



BIG WEST CONFERENCE

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CSU Bakersfield, UC San Diego to Join Big West Conference

IRVINE, CA – The Big West Conference Board of Directors today announced the addition of California State University, Bakersfield and the University of California San Diego as the 10th and 11th members of the Conference.

CSU Bakersfield will become an official member of the conference on July 1, 2020, and will be immediately eligible in round-robin and single-site championship sports for Big West titles, awards and honors and continue its eligibility for NCAA automatic qualification in these sports.

UC San Diego will begin an NCAA mandated four-year reclassification period to Division I on July 1, 2020. Its teams will be included in all Big West round robin sports schedules beginning with the 2020-21 academic year. UC San Diego will become an official member of the conference on July 1, 2024.

In making the announcement, Big West Conference Commissioner Dennis Farrell issued the following statement:

“The addition of these two outstanding universities will further strengthen the Big West’s position as the preeminent NCAA Division I public university conference for the states of California and Hawai’i,” said Farrell. “The 2018-19 academic year marks the 50th anniversary of the Big West Conference and this membership development positions the conference to continue growing and thriving for the next 50 years.”

Once expansion is completed, conference members will have a physical presence in the following markets: Honolulu, HI (University of Hawai’i, Manoa); Northern California (UC Davis); The Central Coast (Cal Poly and UC Santa Barbara); The Central Valley (CSU Bakersfield); Los Angeles County (CSUN and Long Beach State); Orange County (Cal State Fullerton and UC Irvine); The Inland Empire (UC Riverside); and San Diego County (UC San Diego).

Beginning in 2020-21 CSU Bakersfield will participate in the following Big West championship sports: men’s and women’s basketball, baseball, women’s cross country, women’s golf, men’s and women’s soccer, softball, men’s and women’s track and field, women’s volleyball and beach volleyball. For the past two years, CSU Bakersfield has been a Big West associate member in beach volleyball.

“CSU Bakersfield is honored to be invited to join the Big West Conference, and I am pleased to announce that we have accepted the invitation. I believe that this exciting move into the Big West Conference is in the best long-term interests of our athletics program, our university, our alumni, our community, and our Roadrunner fans,” said CSU Bakersfield President Horace Mitchell. “We are prepared and committed to contribute to the growth and vitality of the Big West Conference and will bring a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm to the conference.”

CSU Bakersfield’s athletic programs have recorded significant success in the classroom and in competition over the past several years, including seven team conference championships in the past three years, record GPA’s, Graduation Success Rates, and APR scores. Since its move to Division I in 2010, the CSUB men’s basketball program has achieved national acclaim with a berth in the NCAA Tournament in 2016 and an historic run in the NIT in 2017, becoming the first eight seed to advance to the semifinals.

“This is a wonderful day for our athletics department, university, and community. Membership in the Big West will be transformational for our student-athletes. Our focus will continue to be on the four pillars of success which include promoting academic excellence, providing an outstanding student-athlete experience, pursuing competitive success, and engaging the community,” said CSU Bakersfield Athletic Director Kenneth “Ziggy” Siegfried. “Our move to the Big West enhances our department in all of these areas. I know our community will be thrilled with this announcement as they will now have more opportunities to follow their ‘Runners on the road and they will have the opportunity to rekindle regional rivalries with some of the programs in the Big West.”

CSU Bakersfield and UC San Diego to Join Big West Conference

UC San Diego will field teams in the following Big West sports: men's and women's basketball, baseball, men's and women's cross country, men's golf, men's and women's soccer, softball, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's track and field, men's and women's volleyball, and women's water polo. The men's volleyball team is currently a Big West associate member as the conference begins sponsorship of that sport in 2018.

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

Beginning with the 2020-21 season, the eligibility of UC San Diego's teams to compete in the Big West's single-site championship sports during its reclassification period is to be determined. UC San Diego's teams will not be eligible for the Big West's NCAA automatic qualification in single site championship sports until July 1, 2024.

In addition, the eligibility of UC San Diego's teams to compete for regular season standings and honors in Big West round robin sports during the reclassification period is also to be determined. During that same period, its teams will not be eligible for the Big West's NCAA automatic qualification or in any round robin sport post-season event except in the sports of men's volleyball and women's water polo. The women's water polo team will compete for the conference's championship beginning on July 1, 2019.

UC San Diego's athletics programs have experienced strong success throughout its history, including since moving to Division II for the 2000-01 season. Since the jump to Division II, UC San Diego has finished in the top 7 of the Learfield Directors' Cup standings 12 times and placed second twice. In the overall history of the program, UC San Diego has won 30 national team championships and 138 individual national championships. The school also has produced 78 Academic All-Americans.

"Today marks an historic day for UC San Diego. We're excited to become a member of the Big West Conference and compete against peer institutions that share our absolute commitment to academic and athletic excellence," said UC San Diego Athletic Director Earl Edwards. "The Big West's proven record of achievement, integrity and innovation aligns perfectly with the culture of Triton athletics and our entire university community. Together, we'll accelerate success."

The Big West Conference is a member of NCAA Division I and includes California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; California State University, Fullerton; California State University, Northridge; Long Beach State University; University of California, Davis; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Riverside; University of California, Santa Barbara; and the University of Hawai'i, Manoa.

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OTHER HIGHLIGHTED NOTES

• Expansion gives the Big West Conference institutions in the following nationally ranked television markets (Designated Market Areas):

- No. 2 Los Angeles/Orange County/Inland Empire
- No. 20 Sacramento/Stockton/Modesto
- No. 28 San Diego
- No. 65 Honolulu
- No. 124 Santa Barbara/Santa Maria/San Luis Obispo
- No. 126 Bakersfield

• With the addition of CSU Bakersfield and UC San Diego, the total student enrollment of Big West member institutions will top 375,000, which ranks among the top five conferences in NCAA Division I. The total alumni of the 11 institutions will top 1,675,000. More than 10,000 alumni of the current Big West members live in Kern County, CA (home of CSU Bakersfield) and more than 60,000 alums live in San Diego County.