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Partnership to Aid in Cultivating Diverse Vendors for National Grid, CVS

Curriculum created by Professional Education Center at the School of Continuing Studies will train diverse supply chain participants on essential skills for small business success

April 11, 2014 | Brian E. Clark

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – At a one-of-a-kind “Power of Connections” event hosted today by National Grid Rhode Island and CVS Caremark, leaders from the two organizations joined in unveiling a sponsorship program for local diverse business owners, created in partnership with the Professional Education Center at the Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies.

The program will send selected candidates – all of whom will be potential vendors in the supply chains for National Grid or CVS Caremark who run diverse businesses (primarily women-, minority- or veteran-owned) – to a two-part “CEO Master Series” curriculum designed and offered by the Professional Education Center. The goal is that the skills and knowledge acquired will enhance the participating firms’ résumés and better position them to win contracts.

“Education is a key factor in creating opportunities for job growth, career development and economic expansion,” said Peter Wilbur, vice president for university outreach and engagement at Roger Williams, who announced the sponsorship program at Power of Connections. “The ability to customize our academic expertise in continuing studies in a way that supports the development of a diverse pool of business leaders illustrates our commitment to impacting quality of life in our own community.”
The announcement came during the daylong conference at the Providence Marriott, which was
designed to expand the number of opportunities at National Grid and CVS for diverse business
owners and to emphasize the companies’ belief in community stewardship along with the need to
provide businesses with the chance to create jobs and drive economic growth.

School of Continuing Studies Dean Jamie Scurry says the RWU partnership with National Grid and
CVS Caremark demonstrates how the Professional Education Center can tailor the knowledge base
of its instructors and staff to design a customized curriculum that’s uniquely suited to meet the
specific needs of industry partners.

“It’s not enough to simply provide off-the-shelf information and training, given that companies in the
same industries often have different needs,” Scurry says. “It is critical that investments in professional
development are customized and contextualized to ensure that students gain useable, practical
skills that add value to the organization – that all participants leave with a “toolbox” that improves
performance, aids in problem solving and ensures that they are prepared to immediately effect
change.”

The CEO Master Series will focus on the essential skills that position executives for success and will
comprise two modules: (1) “Maximizing Employee Performance and Learning the Secrets to Submit
a Successful Proposal,” which will include sessions on purchasing and contracts, team building and
performance management; and (2) “Critical Development Areas to be Competitive,” which will
include sessions on sustainability training, safety plans, HIPPA requirements and social media
marketing.

The courses will begin late this spring and will be offered through a blend of in-class and online
learning, to allow for flexibility. For more information on the Professional Education Center, visit
http://rwu.edu/academics/schools-colleges/scs/pec.