

LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY

Request for Proposal

Website Redesign

Proposal Response Deadline:

Friday, March 6, 2020

Questions Deadline:

Tuesday, February 18, 2020, 5 p.m.

Responses to Questions Due:

Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 5 p.m.

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1. RFP PURPOSE

Lenoir-Rhyne University seeks proposals for a comprehensive website redesign from interactive design agencies who have experience with higher education. The university is also interested in leveraging its public website redesign project, site development, and code base for a separate intranet site developed on the same CMS platform as the public website. More details about the intranet project can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Lenoir-Rhyne seeks a partner driven by innovation, audacious in its thinking, and excited by the opportunity to create something entirely new. The agency selected to design and build the next iteration of lr.edu will be passionate about the liberal arts and embrace its vital importance to our global, interconnected society.

We seek a strategic partner and creative and technical team that will quickly grasp Lenoir-Rhyne University's brand, our values, our culture, and the university's strategic direction as noted in the [About Lenoir-Rhyne](#) and [Appendix A](#) sections. The university seeks a partner who can help us leverage our website to demonstrate the value of the liberal arts. This project will deliver a new digital strategy and web presence that elevates the university and reflects best practices in design, content strategy, user experience, usability, accessibility, and technical implementation.

2. PROJECT GOALS

The Lenoir-Rhyne website is a key element in the university's marketing and communications efforts and is an important vehicle for delivering information to external and internal audiences and key stakeholders. It's a vital recruitment, fundraising, and storytelling platform for Lenoir-Rhyne.

The goals of the redesign project include:

- A site that showcases Lenoir-Rhyne's brand strengths, qualities, and values.
- A site that targets prospective and current undergraduate and graduate students and their families without sacrificing the needs of secondary audiences, including current students, alumni, current and prospective faculty and staff members, the media, and general public.
- An information architecture that organizes content in an efficient and logical manner for primary target audiences, while preserving deeper content structures to meet secondary audience needs.
- A site with a more modular, flexible visual design that is fully functional and responsive in design for display across many screen sizes and devices.
- A technology platform that is robust and mobile-first in focus, yet flexible enough to continue to grow and evolve with our web presence. Ideally, we hope to easily reskin the site over several years while retaining an underlying platform and architecture allowing for long-term evolution.
- Assistance with the development of a content strategy, personas, and content framework for the site.
- Evaluation of our current website governance and site management, site support, hosting, and recommendations to support our new website strategy.

3. REQUIREMENTS

The redesigned website will do the following.

- Focus on user experience.
- Follow web standards (HTML5, CSS3).

- Strictly adhere to web accessibility standards— WCAG 2.1 & WCAG 2.0 Level A & Level AA, Section 504, Section 508 (2017).
- Display optimally on a range of screen sizes and devices (smartphones, tablets, desktop monitors). A mobile navigation for smaller screens and a desktop navigation for larger screens.
- Be optimized (design, architecture, and hosting platform) for fast loading—particularly on mobile devices as measured by Google PageSpeed Insights (fast performance of 90 or better). Utilize approaches like a CDN, caching, minifying CSS and JavaScript, and “lazy loading” of page elements for optimized page load times. Our research suggests page load speed is crucial to perceived and actual site success and improved search engine optimization (SEO).
- Render properly in widely used mobile and desktop browsers (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, IE, and Safari)
- Incorporate SEO best practices to improve site visibility. This includes the ability to manually change meta information/tags on each individual webpage—Page Title, Meta Title, Meta Description, Meta Image, Page Crawl Frequency, ability to hide pages from public/internal search and sitemap (no index, no follow), clear page name/URL structure (pages URLs all lowercase using hyphen separators), and an automated XML Sitemap. Pages should be properly structured to use H1-H5 headers. Provide ability to include a robots.txt file for limiting search engines to some content.
- All website content must be directly displayed as webpages and indexable by search engines, i.e., website content that opens in an overlay that is not directly accessible to website visitors through a URL or search engines should be avoided. Important pages that must be indexable by search engines include homepage, landing pages, secondary pages, campus calendar landing page, individual event pages, campus directory landing page, individual faculty directory/biography pages, majors and programs, course listings/descriptions, etc.
- Offer content syndication and content sharing—COPE ([create once and publish everywhere](#)). Content that is duplicated in multiple places should be updatable and maintained in single location. For example, offering the same academic program content for a hidden digital advertising landing page as we do for the main academic program page—the content is updated in one place and published out to both pages. We should be able to do this at the page and section/component/widget level, while also having the ability to display some different elements on similar pages, e.g., the hidden landing page might have an RFI form, the public page might not.
- Provide a [modular](#) or [atomic](#) design framework allowing for more flexibility in content design and delivery across site pages. Here is an [example of modular design](#) from Indiana University. In such design, the same content component (e.g., student testimonial, brand messages, news stories, content featurettes, videos, lists, events, etc.) can be published in multiple layouts on a page—across one column, two columns, four columns, or six columns. We change our focus in page design from whole pages into parts, making it possible for our website to combine content and design, but also allowing our CMS more control. This will allow us to build out pages in ways that make sense from a visual, administrative, and business perspective. A modular or atomic approach to design and populating content will offer us a more flexible and adaptable site that is nimble enough to address changing institutional and visitor needs.
- Provide a [pattern library](#) that offers multiple options for content display, e.g., a blockquote might come with big bold text with a large background quotation, another might include an image, yet another with a vertical line. The pattern library would offer multiple button, list, image, video, accordion or tab styles, among others.
- Integrate social media content/feeds from university accounts within the website whenever possible for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- Provide the ability for website personalization either using a built-in or add-on personalization module/engine or utilizing a site-wide taxonomy. We are open to doing a phased approach and pushing personalization off to Phase 2 as long as Phase 1 site development doesn't prevent later site personalization work. We are particularly interested in the idea of prospective students being able to create

a “Custom Viewbook” from our website, similar to a product offered by Custom Viewbook - customviewbook.com

- Be optimized to share webpage content to social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn by employing separate Open Graph (OG) protocol and Twitter cards on every page to specify page title, descriptions, image, and video. It is preferred that all of these tags populate from the main meta fields, but allow us the ability for them to be individually edited.
- Ability to easily add code to the <head>, beginning of <body> and end of </body> at the site level and at the individual page level. We often need to add or update tracking/retargeting/conversion pixels to our site and site administrators should be able to do this easily without requiring development support.
- Include responsive, accessible, semantic data tables. Tables should automatically stack their layouts for mobile screen sizes. Various design options will be available to stripe alternate rows with darker color to increase contrast.
- Ability to manage all 302 and 301 URL redirects through a single website redirect module or apache .htaccess file. This includes the ability to redirect documents to webpages or other documents.
- Website multilingual support should be available via an add-on module.
- Run all website pages and associated scripts, CSS, and assets under an SSL certificate (https://) for improved SEO and site security. All webpages should be run through a non-secure content scan like <https://www.jitbit.com/sslcheck> before launch. Have the ability to redirect automatically all http:// traffic to https://
- Use non-proprietary programming and frameworks for interactive features.
- Follow best practices for website development, which includes a code repository, dev or staging website and a production website.

4. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The vendor must produce the following project deliverables.

Discovery, Strategy, User Experience, and Information Architecture

- Project discovery and research.
 - Deep dive into Google Analytics for current website to inform redesign project.
 - Review of provided brand documents.
 - 2-3 days of onsite project discovery or client workshops, including invited stakeholder group sessions as well as open sessions for the campus community.
 - Web survey(s) for primary and secondary audiences.
- Web strategy brief, including development of website personas.
- Creative brief.
- Proposed information architecture, user experience, and content strategy.
- Review of current website governance, site management and staffing, and provide a brief with recommendations for any changes for current website management and support.
- A content management system and hosting recommendations brief. Lenoir-Rhyne seeks the guidance and advice from vendor in the selection of a new CMS and hosting platform that best supports the university’s digital strategy. Our preference is to use an open source platform like Drupal, but we are open to a proprietary CMS that is widely used in higher education and supported by a large number of vendors or agencies. We are familiar with a number of popular CMS platforms such as Drupal, WordPress, Hannon Hill Cascade Server and are open to considering these and other systems. We are not considering OmniUpdate

OU Campus (they don't offer a vendor implementation partnership program), TerminalFour (cost), or our current Finalsite CMS (clients are primarily K-12 schools). It is unknown at this time how many CMS licenses are needed if we were to select a proprietary CMS over an open source CMS. We anticipate fewer than 20 licenses, but our preference is to select a CMS that offers an unlimited or high number of licenses.

- Vendor shall address how a code repository, development or staging site, and production website workflow will be used for maintaining and tracking changes to the website's code base, e.g., GitHub, GitHub Labs, etc.
- Post-website launch support, maintenance, and ongoing site development proposal. This should include recommendations and a menu of options and pricing for ongoing website support, maintenance, and ongoing development options or packages, e.g., bulk purchase of hours (pre-paid), pay as you go or per hour pricing (time and materials). Vendor should detail any warranty of code or bug fixes that are identified post-launch.

Design/Build

- Lenoir-Rhyne will likely rewrite all website content in-house. Vendor will propose a process for automating/easing content migration, e.g., scripts to export content from current Finalsite CMS to new CMS and/or service/system for tracking written website content that allows for review and approval and migration into the new CMS, e.g., products like GatherContent, Smartsheet, etc. Process should support written text, photography, video and SEO (page titles, meta descriptions, etc.).
- Design renderings for page layouts (specific decisions to be determined in site strategy) – homepage, audience gateways, campus location homepage landing (may duplicate main homepage with ability to modify as needed for each campus location), department landing, lower level, news landing, news story page, news index, search index/results, academic majors/programs listing page, academic program landing page, academic course listing page, campus directory, faculty and staff bios page, campus calendar landing page, campus calendar events page, social media integration. As noted in this document, the university is interested in a flexible, modular or component design framework. We are also interested in the development of a robust pattern library for the site.
- Coded HTML, CSS, and JavaScript
- Native integration of APIs (e.g., social channels: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.). We primarily use YouTube for videos. We want to be able to control the thumbnail image that is used and remove YouTube branding and YouTube video information (video title).
- Graphic elements required by the design.
- Technical implementation of selected CMS and integration of design templates, modules, and components/widgets.
- Details and assistance with the development of CMS editorial workflows, approval workflows, and site permissions.
- Static HTML and CSS files as well templates (headers and footers) used for reskinning third-party sites and services.
- Site style guide – this should live on the LR website or is provided directly to LR. It would include a pattern library, typography, various column layouts, and cover all design and style options.
- Site training documentation – this should live on the LR website or if done using a separate service or website, direct ownership access provided to Lenoir-Rhyne University.

Website Hosting

Lenoir-Rhyne is interested in a cloud-hosted, managed hosting platform or service, e.g. Pantheon, Acquia,

Rackspace, AWS, or other similar hosting solution. It is our expectation that the hosting platform provide qualified web hosting support by phone, email, and online ticketing, offer 24/7 support availability, provide ongoing, automated upgrades and security patches, and provide a 99.9% uptime guarantee. The selected vendor for the redesign project will help specify and provide recommendations, including content delivery network (CDN), technical set-up, storage, RAM, sFTP, etc., to Lenoir-Rhyne for website hosting that will support the new CMS and associated website applications. It is preferred that the vendor have direct experience working with the recommended hosting provider(s).

Intranet Site

The university is interested in leveraging its public website redesign project, site development, and code base for a separate intranet site developed, maintained, and hosted on the same CMS and hosting platform as the public website. We see the intranet site offering a slightly different header and footer “skin” than the public website to clearly note it as a separate, internally focused site, but offer the same site design and functionality as the public website. More details about the intranet project can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Offering an intranet site on the same CMS and hosting platform as our public website allows us to: (1) develop, train, support, and develop on single platform, (2) realize cost savings from implementing and supporting a single site technology, and (3) leverage site development done for either the public website or intranet on the other site.

5. BACKGROUND – STATE OF CURRENT WEBSITE

Background

The current Lenoir-Rhyne website (www.lr.edu) was launched in August 2016 with initial project work started in 2015. In 2016, the university implemented centralized website management with website content changes and ongoing website development done entirely by the Marketing and Communications Office.

The university’s website uses Finalsite, a propriety CMS primarily used by K-12 schools. Only a handful of colleges use Finalsite for their websites. Finalsite offers a multi-column page builder, however, only a handful of pre-designed classes or modules/widgets were created so typically just text and images are used in multiple column layouts. The current website is built on a responsive design framework.

The current website design is now dated and it lacks an engaging design that extends beyond just a few top-level landing pages— the current homepage, undergraduate and graduate admission pages, academic page, student life page and Profile Magazine section.

Brand Voice/Messaging

In assessing our current website, it is clear that it lacks a clear, cohesive brand voice and messaging that sets Lenoir-Rhyne apart from competitors. Site design and typography is poor, site photography is often repeated, is cliché or posed, and there is limited use of video across the site. The current website misses the mark in communicating Lenoir-Rhyne’s close-knit and supportive community, the totality of the student experience, and student and alumni outcomes. Since these are major selling points for the university, this will be a major focus of our website content strategy to emphasize across the website, including on academic program pages.

In 2019, Lenoir-Rhyne undertook a rebranding and messaging effort with Carnegie Dartlet. This work produced a

new brand voice for Lenoir-Rhyne that is not yet reflected on the university website. The website redesign project will be an important project for rolling out the new brand voice for the institution in a visible way. Visit [Appendix A](#) for more information about Lenoir-Rhyne's rebrand project and how we talk about the university.

User Experience

Overall the site offers a poor user experience for website visitors because of inconsistent navigation (e.g., centered navigation, left-column navigation or use of buttons for navigation), inconsistent header styles, a large amount of website content is hidden in accordions and there is poor content prioritization and editorial decision-making.

Multiple Campuses

Lenoir-Rhyne's main campus is in Hickory, North Carolina. The university also offers graduate degree programs on its campuses in Asheville, North Carolina, and Columbia, South Carolina. The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) is also in Columbia. The current website lists these campuses as <https://www.lr.edu/asheville>, <https://www.lr.edu/columbia> and <https://www.lr.edu/ltss>.

The new website needs to better meet the target audience needs for Asheville, Columbia, and LTSS. Currently, these campus webpages are hard to find and visitors interested in information or programs on these campuses are often pushed back to content on the main campus website that may not be relevant or is potentially confusing. Target audiences, event faculty and staff, often have an affinity for their specific campus location that is not necessarily shared with the university's main campus in Hickory. We need to keep this in mind as we develop the user experience, IA, and content for these campus landing pages. We are not envisioning any special functionality or technical requirements for these campus sites, rather, repurposing design elements and functionality from the main site and spending more time on developing an improved user experience, information architecture, and content strategy for the campus sites.

Academic Programs Listing

The academic program grid list is confusing and has some usability issues. The programs grid moves from left to right on desktop and mobile. This is not clearly apparent on mobile devices. On desktop and mobile, visitors can become easily lost if they select the wrong choices in the many dropdown menus.

A more simplified horizontal list is preferred that doesn't require a large amount of scrolling, doesn't offer lengthy pagination, offers fewer choices, but provides the ability to do a program keyword search populating results in the search field. Most visitors view programs by subject area or major/program, by undergraduate and graduate and by campus location. Including the school or college in the program listing criteria unnecessarily complicates the listing of programs and should be discontinued in the new listing format.

Academic Program Pages

Our academic program pages will be a priority for the website redesign project given their importance to prospective and current students and their parents. Currently, our major/program webpages are overly text heavy and devoid of images and interactive content. There is no prioritization of content on pages, limited use of headers, and limited focus on the student experience—academic research and scholarship, faculty-student engagement/mentorship, study abroad, internships and careers, civic engagement, student organizations/activities, student and alumni outcomes, student testimonials, faculty listings and faculty biography pages or course information.

Using our current CMS and existing design capabilities, we have begun building out more engaging academic program pages specifically for marketing priority graduate programs or for digital advertising campaigns. You can view two examples at <https://www.lr.edu/mba> and <https://www.lr.edu/counseling>. An example of a new giving campaign page can be found at <https://www.lr.edu/give/giving-tuesday>.

Website Accessibility

The current website is not in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA. The university is currently using AudioEye to offer a limited level of accessibility compliance. We plan to discontinue the use of AudioEye once the new fully compliant website is launched.

Site Search

The Lenoir Rhyne website uses [Algolia Search](#) with Finalsite CMS and not Google Custom Site Search. We are limited by the current search and are not able to elevate internal search results using promoted keywords, remove pages from appearing in search results or use search synonyms and other features. We would like to use either Google Custom Site Search or another free or low-cost search option that offers us more functionality and integration with Google Analytics and Google Search Console. We also need a sitemap created to share with external search engines for SEO.

News

News headlines are currently displayed on the university homepage with a photo and headline. The website offers a news index template and news story template that automatically displays the news story image thumbnail on the news story page. We have the ability to tag content to appear under specific areas of the website based on campus or department. We would like the ability to use taxonomy and share news stories throughout the site, including on department/program landing pages, campus landing pages, etc. We also want to present more visually engaging news stories that offer photo and video galleries, blockquotes and other designed components that are available to the main website.

University Magazine

Lenoir-Rhyne maintains a digital version of its university magazine at <https://www.lr.edu/profile-magazine>. This site could replicate functionality and design elements that are developed for the news index page, news landing page and a news story page. In this area, like with news, we want to be able to use taxonomy for managing magazine categories/topics and issue dates.

Event Calendar

The current website offers an event calendar, but individual event pages are not available (all events open in an overlay window). This is problematic for a few reasons: (1) calendar event URLs can't be shared by email or social media to promote individual events, (2) events can't be indexed by search engines, (3) similar events can't be grouped for display by taxonomy tag or event category to promote or find similar events, (4) there is no calendar search, and (5) you must instruct visitors by email, over the phone, or word of mouth how to go to the calendar and look at a specific date and time to find an event.

Our current calendar also does not allow for faculty, staff, and students to submit their own event information

directly to the calendar and does not provide editorial workflows for event review and approval prior to publishing. All events are added to the calendar by marketing and communications staff.

Campus events are important to building and engaging the university community and external constituents. Any future calendar should feature: (1) individual event landing pages with their own unique URLs, (2) strong SEO and be indexable by internal and external site search, (3) display similar events or event categories using taxonomy tags or event categories, (4) offer event search, (5) offer online registration (paid or free RSVP/tickets), and (6) offer the ability to share individual events by email or share events by date range, e.g., an automated weekly email digest that is sent to subscribers.

The future CMS should offer a strong events calendar module that meets the above needs and is integrated within the site. However, as part of the redesign project, we will also evaluate Localist calendar and the LiveWhale calendar. Both of these products offer robust calendars features, with strong SEO and engagement tools. If either of these are selected, the calendar will need to be “skinned” to match the rest of the Lenoir-Rhyne website.

Online Forms

The current website offers an integrated online form builder module. The form module is used to create a number of different online forms, including simple submission forms, RFI forms, online giving forms (for university advancement), job applications (university employment openings are posted online and applications are processed using the online forms module). The current form offers the ability to accept online payment. The future website should also offer online form capabilities, either through an add-on module or third-party application, and accept/process online payments.

We are anticipating that we will move the university advancement online giving forms to our CRM provider, Blackbaud NetCommunity (gifts are manually entered in Blackbaud now) and we hope to move to an external online employment system or job board. Right now, all university jobs are posted by the marketing and communications staff with access provided to various search committee members to review submitted job applications.

Single Sign-On (SSO)

The current website CMS does not use SSO authentication for website CMS administrators, editors, and content authors. The future CMS should authenticate users through Active Directory Federation Services (AFDS).

Campus and Faculty Directory

The current campus directory is managed and updated directly through the CMS. It is not integrated with our administrative CRM, Ellucian Banner. New faculty and staff directory information must be manually added to the website. We'd like to have basic directory information pulled directly from Banner via a .csv or XML feed that is updated nightly and supplemental data, beyond contact information, is maintained in the CMS.

Our current directory only opens individual directory listings in an overlay window, therefore we can't link to them directly via a specific URL and our faculty and staff lists can't be indexed via internal and external search. This also prevents us from providing departmental directories and individual faculty and staff pages on department and program pages. This is a loss opportunity for prospective and current students and parents to view biographical information about department/program faculty and staff. This is something we want to address during the redesign

project.

Campus Map

We offer an interactive campus map through Concept3d at map.lr.edu. The map is not part of the project and will not require skinning.

Digital Marketing

Lenoir-Rhyne has begun promoting the university and its undergraduate and graduate programs through search engine marketing, digital display advertising, and Facebook advertising. We are using hidden landing pages for digital campaigns and tracking conversions for these campaigns.

The future website must support digital advertising landing pages and the use of a floating request for information (RFI) form on pages similar to the one posted to www.lr.edu/mba. Lenoir-Rhyne is currently considering changing its admission CRM from Ellucian Recruit to Slate by Technolutions. If this switchover takes place, we will use Slate's embedded RFI forms and will need the selected vendor's assistance with stylizing the Slate floating RFI form. Conversion pixel tracking is built into Slate forms. The RFI form should work well on mobile, tablet, and desktop.

University Catalog and Course Listings

The university maintains its undergraduate and graduate catalogs offline in various Microsoft Word documents and then converts the files to single PDF files for placement on the website. This is a very manual process. We are interested in implementing a catalog module that would allow us to: (1) automate the catalog production process, (2) use a built-in editorial workflows and approval process allowing staff groups to edit and review each new catalog (and prevent further revisions after a predetermined date), (3) archive as a permanent record each academic year's catalog under a unique URL, and (4) import courses listings and course descriptions from Ellucian Banner either through a direct API connection or XML feed. Ideally, when catalog pages and content is created, it would be preferred that program and course information be made directly available for display on our academic program pages, e.g., ability to pull in course listings, course descriptions and requirements. Currently, we are posting PDF documents that offer details about course requirements for each program.

University HR and Employment Website

Human Resources currently uses Finalsite CMS forms capability and forms workflow. Jobs are posted on the university employment page and applications are submitted by applicants through Finalsite forms. Search committees are provided access to the website form results area to review candidate applications. The Marketing and Communications staff must manually add all job listing descriptions to the website, manually add each job application form, and also provide site access to each search committee member. There is no applicant tracking system that allow job applicants to be tracked, ranked, or sent individual or bulk email communication directly through the site.

We would like to migrate to an HR/employment career website service or find a website employment module that would allow us to make this more efficient. Ideally, we would use a third-party service where we are just embedding job listings, and job information and application details are handled by the third-party service under a forwarded Lenoir-Rhyne subdomain.

Emergency Notifications / Web Alerts

Lenoir-Rhyne uses RAVE Alert for emergency notifications. We need to have the ability to clearly display these emergency alerts on the Lenoir-Rhyne website at the top of the homepage and all interior webpages.

RAVE Alert syndicates active alerts through an XML feed. We would need a “listener” coded to constantly monitor for new alerts as well as an “all clear” message to remove emergency alerts from the website. We should have the ability to publish alerts using HTML/CSS styling include headers, body text, hyperlinks, buttons, etc. We should also have the ability to disable RAVE Alerts from publishing to the website.

We also require the ability to publish important web alert messages at the top of the homepage and all interior pages. These would be for announcements that are important at certain times during the year, but don't rise to the level of emergency notifications and should not be confused as such (i.e., offer a different design or iconography than RAVE Alert). Examples might include, annual giving day, end of year giving, event cancelations, commencement ceremony moved indoors, weather closures or delays, etc.

Sites Requiring “Reskinning”

Decisions will need to be made by the Lenoir-Rhyne team concerning which sites listed below are reskinned and in what phase of the redesigned project. For the purposes of this RFP, it is anticipated that we are only expecting the selected vendor to provide us with a static HTML-coded header and footer and any “reskinning” will be done by the Lenoir-Rhyne team in tandem with the specific application or service provider.

- **Google Custom Site Search** – not currently in use, this will need to be skinned to match the LR website. We anticipate needing help with skinning from the selected web redesign vendor.
- **Blackbaud NetCommunity** – not currently in use for online gifts or events, however, we are discussing the feasibility of moving online giving forms and event listings to this platform. We would simply provide Blackbaud with HTML and CSS files for skinning the site, which would be hosted under a subdomain hosted by Blackbaud.
- **Admission CRM Portal** – our admission staff are currently evaluating the feasibility of switching to Slate by Technolutions for their recruitment CRM. If Slate is implemented, we may require assistance skinning the admission Slate web template. This might involve making slight changes to the provided HTML/CSS/JavaScript static templates so they work on the Slate web/portal platform.
- **Campus Calendar** – if an external calendar is selected for implementation, we would need some coding and CSS help in skinning the design to match the main website.

Websites Not Part of Redesign Project

- **Room Reservations System** - The university currently uses EMS Software for its room reservation system, but it is not integrated with an external website calendar and there are no plans to integrate with a campus calendar at this time.
- **Lenoir-Rhyne University Athletics** (www.lrbears.com) - hosted externally by Sidearm Sports and not part of the redesign project.
- **Library** (www.lr.edu/library) - uses LibGuides as its content management system and curation platform. They also use a variety of online catalogs and databases none of which are part of this redesign project.
- **The Shuford Center for International Education** (bearsabroad.lr.edu.) - uses [Terra Dotta Software](#)

for managing study abroad programs and information.

6. ABOUT LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1891, Lenoir-Rhyne University is a co-educational, private liberal arts institution with more than 50 undergraduate degree programs and over 30 graduate degree programs. Lenoir-Rhyne enrolls more than 2,750 undergraduate and graduate students, has had 11 consecutive years of enrollment growth, and awards \$30+ million annually in scholarship and financial aid.

Lenoir-Rhyne's main campus is in Hickory, North Carolina, where both undergraduate and graduate degrees are offered. The university also offers graduate degree programs on its campuses in Asheville, North Carolina, and Columbia, South Carolina. The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary is also in Columbia. Lenoir-Rhyne is affiliated with the North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and welcomes students from all religious backgrounds.

At Lenoir-Rhyne University, we stand proudly upon our strong foundation of excellence that fosters pride, stability, and community. For more than 125 years, we have prepared students for a life of purpose and career success.

The *Triangle Business Journal* lists LR as the second-fastest growth college in North Carolina based on total enrollment growth from 2012-13 academic year (2,220 students) to 2018-19 (3,058 students). A 37.75 percent growth in students.

The *Charlotte Business Journal* lists LR as fifth-biggest university by undergraduate population in Charlotte area.

The university's 2019-2024 strategic plan is available online at <https://www.lr.edu/strategicplan>. Website and intranet redesigns have been included in the strategic plan as strategic initiatives.

7. INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS

Project proposals should contain the following.

- General description of the firm, including number of years in business and general experience in interactive web design and development, particularly in higher education working on projects similar in scope.
- Detail the firm's experience with project discovery and research, persona development, digital strategy, user experience, information architecture, mobile and responsive web design, usability testing, website accessibility (WCAG 2.1 and WCAG 2.0 Level A & AA compliance), SEO, content strategy, and digital marketing.
- A list of web content management systems the firm has direct experience implementing and providing ongoing maintenance, support, and development.
- A list of website hosting providers the firm has direct experience and that would support a site similar in scope to the Lenoir-Rhyne project.
- Biographies or resumes of all individuals who will be assigned to work directly on the project.
- Case studies with URLs linking to examples of relevant work that is similar in scope to Lenoir-Rhyne's project.
- A project plan that describes the firm's approach, methodology and includes timelines.
- A minimum of three references that Lenoir-Rhyne University can contact about the firm's work that is similar in scope to this project.
- Pricing for the project; including a breakdown by major elements or milestones (e.g., project management,

discovery, strategy, UE, IA, design, build, CMS and hosting recommendations brief, content writing and migration support, QA, usability testing), a total project cost, any incidental expenses that would be charged to Lenoir-Rhyne, and an applicable hourly rate for additional time and materials work that may result from a scope expansion or other unanticipated work.

- Separate pricing and details for a separate intranet site that is essentially a copy of the public website and on the same CMS and hosting platform. The vendor should provide details on how the code repository for the public website and intranet will be set up and maintained to share common elements between both sites and how hosting for a public website and intranet site would be set up and/or impact website hosting.
- Lenoir-Rhyne is interested in working with a long-term strategic partner after site delivery. Vendor should include recommendations and a menu of options and pricing for ongoing website support, maintenance, and ongoing development options or packages, e.g., bulk purchase of hours (pre-paid), pay-as-you-go or per-hour pricing (time and materials). The university is interested in vendor recommendations for how much budget we should allocate toward ongoing maintenance and support for a website similar in size or scope.
- Vendor should detail any warranty of code or bug fixes that are identified post-launch.

Lenoir-Rhyne University anticipates retaining a single vendor to perform the entirety of the scope of work. However, we reserve to right to make multiple awards, e.g., selecting one firm for project discovery, strategy, user experience and information architecture and a second for design/build, or to make no award.

8. PROJECT TIMELINE

Lenoir-Rhyne anticipates a 9-15 month project timeframe with site launch occurring during a semester break, either over the summer (May-early August or during January winter break).

RFP distributed

RFP will be distributed by email as an attachment or DropBox link.

Thursday, February 6, 2020

Deadline for submitting questions

Please submit all questions via email to the Doug Minor, AVP for digital strategy, at doug.minor@lr.edu.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020, 5 p.m.

Responses to questions provided

We will try to respond to all questions within two business days of receipt and no later than this date. Responses to questions will be provided to all agencies at www.lr.edu/rfp-questions.

Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 5 p.m.

Proposals due

Lenoir-Rhyne University will review all proposals received and select 3-4 firms to interview with the selection committee.

Friday, March 6, 2020, 5 p.m.

Notification of interview

All firms will be notified of their status, whether they have been invited for an interview.

Friday, March 13, 2020

Video conference interviews with finalists

March 23, 2020 – March 27, 2020

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Onsite presentation by finalists | April 22-24, 2020 |
| Firm selected <i>Project will begin as soon as possible after selection, pending contract and statement of work completion.</i> | Thursday, April 30, 2020 |
| Possible site visit to firm's office by AVP for Digital Strategy | May 4-7, 2020 |
| Onsite discovery <i>Two days of onsite discovery meeting or workshops with campus stakeholder groups.</i> | June 1-5, 2020 |
| Discovery phase complete | Friday, July 17, 2020 |
| Anticipated website launch <i>Website would be launched at the end of the academic year and following campus commencements ceremonies.</i> | May 10-15, 2021 |

9. PROJECT BUDGET

We have anticipated the budget required for a site-wide redesign project and new CMS implementation. We are asking vendors to trust us that we have done our due diligence and have budgeted accordingly.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail in Adobe Acrobat PDF format to doug.minor@lr.edu. Deadline for submission is Friday, March 6, 5 p.m. Please refer to [Project Timeline](#) for additional dates and deadlines for the project.

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

Any questions about this RFP or the website redesign project should be directed to:

Doug Minor
 Associate Vice President for Digital Strategy
doug.minor@lr.edu
 828-328-7109

APPENDIX A: REBRANDING – HOW WE TALK ABOUT LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY

In 2019, Lenoir-Rhyne engaged Carnegie Dartlet to develop and implement a new brand identity strategy to better tell our story and improve market awareness of the university. The selected vendor for the web redesign project will be provided all branding work completed by Carnegie Dartlet, including project discovery, competitor analysis, reputation surveys, and messaging strategy, among other documents and presentations.

The website redesign project will be among the first areas to fully implement the new brand messaging framework. A color palette and new vocabulary is used to help guide our brand messaging and storytelling to play to our strengths as an institution as shown below.

BODACIOUS BROWN

Through a solid foundation and a bold path forward, Lenoir-Rhyne University must embrace a position of expressing its determination and dedication through its authentic Brown characteristics. Very few competitors convey any stories of resilience and excellence, which makes way for LRU to own this space in the competitive landscape. In order to do this, LRU must express more stories about its expectation of seeking out opportunities to grow and overcome challenges to make a better tomorrow for all.

PROUD CONTENDER – BROWN [Dedicated • Established • Competitive]

Resilient and tenacious, driven by challenging the industry through grit and determination. Delivers surprising strength, perseverance, and tenacity. Values fortitude and hard work. Causes people to feel triumphant and inspired.

PASSIONATELY PURPLE

Lenoir-Rhyne possesses a positive and passionate environment of preparing students for a life of purpose and impact. In a competitive set that leads with Purple, Lenoir-Rhyne must stand apart by expressing its stories in a powerful and emotive way to catch the attention necessary to differentiate. Allow the authenticity of the truly profound support students receive at LRU to captivate the market.

COMPASSIONATE SUPPORTER – PURPLE [Empowering • Caring • Friendly]

Supportive and selfless, driven by compassion, warmth, and the desire to care for others. Delivers friendliness, positivity, and attention. Values responsiveness, commitment, and kindness. Causes people to feel safe and supported.

YES TO YELLOW

Although Lenoir-Rhyne University has expressed some Yellow characteristics in the past, it has yet to own or embrace them fully. However, now is the time to shine a light on LRU's intelligence and creative innovation through progressive and assertive storytelling. LRU seeks to make the world a better place. Tell those stories proudly.

INTELLIGENT INNOVATOR – YELLOW [Forward-Thinking • Transformative • Progressive]

Brilliant and transformative, driven by inventing the future through innovation. Delivers advancement, ingenuity, and radical outcomes. Values newness, experimentation, and invention. Causes people to feel awe and amazement.

APPENDIX B: PEER INSTITUTIONS / COMPETITORS FOR APPLICANTS

Competitors for Applicants

Appalachian State University – www.appstate.edu
Catawba College – www.catawba.edu
Elon University – www.elon.edu
Mercer University – www.mercer.edu
Queens University of Charlotte – www.queens.edu
UNC Asheville – www.unca.edu

UNC Chapel Hill – www.unc.edu
UNC Charlotte – www.uncc.edu
UNC Greensboro – www.uncg.edu
Western Carolina University – www.wcu.edu
Wingate University – www.wingate.edu

Peer Institutions – North Carolina

Catawba College – www.catawba.edu
Gardner-Webb University – www.gardner-webb.edu
Guilford College – www.guilford.edu
High Point University – www.highpoint.edu

Pfeiffer University - www.pfeiffer.edu
Queens University of Charlotte – www.queens.edu
Wingate University – www.wingate.edu

Peer Institutions - National

This is not a fully agreed-to list, but these schools are similar to LR based on data from these organizations: ACA, SACSCOC, SAC, IPEDS, ELCA, and U.S. News.

** Indicates affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Anderson University | Florida Southern College | Maryville College |
| * Augsburg College | Gardner-Webb University | Meredith College |
| * Augustana College | Guilford College | * Muhlenberg College |
| * Augustana University | * Gettysburg College | Presbyterian College |
| Bridgewater College | * Gustavus Adolphus College | Queens University of Charlotte |
| * California Lutheran University | High Point University | * Roanoke College |
| Campbell University | Hood College | * Sewanee |
| * Capital University | Jacksonville University | Shenandoah University |
| Carson-Newman University | King University | Stetson University |
| * Carthage College | LaGrange College | * Susquehanna University |
| Catawba College | Lee University | * Texas Lutheran University |
| Charleston Southern University | Lincoln Memorial University | University of Charleston |
| * Concordia College at Moorhead | Lipscomb University | Virginia Wesleyan College |
| Elon University | * Luther College | Wingate University |
| Emory & Henry College | Lynchburg College | * Wittenberg University |

Division II Athletics – South Atlantic Conference

Anderson University
Carson-Newman University
Catawba College
Coker University
Lenoir-Rhyne University
Lincoln Memorial University
Mars Hill University
Newberry College

Queens University of Charlotte
Tusculum University
University of Virginia, College at Wise
Wingate University
Limestone College

APPENDIX C: INTRANET REDESIGN PROJECT

Project Overview

The university is interested in leveraging its public website redesign project, site development, and code base for a separate intranet or extranet site developed, maintained, and hosted on the same CMS and hosting platform as the public website. We see the intranet site offering a slightly different “skin” than the public website to clearly note it as a separate, internally focused site, but offer the same site design and functionality as the public website.

Offering an intranet site on the same CMS and hosting platform as our public website allows us to: (1) train, offer support and develop on a single platform, (2) realize cost savings from implementing and supporting a single site technology and (3) leverage site development done for either the public website or intranet on the other site.

Instructions to Vendors

Vendors should separate out the cost of implementing a separate intranet/extranet site that is essentially a carbon copy of the public website, including a slightly separate “skin” design for the header and footer, e.g., the intranet header and footer might feature a different color and logo than the public website. Vendors should provide details on how the code repository for the public website and intranet will be set up and maintained to share common elements between both sites and how hosting of a public website and intranet site would be set up and/or impact website hosting. We anticipate that the intranet site will require users to authenticate with SAML/Shibboleth federated SSO.

The Marketing and Communications Office will lead the user experience and information architecture work, content writing and content migration for the intranet site working directly with university clients. So, this work should not be included in vendor project pricing.

Current Intranet Website

The university intranet site (<https://portal.lr.edu>) was launched in 2016 on Microsoft SharePoint. The site is maintained and supported by a single IT staff person who makes most of the content updates for university faculty and staff. The site lacks a clear strategy and offers a poor design and user experience. It's not clear who the audience is for the site since audience content is intermixed. The site is also very “Hickory-centric” in that other university campuses in Asheville and Columbia are either buried or not represented on the site. Not all university offices/departments have a presence on the site. The site does not offer any news/announcements or university events calendar integration.

The university uses Ellucian Banner as its administrative software and course information is maintained within Banner's PowerCampus Self-Service (version 8.8.3 at time of this RFP). We expect that we will just link directly to PowerCampus pages, rather than integrate PowerCampus directly or we would push integration work off into a Phase 2 project. We may need assistance reskinning Banner PowerCampus to offer a similar header and footer and global navigation as the intranet site.

Posting of Content on Public Website Verses Intranet

Overall, there has been a change in philosophy at the university about what content should or shouldn't go on the public website. There is now more openness to posting some content that targets an internal audience on the public website as long as it doesn't get in the way of the site's primary target audience, prospective students and families.

APPENDIX D: TYPICAL CONTRACT TERMS

Lenoir-Rhyne University typically asks for certain contractual terms, depending on the nature of the solution (with SaaS/vendor hosted having higher requirements) and the data stored within (with applications that have Confidential data or significant regulatory compliance requirements receiving greater scrutiny.)

Lenoir-Rhyne and university counsel will anticipate the inclusion of at minimum the following terms, or will request these during final negotiations.

All Contracts

- Sections covering indemnification, indirect damages, or liability caps should be mutually beneficial to both parties to the contract.
- Maximum cost escalator for contract renewal.
- For contracts with auto-renewal clauses, notice of any cost increases at least 60 days before the auto-renewal notice period. (For instance, if a contract requires notice of non-renewal 30 days before end of term, cost increase notification would be required 90 days before end of term.)
- Users should not have to accept an end user license agreement (EULA), or if one is required, assertion that it will not change the terms and conditions of our agreement.
- Security language that notes vendor responsibility to deliver and maintain a secure product, and to provide updates/fixes in a timely fashion where vulnerabilities or flaws are discovered.
- Lenoir-Rhyne University will not agree to a specific state's jurisdiction in event of a lawsuit. We will accept the contract remaining silent on this point.
- Inclusion of language that the vendor provides a warranty for the intended use of the software/service is preferred.
- Indemnification of Lenoir-Rhyne University against third-party intellectual property claims against vendor, including obtaining rights for Lenoir-Rhyne University to continue using the solution by licensing IP, modifying the solution to be non-infringing, or providing exit remedy without Lenoir-Rhyne University waiving rights to remedies for non-conforming services.
- Vendor should agree that product meets applicable federal accessibility standards, currently WCAG 2.0 level A and level AA (this is a requirement for all university services provided to the general public, and should be provided as a commitment for all internal services). Although not currently federally mandated, to future proof our project and stay ahead of demand letters and legal complaints, we request that vendors meet WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards.

SaaS, vendor-hosted, or other circumstances where vendor stores, processes, or transmits Lenoir-Rhyne University data:

- Vendor agrees to keep all Lenoir-Rhyne University data confidential.
- Confidentiality exceptions such as subpoena, warrant, or other governmental request must provide notice to Lenoir-Rhyne University and the opportunity for Lenoir-Rhyne to intercede with the requesting agency to challenge the requirement.
- Vendor agrees to host all data within the United States, and to use industry-standard system protections to protect data confidentiality, availability, and integrity.
- Lenoir-Rhyne University retains ownership of all data, including right for data to be returned on request before or for a limited time period after end of agreement.