Listed below are vendor questions that were received and their corresponding answers to RFB# AA14-RH-4828 – Contract: Marketing Communications Services

Vendors are required to utilize the information contained in this Addendum.

Failure to include information in this Addendum is grounds for rejection of their response by the University.

The original bid opening date will remain as originally scheduled for – Thursday, June 13, 2013 @ 1:00 pm EDST

**Question # 1:** Many colleges and grad schools inside Universities succeed based on the reputation and work of key faculty members. This is particularly true for specialty institutions. In fact, Purdue advertises that they have 40 award-winning professors in the Agriculture Department. What is the national stature of the SSA staff? Your site shows 26 new faculty members. Do you view any individual professors as providing a competitive advantage vs. other schools? Can we use them in marketing communications?

**Answer # 1:**

Several members of our faculty have national and international stature. Examples include the following:

- John Gerber is a national leader in sustainability and is recognized as guiding education in sustainable agriculture.
- Baoshan Xing is an international icon in soil science, recently being named a fellow of both the Agronomy Society of America and the Soil Science Society of America.
- Lyle Craker is an authority on herbs, spices, and medicinal plants, and is invited to speak in all parts of the world.
- Our turfgrass science faculty has recently been congratulated on the spectacular success of their students; a UMass team of students won the National Turf Bowl, a competition conducted to assess proficiency in the area of turfgrass science. They beat teams from Penn State, Cornell, Michigan State, Ohio State, etc.

There are many examples of faculty success and recognition, and certainly, the faculty can be used in marketing communications.

**Question # 2:** What is the desired connectivity to UMass at Large? Most Agricultural schools operate inside the fabric of the University? Only a few, including Stockbridge, appear quite independent. Is SSA’s strategy to be more connected or less connected to UMass than may be perceived currently?

**Answer # 2:**

The Stockbridge School of Agriculture is a school within the College of Natural Sciences at UMass Amherst. We wish to appear unique but not separate. We want to be very obviously part of UMass. Actually, we want to be seen as the foundation of UMass. Realize that UMass began as Massachusetts Agricultural College. Levi Stockbridge (for whom we are named) was the first professor of agriculture. We represent the beginnings of UMass but are also integral to its future.
Question # 3: Most competitive Agricultural Colleges seems to offer a broader curriculum than SSA. SSA appears to specialize in Arboriculture, yet the distinction is not clear. Is the focus on community management and trees intentional and part of your strategy or would you like to be perceived as having a broader offering via the nine-degrees offered.

Answer # 3:

SSA does not specialize in Arboriculture. It is one of our six Associate of Science degree programs. Our degree programs include:

- B.S. – Plant, Soil, & Insect Sciences, Sustainable Food & Farming, Sustainable Horticulture, and Turfgrass Science & Management
- Professional M.S. – Soil Science
- M.S./Ph.D. – Plant Biology, Molecular & Cellular Biology, Oganismic & Evolutionary Biology, and a new program in Environmental Conservation & Sustainability Studies (probably available in 1 year) – all of these programs are offered interdepartmentally and include students from other UMass departments/schools.

Currently, our most popular program is Sustainable Food & Farming.

We wish to be perceived as focusing on the entire breadth of agriculture represented by our degree offerings, i.e. all farming and green industries (the term “green industries” refers to landscaping, tree work, nurseries, greenhouses, and other horticultural businesses).

Our research ranges from the most fundamental biochemical and cellular work to very applied production and management technologies. We wish to be seen as being on the “cutting edge” of all parts of this research spectrum.

We extend the knowledge gained from research directly to the users (farmers and green industry professionals), enhancing the sustainability of these businesses.

Question # 4: If you were to describe the culture of the College in three words, what would they be?

Answer # 4:

I am unsure to what you are referring by the term “College.” The College of Natural Sciences is a diverse collection of departments led by a dean which has both a strong background in research and one in teaching. He does not have any agricultural experience, but is a strong supporter of agricultural industries and agricultural efforts at UMass. Disciplines in the College include biology, geology, geography, physics, chemistry, math, psychology, computer science, polymer science, ecology, astronomy, and agriculture among 15 departments and schools. This configuration came about from a merger 4 years ago of the College of Natural Resources & the Environment and the College of Natural Science & Mathematics. It is difficult to describe the culture in three words; however, it will suggest research, teaching, and impact.

If you were actually referring to UMass Amherst, then diversity, obviously, is much greater, but the same three words are probably as good a guess as I could give anyway.
Question # 5: If you had to weigh the influence of parents vs. students on the decision to attend SSA vs. another school, what value would you place on each (100% scale)? Our hypothesis would be 60/40 student/parent, with parents influencing budget and location.

Answer # 5:

I really don’t know the distribution other than to say that both are important. Your hypothesis seems reasonable.

Question # 6: Are we free to talk to 10-12 recent graduates?

Answer # 6:

I have no problem with you talking with recent graduates. I have two concerns, however. Logistically, I am not sure how this could happen. Also, I certainly would not an assessment of those individuals who found their way to SSA to have undue influence on how we attract “new” students to SSA. We do a pretty good (but not perfect) connecting with our traditional student base, but we need to expand our connections well beyond that base.