

# UPMC's DeMichiei pushes diversity at African American Chamber breakfast

Comments: [0 Comments](#) | [Leave A Comment](#)

[Sep 25, 2014](#)

By Christian Morrow



**PUSHING DIVERSITY**—Guest speaker UPMC Senior VP and CFO Rob DeMichiei poses with African American Chamber Board Chair Sam Stephenson and President and CEO Doris Carson Williams at the Sept. 19 PowerBreakfast [meeting](#).

UPMC Senior VP and CFO Rob DeMichiei told the audience at the African American Chamber Of Commerce Sept. 19 PowerBreakfast that one of the best things the corporate community could do to [increase](#) their businesses' workforce and supply chains would be to fire their chief diversity officers.

His tongue was only partially planted in his cheek as he called, again, for the rest of Pittsburgh's corporate community to follow UPMC's lead on publically posting diversity efforts and results.

"Companies can say, look we have a diversity officer," he said. "But corporations—including us—get measured on lots of stuff. But until and unless they are measured on diversity, they won't do better. If there is no transparency, there is no incentive to improve."

UPMC remains the only local corporation to institute a hybrid "Rooney Rule" for [insuring](#) a diverse pool of candidates for executive hiring. And, DeMichiei said, thanks to internal practices

created by Candi Castleberry Singleton and the [purchasing department](#), UPMC actively searches for minority suppliers and now has a \$100-million annual minority “buy.”

DeMichiei said there have been occasional setbacks when they’ve engaged with firms that did not have the ability to fulfill the contract. But that, in turn, has led to the creation of an active mentorship program that works to help minority firms build capacity.

Part of that mentoring, he said, is working to make sure these suppliers are diversified too—from a client standpoint.

“We don’t want them relying just on us for business because market conditions and needs can change,” he said.

DeMichiei said it also led to UPMC trying to steer [clear](#) of sole-proprietor [contractors](#) for the most part. While such an arrangement would “count” in terms of a minority contract, he said, it doesn’t benefit the community in the way that hiring a minority firm with 20-30 employees could.

DeMichiei also said a new recruiting initiative for UPMC’s financial services division is paying huge dividends in both minority hiring and keeping young talent in Pittsburgh—the Financial Management Rotation Program. He showed a [short video](#) on the initiative.

“We’re hiring directly from college campuses, so we’re getting talent from around the country as well as here,” he said. “They rotate through all the departments interacting and working with executives, and now we have people just a few years [removed](#) from graduation in management and even director-level positions.”

He said 91 percent of [the program graduates](#) have stayed, 72 percent live in the city, and 16 percent have purchased property in city neighborhoods.

“So instead of our talent leaving for Atlanta, we literally have people from Atlanta staying here to work for UPMC,” he said.

After thanking DeMichiei for addressing the chamber, President and CEO Doris Carson Williams welcomed eight new members and reminded the audience of upcoming events including a members mixer Sept. 30 with Pittsburgh Community Services Inc at the Environment & Energy Community Outreach Center; an Oct. 11 “Mortgages for Men” workshop with Dollar Bank; an Oct. 15 discussion of legal issues with lawyers from Buchanan Ingersoll, Schnader Attorneys, and Tucker Arensberg; an Oct. 16 mixer at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History’s “Race” exhibit, and a reminder that Community College of Allegheny County President Quentin Bullock will speak at the Oct. 17 PowerBreakfast meeting.

Call 412-392-0610 for more information on these events.