



2015-16 Brand Enhancement Initiative

A Two-Phase Project:

- 1) Marketing Research,**
- 2) Brand Mapping, Future Brand Strategy
and Design/Messaging Recommendations**

Proposal Invitation

Eastern Michigan University seeks proposals from select suppliers that provide Marketing Research, Brand Mapping and Brand Strategy to successfully build on the University's image, reputation, awareness and continue recent enrollment growth.

The University has experienced considerable success, generated positive awareness and invested significantly over the past five-plus years in the "Education First" brand slogan and the "TRUEMU" integrated marketing campaign. The question we are considering is whether to continue to evolve this highly recognized and effective campaign with a new branding partner, or to move in a new direction.

This will be a two-phase process, with Phase I focusing on research and recommendations; and, Phase II focusing on the development of messaging and a new or revitalized brand look and feel. The new brand look and feel will follow one of two possible directions as stated, either: 1) evolve our current TRUEMU/Education First campaign and slogan; or 2) introduce an entirely new campaign and approach.

The University will make the determination on the future direction of the University's branding efforts at the conclusion Phase I of this project.

Eastern Michigan University

Founded in 1849, Eastern Michigan University is located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. EMU serves nearly 23,000 students who are pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist, doctoral and certificate degrees in the arts, sciences and professions. In all, more than 200 majors, minors and concentrations are delivered through EMU's five colleges: College of Arts and Sciences; College of Business; College of Education; College of Health and Human Services; and, College of Technology.

EMU is regularly recognized by national publications for its excellence, diversity, community focus and commitment to applied education and research. *The Princeton Review* has named EMU a "Best in the Midwest" every year since 2003.

In fall 2015, EMU enrolled its second largest class of incoming freshmen in its 166-year history, growing by 42 percent since 2010. Students are better prepared academically with higher GPAs and ACT scores. Average grade point averages of incoming students have increased from 3.1 to 3.3 since 2010. Average ACT scores have increased from 21 to 22 over that same period. More students are living on campus in university residence halls and apartments, and The Honors College has doubled in size since 2011.

Eastern takes great pride in having one of the most diverse campuses in Michigan. The incoming freshman class this fall is 23 percent African American and 6.5 percent Hispanic.

Phase I Overview

Research and Recommendations

Overall Goals

We want to better understand current perceptions of the EMU brand:

- What is the unique value that EMU brings to our students and key stakeholders?
- What does the public see as the EMU brand?
- What are our points of distinction relative to peer institutions?

Understanding this information will help us build and evolve our university strategic integrated marketing communications plan.

Provide recommendations and pros/cons regarding 1) evolving our current TRUEMU/Education First campaigns and slogans with a possible new look and feel and 2) the introduction of an entirely new brand and approach.

Research

Describe how you would conduct comprehensive research. Explain proposed methodology, process and approach (length of time, number of respondents, costs, etc.).

The research should address key areas, such as:

- What level of brand awareness does EMU have and what distinguishes EMU in the Michigan higher education marketplace?
- What motivates prospective students to inquire or apply to EMU?
- What causes students to select other institutions over EMU?
- What programs are most likely to present opportunities to increase applications and strengthen yield?
- What are EMU's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities (to penetrate existing markets and establish new ones) and threats (institutional, environmental or market specific)? Include perceptions of academic quality, diversity and campus/community safety in this evaluation.
- What are the awareness and favorability levels of the university slogan, "Education First," and marketing campaign, "TRUEMU"?
- What are the awareness and favorability levels of our social media efforts?
- What are the most effective mediums (TV, radio, billboards, pay-per-click, online ads, etc.) to reach prospective students?

Deliverables

At the conclusion of Phase I, the successful consultant will deliver to EMU the following items:

- Comprehensive market research study (with full data) to identify the factors that influence prospective students' interest in the university. Included in the study should be qualitative and quantitative research results of current perceptions of:
 - EMU
 - "Education First" brand slogan
 - "TRUEMU" integrated marketing campaign
- Comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the findings with clear, concise and compelling recommendations to improve overall image, reputation and awareness perceptions and increase new student enrollment.
- Description of EMU's brand attributes and distinct characteristics relative to those of key peer institutions, including:
 - Central Michigan University: **cmich.edu**
 - Ferris State University: **ferris.edu**
 - Grand Valley State University: **gvsu.edu**
 - Oakland University: **oakland.edu**
 - University of Toledo: **utoledo.edu**
 - Wayne State University: **wayne.edu**
 - Western Michigan University: **wmich.edu**
- Competitive brand mapping of EMU and our peers to visually represent strengths and opportunities.
- An overview of messages that will resonate with our key audiences.
- Recommendations and pros and cons for:
 - 1) Evolving our current TRUEMU/Education First campaigns and slogans with a possible new look and feel.
- Recommendations and pros and cons for:
 - 2) Why a new single brand strategy/theme should be considered and detail how it will draw even more "buzz" in the marketplace than "TRUEMU," offering clear, compelling and concise reasons for this position.
- Recommendations of best practices for engagement with key audiences: social media, digital media, mobile media, traditional (radio, TV, outdoor), SEO and nontraditional media.
- **WebEx presentation of the deliverables (listed above) to EMU Marketing and Communication team. Date and time will be determined.**

Phase II Overview

Branding Design, Key Message Development, Implementation Plan

Based on the outcome of Phase I and the determination by the EMU team and external branding partner of whether to evolve the current TRUEMU/Education First brand campaign with new designs, look, feel and messaging OR create an entirely new branding campaign, the selected partner will work with the University to develop branding concepts, designs, possible taglines and messaging.

Overall Goals

- Recommend image and student recruitment strategies, communications and advertising practices in order to broaden the university's presence and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of reaching and communicating with prospective students and their parents.
- Position EMU for measurable gains in awareness, favorability, market position, consideration, academic quality and interaction with prospective students in the 2016 Student-View Report and future Student-View Reports.
- Recommend strategies to drive new student enrollment gains in fall 2016 and beyond, which include:
 - Increase prospective student inquiries, open house visits, contacts for more information and campus visits.
 - Increase open house attendance.
 - Increase EMU's positioning as a college of first choice on FAFSA.
- Improve positive image perceptions among key stakeholders as measured in future annual surveys (alumni, etc.).

Deliverables

At the conclusion of Phase II, the successful consultant will deliver to EMU the following items:

- 3-5 branding design concepts with rationale.
- 3-5 tagline options with rationale.
- Key messages for each of the concepts presented.
- Ongoing work with the University to finalize one of the design concepts and taglines.
- Detailed implementation/rollout plan and strategy.

Proposal Requirements

Proposal submissions are due (uploaded into PublicPurchase.com) by 5:00pm EST Friday October 30, 2015. The submitted proposal must be comprehensive by including all services and costs (Schedule A) to meet the business and technical requirements of the university as outlined in this RFP. In addition, the proposal must identify a detailed approach/methodology, staffing requirements and any assumptions to complete the proposed work.

1. **Present a proposal that addresses all components described above for each Phase. Proposal should include separate pricing and timelines for each Phase.**
2. Describe the history of your company and success researching and developing effective brand strategies for similar institutions.
3. Provide an overview of your brand development services and philosophies, including primary areas in which you feel you can impact a client's brand. Describe the marketing philosophies and best practices you would employ. Describe your experience working with diverse cultures.
4. Share two examples of successful university research and branding case studies that exhibit creativity, innovation, and collaboration.
5. Experience with higher education institutions, both public and private:
 - List all that you currently represent.
 - List all that you have worked with in the past five years.
 - List all Mid-American Conference (MAC) or Michigan-based institutions that you have worked with in the past 10 years.
6. Provide information on your proposed team for this project and how the team would interface with the University.
7. Provide a list of three client references (institution, name, phone and email).
8. **Please provide a milestones calendar, including the number of weeks and major activities each Phase will require. Phase I work is expected to begin on or before Friday November 13, 2015.**

Your response to this RFP indicates your understanding that this is *not* a contract or offer of business at EMU. Those submitting proposals do so entirely at their expense. Submission of any proposal indicates acceptance of all conditions in the RFP unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal.

If a firm intends to subcontract any of the work included in its proposal, such subcontracting must be clearly identified in the proposal.

The proposal submitted is the document the University will use to make its judgment regarding the firm's qualifications, references, ability to complete the scope of work and services requested.

At no cost to EMU, the selected supplier will be required to work with the University to develop a detailed Statement of Work and Approved Budget that would become a key part of the contract and would take precedence over the proposal response.

The University reserves the right to accept any and all proposals in whole or in part, to waive any and

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all informalities, and to disregard all non-conforming, non-responsive or conditional proposals.