

# Mississippi State University

## Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase

**256-093**

Mississippi State University anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Commodity or commodities to be purchased (make, model, description):

Virtual Career Center

2. Explanation of the need to be fulfilled by this item(s), how is it unique from all other options, and why it is the only one that can meet the specific needs of the department:

The Mississippi State University Career Center serves thousands of students and alumni representing all majors and degree levels. The Career Center is a centralized, comprehensive unit providing a diverse range of services to connect job seekers to employers and vice versa. uConnect is a career management and marketing platform that will help the Career Center leverage the resources, tools, and services they already have into one, online environment that enhances access and drives engagement. uConnect's powerful platform will help more efficiently engage faculty, attract employers, and collaborate with other departments on campus.

uConnect would enable the Career Center to provide all current and prospective students, alumni, and families with 24/7/365 highly scalable, self-guided career exploration experiences including up-to-date career data and resources, which is a limitation of the current operating structure. The platform would enhance the student experience by creating an updated career services hub, combining existing resources, such as Symplicity CSM and LinkedIn Learning, into a convenient source for information at any point in their career journey. Faculty and staff who support students would also have access to this resource, allowing them to integrate career readiness into their interactions with students in a meaningful way. This would aggregate career resources, events, and opportunities from across campus, and easily curate them for students based on industry, major, or identity. As such, uConnect is not simply 'another tool,' but rather functions as an integrative framework to engage stakeholders (prospective students, enrolled students, faculty, staff, employers, etc.) by creating an institutional hub for career content that markets services, curates resources, and personalizes direct-to-student communications university-wide.

3. Name of company/individual selling the item and why that source is the only possible source that can provide the required item(s):

uConnect is sole sourced because it offers a unique combination of tools to enable schools to promote their own local career content, resources and data on their own website, living on a custom domain and leveraging proprietary integrations with their existing campus systems and technologies. It would be unrealistic to create a look-alike and would not only be cost prohibitive, but would lack important functionality, including proprietary content integrations, email marketing, that is critical to achieving the desired customer outcomes. Additionally, the requirement to support and maintain the platform would likely multiply the cost and complexity involved.

4. Estimated cost of item(s) and an explanation why the amount to be expended is considered reasonable:

The proposed renewal features a multi-year agreement. The total amount for this platform Year 1 is \$36,050, Year 2 is \$37,131.50, and Year 3 is \$38,245.47. This price includes discounts on the Classes module, and an overall discounted price for the multi-year agreement.

5. Explanation of the efforts taken by the department to determine this is the only source and the efforts used to obtain the best possible price:

The Mississippi State Career Center has conducted several demos with the platform, which began in early December. To our knowledge, there is no other platform like this in the career services field. We also benchmarked with other SEC and ACC institutions, such as the University of Florida, Auburn, Duke, and the University of Miami who currently use the product and have only heard great things about uConnect and its impact on student engagement with their services. Our uConnect sales representative has been incredibly communicative and eager to provide discounts to us as we continue to use this new product at MSU successfully.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jennifer Mayfield, CPPO  
Director and CPO, Procurement & Contracts  
[jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu](mailto:jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu)  
Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, MSU determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then MSU will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If MSU determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then MSU will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. MSU will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.