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Georgia Southern Announces Partnership

JUNE 15, 2015

Georgia Southern University and the Ocean Exchange will hold a signing ceremony to commemorate forming a partnership for the new BIG Pitch Competition. The signing ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 23 at 10:30 a.m. at City Campus located at 58 East Main Street in downtown Statesboro. Georgia Southern University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D. and Ocean Exchange CEO Millicent Pitts will be signing the partnership agreement for the event. With students from around the world competing for the \$10,000 prize, the BIG Pitch Competition is already positioned to be among the largest in the southeastern United States.

"Since its founding, the Ocean Exchange has done a remarkable job in supporting global entrepreneurship and innovation," said Dominique Halaby, DPA, director of the Business Innovation Group (BIG). "Georgia Southern University is excited to partner with such a well-respected and wide-reaching organization."

BIG already includes the Area Small Business Development Center, Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership, and Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development. With the recent additions of the Digital Fabrication Laboratory (FabLab) and Innovation Incubator and the BIG Pitch Competition, Georgia Southern University continues to elevate its entrepreneurship profile.

The BIG Pitch Competition is open to undergraduate and graduate students with faculty advisors from around the world. The contest focuses on solutions in sciences, engineering and technology to help sustainability.

Ocean Exchange, founded in 2010, advocates for collaboration across industries, while protecting the intellectual property of the innovator. Ocean Exchange's worldwide network uses its influences to elevate awareness, motivate and accelerate the adoption of the solutions around the globe. This year's theme is "Translating Sustainability into Value." Judges will be looking for ideas that focus on energy; ocean, land, and air resources; supply chains; and technologies that support sustainability.

The Ocean Exchange also partners with Gulfstream Aerospace and Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (WWL) which offer \$100,000 each in prize money for the competition. The Gulfstream Navigator Award is given to the solution that best fits the theme with applicability across multiple industries generating positive impact on the environment, economies or health. The WWL Orcele Award is given to the solution that makes shipping and logistics more sustainable by advancing zero-emission, marine and/or land-based technologies that are commercially viable.

Georgia Southern is now partnering with the Ocean Exchange and seeking a sponsor to name the University Innovator Award for the winners of the BIG Pitch Competition. The University Innovators Award will go to a team that shows excellence in teamwork, underlying business acumen and a possibility to have the team turned into a start-up company in the future. Finalists will be invited to present at Ocean Exchange in Savannah at the World Trade Center on Oct. 11–13, 2015.

For more information on the BIG Pitch Competition, the Ocean Exchange or Georgia Southern University entrepreneurship programs, please contact Millicent Pitts, CEO of Ocean Exchange at [\(912\) 257-0209](tel:(912)257-0209) or millicent.pitts@oceanexchange.org or Halaby at [\(912\) 478-2733](tel:(912)478-2733) or dhalaby@georgiasouthern.edu.

The Business Innovation Group is the business outreach arm of the Georgia Southern University College of Business. The focus of BIG is to provide students and entrepreneurs with the skills and training necessary to understand business principles, to experience how businesses operate and to successfully launch new business enterprises.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125-degree programs serving more than 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education.