



General | 6/23/2020 10:25:00 AM

## A MESSAGE FROM EARL W. EDWARDS



*A message from UC San Diego Director of Intercollegiate Athletics **Earl W. Edwards**...*

**SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE FEATURE**



have been. From the rapid spread of COVID-19, cancellation of virtually all sports in the United States, the transition to remote learning, the senseless killing of Black men and women at the hands of police officers and subsequent protests highlighting racial injustice - These are challenging times that, I hope, can give rise to a generation of change that will make our world a more inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.

Over these last few weeks of protests in support of Black Lives Matter, it has been inspiring to see the depth and passion that has emerged from scholar-athletes within the UC San Diego athletics program. During the first of several Town Hall Zoom meetings I conducted on the topic of racism, they displayed a sense of disappointment in their faces, hurt in their hearts and resolve in their voices. They talked about their desire to be agents of change and to use their platform to rise up and combat racism and discrimination in our communities.

We heard loud and clear that, as a department, we can do more on issues related to social change. We can better amplify positive messages of equity, diversity and inclusion. We can ensure that every student, coach, staff member or anyone who visits our campus or attends our events feels comfortable and welcome.

Following our initial Town Hall meeting with scholar-athletes, which totaled nearly 200 attendees, we conducted remote meetings with athletic staff and coaches. I met separately with Black scholar-athletes, coaches and staff to deepen our discussion of racism in our community and the effect it has on each of them.

In 2016, we established a position in the athletic department that is responsible for ensuring we have appropriate attention dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion. We have an EDI committee that is currently being expanded and reconfigured to more quickly address issues as they arise. Last year, we established a system for scholar-athletes to report issues anonymously and with third-party oversight. Our strategic plan, recently submitted to the NCAA as part of our Division I application, reaffirms our deep commitment to EDI.

I have highly recommended our coaches and staff read the book: *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*. In collaboration with the vice chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we will expand training and conversation throughout the department.

I made a commitment to our scholar-athletes that I would conduct meetings throughout the year with campus police, local law enforcement and other city and area officials to discuss race issues and ensure our scholar-athletes feel safe and supported in our community.



athletes, coaches and staff are registered to vote and will be encouraging everyone to do so on election days. We will not schedule competitions on Nov. 3, the date of this year's national election.

We will provide opportunities to amplify the voices of our scholar-athletes and coaches, as well as team initiatives, on department and team social media channels. On June 7, women's soccer junior Marissa Ray coordinated with several scholar-athletes to produce an [incredible video](#) in support of Black Lives Matter that was posted on the @UCSDTritons and team Instagram channels. Marissa also appeared recently on a video produced by the NCAA [honoring Juneteenth](#).

While we are laser-focused on social justice issues, we have not taken our attention away from addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The University is currently deep into planning for its Return To Learn program that will provide both in-person and remote instruction this fall. While we do not currently have resolution on our first season of NCAA Division I fall sports competition, we are diligently planning for an early August return to campus for our fall sports teams that features a comprehensive safety and healthy protocol.

For regular updates and information on UC San Diego's response to COVID-19, please visit [coronavirus.ucsd.edu](https://coronavirus.ucsd.edu). For more information on the outbreak and its health implications, please visit [health.ucsd.edu](https://health.ucsd.edu).

Be safe, and Go Tritons!

Earl

### ***About UC San Diego Athletics***

*With 30 national team championships, nearly 150 individual titles and the top scholar-athlete graduation rate among Division II institutions in the United States, the UC San Diego intercollegiate athletics program annually ranks as one of the most successful in the country. The Tritons sponsor 23 intercollegiate sport programs that compete on the NCAA Division I and II levels and, in summer 2020, will transition into full Division I status as a member of the Big West Conference. UC San Diego scholar-athletes exemplify the academic ideals of one of the world's preeminent institutions, graduating at an average rate of 91 percent. A total of 82 Tritons have earned Academic All-America honors, while 37 have earned prestigious NCAA Post Graduate Scholarships. In competition, more than 1,300 UC San Diego scholar-athletes have earned All-America honors.*



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