



CSU Bakersfield

NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Michael Lukens, Director of Public Affairs and Communications
(661) 654-3526

CSU Bakersfield Accepts Invitation To Join Big West Conference

November 27, 2017 — California State University, Bakersfield President Horace Mitchell today announced that CSUB has accepted an invitation to join the Big West Conference. CSUB will begin its affiliation with the Big West on July 1, 2018, when CSUB's president and senior officials may attend Big West Council meetings. CSUB will be eligible to compete for all Big West championships and awards in NCAA Division I Championship sports effective July 1, 2020.

The Big West Conference's board of directors (member institutions' presidents and chancellors) recently voted to invite CSUB and UC San Diego to join the conference. The other Big West members are CSU Long Beach, CSU Fullerton, CSU Northridge, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Irvine, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara, UC Davis, and Hawaii.

"CSU Bakersfield is very pleased to be invited to join the Big West Conference, and I am pleased to announce that we have accepted the invitation," President Mitchell said. "I believe that this exciting move into the Big West Conference is in the best long-term interests of our student-athletes, our Athletics program, our university, our alumni, our community, and our Roadrunner fans. 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."

CSUB Vice President for Student Affairs Thomas Wallace added, "We are excited about the invitation to join the Big West conference. This opportunity allows our student athletes to miss less time in the classroom, and our fans can now readily follow the Runners as we compete for championships in the Big West Conference."

Athletics Director Kenneth "Ziggy" Siegfried called the move into the Big West "a wonderful day for our athletics department, university, and community."

"Membership in the Big West will be transformational for our student-athletes," Siegfried said. "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. Our move to the Big West enhances our department in all

of these areas. Additionally, we will have the opportunity to rekindle regional rivalries with some of the programs in the Big West.”

Siegfried added that CSU Bakersfield has seen significant success in the classroom and in competition over the past several years, including seven team conference championships in the past three years as well as record Grade Point Averages, Graduation Success Rates, and Academic Progress Rate scores among its student-athletes.

CSUB will field teams in the following Big West sports:

- **Men’s** – Basketball, baseball, soccer, track and field.
- **Women’s** – Basketball, cross country, golf, soccer, softball, track and field, volleyball, and beach volleyball.

President Mitchell said the move will provide a number of benefits to CSUB and the Big West Conference, including:

- **Reducing missed class time for student-athletes.** With all of the Big West institutions except Hawaii located in California, the amount of time students spend out of class will be reduced, and travel costs will be reduced by up to \$400,000 a year. The average round-trip distance from Bakersfield to Big West member institutions is 814 miles (302 miles with the exception of Hawaii). The average round-trip distance from Bakersfield to Western Athletic Conference institutions is 2,422 miles.
- **Renewing rivalries with many institutions that have long been competitors of CSUB and are familiar to the community.** For example, CSUB has competed as conference rivals against UC Riverside for 28 years, Cal Poly for 22 years, and CSU Northridge for 18 years.
- **Providing a built-in fan base for the conference, as about 10,000 graduates of Big West institutions live in Kern County.** The move will enhance the fan experience for CSUB supporters and alumni from other institutions.
- **Extending the media exposure of the Big West by adding the Bakersfield/Central Valley media market.** CSUB is the largest sports entity in the Bakersfield market with no Division I competition for media exposure. The addition of CSUB to the Big West increases the conference’s media footprint by 8,161 miles and adds more than 850,000 households.

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 Division I. The total alumni of the 11 institutions will top 1,675,000.

CSU Bakersfield will continue to compete in the Western Athletic Conference until June 30, 2020.

“We have been proud members of the Western Athletic Conference since 2013-14, and we’re extremely thankful for the leadership that has been provided by the WAC board of directors and Commissioner Jeff Hurd,” President Mitchell said. “Our WAC membership has provided a

significant platform for the growth of our athletics programs. We remain committed to assisting the WAC with the addition of new member institutions through June 30, 2020.”

#

About CSUB

California State University, Bakersfield is a comprehensive public university committed to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students. An emphasis on student learning is enhanced by a commitment to scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness and life-long learning. The University collaborates with partners in the community to increase the region’s overall educational attainment, enhance its quality of life, and support its economic development. The University was founded in 1965 and opened for classes in fall, 1970. Its vision is to be the leading campus in the CSU system in terms of faculty and academic excellence and diversity, quality of the student experience and community engagement. The University’s faculty is world-class, with nearly 75% holding the highest degrees in their respective fields.

The University serves more than 10,000 students between the main campus in Bakersfield and CSUB - Antelope Valley and counts approximately 50,000 alumni from its four schools: Arts and Humanities; Business and Public Administration; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering; and Social Sciences and Education. The University offers undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate and credential programs, and a doctoral in Educational Leadership Program (Ed.D). CSUB's Extended University serves the community by offering additional professional development, certificate, and degree programs.

For more information about CSUB, please visit www.csub.edu.