

Request for Proposal

Web site Redesign AUSTIN COLLEGE

Final responses due no later than:

May 22, 2009
3:00 p.m. (CDT)

Austin College Web Redesign RFP

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Austin College seeks to identify a vendor to undertake a complete redesign of the www.austincollege.edu Web site and to identify and implement a new content management system (CMS). The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to provide qualified respondents with the information, requirements, and specifications necessary for the preparation of a professional and comprehensive proposal for positioning the Austin College Web site as one of the leading and most distinctive higher education Web sites in the United States—a site that clearly communicates the College’s mission, strengths, culture, and values, and engages users with a unique experience.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR RFP

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Request for Proposal issued	April 29, 2009
Questions concerning RFP received no later than 3:00 PM CDT	May 13, 2009
Responses to RFP questions provided	May 18, 2009
RFP responses due no later than 3:00 PM CDT	May 22, 2009
Interviews with top potential vendors	May 27, 2009
Recommendation submitted to Senior Staff for consideration	May 29, 2009

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ABOUT AUSTIN COLLEGE

Austin College is a leading national independent liberal arts college of 1,300 students located north of Dallas in Sherman, Texas. Founded in 1849, and related by covenant to the Presbyterian Church (USA), Austin College is recognized nationally for academic excellence in the areas of pre-professional training, leadership studies, and international education.

In fact, few schools the size of Austin College offer a greater emphasis on all things global. Over the last decade, more than 70 percent of Austin College students travel abroad at least once, exploring some 50 countries on six continents. And the Jordan Family Language House offers an immersive residential experience in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

As well, 35 percent of entering students declare an interest in health sciences, and graduates enjoy an 80 percent acceptance rate into healthcare programs, with the highest numbers going to medical school.

One of only 270 schools in the nation with a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, Austin College is also one of the 40 schools profiled in Loren Pope's influential book *Colleges That Change Lives*.

Key Differentiating Factors

New recruitment material and advertising promotes those institutional distinctions that are relevant to prospective students, faculty, and donors. The obvious differentiating factors that Austin College offers are several:

➤ A Nationally Recognized Study Abroad Program

Austin College's study abroad program has been ranked #1 in the nation three times in the last five years by the Institute of International Education in terms of percentage of undergraduate participation, achieving a 70 percent study abroad rate over the last decade and 80 percent in 2008—one of only eighteen colleges or universities nationwide to achieve such a high number. To promote this, we have adopted a "See the World" focus.

➤ Phenomenal Medical School and Graduate Health Science Acceptance Rates

Austin College graduates enjoy an 80 percent acceptance rate into healthcare programs, with the highest numbers going to medical school. To promote this, we have adopted a "Heal the World" focus.

➤ A Strong Service Component

With nine out of 10 students choosing to participate service efforts and logging 12,000+ hours annually, Austin College students are firmly encouraged and supported to get involved. This is

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complemented by a new Global Outreach (GO) Fellowship program, funded by the Williams Family Foundation of Dallas to promote innovative, experiential servant leadership opportunities. Ten Austin College students worked at non-profits in Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, and Russia in the summer of 2008 as GO Fellows, and a dozen more will engage in self-designed international service projects in the summer of 2009 in Costa Rica, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Thailand, and Vietnam. To promote this, we have adopted a “Serve the World” focus.

➤ An Emphasis on Leadership

A component of the College’s Posey Leadership Institute is the Austin College Posey Leadership Award, whose recipients include Wendy Kopp (2006), the founder of Teacher For America who was recently named one of TIME magazine’s 100 most influential people; Dr. Paul Farmer (2007), a noted Harvard physician and medical activist, MacArthur “genius grant” recipient, and subject of Tracy Kidder’s book *Mountains Beyond Mountains*; Geoffrey Canada (2008), a social activist whose work as president and CEO of the Harlem Children’s Zone has been called by *The New York Times* “one of the most ambitious social experiments of our time”; and Greg Mortenson (2009), co-founder of the Central Asia Institute and Pennies for Peace, who has established 78 schools that provide education to over 28,000 children, including 18,000 girls, in rural and often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, where few education opportunities existed before—all documented in the highly acclaimed *Three Cups of Tea*, which has been a #1 *New York Times* bestseller ever since its January 2007 release. To promote this, we have adopted a “Lead the World” focus.

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PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The selected vendor will be the respondent whose proposal, as presented in the response to this RFP, is the most advantageous to the College. If its representatives so determine, Austin College is not bound to accept the lowest priced proposal if that proposal is not in the best interest of the College. College personnel will evaluate the proposals.

All qualified vendors are encouraged to submit a proposal.

Note: If the respondent plans to subcontract, or partner with another firm, any of the work described in the specifications, the respondent must document the role and skills of the subcontractor or partner firm. The criteria for evaluation of proposals and selection of the successful respondents for these awards will include, but not be limited to, the factors that follow.

Format of Proposal

To qualify for submission, all proposals must include the following information:

1. A statement of qualifications describing concisely the respondent's capabilities and experience, including resumes of all principals to be involved in the project and their roles and responsibilities for the proposed project.
2. A list of comparable Web sites designed by respondent, including Web site addresses and contacts for entities operating such Web sites, who may be used as references.
3. A cost proposal range based on the information presented in this RFP. The range should account for probable adjustments in scope resulting from needs analysis and planning meetings following final selection of the vendor.
4. An executive summary providing an overview of the proposed project, an explanation of how the proposed plan differentiates from other solutions, and a statement of projected impact potential for the College.
5. A timeline and separate costs for various components of the design, development, CMS, training, and maintenance.
6. A listing of the necessary software and hardware, any additional communication requirements, integration needs, and other potential costs associated with the project.
7. A summary work plan describing the respondent's approach to designing, managing, and coordinating the project. The description should include all primary tasks listed in the scope of work for all phases of the project, and a tentative schedule.

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8. An estimated summary timeline for completion of each phase of the project. This should be as realistic as possible, since this will be a part of the contractual agreement.

Delivery

The proposal (response) should include one (1) signed original on paper and three (3) hard copies. The copies should be stapled only (no bindings). The response should also include one (1) emailed, electronic version in Microsoft Word (.DOC) format or Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) format. The emailed version must be received by the due date/time stated in the Schedule of Events. The signed original and copies must be received no later than one (1) business day after the due date/time. A legally authorized representative(s) of the participant must sign the proposal. Proposals should be addressed as follows:

Austin College
Attn: Doug Darby, Director of New Media
RFP#0904101_ACWebRedesign
900 N. Grand Avenue, Suite 6H
Sherman, TX 75090

All questions regarding the RFP should be submitted as soon as possible to allow adequate response time. Your inquiries, questions and requests for clarification should be submitted via email to the following email address: **ddarby@austincollege.edu**

The subject line of your email should contain the following: "RFP ACWebRedesign Inquiry"

Note: Due to the timeframe of this RFP, only email will be used for communicating all inquiries, questions, and requests. Phone inquiries concerning this RFP will not be accepted. All inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification must be submitted and received by May 13, 2009, at 3:00 PM CDT.

Points of Contact

- **Doug Darby**, Director of New Media – Web Site Redesign RFP Project Lead
- **Bill Edgette**, Executive Director of Information Technology – CMS and Technology
- **Michael Stryck**, Executive Director of College Relations – Branding, Marketing, and PR

Demonstration of Qualifications and Capabilities

Proposals shall be prepared simply and succinctly, providing a straightforward, concise description of the vendor's abilities to satisfy the requirements of this request.

1. Official name, address, and primary Web address.

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2. Single point of contact for contract for this project. Indicate individual's length of service with your company. List her or his experience and qualifications specifically, as these factors relate to the responsibilities each will be fulfilling on this project.
3. Staff size and allocation. Austin College develops long-term partnerships with vendors and understanding the size, skills, and scope is important. Provide overall number of employees, distribution by skill or duties, average tenure, percentage of work performed by external contractors. If you are using subcontractors or "partner firms," provide company name and contact information. Estimate the number of employees who would be significantly involved in this project.
4. Provide references of projects that highlight creative and technical ability to capture the vision, values, or market strength of the organization.
5. Discuss your company's experience with projects of similar magnitude. Highlight your experience in assessment and planning in identifying needs of primary stakeholders and ability to deliver representative Web sites.

Evaluation Criteria

Austin College will review and evaluate all proposals using its sole judgment and discretion, and may take into account the content of the responses and any other factors it deems relevant in its judgment and decision making process.

Proposals will be evaluated in terms of how well they demonstrate:

- An understanding of the needs of the College and its stakeholders
- A track record for successful Web design project execution
- An understanding of the core institutional strengths of the College
- An understanding of the traditions and culture of the College
- Stability as a commercial entity
- A vision for leveraging the Web site as a strategic asset
- Developing solutions that are creative, practical, strategically minded, and cost-effective
- A clearly articulated plan for identifying and executing the work
- An appreciation for working with a complex and diverse higher education institution
- A firm understanding of Web 2.0 strategies and methods
- A knowledge of current and developing trends in user interface design
- Clean, intuitive information design approaches
- Solid organizational and project management processes
- Considerations for future developmental needs and growth of the College

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STATEMENT OF NEEDS

While Austin College has made phenomenal gains to strengthen its profile and selectivity, it continues to suffer a syndrome of invisibility and remains perceived as a “hidden gem” and a “best-kept secret.”

Given the increasingly competitive landscape in higher education—for quality students and faculty, as well as positive fundraising outcomes—Austin College has recently embarked on a more aggressive approach to marketing, a key component of which is a Web site redesign.

The College’s Web site is a key strategic asset that is vital to our recruiting, marketing, public relations, and fundraising efforts. As such, the College needs to be able to leverage effectively the full potential of the Web site as a vehicle for brand awareness, as a channel for communication and information dissemination, and as a means of experiencing the campus environment, culture, and population. The College’s existing Web site at www.austincollege.edu lacks an external focus and does not serve the strategic role that is essential to the current competitive climate.

The desired outcome for this project is the creation of a comprehensive next generation Web presence for Austin College that incorporates the appropriate design, organizational, technological, and methodological approaches to attract and engage its target audiences with solid content and interactions that will achieve positive, productive outcomes and success for institutional goals. This solution must be not only in the form of a completely new Web site but also must provide for a content management solution that will ensure the College’s ability to maintain existing content and functionally, and develop the site as an evolving resource.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Objective and Goals

As a complement to the engagement we currently seek, Austin College has partnered with the Dallas-based branding agency The Richards Group (TRG) and its design-affiliate, RBMM. Begun in November 2007, this partnership involves a four-stage process that includes a spherical brand analysis to develop a positioning statement and brand personality attributes, and is then followed by creative work to design a new logo and brand architecture, and creation of a new standards guide and brand visualization. The last such exercise at Austin College was conducted in 1992 to 1993.

Material from this initiative—including the extensive data collected as part of the spherical analysis and the resulting positioning statement and brand personality attributes—will all be made available to our selected agency for the discovery phase of this engagement.

Because we recognize that an institution's Web site is a key strategic asset, the current engagement we seek is to partner with an interactive agency that can help elevate Austin College to a new level through its Web presence, and in such a way that complements work that has been accomplished through our TRG partnership.

Above all, we see the new Web site leveraging our assets to achieve positive outcomes and to convey a brand strength that makes Austin College a compelling and credible opportunity and investment.

Institutional Benchmarks

To provide guidance on positioning, targeted outcomes, and benchmarks, contextual information covering competitive institutions where applicable—along with specific examples of function, form, design, and interaction—are listed in the following sections.

In reference to institutional benchmarks, Austin College identifies its competitor and peer institutions from three (3) considerations:

- Cross-Admit Colleges and Universities
- Aspirant Institutions
- Athletic Conference Schools

Cross-Admit Colleges and Universities

Currently, Austin College draws the majority of its students from Texas, some 91 percent, and attracts a diverse student body comprised of 16 percent Asian, 9 percent Hispanic, 2 percent

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African-American, 1 percent Native American, and 2 percent international. In all, 30 states and 29 countries are represented.

The top cross-admit colleges and universities over the past several years also are largely in Texas, and they include an interesting mix of private and public colleges and universities. Of these, the three schools most similar in size, scope, and mission, are Southwestern and Trinity universities, and Hendrix College. Overall, the top cross-admits include:

- Baylor University (Waco, TX) / <http://www.baylor.edu/>
- Southwestern University (Georgetown, TX) / <http://www.southwestern.edu/>
- Texas A&M University / <http://www.tamu.edu/>
- Trinity University (San Antonio, TX) / <http://www.trinity.edu/>
- University of Texas at Austin / <http://www.utexas.edu/>
- Texas Christian University (Fort Worth, TX) / <http://www.tcu.edu/>
- University of Texas at Dallas / <http://www.utdallas.edu/>
- University of North Texas (Denton, TX) / <http://www.unt.edu/>
- Texas Tech University / <http://www.ttu.edu/>
- Southern Methodist University (Dallas, TX) / <http://www.smu.edu/>
- Hendrix College (Conway, AR) / <http://www.hendrix.edu/>

Aspirant Institutions

The College's location in Sherman—more than an hour's drive north of Dallas and in a city of 35,000 that cannot be considered a "college town"—has been an historic liability. The proximity to metropolitan areas that a number of our competitors enjoy—Southwestern to Austin, Trinity to San Antonio, Hendrix to Little Rock, SMU to Dallas, TCU to Fort Worth—likely figures into the decision making of prospective students. Recent efforts to promote the College's national leadership position in study abroad have begun to mitigate this issue, and we remain convinced that study abroad is the key differentiating factor from a recruitment standpoint.

An additional challenge marketing Austin College to our prospect pool in Texas is the fact that we are a small liberal arts college in a state where things are generally big. Whereas small liberal arts colleges are more the norm in, say, New England, they are surely the exception in Texas. Typically, due to family ties, prospective students will by default apply to the two flagship public universities: the University of Texas or Texas A&M. As well, given our proximity, the University of Texas at Dallas represents a growing competitive threat among public institutions, along with the University of North Texas.

Nonetheless, we do look mostly to schools in the Northeast and Midwest as our aspirants, as well as schools with leading study abroad programs, and they include:

- Bates College (Lewiston, ME) / <http://www.bates.edu/>
- Bowdoin College (Bowdoin, ME) / <http://www.bowdoin.edu/>

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- Carleton College (Northfield, MN) / <http://www.carleton.edu/>
- Colby College (Waterville, ME) / <http://www.colby.edu/>
- Connecticut College (New London, CT) / <http://www.conncoll.edu/>
- Davidson College (Davidson, NC) / <http://www.davidson.edu/>
- Hamilton College (Clinton, NY) / <http://www.hamilton.edu/>
- Macalester College (St. Paul, MN) / <http://www.macalester.edu/>
- Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA) / <http://www.dickinson.edu/>
- Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI) / <http://www.kzoo.edu/>

These schools have been selected due to their size and level of financial resources.

Athletic Conference Schools

Austin College is a non-scholarship Division III program that competes in the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC). While there is far fewer cross-admit interest with these institutions, with the exception of Rhodes and Sewanee, the remaining SCAC schools not listed above include:

- Birmingham-Southern College (Birmingham, AL) / <http://www.bsc.edu/>
- Centre College (Danville, KY) / <http://www.centre.edu/>
- Colorado College (Colorado Springs, CO) / <http://www.coloradocollege.edu/index.asp>
- DePauw University (Greencastle, IN) / <http://www.depauw.edu/>
- Millsaps College (Jackson, MS) / <http://www.millsaps.edu/>
- Oglethorpe College (Atlanta, GA) / <http://www.oglethorpe.edu/>
- Rhodes College (Memphis, TN) / <http://www.rhodes.edu/>
- Sewanee—University of the South (Sewanee, TN) / <http://www.sewanee.edu/>

Look and Feel

To following examples illustrate some desired aspects of the redesign. Note that these examples are not intended to represent endorsement of messages or content represented within the noted sites, but they are meant only to provide some examples of feature sets and interaction found to be in-line with the outcomes of the project.

- Creative interfacing with enhanced content / <http://iamsecond.com/>
- Great example of mobile design / <http://m.acu.edu/>
- Good example of school microsite / <http://hendrix.odyssey.collegetrends.org/>
- Effective use of Web 2.0 design / <http://visit.sewanee.edu>
- Good virtual tours / <http://www3.lehigh.edu>
- Innovative technology / http://ge.ecomagination.com/smartgrid/#/landing_page
- Admissions blogging example / <http://oregonstate.edu/admissions/blog/>
- Innovative design and user interface example / <http://www.neumont.edu/>
- Clean information design for main page / <http://www.xavier.edu/>

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CURRENT WEB ENVIRONMENT

Overview

Austin College is aware that its Web site, in its current state, is more than a generation out of step with most of its competitors, and with Web 2.0 methods of visual and information design. The site lacks the needed flexibility to function as a competitive strategic asset to the school. There are a number of issues existing that a complete redesign will alleviate, primarily in information access, navigation, and design flexibility. Beyond these major factors, functional needs will need to be addressed during the needs analysis stage of site planning.

Austin College Web services are provided by a mixture of Web servers and related systems that have grown over time. While there is a primary Web server (www.austincollege.edu), much of its content and some specific departments reside on different physical servers. The primary Web server uses a CMS provided by www.dlfwebgroup.com and is the official Web site of the College. The CMS uses a small SQL database to store all content; however, other Web servers do not use a CMS and are maintained through native html or common editors. While Windows is the primary desktop operating system, a significant number of faculty members use the Apple platform.

The following references have been provided to assist in understanding the College's Web technology environment and the scope of the project. In most cases, content contained in an existing server must be reincorporated in the new Web structure. Where needed, however, content will be examined and rewritten. In other cases, it is necessary to reference the current site in the appropriate location, and there are no expectations that material will be transferred or a new application created. Specific examples are <http://baseball.austincollege.edu> and <http://vcrc.austincollege.edu>.

Page Count

The information below represents an approximation of the pages residing on Austin College's Web servers. As all systems contain inactive pages, the College's Information Technology department could not get an accurate count.

- www.austincollege.edu 3,304 – the approximation of active pages on the main server
- artemis.austincollege.edu – 36,367
- ACweb (contains many sites) – 10,523

PHYSICAL SERVERS

SHERMAN

- Austin College main Web site (www.austincollege.edu)

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ACWEB

- CML Web site / Language House Web sites (<http://cml.austincollege.edu>)
- Austin College Magazine (<http://magazine.austincollege.edu>) – included in redesign
- President of Austin College (<http://president.austincollege.edu>)
- Abell Library (<http://abell.austincollege.edu>)

Intranet Web Sites

The following sites will be retained, but not included in the redesign. This information is for reference purposes only.

- AC Intranet Website (roos.austincollege.edu) – for reference only
- Operations Guide Review (review.austincollege.edu) – for reference only

The following sites should be evaluated for incorporation into the new Web site, but are not designated as stand alone areas for recreation.

- AC Baseball Scoreboard Web application (<http://baseball.austincollege.edu>)
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems) (gis.austincollege.edu)
- Music Theory (musictheory.austincollege.edu)
- Student Web pages (acstudentweb.austincollege.edu)
- Art History courses (art.austincollege.edu)

ARTEMIS

This server contains many different functions: faculty personal Web pages and departmental pages. Departmental pages will need to be converted and an organizational method provided for personal Web pages. Other Web sites should be referenced in logical areas.

- Virtual Catalog of Roman Coins (<http://vcrc.austincollege.edu>)
- Weather (<http://weather.austincollege.edu>)
- Recycle (<http://recycle.austincollege.edu>) – redirect to specific page
- Student Directory (students.austincollege.edu)

WEBSTER

The Webster server runs the EzProxy system that provides authenticated access to external databases. Austin College will continue to use EzProxy to access these databases within the College library's content area of the new Web site.

- EzProxy/CAS requests (Webster.austincollege.edu)

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WebHopper

WebHopper is the server and brand name of system that provides access to personal academic and administrative information for students, faculty, and staff.

- Web Hopper (hopper.austincollege.edu)

ACBBGOOD

For reference purposes.

- Moodle Campus Learning Management System (moodle.austincollege.edu)
- Moodle Test (moodletest.austincollege.edu)
- Tracdat Assessment Initiative (tracdat.austincollege.edu)

ACFSWEB

For reference purposes.

- Large File Web Sharing (webshare.austincollege.edu)

Overall Technical Environment

The server infrastructure is comprised of a mixture of Windows 2003 and 2008 servers. New servers that have been added are running Windows 2008 and operate in a virtualized environment, primarily VMware (with some Hyper V). All systems need some integration to Active Directory (AD) as users are required to authenticate through AD. Bandwidth to the campus is provided via DS3 and shaped by application and location. Most services are Web-enabled and VPN is available to faculty and staff.

Current Web Servers

- Windows 2003, SQL 2003, Dell 2650 2 CPU, 4 GB RAM, 40GB disk drive

Existing CMS

The current CMS (<http://dlfwebgroup>) was installed as part of the College's existing Web site configuration. While the CMS provide some novice users the means to post information, this solution has demonstrated to be totally inadequate to support the College on many levels: architecturally, creatively, and operationally.

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Current Staffing for College Web-Related Services

Austin College has adopted a decentralized model for populating content. With most campus users posting somewhat simple content, the primary support for Web page development is provided by one staff member, who resides in the Information Technology office, and two student workers. Some faculty and staff have the necessary skill set for more advanced Web development, and therefore are provided with the access privileges to post directly to Web servers.

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EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW WEB ENVIRONMENT

Stated Purpose of the Web Site

Brand strength. As the Web site serves as our likely initial point of contact, it should establish our national leadership positioning in study abroad, convey a level of confidence and relevance, and provide a clear sense of Austin College as a progressive institution.

To be specific, the new Web site must grab and hold the attention of the target audience—and entice them to explore. Usability should be apparent, and navigation should be obvious and intuitive in nature, following a logical, predictive tiered approach, providing for primary/global elements, and secondary and tertiary menu options where appropriate. Likewise, the placement of content should follow solid information design theory and provide for an understood location for implementing access to enhanced content (i.e., video, interactive applications, alternative navigation). There is a very small window of opportunity and this initial contact must convey the core strength and identity of Austin College in a manner that convinces the visitor to go deeper. A key to success is that the technology and design not get in the way of the message.

Core Message

Austin College's tradition of service and academic excellence position it as the first choice for globally minded students looking to become servant leaders, be it in their communities, across the nation, or around the world.

Intended Audiences

While the Web site will serve a wide range of audiences, the redesign should be focused on the considerations of the primary and secondary audiences in relation to the initial contact impression and experience. The College's key audience should be considered prospective students, and their families, followed by current and potential donors. There should be, however, clear visual queues and an understanding upon arrival to the site for other key constituents (i.e., alumni, athletics, prospective faculty, etc.) to find desired content and relative areas associated with their interests and involvement with the College. At its core, the design of the new site must convey the brand strength of the institutions and reflect the emphasis of the uniqueness of the college. It must also provide for a content management solution that makes Austin College a compelling and credible opportunity and investment.

Content Management

Austin College anticipates incorporating a new content management solution as part of the Web site redesign project. This RFP, therefore, must include the identification and implementation of two potential CMS solutions as part of the overall outcomes of the new Web environment. The vendor is expected to work with the College's Information Technology department concerning the

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selection and implementation process. All design considerations must account for the new content management work flow, and Web publishing policies and procedures. As there are differing levels of Web users who will be responsible for creating and publishing content, we must understand the needs of our content authors in relation to the selected solution. It should be able to accommodate all levels and provide for the maximum flexibility to ensure the new Web site has the capacity to evolve and continue to meet the needs of the College, its community, and audiences in the future.

Expected Outcomes from the Redesign

The Web site should be first and foremost external in focus. While the assumption is that the Web site will continue to serve internal audiences before the final implementation of the developing campus Sharepoint portal, the needs of most users will be handle through specific content areas. With this consideration, potential organizational functions of the site as a whole include, but will not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Disseminating key institutional information to prospective students and parents
- Promoting contact with admissions and gathering information
- Marketing the strengths, traditions, and differences of the College
- Enabling visitors to experience a virtual campus and culture interaction
- Aggregating associated third-party social networks and services
- Highlighting current and upcoming campus events and news
- Providing an access point for information related to academic programs
- Providing historical, organizational, and cultural information for prospective faculty and staff, and other public audiences
- Serving as the public face for the institution
- Functioning as a primary public relations contact point

Taking into account Austin College's usage of Web 2.0 applications, networks, and services, the site must also incorporate an aggregate approach to design that features study abroad and related components. The College also recognizes the key importance of ensuring coding for a mobile site as an essential complement to the redesign process. In particular, we are aware of and impressed with the mobile sites created by MIT, Duke, Stanford, and ACU, either as mobile sites or iTunes apps. As well, because student-athlete recruitment is a strategic element of our overall enrollment effort, we are interested in a better athletics component. This has the potential to be realized within the primary Web or as a related microsite.

Recognizing the Austin College Web presence as a key strategic asset in recruitment, marketing and public relations, and fundraising, the success of the redesign is of fundamental importance in fostering relationships with prospective students, and their families, our primary target audiences, maintaining and enhancing connections with current and potential donors, and reinforcing the value of the broader Austin College community as a whole.

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OVERALL PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

Overview of Expectations

Through extensive on-campus research, knowledge of industry standards, and frequent interaction with the Web Site Redesign Committee and meetings with campus stakeholders, the vendor will design, develop, install, and test a set of a new strategic solution for the College's Web presence, content management system, and new content layout templates for on-going development. It is understood that, while some specific requests might be made, the responsibility for content creation lies primarily with Austin College.

The vendor that is awarded this contract will be expected to present at least three different concepts for the Website, two CMS recommendations, and three design prospects for the Austin College mobile Web, all to be reviewed by the Web site Redesign Committee, Senior Staff, and key campus stakeholders where applicable. The vendor will be expected to review current Web site databases being used to support portions of Web site and make recommendations regarding architecture for the College Web site. Additionally, the selected vendor will work in tandem with the College's Information Technology department to determine the required specifications for the CMS solution, taking into consideration existing systems and those still in development.

As this RFP is intended to provide a completely new Web presense for the College, it is imperative that the existing Austin College Web site not be considered a viable model for content organization, design, or as a benchmark. It should only be referenced in terms of examining types of content, existing usage, and other discovery aspects as part of the planning phase of the project.

Basic Functional Expectations

While the basic expectations for the project are addressed within the Project Scope section, key considerations are reemphasized here. These points represent the foundational needs and should not be regarded as an exhaustive itemization of features and functions for the vendors recommended design options. The basic functional expectatons includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Web site architecture that is intuitive, well organized, structured for easy access, and responsiveness to the needs of our target audiences
- Clean, concise design that minimizes vertical scroll and provides apparent queues for interaction
- Design options for mobile platforms, smartphones, and portable networking devices
- The incorporation of diverse content solutions to provide dynamic population, support for scripting, and inclusion of Web-based applications, services, and innovations
- The identification of appropriate institutional policies that are acceptable to the College to ensure on-going maintenance and quality, and facilitate future development needs
- The identification of elements that should be included on the main page, and providing for a

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design that presents those elements in a clean and efficient manner, consistent with the core message and strengths of the institution

- Recommendations on the restructuring of content areas, clustering of related information, and development of special interests sections and microsites
- A site design that is compatible with institutional technologies and is accessible to Web site visitors, all meeting Section 508 and TAC 206 and 213 requirements
- A training strategy that will ensure all required Austin College staff are thoroughly versed in the procedures and processes necessary to sustain the quality of the College's Web presence, and enable users to continue to develop and utilize the design potential
- Ensure individual Web pages print cleanly to standard letter size paper
- The site design, and all associated templates, must provide consistency in navigation, layout, and styles in a manner that is user-centric and intuitive
- The development and execution of thorough testing processes, providing for sign-off verification prior to final product delivery and new site deployment

Scope of the Project

The Web Redesign should tentatively proceed as follows:

- Phase I — Assessment and Planning
- Phase II — Prototyping, Structural Development
- Phase III — Visual Design
- Phase IV — Content Development
- Phase V — Construction, Programming, Testing and Implementation, Training, Maintenance

Stage Deliverables

Phase I — Assessment and Planning

- **Needs Analysis** (propose a strategy for research and consultation with campus stakeholders and key constituents)
- **Requirements Document**
- **Assessment** of goals, audiences, existing technologies, functional requirements, and development of a preliminary site plan

Phase II — Prototyping, Structural Development

- **Creative Treatment**, storyboards, site maps, color palettes, navigation systems, design principles for three to five prototype options
- **Technical/Implementation Specifications** for the support of each option

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Phase III — Detailed Design

- **Detailed Design** includes specifications on the option chosen, structural development of organizational site map and navigation, and interface with navigation

Phase IV — Content Development

- **Content Development** includes plan for updating and rewriting content, schedule for gathering information, photos, a proposal for a long-term content management solution and staff training after initial launch, and options for copyediting and development with campus-based writers or by writers provided by the vendor

Phase V — Construction, Programming, Testing & Implementation

- **Finished Site** with all templates, source code and test documentation
- **Technical Documentation**
- **User Acceptance BETA Test Plan**
- **Custom Programming**
- **Maintenance Training and Documentation**
- **Cut-Over/Beta Test Plan**
- **Content Management System** identification and implementation

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SPECIFICATIONS

Phase I — Assessment and Planning

1. **Needs Analysis** — The vendor will submit as part of this proposal a plan for conducting the needs analysis for the definition of requirements for the new Web site. This plan should include the groups of people that will be consulted during this phase of the project as identified by Austin College.
2. **Requirements Document** — The vendor will compile a requirements document, in a format to be proposed by the vendor in this proposal and refined after acceptance of the proposal, for the next-generation Austin College Web site. The College anticipates that in the preparation of the requirements document, the vendor will consider issues such as (partial list):

- Current research and best practices concerning the use of Web technologies in student recruitment marketing
- Market research findings, messaging recommendations, and the brand creative and positioning statement developed for Austin College by TRG
- Current research, best practices, and future trends concerning the use of Web technologies and strategies in institutional advancement
- Evaluation of balance performance between information architecture, graphics, and content/writing

2.1. Information architecture must be:

- Built based on the external visitor's perspective
- Full of interesting content, but clean and well organized; not cluttered
- Primarily focused on primary and secondary audiences, putting public content as the main emphasis
- Logically organized, with easy-to-locate content and easy recognition of where one is on the site
- Built with a consistent, intuitive navigation system (including global and secondary navigation, tools, and navigation styles that stay constant through the whole site)
- Fast loading
- Built on Web standards as defined by the World Wide Web Consortium and in compliance with accessibility standards as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 508c section of the Rehabilitation Act
- Supportive of Blogs, RSS, and Podcasting
- Able to provide content design and formatting for mobile platforms (i.e., iPhone, Blackberry, etc.)

2.2. Graphics must grab attention in the first few seconds, but not overwhelm the visitor and include:

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- Good visual layout and information design
- Appropriate use of dynamic/active content
- Integration with main brand and print materials
- Consistent look and navigation through the entire site
- Strong images, including interior pages
- Enhanced components (i.e. FLASH™, streaming, etc.)

2.3. Writing/Content must be:

- Easy-to-read writing using short sentences, short paragraphs, and short articles
- Engaging (i.e., topics like student journals showing campus life from a first-person perspective, etc.)
- Prospective-student focused on features, benefits and outcomes
- Engaging to alumni, providing community information and offering reasons to engage and activities to join
- Offering fresh writing that promotes upcoming events and recent successes
- Optimizing the search engine function using keyword phrases that target the most important topic areas
- Able to include engaging elements such as virtual tours, student journals, successful outcome quotes, graduate and faculty profiles, etc.
- Compliant and conform with guidelines of W3C's Web technologies in admissions marketing
- Sensitive to target audiences and their information needs
- Able to meet browser and platform compatibility standards
- Supportive of scripting, specifically JAVA
- Able to embed Web applications
- Internal site search capable
- Effective in deployment of means for tracking Web metrics
- Able to populate dynamic content as appropriate and needed
- Capable of personalization and customization for groups and users
- Supportive of microsites, unique content areas, or event specific portals
- Integrated with proper "look and feel" in its relationship to Austin College's brand creative
- Able to support the role of FLASH™ interactive objects, video, etc.
- Capable to support streaming video and audio and other technologies
- Sensitive to end-to-end content management and support for print-on-demand technology
- Able to integrate Microsoft Sequel Server and other databases if appropriate
- Capable of connectivity to college Datatel database system and Sharepoint portal
- Supportive of an aggregate function for associated third-party social networks, applications, and services

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- Able to detect and deliver Web content formatted for smart phones (i.e., iPhone, Blackberry, etc.), and mobile computing devices
 - Capable of prioritization of Austin College pages on external search engines
 - Designed to reflect a Web 2.0-3.0 philosophy of contribution, participation, and subscription in relation to content
3. **Site Audit** — While the current Austin College Web site may provide insight into the existing content, campus users, and present Web applications and services being utilized, it should not be considered in determining content organization or presentation strategies, potential layout schemes, or other developmental planning.
 4. **Time Frame** — Austin College anticipates that Phase I will take two to three weeks.
 5. **Pricing** — Vendors will submit a price for completion of Phase I of this project.

Phase II – Prototyping, Structural Development

1. **Prototypes** – The successful vendor will provide storyboards, creative treatments, design comps, site maps, color palettes, and navigation tools for three to five prototypes as a means of meeting the requirements identified in Phase I. Austin College will select from these alternatives for ongoing work.

The successful vendor will work with designated individuals and groups to combine research, knowledge of the College's needs, and Web site technology to create a site strategy and navigational structures that best meets the desired outcomes and the overall needs of the College. Although the final strategy and design will be directly influenced by Austin College, the successful vendor will be expected to bring ideas, recommendations, experience, leadership, and applicable information to the table for discussion. The successful vendor will work with Austin College to provide a Web site structure that will prove to be one of the leading and most distinctive Web sites in higher education, demonstrating innovation, creativity, and progressive leadership.

A format must be proposed for this deliverable in the proposal. Each prototype alternative must have a detailed cost attached at the time of submission.

2. **Technical/Implementation Specifications** — The College expects the solutions proposed in this phase will be capable of implementation within the chosen CMS without significant customizations.
3. **Time Frame** — Austin College anticipates that Phase II will take two to three weeks.
4. **Pricing** — Vendors will submit a price for completion of Phase II.

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Phase III – Detailed Design

1. **Detailed Design** — The successful vendor will provide detailed design specifications for the development of those portions of the prototypes agreed upon by the vendor and Austin College. The vendor will propose a format for this deliverable in this proposal. The detailed design specifications will be approved by Austin College before proceeding with Phase IV.
2. **Time Frame** — Austin College anticipates that Phase III will take approximately one to two weeks.
3. **Pricing** — The vendor will provide an estimate for the completion of Phase III. Hourly rates and all other expenses must be listed. Austin College retains the right to seek other bids for this portion of the project.

Phase IV – Content Development

1. **Content Development** — The successful vendor will provide a detailed plan for gathering information, photos, and other assets (maps, graphics, charts, etc.) and an estimate for copy-writing and collaborating with institutional writers. The vendor will propose a format for this deliverable in this proposal. The plan will be approved by Austin College before proceeding with Phase IV.
2. **Time Frame** — Austin College anticipates that Phase IV will take approximately four to seven weeks.
3. **Pricing** — The vendor will provide an estimate for the completion of Phase IV. Hourly rates and all other expenses must be listed. Austin College retains the right to seek other bids for this portion of the project.

Phase V – Construction, Programming, Testing, and Implementation

1. **Programming and Testing** — The successful vendor will construct those portions of the next-generation site agreed upon by the vendor and Austin College, including templates for sections not built out by the vendor, complete with source code and documented testing. The successful vendor will propose the format for this deliverable in this proposal.
2. **Technical Documentation** — The successful vendor will provide supporting technical documentation for the site and source code. The vendor will propose a format for this documentation in the proposal.
3. **User Acceptance Test Plan** — The successful vendor will submit a format for the user acceptance test plan that will be used in the acceptance process of the completed site in this proposal.

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4. **Maintenance Training** — The vendor will be required to provide training for Austin College technical staff for the maintenance of the site. The vendor will also provide maintenance documentation. Part of this proposal will be a suggested format for the documentation and an outline of a plan to complete this training, including the number of people to be trained, the format, and the duration of the training.
5. **Cutover/Beta Test Plan** — The successful vendor will submit a complete cutover and Beta Test plan to move Austin College from the old site to the new site. This proposal should include a proposed format for that plan.
6. **Time Frame** — Austin College anticipates that Phase III will take approximately six to seven weeks.
7. **Pricing** — The vendor will provide an estimate for the completion of Phase V. Hourly rates and all other expenses are required to be listed. The College retains the right to seek other bids for this portion of the project.

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Time Frame** — Austin College is looking for an optimal target roll out of the new Web site for the start of the Fall 2009 semester, with an approximate time frame of October 2009. Required adjustments to this targeted roll out date resulting from information or criteria identified during the planning phase will be addressed to the Web Site Redesign Committee and Senior Staff. The vendor will submit potential contingencies providing for a phase-based deployment of the new Web site and to permit meeting the basic goals of the initial targeted roll out date goals. Please state if your firm can adhere to this time frame scenario, breaking the project into tasks with anticipated completion times.
2. **Timeline** — Upon award, Austin College and the vendor will agree on the project's timeline. The timeline should clearly indicate development, aesthetic design, and user-interface stages, including user testing. Any plan developed must take into account long-term maintenance by Austin College staff, as well as development costs.
3. **Payment Schedule** — Austin College will make payments only as completion of phases (Phase I — Phase V) is achieved and will withhold 10% of each "phase" invoice until the completion of the final phase. Payment of final invoice on the final phase will be made 30 days after Austin College acceptance, i.e., following testing and successful implementation. The final payment will also include the 10% held back from each previous invoice. Austin College is responsible for authorizing payment on each phase.
4. **Evaluation of the Project** — Upon deciding on the successful vendor, Austin College will work with the successful vendor to formalize a process for evaluation of the project and determine the criteria for acceptance.
5. **Price** — Proposals should include all costs and description information on the various components of this project. Proposals should also list any hardware or software requirements that are expected to be available at Austin College. Proposals should include an hourly charge for services requested. The successful vendor shall be required to provide and receive approval of a written estimate including a "not to exceed" amount for all phases of this project.
6. **Training** — As part of the entire project, the vendor will train assigned College personnel. Please include a separate section in your proposal on how and at what state in each phase this training will be accomplished and how many Austin College employees may be trained.
7. **Documentation** — Appropriate documentation must be provided at each phase of the project.
8. **Ownership** — Austin College requires that any design ideas concepts, custom scripts, and graphic elements provided as a result of this project become the property of Austin College and may be used by Austin College at any time. Additionally, Austin College may make subsequent changes to the site at its discretion. All rights of ownership will reside with Austin College. Any

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copyrightable subject matter or works will be considered Works for Hire. Austin College may add a written copyright notice to its site if it so chooses. The site will not name or identify the vendor that developed it. The successful vendor will be asked to sign a Creative Rights Agreement. Any requirements or questions concerning the Creative Rights Agreement should be included in your proposal.

9. **Process Review** — Austin College will require that the successful vendor be available as needed to review the progress of the project. Additionally, written status updates will be required weekly. Please include in your proposal your process for reviewing the progress of the project.
10. **References** — Include in your proposal a list of three or more current academic/institutional clients for whom the vendor has provided similar services. The clients referenced should preferably be of a size equivalent to Austin College. For each reference provided, describe the project and the work performed and provide the customer's name and address, and the contact person's name, telephone number, and email address. Also, state the budget given for the project and whether or not your firm met or exceeded said budget. Provide at least five additional Web addresses where your firm has been a consultant or designer.
11. **Organization and Project Personnel** — Describe your organization, including a joint venture or association. Provide the name of the firm's owner(s) and/or principal officer(s), and state the date of incorporation (or partnership), current annual dollar volume, and number of employees. Provide the firm's organizational chart and the most up-to-date financial balance sheet. Submit the names and credentials for each person who will work on this project, including all relevant experience.
12. **Employee Conduct** — During the contract term, Austin College shall retain the right to require the vendor at any time to remove from College property any employee, agent, or representative of the vendor whose conduct, appearance, or performance is reasonably deemed by Austin College to be unacceptable.
13. **Capacity and Capability** — Describe your firm's approach to providing and managing the services described in this RFP. Detail your firm's ability, depth of experience, and expertise as it relates to each phase of the project. Discuss how your firm will coordinate or provide services that may not be available in-house. Provide information that demonstrates your firm's capacity and capability to perform work, including any specialized services. Provide a summary of current work and a statement regarding ability to assign adequate staff and resources to meet the project schedule. Provide a summary of your firm's experience in training people. Describe how your firm proposes to handle training.
14. **Alternative Proposals** — Austin College seeks to accommodate all the specifications and requirements detailed in this RFP, and preferences will be given to those proposals that most nearly address all such specifications and requirements. However, suggested viable alternatives that would benefit Austin College will also be considered. Please cite and explain all exceptions

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to any specifications and requirements that are not met by your proposal. The acceptability of proposed services, equipment, staff, and any alternatives will be determined solely by Austin College. Proposals should include all related services, benefits, and enhancements that are available from the vendor. Any additional charges for these items must be specifically stated in the proposal.

15. **Austin College Technology Environment** — While the College is primarily a Microsoft Windows solutions environment on Intel hardware, preference will be given to proposals that will operate within the Windows and Apple environments.