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PRESS RELEASE

UC San Diego to Join NCAA Division I Big West Conference

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.

"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."

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.

"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.

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.

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.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT UC SAN DIEGO, DIVISION I AND THE BIG WEST CONFERENCE:

"The transition to Division I marks a new era for UCSD, opening up many exciting new opportunities for all students. It allows us the chance to create a new, well-rounded campus culture and to show the world that we aren't just outstanding academically, but outstanding in every sense of the word. I am so thrilled to see what future generations of Tritons will do with it." - **Dominick Suvonnasupa, President, Associated Students, UC San Diego (2016)**

"As a UC San Diego engineering alum and 3-year Triton athlete, I'm doubly excited. First, for the opportunity to see the Tritons compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics, and also to better tell our university's amazing story through the elevated profile that Division I will provide. This is a transformative event!" - **Brandon Nixon, Chairman and CEO, Lytx, Inc**

"It's fantastic that Triton Athletics has achieved this goal, but it comes as no surprise! Every day, they exhibit the characteristics of true team players as innovative, collaborative leaders. Their well-rounded, visionary approach to the study of athletics as a holistic discipline is surely an indicator of future successes to come." - **Beth Binger, BCIpr, Past President, UC San Diego Alumni Board of Directors**

"This announcement is welcome news to everyone at UC San Diego Health! I know it will bring more attention to the exceptional collaborative work that the Athletic Department has been doing with us and others across campus. Together, we're combining our areas of expertise to pioneer new scientific ways of advancing health and sports performance. I very much look forward to bringing our work to a larger stage." - **Dr. David Brenner, Vice Chancellor, UC San Diego Health Sciences; Dean, UC San Diego School of Medicine**

"Triton Alumni around the world will be excited to express our collective spirit in Division I. For nearly 60 years, UC San Diego Tritons have shaped the world without a podium to tell our stories. Through D-I, we will share our non-traditional approach to how we positively impact the San Diego community, the state of California, the country, and the world. Often, athletics is the spark that leads to an invitation back to campus or a reason for alumni to gather to share wonderful memories and build new friendships. UC San Diego's trajectory has intersected its vision for the future and we can see how D-I will play a key role in student experience, campus culture, the relationship with the community, the connection of alumni around the world and a stage for the university to share its vision of how it crafts the future of the world and beyond." - **Ping Yeh, Co-founder/CEO, StemoniX**

**About UC San Diego**

At the University of California San Diego, we constantly push boundaries and challenge expectations. Established in 1960, UC San Diego has been shaped by exceptional scholars who aren't afraid to take risks and redefine conventional wisdom. Today, as one of the top 15 research universities in the world, we are driving innovation and change to advance society, propel economic growth and make our world a better place. Learn more at www.ucsd.edu.

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