

**AD AGENCY CONTRACT
INTEGRATED MARKETING, MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND BUYING APPROVAL
A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** University Communications and Marketing Department (UCM).

2. **Introduction:** Oakland University continues to operate in an increasingly competitive enrollment environment, requiring its marketing efforts to become more integrated, data-informed and closely aligned with the prospective student journey. Today's media environment requires more than effective advertising campaign management or the generation of impressions and clicks. It requires an enrollment marketing approach that connects audience strategy, creative, media, recruitment communications and measurement to better understand and influence how prospective students progress from initial consideration through application and enrollment.

Oakland's existing media program has established a foundation, including broad market presence, successful campaign strategies and valuable historical performance benchmarks. The University's next opportunity is to build on that foundation with a more sophisticated enrollment marketing model that aligns investment to enrollment priorities, differentiates communications based on audience and stage of the student journey and more directly connects marketing performance to meaningful enrollment outcomes. This evolution also complements Oakland's investments in its new institutional brand, prospective student journey, and ongoing Slate modernization.

To support this evolution, the University conducted a highly competitive search for an advertising agency partner with both sophisticated media capabilities and demonstrated expertise in higher education enrollment marketing. Birdsall, Voss & Associates, Inc. (dba BVK) received the highest evaluation score among 31 proposals reviewed and five finalist presentations. BVK's proposed team and portfolio, including comparable work with Michigan State University, Indiana University, the University of Florida and other public research institutions, demonstrated an ability to translate institutional strategy into integrated enrollment marketing programs. BVK's appointment represents the next evolution of Oakland's work, preserving successful strategies and institutional knowledge while adding significantly deeper audience and journey planning, integrated media strategy, enrollment-focused measurement and ongoing optimization.

3. **Previous Board Action:** N/A

4. **Budget Implications:** Unlike traditional commission-based media relationships, BVK operates through a transparent, fee-based model. This ensures that their recommendations are never influenced by media spend or channel selection. Instead, they are guided by Oakland's enrollment priorities, institutional goals, and strategies that will produce the strongest outcomes. The estimated agency fee for the remainder of FY27

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is \$320,000. Estimated agency fees for the remaining fiscal year (FY) periods: \$450,000. This includes ongoing strategy, optimization, and executive reporting. The retainer will remain constant for all of the term of the agreement, which is 1 year with 2 one-year renewals. This agreement does not include creative development which will be scoped each year based on OU business needs and treated as an incremental investment. The agency fee range will remain constant, but total expenditure will be based on the media purchased by Oakland University each year. BVK to pay all media vendor invoices directly to contracted vendors and invoices Oakland. These are strictly net pass-through charges based upon approved marketing and advertising budgets, which average \$3-4 million per year.

5. **Educational Implications:** The work has been and will continue to be critical to the recruitment of graduate and undergraduate students.

6. **Personnel Implications:** None.

7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** This recommendation was formulated by the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer and reviewed by the Purchasing Department, Office of Legal Affairs, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, and President.

8. **Recommendation:**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves the agreement with BVK as the media consulting, planning, buying and stewardship vendor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the President, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and their respective designees, to perform all acts and deeds and to execute and deliver all contracts, instruments and documents required by this resolution that are necessary, expedient and proper in connection with the work; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that said contracts, instruments and documents shall be reviewed by and be in a form acceptable to the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel prior to execution and be in compliance with the law and with University policies and regulations and conform to the legal standards of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel.

9. **Attachment:** None.

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Submitted to the President
on Oct 6, 2026, 2026 by

Chris Pilsner

Christine Foley Pilsner
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer

Stephen W. Mackey

Stephen W. Mackey
Senior Vice President for Finance and
Administration and Treasurer to the
Board of Trustees

Recommended on 10/6, 2026
to the Board of Trustees for Approval by

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz
Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by:

Joshua D. Merchant
Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees