

**Request for Proposal:**  
Website Design & Development

Requested by:  
**The Accreditation Council for  
Business Schools and Programs**

Prepared by:



**The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)** is a leading specialized accreditation association for business education supporting, celebrating, and rewarding teaching excellence. ACBSP is seeking qualified respondents to build a new website for members and the public which will improve communications by the Council with both audiences at [www.acbsp.org](http://www.acbsp.org). The new ACBSP.org site will be built on a recognized, scalable and supported content management platform which allows staff and member volunteers from around the world, and with a wide range of skills, to create, manage and modify pages for the profession and the public which support Council communication and outreach goals. The website will allow ACBSP to differentiate between members and non-members while providing distinct experiences for the profession and the public.

AssociaDirect, a leading consultant firm to the association community, has been contracted to administer this Request for Proposal process.

The goals for the new website are to improve end user experience and activity, to decrease transactional and operational costs for the Council, to improve our ability to respond to informational requests, and to update overall branding and look of the website to reflect the “face of ACBSP”.

## General Evaluation Criteria

Vendor evaluation criteria will include:

- Capacity – provide all aspects of the design, infrastructure, and development.
- Creativity – demonstrate ways in which the proposal will solve problems for the Council.
- Responsiveness – engage with requests for additional information.
- Collaborative approach – demonstrate that the proposal is a “living document.”
- Expertise – show evidence of the quality of comparable work.
- Cost – establish reasonable price. Price will be a significant, but not sole, criterion in evaluating the proposals.

The contract will be made to the qualified respondent whose proposal is most advantageous to the Council with price and other factors considered, as determined by ACBSP at its sole discretion. ACBSP may reject any and all proposals.

## Overview and History of ACBSP

ACBSP’s mission is to promote continuous improvement and recognize excellence in the accreditation of business education programs around the world. Our vision is that every quality business program worldwide is accredited. ACBSP, founded in 1988 and located in Overland Park, Kansas, was created by its members to fulfill a need for specialized accreditation by institutions of higher education with business schools and programs. Specifically, that need was for business education accreditation that acknowledged and emphasized quality in teaching and learning outcomes.

In 1988 only 260 of the 2,400 institutions of higher education had their business schools and programs accredited, and that accreditation was administered by only one organization. Many of the remaining 2,140 institutions felt that an alternative organization with an accreditation philosophy more attuned to

the missions of their institutions should be created to satisfy their business accreditation needs. Most of the 2,140 institutions had (and still have) as their primary, student-oriented objective excellence in teaching as opposed to a heavy emphasis on research. They wanted an accrediting organization that had this teaching emphasis reflected in its accreditation standards. Their response was the creation of ACBSP.

ACBSP membership has continued to grow and so has its global reach. In 1988, ACBSP had seven regions with member campuses in the United States. Now the Council is comprised of 10 regions with member campuses in 50 countries.

As of July 2011, the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) has 1,051 member campuses representing 520 institutions, 157 of which are located outside of the United States. Of those member campuses, 541 have achieved accreditation and more than 419 are in candidacy for accreditation. Individual membership now exceeds 8,000.

## User Scenarios and Audiences

ACBSP serves members, potential members, industry professionals and the public. Each group interacts with the Council in distinct ways and by unique user-paths. We attempt to identify three likely interactions by key stakeholders and users types to aid your proposal development. Users from spheres beyond these case studies are likely and should anticipate a successful visit as well.

### Audience 1 – Members

ACBSP membership is composed of business school programs at institutions of higher education in the United States and abroad. For example, There are individual campuses that are members and there are campuses that are part of a larger system, the University of Phoenix or Argosy University being two examples of the latter. Each campus has a profile. In addition, individual faculty and staff at these institutions participate in ACBSP programs, committees and projects in person and online as individual members and each has a profile. For each campus member, there can be from two to many personally involved members who each require access to web content that is authenticated by their own ID as well as their institution's ID and member status. The total number of individual members currently exceeds 8,800 persons. Each institution likewise has up to two 'champions', super-users who need extraordinary access to their home institution's member profile. An average visit to the ACBSP website by a regular member can include a) review and interaction with web pages, b) purchasing a product or conference registration, c) login to members-only content to update their profile and download member only information, and d) participation in one or more communities.

In addition to the educational institution members there are corporate members and VIP guests. There are currently 15 corporate members and 49 VIP members. Corporate members have similar profiles to what is offered to ACBSP members with a company profile, individual members with each having an individual profile. They are primarily companies that provide products and services to ACSBP members. An average visit to the ACBSP website by a corporate member can include a) review and interaction with web pages, b) login to members-only content to update their profile and download member only information, c) access the profiles of institutional members and d) participation in one or more communities.

The VIP members are not affiliated with either an institution or a company. They are individuals who need to be aware of ACBSP and receive publications and meeting information. This includes a few Emeritus members, executives with other accrediting bodies, and public members of ACBSP governing boards as examples.

## **Audience 2 - Non-English proficient members and visitors**

ACBSP has a significant reach beyond the United States and is a key part of the business school community internationally. While many members, regardless of location, will interact with the website when rendered in English, ACBSP has identified a current and potential member base who could more successfully interact with the website in Spanish, French and Russian. Offering these members an opportunity to choose in which language and character set to view and use ACBSP pages is a key goal of this new site build. Members residing outside the United States – particularly members and potential members in sub-Saharan Africa, the former Soviet Union, and parts of Central and South America – should have an experience of the ACBSP which renders quickly over lower bandwidth and on earlier versions. An average visit to the ACBSP website by a non-US member will offer an opportunity to choose between four language and character packs and include a) review and interaction with web pages, b) purchasing a product or conference registration, c) login to members-only content to update their profile and download member only information, and d) participation in one or more communities.

## **Audience 3 – The Public**

ACBSP is a trusted source of information about accredited business school programs in the US and abroad. The public – that is those individuals who are not otherwise qualified to become members - have several compelling reasons to interact with ACBSP information on the web. This RFP envisions an interaction originating alternately at the ACBSP.org homepage or a “public start page” that moves through a specific set of pages which look differently than those intended for members and the broader profession. Three groups within the Public audience include students interested in pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree and are seeking to locate an ACBSP accredited institution, faculty looking to verify the CV of a prospective colleague, high school guidance counselors who are seeking to verify accredited status, and employers in the private sector verifying credentials of a prospective hire educated at a particular institution or seeking a nearby campus that offers prospective employees who have graduated from an accredited institution. A key feature of the new website will be a boutique search engine resident on the ACBSP web servers which is queryable by these audiences and will deliver information about ACBSP member and prospective member institutions. In addition to using this search tool, an average visit to the ACBSP website by the Public will include review and interaction with web pages regarding the value of obtaining a degree from an accredited business program and hiring employees from such a program.

## Overview of Requirements

### Platform

We are seeking to use an existing, established platform for content management. We would like the platform selected to fulfill the following requirements:

- Uses a core technology which is readily available on most major ISPs in the United States.
- Uses proven, upgradable open-source code.
- Has the ability to extend the base platform through plugins and/or addons.
- Has the ability to support multiple “themed” looks through style sheets.
- Does not require annual licenses.

Currently, we are favorable towards using an open-source technology such as Drupal 7; however, we are amenable to alternative open-source or proprietary solutions that fulfill the above requirements. Preference will be given to vendors who have had experience with these technologies.

### Features

#### Universal Features

- Translate this page
- Print / PDF this page
- Cite this page
- Share this page
- Page Feed for RSS

#### Roles – Content Contributors

- Support multiple contributors through login and password.
- Ability to create and assign contributors to roles, enabling differing levels of content control and authorship, including approval cycles for content publishing.
- Roles should be completely contained within the website infrastructure.
- Roles should be able to define permission levels on a per-page or per-field basis.

#### Content Management and Workflow

- Ability to add, remove and edit content on site using WYSIWYG editor.
- Ability to track content as it goes through the workflow with an indication of which stage of the publishing process the content asset is in.
- Workflow dashboard indicating status of each asset and identity of contributor.
- Ability to add notes or comments through the workflow process.
- Ability to administer metadata fields.
- Ability to preview content before publication and revert.
- Support for non-HTML media files including audio, video and photo galleries.
- Support sharing of content with social media.
- Ability to publish content on a schedule.
- Ability to have content expire on a particular date and time.
- Ability to add any number of attachments (such as PDFs) to specific content.
- Workflow includes a Change Log and allows for reversion to specific published page instance.

## Navigation

- A menu system which is editable by administrators to facilitate re-organization as needed.
- The ability to organize the site's navigational system into multiple departments and divisions within departments, and the ability to create, update and delete departments (based on role).
- Navigation based on breadcrumbs as well as nested trees.

## Searching

- The ability to search the website using metadata, keywords, and tags.
- The ability to assign results to keywords or phrases.
- The ability to restrict search results based on user login status.

## Tagging and Aggregation

- Allow creation of functional groupings of web pages or portions of web pages from multiple departments in order to facilitate public access to information that crosses departmental lines.
- Ability for content contributors to assign keyword tags to pages and to utilize tags to create ad hoc URLs when searched.

## Metadata

- Pages must render metadata fields for search engine success.

## Blogs

- Option for creation and maintenance of multiple blogs both restricted within a department's portion of the website or made available generally while hosted by a specific department.
- Ability to enable or disable comments on content.

## RSS and Feeds

- Every page should generate a feed.
- Ability to utilize a feed from a third party source to create content on the website.

## Embeds

- Ability to utilize embed code from third party sites without loss of fidelity for the host-page.
- ACBSP publications pages should not impede easy citation by users.

## Forms

- Tools for form design should be accessible to the average user.
- Data submitted to forms must be captured in queryable format on the web server.
- Provision must be made for email notification to staff upon 'submit'.
- Appropriate security certificates must be included.

## Multilingual Content

- Support content that uses the following character encodings: Western (ISO-8851-1), Unicode (UTF-8) and Cyrillic (Windows 1251).
- Connect the language versions together, both in the editing interface as well as on the live site, creating cross-linked content (automatically generating links to language versions).
- Facilitate the maintenance of all language pages in parallel.

### Accessibility

- Web pages produced by system should support web standards as defined by the W3C.
- Pages produced should support visitors with limited bandwidth, including slow connections such as dial-up or low-quality cellular connections.
- Email interfaces, if any, are not dependent on a specific email client.
- Web pages produced should accommodate individuals with disabilities in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508.

### Templates and Style Sheet

- All pages are created using templates which apply standard site design and navigation elements and support W3C accessibility guidelines.
- All pages must render in mobile browsers with navigation.
- Templates must be easy to modify and adapt for different types of content while maintaining the corporate brand.
- Alternate templates can be set for a page or section of pages to distinguish sub-sites.
- Design changes should be possible without extensive programming or technical support from the vendor or consultant. In-house team should be able to access, modify and create templates.

### URLs and Links

- Easy creation and maintenance of links.
- URLs generated by the CMS should be SEO-friendly and are not category or session IDs.
- The system should allow users to rename SEO-friendly URLs.
- The system should allow creation of an XML sitemap for search engines.
- When a page is deleted or moved, all links to that page are updated site-wide, eliminating broken links.

## Special Projects and Considerations

### Accreditation Status Search Tool

#### Home Page

Professional Tree | Public Tree | Communities

Jobs Board  
 Conference  
 Continuing Education  
 Accreditation Status Finder  
 Recently reaffirmed and newly accredited programs  
 ACBSP Update feed  
 BEW News feed  
 Sponsored content  
 Store  
 Members-only access  
 Staff Finder / Contact Us.

#### Jobs Board

- Fee based service for employers to post branded jobs with staff approval workflow
- Free service for members to post resume / CV with staff approval workflow
- Easy to administer: put up, pause, take down, re-launch

#### Communities

- Website provides collaborative workspaces for committees, Boards of Commissioners and candidate institutions.

##### Features in all Communities

Universal sign-in  
 Email and in-box options  
 Identifiers and Profile  
 Office integration  
 Self-starting communities

##### Tools in all Communities

Shared documents and files  
 Posts or discussion board  
 Shared calendar  
 Chats  
 Polls and voting  
 Wiki space  
 Mapping and location  
 Direct messaging or email bridge

- Members and Champions can self-administer aspects of member profiles.

- ACBSP members are organized into several “regions” of geographically defined meta-communities. Members in a region need to be able to communicate and collaborate in a distinct and identifiable way with others in the region. Regions need to be scalable as ACBSP’s needs change.

## Integrations

### Store Interaction

- ACBSP will continue an e-commerce relationship with its current third-party provider. The web site will need to successfully hand-off visitors to this site.

### Conference – Registration and Hotels

- Website supports marketing goals for conference and CE while providing archives for resale. ACBSP will continue its current relationship with CVENT for conference registration and housing. The website will need to successfully hand off users to that site.

### Dues Process

- Website supports dues renewals and new memberships through e-commerce and interactive forms.

### Giving and Donations Process

- Website supports Developing Global Business Leaders Campaign and other fundraising through donation interface and provides donor recognition.

### Micro Sites

- Website supports a hand-off to micro sites like the “Seminar Series” for member login status and identity.

## Vendor Pricing Structure

ACBSP has a limited budget for this work and vendors are expected to provide their best pricing, including any discounts that may apply for nonprofit organizations. Detail all costs based on the requirements presented here. ACBSP is interested in detailed pricing for each separable task of the project and for each identified implementation requirement. Either hourly “not to exceed” pricing or firm fixed pricing is allowed. Please also provide information regarding future support costs.

Provide an approximate timeline for the proposed project by breaking the development into stages and then listed time ranges for each to be completed.

Provide the terms and conditions that would be included with the contract for the project as you have proposed it.

## Vendor Background and Qualifications

### Specific Expertise and Examples

- Describe what your general capabilities are as a company, and what separates you from others in your industry.

### Experience Working with Associations and Nonprofit Organizations

- Provide examples of relevant projects that you have completed in the past, and describe specific lessons learned from working with on these projects, which you will bring to our project.

### Organizational Capacity

- Provide a list of the principal personnel that would lead your development team for our project, along with a short bio for each listing their qualifications and experience. If a single subcontractor will be used for more than 25% of the project, please include company information as well.

### References and Awards

- Provide a list of three clients that you have completed projects for in the past. Two can be current clients, but at least one should be a non-active client. Be sure to include a contact name and full contact information for each. Please include a list of awards staff or the company has won in the recent past.

## Demonstration of Products

At the option of ACBSP, and as a condition prior to selection, we may request a demonstration of prior work in order to determine if a vendor is appropriately qualified. The demonstration must be for a web-site and with a web management platform that is materially similar to the proposal. Failure to agree to the demonstration may disqualify a candidate.

## Conditions of Work

Final agreement(s) must be reviewed and approved by an officer of each company.

- Vendor will be responsible for all licenses, permits, fees and taxes associated with the system installation.
- All hardware, network, and software installation and configuration must be performed in cooperation with ACBSP.
- The implementation must be accomplished in a manner that minimizes disruption of ACBSP business via the Internet.

## Schedule

This RFP is being released on November 28, 2011. All proposals must be received by January 13, 2012. Any questions regarding this request for proposal document must be received by January 5. Responses to all questions will be sent within one business day of receipt.

Late arrivals after the deadline will not be accepted. All expenses for preparation of the proposal package are the responsibility of the respondent. All materials should be submitted to:

**John Chrastka**  
**AssociaDirect**  
**8 S. Michigan Ave, Suite 2014**  
**Chicago, IL 60603**

or

**jchrastka@associadirect.com**

Finalists will be selected on January 18, 2012 and bidders will be notified by email immediately thereafter. Interviews with Finalists will be scheduled for the week of January 23 by web conference only. The winning Vendor will be notified on February 1. Work starts no later than February 15 with a go-live date for the completed web project of June 8, 2012.

If you anticipate conflicts with any dates or deadlines, please note in your proposal.

### **Confidentiality and Communications**

The vendor should treat all information contained in this RFP, and obtained in subsequent communications with ACBSP, as confidential. The vendor shall not refer to ACBSP in any media release, client negotiations or public announcement, without ACBSP's written consent.

This project may be discussed with the following individual only:

**John Chrastka, AssociaDirect, jchrastka@associadirect.com**

Questions may be forwarded to this individual who will arrange contact with ACBSP staff as required.

This RFP will become the property of ACBSP.

## Appendix A - Site Map

Navigation should allow people to follow a 'who you are' path with fewer clicks to get to information. Broadly, the look and feel for the Professional Section should be different than the pages intended for the Public Section.

Home Page

FAQ Pages

Professional (Member) Section

- Volunteer Recruitment

  - Committees

  - Commissions

  - Award Evaluators

  - Site Visitors

- Award Information

  - Applications

  - Status

  - Historical Winners

- Conference Information

  - Current Conference Micro-site

    - For Attendees

    - For Exhibitors

    - Housing and Travel

    - City and Services

    - Advertising and sponsorship

  - Registration Landing Page

  - Past Conference Archives

    - For Free

    - For Sale

  - Conference Community (referral)

- Dues Information

  - For Programs

    - Forms and e-Commerce

  - For Champions

    - Forms and e-Commerce

  - For Faculty and Staff

    - Forms and e-Commerce

  - For Corporate and Vendors

    - Forms and e-Commerce

- Donations and Capital Campaign

  - Landing Page

  - Current Campaigns

    - By Topic and Area

  - Annual Report

- Success Stories
- Accreditation Status Search
- Communities
  - Self Study Community
  - Evaluators Community
  - Commissioners Community
  - Regions Communities
  - Conference Community
- CE Offerings
- Champions Landing Page
- ACBSP Update Archives
- Logos and Resources

#### Pages for the Public

- What is Accreditation?
- Testimony
- Accredited Programs
  - Lists
  - Status Search
  - Geographic Search
  - Degree Program Search
  - Characteristics Search
- For Employers
  - Value of accreditation on CV
  - Program search
- Applying to Member Institutions
- Donate (referral)