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## UC San Diego to Join NCAA Division I Big West Conference



*Photos by Erik Jepsen, UC San Diego Publications.*

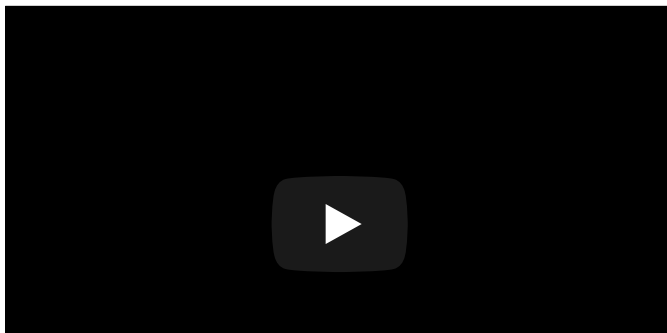
Today marks a new era in the history of the University of California San Diego as Triton Athletics has accepted an invitation to join the Big West Conference, paving the way for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I reclassification. The move fulfills the wishes of the student body, which voted overwhelmingly last year to move UC San Diego Athletics to Division I.

ranks,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “We believe that this move will enhance the overall student experience at UC San Diego and heighten our sense of community and school pride. It also demonstrates our commitment to uncompromising excellence across the board.”

The transition from Division II to Division I athletics was initiated by the UC San Diego student body, which approved a Division I referendum in 2016, and was endorsed by UC San Diego’s Academic Senate.

“We are pleased and honored to accept the Big West Conference invitation to join its

“Elevation to NCAA Division I athletics is a reflection of UC San Diego’s culture of risk-taking, collaboration and innovation,” said UC San Diego Director of Athletics Earl W. Edwards. “Aligning with peer institutions and competing at the highest levels in all endeavors is one of the reasons for the transition to Division I. We are extremely



excited to be joining the Big West Conference with their strong history of success in a broad base of sports.”

The Big West Conference, in its 49th year of operation, is comprised of nine institutions, including four other University of California campuses, and sponsors 18 sports. With 17 national team titles, Big West student-athletes have also succeeded on a worldwide stage in the Olympics, Pan-American Games and the World Cup.

“The students and administration at UC San Diego have done a remarkable job in positioning their university for reclassification to NCAA Division I and membership in the Big West Conference. The university’s academic and athletic profiles are closely aligned with those of Division I institutions and thus UC San Diego will be a marvelous addition to the Big West Conference. It’s a real honor for the Big West to welcome such a prestigious academic institution to the family,” said Big West Commissioner Dennis Farrell.

The Big West Conference includes four other UC members—University of California, Santa Barbara; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Davis and University of California, Riverside—as well as California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Long Beach State University; California State University, Fullerton; California State University, Northridge; and the University of Hawai’i, Manoa. California State University, Bakersfield also received an invitation to join the Big West Conference today.



*UC San Diego Fencing Team.*

The Tritons will begin a full Big West competitive slate in the 2020-21 academic year. Two sports will join the Conference early, beginning with Men’s Volleyball starting its first full season of Big West participation this year (2017-18). Women’s Water Polo will commence Conference play in 2019-20.

Following an NCAA-mandated 4-year reclassification period, UC San Diego will be a full member of the Big West Conference and eligible for all Big West Championships in NCAA Division I sports in Fall 2024. National Collegiate Sports (NCAA sports with only one combined

division) remain eligible for Big West and NCAA Championships during the four-year reclassification process. Triton National Collegiate Sports include men's volleyball, men's and women's water polo, and fencing.

With the transition to Division I, UC San Diego will build upon a solid foundation of academic and athletics excellence, having been consistently ranked among the top seven Division II programs in the country on 11 different occasions in the annual Directors' Cup standings. In 2016, the Tritons placed third in the nation and have twice been named national runner up.



*UC San Diego Water Polo Team.*

The 23-sport program has captured 30 national championships, 43 teams have finished as national runners-up and 48 others have achieved national third-place honors. With 251 national, regional and conference championships, and 138 national individual championships, UC San Diego student-athletes have also earned 36 prestigious NCAA Post-Graduate Scholarships and 78 Academic All-America selections.

The Tritons have ranked first among all Division II institutions in the last eight National Collegiate Scouting Association Power Rankings, which comprehensively measure student-athlete graduation rates, academic strength and athletic prowess. UC San Diego has also been honored with the NCAA Division II Presidents' Award for Academic Excellence.

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