**NEWS RELEASE--***Immediate Release*

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**Colonel Mike Prendergast Addresses Graduates at Keiser University’s Commencement Ceremony in Tampa**

*Approximately 300 graduates are expected to cross the stage*

**Tampa**, FL—June 2015—Keiser University faculty and staff of the Tampa campus welcome family and friends to the commencement ceremony for the Class of 2015 on Friday, June 5. The nearly 300 graduates will be given their keynote address by Colonel Mike Prendergast, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs. The graduation will take place at the Grace Family Church located at 5100 West Waters Ave. in Tampa at 7:00 p.m.

“The Tampa campus acknowledges our outstanding graduates for their academic accomplishments.  Each graduate is recognized for their dedication, sacrifice and hard work it took to obtain their Master, Bachelor and Associate degrees. I am confident that their achievements will serve them well in the future as they go forth toward their new endeavors,” said Brandon Barnhill, Campus President.

The Tampa campus is proud of all of their graduates but wants to highlight the two top academic achievers from the Class of 2015. The valedictorian, Bradley Travi earned his Bachelor of Science in Forensic Sciences and Michael Beirne, the salutatorian, who is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Cyber Forensics/Information Security.

The graduates will receive their keynote remarks from Retired Army Colonel Mike Prendergast who is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, a post he was appointed to by Governor Rick Scott in 2011. The Tampa native served 31 years of active duty service as a Military Police Officer, with multiple combat deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as assignments in Africa, Europe, and Asia. He culminated his military service with a tour at MacDill Air Force Base where he served as the U.S. Central Command Provost marshal. He retired from active duty on October 1, 2009.

Col. Prendergast’s personal awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, three Legion of Merit medals, the Bronze Star Medal, four Meritorious Service Medals, six Army Commendation Medals, and two Army Achievement Medals. Mike is a 2009 inductee into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, Georgia, and is a recipient of the Military Police Corps’ Order of the Marechaussee award in Silver for having had a significant impact on the Army’s Military Police Corps.

This spring, close to 5,000 Keiser University graduates are expected to cross stages throughout the state signifying completion of their college degrees and the beginning of the next chapter in their professional lives. For the last several years, Keiser University has held the top ranking in Florida and second in the nation for production of associate graduates in the health professions and related clinical sciences. Over 20 percent of Keiser’s student body are veterans, service members or military family members.  Having served and sacrificed for their country, many returning Veterans choose health care fields to continue their life of service.  The US News and World Report ranked Keiser University the thirteenth “Best College for Vets” in the Southern region of colleges in the United States.

**About Keiser University:** Keiser University is a private, not-for-profit University serving nearly 20,000 students offering 100 degrees at the doctoral through associate level on 17 Florida campuses, online and internationally, employing 3,500 staff and faculty. Keiser University holds Level VI accreditation signifying recognition of its expanded doctoral degree offerings.

Sixty-two percent of KU students graduate in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and healthcare fields, providing the talented workforce necessary for Florida to compete globally. Statewide Keiser University campuses currently have 60 accredited programs, spanning 21 program offerings, from 18 accrediting agencies/regulatory agencies to ensure that the top industry standards are met in degrees such as nursing, occupational therapy assistant, radiologic technology, physical therapy assistant, physician’s assistant, and many others.

Keiser University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award certificates and degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialist, and doctoral levels.  Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Keiser University.

For additional information regarding Keiser University, go to [www.keiseruniversity.edu](http://www.keiseruniversity.edu)

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