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Metropolitan Business League newsletter

January 23, 2009

University of Richmond Teams with Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council to Provide Leadership Training for Minority Executives

(Richmond, VA)—Leadership skills are always necessary for successful business executives and that is even more true now, as the faltering economy has claimed jobs and shuttered businesses.

The Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council has designed, along with the University of Richmond's Robins School of Business an innovative leadership development program exclusively for chief executive officers of certified minority businesses to assist as these business leaders grow their businesses and stave off the effects of the financial markets. Leadership skills, business expansion and customer service will be at the forefront of the offerings. This initiative has secured founding sponsors that include three major Central Virginia-based corporations, Altria Group, Dominion Resources and MeadWestvaco.

This spring, after a rigorous application process, VMSDC will select the first 20 executives. In June, the selected executives will arrive on the University of Richmond campus for a three-day intensive session, followed by a second three-day session scheduled for mid-September.

"As always we're committed to education and training," said Connie Smith, VMSDC chair and who also heads supplier diversity development for the Altria family of companies. "This program will provide the right information at the right time to suppliers that are ready to evolve to the next level. We're excited to provide this program through the University of Richmond."

Robins School faculty with expertise in strategic management, finance, marketing and entrepreneurship will collaborate with staff from the school's Executive Education division to design a curriculum tailored specifically to VMSDC's membership.

"The Robins School is honored to have been chosen for this important work," said Dean Jorge Haddock.

"We look forward to having our faculty members apply their expertise in a way that is sure to make a difference in Virginia's future economy," said Richard Coughlan, senior associate dean in the Robins School of Business. "By helping chief executives expand their firms' capabilities, we aim to increase their chances for building new partnerships with major corporations across the country."

Details about the program, including costs and admissions requirements, will be posted to the websites of the VMSDC and the Robins School in early 2009.

About VMSDC:

The Council, or VMSDC, is a membership organization of major corporations, financial institutions, government agencies, universities and Virginia-based companies. It promotes and facilitates development of business relationships between its members and certified minority-owned enterprises. The Council works to expand business opportunities for minority-owned companies and to help build a stronger, more equitable society by supporting and promoting minority business development. VMSDC has 255 corporate members and approximately 375 certified minority businesses.

About The Robins School of Business:

Ranked in the top 20 nationally by BusinessWeek, the Robins School of Business is the only [fully accredited](#), top-ranked undergraduate business

school that also is part of a top-ranked liberal arts university. BusinessWeek also recognized the school for having one of the top 15 part-time MBA programs in the country. Its executive education division offers open enrollment courses and customized leadership development programs for individuals and businesses.