



December 5, 2023

TO ALL PROSPECTIVE OFFERORS

The University of the District of Columbia, Office of Contracting and Procurement, kindly submits responses to questions in preparing your responses to Solicitation No. GF-2024-R-0016 for Branding and Marketing Services.

Thank you for your consideration and participation.

Denise Joyner

Denise Joyner
Contract Specialist

- 1. What are the primary barriers impacting UDC enrollment today (e.g., lack of awareness, cost of enrollment, perception of value/quality, etc.)? What are the primary concerns with the brand identity as it is today?**

The primary barriers impacting UDC's enrollment include working without a CRM, navigating a manual enrollment process and having limited promotional materials to attract students.

There are several primary concerns with UDC's brand identity. The University is primarily a commuter school with nearly half of its enrollment in its Community College. The University struggles to increase awareness and combat poor perceptions among some District residents. It is seeking marketing support to drive home its identity as the District's only public higher education institution that offers a high-quality, affordable education—a first-choice institution—while honoring its legacy as an HBCU.

- 2. In addition to refreshing the brand identity, are you looking for support with positioning UDC? If so, can you elaborate on the positioning challenges UDC has experienced?**

Yes, the University is seeking support with its positioning. The University is currently undergoing a new strategic plan. The strategic plan is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2024. The University's vision is to serve as a leading national public urban University through:

- Excellence in student achievement
- Strong alignment with local workforce needs
- Impactful service to the community

- 3. Why now? Is this RFP being issued due to a procurement requirement or a need to improve existing marketing efforts?**

UDC is seeking to increase enrollment starting with fall 2024 and bolster overall marketing efforts. However, UDC's marketing and communication efforts are limited due to staffing resource expertise. Two of its priorities are to establish and elevate its brand identity and support its Enrollment Management efforts. UDC doesn't have the capacity to properly engage in and support this work.

- 4. Are you working with any other agencies to deliver on the services outlined in this RFP? If so, have they been invited to participate in this RFP process?**

No, the University is not working with any other companies, but it does contract freelancers to support photography, content creation and minor graphic design, as needed.

The photography, content creation and graphic design work will be handled primarily by the awarded firm and managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications.

5. What exists in terms of marketing and enrollment strategies that have been used to drive past efforts?

In 2018-19, UDC launched its Pathways to Possible brand campaign, which included radio and television spots, outdoor ads, video and paid digital media. In 2022, previous radio and TV spots were re-run.

To further support Enrollment Management Services efforts, UDC currently partners with Blackboard Anthology to help with recruitment through paid digital ads (both branded and targeted program campaigns) and prospective student nurturing management. Paid digital advertisements are primarily run on Google Ads, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. Sometimes, it runs them on Twitter/X, depending on the content.

6. Can you elaborate on what One UDC means and how this was conceived/how this is being used across comms?

When the University selected its 10th President, Maurice Edington, Ph.D., in August 2023, his vision was to establish “One UDC” to unify the campuses. The University has multiple campuses with different identities: The Van Ness Campus in Northwest Washington is our flagship campus housing our law school, student center, athletics courts, theater, and administration buildings. Our Lamond-Riggs Campus in Northeast Washington houses our Community College and part of our Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning programs. Our Congress Heights Campus in Southeast Washington also houses our Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning programs. UDC also has a hangar at Reagan National Airport where its students take part in Airplane Mechanical and Technical programs.

One UDC could be a campaign, although the primary message should be related to the identity goals outlined within the forthcoming strategic plan.

7. What audience-specific sentiment research exists today? Have you engaged current and/or prospective students recently?

UDC’s Enrollment Services team is working with MarketView Solutions, a data and analytics integration tool, to generate historical data for the University. Enrollment Services has combined its daily admissions caseload to populate this data.

8. Will we have access to analytics platforms and past campaign performance reports?

The University doesn’t have a CRM in place to track data and performance. Macro data on students and prospective students can be shared with the awarded firm, including the ability to collect further research.

9. What are the primary geographies that UDC pulls candidates from (e.g., local, regional, national)?

UDC attracts and enrolls students primarily from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia as well as international students.

10. What is the priority in terms of growing enrollment (e.g., undergrad, grad, workforce development, community college)?

UDC welcomes all students who are interested in achieving higher education goals. Enrollment Management Services has set a goal of 3 percent annual growth, targeting undergraduate students, especially those who are in school for the first time. The Enrollment team has set a recruitment goal of 1,283 students for fall 2024. The team is using recruitment events such as high school visits, admit days where students can visit any campus and sit in on classes and college fairs to drive that goal. In addition, Enrollment monitors its caseload report to assist students in completing their applications through phone calls, text messages and emails.

11. What should we expect in terms of a media budget to support marketing efforts?

The media budget will be determined based on recommendations by the awarded firm and working collaboratively with the Office of Marketing and Communications.

12. What exists today in terms of an image and asset library to support campaign execution? Has the University set aside budget specific to this task per the request for support in the RFP?

UDC has existing libraries and continues to expand its content, video and photography libraries. Yes, in early 2024, the Office of Marketing and Communications is scheduling photo and video shoots to expand its library and address any gaps in visual materials. UDC will provide content, video and photography assets for this engagement.

13. What does the internal UDC MarCom team look like? Please elaborate on skillsets currently on staff (e.g., web team, creative development, content development, etc.).

The Office of Marketing and Communications Organization Chart is as follows:

Vice President: Drives marketing and communications vision and strategy for the University, supports the President and manages the department budget and resources.

Assistant Vice President: Supports the Vice President and oversees communications and marketing. Will lead engagement with the awarded firm.

Assistant Director, Media Relations: Oversees positioning of UDC through media engagement.

Senior Editor: Oversees, assigns and edits content.

Social Media Manager: Manages and monitors social media accounts and covers events.

Web & Digital Manager: Manages website development, marketing emails and small design projects. Currently, managing the website redesign to be launched in summer 2024.

Writers: serve as communications staff for the President and cover University matters.

UDC TV: Films University's signature events.

14. As we consider the brand refresh, who are the internal UDC stakeholders that will have a voice in decision-making on behalf of the brand?

The Office of Marketing and Communications will be the primary voice and decision-maker in any branding updates. The team will seek input from senior leadership and other appropriate stakeholders, as needed.

15. What does an ideal agency partnership look like?

Ideally, the awarded firm will take the lead on conducting research to elevate UDC's identity and attract more students, recommending and implementing messaging and content for UDC's Office of Marketing and Communications, with support from internal staff.

16. How many agencies have been invited to respond to the RFP?

This is an open RFP process. As such, there is no limit on the number of respondents.

17. The RFP mentions a fixed fee agreement, what is the maximum contract value for the first year of this engagement?

The maximum contract value for the base period shall not exceed \$120,000 by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2024.

18. What is the total allowable budget allocated for this project?

The maximum value will be determined for each option period upon providing UDC with a quote for each option period.

19. What is your specific recruitment goal? What is driving it?

UDC welcomes all students who are interested in achieving higher education goals. Enrollment Management Services has set a goal of 3 percent annual growth, targeting undergraduate students, especially those who are in school for the first time. The Enrollment team has set a recruitment goal of 1,283 students for fall 2024. The team is using recruitment events such as high school visits, admit days where students can visit any campus and sit in on classes and college fairs to drive that goal. In addition, Enrollment monitors its caseload report to assist students in completing their applications through phone calls, text messages and emails.

20. What type of recruitment activities are you referring to?

- High School Visits
- College Fairs
- Spring Open House
- Spring High School Counselor Event
- Admit Days
- Marketing campaigns, including paid media
- University website udc.edu

21. Is the “One UDC” theme going to be used as a one-year theme or as the home base for the brand? Why or why not?

When the University selected its 10th President, Maurice Edington, Ph.D., in August 2023, his vision was to establish “One UDC” to unify the campuses. The University has multiple campuses with different identities: The Van Ness Campus in Northwest Washington is our flagship campus housing our law school, student center, athletics courts, theater, UDC TV and administration buildings. Our Lamond-Riggs Campus in Northeast Washington houses our Community College and part of our Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning programs. Our Congress Heights Campus in Southeast Washington also houses our Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning programs. UDC also has a hangar at Reagan National Airport where its students take part in Airplane Mechanical and Technical programs.

One UDC could be a campaign, although the primary message should be related to the identity goals outlined within the forthcoming strategic plan.

22. What work has been done to date to inform and/or create a refreshed brand identity?

In 2018-19, UDC launched its Pathways to Possible brand campaign, which included radio and television spots, outdoor ads, video and paid digital media. In 2022, previous radio and TV spots were re-run.

23. Does UDC have a robust library of current video and photography?

UDC has existing libraries and continues to expand its content, video and photography libraries. Yes, in early 2024, the Office of Marketing and Communications is scheduling photo and video shoots to expand its library and address any gaps in visual materials. UDC will provide content, video and photography assets for this engagement.

24. Based on your previous experience, does UDC expect to need multiple film production shoots during the course of this initial engagement?

During the base period, it is possible we may produce several projects. The Office of Marketing and Communications does have internal staff with the capacity to capture photos and small-scale video productions.

25. What is UDC's current capacity and approach to creating print publications? How many publications are currently being produced? What is the average length of each publication? Is the vendor expected to handle printing of the publications?

The Marketing and Communications team typically works with a contractor to create larger collateral pieces; smaller projects are handled by the staff and freelancers. Currently, none are being produced. UDC's most recent publication was a 36-page "Welcome" booklet, however, there is no set schedule of projects. No, the awarded firm does not need to handle the printing.

26. Do you have an existing paid media budget? If so, what is it?

No, we do not have an existing media budget. However, the media budget will be determined based on recommendations by the awarded firm and working collaboratively with the Office of Marketing and Communications.

27. The RFP mentions ads for UDC owned channels (digital + traditional) – do you currently advertise elsewhere? If so, where?

To further support Enrollment Management Services efforts, UDC partners with Blackboard Anthology to help with recruitment through paid digital ads (both branded and targeted program campaigns) and prospective student nurturing management. Paid digital advertisements are primarily run on Google Ads, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. Sometimes, it runs them on Twitter/X, depending on the content.

28. Do you have staff capacity to design and/or produce advertising materials? Or will that rest solely with the vendor?

The Marketing and Communications team typically works with a contractor to create larger collateral pieces; smaller projects are handled by the staff and freelancers. Currently, none are being produced. UDC's most recent publication was a 36-page "Welcome" booklet, however, there is no set schedule of projects. No, the awarded firm does not need to handle the printing.

29. Will UDC be developing a new website? If selected, will our role be to provide counsel and guidance or design and development?

Yes, there will be a new website in 2024. No, the awarded firm will not be required to provide counsel, guidance, design or development on the new site.

30. Is UDC looking for support in creating individual social media posts OR higher-level strategy? If individual posts, how many individual posts does UDC anticipate per month?

Yes, the team expects the awarded firm to collaborate with its staff in developing strategy. UDC anticipates up to a dozen posts per month.