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NCAA President Said NCAA Helps Student-Athletes with Life Skills

Winthrop University

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NCAA President Said NCAA Helps Student-Athletes with Life Skills

Quick Facts

- In addition to Emmert's keynote speech, the evening was highlighted by the introductions of former Winthrop student-athletes and coaches who were members of one of the 15 Teams of Distinction that were honored for a memorable achievement.
- In explaining the value of intercollegiate athletic programs at schools such as Winthrop, Emmert told the audience that the graduation rates for student-athletes on average across the nation is 88 percent while the national graduation rate is under 60 percent.



Mark Emmert

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **NCAA president Mark Emmert** told nearly 300 people attending Winthrop's **125th Anniversary Celebration** dinner on Friday night that intercollegiate athletics is all about providing talented and skilled student-athletes with the support to be successful in life.

"We have 400 thousand young people participating in intercollegiate athletics and all but a small percentage will go on to be a professional in something other than sports," said Emmert who took office last November as the **fifth president in NCAA** after serving as president at the University of Washington.

"I congratulate this university and community for the wonderful milestone you have reached, and I am delighted to see that Winthrop is taking the time this year to celebrate its history and success in athletics," he said.

In addition to Emmert's keynote speech, the evening was highlighted by the introductions of former Winthrop student-athletes and coaches who were members of one of the **15 Teams of Distinction** that were honored for a memorable achievement, and the presentation of a **video documentary** about the evolution of intercollegiate athletics at Winthrop.

The list of teams honored included:

- 1980-81 men's basketball team (record number of victories in school history)
- 1981 baseball team (NAIA World Series runner-up), 1987 softball team (first Big South championship)
- 1987-88 men's basketball team (first Big South championship)
- 1987 softball (first Big South championship),
- 1988-89 women's golf team (first Big South championship)
- 1994 women's tennis team (first Big South championship)
- 1995 baseball team (first NCAA bid)
- 1997 men's tennis team (first Big South championship and NCAA bid)
- 2000 men's cross country team (first Big South championship)
- 2002 volleyball team (first Big South championship and first NCAA bid)
- 2002 men's soccer team (first Big South championship and NCAA bid)
- 2006 women's soccer team (first regular season Big South championship)
- 2006-07 men's basketball team (first NCAA tournament victory)
- 2007 softball team (first NCAA tournament bid), and
- 2008-09 women's basketball team (first WNIT bid).

In explaining the value of intercollegiate athletic programs at schools such as Winthrop, Emmert told the audience that the **graduation rates for student-athletes** on average across the nation is 88 percent while the national graduation rate is under 60 percent. "Student-athletes happen to be great students and they graduate in higher numbers and they are very successful in life.

"We have allowed the media and others to define what **student athletics** is all about. We have allowed the handful of kids, the one-and-dones who run off to play professionally after one semester, to cause people to think that is what the college basketball player is about. The truth of the matter is there are about 10 of those cases each year out of 400,000 student-athletes."

"That's what we are really all about in intercollegiate athletics. That's what this ceremony and this celebration are all about. Out of all the great student-athletes you will have a handful who are talented enough to play professionally. "Isn't that wonderful" he asked. "We should help those who have the ability, the skill and the passion to go into professional sports. Why wouldn't we love that? It's as if we had a great dancer, a great painter, a great pianist or a great accountant. When they want to go out and be successful in their field, It is **our job at the university** to help them get ready for that opportunity."

Emmert says he gets angry when he is asked, "it's all about money, isn't it?"

The truth is so far opposite of that, he says. "When you look at all divisions there are about 1,100 colleges and universities that are NCAA members. There are 14 schools that had a positive cash flow last year from their sports program. All of the others took money and put it into their athletic programs. But why would you do that? You do it because they offer **great value to this university**. You are providing opportunities to about **300 student-athletes here at Winthrop**, and you support it because that is what the **full collegiate experience** is here in America, You support it even though it loses money, just like the music school loses money because music education is very expensive. Do you want a school that doesn't have a music program? Of course not. Nor do you want a school that doesn't have an athletic department "

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