

Massachusetts College of Art and Design RFP 21-02

Public Relations Services

Attachment # 1 - Specifications and Description of Services

Relevant Background

Founded in 1873, MassArt is the first freestanding public college of art and design in the United States. The College excels in the education of professional artists, designers, and art educators and is an integral contributor to the cultural and intellectual life and creative economy of the Greater Boston region, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and beyond. Located in Boston's hub of arts and culture along the Avenue of the Arts, MassArt enrolls nearly 2,000 students and offers a comprehensive range of 18 undergraduate majors and 9 graduate degree programs, as well as youth and continuing education programs.

The College is committed to community engagement as a significant component of its mission and teaches its students to be engaged citizens as well as artists, designers, and educators through its curricular and extracurricular offerings. MassArt is a rich resource for public programs, including innovative museum exhibitions, lectures, and events; youth art programs that serve hundreds of Boston Public Schools and Greater Boston students, ages elementary through high school; community arts partnerships and civic engagement initiatives; and professional development opportunities for educators, artists, designers, and the general public. Across all of these offerings, thousands of Greater Boston residents are served each year.

MassArt attracts a diverse full- and part-time student body, with a Fall 2019 enrollment of 2,095 (1,780 undergraduate students, 128 graduate students, and the balance in certificate or continuing education programs). The College offers 18 undergraduate academic programs and nine graduate programs. Three departments -- Studio Foundation, History of Art, and Liberal Arts -- serve all students.

Bachelor of Fine Arts degree programs include: Animation, Architectural Design, Art Education, Ceramics, Communication Design, Fashion Design, Fibers, Film/Video, Glass, History of Art, Illustration, Industrial Design, Jewelry and Metalsmithing, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, and Studio for Interrelated Media (SIM).

Graduate programs lead to the following professional degrees: Master of Architecture, MAT/MA/MEd: Art Education, Master of Design Innovation, MFA: 2D Fine Arts, MFA: 3D Fine Arts, MFA: Design (Dynamic Media Institute), MFA: Film/Video, MFA Fine Arts (Low Residency), MFA: Photography. Certificate programs offered include Fashion Design, Furniture Design, Graphic Design, and Industrial Design. Post-Baccalaureate programs in the areas of Design (Dynamic Media Institute), Photography, and Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) are also available.

Among the undergraduate students who entered MassArt in fall 2019, 73% came from Massachusetts, 12% from other New England states, and 15% from other U.S. and international locations. Thirty-one percent of BFA students self-identify as ALANA (African American, Latino, Asian, and Native American). Students are supported by 282 full- and part-time faculty members who are practicing artists, designers, educators, and scholars; the student-faculty ratio is 10:1. MassArt's faculty, its extensive studios, the wealth of resources in its arts library, and the breadth of its curriculum are widely considered to be among the best in the nation. Sustaining high graduation rates (71%), MassArt has been recognized by *The Washington Post* as a superior value nationwide among the top public colleges.

People of MassArt

MassArt's faculty are accomplished working artists, designers, and educators who bring their expertise into the studios and classrooms, providing real-world learning opportunities and industry connections for their students. A large portion of MassArt faculty and staff are also alumni of the College and exemplify the excellent education MassArt provides.

Among MassArt's most accomplished alumni are designer Brian Collins, multimedia artist Sam Durant, art dealer Arne Glimcher, Oscar-winning set designer Nancy Haigh, visual artist and composer Christian Marclay, 2016 Project Runway winner Erin Robertson, interior and lifestyle designer Kelly Wearstler, and conceptual artist William Wegman.

This year, Assistant Professor Chico Colvard and alumnus Steve Locke were awarded Guggenheim Fellowships; Lee Luker '07 won a Golden Globe Award for his work on the full-length animation, *Missing Link*; Justine Silva '12 won the second season of NBC's *Making It*; MassArt alumna and fashion design faculty member Kenlyn Jones received an award from the CFDA's Inclusive by Design Fund for her plans to add plus-size design to MassArt's curriculum; ceramics professor Janna Longacre was voted into the International Academy of Ceramics; and architecture faculty Patti Seitz and Mitch Ryerson received a Collaborative Achievement Award from the AIA for their work on the Global Design Initiative for Refugee Children. In 2019 Lavaughan Jenkins '05 received the prestigious Foster Prize from the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and Dillon Buss '12 in partnership with MassArt's marketing and admissions teams won the Grand Gold Prize from CASE Circle of Excellence for best recruitment video.

The Campus

The College recently completed a major physical transformation of its campus. In February, the new MassArt Art Museum (MAAM) opened to the public and welcomed more than 2,600 guests on opening day. The Design and Media Center, a laboratory for interdisciplinary learning, and a space for curricular and community collaboration opened in January 2016. A striking 21-story residence hall called Treehouse opened in October 2012, guaranteeing housing on campus to all freshmen and sophomores, and the renovated campus center and dining commons opened in 2010.

Project Goals

Massachusetts College of Art and Design will engage the services of a public relations consultant/firm to spearhead public relations initiatives from August 2020 through June 30, 2021. The firm will be charged with building the College's reputation by generating a high level of local, national and international media coverage in print, online, broadcast, and radio outlets.

In partnership with the MassArt Marketing and Communications team, the consultant/firm will conceptualize and execute a strategy that builds upon the College's unique strengths: its legacy as the first freestanding public college of art and design in the country; its mission of providing an accessible education to everyone with talent and the will to succeed; the excellence of its faculty as working artists, designers, and educators; its broad-based academic offerings; and its long-term commitment to civic engagement and community arts partnerships.

The consultant/firm will initiate and sustain aggressive outreach, including implementing national and regional media relations efforts by pitching and securing stories with a sustained follow-up approach. They must be able to demonstrate established relationships with a range of reporters and editors focused in the areas of education, arts and culture, and the innovation/business arena.

The College has designated the following initiatives that the consultant/firm will focus on during the duration of the engagement, with the expectation that multiple stories will be placed across differentiated outlets for each initiative.

College-wide initiatives for the PR engagement include:

- Raise Institutional Profile

MassArt has a legacy of offering an accessible, excellent art and design education. The College seeks to advance its reputation and visibility through a thoughtful and substantive strategy grounded in the unique strengths of the College. Among the local, national, and international audiences to be reached are prospective students, Massachusetts leaders and influencers, arts patrons and prospective donors, corporate partners, and external funders. In partnership with MassArt's marketing and communications team, the selected PR firm will be responsible for creating and executing a strategy that exemplifies MassArt's value proposition: place stories that celebrate MassArt's excellent curriculum and student successes, identify rapid response opportunities for faculty expert contributors, and showcase the variety of career paths of art and design graduates through MassArt alumni stories.

- Reputation Management

As MassArt enters the 2020-2021 academic year, it begins a transitional period. On June 1 Dr. Kymberly Pinder started her tenure as Acting President, following the announcement of 12th president David P. Nelson's resignation. The PR firm selected will offer media training and PR support for the Acting President and will also support the College's communications efforts when a permanent president is selected. Also, the College is planning its return to limited on-campus activity this fall following the COVID-19 pandemic, and will seek the support of a PR firm in its PR strategy and media relations activity during this transition.

- Promote and Position the MassArt Art Museum

The MassArt Art Museum (MAAM), which opened in February 2020, is Boston's newest and free contemporary art museum. After extensive renovations, MAAM opened in the space formerly known as the Bakalar & Paine Galleries at the heart of MassArt's campus on the Avenue of the Arts. MAAM is a *kunsthalle*, or non-collecting museum, showing temporary exhibitions that feature the work of emerging and established artists to bring fresh, diverse perspectives to Boston. As MassArt's teaching museum, MAAM is a resource for MassArt students and faculty, educating students about contemporary art, partnering with faculty to support the curriculum, and preparing students for careers in the museum field. As an extension of the College's public mission, the Museum is also a vital resource to the community, offering a pathway to education in the arts and free, unique educational programming to Boston-area public schools and community groups.

Ranked as the second "most anticipated museum opening in 2020" according to *Smithsonian Magazine*, the opening of the MassArt Art Museum garnered extensive press coverage and generated excitement in the

international and local art communities. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum was open to the public for just three weeks before it was forced to close. In partnership with the MassArt team, the consultant will be charged with planning and executing a strategy to continue engagement of MAAM's audiences, promote the reopening of the Museum, and maintain the momentum of the Museum's recent grand opening success.

- Support Fundraising Initiatives and Events

The MassArt Foundation raises funds for critical scholarship and academic programming support to the College. In addition to its annual fund campaigns, the Foundation is responsible for producing signature fundraising events such as the MassArt Auction, the College's largest annual fundraising event, and the Fashion Show Party. The PR firm will support these events by partnering with the MassArt team on planning and executing strategies to produce a high level of visibility, position these events as premier Boston social events, and communicate the importance of supporting art and design.

- Increase Awareness of MassArt's Values and Programs that Support Social Justice and Equity

An important component of MassArt's PR strategy for the next two years will be to share diverse voices that reflect the student body, alumni, faculty, and staff; and to communicate the College's values in regards to social justice and equity.

MassArt has a longstanding commitment to offering an accessible art education on and off campus and has developed a deep relationship with its community partners to enact change beyond the walls of the College through the power of art and design. The Center for Art and Community Partnerships and the MassArt Art Museum provide free access to art for the public and the program Artward Bound offers a free after school program for Boston area high school students interested in art and design. This spring MassArt, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, announced it received a \$1.2 million grant from the Surdna Foundation to launch a new regranting program titled Radical Imagination for Racial Justice. Over the next 3 years MassArt and the City will offer grants to artists of color working or living in Boston. The consultant will support MassArt's efforts to promote the program and communicate its impact on the City.

- Crisis Communications

In the event of a major campus crisis, the consultant/firm will consult on the communications approach, including vetting the college statement/talking points and advising on overall press strategy. The consultant/firm must provide an on-call contact in case of a major campus crisis, and must be available to review the statement/talking points within a half-hour.

Media Placement and Measurement

The consultant/firm will:

- Secure coverage across a broad range of differentiated media outlets, focused on the institutional initiatives described above.

- Maintain an appropriate range of media tools in order to manage the project effectively, including a current database of local, national and international media outlets. The firm will provide MassArt with select media contact information upon request.
- Track coverage and archive media hits received in digital and hard-copy form. The consultant/firm is required to provide a digital report containing all placements at the conclusion of the contract. The firm must also include a monthly report with monthly invoices that include a breakdown of hourly firm and employee activity.

Meetings

The consultant/firm will be available for a standing weekly phone call (approximately 30 minutes) and up to 4 pre-scheduled in-person meetings during the one-year term of the contract.

Project Timeline

Bid Issued	July 10, 2020
Deadline to submit <u>written</u> questions	July 17, 2020 at 11:59 PM EST
Bid addendum issued answering questions	July 21, 2020
Bid Deadline	July 28 at 3:00 PM EST
Finalist Interviews via Zoom	August 5 – 7, 2020
Anticipated Bid Award and Start Date	Week of August 10, 2020

Any questions regarding the bid must be submitted in writing to marketing@massart.edu by July 17, 2020, 11:59 PM EST. Please include Public Relations RFP 21-02 in the subject of your email. An RFP addendum will be issued by end of day, July 21, 2020, containing written responses to questions received. The College will not be able to address additional questions received after July 17, 2020.

The College anticipates commencing services on the week of August 10, 2020. The project will end on June 30, 2021. MassArt reserves the right to extend the contract for up to two additional twelve month periods with the same terms and conditions. Any changes must be agreed upon in writing.

Either party may terminate this agreement without cause by giving to the other party not less than thirty (30) days advance written notice of both its election to do so and the effective date of termination. If this agreement is terminated, the college shall have no further obligations other than payment for services already rendered and for expenses previously incurred.

Proposal Deadline

Bid proposals are due by 3:00 PM EST on July 28, 2020. MassArt is not responsible for delays and will not open any proposals received later than the deadline date and time as put forth in this RFP.

Bids must be submitted electronically by emailing proposals to purchasing@massart.edu. Your electronic file should not exceed 10 megabytes. Subject line in your email should reference RFP 21-02, Public Relations Consultant Services for Massachusetts College of Art and Design. No paper or fax copies will be accepted.

The cost of producing proposals shall be borne by the candidates.

After a review of proposals, two to three selected finalists will be invited for a Zoom interview with college representatives. During the interview, the team lead/account manager must be accompanied by the people/person handling the day to day pitching, follow up, and placement of stories. The interviews will take place August 5 – 7, 2020 and will last for approximately one hour.

Vendor Response and Evaluation Criteria

- A description of candidate’s capability and experience developing and executing a strategic media-relations effort for one or more of the following organization types: universities, non-profits, museum/arts/design groups, businesses.
- An explanation of how the consultant/firm is best served to meet the public relations objectives of the major college initiatives outlined in this RFP.
- A minimum of three different client case studies with descriptions of strategies and results achieved for them within the past five years.
- Demonstration of established relationships with reporters and editors across differentiated media outlets (print, online, radio, television, etc.) relevant to the success of this project.
- Demonstration of social media expertise, experience identifying and placing stories on media/entertainment sources, blogs, and websites, as well as established relationships with popular bloggers and social media influencers.
- A full client list along with 15-20 selected samples of media coverage secured. The client list is to include the email and phone number of primary contact at each company to be used by MassArt to check references.
- Credentials of the specific team members who will be working on the account. Note: The awarded bidder must consult with MassArt regarding any replacements to the original account team outlined in the RFP document. Any team member replacement(s) must be mutually agreed upon.
- Identify the positions and levels (i.e. VP, Associate etc.) of the staff assigned to the MassArt account and **hourly rates** for each position/level. Bid responses must also include an **estimated number of hours** per position/level per month to accomplish the work outlined in this request for proposal.

Please note, there is no guarantee of volume (number of hours) to the awarded bidder. Needs may vary from month to month, however it is anticipated that the college will utilize the selected firm for all services described herein.

Bidders should also be cognizant of the fact that MassArt is a public institution of art and design. Therefore, the College must have a high quality AND cost-effective public relations initiative. The successful bidder will have to demonstrate the ability to achieve both objectives. MassArt will use the entirety of responses in the section of the RFP titled “Vendor Response and Evaluation Criteria” as the evaluation criteria. Rates are one factor, but the selection will also take into consideration the public relations firm’s ability to deliver on the other criteria. The awarded firm will be required to submit invoices on a monthly basis with monthly reports outlining hours worked, pitching and outreach activity, placements secured, and meeting/account management work attached to the invoice.