

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Amanda Rubalcava

Jan 23, 2020



UC San Diego students and freelance professionals work in the Dana Chaiken Production Studio while the men's volleyball team played against Loyola University Chicago at RIMAC Arena on Thursday, January 9, 2020. Photo by Derrick Tuskan/UCSD Athletics.

Softball Alumna Dana Chaiken Brings UC San Diego Athletics to ESPN Audiences with Gift to Production Studio

University of California San Diego Athletics Hall of Fame inductee Dana Chaiken '91 has risen from collegiate softball player to one of the largest alumni benefactors of [Triton Athletics](#). In support of UC San Diego's upcoming transition to NCAA Division I, Chaiken directed a \$250,000 grant from the Donald and Carole Chaiken Foundation toward renovations of the production studio in RIMAC Arena. The gift has amplified the reach of UC San Diego's competitive sports teams, enabling audiences from around the country to tune in to every basketball and volleyball home game on ESPN3.

"Beyond serving as a record-breaking Triton scholar-athlete and exemplary alumni leader, Dana Chaiken is now giving back to UC San Diego with a generous contribution that will touch the lives of hundreds of scholar-athletes whose talents will be broadcast on a national level," said UC San Diego



*UC San Diego Athletics Hall of Fame inductee Dana Chaiken '91.
Photo provided by Dana Chaiken.*

Director of Athletics Earl W. Edwards. “I look forward to watching this investment strengthen the university’s presence as a member of NCAA Division I and deepen our commitment to making UC San Diego a home for leaders in academics, research and athletics.”

By fall of 2020, the Dana Chaiken Production Studio—which accommodates a multi-camera, high definition live event broadcast—will produce every home game in 10 of the university’s competitive sports for distribution on various platforms including Big West Conference television partner ESPN. The wide-reaching effect of the upgraded state-of-the-art studio is one that hits close to home for Chaiken, who earned 12 top-10 softball records during her undergraduate career at UC San Diego. While earning a bachelor’s degree in communication, Chaiken also worked in the campus’ Sports Information Department and served as sports editor of the student-operated *The Guardian* newspaper.

“Historically, my family and I make gifts that aim to benefit the most people possible,” said Chaiken about grants from the Donald and Carole Chaiken Foundation. “Our support of the studio’s renovation is as much for the students working towards a degree in communication who will be learning essential job skills while working to produce games, as it is for the talented scholar-athletes who will be receiving well-deserved exposure through national coverage.”

A Grant’s Impact in Action

Thanks to the high-quality broadcast from the Dana Chaiken Production Studio, footage of UC San Diego junior forward [Marek Sullivan’s enormous dunk](#) against Cal State East Bay on January 4 has garnered national attention. The top-tier production helped ensure the content was captured at multiple angles and ready to package for a variety of news outlets, such as San Diego’s local Fox 5 and NBC 7 stations who televised the play. Now a viral hit on social media, the video of the dunk has amassed over 1.4 million views online.

Students interested in video production and the sports industry are invited to apply for internships within the studio, where they will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in assisting high-caliber broadcast sports productions. While shadowing professional directors and producers contracted by the university, students can build up their portfolio with real world skills. Broadcast

coverage of collegiate sports made possible by the studio also increases the exposure of dedicated scholar-athletes who study just as hard as they train—athletes at UC San Diego graduate at the highest success rate among all NCAA Division II programs (91 percent).

Over the years, Chaiken and her family have generously given UC San Diego more than \$825,000 in support of Triton Athletics and additional departments on campus. In 2008, the Donald and Carole Chaiken Foundation funded improvements to the university's Softball Field Complex, which recently received the 2019 Division II Turface Athletics / NFCA Field of the Year award. The Foundation has also contributed to the Spanos Athletics Performance Center, alongside recent gifts given to the UC San Diego Undergraduate Scholarship and Triton Softball. Chaiken's philanthropic gift toward the production studio provides an enhanced first-class viewing experience that is well-timed as the campus advances to the highest level of intercollegiate athletics.



Mike Crum captures video footage of the men's volleyball game against Loyola University Chicago. Photo by Derrick Tuskan/UCSD Athletics.

Alongside its transition into Division I, UC San Diego is expanding access for more bright scholar-athletes to pursue higher education through merit-based athletic scholarships—many of whom would not have the resources needed to further their academic and career goals otherwise. During her cherished time donning blue and gold as a four-year starting shortstop, Chaiken was aware that it was due to the generous support of others that the university was able to fund the proper facilities necessary to pursue her love of sports. Now, she is inspired to serve as a loyal partner committed to the success of young scholar-athletes, fortifying UC San Diego's history of academic and athletic excellence.

“The most rewarding part about giving back to the university is providing opportunity,” Chaiken shared. “UC San Diego has grown so much in the last 59 years, and I recognize all those who paved the way for me to do what I did when I was an undergraduate. Now, it is rewarding to turn around and provide that same opportunity for others for years to come.”

This philanthropic gift from the Donald and Carole Chaiken Foundation contributes to the [Campaign for UC San Diego](#)—our university-wide comprehensive fundraising effort concluding in 2022. Philanthropic partners help UC San Diego enhance student support, ensure student success, transform the campus, connect our community, and redefine medicine and health care on a global scale. To learn more information about giving to UC San Diego Athletics and to follow updates on its NCAA Division I transition, visit ucsdtritons.com.

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