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Students Vote for Division I Move

UC San Diego's undergraduate student body has voted in favor of moving the campus' 23-team intercollegiate athletics program to NCAA Division I. In a weeklong election, students voted in approval of a referendum that will result in increased student fees to cover the costs associated with a non-football Division I athletic program.

A total of 8,828 ballots were cast, with 6,137 in favor, 2,567 against and 124 abstentions. The results were announced Tuesday.

“This has been a student-centered initiative from the very beginning and to see that the majority of our students favor a move to NCAA Division I demonstrates that they recognize the change as a progressive step for both our athletic program and UC San Diego as a whole,” said UC San Diego Director of Athletics Earl W. Edwards. “Division I will help extend the entire university’s culture of excellence, align us with peer academic institutions, improve the student experience, strengthen our brand, increase alumni engagement and further our community connection. This move will impact the entire campus in a multitude of ways.”

The referendum was placed on the ballot under the tenure of former Associated Students (AS) President Dominick Suvonnasupa. "I am so excited that students decided that they want to make the move to Division I athletics," said Suvonnasupa. "I think this marks a huge milestone in UC San Diego's history. This was a student-led initiative, and it was really the students who made this possible."

The student vote was a key milestone in an ongoing process to move Triton Athletics to the Division I level. Included in this process will be review by the UC San Diego Academic Senate and several of its standing committees. In addition, an invitation will need to be secured for membership into the nine-team Big West Conference. The Big West Conference includes four other UC members—Santa Barbara, Irvine, Davis and Riverside—as well as Cal Poly, Long Beach State, Cal State Fullerton and the University of Hawaii.

“UC San Diego has a history of excellence,” said Suvonnasupa, “and we want to make sure that we carry that spirit into this transition. It's not just about going D-I; it's about doing it right. We will be working with faculty, staff and our campus community to make sure that we all have the same shared vision on Division I, and that we move forward together."



Kyra Scott

Kyra Scott, a chemical engineering major and member of the women’s tennis team, was working in the lab when the referendum results were announced. “I watched online for the results,” recalled Scott. “An overwhelming majority of students were in favor. It feels absolutely incredible to witness this student movement. I believe this is a turning point for UC San Diego that will strengthen the campus’ culture of excellence even further.”

To learn more about Triton Athletics, visit ucsdtritons.

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