



Request for Proposal to Enhance SURA's Value Proposition and Advance Improvements to its Brand, Website and Communication Tools

Background:

Prior to developing a five-year Strategic/Business Plan which was approved in FY10, SURA engaged Beers + Cutler to provide a Risk Assessment report. Completed in December 2008, that report listed 14 risk areas – all of which were addressed by management and reported to the Board of Trustees throughout the plan's execution. On-going, strategic issues identified in that report continue to receive concerted focus. SURA is now prepared to take closer aim at one such area – addressing its value proposition – which was noted in the B+C report:

While SURA benefits from the ability to quickly change strategic direction and react to unexpected research opportunities, limited long-term strategic planning may hinder its ability to effectively ... provide value to SURA members within a consistent branding platform.

As SURA's development efforts seek to expand its sponsored research programs and examine new management and operations opportunities, the SURA brand, website and communications tools will require enhancement, expansion and revision. While budget and time limitations prevent a complete overhaul of our brand identity and the tools that express it, SURA does need a new look, feel and update that expresses our value proposition to members, partners and stakeholders.

As a first step to begin this process, the Board of Trustees affirmed a revision to its mission statement at its Fall 2013 meeting:

SURA's mission is to advance collaborative research and education and to strengthen the scientific capabilities of its members and our nation.

Proposal Components:

SURA invites proposals to improve its brand, including but not limited to updating its website, as well as expanding and enhancing its media and communications presence and tools, with the following objectives:

- Work to improve SURA's brand identity to align with our current projects and capabilities;
- Consult with a task force of staff and Trustee representatives to understand and utilize SURA's past accomplishments, current program achievements, and future potential for serving members and partners;
- Address content revision and technology updates/enhancements of SURA's website, to articulate that brand identity and serve as a resource for members and stakeholders (including RSS technology) – as well as the content management tools to maintain it;
- Revise and/or create other communication tools and advice that go beyond the website as a marketing opportunity (Facebook, Wikipedia, SURA's annual "Year in Review", regular board and member communications, etc.); and,

- Other collateral materials or advice that completes a comprehensive update to SURA's brand identity.

Process & Timeline:

As we engage outside expertise to assist SURA with branding, web design and content management, and other communication tools, the following task force has been identified to inform and assist the process:

SURA Staff:

Chief Public Affairs Officer and SURA Director of Administration & Human Resources, (Coordinators); other SURA staff as needed.

Board of Trustees:

Three to six members of the SURA Board of Trustees or their designees (TBD)

Outside Stakeholders: Southern Governors' Association Director of Communications, and any others TBD.

SURA anticipates a working timeframe from January through July 2014.

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Creation Date: 11/21/2013 12:46:00 PM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 11/21/2013 12:46:00 PM
Last Saved By: Greg Kubiak
Total Editing Time: 62 Minutes
Last Printed On: 11/21/2013 1:48:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 517 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 2,952 (approx.)