



SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

Addendum #3 to RFP SU26-03
Content Management System
November 20, 2025

Q1. This RFP is very similar to an RFP Shepherd published in late 2024. Can you clarify the reasons your previous RFP did not result in a successful partnership and any new hopes or expectations you have of vendors for this re-released opportunity?

A1. Shepherd University was in the process of identifying some new processes. Some items have been worked out while other processes are continuing to change. However, the University realizes that the website is a critical recruitment tool and it needs to be updated in order to meet the needs of potential students.

Q2. The RFP references both a website redesign and brand strategy/rebrand/marketing campaign efforts. Could you clarify whether the brand development will be completed before, during, or after the website redesign? How far along is Shepherd in defining new brand identity elements (logo, color palette, typography, tone of voice, photography style, etc.)?

A2. The rebrand was completed in 2024. The successful vendor should be able to support marketing strategies and campaigns through their work to redesign the site using industry best practices.

Q3. Has Shepherd conducted any recent audience research or brand perception studies to inform this project, or would you expect the selected partner to lead that discovery?

A3. Shepherd University would anticipate the selected partner to lead the discovery.

Q4. Can you clarify whether the University is: seeking to continue on WordPress, considering migration to a new CMS, or evaluating both paths concurrently?

A4. The University needs a new website; however, the platform has not been identified. The successful vendor's proposal should include recommendations for a CMS.

Q5. Does Shepherd expect the partner to provide in-person workshops or virtual sessions for key milestones (IA validation, design reviews)?

A5. We recognize that a lot can be accomplished virtually. We do believe there is value to having a team on-site during at least the discovery phase of website development.

Q6. Are there any custom integrations (e.g., Slate, Ellucian, campus calendar, catalog systems) that may influence the IA or design strategy?

A6. Yes. Google Tag, Campus Calendar, and Google Analytics.

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Q7. Should the design system and templates be compatible with multiple CMS options (e.g., flexible for either WordPress or a future enterprise C

A7. Only if it is in the University's best interest and does not inhibit the functionality of the Shepherd University site.

Q8. How many distinct content types or templates should we anticipate designing (e.g., homepage, degree detail, news, events, department, etc.)?

A8. Shepherd University wants to make the website more uniform, focusing on student recruitment. It is anticipated that developing a homepage and templates for departmental pages, news and events, degree options, and potentially a calendar.

Q9. What is Shepherd's target timeline for discovery, design, development, and launch?

A9. Fall 2026

Q10. Are there any budget parameters or not-to-exceed amounts the University can share to help ensure our proposal is both realistic and responsive?

A10. Shepherd University is not sharing a budget for the project at this time.

Q11. Are there state procurement requirements or preferred vendor programs we should be aware of?

A11. There are not any preferred vendor programs. The State Procurement requirements is that the proposer follow Section 2 of the proposal and submit these items in the order identified.

Q12. What modules would you need pricing for? For example, news, events, directory, etc.

A12.

Q13. Are you looking to integrate with any external systems? For example, directory, courses/program finder, etc.

A13.

Q14. Are you looking for pricing for the hosting of the web server or would you prefer to handle that yourselves?

hosted offsite, but the hosting site needs to be within the

United States.

Q15. As a web design agency, we partner with multiple enterprise CMS partners for implementation. There are two CMS platforms we believe could effectively suit Shepherd's needs. Would you be open to receiving multiple proposals from our team, one with each of those two CMS partners, to give Shepherd quality options to consider?

A15. Yes, the more options available, the better.

Q16. We understand that you are unable to provide the budget details currently. However, we also recognize that your current annual costs are relatively low. Could you please confirm if there is flexibility in increasing your annual recurring costs for a SaaS web CMS?

A16. Yes, Shepherd University is aware that the current annual costs is relatively low, and the amount allocated for this project will have to increase in order for the project to be successful.

Q17. Is AWS an acceptable hosting provider?

A17. The hosting provider needs to be a hosting agent that resides in the United States.

Q18. How many websites will be migrated to the new CMS? Please list them.

A18. There is one website , www.shepherd.edu. that has many web pages on that site. Not all of the content will be migrated.

Q19. How many pageviews per year do all websites receive annually?

A19.

Q20. How many pages and documents will be migrated to the new system?

A20. Shepherd University is not certain of the exact number of pages and documents at this time. We have begun reorganizing and consolidating content as part of this project, and the final scope will depend on the structure recommended by the selected vendor. Once we identify a successful partner and finalize the information architecture, we will have a clearer estimate of the total content to be migrated.

Q21. Are any integrations to 3rd party systems required? Please list them and describe the nature of the integration to the CMS.

A21.

Q22. Does Shepherd University have a personalization strategy currently or is this something the university would like to explore?

A22.

Q23. What is the university's SSO provider?

A23. Azure

Q24. Is the University open to replacing the existing website search?

A24. It is an essential part of the proposal.

Q25. You are currently using WordPress. We specialize in Drupal only. Is it your preference to stay on WordPress, or are you open to migrating to a new CMS platform?

A25. Shepherd University is open to exploring new CMS options.

Q26. Is there any requirement or restriction from the University regarding CMS technology choice or hosting vendor approval?

A26. There is no predetermined restriction on CMS technology or hosting vendor; however, any solution must meet Shepherd University's security, accessibility, and compliance standards. Final approval will depend on the proposed system's ability to align with these requirements and integrate effectively with our existing infrastructure.

Q27 The RFP states the CMS must support SSO and multiple integrations. Can you specify which authentication method or identity provider is currently used?

A27. Azure/SAML

Q28. The RFP mentions a website redesign and content management system implementation. Does the project include both the public website and any subdomains or microsites?

A28.

Q29. Are there any e-services or transactional systems integrated into the main site that are in scope for the redesign?

A29.

Q30. Do you have defined success KPIs or performance indicators for the new website?

A30.

Q31. Can you confirm if the main goals are to improve navigation, accessibility, SEO, and overall brand alignment, as outlined in section 3.4 of the RFP?

A31. Yes, along with improved search options and full security and regulatory compliance.

Q32. Are there any mandatory third-party integrations or institutional systems that must connect with the new CMS?

A32 Refer to questions 6, 13, and 21.

Q33. Will existing website content be migrated as-is, or will there be a content audit and reorganization prior to migration?

A33. Shepherd University is looking for recommendations from vendors, but do not anticipate migrating any information as-is without a full audit and reorganization.

Q34. Are brand guidelines and visual identity assets already finalized, or are they being developed in parallel with the website project?

A34. The brand identity and assets are ready and are being integrated now. The standards can be referenced at:

https://issuu.com/shepherd_university/docs/june_24_brand_standards?fr=sY2EwODc0Mzc3ODA

Q35. Is there a designated internal content team responsible for updates, or will the CMS need to accommodate decentralized content authors across multiple departments?

A35. Shepherd University would like to hear suggestions about site governance from vendors, but prefer a centralized system that ensures consistency across the site.

Q36. Do you expect our team to handle only content architecture and migration, while your internal team provides copywriting and media assets?

A36. Shepherd University has a team ready to support copywriting and media assets; however, Shepherd University is also open to collaboration based on the recommendations brought forward during the RFP process.

Q37. The RFP specifies compliance with ADA and WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Are there any additional accessibility or policy requirements specific to Shepherd University?

A37. No. ADA and WCAG 2.1 AA" are sufficient.

Q38. Do you currently have an SEO strategy or analytics framework that the new site should preserve or enhance?

A38.

Q39. Will the University provide ongoing SEO performance data to evaluate success post-launch?

A39. This is part of the need

Q40. The RFP states the CMS must be hosted at a University-approved site. Does the University have a preferred hosting provider or existing infrastructure vendor list?

A40. Not at this time, but hosting should be US-based.

Q41. Does the CMS need to integrate with any analytics, marketing, or accessibility monitoring tools?

A41. Shepherd University currently uses Google Analytics but are open to proposals for additional tools that may be available.

Q42. Are there specific security certifications or compliance standards beyond ADA and WCAG, such as PCI DSS or FERPA, that must be supported?

A42. Not that Shepherd University is currently aware.

Q43. Is there a requirement for on-premises backups or disaster recovery testing within the hosting scope?

A43. Disaster recovery. The proposal should include information about backups and their frequency.

Q44. Will our project team interface primarily with the Procurement Services team or with a designated web and communications committee after contract award?

A44. The project team will interface with University Communications team after contract award.

Q45. Are there multiple stakeholder groups that will approve design and content decisions, or will decision-making be centralized?

A45. Shepherd University would like to - hear from vendors about best practices for website governance; however, based on our current experience we prefer a centralized process.

Q46. Are you expecting an agile, phased delivery approach, or a single launch at project completion?

A46. Shepherd University welcomes vendor recommendations about the most effective way to meet the ambitious goal to launch a new main site by Fall

2026

Q47. Are there any internal IT policies or security reviews that must be completed before site deployment?

A47. SOC 2 or similar

Q48. What are the expectations for post-launch support and maintenance during the initial five-year contract term?

A48.

Q49. Do you require 24/7 support response for critical website issues?

A49. Shepherd University needs to have a way to address unexpected outages or other problems that take our website offline.

Q50. Are there service-level metrics or response-time requirements that must be included in the SLA?

A50. Yes, service-level metrics and response-time requirements should be included in the SLA. At a minimum, identifying defined response times for critical issues (such as site outages or security breaches), high-priority issues (performance degradation), and standard support requests.

Q51. Will maintenance include CMS upgrades and feature enhancements, or only security and uptime support?

A51. Shepherd University - will require upgrades and enhancements to be part of any maintenance proposals.

Q52. The RFP doesn't specify a budget or budget range for this project. Could you share the anticipated budget to help us appropriately scope our proposal and ensure alignment with your expectations?

A52. Shepherd University is not prepared to share a budget at this time.

Q53. Do you have a target launch date or any critical milestones that would inform the project timeline?

A53. Shepherd University would like to launch a redesigned main webpage that includes a searchable catalog and consistently designed and streamlined departmental pages in the Fall of 2026.

Q54. We see that the site is currently on WordPress CMS. Are you happy with WordPress CMS and open to considering it for this project or are you looking to transition to a new CMS?

A54. Shepherd University is open to vendor recommendations regarding CMS technology as part of their proposals

Q55. If happy staying on WordPress CMS, are you open to a managed services agreement for the hosting, maintenance, and support of this open source CMS to help address the security concerns you are currently dealing with?

A55. Yes

Q56. If interested in transitioning to a new CMS, are you looking for an open-source solution or a proprietary licensed CMS solution?

A56. Shepherd University is open to vendor recommendations regarding CMS technology as part of their proposals

Q57. Beyond mentioned security concerns around updates, are there any other pain points with the current WordPress CMS specifically that you'd want addressed in this upgrade or move to a new CMS platform?

A57. Shepherd University wants a more dynamic, responsive, and user-friendly interface on the back end to create and maintain webpages within the site.

Q58. Approximately how many pages of content will need to be migrated to the new CMS?

A58. That will depend on the proposal from the successful vendor. That said, we anticipate migrating very little content directly into the new site.

Q59. Are you expecting the selected vendor to migrate all content? Would you be open to a division of labor in content migration as a cost-saving measure?

A59. Yes

Q60. Section 5.2 has a section titled "Demonstrated and Proven Search Engine Optimization" as worth 35 points. However, the content under that section seems to relate to the Scope of Services sections of the RFP in which search engine optimization (SEO) is not mentioned. We are assuming this header title is incorrect, and these 35 points are awarded for demonstrated ability to perform the scope of services. Can you confirm that this assumption is correct?

A60. Yes

Q61. Could the University please clarify why a phased approach is being suggested for implementation and what that entails from the University's perspective?

A61. A phased approach is suggested to help manage risk, ensure quality, and allow for stakeholder feedback throughout the process, given the ambitious goal of launching by Fall 2026. From the University's perspective, this typically involves breaking the project into stages such as information architecture and design, core functionality development, content migration, and testing. This approach also supports training and smoother adoption for internal teams. However, we are open to proposals that recommend a different approach if it achieves the same objectives within the timeline and ensures a secure, accessible, and high-performing website.

Q62. Could the University clarify what type of log files or reports are expected from the CMS, specifically whether this refers to analytics-related data or other reporting data?

A62. The University expects the CMS to provide both analytics-related reports and system-level logs. Analytics reports should include metrics such as page views, user behavior, traffic sources, and conversion tracking to support marketing and decision-making. System-level logs should cover security events, user access, and administrative actions to ensure compliance and maintain site integrity. These reports should be easily accessible through the CMS dashboard and exportable for auditing and performance review.

Q63. Could the University identify which APIs (if any) will need to be integrated with the new CMS?

A63. We do not have a specific list at this time.

Q64. Beyond the Modern Campus Catalog integration, are there other third-party integrations that should be considered as part of this project scope?

A64. Yes; however, we do not have a finalized list at this time.

Q65. Can you clarify which specific branding assets are expected as part of the rebrand? (e.g., logo redesign, tagline, brand guide, messaging framework, collateral templates, etc.)

A65. The rebrand has been completed. We are currently in the implementation phase.

Q66. Are there expectations for the agency to produce marketing collateral deliverable (such as admissions brochures, email templates, or campaign assets) under the new brand?

A66. No

Q67. Will the University provide new photography/video assets that align with the rebranding? Will on-site creative direction for media asset creation be needed?

A67. Yes

Q68. Should the deliverables address brand application across academic departments, athletics, and administrative units, or only the central University brand?

A68. The Shepherd University brand standards are to be used across all divisions and departments of the University outside of athletics.

Q69. If the project is to redesign the website, why is "website design" listed under optional?

A69. Because we missed that in the review.

Q70. Is this project funded?

A70. Yes.

Q71. Must SAAS license fees be included in the total budget?

A71. This information must be included so that Shepherd University can identify the fees in the first year and on an annual basis for financial planning purposes.

Q72. Must the information requested in Attachments B, D and F be confined to a single 8.5 X 11 page or can this information be presented in an alternate format such as a multi-page .pdf file with imagery?

A72. These Attachments do not need to be confined to one page. This information can be addressed in the format by the vendor to ensure the information is provided fully.

Q73. Can you provide examples of higher education websites or even those outside of higher ed that you aspire to/favor and why?

A73. <https://www.siena.edu/>,

www.marshall.edu,

<https://www.fairmontstate.edu/>

<https://www.kenyon.edu/>

These are examples of the modern, dynamic, and professional website experiences that Shepherd University is - looking to provide as redesigning of the website proceed to our website to target potential students.

Q74. Who are recent competitors and/or comparators?

A74.

Q75. Do you have an intranet and/or portal for current students? Is that outside of the scope of this redesign?

A75. We are developing an employee intranet to reduce the scope of this project. We do not yet have a student portal and are open to suggestions from vendors as part of the proposals.

Q76. Is <https://shepherdrams.com/> outside of the scope of this redesign?

A76. Yes

Q77. What specific qualities are you looking for in an agency partner?

A77.

Q78. Will web guidelines for the brand be provided to the winning bidder?

A78. Yes

Q79. What are your hopes and expectations for a vendor lead discovery phase and development of a website strategy?

A79.

Q80. Do you have writers on staff? Do you need help with content strategy and governance?

A80. Yes and yes.

Q81. What is the desired launch date for the new site?

A81. August 2026

Q82. Can you confirm whether hard copies and a USB flash drive must be submitted for consideration to the address provided in the RFP, or will digital submissions via email be accepted for this RFP?

A82. Hard copies and a USB Flash Drive must be submitted for consideration.

Q83. Will local vendors be given preference during the proposal review process?

A83. The objective of the RFP is to select the most qualified proposal. If a local vendor provides a proposal that demonstrates being most qualified, a demonstration will be requested. However, there is not a mechanism to provide preference to local vendors during the review process.

Q84. What specific institutional changes or new requirements have emerged in the past year that we should account for in our updated proposal, and how has your internal stakeholder group or approval process changed since we last engaged?

A84. We have welcomed new leadership in the last year. In addition, we must meet new accessibility requirements and have begun identifying more centralized processes for our other technological assets. We are better positioned to move forward with a comprehensive overhaul of our website.

Q85. What are the top 2 - 3 CMS options that you're leaning towards?

A85. The University has issued an RFP to obtain what options are available that would best meet the demands of a higher education website. There are not any particular options that are being leaned towards.

Q86. Since our last technical audit identified your Entra ID integration needs and events calendar requirements, have there been any additions to your required third-party integrations or changes to your content migration scope?

A86. We are in the process of bringing on new vendors now who may have resources that will have to be integrated. We do not have a final list at this time.

Q87. What were the primary factors that led to the project pause, and what specifically does Shepherd need to see in a proposal now to ensure this project moves forward without delay?

A87. We were in the process of identifying new processes and resources that had to be worked out before beginning work on a new website. To ensure that we can move forward now, the University will need to have a specific proposal for a vendor lead discovery phase and development of a website strategy. We need specific outlines about security and maintenance of the website and a best practices approach to internal governance once the site is up and running.

Q88. Are there institutional deadlines or enrollment cycles that should drive our project timeline and phasing decisions?

A88. We would like the new site ready for the Fall of 2026.