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## **RWU, CVS Health Open Nominations for 2021 Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers**

Roger Williams University

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Roger Williams today announced it will start a new cohort for diverse business owners on June 9 as part of CVS Health’s [Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers](#), an innovative training and mentorship program that helps diverse vendors gain critical management skills in leadership, marketing and finance.

“I value our relationship with CVS Health and am honored to work on this amazing professional development program with their team,” said Dawne Pezzuco, Director of the Center for Workforce & Professional Development at RWU’s University College. “The training continues to improve and build on past successes each year and has made a positive impact for so many small diverse suppliers.”

For the seventh year, the executive leadership series will offer networking opportunities, individualized executive coaching on business needs, weekly workshops and flexible online courses. The four-month program, which will start online due to the pandemic, works to develop a wide variety of skills, including successful tactics for expanding retail distribution of products and services, all based on the competencies and practices of CVS Health.

“Deepening our relationships with small business owners is an important part of our focus to support

and sourcediverse businesses by connecting, engaging, and networking with diverse suppliers,” said Monette Knapik, Director of Strategic Procurement for CVS Health. “Together with Roger Williams, we aim to build on the program’s success to help increase economic opportunities for the people and local businesses in the communities we serve.”

Over the past six years, nearly 90 minority and women business owners have graduated from the Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers and 60% of them have businesses across the country.

One recent graduate, Elizabeth Shanley, credits the program for giving her the friendly push she needed to expand her skill set to help her business grow. She completed the CVS Health Executive Learning Series for Diverse Suppliers in 2019.

“I tend to focus on the future, in my personal life, and in my family business, but having access to the talent and resources in this program pushed me to pay attention to and create a plan around the actionable items that could help me achieve our goals,” Shanley said. “I can honestly say that this experience has changed my life.”

Another graduate, Boston business owner Sherman Wright, managing partner and chief operating officer at [Ten35](#), a Black-owned brand consulting agency,

said his experience in the CVS Health Executive Learning Series was “quite insightful and helpful.”

“The program provided access to great resources, allowing me to step away from my business and look at it with a fresh perspective while engaging with other entrepreneurial peers, seasoned professionals and academic thought leaders,” said Wright.

Nominations to the program will be made through the National Diversity Council and local Chambers of Commerce and will be accepted from now to April 21, 2021. Nominees have the opportunity to receive their tuition fully sponsored by CVS Health.