Branding Strategy Initiative
2014-2016

Request For Information
Table of Contents:

- Unity College Introduction ........................................... Page(s) 4, 5, 6
- Overall Project Scope ....................................................... Page(s) 7, 8
- Strategic Branding Initiative .............................................. Page(s) 10, 11
- Brand Strategy Initiative Objectives ................................. Page(s) 12
- Example Phase One – Assessment ................................... Page(s) 14
- Example Phase Two – Architecture .................................. Page(s) 15
- Expected Deliverables ...................................................... Page(s) 16
- Expected Timeline ............................................................ Page(s) 17
- Submission Information ..................................................... Page(s) 18
Greetings from Unity College,

Unity College has a bold new vision for its future. The recently adopted strategic plan called “Building a Beacon” represents the map of where our institution is headed and the transformation being undertaken.

A critical component of the plan and an indicator of success is our transition from a regional to a nationally recognized institution. Building on our strong foundation and positive momentum, the Unity College Board of Trustees embrace the need to leverage our brand.

This overwhelming support has resulted in the creation of a team that will steward a Branding Initiative designed to facilitate the process.

The overarching goal of this initiative involves positioning and differentiating the College to ensure it is perceived both internally and externally as a national brand offering accredited, high-quality academic program through flexible, multiple delivery systems, including online and graduate programs. (Continued on next slide)
This exercise is not designed solely for brand clarification, the scope is much larger and more comprehensive than the traditional higher education model. This venture is intended be a shift from traditional ‘academic’ thinking and its resulting approach to adopting a model that is more reflective of a business approach in running an academic institution.

This initiative will be a multi-year engagement that generates recommendations that are both achievable and measurable in establishing and sustaining a differentiated identity for the College.

Because this initiative is an integral part of our future and will drive our actions, we have investigated organizations that mirror our philosophy of innovation and reflect the commitment we know is necessary for success.

We are not looking for a firm, we are looking for a partner in this process of becoming a national brand. Your firm has been selected to participate in the RFI process for the Unity College Branding Initiative. (Continued on next slide)
Unity College Introduction: (Cont..)

The websites listed below will allow you the opportunity to become familiar with Unity College as an institution as well as with our strategic plan that outlines our future direction.

Unity College Website: [www.unity.edu](http://www.unity.edu)
Unity College Strategic Plan: [http://strategicplan.unity.edu/](http://strategicplan.unity.edu/)

If you have any questions on the scope of the project or would like further clarification, please feel free to contact me directly:

Dr. Melik Peter Khoury
(207) 509-7144
Mkhoury@unity.edu.

We look forward to reviewing your submission.
Overall Project Scope:

- The initiative should clarify the current position and awareness of Unity College, as well as the intended identity for the future, and the challenges in creating that identity.

- The initiative should include assessment of internal attitudes among faculty, staff and current students as well as the perceptions of key audiences such as prospective students, peers, influencers, foundations, and alumni.

- These assessments will include clarification of current markets for Unity College, analysis of future markets for Unity College, and identification of the significant competitors within those markets.

- The research also should include an integrated marketing communication audit to assess current Unity College activity across all strategic units of the college.
The initiative should include a comprehensive, integrated planning and development process that engages the entire enterprise.

The audit should include evaluating Unity College’s publications, the website and other electronic communications, as well as reviewing the marketing/communications activities of the College’s key competitors.

The initiative should result in a new value proposition, key differentiating attributes, identity, and recommendations for creative treatments, marketing initiatives, and communications plans that will position Unity College and sustain the new value proposition and identity as a national beacon.

The initiative should result in both optimal enrollment and measurably enhancing the image of Unity College among alumni, academic organizations, and other persons of influence in order to position the College among the ranks of peer colleges.
Strategic Branding Initiative
Objectives
Unity College is engaging in a Strategic Branding Initiative to identify and define Unity’s most opportunistic positioning for the long term, in an increasingly competitive and dynamic educational marketplace.
Rising to the challenge of becoming a *national brand*, which has been identified as a key objective in the Strategic Plan, will require a fundamental shift to become more *external facing* as the educational landscape continues to evolve.
Brand Strategy Initiative Objectives:

1. Better understand Unity College’s position in the market; from a local, regional and national perspective

2. Fully examine Unity’s core values and their alignment within the larger context and expectations of education and post-graduation opportunities

3. Identify a roadmap that builds and elevates Unity into a national, if not global brand status

4. Examine, understand and establish a differentiated position in the competitive landscape, recognizing the ongoing and dynamic shifts in education

5. Enhance Unity College’s academic reputation and thought leadership

6. Deliver strategies specific to increasing enrollment & fundraising

7. Identify opportunities to penetrate new markets and touch points of outreach

8. Establish measurable benchmarks to assess progress and outcomes
Initiative Activities
Example Phase One – Assessment:

1. Comprehensive *SWOT Analysis* – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

2. Competitive Positioning Assessment
   - Identify gaps between current perceptions of Unity College (UC) and perceptions necessary to achieve a differentiated identity

3. Identify UC competitors, Peers and Aspirants

4. Conduct Marketing/Communications Audit of UC competitor, peer and aspirant educational institutions

5. Conduct Product Assessment and Pricing Strategy

6. Assess Awareness and Current Brand Equity of Unity versus clearly defined competitive set
Example Phase Two: Architecture:

1. Develop a fundamental brand architecture, including key pillars that will define, differentiate, and propel Unity College forward over the next 3-5 years

2. Facilitate an integrated planning and development process that engages the College community but also provides an objective perspective

3. Provide recommendations for a portfolio of products/services that will deliver on and enhance the foundational strategies

4. Identify the brand identity, brand story, personality/voice across all points of engagement, from Awareness through Advocacy
Expected Deliverables:

The expected deliverables to the RFI should include at a minimum:

- A background of your firm
- Your philosophy
- Some insight as to your strategic and differentiated approach
- Three case studies where you have done similar work
Expected Timeline (2015):

- JANUARY:
  - Responses to this RFI are due by January 6
  - Unity College will begin reviewing agency RFIs on January 7

- FEBRUARY:
  - Finalists contacted to deliver a written RFP by February 4
  - Written RFP due February 18

- MARCH-APRIL:
  - Onsite finalists, visit dates, locations & itineraries will be finalized and communicated by March 6
  - The onsite visits will occur between March 9 and April 17

- MAY:
  - A partner will be chosen no later than May 1
  - Successful partner will be expected to visit campus and present finalized strategy, timeline, and approach to the full Unity College Board of Trustees for the May 7-9 meeting
Submission Information/Questions:

Dr. Melik Peter Khoury
Executive Vice President
& Liaison to the Board of Trustees
Unity College
Office: 207-509-7144
Cell: 207-298-0333

Send e-submissions to:
Mkhoury@Unity.edu

Send print submissions to:
Melik Peter Khoury
Unity College
90 Quaker Hill Road
Unity Maine, 04038