



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Department: Communications and Marketing	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) NO. 03032026VLG
Due Date: March 17, 2026, by 5:00PM EST	Issue Date: March 3, 2026
Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries regarding this RFI to: Veronica Green IT Services Category Manager Veronica.Green@UNC.edu	Description: Redesign and Development of University Website www.unc.edu and The Well, webpage.

RFI SUBMITTAL: Vendor’s response to this RFI must be submitted through the Sourcing Tool. For training on how to use the Sourcing Tool to Vendors should go to the following site:
<https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/vendor-training>.

Questions or issues related to using the Sourcing Tool itself can be directed to the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440, Option 2. Help Desk representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM EST to 5:00 PM EST.

NOTICE TO VENDOR

Request for Information (RFI) will be received electronically via eVP the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP), <https://evp.nc.gov>, until March 17,2026 by 5:00PM EST

QUESTIONS

Submit written questions to Veronica Green until March 10.2026. Questions may be submitted by e-mail to [Veronica.Green@UNC.EDU Please insert “**RFI No. 03032026VLG Questions**” in the subject matter of your e-mail. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP), <https://evp.nc.gov>, as an addendum to this RFI.

EXECUTION

VENDOR NAME:	E-MAIL:	
STREET ADDRESS:	P.O. BOX:	ZIP:
CITY & STATE:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:	TOLL FREE TEL. NO:
TYPE OR PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING:	FAX NUMBER:	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	



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1.0 OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE

The intent of this Request for Information (RFI) is to gather information for a possible future solicitation, which may result in a contract for The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for its Department of Marketing and Communications. (Department).

THE DEPARTMENT MAKES NO COMMITMENT TO ACQUIRE ANY SERVICES UNDER THIS RFI. DEPARTMENT WILL NOT PAY FOR INFORMATION RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE RFI. THE VENDOR SOLEY BEARS ANY COSTS INCURRED IN PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF A RESPONSE.

This RFI is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation. Responses to the RFI will not be returned nor will the Department confirm receipt of the RFI response. Whatever information is provided in response to this RFI will be used to assess tradeoffs and alternatives available for determining how to proceed in the acquisition process. Responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Department to form a binding contract.

All interested vendors are requested to provide a written response to the request below. A response to this RFI is necessary to assist the Department in determining the potential levels of interest, adequate competition, market maturity, and service capabilities within the business community.

The Department requests detailed vendor specific and industry standard information on how your firm would address the items in the following sections of this RFI.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Department is conducting this RFI as market research to determine variables to consider for a Redesign and Development of University Website www.unc.edu and The Well, webpage

Based on the responses to this RFI, Department may further solicit for the requirements that most meet its needs regarding cost, performance, delivery method, growth potential, scalability and least disruptive to operations.

3.0 BACKGROUND & CURRENT STATUS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first public university, is a global higher education leader guided by the principle of *First. And For All.* A member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, Carolina is ranked No. 1 in best value for academic quality in U.S. public higher education. Carolina is committed to ensuring that every student who earns admission can come to Carolina and thrive. Addressing the greatest challenges of our time through innovative teaching, research and public service, Carolina is an engine of opportunity for the next generation of students, the economy and public progress in North Carolina and beyond. Carolina facts and figures can be found on the [By the Numbers webpage](#).

4.0 RFI PROCEDURES

The Department recognizes that considerable effort may be required in preparing a response to this RFI. **However, respondents are advised that this is a request for information only, and not a request for services.** Respondents shall bear all costs for preparing their RFI response. Respondents to this RFI are asked to be thorough and concise.



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Entities who submit documentation in response to this RFI may be invited to present their ideas. An in-person presentation by an entity that submits documentation or participates in discussion or demonstrations in response to this RFI will not serve as a basis for precluding that entity from responding to any future solicitation regarding handling and disposition services.

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFI, and all documentation submitted by the various respondents shall become the property of the Department when received. The responses to this RFI, any follow-up questions and presentations to the Department may be used to develop any future solicitation.

5.0 Schedule

Respondents will have two (2) weeks to prepare their submissions to this RFI. Responses must be received by the date and time specified in this RFI. Respondents may also be invited to present and discuss their solutions. This could be virtually or in person. Respondents will be notified of the specific date and time at least two (2) weeks in advance of their presentation.

6.0 Clarification Questions

Clarification questions regarding this RFI will be accepted until March 9, 2026. All questions must be submitted in writing to the email address specified on the cover sheet of this RFI. An addendum containing clarification questions, and their answers will be issued as an addendum to this RFI, though eVP.

7.0 Response

The Department is not interested in brochures or “boilerplate” responses. Instead, responses should clearly define how the Vendor’s proposed solution(s) would meet the Department’s business requirements. Any issues or exceptions to the Department’s requirements should also be identified and explained in detail. The Vendor shall provide the following in their response:

1. Executed RFI

2. Transmittal Letter

The transmittal letter should be in the form of a standard business letter and should be signed by a respondent-authorized individual.

3. General Information

Respondent information:

- a) Name of Company
- b) Contact Person
- c) Address, Telephone Number, Email Address
- d) Brief history of company



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4. Required Agency Qualifications:

- Three examples of redesigns and documents outlining each process, with the inclusion of at least one .edu redesign if vendor has completed one in the past year. As this work will be on a WordPress site, any examples of development for WordPress will be critical.
- References from current clients who received the same services as described in the RFI response
- Team bios, including each person's responsibilities and expertise.

5. Desired Agency Qualifications:

- Knowledge of the opportunities and challenges associated with a collaborative creative process in the higher education environment.
- Familiarity with UNC-Chapel Hill.

6. Content

Interested firms shall submit a response to this RFI together with:

- Marketing materials including information on your firm
- Detailed description of the product(s), services and capabilities available to the Department
- Representative cost estimates
- Recommended implementation strategy
- Timeline estimates

The response should define all services that will be required by the proposed solution. The response should also include:

- The vendor's understanding of the project and services by addressing the Department's business requirements;
- An estimated total cost of ownership for the solution including continued compliance with emerging industry standards.

7. Cost and Schedule Estimates

These cost estimates are not formal quotes and have no bearing on any future solicitation for solutions. This information is for research and planning purposes only.

- Cost Estimates for initial solution implementation to include hardware, software and services.



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- Cost Estimate for total cost of ownership
- Define any limitations to cost estimates
- Describe DEPARTMENT resources required to implement and support solution
- Describe all related charges or fees, for a solution proposed.

8. Multiple Responses

Multiple responses will be accepted from a single vendor provided that each response is comprehensive, meets all of the state's requirements, and is truly unique. Please submit responses separately and clearly indicate responses as "Response #1, Response #2, etc.

8.0 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

In accordance with 09 NCAC 06B.0103 the State may maintain confidentiality of certain types of information described in N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-1 *et. seq.* Such information may include trades secrets defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-1.2. Respondents may designate appropriate portions of its response confidential, consistent with and to the extent permitted under the Rules and Statutes set forth above, by marking the pages containing confidential information with boldface type at the top and bottom of each such page stating "**CONFIDENTIAL.**" By so marking any page, the Respondent warrants that it has formed a good faith opinion, having received such necessary or proper review by counsel and other knowledgeable advisers that the portions marked confidential meet the requirements of the Rules and Statutes set forth above. The State may serve as custodian of Respondent's confidential information and not as an arbiter of claims against Respondent's assertion of confidentiality. If an action is brought pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-9 to compel the State to disclose information marked confidential, the Respondent agrees that it will intervene in the action through its counsel and participate in defending the State, including any public official(s) or public employee(s). The Respondent agrees that it shall hold the State and any official(s) and individual(s) harmless from any and all damages, costs, and attorney's fees awarded against the State or official or individual in the action. The State agrees to promptly notify the Respondent in writing of any action seeking to compel disclosure of Respondent's confidential information. The State shall have the right, at its option and expense, to participate in the defense of the action through its counsel. The State shall have no liability to Respondent with respect to the disclosure of Respondent's confidential information ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-9 or other applicable law.

All information received in response to the RFI that is marked Confidential will be handled accordingly. The Department shall not be liable for or suffer any consequential damages for any proprietary information submitted and not properly identified. Proprietary information will be safeguarded in accordance with the applicable state regulations.

9.0 SCOPE OF WORK AND KEY DELIVERABLES:

Strategic Goal: Content Distribution and Manager Customization

Our content and key information is at the heart of the new website. After content producers submit their work, unit managers should be empowered to localize their content and reach their specific audiences through a distributed site ownership model.



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1. School/Unit Unique Landing Pages (Customization & Management)

- Structure: Each major school and selected unit will be assigned a managed sub-site or dedicated landing page within WordPress.
- Customization: Unit-level managers (site admins) should have the flexibility to customize the design and content of their pages using pre-approved, branded templates and a user-friendly block-based editing experience using approved patterns, templates and components. This ensures a unique, tailored presentation for their news and research while maintaining network consistency.
- Content Aggregation (Pooling): These pages should be designed to syndicate relevant news from the central content hub, but they should prioritize and localize the unit's own stories. All university stories must be categorized by interest topics (e.g., Health & Science, Arts & Culture) for easy sorting and syndication.

2. Seamless Content Distribution Functionality (Audience Reach)

- Distribution: We would like to more easily integrate our content with a newsletter platform.
- Design Composer: A user-friendly block-based editing experience should be deployed in WordPress.
- Integrated Lists: As part of the distribution, we are curious about how integrations would connect with the University's centralized email lists (leveraging SSO/directory integration) to ensure secure, targeted distribution to faculty, students, and external subscribers.

Strategic Goal: Efficient Content Creation

We are interested in options to create a more productive workflow for our content team. Currently, our editorial and digital production teams are tasked with finding related content, selecting content categories and tags, suggesting headlines for all platforms and newsletters, and working with the social media team on copy. We are bullish on AI and curious about its capabilities here, but interested in all options to enhance the efficiency of both content creation (ease of use) and consumption (speed/personalization).

Platform Function	Goals for Ease of Use & Speed
Content Creation & Workflow	Automated Content Versioning: Create various outputs from a single article, including summarization for newsletters, drafting platform-specific social media posts , and generating metadata (tags, categories).
Research & Editing	Assisted Editing: Help draft potential headlines and summaries , and perform preliminary copyediting and



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	language tasks to significantly accelerate the editorial production process.
Audience Personalization	Content Recommendations: Analyze user behavior and preferences to deliver tailored content recommendations and a personalized homepage feed to users. This addresses the goal of directing users to "other stories of interest".
Search & Discovery	Enhanced Search Functionality: Maintain a smarter, more refined search engine that can understand intent and recognize elements within content. This directly addresses the existing difficulty in finding older content.

Strategic Goal: User Experience (UX) & Design

The design and user experience should mirror the principles of a premium digital newsroom, specifically using the Nike Newsroom as a guide. Written stories will be accompanied by dynamic photo galleries and occasionally video. These stories should be easy for users to find and for editors to distribute across channels.

We reach a variety of consumers — prospective students and families, researchers, faculty and staff, alumni and current students, among them. The platform should be easy for all to navigate and find the key information they are looking for.

UX Principle	Implementation Detail
Clean & Uncluttered Layout	We prefer designs with low cognitive load , using ample negative space and clear hierarchy to ensure information is easy to digest.
Intuitive Navigation & Speed	Our current navigation lacks clarity. We hope to build a new one that is intuitive and highly efficient , prioritizing speed and simplicity for the user journey to find relevant university information and news stories.
Visual Storytelling & Brand Consistency	Our unified brand identity is a major priority. We'd like a consistent visual experience (alignment and rhythm) with high-quality visuals to create a premium feel that aligns with the University's brand identity.



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Emotional Connection	Currently, we have few options for story presentations that look like anything more than a traditional news story. We are interested in expanding that, creating presentations that lean on emotional narrative and inspiration to foster a deeper connection with the audience.
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PLATFORM DETAILS:

The proposed solution must be feasible within the University's extensive and centrally managed web ecosystem.

- **Platform:** The core content management system is within a single WordPress site architecture, separate from the University's multi-site networks. While the University supports more than 5,000 WordPress sites campus-wide, this project must fit the specific architecture and hosting constraints of that installation. The system currently supports over 5,000 active websites.
- **Hosting:** The environment is hosted on Pantheon.
- **Constraints:** All design and functionality must be feasible within a WordPress environment, adhering to an approved base theme, component library, and WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards. Solutions must prioritize performance, scalability, and maintainability and avoid proprietary plugins or complex customizations. Third-party plugins and services should be minimized; any proposed commercial plugins or SaaS tools must be explicitly identified with licensing and renewal costs, support expectations, security update practices and an exit/replace strategy. All functional features must be modular and loosely coupled. Each feature should be independently deployable, configurable and removable without impacting other features, content or core site functionality.
- **Integration:** The design must ensure seamless integration with existing University systems, including Single Sign-On (SSO) for authentication.