CVS Health, RWU Create Professional Development Program to Support Diverse Suppliers

Public Affairs, Roger Williams University
CVS Health, RWU Create Professional Development Program to Support Diverse Suppliers

Training program created by the Professional Education Center at Roger Williams University will help CVS Health diverse-owned suppliers develop skills in finance, leadership and technology.

June 16, 2015 | Public Affairs Staff

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – As part of its commitment to support the development of diverse business leaders, CVS Health has partnered with the Professional Education Center at the Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies to create a new, customized professional development program – CVS Health: Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers. The training program will help diverse vendors gain critical management skills that allow them to expand their partnerships with CVS Health and drive their companies’ success in areas such as marketing, finance and human resources.

“Working with large companies can be challenging, especially for small businesses with few resources,” says Raul Suarez-Rodriguez, CVS Health’s manager of supplier diversity. “CVS Health recognizes how important it is to deepen our partnerships with these small business owners and invest in their development by creating training opportunities that expand their capacity, skill level and growth potential. RWU has been a valuable partner in creating a unique training program catered specifically for our diverse suppliers.”
CVS Health selected 10 partners for the Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers program, which launches on June 19 and will focus on building skills in areas such as finance and budget, leadership, management, technology, human resources and communications.

The new training series grew out of the successful pilot program, the CEO Master Series, which helped a group of diverse business owners gain skills and knowledge with customized courses – on purchasing and contracts, team building, sustainability training, performance management and social media marketing – last spring. Created by RWU’s Professional Education Center and CVS Health, the CEO Master Series enhanced participating firms’ résumés and better positioned them to win contracts with large companies.

CVS Health found the pilot program a huge success in helping its partner base gain usable, practical skills that add value to their organization. Business executive Jamar Milsap was one of the participants and says the CEO Master Series helped his company secure new contracts.

“For a growing supply company, the CEO Master Series program was exactly what we needed,” says Milsap, vice president of client relations for Peachtree Supplies, Inc. “From the diversity of speakers and classroom content to the many opportunities to network with fellow classmates, the program was hugely beneficial and a great experience. Since graduating, we have secured multiple projects using the tools learned through the courses. It truly helped us take our company to the next level.”

Based at the University’s Providence campus, the Professional Education Center creates customized educational programs for local corporations, government agencies and community nonprofits that wish to offer specific courses or trainings to help employees build new skills or gain industry knowledge. For CVS Health, the PEC created curriculum that would arm participants with the skills needed for small business success while also providing an opportunity to learn more about CVS Health and the many partner opportunities available with the company.

“By collaborating together, CVS Health and PEC identified the gap in professional development for diverse suppliers and built a one-of-kind program that included both the core competencies that CVS Health values and the management skills that can help strengthen each participant’s business as a whole,” says Adriana Dawson, assistant dean, professional education and employer outreach at RWU’s School of Continuing Studies. “With this customization, CVS Health is able to strengthen its relationships with suppliers while also helping these small businesses flourish in their communities.”

“With the PEC, corporate partners can create a customized learning experience that meets their specific industry needs or organizational goals,” says Jamie E. Scurry, dean of the School of Continuing Studies. “The unique programming created by the PEC truly exemplifies our mission of furthering the education of our students, helping them reach new career successes, pursue new career paths and removing barriers to upward socio-economic mobility.”
The Professional Education Center and CVS Health developed the curriculum with help from several national diversity chambers and councils, including the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Southern Florida Minority Supplier Development Council, U.S. Business Leadership Network (DSDP), U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce and Women’s Business Enterprise National Council.