



Case Study: Research Services (Western Kentucky and the Sun Belt Conference)

NCAA decision-makers find empirical, data-driven analysis to be superior to anecdotes and opinions. Research Services provides athletic departments with rigorous, customized research and delivers actionable recommendations founded in data. This case study highlights feedback from the conference level (Wright Waters, Former Commissioner of the Sun Belt Conference) and institutional level (Ross Bjork, Athletic Director of Western Kentucky University). Together, they share the operational and financial benefits of Research Services.

Research Services is helping Athletic Directors:

- › Make decisions founded upon reliable data, not intuition
- › Evaluate and capitalize on new revenue opportunities
- › Reduce wasteful spending; effectively refocus resources
- › Increase success rate of strategic initiatives

"You need this information. It will help you in your daily tasks, it will help you balance your budget, generate more revenue, and be more creative while operating in intercollegiate athletics." - Ross Bjork

Challenges with Strategic Decision Making:

- › One-size-fits-all consultants don't get the job done
- › Mirroring successful campaigns from other programs doesn't provide customized results
- › Stale ideas and strategies don't create impact at the program level

Goals for Sun Belt Conference and Member Programs:

- › Increase regular season-basketball attendance at each institution
- › Grow post-season tournament and championship attendance
- › Generate data-driven research to support best practices and achieve long-term sustainable attendance growth

"You can spend a lot of money [with typical research firms] and not have a lot to show for it. Just because a marketing strategy works at school A, doesn't mean it will work at school B – one size doesn't fit all." - Wright Waters

"College athletics is very traditional. Decision making has always been rigid and not fluid. The sophistication of the reports provided by Research Services facilitates a creative approach." - Ross Bjork

"A lot of people can tell you how to grow your crowds, but it's based on intuition, not on relevant data." - WW

→ Results from Research Services

- › Actionable data and analysis with customized steps to achieve goals
- › Empirical, unbiased, and objective research
- › Increased collective enthusiasm, clear direction

"As an administrator, data-driven decisions are your best friends. When you have information like Research Services provides, you can make better decisions." - RB

"Every penny and every dollar is important. We wanted to go from research to having actionable direction—Winthrop helped achieve that." - WW

→ What's Your Experience with Research Services by Winthrop Intelligence?

"With Winthrop, you're dealing with people who listen and understand your problems. They're not trying to fit your problems into a pre-set solution; they custom-fit a solution to your problems." - WW

"Winthrop Intelligence is the only company out there doing data-driven research and analysis within the collegiate space. Having someone that is really passionate and cares about research makes all the difference." - RB

→ Summary of Value

"Research Services is forcing our group of decision makers to think about things differently. It's forcing people to make sound decisions based on really good data." - WW

"Research Services gives you confidence because you have data to back up your decision making. You can defend your decision making and be creative in your strategies." - RB

"Athletic directors are trying to be more cutting-edge to differentiate their programs in the marketplace, to get people to invest in the program. We have to generate more revenue and be accountable in our decision making. Research Services helps us do that without question." - RB

"I anticipate that we'll see ROI in two ways: increases in attendance at the institutional level and an increase in attendance at championship events." - WW

Winthrop Intelligence is grateful to



Wright Waters

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(and previously, Commissioner of the Sun Belt Conference)
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