**Northwestern University**

**Invitation to Bid # PPSITB2020-010**

**Selection for Market Research Consultant**

**Background:**

The School of Professional Studies (SPS) at Northwestern University is interested in developing a new master’s in Healthcare Administration degree (HCA). The degree would be developed and delivered in partnership with Feinberg School of Medicine. The new program currently is set to begin offering classes in fiscal year 2022 (Winter 2022), with an announcement to the public about the program 12-18 months prior to that class start date. To help determine viability and positioning for the degree, SPS seeks to partner with an external market research firm to conduct research across various dimensions.

**Goals:**

The goal behind a market research effort is to confirm (or disprove), and expand upon, the hypotheses established in the program feasibility study phase of the HCA development process in order to clearly establish positioning opportunities for the program in the market, inclusive of curriculum needs. More concretely, the findings will provide greater insight into the goals listed below.

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| **PRIMARY GOALS** | **SECONDARY GOALS** |
| * Demand for a healthcare administration master’s program that serves the needs of mid-level managers and physician leaders looking to advance into director level positions in healthcare * Audience size and characteristics   + Who is interested in pursuing a master’s in Healthcare Administration?   + Why are they interested?   + What would make them choose Northwestern SPS/Feinberg program? * The brand equity that a partnership between Feinberg and SPS possesses inclusive of   + Brand awareness and recognition   + Brand sentiment   + Brand reputation   + Perceived value of a Northwestern SPS degree, taught in partnership with Feinberg faculty * Career tracks which prospective students would seek to pursue with the completion of the degree * Positioning for an online HCA degree targeted to mid-level working professionals in healthcare * Tuition planning strategy that accurately meets the desires of prospective students | * Curriculum expectations for an online HCA degree:   + What specific skills/knowledge do prospective students expect to learn in completing a HCA degree?   + What essential skills/knowledge do healthcare executives expect graduates of a HCA degree to possess?   + What is the importance of CAHME accreditation credentials? * Validating the importance/relevance of current skills that we understand to be a part of existing HCA programs:   + Business operations skills   + Process management   + Personnel management   + Strategic thinking and planning   + Operations and change management   + Data analysis   + Healthcare law and regulation   + Finance and budget planning   + CAHME accreditation credentials   + Continuum care * Program characteristics:   + Residential requirements   + Executive format   + Fully online program (and duration) * Career tracks which employers perceive to be available to working professionals with the completion of a HCA degree * Current and future employment and employment requirement trends for working professionals in healthcare |

**Market Research Dimensions:**

* Determine national and regional (Midwest) market demand
* Determine price sensitivity for a master’s in Healthcare Administration degree
* Understand competitive landscape both in terms of competing universities with HCA programs

as well as programs that focus on similar skills and concepts such as an MBA

* Determine unique proposition opportunities in a niche landscape
* Determine audience size and characteristics
* Determine marketing strategy opportunities
* Determine curriculum needs.

**Proposed Bid Scope and Description:**

The services Northwestern intends to utilize from the consultant are listed in this ITB. In order to be considered for award, bidders must submit a response that addresses all of these requirements. The selected consultant will serve as the Market Researcher to the School of Professional Studies during the research and discovery portion of the degree development process.

Establishing a partnership with a market research firm would allow Northwestern SPS to more effectively evaluate the feasibility and market approach for a new online master’s in Healthcare Administration degree. The expectation is that the selected market research partner would conduct and develop quantitative and qualitative research inclusive of, but not limited to:

* Focus groups with prospective students
* Focus groups with individuals who have completed similar programs at competing institutions
* Focus groups with current healthcare employees in leadership positions with decision making and hiring power
* Surveys to similar populations as listed above to develop quantitative data
* Survey questions would be developed to expand current understanding of market opportunity for the development of a HCA degree across the dimensions listed above

As a final deliverable, the market research partner will be asked to compile findings and share a thorough analysis of research results as well as a recommendation for program development and positioning that aligns with the goals listed above.

**Additional Bid Steps:**

* FINALIST WEB VISUAL-PRESENTATIONS. Bidders who submit proposal may be required to make oral presentations of their proposal to evaluation committee. These presentations provide an opportunity for the bidders to clarify the proposals through mutual understanding. Bidder will schedule their web visual-presentation, once PPS informs them too.
* Best and Final Offer (BAFO). NU many request that bidders still being considered after the initial review of proposals submit a Best and Final Offer (BFAO) based on additional detail and specifics provided to the finalists.

**Proposed Bid Timeline:**

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| **Key Milestone:** | **Date:** |
| Issue Date | May 19, 2020 |
| Bidders Questions Due | May 22, 2020 |
| PRS Response to Questions | May 28, 2020 |
| Bid Due Date | June 10, 2020 |
| Finalist Web Visual-Presentations | TBD |
| Award Recommendation Date | July 1, 2020 |
| Start Date | August 1,2020 |