

The Regents of the University of California

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

#UCSC

FOR

High Performance Computing Clusters (HPC) Expansion for UCSC Office of Information Technology Services

Issued: January 2025

1. INTRODUCTION & SCOPE of WORK

1.1 Background about the University of California.

Founded as the state's first and only land grant institution in 1868, the University of California is a system of 10 campuses with approximately 220,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The official research arm of the State of California, UC has five medical schools, four law schools and the nation's largest continuing education program. It also manages three national laboratories that are engaged in energy and environmental research and approximately 135,000 acres of natural habitat in California for research, teaching and outreach activities. The University's fundamental mission is teaching, research and public service.

Additional information regarding the University of California can be found at <http://www.ucop.edu>.

1.2 University of California, Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz [began in 1965](#) as an unconventional place that was unlike other educational institutions, a place where innovation—no matter how messy—was part of the campus's DNA. In the words of then-UC President Clark Kerr, it was "the most significant educational experiment in the history of the University of California."

With 19,173 students, 8,700 faculty members and 8,354 staff, UCSC is among the most diverse campuses in the University of California system. Increasingly a first-choice campus for students, UCSC ranks among the top 15 U.S. universities in the number of making an impact and ranks number 1 in the nation for racial and gender diversity in leadership. UCSC ranks the second-largest employer in Santa Cruz County.

1.3 Purpose Background

The University of California, Santa Cruz is expanding on an existing small-scale HPC cluster (called Hummingbird) that will be housed on the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) Campus colocation facility in Quincy, WA . This expansion is envisioned as the primary computational platform for the university's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience as part of an expandable, shared high-performance computing (HPC) resource for the UCSC research community. It will therefore serve a vibrant cross-section of computing and data needs for research computing applications across campus and beyond. Expansion will be based upon available funding and research requirements. We envision a mid-scale HPC system designed to support cutting-edge research across a diverse array of scientific disciplines to empower researchers at UC Santa Cruz to tackle complex scientific problems, process massive datasets, and conduct simulations that advance knowledge in numerous fields.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to invite prospective companies to prepare and submit a proposal (bid) for a converged CPU-GPU cluster that integrates with existing Infiniband-based compute and storage nodes. UCSC, at its discretion, may choose one vendor for the expansion cluster and the same source for deployment and integration set-up for the expansion. The goal is to select a system and source that would provide the best value.

The Engineer's Estimate (proposed budget) for this project is not to exceed \$1,750,000.

2. **TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.**

Bidder is required to comply with all applicable Federal and State laws, local ordinances and University regulations during the term of the contract.

HPC Facility

Hummingbird and future expansions will be hosted at UC Santa Cruz's colocation facility in Quincy, WA USA. The colocation facility is housed in the Western Technology Center and is operated by NTT Data Services.

The entire facility provides Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) of 4,360 kW redundant (2N) UPS expandable to 10,800 kW (2N) UPS. Overall, the facility is capable of 170w per square foot of data center floor space. Approximately 7,200 kW N+2 cooling capacity for the facility as a whole. Fire suppression and smoke/water detection systems are VESDA; detection system and multi-zone, with a dry-pipe sprinkler fire suppression system. Generator power is 2N+1. The facility is physically secured through multi-level security card readers, CCTV, 24x7 guards, gate controls and perimeter fences. The site utilizes a Optimized Containment System (OCS) design featuring hot aisle containment modules engineered for agnostic cabinet organization. Overall the facility is capable of serving up to 1,300 cabinets.

UCSC HPC occupies a dedicated OCS of 16 cabinets. See Figure 1. OCS Design

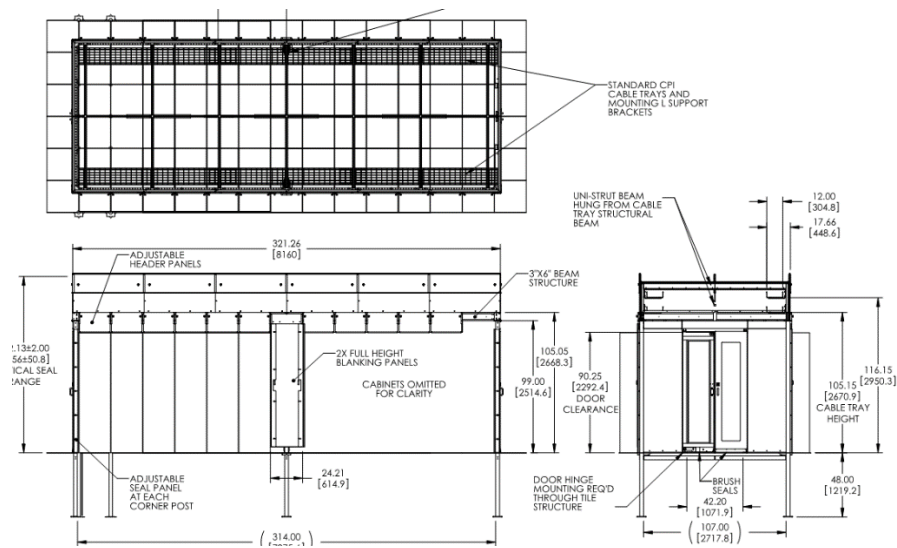


Figure 1. OCS Design

Cabinets are manufactured by NTT DATA IT, DCI, and Rittal and conform to typical data center standards for depth, width and height. Each cabinet provides 17.4kW of power (3-phase 240V) across A-B circuits for server dual power supplies. Each rack is supported by two (2) 24Amp PDUs (A/B feeds). Each device in the rack connects to both PDUs to provide redundancy and ensure a device will not go down during a single source event. For HPC applications, the total available kW per cabinet must also support requisite networking equipment, as well as HPC nodes.

Software and Configuration Requirements

Based on information to be shared with the selected vendor and in consultation with UC Santa Cruz technical staff, components are expected to have their IPMI network interfaces fully configured before they are delivered. Such that when they are installed and cabled, they can be reached remotely through UC Santa Cruz standard networks. Additionally, the selected vendor will work with UC Santa Cruz technicians to pre-configure other network interfaces, such as the management interconnects and Infiniband to reduce time-to-deploy. Because this is an expansion of existing HPC and current nodes use the Preboot Execution Environment (PXE boot), there is no requirement for software installation before delivery. This includes operating systems, HPC management software and schedulers.

Storage System:

Upon installation, but before final acceptance, the selected contractor shall verify to the satisfaction of UC Santa Cruz System Administrators, the following items:

- Installation and setup of all storage system resources.
- Configuration of:
 - All storage controllers
 - High-speed storage interconnects

- All management interfaces
- File system parameters
- Presentation of file system to all cluster nodes.
- Successful completion of benchmarking performance runs.

Remote Support

UCSC's HPC system is supported by an NTT on-site team that provides 24x7 staffing to provide basic hosting services, such as hardware installations, cabling, trouble ticket dispatch, warranty repairs, and other hands-on services. This expansion will be managed and users supported by a geographically distributed team of UCSC employees. As such, proposals are expected to allow for remote configurations and remote access (e.g. IPMI management).

Current Hummingbird Specification

Hummingbird Computational Cluster (Hummingbird or HB)

Hummingbird is a hybrid open/sponsored access computational cluster at UC Santa Cruz. The intent of this proposal is to expand the high-performance partition to support an additional (approximate) 15,000 cores, at least 5PB of additional storage, expanded GPU capabilities, while maintaining the current 200Gbps Infiniband interconnects. The cluster has been pre-installed with software packages that are used in the sciences and engineering, as well as tools and applications for the social sciences, humanities and arts using a modules system.

Located at the UC Santa Cruz colocation facility in Quincy Washington since 2023, Hummingbird 2.0 allows for high-availability, extensibility (via the "condo model") and is connected to the campus network at 10-100Gbps for high-speed data transfers using Globus. While HB 2.0 is fully integrated into the legacy Hummingbird cluster, where the two clusters share storage, software, ethernet connectivity, and configurations, we expect to be able to retire a significant portion of the legacy HB installation. Successful responses to this call for proposals will fully integrate into HB2.0, but there is no requirement for integration into legacy HB. There is also no prohibition against proposals to do so. HB has two access models: open access and sponsored access.

Current Node count is summarized in Table 1. Node Count.

Legacy Open Access*	26
Legacy Sponsored Access*	3
HB 2.0 Sponsored Access	16

*Mix of AMD and Intel Chipsets.

HB 2.0 has adopted the AMD processor hardware, shown in Table 2. Infiniband Network

consists of a single managed Mellanox Quantum-2 based, with 64x NDR 800Gb/s ports, InfiniBand switch, 32x OSFP ports, 2x AC PSUs, in a standard depth, with P2C airflow and Rail Kit (nVidia Part number MQM9700-NS2F, SKU 920-9B210-00FN-0M0). The current installation relies on Mellanox/NVIDIA, passive copper splitter cables, IB twin port NDR800Gb/s to 4x200Gb/s, OSFP to 4xOSFP, 2m and 3m.

To maintain coherence with HB2.0, we strongly prefer the use of SuperMicro 2x2 chassis (i.e. four blades in a 2U chassis) for compute nodes, and a 2U - 4U SuperMicro chassis for GPU nodes. Other nodes, such as metadata server (MDS) and object storage device (OSD) nodes may vary.

Expansion will require additional Mellanox/NVIDIA switches and cabling and proposal responses must be compatible with the above Infiniband networking infrastructure.

General Required Features

Without relying on a proprietary vendor supplied kernel module, all nodes must include command line Linux utilities that allow one to flash the BIOS, BMC, and other system Firmware; the system must be configured using non-proprietary tools for changing system configurations, including changes to the BIOS; and minimize use of varying components for each node type (compute, GPU, etc.) for ease of maintenance and firmware difference.

Standard Node Requirements are outlined in Table 2. Standard HB 2.0 Node Features

Approximate % of Total Nodes	Node Description	Processor	RAM GB	Local Disk	IB	Network Interface Card	Notes
10	Ultra-high Memory	2X AMD EPYC 7513, Milan, 2.6GHz, 32 Core or better	2048	4TB NVMe SSD or better	Yes	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s) and 200GbE, single-port OSFP, PCIe 5.0 x16	RAM = 16*128GB
20	High-memory	2X AMD EPYC 7513, Milan, 2.6GHz, 32 Core or better	1024	4TB NVMe SSD or better	Yes	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s) and 200GbE, single-port OSFP, PCIe 5.0 x16	RAM = 16*64GB
60	Standard	2X AMD EPYC 7513, Milan, 2.6GHz, 32 Core or better	512	4TB NVMe SSD or better	Yes	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s) and 200GbE, single-port OSFP, PCIe 5.0 x16	RAM = 16*32GB
SINGLE NODE ONLY	64-bit GPU	2X AMD EPYC™ 9355, 3GHz, 32 core or better	1024	4TB NVMe SSD or better	Yes	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s) and 200GbE, single-port OSFP, PCIe 5.0 x16	2x NVIDIA H100 (with option for up to 4 cards)

10	32-bit GPU	2X AMD EPYC™ 9355, 3GHz, 32 core or better	512	4TB NVMe SSD or better	Yes	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s) and 200GbE, single-port OSFP, PCIe 5.0 x16	8x nVIDIA L40s or better
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Successful responses will provide compute nodes with the above, minimum specifications for processors, core counts, local disks, network interface cards, and be a mix of high-memory nodes, ultra-high memory nodes and 2TB RAM nodes, according to the quantities listed in column A above.

In addition to the above compute nodes, responses to the RFP will provide additional storage for the system, summarized in Table 3. Storage Standards.

Standard Storage Node Requirements are outlined in Table 3. Standard BeeGFS Nodes

Minimum Quantity	Node Description	RAW Capacity (TB)*	Processor	RAM (GB)	IB	NIC	Notes
5	BeeGFS Object Storage Node (Parallel file access)	1080	2X Intel Xeon Gold, Ice Lake, 6346, 3.10GHz, Sixteen cores or better	512	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s)	200GbE, single-port OSFP	Minimum of 5PB of raw storage overall.
2	BeeGFS Metadata Node	760	Dual AMD EPYC 7003 Processors or better	128	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s)	200GbE, single-port OSFP	

Login Node and Head Node Requirements are outlined in Table 4. Login Node and Head Nodes

Minimum Quantity	Node Description	Processor	RAM (GB)	IB	NIC	Notes
2	Login Node	2X Intel Xeon Gold, Ice Lake, 6346, 3.10GHz, Sixteen cores or better	512	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s)	200GbE, single-port OSFP	Onboard 10G SFP+
2	Head Node	Dual AMD EPYC 7003 Processors or better	1024	NVIDIA ConnectX-7 adapter card, NDR200 IB (200Gb/s)	200GbE, single-port OSFP	Onboard 10G SFP+

In addition to the above hardware, proposals are expected to include 5-year warranties on all hardware, as well as the appropriate 5-year licenses for associated software (e.g. BeeGFS and nVIDIA Mellanox).

InfiniBand Fabric Requirements:

The vendor shall provide the following:

- Managed switches which are fully compatible with the current system switches;
- All necessary cables for systems on RFP, and any necessary inter-switch links if required;
- Provide a minimum of 120 ports on the InfiniBand fabric for nodes and other systems (this is likely larger than the number of systems included in the RFP, plan for future expansions);
- Oversubscription of the InfiniBand fabric will be allowed up to 4:1 oversubscription rate;
- Cables to be run above the racks and through cable trays;
- Must include a diagram of proposed InfiniBand fabric, including existing and planned switch(es) and cables;
- 3 year advanced replacement with next business day shipping covered both ways by vendor.

All of the requirements are listed under the questions section of CalUSource and please provide a response to each requirement.

Pre-delivery Requirements

Pre-Delivery Support and Logistics:

The Proposer shall work with a UC Santa Cruz representative for pre-delivery as stated below:

- Upon executed agreement, define the final delivery schedule, to include date, time and location, perform a site survey and inspection.
- Meet with UC Santa Cruz representatives in a pre-planning meeting.
- Provide to UC Santa Cruz power usage information on the proposed solution, for generation of appropriate rack layouts.
- Installation: label all cables and utilize required Ethernet color coding; UC Santa Cruz shall provide the labeling format and cable color-coding requirement.

Delivery and Installation

Upon delivery, the selected contractor shall provide all manpower necessary to unbox, rack and cable all equipment, and arrange replacements for all faulty vendor supplied equipment with new, like equipment. The selected contractor will coordinate with UCSC technical staff as well as NTT on-site technical support to install, cable and test all equipment, as well as provide replacements for items found to be defective. Contractor shall install and cable all network hardware, including Intermediate and InfiniBand switches.

Support Expectations

Proposer's response must describe standard support features and availability provided after delivery and deployment.

Security and Compliance

Data Security: The infrastructure must meet University of California's Electronic Information Security Policy (IS-3) policy and associated standards to protect sensitive data and intellectual property. The solution must be built to satisfy common regulatory, contractual, and certification requirements, which may include NIST SP 800-171, CMMC, NSPM-33, NIH, California Department of Public Health, etc.

3. CONTRACT TERM AND PRICING

The initial term of the contract resulting from this bid is for a period of five (5) years commencing from the inception date of a fully executed contract. The University may, at its option, extend the contract and its terms for five (5) additional one-year periods. Pricing shall be held firm for the first two (2) years. Any price increase for subsequent contract years three (3) through five (5), shall not exceed the lesser of the Consumer Price Index or 3% in any one-contract year. Subsequent year price increases and term extensions shall be negotiated by an authorized representative of the University's Procurement and Contracts Division.

4. RFP SCHEDULE

This section provides the following schedule of events. Bidders should carefully examine and make certain they have a clear understanding of the requirements of the specified milestones and the associated dates.

Request for Proposal Schedule	Dates
RFP Release in CalUsource	8:00pm (PST) on January 15, 2025
Request for Information/ Discussion Due	2:00pm (PST) on January 16, 2025 to 10:00am February 11, 2025
UCSC Response to Request for Information	10:00am (PST) on January 17, 2028 to 3:00pm February 14, 2025
Questionnaire Response Due Date	10:00am (PST) on February 17, 2025
Selection of Top Ranked Bidder(s)	9:00am (PST) on February 24, 2025
Notice of Intent to Award	3:00pm (PST) on March 15, 2025

5. POINT(S) OF CONTACT

All communication with UCSC must be directed to the "Discussion Forum" for this solicitation via CalUsource.

6. RESTRICTION ON COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Except as specified in this Section 8, Bidders are not permitted to communicate with UCSC staff .

6.2 If a Bidder is found to be in violation of this provision, the University reserves the right to reject its proposal.

7. SUBMIT PROPOSAL

This RFP will be published in CalUsource and all prospective bidder should have access to it. Any prospective Bidder intending to submit a proposal is required to meet the prerequisites and to submit an Intent to Bid. No proposals submitted outside of CalUsource will be accepted unless previously agreed to by the Senior Strategic Sourcing Partner. After submitting the intent to bid prospective bidders are required to answer the questions and submit all required documents to be considered for further evaluation.

8. DISSEMINATION OF RFP INFORMATION [RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS, ADDENDA, ETC.]

8.1 The University may revise or add to the RFP prior to the deadline for Proposals and, at its own discretion, may extend the deadline for all potential Bidders. Any changes to the RFP will be in the form of written addenda issued by the UCSC Point of Contact(s) and will be published in CalUsource. The Addenda will be clearly marked as such, numbered consecutively, and shall be made part of this RFP. Any Bidder who fails to receive such addenda shall not be relieved of any obligation under his/her Proposal as submitted.

NOTE: IT IS THE BIDDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK RFP ONLINE IN CALUSOURCE FOR ANY AND ALL RFP ADDENDA ISSUED PRIOR TO SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL.

8.2 Except as stated in this provision, no person is authorized to amend any part of this RFP, in any respect, either in writing or by oral statement.

9. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP

9.1 All inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification of the contents of this RFP should be submitted in writing via the RFP Discussion Forum in CalUsource.

9.2 A listing of Bidder inquiries (without identifying the source of the inquiry) and UCSC responses thereto will be posted on the RFP Discussion Forum in CalUsource.

9.3 Whenever the UCSC response to an inquiry would constitute a modification or addition to the original RFP, the reply will be made in the form of an addendum.

9.4 All inquiries should include:

- A. A clear and concise question and reference page number; and
- B. References to specific points within this RFP.

9.5 Questions are due by the date specified in the RFP schedule in Section 4 of this document via RFP Discussion Forum in CalUsource. Questions submitted after the due date will not be responded to.

9.6 Any persons other than the UCSC contact designated herein shall be deemed unauthorized to respond to questions regarding this RFP and may not be relied upon.

10. ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

If a Bidder discovers any discrepancy, error, or omission in this RFP or any Attachments, UCSC should be notified immediately, and a written clarification/notification or addendum will be issued in accordance with Section 9 of this RFP. No Bidder will be entitled to additional compensation for any error or discrepancy that appears in the RFP where UCSC was not notified and a response provided.

11. SPECIFICATIONS

Bidders are expected to meet or exceed the RFP specifications in their entirety. Each proposal should be in accordance with this specification. If products and/or services, as proposed, do not comply with specifications as written, Bidder should attach to their proposal a complete detailed itemization and explanation for each and every deviation or variation from these specifications. Absence of any such itemization and explanation shall be understood to mean that Bidder proposed to meet all details of these specifications. Successful Bidder(s) delivering products and/or services pursuant to these specifications shall guarantee that they meet specifications as set forth herein. If it is found that materials/equipment and/or services delivered do not meet requirements of this specification, the successful Bidder(s) will be required to correct same at Bidder's own expense.

12. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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12.1 The following Exhibits, posted under Documents on CalUsource, contain the terms and conditions for this RFP:

- Purchase Agreement Template
- UC Terms and Conditions of Purchase

12.2 UCSC reserves the right to modify these Exhibits to the extent that it deems necessary either before or during any negotiations with a selected Bidder.

12.3 Each Bidder is expected to review the terms and conditions in these Exhibits and acknowledge their acceptance or their objections to specific parts of these Exhibits as a mechanism to expedite the contract negotiation process.

13. RFP EXCEPTIONS

The University will not consider the submission of the Bidder's standard agreement(s) to be a presentation of exceptions. Every exception request must be stated as such in their proposal in accordance with this Section 14.

13.1 Technical Exceptions:

The Bidder should clearly describe any and all deviations in its Proposal from the functional requirements stated in this RFP and also describe any services that could be made by the Bidder to satisfy those requirements.

13.2 General Exceptions:

The Bidder should clearly state its objections, exceptions, or alternatives to the general (non-technical) requirements stated in this RFP. If the Bidder has no general exceptions to present, this fact should be stated in the proposal. Bidders are cautioned that if the University is unwilling or unable to approve a request for exception to the RFP requirements and the Bidder does not withdraw the request, the proposal will be deemed to be non-responsive and ineligible for contract award.

14. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS/ATTACHMENTS

14.1 Questionnaires must be completed and submitted by 10:00 AM PST on February 17, 2025. Additional Documentations such as official Proposal, supporting Documents will be accepted however must be received as an attachment via CaluSource prior to Questionnaire Submission by 10:00 AM PST on February 17, 2025. Faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted. All supporting Documents must be submitted only in the CalUsource tool.

15. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS

15.1 All proposals, supporting materials and related documentation will become the property of the UCSC.

15.2 This RFP, together with copies of all documents pertaining to any award, if issued, will be kept for a period of five (5) years from date of contract expiration or termination and made part of a file or record which shall be open to public inspection. If the response contains any trade secrets that should not be disclosed to the public or used by the UCSC for any purpose other than evaluation of your approach, the top of each sheet of such information must be marked with the following legend: "CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION".

NOTE: THE FINANCIAL PROPOSAL IS NOT CONSIDERED "CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION".

15.3 All information submitted as part of the proposal must be open to public inspection (except items marked as trade secrets and considered trade secrets under the California Public Records Act) after the award has been made.

15.4 Should a request be made of UCSC for information that has been designated as confidential by the Bidder and, on the basis of that designation UCSC denies the request for information, the Bidder may be responsible for all legal costs necessary to defend such action if the denial is challenged in a court of law.

16. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

1.1.1 Bidder's proposals must meet the minimum spec requirements as listed on Statement Of Work.

1.1.2 For a period of 18 months past delivery, bidder must respond within five (5) business days to updated price requests for identical/substantially similar nodes/clusters.

1.1.3 Bidders must include all costs related to delivery, installation, and warranty (5 Year Next Business Day). Bids must also include the cost of hardware installed into standard 19" data center racks and removal/disposal of all packing material.

1.1.4 All additional components (e.g. high-performance network cards, memory, disks, CPUs, etc.) must be installed by the bidder and must carry the same warranty and service requirements outlined in Statement Of Work (SOW).

1.1.5 Bidders must remove all packing material and appropriately recycle these materials offsite. Any unpackaging must be completed within 3 calendar days.

1.1.6 Selected finalists will be required to provide remote shell access to at least two (2) nodes, connected to each other with high-speed fabric in a physical configuration similar to the proposed systems.

17. UNIVERSITY RIGHTS

17.1 Qualification status is based, but not limited to, factors such as financial resources, past performance with the University, delivery capability, experience, organization, personnel, technical skills, operational controls, equipment, warehouse facilities, quality control and other related factors which may be an indicator of a Bidder's ability to perform. University staff may visit a Bidder's site to further clarify and verify that Bidder will meet RFP requirements.

17.2 University reserves the right to obtain Dun & Bradstreet reports, or similar independent reports, for further indications of the Bidder's ability to provide the products and services specified in this RFP. The Bidder should provide their company's Dun & Bradstreet number with the submitted proposal.

17.3 The University reserves the right to reject all quotes and to make no award. Unless stated otherwise in this RFP, the University reserves the right to make multiple awards or to award items separately or in the aggregate as the interests of the University may appear.

18. PARKING

Parking for Bidder vehicles shall be at Bidder's expense. Bidders may obtain map of the install location upon request. UCSC will not be responsible for any fees, fines or penalties levied by Parking Services against the Bidder.

19. TAXES

The successful Bidder's work activities may be subject to applicable State and Local taxes.

20. PROPOSAL CONTENT

20.1 Affidavit

The acceptance of the UC's Terms and Conditions must be signed by a Bidder's representative authorized to bind the Bidder's organization to the terms and conditions of this RFP and returned via CalUsource.

20.2 Financial Proposal

A. Bidders should take note of the following in submitting their Financial Proposal:

- 1) Bidder is responsible for all aspects of delivery.
- 2) UCSC requires an annual fixed price agreement for all services to be provided as a result of this RFP. Bidders must price their offerings with this requirement in mind **(if applicable)**.
- 3) If there are cost decreases applicable to the quoted products prior to the University placing an order for same, the University shall benefit from a corresponding reduction in cost **(if applicable)**.
- 4) Bidders should identify any additional or miscellaneous costs, discounts, fees, or charges not explicitly included elsewhere in their proposal so the total cost to the University for the services/products to be provided is known.

20.3 Mandatory Requirements Questionnaire

The mandatory requirements section must be completed in CalUsource * Note: in the event Bidder has responded "NO" to any of the Mandatory Questions within the Questionnaire, they may not be considered in the Bid Event.

20.4 Supplier Questionnaires

The Supplier Questions within each Questionnaire must be completed in CalUsource.

21. NEGOTIATIONS AND METHOD OF AWARD

The contract resulting from this RFP, if any, will be awarded to the responsive and responsible Bidder offering the greatest benefit to UCSC.

Questionnaires will be examined by a UCSC evaluation team utilizing a BEST VALUE Method. The intent of the evaluation process is to determine, through application of uniform criteria, how effectively the proposed products and/or services satisfy UCSC's requirements. In addition to material provided in the proposal, the evaluation team may utilize site visits, or may request oral presentations, additional material, information, or references from the Bidder and others.

Any answer(s) that are found to be administratively or technically non-responsive are subject to immediate disqualification.

Exceptions taken in the questionnaire submitted, or irregularities therein, may be negotiated with or corrected by the Bidder involved provided that, in the judgment of UCSC, such action will not negate fair competition and will permit proper comparative evaluation of proposal submitted. UCSC's waiver of an immaterial deviation or defect shall in no way modify the RFP documents or excuse the Bidder from full compliance with the RFP specifications in the event the contract is awarded to that Bidder.

Should UCSC be unable to obtain a fair and reasonable price through negotiations with the highest ranked Bidder, UCSC shall enter into negotiations with the next highest Bidder and may award that contract if the parties are able to arrive at a fair and reasonable price. If that is unattainable, UCSC shall enter into negotiations with the next highest qualified Bidder in

sequence until an Agreement is reached. This process will continue until an award is made or until UCSC rejects all bids.

NOTE: THE UNIVERSITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE BIDDER(S) SUBMITTED PROPOSAL.

Prior to contract award, UCSC may, at its sole discretion, seek clarification from any Bidder regarding proposal information and may do so without notification to any other Bidder.

Any contract awarded pursuant to this RFP will be in writing and will incorporate the requirements and specifications contained in this RFP and in the Bidder's Proposal as accepted by UCSC.