

**Office of the President**

**TO MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS:**

**DISCUSSION ITEM**

*For Meeting of January 23, 2024*

**STRATEGIC CAMPUS ATHLETICS OVERVIEW: UC SANTA BARBARA AND UC SAN DIEGO**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

UC Santa Barbara sponsors 20 National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I sports programs: baseball, softball, women's basketball, men's basketball, women's volleyball, men's volleyball, women's soccer, men's soccer, women's water polo, men's water polo, women's tennis, men's tennis, men's golf, women's swimming, men's swimming, women's cross country, men's cross country, women's indoor track and field, women's outdoor track and field, and men's track and field.

UC Santa Barbara is a founding member of the Big West Conference. The Big West is a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I conference comprised of 11 educational institutions, including five UC campuses: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; California State University (CSU) Bakersfield; CSU Fullerton; CSU Northridge; CSU Long Beach; UC Davis; UC Irvine; UC Riverside; UC San Diego; UC Santa Barbara; and the University of Hawaii.

UC Santa Barbara also competes in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation in men's and women's swimming.

UC Santa Barbara Athletics is committed to serving, supporting, and enhancing student-athletes' holistic development through participation in NCAA Division I sport. Student-athletes are empowered to showcase their skills on a national stage, realize their intellectual potential, develop holistically for success, and inspire positive change in the world. Furthermore, service of the athletics department goes beyond student-athletes to support a deeply connected and engaged Gaucho community.

**BACKGROUND**

UC Santa Barbara comprises approximately 460 student-athletes, representing the institution with distinction in intercollegiate athletics competitions. The majority of student-athletes are undergraduates, with nine student-athletes enrolled in graduate programs. Forty-nine percent of the student-athlete population are female, 51 percent are male. In addition, 74 percent of student-

athletes receive some portion of athletic scholarship. The race/ethnicity profile for UCSB Athletics is seven percent Asian, nine percent Black, nine percent Hispanic/ Latino, one percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 13 percent two or more races, 60 percent White, and two percent unknown. Ten percent of student-athletes identified as low-income and/or first-generation students. In addition to the United States, UC Santa Barbara student-athletes represent 19 countries (35 unique students): Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Serbia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

### **ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

Beyond their athletics achievements, UC Santa Barbara student-athletes excel academically and maintain consistently high academic performance comparable with the general undergraduate population. The overall undergraduate student GPA is 3.35, while the overall student-athlete GPA is 3.31. UCSB has a graduation rate of 88 percent and a student-athlete graduation success rate (NCAA GSR) of 88 percent.

UC Santa Barbara student-athletes are enrolled in a wide variety of majors and are actively integrated into campus and academic departments. At the time of this report, student-athlete majors included 17 percent Economics, 12 percent Biology or Chemistry, 12 percent Communications, ten percent Sociology, seven percent Psychology/ Biopsychology, seven percent Mathematics/Statistics and Data Science, five percent Environmental Science, six percent undeclared, and a variety of other majors in the College of Letters and Science and College of Engineering.

### **STUDENT-ATHLETE SUPPORT SERVICES**

UC Santa Barbara Athletics provides student-athletes with a robust program of support services and resources to enhance their academic, athletic and campus experiences. The Gaucho Care Model is a holistic, collaborative, and integrated approach to provide resources and support services to student-athletes as they navigate the rigors of being a NCAA Division I student-athlete at the Santa Barbara campus as well as preparation for their next steps beyond UCSB. The model includes comprehensive resources inclusive of but not exclusive to:

- Academic Services: academic advising, priority registration during class selection, structured study hall and quiet study rooms available in the Barber Academic Center, exam proctoring, tutoring, and mentoring
- Student Services: leadership development, career development, transitions programming for new student-athletes, housing support, and additional educational training and dialogues such as diversity, equity and inclusion; financial literacy, and more.
- Health, Wellness and Performance Services: sports medicine services, general health and wellness coordination and resources, mental health support services, performance-focused data analysis, strength and conditioning training and support

In addition, introductions and warm handoffs are standard for integration, with a wide range of additional on- and off- campus resources to support student-athlete holistic development and well-being.

**BUDGET**

UC Santa Barbara Athletics benefits from substantial financial support from campus funding channels, demonstrating the commitment to a thriving, broad-based National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletic program that provides an exceptional student-athlete experience as well as serves the greater campus community. Despite this support, however, the revenue sources are not able to keep pace with the steadily rising costs, creating an inherent fiscal structural challenge.

UC Santa Barbara Athletics aligns with the NCAA’s agreed-upon reporting procedures by utilizing an independent public accountant to review all revenues and expenses and to complete an annual financial report. UCSB Athletics also adheres to the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act guidelines and annual reporting requirements.

<u>REVENUE</u>		<u>EXPENSE</u>	
Campus Allocations	\$17,693,393	Athletics Student Aid	\$5,869,622
Student Fees	\$2,489,986	Coaches Salaries and Benefits	\$6,353,561
Contributions	\$3,529,657	Admin. Support Salaries and Benefits	\$4,235,067
NCAA Distributions	\$882,162	Team travel	\$2,450,025
Sports Camp Revenues	\$804,745	Game Management	\$1,272,634
Endowment Funds	\$650,765	Equipment and Supplies	\$1,223,865
Royalties and Sponsorships	\$412,557	Admin and Overhead	\$2,404,152
Ticket sales	\$280,297	Debt Service, Lease and Rental Fees	\$761,082
Guarantees	\$85,500	Marketing and Promotions	\$575,356
Other Revenues	\$205,657	All Other Expenses	\$2,420,261
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$27,034,719</b>	<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$27,565,625</b>

**Revenue**

Campus allocations and student fee funds comprise approximately 75 percent of the department’s financial support. External sources make up approximately 15 percent of the revenue inclusive of gift funds, camp revenues, sponsorships, ticket sales, and NCAA distributions. The current instability in the NCAA landscape, escalating costs due to inflation and the high cost of living in Santa Barbara are exacerbating the financial pressures and associated challenges.

**Expense**

UC Santa Barbara Athletics’ top three investments include student-athlete grant-in-aid (athletic scholarship), team travel, and staffing. These three areas comprise 69 percent of the overall annual operating expenses. An additional 18 percent is comprised of areas such as insurance premiums, medical related expenses, student-athlete supplemental nutrition and meals, recruiting, and a Big West Conference–required investment in producing live–streamed game day events.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

UC Santa Barbara Athletics has a long-storied history of athletic excellence. Below are highlights from 2023:

- Women's Volleyball with a 27-5 record won the Big West Conference Title and earned an At-Large berth to the NCAA tournament
- Men's Water Polo finished second in the Big West Conference, competing in the Conference Championship game in the inaugural year in the conference
- Men's Basketball captured the Big West Conference Regular Season Title and won the Conference championship to participate in March Madness. In the professional ranks, Gabe Vincent competed in the National Basketball Association (NBA) Championship as a starter for the Miami Heat.
- Women's Basketball competed in the Big West Conference Championship
- Men's Tennis won the Big West Conference Title and Championship, advancing to the NCAA postseason
- Women's Tennis had two student-athletes advance to NCAA postseason in singles and doubles
- Men's Volleyball was highlighted this fall having the second best recruiting class in the country.
- Baseball, a perennial nationally ranked program, finished second in the Big West Conference. Thirty-five Gauchos are participating in the professional ranks currently. Two Gauchos competed in the World Series this fall: Kyle Nelson, pitcher for the Arizona Diamondbacks and Skip Schumaker, manager for the Miami Marlins.

In addition, UC Santa Barbara student-athletes, coaches, and staff are committed to serving the community through a variety of service and engagement opportunities. Below are a few highlights from 2023:

- Participation in events inclusive of but not exclusive to:
  - Women and Girls in Sport day
  - Guide Dogs for the Blind event
  - Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation event
  - First responders' events
  - Santa Barbara half marathon volunteers
  - Food and Toy drives
- Visiting and participating with local schools, youth groups, and organizations
- Team Impact participation

## **CONCLUSION**

UC Santa Barbara Athletics is committed to serving, supporting, and enhancing the collegiate experience of student-athletes as well as serving and connecting the broader Gauchos community through the delivery of high-quality athletics programs. Woven throughout the programs' history is a people-first approach and a commitment to development, learning, and resourcefulness.

UC Santa Barbara Athletics is currently developing a strategic plan to build on this lengthy history and create a sustainable foundation for achievement in and out of the athletics arena in this dynamic landscape of collegiate athletics. The changes in collegiate athletics over the past handful of years, along with instability for the foreseeable future, poses a significant challenge.

At the local level, the aging physical infrastructure of facilities, increased cost of living expenses, and other escalating costs of industry requirements (e.g., travel expenses, officiating fees, software requirements, unbudgeted mandates) further exacerbate a challenging financial model. UC Santa Barbara is dedicated to ongoing review and identification of opportunities for success programmatically and financially. The campus' membership in the Big West Conference has offered stability with similarly aligned public institutions in California and Hawaii. Furthermore, the ongoing development of the existing framework of support for student-athletes and identification of fiscally responsible strategic priorities allow ongoing delivery of a high-quality athletics program that serves and brings pride to the campus, community, and UC system.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

UC San Diego Athletics proudly sponsors 23 varsity sport programs: 11 for women and 12 for men. Twenty-two programs are National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level, with men's rowing as the sole non-NCAA sponsored sport. UC San Diego's broad-based participation yields an athletics program with over 550 scholar-athletes.

UC San Diego announced in November 2017 that it had accepted an invitation to join the Big West Conference and would begin the process to transition to NCAA Division I athletics. The student body voted in favor of a move to Division I athletics during a referendum in 2016. The move was also endorsed by the UC San Diego Division of the Academic Senate.

UC San Diego is transitioning to NCAA Division I to align with peer institutions and enhance the overall student experience. The move aims to raise the campus' profile, engage alumni and community connections, and uphold the core values and mission of the campus. UC San Diego has successfully demonstrated that academic excellence and athletic excellence are not mutually exclusive. As a non-football Division I program, the Athletics Department will continue to prioritize academics and align itself with the core values of the campus. With this being the last year of the reclassification period, UC San Diego looks forward to full active NCAA Division I membership during the 2024–25 academic year, including eligibility for NCAA Division I post season play.

With four conference memberships, UC San Diego’ competitive footprint spans coast to coast. UC San Diego competes with many sister campuses in the Big West Conference as well as in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, Coastal Athletic Association, and (non-NCAA) Western Intercollegiate Rowing Association.

UC San Diego Athletics boasts a storied history of athletic excellence, having claimed 30 NCAA national championships in team sports, while 44 have finished as national runners-up and 49 achieved third-place honors. Individually, 138 Triton scholar-athletes have earned national titles. All told, UC San Diego has won 276 national, regional, and conference championships. Triton scholar-athletes have earned an impressive 1,400 All-America honors for athletics achievement over the years, while 83 have been named to Academic All-America teams and 38 have been awarded prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships.

UC San Diego Athletics is dedicated to enhancing students’ educational and personal development by engaging them in competitive NCAA Division I sport. The academic performance of UC San Diego’s scholar-athletes is comparable with the general undergraduate student population, as measured by both GPA and graduation rates. The overall undergraduate student GPA is 3.328 and the overall scholar-athlete GPA is 3.389. Based on the most recent published figures, UC San Diego has a graduation rate of 88 percent, and the scholar-athlete graduation rate is 97 percent. UC San Diego Athletics’ four-year federal graduation rate average of 90 percent is the top mark among all public institutions.

UC San Diego’s steadfast commitment to the well-being of scholar-athletes fosters an environment that promotes excellence in athletic and academic performance and is emphasized through the deliberate prioritization of mental health support for scholar-athletes. UC San Diego Athletics upholds and advances UC San Diego’s values and is proud to partner with the campus to highlight UC San Diego as a destination for bold thinkers and curious minds.

## **BACKGROUND**

UC San Diego primarily competed as a member of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III from the early 1960s until the 2000–01 season. The program transitioned to NCAA Division II in fall 2000 and joined the California Collegiate Athletic Association. In fall 2020, UC San Diego competed in its first year as a member of the Big West Conference.

During its recently-concluded 20-year affiliation with NCAA Division II, UC San Diego consistently ranked as one of the most successful athletic programs in the nation, ranking among the top ten nationally in the Learfield IMG College Directors’ Cup in 20 of the last 25 years— five of which were Division III. The program claimed the Directors’ Cup title as a member of Division III in 1998 and finished as runner-up three times while in Division II, including 2018–19.

As one of the newest members of the Big West Conference, UC San Diego rounds out the membership comprised of 11 nationally respected educational institutions (five of which are UC campuses): California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; California State University

(CSU), Bakersfield; CSU Fullerton; CSU Northridge; CSU Long Beach; the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa; UC San Diego; UC Irvine; UC Riverside; UC Davis; and UC Santa Barbara.

**Sponsored Varsity Sports by Conference Affiliation**

UC San Diego Athletics sponsors 23 varsity sport programs within four different conferences, demonstrating its commitment to providing a board spectrum of opportunities for scholar-athletes to excel in their chosen disciplines.

<b>Big West</b>	Baseball (Men) Basketball (Men and Women) Cross Country (Men and Women) Golf (Men) Soccer (Men and Women) Softball (Women) Tennis (Men and Women) Track and Field (Men and Women) Volleyball (Men and Women) Water Polo (Men and Women)
<b>Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF)</b>	Fencing (Men and Women) Swim (Men and Women)
<b>Coastal Athletic Association (CAA)</b>	Rowing (Women)
<b>Non-NCAA Western Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA)</b>	Rowing (Men)

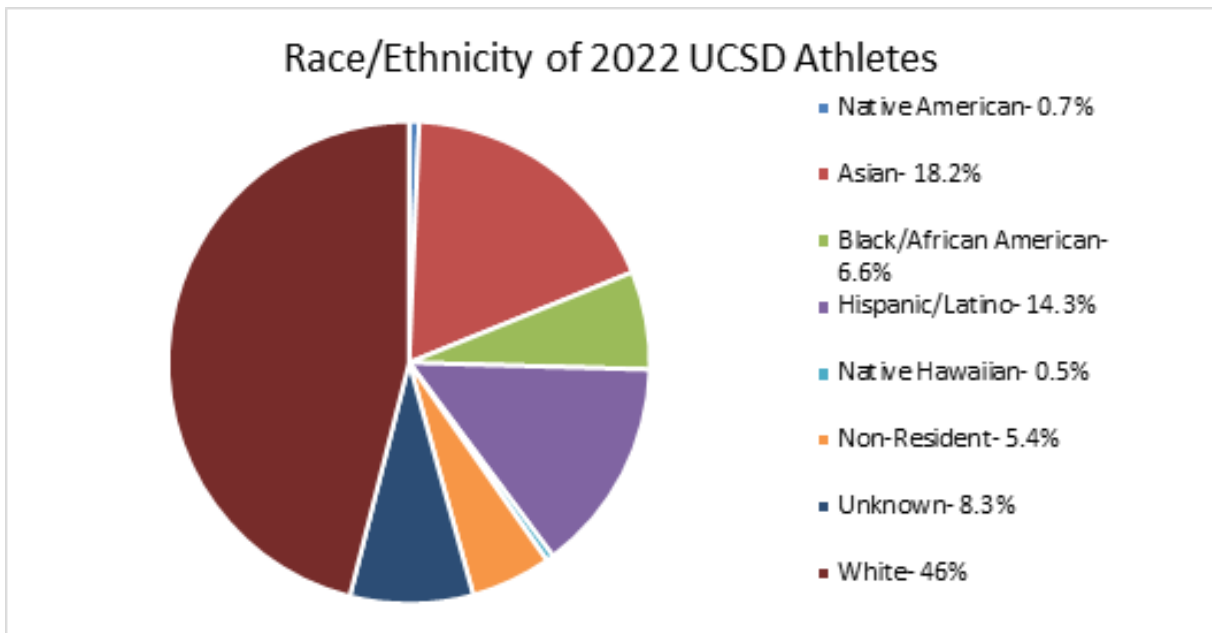
**Scholar-athlete: By the Numbers**

For the 2022–23 academic year, the UC San Diego Athletics scholar-athlete population was 593 scholar-athletes represented by 303 men and 290 women. Most of the scholar-athletes are undergraduates, with 12 graduate scholar-athletes. Of the 593 scholar-athletes, 336 are on some portion of athletic scholarship.

UC San Diego scholar-athletes hail from diverse backgrounds. According to the latest 2022 data, the racial/ethnic composition of UC San Diego scholar-athletes was: 0.07 percent Native American, 18.2 percent Asian, 6.6 percent Black, 14.3 percent Hispanic, 0.5 percent Native Hawaiian, 5.4 percent nonresident, 46 percent White, and 8.3 percent unknown (Figure 1 below).

UC San Diego’s excellence in athletics has brought students from all over the world. In addition to the United States, UC San Diego scholar-athletes represent 19 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, and United Kingdom.

Fig. 1



### ACADEMICS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Scholar-athletes study in nearly every one of UC San Diego's majors and in a similar distribution across majors to the general student body. In addition, postgraduate participation is at an all-time high, with nearly two percent of UC San Diego scholar-athletes enrolled in post-baccalaureate opportunities. Scholar-athletes are actively integrated into their academic departments and are expected to regularly meet with their department advisers.

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The mission of UC San Diego Athletics is to ensure that its educational and athletic excellence develops inclusive leaders for life while enriching and engaging the campus and San Diego as a whole.

#### Services Provided for Scholar-Athletes

- Scholar-athlete academic recognition
- Academic advising and graduation planning
- Academic eligibility monitoring according to both National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Big West standards



- Individual assistance for academic, career, and personal challenges
- Opportunities in life skills, career development and community outreach
- Tutorial assistance

The Academic Support Program within Scholar Athlete Success (SAS) seeks to provide strong, individually catered, academic support for all scholar-athletes and promote independent learning. Below is an overview of the academic support services at UC San Diego Athletics.

- Scholar-athletes screening and Triton Success Program (TSP)
- Tutorial services
- Advising and academic planning
- Campus resources and collaborations
- Champions for Life: Triton Success Beyond Athletics

UC San Diego Athletics is committed to integrating its scholar-athletes into the campus' academic community while meeting the unique time demands and challenges of being a scholar-athlete. The Athletics Department partners with the UC San Diego Teaching + Learning Commons (the Commons) and The Writing Hub to provide specific scholar-athlete tutorial services in various subjects throughout each week of the quarter.

In addition to providing academic support, UC San Diego Athletics also provides scholar-athlete development services, some of which are mandated by NCAA regulations, State law, and/or Regents policies. This includes topics in career development; Title IX; name, image, and likeness (NIL); wellness; financial literacy; diversity, equity, and inclusion; among others.

UC San Diego Athletics provides its scholar-athletes with the essential resources necessary to achieve both their academic and athletic goals. When necessary, UC San Diego Athletics partners with "The Hub" Basic Needs Center<sup>1</sup> to ensure that scholar-athletes are aware of all resources available to them.

UC San Diego basic needs resources include but are not limited to the following:

- Triton Food Pantry (available to all UC San Diego Students and Staff)
- CalFresh Program (students can receive assistance upon completing CalFresh application)
- Personal Hygiene Product Form (students can request items that they may need and arrange a pickup time to retrieve these items)
- Basic Needs Lyft Program
- Laptop Lending Program (students with significant financial need are eligible for a quarter-long laptop loan through the Basic Needs Resource Hub)
- Food Security Application Process and Program for International and Undocumented Students (application process available to UC San Diego Students through The Hub Basic Needs Resource Center)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/>

- Resources for Students with Dependents<sup>2</sup>

**BUDGET**

UC San Diego Athletics operates as a self-supporting activity relying primarily on student fee revenue and does not receive financial support from core campus funds. Ninety-two percent of the revenue comes from student fees, with the other eight percent primarily coming from contributions, tickets sales, and camps. The maximum allowable increase of the student fee is three percent, which is far below the inflation rate. Increased costs are associated with UC San Diego Athletics’ transition to Division I, including conference and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) initiation fees, staffing to NCAA Division I standards, as well as addressing Division I facilities standards. UCSD Athletics has prepared for the transition by building up reserves, operating conservatively, and focusing on building additional revenue sources. Reserves have been leveraged to ensure financial solvency while remaining competitive with the Big West conference, as was the case in the 2022–23 year. Opportunities for revenue will further increase as UCSD Athletics becomes full NCAA Division I members in the 2024–25 academic year.

<b>Revenue</b>	
Ticket Sales	\$325,613
Student Fees	\$24,598,861
Guarantees	\$75,000
Contributions	\$498,176
Program Sales	\$5,193
Advertisement and Sponsorships	\$142,405
Sports Camp Revenues	\$328,502
Athletics Endowment Income	\$265,213
Other Operating Revenue	\$202,691
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$26,441,654</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	
Athletic Student Aid	\$4,904,920
Staff/Coach Salaries	\$12,094,967
Recruiting	\$283,518
Team Travel	\$2,505,797
Sports Equipment & Apparel	\$1,121,083
Game Expenses	\$543,192
Fund Raising & Marketing	\$725,364
Athletic Facilities Debt Service	\$1,841,762
Other Operating Expenses	\$2,735,537
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$26,756,140</b>

**Revenue**

UC San Diego Athletics relies on primarily student fee revenue. The Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) Student Fee accounted for 92 percent of total revenue for UC San Diego Athletics in 2022–23. The 2022–23 Fee consists of three referenda totaling \$324.36 per quarter. UC San Diego Athletics received \$236.88 (about 73 percent) of the total fee, with the remainder going primarily to support general student aid.

<sup>2</sup> <https://students.ucsd.edu/well-being/wellness-resources/student-parents/>

Fig.2

ICA Student Fee

Date	* Fee	**Quarterly Fee	Return To Aid		I.C.A.		Sports Clubs		Recreation Clubs		Campus Recreation Department		Total
Fiscal Year 2022-23	A	\$44.09			\$41.67	94.51%	\$2.03	4.60%	\$0.39	0.89%			100.00%
	B	\$108.19	\$31.37	29.00%	\$73.03	67.50%					\$3.79	3.50%	100.00%
	C	\$172.08	\$49.90	29.00%	\$122.18								
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$324.36</b>	<b>\$81.28</b>		<b>\$236.88</b>		<b>\$2.03</b>		<b>\$0.39</b>		<b>\$3.79</b>		

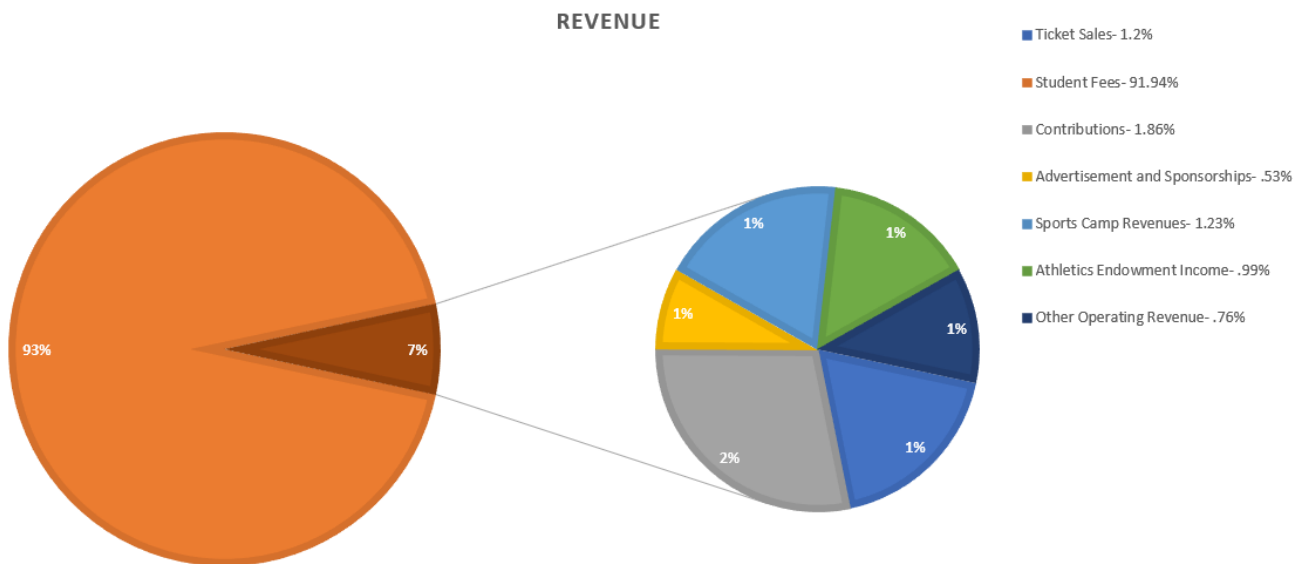
**Referendum A**, passed in 2002 at the amount of \$28.25, dictated that UC San Diego Athletics would receive roughly 95 percent and that the remainder would be shared between Sports Clubs and Recreation Clubs.

**Referendum B**, passed in 2007, increased the fee by \$78.04 and added a return-to-aid component that distributes 29 percent of the increase to the Financial Aid and Scholarships office for need-based awards.

**Referendum C** was passed in 2016 as UC San Diego began planning for the transition to Division I.

The increase of \$60 associated with Referendum C did not take effect until fiscal year 2019, through which 29 percent would be distributed as Return-to-Aid and the remainder would go to UC San Diego Athletics. All referenda included annual inflation adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and were capped at three percent to reach the current figures.

Fig.3



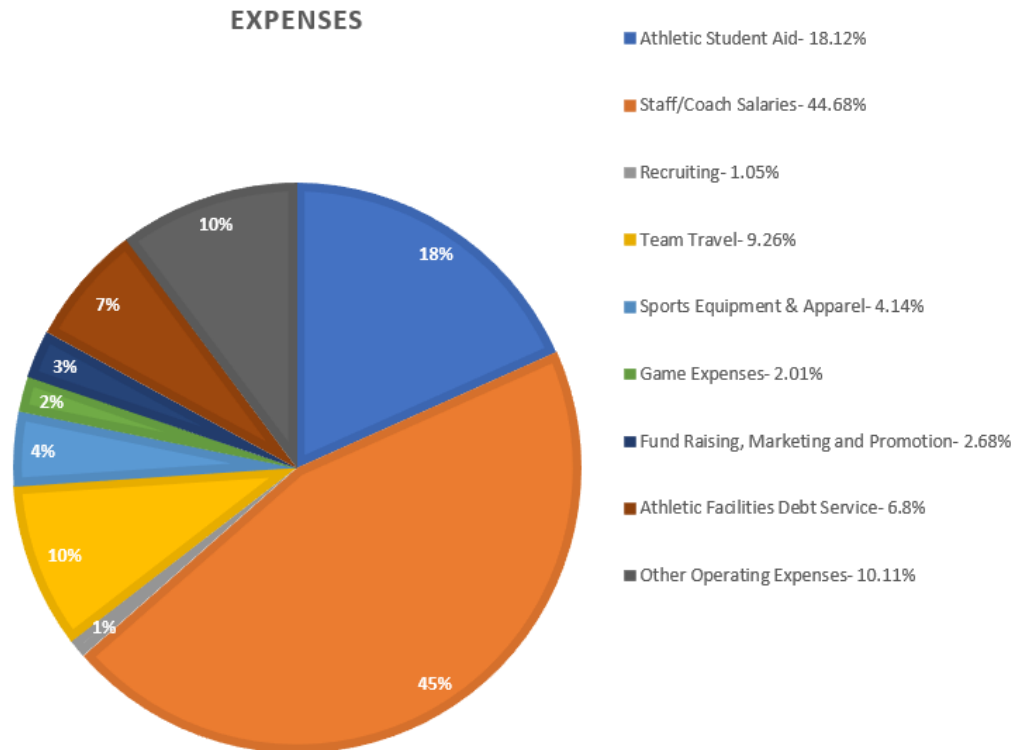
UC San Diego Athletics’ main revenue opportunities lie in corporate sponsorship agreements, increased donor gifts, endowments, and ticket sales. Main revenue opportunities have grown with the transition to Division I due to increased exposure. Once UCSD Athletics are full NCAA Division I members during the 2024–25 academic year, it will also become eligible for NCAA revenue distributions.

Challenges associated with maintaining source revenues include the stagnant nature of the student referendum fee structures (e.g., the CPI cap). The current instability of the NCAA, conference realignments, NIL, and government legislation could also affect funding streams.

**Expenses**

UC San Diego Athletics’ top three investments are in staffing, such as administration and coaches; athletic student aid; and team travel. These components account for 72 percent of the yearly operating expenses. UC San Diego Athletics has been adding new positions over the last three years to comply with Division I standards and anticipate escalating expenses in staffing until all new positions from the strategic plan have been filled. Athletic Student Aid expenses increase proportionally to the cost of attendance each year and are furthermore exacerbated by the need to also recruit out-of-state Division I talent. UCSD Athletics is conducting a feasibility study to assess facilities to bring them up to Division I standards.

**Fig.4**



UC San Diego Athletics maintains a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency in managing its budget and resources. The department regularly publishes its annual statements of revenues and expenses following NCAA audit procedures. Additionally, UC San Diego Athletics adheres to the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act guidelines, providing financial data, participation rates, and coaching salaries by gender and sport to ensure transparency and compliance.

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

UC San Diego Athletics is dedicated to identifying and recognizing its opportunities for success financially and programmatically. These opportunities include:

- **Support of External Relations:** UC San Diego has strengthened key service provider and campus-wide partnerships to expand branding, sales, and engagement opportunities. The department has contracted relationships with industry leading providers in the areas of ticket sales and operations (Paciolan), trademark licensing (CLC), website publishing (Sidearm), social media (Sprout Social) and video production (Anthony James Partners, Amazon Web Services and ESPN+). In fall 2023, UC San Diego and JMI Sports announced a ten-year multimedia partnership that will create collaborative opportunities for increased brand exposure and sponsorship revenue for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Triton Athletics program.
- **Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance:** UC San Diego is one of six universities invited to participate in the Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance, which publicly launched on July 21, 2021. The Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance is a scientific collaboration that aims to transform human health on a global scale through the discovery and translation of the biological principles underlying human performance.
- **Stable Conference Membership:** The Big West has undergone realignment but has become a stable collegiate athletic conference over the past two decades with California and Hawaii institutions. Participating in the Big West serves myriad functions, including but not limited to regular season schedules, relatively equitable financial environment of member institutions, regional footprint, and similar institutional mission, vision, and values.
- **Community Engagement:** Community engagement is an important pillar of UC San Diego Athletics. This includes participating in community programs such as Special Olympics, Team Impact, UC San Diego Day of Service, Team vs Cancer, Pro Kids/First Tee, Heart Walk, Lucky Duck Foundation, Surfrider Beach Cleanup OB, Ronald McDonald House, Drama House Productions, Toler Elementary, Encanto Elementary, Challenger Middle School, Hawthorne Elementary School, La Jolla Holiday Youth and Community, Habitat for Humanity, ACEing Autism, and Adopt a Family. UC San Diego scholar-athletes engage in community service individually and as part of their team activities. For instance, for the last two years, the UCSD women's basketball team has adopted Encanto Elementary School, which is in the southeast region of San Diego County. Due to budget cuts and minimal shared resources in the community, they no longer have a physical education teacher and needed school supplies. The women's basketball team has helped the Encanto Eagles by providing school supplies, a mini

basketball clinic, reading time with the students, and more engaging and inclusive activities. UC San Diego scholar-athletes have also volunteered to serve on conference and national committees such as the Big West Undivided national representative on the NCAA Scholar-Athlete Advisory Committee.

## **CHALLENGES**

One of the most significant hurdles facing UC San Diego Athletics is the unpredictable future organization of collegiate sports. As evidenced by conference realignment leading to the near dissolution of the Pac-12 Conference, collegiate sports are in a time of major transition and transformation. Items such as name, image, and likeness (NIL), *NCAA vs. Alston*, and other court cases affect all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I institutions, and the ultimate outcome remains uncertain and difficult to foresee.

Other industry requirements such as officiating fees, playing rules changes per the challenge review system (CRS), and postseason championship expenses are unbudgeted mandates and continue to affect budgets. Additionally, there is the misconception that UC San Diego generates substantial net revenues capable of covering scholar-athletes' scholarships for full cost of attendance. Further, achieving success in the competitive athletic arena creates a misleading impression that the funding model is sufficient to support all the demands of being a Division I athletic program.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **NCAA Reclassification Self-Study**

In 2020, UC San Diego became a member of Division I and the Big West Conference, marking the beginning of a four-year reclassification process. As part of this transition, the campus is required to complete the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Reclassification Self-Study in Year 3. This process involves conducting a thorough assessment of the entire athletic program in three areas identified by the NCAA: governance and rules compliance, academic integrity, gender equity, diversity issues, and scholar-athlete well-being.

The self-study process presents an opportunity to increase awareness of the positive impact that intercollegiate athletics can have on the campus' goals, such as being student-centered, expanding exposure, and creating a more vibrant and diverse campus environment. The evaluation is designed to ensure that the intercollegiate athletics program aligns with the mission statements of both the UCSD and the Athletics Department. To encourage broad participation, UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students serve as committee members and actively engage in the self-study process.

In fall 2023, the self-study process concluded when UC San Diego welcomed a peer review team and NCAA staff to campus to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the self-study report, validate the broad-based campus participation, and confirm compliance with established

standards. The results of the self-study were favorable, and the peer review team recommended UC San Diego for full, active NCAA Division I membership.

### **Scholar-Athlete Mental Health**

UC San Diego Athletics has an ongoing commitment to dedicating a variety of resources to the mental health of scholar-athletes. With the onboarding of a full-time dedicated clinical sports psychologist in the summer of 2022, mental health support for scholar-athletes continues to be a strong focus within the department. In the summer of 2023, a second dedicated clinical sports psychologist was added to the team, and the services of a postdoctoral resident and two other campus sports psychologists are also utilized. These positions elevate the care provided within the athletics department and complement the Triton Mind program, which is supported by a certified mental skills practitioner and a Coach Success and Performance Mind Coordinator.

### **Early NCAA Division I Success**

UC San Diego Athletics' list of sport competition successes is not short. Notable accomplishments of the past two seasons include:

- Women's Swim clinched the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) championship in 2022
- Baseball clinched the department's first Big West title in 2023
- Women's Water Polo finished the 2023 season ranked tenth in the nation
- Men's Basketball defeated Cal for two straight season
- Fencing had six athletes compete at the 2023 NCAA Championships
- Men's Rowing won all three races at the Western Sprints, qualifying for its Intercollegiate Rowing Association national championships in 2023

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

### **Philosophy Statement**

“As one of UC San Diego's largest and most visible units, UC San Diego Athletics has a special responsibility to help create an environment that contributes positively to the University's principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

We uphold this expectation by committing ourselves to practices that ensure the dignity, safety, and well-being for all students, fans, staff, and scholar-athletes, celebrating each Triton's unique identity as defined by their race, ethnicity, heritage, gender (identity, expression, and lived names), sex, sexual orientation, age, and/or religion among other elements.

We are committed to the comprehensive integration of equity and diversity in our athletics department culture and strategic decision-making as we aim to treat each member of the Triton Family in a fair and equitable manner. We are intentional in our efforts to combat harmful behavior through education and, if needed, higher consequences.

We are in alignment with the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy and Principles of Community and continue to maintain an open line of communication between our partners at the Community Centers and the Office of the Vice Chancellor – EDI for guidance.

UC San Diego Athletics does not tolerate any discriminatory or derogatory language and/or behavior. This includes, among other things, race-based hate speech and symbols, both in written or verbal format, and gestures.”

### **Program**

Triton Rise Up (TRU) is a group dedicated to cultivating a diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist department culture within UC San Diego Athletics. In alignment with the department’s core value of inclusion and overall strategic plan, this group champions open and respectful dialogue and promotes ongoing education around issues of race, multiculturalism, social inequity, and restorative justice within Athletics.

In fall 2022, UC San Diego Athletics furthered developed its inclusivity by partnering with Return On Inclusion™(ROI), a sport-specific diversity and inclusion education platform dedicated to developing inclusive leaders and fostering a culture of belonging across social and cultural differences. Through this partnership, select personnel are assigned training modules that, upon successful completion, will culminate in earning the ROI Inclusive Leader Certificate. The self-paced modules standardize learning methods, deepening UCSD Athletics’ commitment to help every coach and athletic administrator develop the skills and competencies necessary to support scholar-athletes and achieve inclusive excellence in programs, policies, and practices. Each module covers inclusion priorities determined by athletic administrators and coaches to be the areas of greatest developmental need. ROI founder and course instructor, Nevin Caple, journeys with UC San Diego coaches and staff to help simplify complex concepts while learning, growing, and thriving as inclusive leaders.

## **PROGRAMS OF EMPHASIS**

### **Athletic Performance Unit**

One of the leading examples of UC San Diego’s holistic approach to athletic performance is Triton rehabilitation science. This initiative uses baseline objective data to identify potential injury risk and implements individual interventions. The mission, along with Triton Sports Science, is to help mitigate injury and ensure training is specific to each scholar-athlete’s physical competency and capability to best prepare them for the demands of their training and competition.

Triton rehab science also ensures that every scholar-athlete that sustains a long-term injury is supported by an interdisciplinary return-to-sport plan. Scholar-athletes are supported by experts in the following disciplines: Sports Science, rehab science, athletic training, athletic performance, sport psychology, Triton Mind, sports nutrition, and sport-specific coaching. Progress is objectively measured through the process to ensure scholar-athlete’s return to their



sport better, faster, fitter, and stronger. Return-to-sport is supported and overseen by UCSD's top-tier orthopedic surgeons.

### **Scholar-Athlete Development**

The UC San Diego Athletics Department provides UC San Diego scholar-athletes with resources, programs, and experiences that enable them to thrive at UC San Diego while developing a lifelong connection to the campus.

Champions for Life is a dynamic curriculum of four modules filled with workshops and opportunities for Triton scholar-athletes. These modules will cultivate skills in leadership and career development to help scholar-athletes transition and succeed in life beyond athletics.

Champions for Life consists of four modules:

#### Foundation Series

Each program supports scholar-athletes at the different stages of personal and professional development throughout their time at UC San Diego and is based on the five core values of Triton Athletics.<sup>3</sup>

- Integrity and Inclusion: Tritons Rise Up
  - Athletics Department's formal orientation for incoming Scholar-Athletes and equity, diversity, and inclusion training
  - Required for all incoming scholar-athletes (first-years and transfers)
- Innovation: Exploring Scholars
  - Academic planning as it relates to athletic eligibility and NCAA rules and regulations.
  - Understanding how to connect with instructors, advisors, and resources on campus
  - Career exploration and development
  - Required for all second-year scholar-athletes
- Resilience: Pathway to Success
  - Resume writing, job applications, best practices, internships, and personal branding
  - Required for all third-year scholar-athletes
- Excellence: Beyond Athletics
  - Triton Networking Night is a formal networking event with scholar-athlete alumni to discuss career development and opportunities
  - "Ready, Set, GO!" is a series of workshops and opportunities to help build life skills necessary to excel in life after athletics. Topics include financial literacy, mental health, and personal planning.
  - Required for all graduating scholar-athletes

#### Triton Leadership Academy

The Triton Leadership Academy is the vehicle for developing inclusive Triton Leaders in their

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ucsdtritons.com/sports/2020/5/3/uc-san-diego-athletics-mission-statement>

field of play and in life. The program is open to all scholar-athletes who would like to develop their leadership skills.

- Emerging Leaders develop leadership skills to lead themselves and others and is open to all scholar-athletes.
- Advanced Leaders discuss real-time leadership topics while practicing problem solving skills. Completion is required for Emerging Leaders.
- Tritons Lead for Life is a post-athletics transition program to become a lifelong leader.
- Leadership Lab provides educational training for team captains and leaders to advance skills in equity, diversity, and inclusion; hazing and sexual harassment; academic integrity; and leadership skills. This training is a two-part series and required for all team captains and leaders.

#### Mindful Triton

This is a series of workshops offered by Triton Mind, Sports Performance, Sports Psychology, and Nutrition. All workshops are open and available for all Triton scholar-athletes.

- Mindful Scholar-Athlete (MSA) Mindfulness Training
- Mental Skills Coaching (Team and Individual)
- Mental Health Support and Triton Mind Community
- Scholar-Athlete Injury Support Group
- Scholar-Athlete Process Group
- Nutrition Screening

#### Triton Opps

The following opportunities and student groups are available to all Triton scholar-athletes.

- Triton Athletes' Council (TAC)
- Black Triton Association
- Tritons Rise Up
- Gender Inclusive Fellowship of Tritons
- LGBTQ+ Athlete Affinity Group
- International Scholar-Athlete Affinity Group
- Community Service
- Campus Workshops