Northwestern Michigan College - Website Redesign RFP Q&A

1. Are there any limitations within the current Cascade CMS instance (version, custom modules, hosting constraints) that we should account for in design and development planning? Please be aware that we host our Cascade CMS internally.
2. Does NMC anticipate retaining its current internal hosting infrastructure, or are infrastructure optimizations under consideration? We do not anticipate changing our hosting infrastructure but are open to hearing an argument for doing so.
3. For the interactive Program Finder tool, does NMC envision this driven directly from Banner data feeds or maintained within Cascade-managed structured content? The interactive program finder is expected to be maintained within Cascade-managed structured content.
4. Regarding the strong preference for integrated paid media management, would this be evaluated as part of the core award decision or as a value-added differentiator? This would be a value-added differentiator.

5. Can you please describe in greater detail the type of integration that is needed for each system identified in the RFP (Ellucian Recruit/Banner, blogs.nmc.edu, calendars, Career Coach, RFI forms, Issuu, SmugMug, College Raptor, YouVisit, Panopto/Vimeo/YouTube). With Cascade CMS, there are a number of different ways to integrate with systems – linking off, SSO, API integrations via front end code, etc. The more details we have about your expectations, the more accurate we can be with our scoping. There are a variety of integrations methods. See the document here - https://www.nmc.edu/departments/finance-administration/requests-for-proposals/files/NMC-website-integrated-programs-and-systems.pdf - for more information.
6. The RFP states that there are 1650 HTML pages to be migrated. How many Cascade Content Types are used by these 1650 pages? See the document here - https://www.nmc.edu/departments/finance-administration/requests-for-proposals/files/NMC-web-pages-and-content-blocks.pdf
7. What page component types exist for your site now? See the document here - https://www.nmc.edu/departments/finance-administration/requests-for-proposals/files/NMC-web-pages-and-content-blocks.pdf
8. Can you confirm that this contract is for services only and doesn't need to include CMS licensing or hosting? (Do you plan to continue hosting internally?) This contract is for services only and does not include CMS licensing or hosting.
9. The RFP states that content will be migrated As Is. Is NMC prepared to provide updated photography to support a new modern design? Or should we assume that the new design needs to use the photo assets currently on the site? NMC plans to get additional photography in the next fiscal year but the proposal should be written with the assumption that we will rely on existing photography.

Given NMC's preference for a partner who can support both the Website Redesign and Digital Marketing scopes, would NMC be open to receiving one integrated proposal that addresses both RFPs — outlining shared strategy, coordinated execution, and resourcing efficiencies — while still clearly separating scope and pricing for each? Yes

Both RFPs express a strong preference for a single vendor handling both digital marketing and website redesign. If a single vendor is selected for both, how does NMC envision the coordination between the two scopes—single contract, single point of contact, or separate workstreams? Separate workstreams.

Is there a preferred evaluation timeline for both RFPs? Early spring.

Will decisions on both be made simultaneously, or could one be awarded before the other? One could be awarded before the other.

Questions on Website Redesign Support RFP Technical Environment & Cascade CMS
What version of Cascade CMS is currently running, and are there any planned upgrades during the project timeline? We're currently running 8.26.0 but will be upgraded to a more recent version like 2025.2.2 before the project kicks off.

Are there known technical or IT constraints within Cascade CMS that may limit the use of modern front-end frameworks (e.g., Tailwind), custom JavaScript, or API-driven integrations? Not that we're aware of.

How flexible is the current Cascade environment in supporting new modular templates, custom content types, or third-party widget embeds? We've found the environment to be flexible enough to support new templates, custom content and embeds.

What level of internal IT support is available during the design, development, migration, and launch phases? Will IT be involved in DNS cutover and server configuration? IT will be able to support the project. There shouldn't be a need for DNS cutover as the IP addresses and hosts should remain the same.

Is the Cascade CMS license and hosting managed internally by NMC IT, or through Hannon Hill? It's managed and hosted internally.

Are there any licensing constraints on the number of templates, users, or sites? Systems Integrations. None that we're aware of that would affect the project.

Are there any major pain points with current system integrations (Ellucian Recruit/Banner, R25 calendars, Career Coach, WordPress connector, etc.) that the redesign should address? The main pain point is incomplete integrations.

For the Program Finder tool, does NMC envision this as a custom-built feature maintained long-term by internal teams, or would NMC expect ongoing vendor support for enhancements and maintenance post-launch? This would be maintained long term by internal teams.

For the Ellucian Recruit and Banner integrations: are these API-driven, iframe-based, or manual data feeds? What are the refresh frequencies? Digital campaign source data is automatically

recorded in Ellucian application records but needs to be manually exported as reports, which we do weekly.

Is the blogs.nmc.edu WordPress site included in the redesign scope, or is it limited to the Cascade WordPress Connector feed integration? The Word Press site is not included in the integration.

Content Migration & Information Architecture
Of the approximately 1,650 HTML pages, has NMC conducted a content audit to identify which pages are active/current versus outdated or redundant? Yes but additional audits will likely be necessary.

Does NMC have an existing redirect map or URL strategy, or will the vendor be responsible for creating the full redirect plan? We will be looking to our chosen vendor for a redirect plan.

Are there content governance rules or workflows currently in Cascade CMS (approval chains, publishing schedules, role-based permissions) that should be preserved or improved in the redesign? Our current approval chains, publishing schedules and role-based permissions should be preserved.

What is NMC's preference for content migration: fully automated, vendor-assisted manual, or a hybrid approach? Hybrid

Is there internal staff capacity to support manual content review during migration? Yes

Design, Branding & UX
Has NMC conducted any user research, usability testing, or user surveys with prospective students regarding the current website experience? No

Beyond the four main page types mentioned (homepage, interior, staff/faculty, academic program), are there additional specialized page types or microsites that should be included in the template scope? A program finder page and possibly a calendar page.

Accessibility & Compliance
Has NMC conducted a recent WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility audit of the current site? If so, can the results be shared with prospective vendors? We haven't conducted a full site audit but we use DubBot to monitor and remediate accessibility issues on an ongoing basis.

Are there specific accessibility requirements beyond WCAG 2.2 AA (e.g., Section 508, internal IT security policies for student-facing pages)? No

Project Timeline, Budget & Success Criteria
The RFP references a "six-figure investment" for the website redesign. Is there an upper boundary for the project budget, and does this include post-launch support and maintenance? An upper boundary has not been established but this is a competitive RFP process. This does not include post-launch support and maintenance.

With a proposed start date on or before July 1, 2026 and contract through June 30, 2027, is the expectation for a full site launch within 12 months? Ideally.

Are there interim milestones or phased launch expectations? We would look to our prospective partner to establish those.

What would NMC consider a successful website launch, and what are the key metrics for evaluating success in the first six months post-go-live? This can be established after a contract is signed.

1. Section 4.01(a) asks vendors to "include the number of years the company has operated as an aircraft manufacturer." This appears to be carried over from a different RFP template. Can you confirm what firm overview information you're actually seeking and whether the rest of Section 4.01 accurately reflects your requirements?

    Please include the number of years the company has offered website design services or paid media management. The rest of the section is accurate.

2. The RFP references a "six-figure investment." Can you provide any additional guidance on whether the anticipated budget is in the low, mid, or high six figures? And does this budget include the optional paid digital media management services, or is that expected to be scoped and budgeted separately?

    The paid digital management is to be scoped and budgeted separately. There is a second RFP available that further outlines that request.

3. Of the ~1,650 HTML pages, approximately how many are actively maintained and expected to carry over to the redesigned site versus pages that may be retired? Is NMC open to a content audit that could result in a significantly reduced page count, and would NMC staff be available to make editorial decisions on content retention during the migration phase?

    We are open to a content audit and we are available to make editorial decisions related to content retention.

4. With a proposed start date on or before July 1, 2026 and a contract end of June 30, 2027, what is the expectation for launch timeline.

    There is flexibility in the launch timeline

5. The RFP describes paid digital media management as "highly desirable" but doesn't include it in the formal Scope of Work. Should respondents include paid media management as a separately priced line item, or integrated into the overall proposal cost?

The paid digital management is to be scoped and budgeted separately. There is a second RFP available that further outlines that request.

6. Do you have more specific guidance regarding a six-figure budget, perhaps a range you would like to target? We do have a limited budget, your competitive bid will be sufficient.

1. Budget - In order to better evaluate scope requirements, please provide approved budget or budget range for this project (new CMS, Hosting, Web Redesign, Content Migration, etc.). This will give us a better idea of what we can do to meet your needs, and help us determine the timeline we can complete it in. We are looking for a partner who can scale efficiently; for context, we anticipate our project scale to align with a six-figure investment.

2. Cascade CMS – Is your current instance of Cascade a cloud instance or on-premise? On-premise

3. Has any research/discovery been completed on the website in the last 24 months? Research has been done to confirm that the website can be effectively redesigned on the current CMS. The output can be made available after a contract is signed.

4. Are you interested in completing qualitative or quantitative analysis to inform the designs and user experience as a part of the Website Redesign Project? Analysis items may include user focus groups, surveys, heatmaps, engagement review of the current site, audience-based navigation, and content review, and/or online user experience recordings. Yes.

5. Content Strategy - Are you interested in having the chosen vendor provide a Content Strategy that would include a content audit of your high-level pages to help determine what pages to move to the new website, what content is missing, organization of content, what content needs to be edited, etc? Yes but this should be outlined as a separate section of the bid.

6. Content Development - Will the chosen vendor be responsible for writing new content or copyediting existing website content? If so, in order to provide an accurate quote, how many pages of content should the chosen vendor plan to: No
i. Copywrite (provide new content)
ii. Copy edit existing content

7. Do you have a set of User/Audience Personas defined? Or would you like to include Audience Persona Strategy/Creation as part of the redesign discovery process? We do have Audience Personas and they have been added to our rfp page on the website for your reference.

8. Content migration – Will the vendor be responsible for migrating content from the existing website or will you be handling that migration? We will handle this.
a. Please provide estimated number of pages to be migrated 2,500

9. What types of templates do you anticipate requiring for the redesign? Our standard offering generally consists of templates for homepage, landing page, standard/interior page, and degree/program listing and detail page. These standard offerings are acceptable.

10. Do you need to have any of the following templates as part of your main scope of work:
a. News listing page and news detail page? No
b. Faculty/Staff Directory? No
c. Calendar? Yes. The existing Calendar pages including the Academic Calendar page are mostly static and text-based rather than a graphical calendar aside from nmc.edu/news/calendars/general/ and nmc.edu/news/calendars/student/
d. Other Templates? Possibly a Program Finder page.

11. How are you managing your current faculty/staff directory? With the redesign, will the

directory stay as-is? Or, will it be managed within the CMS? This will stay the same.
12. How are you managing the calendar on your current website? With the redesign, will the calendar stay as-is? Or, will it be managed within the CMS? The site currently features three different calendars that are all managed differently. This is an area that could be improved but is not the main focus of the redesign.
13. What are your expectations for Google Analytics in terms of consulting and migration to the new site? We currently have Google Analytics on the site and we would expect a smooth transition to the redesigned site with no interruptions in data flow.

a. Have you implemented GA4? Yes.
b. Do you need vendor to setup GA or will vendor be using existing setup? We will be using our existing setup.
14. Can you describe the SEO efforts taken on your site so far? What is your current SEO strategy? SEO has been focused on hygiene and accessibility. There is no current SEO strategy.
15. SSO Integration – Is the SSO integration related to the CMS only or are there specific parts of the site which require SSO?
16. Hosting – Is the Cascade CMS and Database hosted in Hannon Hill's cloud or do you host on premise? On premise
17. Hosting – Who currently hosts the production web server (on-premise or 3 rd Party)? We do. On premise.
18. Is hosting of the production web server part of this project scope? No
19. Hosting – If hosting is part of the scope for this response, please provide the following for the web server:
a. Current CPUs
b. RAM GB
c. Disk GB
d. Data Transfer / Bandwidth GB
e. Operating System – Windows or Linux

- What is your anticipated/desired launch date? The launch date is flexible.
- Would you prefer a handwritten ("live") signature on the signature page, or is a digital signature acceptable? Digital is acceptable.
- Do you plan to use the Cascade faculty module for staff/faculty pages? We don't currently but are open to doing so in the future.
- Of the integrations, are they more links and embeds or do any of the ones listed need API integrations (except Banner feeds)? They're primarily links and embeds.
- Can you explain more the request to have a tool such as Looker Studio for website development progress? Is this a Project Management status versus website analytics? This would be for project management tracking. Other tools are acceptable.
- Are you considering going to the SaaS version of Cascade? We are not currently considering it.
- We believe this is a typo: Include the number of years the company has operated as an aircraft manufacturer. Thank you for alerting us. Please include the number of years the company has offered website design services.
- Can LinkedIn be used for team resumes or would you like actual resumes? LinkedIn resumes can be used.