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# **Request for Proposal #: 2023-01-001**

## **Budget Transformation Implementation**

**Date of Issue: January 5, 2023**

**Proposal Submission Deadline: January 25, 2023**



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## 1.0 About Rice University

William Marsh Rice University, commonly referred to as Rice University, is a non-profit private research university located on a 285-acre campus in Houston, Texas. The university is situated near the Houston Museum District and adjacent to the Texas Medical Center.

Opened in 1912, Rice is a preeminent research university with a distinct undergraduate focus. Its educational distinction is demonstrated by a relatively small student body and 6:1 student-faculty ratio, among the lowest in the top American universities including the Ivy League. A member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), Rice has a high and growing level of research activity with \$167.9 million in sponsored research funding in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

We employ all types and levels of staff positions – from custodians to investment professionals to executives. Rice is a self-sufficient community with its own power plant, police department and fleet of buses. With a booming Houston economy, it has become increasingly important for us to create and implement systems and programs that will enable us to attract, retain, motivate and engage the best and the brightest to lead Rice University in its second century.

## 2.0 Introduction

Rice University is issuing a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) to receive proposals from qualified and experienced professional higher education advisory firms to perform a comprehensive, campus-wide assessment of base budget funding allocations, and provide advisory and analytical services to support a transformation of the current budget allocation model. The budget model transformation initiative is expected to support and enable the campus strategic goals of developing a budget that reflects Rice’s values and is guided by the academic mission, provides increased transparency, and builds incentives into the model to support schools’ and administrative units’ increased ability to understand and leverage opportunities, growth, possibilities and outcomes.

Rice University is dedicated to ensuring student success by providing affordability and access to a quality education. New leadership at Rice has provided a catalyst for growth and a more refined strategic vision, which includes growth in graduate students, research, and other revenue sources. Rice sees an opportunity to reassess its current budget allocation model to further support the University’s academic, research and service mission. To achieve this, Rice University is seeking a qualified firm to support a phased approach to a budget model transformation that include revenue and cost containment incentives. The firm will perform an assessment of Rice’s current state base budget allocations to analyze how the model is currently performing and what it is incentivizing. This base budget assessment will be followed by work in support of the development of the governance structure, a set of design options, modeling the impact of those design options, and a stakeholder engagement plan. The final phase will include the development of new capabilities including templates, tools, and techniques for evaluating new revenue generation opportunities. Based on stakeholder feedback and iterative designs and modeling, the work will culminate in a fully developed budget model and supporting processes that, in parallel with the current budget model, could be implemented for FY2025. It is important to the University that this is a University-led, consultant-supported engagement. The project is co-sponsored with the provost office and the university budget office and this transformation is led by a partnership between the VPFA and the Provost.



### 3.0 RFP Timeframe

Distribute Request: Thursday, January 5, 2023, 2022

Respondents Submit Questions: Friday, January 13, 2023

Rice Responds to Questions: Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Proposals Due: Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Finalist selection: Finalists notified by Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Full proposal and oral presentation of selected finalists: February 14 & 15, 2023

Desired Project Kick-Off: March 1, 2023

### 4.0 Scope of Work

#### Rice's budget model should:

1. Reflect and execute the university's mission and priorities
  2. Be simple, understandable, easy to manage, logical and transparent
  3. Promote and reward academic excellence, performance, success, and innovation
  4. Foster trust and responsibility around decision making
  5. Provide predictable funding to support our ability to be strategic in our planning
  6. Allow for increased unit level control and accountability while ensuring coordinated decision making
1. Anticipated timeline: Kickoff 2/2023 and firm to complete all work within 24 months. The first 18 months will be focused to ensure a July 2024 (FY25) budget model implementation. The last six months will be used to support phase 4 deliverables as well as post implementation support.
  2. "Unit" is defined as and can encompass a school, division, institute or administrative department within Rice University.
  3. To support the University with a transformation of the budget model, the University seeks to partner with a firm and has detailed a phased approach for the additional support required for a budget model redesign and programmatic requirements, which are outlined below:

#### 4.1 Project Phases - Discovery, Model Design, Preparation & Planning and Implementation

##### Kick off Phase 1 – Discovery:

In the Discovery Phase, the firm will be required to understand Rice's base budget across schools, colleges and academic and administrative departments. This will include an evaluation of the benefits and challenges of



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the current allocation as informed by other higher education institutions, the University's budget principles and strategic goals, the internal appetite for change, and best practices within higher education. At a minimum, this will require:

1. Review University budget and financial planning models with University stakeholders, and the landscape and trends pertinent to budget model design including the incentives (positive and negative) associated with a budget model
2. Interviews with University identified stakeholders, including each Dean and a representative sample of department chairs, administrative unit leadership, budget officers, and budget development facilitators, plus any additional stakeholders as requested.
3. Generation of a current state budget model of the University's current resource management, which must include a high-level of University funds flow and identification of incentive opportunities for new funding generation as well as opportunities for reallocation and use of surpluses. Assessment of direct cost to deliver programming in different departments/schools/colleges across campus. Analysis of overhead costs including utilities, maintenance, custodial, recycling & trash, grounds, deferred maintenance, cost per square foot, indirect cost recovery split.
4. Inventory of current incentives, including tuition sharing agreements, research funding incentives, enrollment growth incentives including online and non-traditional course enrollment, percent of self-funded grad students, and other metrics that have been included in peer institution budget models or should be considered as we re-design Rice's budget to be detailed in supplier's proposal.
5. Assessment of base budget allocations against key performance measures such as teaching activity, student outcomes, research activity using multiple metrics, and enrollment, including benchmarking against measures from peer institutions and accounting for common differences across academic disciplines.
6. At the end of phase 1, a fully developed timeline that includes the phases, dependencies opportunities for revenue generation and cost containment and tasks will be delivered to the university.
7. Current state assessment report to be delivered by the firm to the University at the conclusion of Phase I., which must include interview feedback, data analysis, and recommendations for the University's redesign efforts.

### **Kick off Phase 2 – Model Design:**

In the Model Design phase, the firm will support the Executive and Steering Committees in the development of a financial model capable of illustrating various resource allocation scenarios within the baseline framework. This model will incorporate financial, student, employee, and square footage data sets to develop allocation processes across units and will be guided by a set of guiding principles that will be refined at the beginning of Phase 2 and ensure alignment of academic mission and budget priorities. At a minimum, this will require:



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1. Data collection, scenario validation, and detailed allocation capabilities. Supplier must outline what resources will be required from the University as well as the resources from the firm to meet the projected timeline.
2. Development of design options that incorporates and aligns with future-state principles, within the baseline framework. The current budget model has provided stability for the campus, but greater flexibility is needed for strategic investments and to respond to the rapidly changing higher education landscape, including opportunities and crises that may arise. Similarly, funding must better enable us to respond to and anticipate current and future realities, instead of reflecting legacy decisions that may no longer be relevant. The revised budget will provide enhanced incentives to support and reward growth in key areas, respond to declines, and ensure accountability for the use and allocation of funding. Increased transparency and more unit decision-making will enable stakeholders to better understand and engage in budgetary decision-making that furthers the university's mission and strategic objectives. This is an opportunity to focus on the entire budget, and not just the increment.
3. Discussions with the Steering Committee to receive and incorporate feedback on key decision points such as allocation weights and timeframes, historical trends, subvention strategies, and overhead allocation.
4. Development of a final baseline model or framework that contrasts existing allocations with a proposed new allocation methodology. Supplier must outline required University and Firm's resources required to complete development including a timeline to complete.
5. Provide support to Executive and Steering Committees to develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and plan, including identification of audiences and meeting formats, development of key messages and meeting materials, and synthesis of and action steps based on feedback.

### **Kick off Phase 3 – Preparation and Planning:**

In the Preparation and Planning phase, the University will focus on the processes, policies, tools, and timeline that are critical to support annual budget development in support of the redesigned budget model. The goal of this phase is to test the new model and address any unexpected issues during implementation. At a minimum, this will require:

1. Assessment of the differences between current state and proposed future state of annual budget development. This includes considering the current state differential budget models in some units.
2. Gap analysis of current state against desired future state.
3. Scenario analysis to determine potential impact of new model given various factors
4. Development and document new expectations, processes, and structures required to support annual budget development within the new budget model. This includes but is not limited to documenting processes or models that support the allocation of overhead, direct costs, and revenues.



5. Recommendations for a budget development governance structure and roles and responsibilities, to support transparency in decision making.
6. Templates for unit-level reports to support planning and decision making under the new model, both centrally and across units.
7. Provide guidance on transition and implementation of the new budget model, including establishing a parallel process to test the new budget model at the same time as the current model that enables leadership and stakeholders to understand the new model's impact relative to the existing model.

#### **Kick off Phase 4 – Implementation:**

The advisory firm will perform an assessment of the campus to determine the alignment of the budget model to the overall mission, and provide analytics, dashboards and other tools to support the incentives within the model.

#### **1. New Revenue Generation**

As part of its goal of revenue diversification, Rice is looking to expand opportunities to create new sources of revenue and/or leverage existing resources to enhance revenue. These opportunities might include but are not limited to non-traditional revenue generating opportunities, new and emerging student populations, academic programs, and auxiliaries. The new budget model will have incentives built in, and the university will need ways to quantify, report, train, educate, provide data analytics, and other support documents, dashboards and tools in support of the new incentives. Additionally, the university requires the creation of the tools to develop new revenue streams and opportunities that are supported by the model.

#### **2. Cost Containment**

To support future growth, the future state must include a continuous look at mechanisms to contain cost and develop the structures and systems that focus on continuous improvement. The end state model must include mechanisms to incentivize cost reductions and containment.

#### **3. Procurement Strategy**

Rice University procures over \$372 million annually in goods and services. While significant work has been done in this area, with the incorporation of a new ERP system the University would like to focus more fully on strategic sourcing and best practices in procurement. Experience suggests there are uncaptured opportunities to realize savings through improved contracting support, scheduled quantity purchases, consolidated purchases, etc.

#### **4. Use of Gift and Endowment Funds**

With our reliance on the endowment and ongoing pressure on the unrestricted endowment, Rice is seeking recommendations to maximize the use of available gift funds and a review of our overall policies on gift use. Current efforts suggest opportunities for enhanced availability of training resources to campus users,



development of benchmarks, etc.

## 5. Culture and Organizational Change

The change in the budget model will require changes to organizational structure to support the budgeting both centrally as well as in the units. The implementation plan should include recommendations for needed changes to the organizational structure, assessment of needed training for staff and leadership, and tools in the model and communications strategy to foster the culture change needed to be successful.

## 5.0 Proposal Submission

**5.1 Technical Proposal:** In order to qualify for consideration, respondents must be able to demonstrate relevant prior experience, current knowledge, and past performance and respond with their qualifications as outlined below:

1. Provide a detailed company overview, including
  - a. The company's cover letter and overview to include the total number of years in the business.
  - b. Profile of the specific team who would manage the project and each team member's role, responsibilities.
  - c. Detail a single point of contact as an account lead/representative that is responsible for the management of a resulting contract. Supplier must provide the name of this contact and background experience managing an account and contract of similar scope of services.
  - d. Provide a secondary account lead and contact information should the primary account lead be out of office for any reason so as to ensure continuity of services and no delay in timeline.
2. Detail experience with institutions of similar size and complexity, including past experience working with Rice University, particularly similarly-sized comprehensive research and doctoral universities and preferably other AAU universities.
3. Detail prior experience serving in a support capacity for major committee-led initiatives and outline supplier's role/responsibilities and the outcomes.
4. Detail experience with design and implementation of University budget and financial planning models, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the landscape and trends pertinent to budget model design including the incentives (positive and negative) associated with a budget model.
5. Provide references from at least three (3) accounts of similar scope. References may be contacted at any time during this solicitation process. Include, at a minimum, the following information: 1) company name; 2) contact name; 3) phone number; 4) email address; 5) brief description of project scope and value; 6) status of project.





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6. Outline relevant innovative approaches for budget design and redesign initiatives within higher education.
7. Supplier must detail how they will approach each phase of the project as outlined above and include methodologies, relevant research, market data/information in how supplier will approach and successfully deliver on the scope of work
  - a. Detail what methodology supplier's company uses to formulate plans to complete the consulting services in the area of budget model redesign clients.
  - b. Detail innovations supplier's company has developed for projects of a similar scope.
  - c. Outline supplier's approach so that the outcome/goal is visible at the beginning of the project.
  - d. The University supports a hybrid work environment. Outline the time that will be spent remote and in person for delivery of the project objectives.
8. The University seeks to kick-off the project in February 2023 and implement the new model for FY 2025.
  - a. Provide a timeline, preferably presented as a Gantt chart that includes a detailed timeline outline of number of weeks, exact dates, and must include major milestones for each phase of the project.
  - b. Include start-up tasks and identify client and supplier responsibilities.
  - c. Detail how progress is tracked during a project in order to ensure the client's objectives are being achieved. Detail the format in which this is shared with the client.
  - d. Provide a measurable performance infrastructure – specifically tools and processes – to regularly track progress and ensure the right pace of delivery of plans with the bid response.
9. The University expects the project will result in a new model and approach for FY 2025 (July 1, 2024). This requires that the model be ready for planning purposed in January 2024. Please provide how each phase of the project will meet that goal.
  - a. Detail approach to ensuring Supplier will meet each phase of the project in the projected timeline.
  - b. Detail how the firm determine team structure and number of hours per team member is required in order to determine the timeline
  - c. Outline a work plan to meet milestones and objectives.



- d. Provide examples of finalized work plans for a complex project.
10. How does the supplier plan for contingencies? What approaches does the supplier take to mitigate risk? Supplier must include a contingency and risk mitigation plan.

## **5.2 Financial Proposal:**

- a. The University is looking for a fixed price bid for the budget model implementation, but is interested in financial proposals that demonstrate "profit sharing" from suppliers in the success of the revenue and cost containment strategies developed.
- b. Provide a list and the number of hours per week project leads will be dedicated to this project.
- c. Provide the names of other consultant support and the number of hours per week anticipated for each phase of the project.

While not the most important part of the proposal, overall cost will be considered as part of the evaluation of your proposal. Proposals should view each phase as a distinct and separate phase that may be awarded separately. Prices shall be fixed and firm for the term of the contract: If the Supplier is awarded a contract under this bid solicitation, the prices proposed by the Supplier shall remain fixed during the term of the contract, except as agreed to under terms generated from the requests for changes to or additional services/goods.

After the initial term, the University and Successful Supplier may discuss future scope and re-negotiate pricing for the renewal term. It is agreed and understood both parties must agree to negotiated terms before proceeding or issuance of payment.

### **Invoicing:**

All out-of-pocket expenses such as production, subcontractor, messenger and shipping charges will be billed at direct cost with no mark-up. The University must approve any other expenses in advance.

Invoice must be provided that include which team members performed which work and include billable hours and rate per team member if rate structure per team member differs. Invoices must be sent directly to [payment@rice.edu](mailto:payment@rice.edu).

### **Audit:**

If at any time The University identifies any irregularities in the administration of the contract, or the agency has acted in such a way as to give just cause to suspect a violation of the agreement, a business review and/or audit may be conducted with a minimum notice in order to investigate and correct a problem.

The University expects full restitution of any mistakes found to be in the University's favor during an audit, and that full action is taken to correct any procedures that allowed the mistake to happen.

Continued discrepancies could result in termination of the contract.



Suppliers must agree and understand the University does not indemnify.

**Travel:**

The Supplier may be required to travel in performance of orders issued under this contract.

Supplier shall be reimbursed the actual cost of all travel conducted while providing the services in accordance with statements of work and respective Purchasing Entities' regulations. Allowable travel and State per diem charges will be agreed upon at the time work is requested. Thus, all travel shall be pre-approved.

The Supplier shall perform all travel necessary to accomplish the tasks contained in a task order. At a minimum, the Contractor shall be prepared to travel in conjunction with interviews, site visits, and to provide support at Leadership meetings.

All travel requirements shall be approved in advance by the University. The Supplier shall be responsible for making all travel arrangements.

Costs for transportation may be based upon mileage rates, actual costs incurred, or a combination thereof, provided the method used results in a reasonable charge. Travel costs shall be considered reasonable and allowable only to the extent that they do not exceed, on a daily basis, the maximum State per diem rates in effect at the time of the travel. If the additional expenses are not justified and approved by the University, the Supplier will be responsible for paying the difference.

## **6.0 Service Level Expectations:**

### Overall

- Commit to our business including senior management engagement
- Thoroughly understand our current state, strategic priorities, business objectives and audiences
- Assign experienced personnel to execute services with clearly defined roles
- Ensure continuity of qualified staff on account
- Understand higher education institutions and their processes

### Strategy

- Deliver genuine insights to reassess the current budget allocation model
- Advise on improved positioning
- Ensure strategy is met during development

### Account management

- Assign staff with expertise to handle business
- Build strong relationship with identified Leadership team
- Keep internal teams on strategy
- Build good plans, deliver on-time and on-budget



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- Anticipate needs
- Able to mobilize supplier resources
- Sense of urgency and good follow-through
- Good communicators and presenters
- Status update meetings, frequency to be determined
- Participate in meetings with University leadership as requested

### Data Analysis

- Expert knowledge of principles and practices in public budget allocation models
- Supplier must be well versed in data analysis including the collecting of historical budget data and analyzing needs

### Quality Control

- Provide quality services/products and management
- Provide accurate data/reports and meet task order objectives, with emphasis on overall success and positive impact to project
- Provide management and support of personnel, to include training, guidance, and supervision of qualified personnel to accomplish the task order.

### Budget and financial

- Good budget control and cost-saving measures
- Timely, accurate and well-supported invoices, itemized to include but not limited to
- Provide billing information as requested
- Proactively apprise client of any potential budget overages in advance of overage occurring

## 7.0 Submission Requirements:

All specific response items represent the minimum information to be submitted. Deletions or incomplete responses in terms of content or aberrations in form may, at the University's discretion, render the response non-responsive.

Although Suppliers are encouraged to be creative with the format and content of responses within each section, the University asks that Suppliers address the following information in the following order as best as possible to facilitate the evaluation and selection process;

1. Company profile
2. Supplier's experience and qualifications
3. Timeline to complete each phase of the scope of work
4. Approach to the scope of work
5. Pricing
6. References



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Rice may, at its sole discretion, amend any awarded Contract to include other periods, services, and/or deliverables within the Scope of this RFP. This RFP includes a description of the project context, objectives, proposal requirements, and instructions for submitting your proposal.

RFP documents are found in Rice University's Solicitation Opportunities website at <https://buy.rice.edu/solicitation-opportunities>. Respondents must periodically review the site for potential amendments, regular updates to the RFP timeline, and other related information.

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

Late proposals will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the offeror to ensure that the proposal is submitted on or before the proposal opening date and time. Proposals must be submitted electronically via solicitation portal as specified above.

### **7.1 Variations/Exceptions**

For purposes of bid evaluation, Suppliers must indicate any variances to the specifications, terms and conditions; no matter how slight. If variations are not stated in the Supplier's proposal, it shall be construed that the Supplier fully complies with the specifications, terms and conditions. Notwithstanding the above, it is hereby agreed and understood that the University reserves the right to reject these variations if they individually, or as a whole, do not meet the standards established in the specifications.

## **8.0 Submission Evaluation and Award**

### **8.1 Proposal Evaluation**

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be reviewed for responsiveness by the Purchasing Agent prior to referral to the evaluation committee. A committee will then evaluate all responsive proposals in accordance with the criteria described below. Total Scores will be tabulated, and the contract will be awarded to the offeror whose proposal is deemed to be the most advantageous to the University.

If the University requests presentations by short-listed offerors, committee members may revise their initial scores based upon additional information and clarification received in this phase. Please note that the date for presentations has not yet been set. If your company is invited to give a presentation to the evaluation team, the dates may not be flexible.

The University, at its discretion, may utilize a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) stage. If this phase is utilized, the Purchasing Agent shall submit to the offerors most likely to receive the award, requests for specific clarification and allow offerors to enhance their pricing. The Purchasing Agent shall coordinate the offerors' responses for review by the evaluation team. The Purchasing Agent shall be the SOLE point of contact throughout the process for all offerors. Please note that the date for the BAFO stage has not yet been set. If your company is invited to participate in this stage, the dates may not be flexible. If the University requests Best and Final Offers by short-listed offerors, committee members may revise their initial scores based upon additional information and



clarification received in this phase. In lieu of revising scoring, the University reserves the right to evaluate BAFOs by use of a narrative.

The contract will be awarded to the offeror whose overall offer is deemed to be the most advantageous to the University as determined by the evaluation team. The PSC purchasing office, after review and approval of the evaluation team's written recommendation, will notify all offerors via a posting on the electronic solicitation notification system of the results of the solicitation evaluation. The posting will be an announcement of award.

## **8.2 Method of Award**

It is the intent of Rice University to award a contract to one supplier who receives the highest score from the University's RFP Evaluation Committee. The Committee will score written Proposals by reviewing the documentation submitted by the supplier. Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Company profile and experience
- Qualifications
- Project approach
- Timeline to complete project
- Price
- References

A presentation and/or demonstration may be requested by "short-listed" suppliers prior to award. However, a presentation/demonstration may not be required, and therefore, complete information should be submitted with your proposal.

## **8.3 Determination of Responsibility of the Offeror**

The University reserves the right to make its offeror responsibility determination at any time in this RFP process and may not make a responsibility determination for every offeror.

Factors to be considered in determining whether the standard of responsibility has been met include whether an offeror has:

1. Availability of the appropriate financial, material, equipment, facility, and personnel resources and expertise, or the ability to obtain the necessary to indicate the capability to meet all contractual requirements;
2. Satisfactory record of performance;
3. Satisfactory record of integrity; and
4. Supplied all necessary information in connection with the inquiry concerning responsibility.

The offeror shall supply information requested by the University in the Questions section concerning the offeror's responsibility. The University reserves the right to request further information as it deems necessary to determine the offeror's responsibility. If the offeror fails to supply the requested information, the University shall base the determination of responsibility upon any available information or may find the offeror non-responsible if such failure is unreasonable.



## 9.0 Contract Form and Term

It is the intent of the University to award a contract to one (1) Firm under this solicitation. The contract period will begin upon execution of University Contract and terminate 24 months following execution date. One (1) year renewal option is included and the contract will be renewed at the discretion of the University. The services performed under this award will be governed by the University's Sample Contract (Professional Service Agreement), located under the "Files" section of this solicitation. Suppliers must include with their proposal any proposed edits or exceptions to this contract along with a detailed reason for each requested edit. The University will not accept any standalone supplemental agreement(s) from the Supplier and will negotiate in good faith with the awarded supplier on a final contract. The University encourages the Supplier to propose as minimal edits as possible and may use this as an additional means to assist in determining the final award. It is expressly understood that the contract resulting from this solicitation shall not grant the successful Supplier exclusive privilege to furnish the University any or all of the services, which are subject to this contract.

### Option to Renew for Subsequent Year

This option to renew is a University prerogative and not a right of the Supplier and will be exercised only when such continuation is clearly in the best interest of the University and when the Supplier has provided satisfactory performance during the initial contract period. Unless either party provides sixty (60) day written notice, the option period shall become automatic at the end of the original period. During the option period, the University will consider an adjustment to the pricing structure if the Successful Supplier can demonstrate, through documentation issued by the manufacturer, that it was subject to a price adjustment. It shall be understood that such price adjustments shall not exceed the amount passed on to the supplier by the manufacturer. The Successful Supplier is obligated to notify the University of such adjustments, either price reductions or price increases, within sixty (60) calendar days after receiving said notification from the supplier. Additionally, such notification shall be accompanied by U.S. Department of Labor Consumer Price Index documentation from the supplier and shall be received by the University's Purchasing Office. The University reserves the right to reject any price adjustments submitted by the Supplier and/or to terminate the contract with the Supplier based on such price adjustments.

Submission of proposals indicates acceptance of all conditions contained in this RFP.

## 10.0 Additional Information

Please submit a proposal understanding and addressing the issues noted above. Also understand that we feel that a firm's broad and deep understanding of both higher education and the Houston market will be a consideration in the selection. Universities tend to make decisions via committee, so please also plan for some committee work (or preparing for committee meetings) and senior management meetings when structuring your project time estimates.

Please direct questions and electronic copies of your proposal to Paul Aguilar at [pa25@rice.edu](mailto:pa25@rice.edu). Please do not call or contact any other Rice faculty or staff member directly about this project.