response time, and resolution time for critical incidents? Are there penalties or incentives associated with meeting or exceeding these SLAs?	Refer to the response to question number 69
146.	Would you require a detailed uptime SLA that guarantees 99.95% availability or higher for all hosted WordPress sites?	Yes. UNC requires a detailed uptime SLA guaranteeing at least 99.95% availability, with a preference for 99.99%, covering all hosted WordPress sites and excluding scheduled maintenance windows.
147.	Is there an opportunity to extend the submission deadline beyond November 7th?	Unfortunately, we cannot extend the submission deadline beyond November 7 th .
148.	This section mentions 'technical debt' and desire for 'better resource management'. Can you elaborate on the specific operational challenges or inefficiencies with the current hosting arrangement that prompted this RFP?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC..
149.	What does success look like 12 months post-migration?	Success will be defined by a secure, high-performance hosting environment achieving 99.99% uptime, with optimized infrastructure management and reduced middleware maintenance overhead for ITS Digital Services.
150.	What solutions have you seen a demo of in the past 12 months?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC..
151.	Beyond stated requirements of SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, and PCI-DSS, are there any additional security certifications or compliance frameworks (such as GovRAMP, FedRAMP, HIPAA or others) that would be valued or required?	At this stage in the RFP process, the only security certifications or compliance frameworks that are required are described in Section 3.3 of the RFP document. Other security certifications or compliance frameworks that the vendors proposed solution would meet or exceed may be of interest and could be included in the vendors response.

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152.	What is UNC's projected site growth over the next 3-5 years including any known initiatives (new schools, programs, digital transformation projects) that would significantly impact hosting requirements?	UNC anticipates steady, incremental growth in hosted sites over the next 3–5 years. While specific projections are not available, the university conducts annual site decommissioning and cleanup to manage growth and maintain platform efficiency.
153.	What SSO solution does UNC use today (Entra ID, SAML, OAuth, etc), and which user groups require SSO authentication? Should this apply to all sites, multisites, or specific instances?	Refer to the response to question number 6
154.	A WAF is mentioned as being required as a built-in security feature - should this be integrated with hosting or can it be a separate layer?	An integrated, vendor-managed WAF is preferred. A separate WAF layer is acceptable only if it's fully managed by the vendor and provides seamless protection, logging, and support within the same SLA.
155.	Can you characterize the level of custom development that exists across the 5,369 sites, including any heavily customized themes, must-use plugins, or custom code dependencies that would affect migration complexity or require ongoing support?	Our themes and plugins are installable via Composer, ensuring easy integration and portability. Their design minimizes migration complexity and reduces the need for ongoing support.
156.	Is there use of a Digital Asset Management (DAM) solution in use today? If yes can you share details?	UNC does not currently maintain a centralized Digital Asset Management (DAM) solution. Some individual units may use their own tools, but no system-wide DAM is in place at this time.
157.	Do you currently use S3 or another object storage solution, and if so, should the new environment integrate with existing buckets, or would you migrate to vendor-provided storage?	We would prefer to migrate to a new s3 than to vendor provided storage
158.	As we develop architecture recommendations, are there known pain points with the current multisite segmentation - such as performance bottlenecks, management challenges, sites in inappropriate networks, or unclear placement criteria for new sites - that should be considered?	UNC does not disclose internal assessments of its current multisite configuration. Vendors should focus on proposing an architecture that meets the scalability, performance, and management requirements outlined in the RFP.
159.	Will headless (decoupled) architecture be needed or considered?	Headless or decoupled architectures are not required but may be considered for specific use cases if they demonstrate clear value and substantial conformity with the RFP's requirements.
160.	To ensure our pricing proposal aligns with UNC's expectations, can you share the current annual hosting spend and a target/planned budget range for this engagement including ongoing hosting/support as well as migration?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
161.	Given the significant traffic variability noted in the RFP (100M+ monthly page views with peak events),	Budget predictability is important. UNC prefers a fixed or tiered pricing model that accommodates traffic variability without unexpected cost increases, ensuring scalability within a predictable annual budget.

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	how important is budget predictability for hosting costs?	
162.	Have unpredictable billing or overage charges been a challenge with your current hosting arrangement?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
163.	The proposal asks to align with UNC's academic and operational calendar. Are there blackout periods or preferred windows for migration activities?	Yes. Migrations should avoid peak academic periods, including the start of fall and spring semesters and final exam periods. Preferred migration windows are during summer months or academic breaks, in coordination with ITS Digital Services.
164.	When would UNC ideally want to complete the migration?	Refer to the response to question number 32
165.	What specific metrics, dashboards, or reporting cadence does UNC envision when emphasizing 'proactive, data-driven performance monitoring'?	At the application layer, pinpointing plugins that contribute to latency or resource contention is critical for performance optimization. Effective monitoring should provide visibility into the health and responsiveness of this layer, enabling proactive remediation. At the edge, it is equally important to identify anomalous IP behavior—such as traffic patterns indicative of bots or malicious actors—and implement access controls to mitigate potential threats and preserve site integrity.
166.	Are there particular performance issues or trends you want visibility into that you don't have today?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
167.	Can you provide details on the reference of UNC's 'lean staffing model' in terms of current Digital Services team size and structure, including how many FTEs are dedicated to WordPress platform management, development, and support?	UNC ITS Digital Services operates with a lean team of approximately 5-7 full-time staff responsible for WordPress platform management, development, and support across multiple university networks
168.	Can you provide insight into the expected level of ongoing support and collaboration with UNC's technical teams post-migration?	The awarded vendor is expected to maintain active collaboration with UNC's technical teams post-migration, providing ongoing platform monitoring, domain and certificate management, performance optimization, and 24/7 outage support. Routine maintenance and non-critical support should be coordinated during normal business hours to ensure smooth operations and knowledge sharing.
169.	What are UNC's expectations for support availability hours and response times for both routine and critical issues?	Refer to the response to question number 8
170.	The largest database contains 72,399 tables (tarheels.live multisite). Is this table count from active sites/content, or does it include technical debt from deleted sites or plugins that should be cleaned up during migration?	This table count is from active sites. There could be minimal orphaned tables in that count, but not many

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171.	For migration planning and assessment, will vendors be provided direct read access to current databases and media files, or will UNC provide exports/dumps through an intermediary?	For planning and assessment, vendors will not receive direct access to production databases or media files; UNC will provide approved exports or database dumps through a controlled process. For the migration phase, the awarded vendor will be granted direct access to necessary environments and data under supervised and secure conditions.
172.	Does UNC expect the new vendor to provide CDN services, or will you continue using Fastly (or similar) separately?	UNC expects the awarded vendor to provide a built-in or fully integrated CDN solution as part of the hosting platform. Existing CDN arrangements will be evaluated during transition planning.
173.	The summary of current hosting metrics mentions Average Daily Visitors, Expected Peak Traffic, and Fastly Monthly Page Views per site. Do these numbers reflect unique visitors? If not, can you please provide monthly unique visitors (MUVs) for each of the Multisite and Standalone sites along with the total monthly unique visitors across all sites combined?	The metrics provided reflect page views, not unique visitors. UNC does not currently aggregate monthly unique visitor (MUV) data across all environments. Vendors should use the provided traffic and page view figures as the basis for capacity and scalability planning.
174.	The average database size is listed at 736.74 MB and each site has the database size provided. Is it possible to share if there are other databases (and their sizes) which may factor into the migration timeline?	All databases and their sizes are included in Attachment D: Summary of Current Hosting Metrics. There are no additional databases outside those listed that would affect the migration timeline.
175.	Based on the information provided later in this document, what is qualified as "advanced traffic filtering techniques" outside of JA3 fingerprinting or bot and traffic mitigation, regarding the Web Application Firewall (WAF)?	UNC expects the WAF to include advanced traffic filtering and threat detection capabilities consistent with industry best practices. Specific methods or configurations will be determined during implementation.
176.	Which additional add-ons with AGCDN are you using today?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
177.	How is Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) mitigation implemented today?	The University requires the awarded vendor to provide robust, enterprise-grade DDoS protection integrated within the hosting and CDN layers, consistent with the security requirements outlined in the RFP.
178.	Regarding self-service site provisioning, can you provide us with information on UNC's Single Sign-On (SSO) strategy and tools that will need to be integrated with the vendor's platform?	The vendor's platform must support integration with UNC's existing Single Sign-On (SSO) through standards-based protocols managed by UNC's identity systems.
179.	Can you provide examples of what SSH and SFTP access is being used for today?	We currently use WP-CLI for managing administrative tasks across the WordPress multisite network. SFTP access is used primarily for reviewing and managing uploaded files within the environment.
180.	Does UNC leverage internal teams only or do you also work with agency partners?	UNC primarily leverages internal ITS Digital Services teams for development and maintenance. Environments are restricted to UNC

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		users, and all code is maintained internally to ensure platform stability, security, and compliance.
181.	The RFP requests media offloading (e.g., to S3). Will UNC manage media storage once the environment is set up, or is this a requirement for the vendor?	This is not a current requirement, but UNC may evaluate or utilize media offloading capabilities if supported by the vendor's platform. Vendors may include optional approaches or recommendations for future consideration.
182.	For post-migration support, what is the expected stabilization period (e.g., 30/60/90 days) during which the vendor is responsible for ensuring platform stability before UNC assumes steady-state operations?	The vendor is expected to provide continuous platform monitoring and stability support throughout the entire contract term, including an initial stabilization period defined in the contract.
183.	For features such as CDN, WAF, and DDoS protection, does UNC expect these to be included in the base hosting cost, or may they be proposed as optional, itemized services?	UNC requires annual, predictable pricing. CDN, WAF, and DDoS protection may be included in the base cost or itemized
184.	Can you provide a list of the current sub-domains, custom domains, and directory-based domains for all projects?	UNC utilizes subdomains, custom domains, and directory-based domains across its WordPress environments. A full list will be provided to the awarded vendor during migration planning.
185.	With the current focus on WordPress, do you already have plans to explore other technologies?	No
186.	Does UNC have existing contracts with Azure or AWS where a Marketplace approach would be interesting to your procurement?	UNC may consider a Marketplace-based procurement approach if it aligns with university purchasing and compliance requirements, but there are no confirmed arrangements specific to this RFP.
187.	What is the envisioned budget for this project?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
188.	In terms of the current level of services related to your evaluation criteria, can you describe your level of comfort and trust in the current solution?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
189.	Are there any specific workflow elements that you would like to streamline?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
190.	Can you describe your current WordPress hosting architecture (e.g., number of multisite networks, total installs, size/traffic of largest sites)?	Details of UNC's current WordPress hosting architecture, including the number of multisite networks, total installs, and traffic metrics, are provided in Attachment D of the RFP.
191.	What are the most significant challenges you've experienced with your current vendor?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.

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192.	How are you currently handling deployment workflows, version control, and environment management (dev/stage/prod)?	The live server is the source of truth for content. Content is cloned to dev environments for testing updates or bleeding edge code. Code is updated into a mono repo via composer and pushed to the master branch and piped on to the server.
193.	How decentralized is management today? Do site owners have admin access, or is that limited by Digital Services?	Site owners have admin access to the WordPress dashboard. Digital Services has super admin access
194.	Are there any legacy or non-WordPress components (PHP apps, static sites, etc.) that need to be hosted or integrated in the same environment?	No. The hosting environment is focused on WordPress sites only. Any non-WordPress integrations are out of scope, except for connections explicitly outlined in the RFP (e.g., SSO or related services)
195.	Do you have any existing relationships with CDN or DNS providers (e.g., Cloudflare, Akamai) that the new vendor would need to integrate with?	UNC does not have any binding relationships with specific CDN or DNS providers. The awarded vendor's platform should include or integrate with industry-standard CDN and DNS services as part of the overall hosting solution.
196.	How many sites (standalone and multisite) are expected to be migrated as part of the initial phase?	The number of standalone and multisite environments to be migrated in the initial phase is outlined in Attachment D. Migrations will be planned and executed in sprints based on site complexity and priority.
197.	Will the current vendor provide full access to source code, databases, and configurations to facilitate migration?	Yes. UNC ITS Digital Services has full access to source code, databases, and configurations and will work directly with the awarded vendor to facilitate migration and ensure a smooth transition.
198.	Are there expected blackout dates (e.g., during the academic calendar) when major cutovers or downtime are not permissible?	Refer to the response to question number 163
199.	Do you expect the vendor to perform all migrations, or will UNC's Digital Services team handle a portion with our guidance?	Refer to the response to question number 4
200.	How do you define "successful migration." Is it uptime only, or validation of site functionality, redirects, and analytics tracking?	A successful migration is expected to meet standard best practices, ensuring full functionality and data integrity across all sites
201.	What is your expected go-live timeline, and how flexible is it?	Refer to the response to question number 32
202.	Which security frameworks or compliance certifications are most important to UNC (e.g., SOC 2 Type II vs. HECVAT vs. ISO 27001)?	Refer to Section 3.3 of the RFP document. This information is included there.
203.	Will the university require vendor completion of the HECVAT (and if so, which version — Full, Lite)?	Yes. UNC requires vendors to complete the HECVAT Full version or an acceptable alternative to ensure alignment with university security and compliance standards.
204.	Are there specific university policies regarding data residency or backup location (e.g., must be in the U.S.)?	No
205.	Are you currently using or planning to use UNC's central authentication (SSO) and if so, via SAML, Shibboleth, or CAS?	Yes. UNC uses central authentication (SSO) for user access. Integration details will be provided at a later date.

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206.	How frequently are penetration tests or vulnerability assessments expected?	Periodic penetration tests and vulnerability assessments are desired and UNC is interested in vendor proposals for their frequency.
207.	Do you require integration with university-managed monitoring or SIEM tools (e.g., Splunk, Datadog)?	Splunk
208.	Are there performance KPIs (e.g., page load times, response latency) that will be used to measure vendor success?	No specific performance KPIs are defined, but performance and reliability should be prioritized and clearly demonstrated in the proposed solution.
209.	Are there restrictions on hosting provider cloud infrastructure (e.g., AWS, GCP, Azure)?	No
210.	Do you anticipate needing autoscaling for high-traffic sites (e.g., unc.edu, admissions, athletics)?	Yes, unc.edu and Alert Carolina
211.	How important is real-time cache invalidation across multisite environments to you?	Real-time cache invalidation across multisite environments is important for ensuring content accuracy and consistent performance, particularly for high-traffic or frequently updated sites, though UNC balances this with overall platform stability and resource efficiency.
212.	How are costs currently allocated to different schools/departments?	Hosting is centrally funded, though some departments may require separate billing for dedicated environments. The vendor should support direct departmental billing when needed.
213.	Would you prefer a container-based platform with isolated environments per site, or shared infrastructure within multisite clusters?	A mix of these, the solution should ensure strong isolation, security, and consistent performance across environments.
214.	Would you prefer a predictable annual contract or usage-based (elastic) billing?	Predictable annual contract.
215.	Should pricing account for self-service sites differently than enterprise-managed sites?	Yes. Pricing should differentiate between self-service and enterprise-managed sites if usage patterns or resource needs vary, while maintaining a predictable annual cost structure across all environments.
216.	Are there internal chargeback requirements we should accommodate (e.g., individual billing per department)?	Yes. UNC uses an internal chargeback model to allocate costs by department or project. The vendor's solution should support reporting or billing mechanisms that facilitate this cost distribution while maintaining a single master contract with UNC. UNC has a strong preference for vendors that can directly bill and receive payment from individual departments. Removing the requirement for internal chargeback requirements when appropriate.
217.	Do you anticipate extending this contract to other UNC System schools? If so, would pricing need to scale or vary by institution?	Please refer to section 2.6 in RFP.
218.	What does "strategic partnership" mean to UNC in practice? Regular architecture reviews, performance reports, joint governance meetings?	Refer to the response to question number 10
219.	How often do you expect vendor check-ins or quarterly business reviews (QBRs)?	Meeting cadence and business reviews will be defined during contract negotiations based on project needs and performance requirements.

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220.	What are your expectations for response time and escalation on critical incidents?	UNC expects vendor SLAs consistent with industry standards, including a 15-minute initial response for critical incidents, prompt escalation to senior engineers, and continuous communication until resolution. Non-critical issues should be addressed within standard business-hour SLAs.
221.	Would UNC be open to joint innovation pilots? For example, exploring cost optimization through environment automation or green hosting initiatives?	UNC may consider collaborative innovation pilots that align with university objectives, provided they do not affect platform stability, compliance, or cost predictability.
222.	Who will be on the evaluation committee (IT, communications, procurement, academic units)?	The evaluation committee will include representatives from technical, administrative, and procurement areas across the University. Specific membership details will not be disclosed.
223.	Beyond price and technical compliance, what differentiators are most likely to influence your final decision?	Section 5.0 of the RFP document provides information on how vendor proposals will be evaluated.
224.	Will finalists be asked to provide demos of admin dashboards, developer tooling, or migration workflows?	Yes
225.	How will you assess a vendor's ability to support your decentralized environment (i.e. references, demos, or case studies)?	Vendor capabilities will be evaluated through a combination of references, demonstrations, case studies, and other supporting materials as outlined in the RFP.
226.	What are the most important success metrics for year one of the contract?	Key success metrics for the first contract year include stable platform performance, security and compliance adherence, responsive support, and effective collaboration with UNC's technical teams.
227.	What are the most important success metrics for year one of the contract?	Refer to the response above
228.	What level of training will be required for the Digital Services team?	ITS - Digital Services team will require targeted technical training focused on platform administration, monitoring tools, and workflow integration. Comprehensive end-user training will not be necessary, as the team is already experienced with WordPress management.
229.	Are there specific reporting requirements (e.g., uptime, performance, cost utilization) that must be automated or integrated with your systems?	UNC requires regular reporting on key metrics such as performance, uptime, and resource usage.
230.	How often would you like to review optimization or architecture recommendations?	Review frequency for optimization or architecture recommendations will be defined during contract implementation based on project needs and performance goals.
231.	How do you envision the WordPress environment evolving over the next 3–5 years? Consolidation, modernization, or expansion?	Future platform direction will be guided by institutional priorities and governance decisions over time.
232.	How important is sustainability or carbon efficiency in vendor selection?	Sustainability and carbon efficiency are not defined evaluation criteria in this RFP, but vendors may include related information.
233.	Would the University consider a multi-framework hosting partner (beyond WordPress) to future-proof the environment?	This RFP is focused exclusively on WordPress hosting. Multi-framework solutions are out of scope for this procurement.

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234.	What internal metrics or goals is Digital Services accountable for (e.g., uptime SLAs, cost reduction targets, accessibility compliance)?	The Digital Services team aligns with university-wide standards for uptime, accessibility, security, and cost efficiency as outlined in the RFP requirements.
235.	With the intent to collaborate closely with Digital Services throughout onboarding, implementation, and migration, can UNC share the current hosting provider and/or platform type (e.g., cloud vs. on-prem, etc.)?	UNC's current WordPress environments are hosted on a cloud-based platform. Specific provider details will not be disclosed.
236.	Beyond features, are there specific security, compliance, and performance requirements for hosting?	Yes. Specific security, compliance, and performance requirements are defined in the requirements section of the RFP.
237.	For context, how are the sites currently configured and distributed (what is their current server setup and site management look like)?	UNC's WordPress environments are hosted on a cloud-based platform using a mix of multisite and standalone configurations managed by ITS Digital Services. Additional details are outlined in the attachments and requirements sections of the RFP.
238.	Beyond the regular vulnerability scanning of core, themes, and plugins – is the vendor expected to support the updating of plugins, or is that the responsibility of the UNC individual site administrator?	Plugin, Theme, and WordPress core updates are managed by UNC's ITS Digital Services team.
239.	To meet the scalability expectations, can UNC offer any data (historical or planned) on expected increase of sites over time (i.e. year-over-year numbers of UNC sites)?	Specific projections are not available, but annual site reviews and decommissioning help manage overall platform growth and scalability.
240.	Can you please confirm if DNS management will be under the responsibility of UNC, or will the vendor control any of the authoritative zones beyond technical support and direction?	DNS management will remain under UNC's control, primarily managed by ITS Networking. The vendor may provide technical support and guidance but will not control authoritative DNS zones
241.	Will the vendor need to provide training only for the ITS Digital Services team or also for decentralized site admins?	Training will be required only for the ITS Digital Services team. Decentralized site administrators will continue to use existing UNC-managed WordPress tools and resources.
242.	Regarding Developer Access Needs, is the vendor expected to support non-WordPress migration/integration and/or maintenance needs?	The vendor is not expected to support non-WordPress migrations or integrations, except where integration with UNC systems (such as SSO, monitoring, or security tools) is explicitly outlined in the RFP. The vendor should, however, be collaborative and provide guidance when third-party systems interact with the hosting environment.
243.	Is there a central CDN or AGCDN used among the multisites currently?	Yes. A central CDN configuration is currently in use across UNC's multisite environments. Specific implementation details are outlined in the RFP attachments.
244.	For clarity, is there an ATTACHMENT D: COST FORM not included in the RFP, with fields for vendor input?	No. Attachment D: Cost Form is included as part of the RFP and provides info for pricing.

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245.	Due to the volume of sites, we envision doing the migration in batches according to priority. Does UNC foresee the need to prioritize the migration of any site (Multisite or Standalone) over others due to specific needs (i.e. testing priority, agile strategy, redesign planning, etc.)?	Yes. UNC anticipates prioritizing high-visibility and mission-critical sites for early migration, such as www.unc.edu, alertcarolina.unc.edu, and other key departmental networks, followed by lower-priority or smaller sites in subsequent phases.
246.	which VPAT template you'd like us to use. The Information Technology Industry Council publishes several versions, and since we don't typically complete these templates, we'd like to ensure we select the correct one that meets your requirements	Vendor's responding to this RFP can complete VPAT version 2.5 Rev WCAG which can be found at https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat
247.	what type of servers your current environment is running on?	Refer to the response to question number 1
248.	What are the primary reasons for rebidding this contract now? Is it a standard procurement cycle, a need for improved performance, better cost visibility, or a change in service expectations?	This RFP is part of a standard procurement cycle to ensure continued value, performance, and alignment with UNC's security, compliance, and service requirements.
249.	Which aspects of the current platform setup, such as support responsiveness, scalability, security, or cost structure, are driving the decision to seek a new vendor?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process. This RFP is focused on identifying a vendor whose solution demonstrates substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications outlined in the RFP at the best value to UNC.
250.	We understand that the current WordPress environment includes several multisite networks and standalone sites. Is there a specific reason why these sites were separated?	Refer to the response to question number 252
251.	Similarly, are they hosted on different plans on Pantheon at the moment?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process.
252.	Would UNC consider unifying all sites onto a single multisite network or are there hard requirements to separate them?	UNC is open to vendor recommendations regarding multisite architecture. While segmentation is currently preferred to reduce security risks, single points of failure, and scalability concerns, UNC will consider unified or alternative approaches if the proposed solution effectively mitigates these risks and meets the requirements outlined in the RFP.
253.	You mention more than 360 custom domains with wildcard SSL. Would you prefer that the selected vendor handle certificate issuance and renewal for all domains, or will UNC continue to manage certificates for certain sites?	The vendor should manage certificate issuance and renewal
254.	We noticed the RFP does not specifically reference a CDN, though Attachment D metrics are drawn from Fastly and Pantheon dashboards. Could you clarify whether vendors should propose an integrated CDN solution, continue working with the	Vendors should propose an integrated CDN service

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	existing Fastly setup, or exclude CDN if this remains under ITS management?	
255.	For vendors who provide an integrated CDN as standard, would you use your own CDN provider or the vendor's?	We would use the vendor's CDN
256.	If CDN services are expected, could you please share any preferred capabilities?	WAF, VCL scripting, DDos protection, metric gathering, rate limiting at a minimum.
257.	The RFP lists a 99.9 percent uptime requirement but later has a service credit table calculating uptime from 99.95%. Which is the preferred uptime requirement?	UNC requires a minimum uptime of 99.95% across all environments. A 99.99% uptime is preferred for high-visibility or mission-critical sites.
258.	Would UNC be able to share how incident severity levels are defined and what response and resolution targets are expected for each?	UNC follows standard industry practices for defining incident severity levels. Vendors should propose clear severity classifications with corresponding response and resolution targets that align with those best practices and meet the SLA expectations outlined in the RFP.
259.	Would UNC be able to share how incident severity levels are defined and what response and resolution targets are expected for each?	Refer to question 258
260.	How is UNC currently receiving monitoring and support issue updates?	New Relic will alert an application layer issue. We have external monitoring for site outages. The host runs scans for malware in our codebase
261.	UNC mentions the need for telephone assistance, has this been used in recent years and is this a hard requirement?	If there is an emergency issue that warrants immediate response and ticketing is proving to be too slow than we need a faster way to resolve the issue. I suppose a 24/7 chat would do the same
262.	Is UNC running any log scanning / monitoring external integrations such as those required by SIEM?	Splunk
263.	Could you please confirm whether any of the hosted sites handle regulated data or private data that require assessment by different professional standards?	No sensitive data should be stored on these networks
264.	There is an outline for backup and DR expectations. Could you please confirm the desired backup retention period, as well as the desired Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO) for this service?	Refer to the response to question number 21
265.	Could you please confirm whether vendors should integrate with UNC's existing version control systems or is the expectation here for us to propose a suitable CI/CD pipeline?	UNC is flexible and open to vendor recommendations.
266.	Could you please share the intended audiences (for example, administrators, developers, or site owners) and the preferred format and cadence of training sessions?	Training will be focused on platform engineers and offered as needed, with flexibility for virtual or other suitable formats

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267.	Could you share the ideal timing for cutover and migration to help avoid peak academic and traffic periods?	Cutover and migration should be scheduled to avoid peak academic periods, including the start of semesters and final exams. The preferred window is during summer months or academic breaks, in coordination with ITS Digital Services.
268.	When evaluating proposals, which factors will matter most to UNC ITS: technical performance, cost efficiency, compliance, or partnership approach?	The criteria for evaluating proposals is outlined in section 5.2 of the RFP document. The best overall value to the University for substantially conforming proposals will matter the most when awarding this contract.
269.	Beyond meeting the stated requirements, what would make a proposal stand out to the evaluation committee?	Unfortunately, we cannot respond to that question at this stage of the RFP process.
270.	How does UNC ITS envision working with the selected vendor? Should the provider act primarily as a managed service operator or as a collaborative partner who helps guide ongoing platform development?	UNC ITS expects a collaborative managed service partner focused on infrastructure, monitoring, and optimization, generally not providing application-level support unless specifically needed.
271.	How much day-to-day involvement does ITS expect to have once the new environment is in place?	ITS Digital Services will manage WordPress updates and application-level maintenance. The vendor will be responsible for infrastructure, add-on services, and day-to-day configuration support, including SSL certificate management and related platform services.
272.	What is the average year-over-year (YoY) growth for your Multisite — both in number of sites and in disk space?	Refer to the response to question number 44
273.	Do any of these sites require a reverse proxy to be set up? If yes: How many subsites & sites?	Refer to the response to question number 47
274.	Do you require Redis caching? If yes: How many environments are needed?	All of them
275.	For standalone sites, how many current users need backend access to add articles or content?	Refer to the response to question number 43
276.	Do you currently have a Cloudflare account set up to manage bot traffic?	No
277.	Are there any anticipated projects (multisite or large single-site) that we should be aware of, which will require their own environments?	Refer to the response to question number 42
278.	On page 41, can you clarify whether the media library is being offloaded or if it needs to be hosted by supplier? You mention in section 3.5.5 that you request media offloading support—please clarify	Refer to the response to question 24
279.	Do you require a staging or development environment for each site?	Yes, we'd prefer a couple environments for each site