**K E I S E R**

UNIVERSITY

Flagship Campus

For Immediate Release

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**Keiser University Flagship Campus President to serve on Panel Showcasing Workforce Initiatives in Growing Marine Industry**

***Florida’s marine businesses boast 136,000 jobs and an annual economic impact of $11.5 billion***

West Palm Beach, FL--Mar.16 2016— The prestigious Palm Beach International Boat Show will hold its 31st annual event on Mar. 17 beginning at 12:00 p.m., and kicking off the main event earlier that day at 10:00 a.m. is a panel of experts addressing “Workforce Initiatives in Florida’s Growing Marine Industry.”   Dr. Tom Duncan, campus president of Keiser University’s Flagship Campus, will join distinguished leaders Steve Moynihan, John Sprague, and Chuck Collins in addressing the employment demands of an industry that promotes 136,000 jobs in the region and an $11.5 billion annual economic impact.

“South Florida is one of the great marine centers in the United States,” says Dr. Tom Duncan.  “Because the marine industry is so vital to our entire region, those of us in education have an obligation to do our part to meet the current and future employment needs for the marine sector.”

Duncan has been leading a team from Keiser University in exploring the educational and professional needs of the marine industry-- with significant focus on boats, yachts, and marina management. Keiser’s Flagship Campus plans to launch a new degree program in the coming months to educate and train business professionals for this sector.   Research from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that Miami-Dade, Duval, Hillsborough, Broward, and Manatee counties have the largest number of workers in the marine industry. Keiser University has branch campuses in each of these geographical areas, and the marine degree program will be expanded to those campuses in the foreseeable future.

“Many of the boat and yacht building, repair, and marina businesses throughout Florida and the U.S. are family-owned and operate as small businesses. There are no regionally accredited universities in Florida offering degrees specific to preparing the next generation of marine business professionals, yet Florida has the highest number of marinas in the nation.  We see a real opportunity for students to learn and lead Florida’s economy in this industry in both the short and long-terms,” adds Duncan.

With Florida having the fourth highest number of employees in the water transportation sector, and being second only to Texas in the number of employees in marine cargo handling, the University is developing a companion degree program aimed at serving the workforce demands of the ocean shipping and port management sectors of the maritime industry.  A degree in business administration with a concentration in transportation and logistics is already offered at Keiser University.  One of the new tracks is focused on maritime commerce and management and will be extended to campuses in other major Florida port cities including Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa.

Over 20 percent of the Keiser student body statewide is comprised of military service members, veterans, and their family members, including members of the United States Navy and Coast Guard branches, who may find a natural fit in careers in the marine industry.

Recently Belinda Keiser, Vice Chancellor of Keiser University, announced the launch of a Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Flagship Campus in West Palm Beach.  The Center is intended to prepare graduates to start their own businesses and reach greater heights in their chosen professions as many alumni already have.  She said that Florida’s increased focus on advancing the marine industry provides even more opportunity for Keiser University to continue contributing fully to the talent and workforce pipeline.

“Our mission has always been to serve students, our communities, the state of Florida and beyond with the development of entrepreneurs and appropriately prepared graduates for the industries in which they are most needed,” Keiser said.  “We believe the marine industry is a sector we are well-suited to support through our educational programs,” she added.

Approval is pending from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

**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 18 Florida campuses, online and internationally, employing 3,800 staff and faculty. Keiser University and the Keiser Mills Foundation provide nearly $44 million annually in need-based and academic scholarships.

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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