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NCAA president Mark Emmert headlines executive leadership discussion at UWF

Pensacola, Fla. – April 27, 2016 – NCAA President Mark Emmert and University of West Florida President Judith Bense recently held a panel discussion titled “Executive Leadership: From the Classroom to the Boardroom,” as part of Emmert’s visit to UWF. The event was hosted by the UWF Department of Legal Studies, Public Administration and Sport Management on Wednesday, April 20, 2016.

The event focused on leadership development, as Emmert and Bense shared stories and lessons learned about their journeys to executive positions at universities and associations. Emmert’s day at UWF also included a lunch with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and a keynote address for more than 500 attendees at the Argonaut Athletic Club and Student-Athlete Banquet.

Questions from students were submitted in advance of the panel discussion – as well as before and during the event via Twitter. UWF students, faculty and staff sought answers to thoughtful questions including, “How do you inspire innovation in your workforce?” and “What are the most important traits of successful leaders today?”

Dr. Matthew Ruckman, assistant chair of the UWF Department of Legal Studies, Public Administration and Sport Management, organized the executive leadership event.

“Overall, I was really happy with the student turnout,” Ruckman said. “It was great to hear Dr. Emmert and Dr. Bense give the students advice about how they can move forward in their careers and what they need to focus on to be successful long-term.”

Mark Chasteen, a junior in sport management at UWF, was especially touched by how approachable Emmert was – staying to interact with students and take photographs even after the discussion concluded.

His greatest takeaway was learning about failure and perseverance. “They said it’s okay to fail. You can’t learn just by being successful all the time,” Chasteen said. “If you really set your mind to it, and you are determined enough, no one can stop you.”

Danielle Rodriguez, a member of the executive board of the Sport Management Student Association who graduates this spring with degrees in sport management and marketing, said the talk inspired her to keep trying and take more risks. Because of Emmert's visit, she now plans to broaden the scope of her job search.

"Personally, wanting to get to that level of executive leadership, it was really great to be able to talk to someone who is there," Rodriguez said.

Ruckman hopes the students will have a better understanding of the roles they may aspire to after meeting the NCAA president.

"I think a lot of the students in sport management got into the program because they love sports, but they don't fully realize all of the career possibilities available to them," Ruckman said. "Mark Emmert is a great example of what you can do in this business."

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See attached photo of Drs. Judith Bense and Mark Emmert at the event

About the [University of West Florida](#): Founded in 1963, the University of West Florida is a vibrant, distinctive institution of higher learning with undergraduate, graduate and targeted research programs. With multiple locations in Northwest Florida, the University serves a student population of more than 12,000. Dedicated to helping students realize their full potential, UWF favors small class sizes with quality teacher-scholars who deliver personalized, innovative, hands-on learning and leadership opportunities.

