

## **Speakers and Moderator Bios Blue Economy: Best Practices**

### **Christian Cowan - Biography**



Christian Cowan is a senior executive with more than 20 years of experience in technical manufacturing operations and marketing in the IT networking, energy and textile industries. He brings both domestic and overseas hands-on manufacturing experience to the URI Research Foundation (URIRF), the parent organization of Polaris MEP and 401 Tech Bridge. The URI Research Foundation has supported the Rhode Island Blue Economy opportunity with EDA support developing strategies in recent years such as the Rhode Island Grow Blue Initiative. Christian earned his BSEE degree from Villanova University and his MBA from the University of Rhode Island.

### **Dr. Shannon Campbell - Biography**



Dr. Shannon Campbell is Senior Associate Vice-President for The University of Southern Mississippi's Coastal Operations, serving as lead strategist and principal spokesperson. She previously served 8 years as the university's Director of Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, 17 years in community college leadership and 29 years as co-owner of a small business with her husband. She holds an engineering degree, is a certified project manager, and is an experienced applied researcher having administered more than \$48 million in federal and state grants. Campbell provided leadership for prioritizing a central focus on the blue economy for Mississippi and facilitated the launch of 'Gulf Blue—Big Ideas out of the Blue' regional innovation initiative.

## Joshua M. Berger - Biography



Having founded Washington Maritime Blue during his time as Governor Jay Inslee's Maritime Sector Lead for the State of Washington, Joshua was appointed as President & CEO to help lead the organization's growth and leadership in the global Blue Economy. As a strategic alliance to accelerate innovation for a sustainable and inclusive maritime and ocean economy, Joshua works at home and abroad to support economic growth, address climate action, and serve communities' interests.

Formerly, Joshua's role with the state served as a policy liaison between maritime industry stakeholders, the Governor's office, legislature and state agencies. As Director of Maritime Economic Development, he focused on building public/private partnerships, and ensuring a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. In his role, Joshua managed the development of Washington State's Strategy for the Blue Economy for a sustainable, decarbonized maritime industry alongside the development of a Maritime Innovation Center.

Joshua serves on multiple Boards and Advisory Committees supporting maritime and ocean clean technology, innovation and ocean literacy. Before joining the Department of Commerce in 2015, Joshua served as the founding Director of the Washington Maritime Federation and brings extensive maritime industry experience to his position. During his career, he has developed a successful record of leadership in a number of positions including: Maritime Sector Business Development Manager for the Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County; Program Director and Marine Operations Manager at The Evergreen State College; and E3 Regional and Network Coordinator for the Environmental Education Association of Washington

Joshua earned a master's degree from Antioch University Seattle in Participatory Planning. He is also a licensed and professional Merchant Mariner having worked in the towing industry and aboard traditional sailing ships as platforms for education and training, including nearly ten years as Captain and Restoration Project Manager of the historic schooner *Adventuress*. He lives in Seattle, WA raising his children as sailors and stewards with his wife Miranda.

## Katherine O'Fallon - Biography



Katherine O'Fallon has served as the Executive Director of the Marine Research Hub since October of 2022. Katherine received her degree in Marine Biology from Long Island University Southampton in New York and began her career working as a marine biologist and educator in Curacao. In 2002, she moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida and received her master's degree in marine science and education from Nova Southeastern University. In 2006, she began teaching marine science at New River Middle School (NRMS) and became the Marine Magnet Coordinator, elevating the school to become a National Certified Magnet School in 2018. Katherine is involved in the Plywood Regatta committee with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida, which connects students to the marine industry.