

# IGNITE

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE



**UC DAVIS ATHLETICS  
2023 STRATEGIC PLAN**

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## Dear Aggie Nation:

It is truly an honor to share with you IGNITE. This strategic plan is a road map for the UC Davis Athletics Department for the years ahead.

Aggie Athletics is unique and thus, IGNITE, is specific to our department, University and stakeholders. Included in the pages that follow are our department's defined values, vision, mission and five key areas that will be our focus in the months and years ahead, as we work to support our student-athletes, coaches, and staff in their collective pursuits of success. The five priority areas are (1) Student-Athlete Development and Welfare, (2) Competitive Excellence, (3) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, (4) Assess and Value Personnel and (5) Revenue Generation. IGNITE aligns with the University's strategic plan, *To Boldly Go* and our department looks forward to continuing to do its part to advance the overall University.

IGNITE will be a daily guide for our department, a "North Star", as we make decisions both big and small in pursuit of excellence and in supporting our incredible student-athletes. We hold ourselves accountable for the objectives set out in this strategic plan, knowing that many of these objectives will take support and buy-in from the entire UC Davis community to realize their full potential. As the NCAA and Division I intercollegiate athletics continues to transform, we must be nimble in our work, and we will continue to revisit IGNITE often in the years ahead.

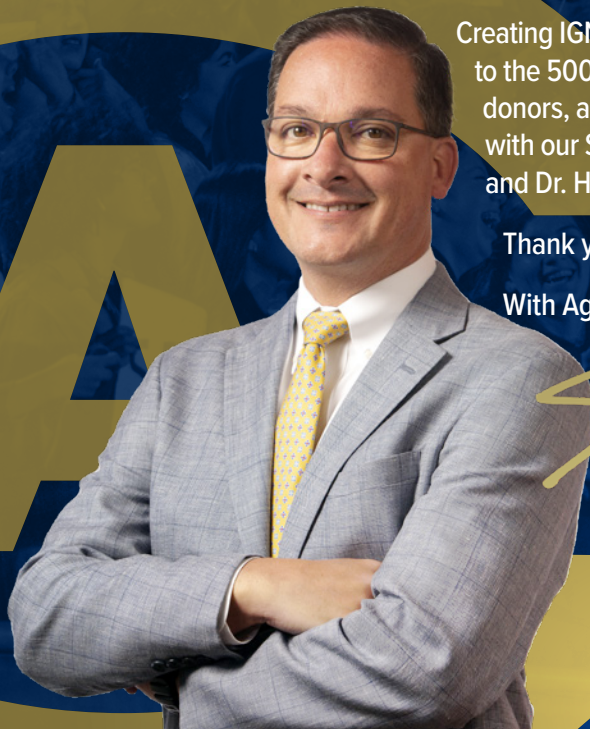
Creating IGNITE has been a diligent and inclusive effort over the last six months, and we are grateful to the 500+ members of our community including students, coaches, staff, faculty, campus leaders, donors, alumni, and local residents, who participated in the process or who shared their feedback with our Strategic Plan Steering Committee. That committee was chaired by Joseph Castagnola '97 and Dr. Heather Hunter '96, who did an incredible job leading us through a comprehensive process.

Thank you for supporting Aggie Athletics!

With Aggie Pride,



**ROCKO DELUCA**  
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



**Dear Aggie Nation:**

Athletics are the “front porch” of our university. Athletic events provide a deep sense of community and energize campus. They are also one of the primary ways people are introduced to a school.

It has been wonderful to see the rise of UC Davis Athletics. Over the last six years, Aggie Athletics won 16 conference titles and garnered 19 All-Americans. Beach volleyball and equestrian became official varsity programs. Football earned its first FCS Playoff birth and victory. We saw our first Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft pick, along with five student-athletes drafted by Major League Soccer (MLS) and six by Major League Baseball (MLB).

With this renewed energy, I am pleased to support IGNITE, Athletics’ strategic plan. This plan positions Athletics for ongoing success. It will also help to make our entire university better. The goals support the goals outlined in To Boldly Go, UC Davis’ strategic plan. These include making UC Davis a model for diversity, equity and inclusion, fostering competitive excellence, and providing an unparalleled education that prepares student-athletes, not only for triumph on the court or field, but also for life beyond graduation, whether that is graduate school or the workforce.

I’m grateful to Director of Athletics Rocko DeLuca for his strong leadership. I’d also like to thank Joseph Castagnola and Dr. Heather Hunter, co-chairs of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and everyone who provided input to help shape IGNITE. The future of Athletics looks bright. Go Ags!

Sincerely,

**GARY S. MAY**  
CHANCELLOR





# MISSION

*UC Davis Athletics is committed to excellence, while creating and fostering an inclusive environment that develops leaders.*

# VISION

*UC Davis Athletics strives to win championships and develop holistic student-athletes who personify Aggie Pride.*

## CORE VALUES

# P R I D E

### PRIDE

*A spirit that unites a diverse group of people to carry on tradition.*

### RESOURCEFUL

*Open-minded, innovative problem solvers.*

### INCLUSIVE

*A respectful and supportive community.*

### DETERMINED

*A fearless, hardworking mentality.*

### EXCELLENCE

*An unrelenting pursuit of success.*

## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Heather Hunter '96**, Co-Chair, Sr. Associate AD/SWA  
**Joseph Castagnola '98**, Co-Chair, ICA Board Member  
**Ken Burtis '76**, UC Davis Distinguished Emeriti  
**Mike Child '76**, Senior Advisor, TA Associates, ICA Board Member  
**John Eadie**, Distinguished Professor & Dennis G. Raveling Endowed Chair  
**Bruce Edwards '60**, Chair of ICA Board  
**Josh Flushman**, Sr. Associate AD/Sports Administration  
**Radhika Gawde**, President, ASUCD  
**Pam Gill-Fisher '71, '72, '75**, Former Sr. Associate AD, ICA Board Member  
**Darryl Goss '83**, Acquisition and Investment Consultant, ICA Board Member  
**Suzanne Isidor**, Head Coach, Women's Lacrosse  
**Kevin Johnson**, Dean, School of Law  
**Daniel Leyson**, Child and Meisel Families Director of Men's Water Polo  
**Sean Quinn**, Chief Financial Officer, UC Davis Athletics  
**Courtney Randall**, Associate Athletic Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
**Kelly Ratliff '86 '93**, Retired Vice Chancellor for Finance, Operations and Administration  
**Paul Sallaberry '79**, Operating Partner, Sales, Icon Ventures  
**Danielle Shank**, Sr. Associate Athletic Director, External Relations  
**Debby Stegura '79**, Regent Emerita, Past President of Cal Aggie Alumni Association  
**Cory Vu '90**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Health, Wellness, and Divisional Resources  
**Greg Warzecka**, Former Director of Athletics  
**Jason Wohlman**, Associate Vice Chancellor, University Development

## PRIORITY AREA CO-CHAIRS

### STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE CO-CHAIRS

**Dr. Matt Lynch**, Head Team Physician  
**Sydney Holmes '20**, Health Promotion Specialist, Mental Well-Being

### COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE CO-CHAIRS

**Daniel Descalso '22**, Arizona Diamondbacks, Jayscals Ventures LLC, Baseball Alumni  
**Kevin Nosek '99**, Associate Head Coach, Men's Basketball

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION CO-CHAIRS

**Heather Hunter '96**, Sr. Associate AD/SWA  
**Courtney Randall**, Associate Athletic Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

### ASSESS AND VALUE PERSONNEL CO-CHAIRS

**Brett Burns '96**, Senior Assistant Dean, School of Law, Soccer Alumni  
**Rob Norris '03**, Associate Athletics Director, Development

### REVENUE GENERATION CO-CHAIRS

**Liz Martin**, Sr. Associate Athletics Director, Alumni Relations & Development  
**Brent Sasaki '94**, Vice-President, Pivot Agency – UC Davis Alumni





# 1

## STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

*Integrate a holistic model that supports student-athletes for their academic, athletic, and post-graduation success.*



## STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

### **FOSTER ENVIRONMENTS THAT PROMOTE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

- *Further develop tutoring services in connection with broader university academic support services.*
- *Sustain and enhance Aggie EVO as premier program in DI Athletics that launches student-athletes at 95% success rate.*

### **ENHANCE EMPHASIS ON THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENT-ATHLETES.**

- *Increase access to nutritional resources via newly hired nutritionist.*
- *Expand sports performance technology across all sport programs.*
- *Engage in a multi-disciplinary review of the ongoing care and support for high-risk student-athletes.*
- *Improve mental health and resource knowledge among student-athletes.*
- *Implement NCAA Transformation Committee recommendations for holistic student-athlete benefits model and student-athlete voice in decision-making.*

### **FORMALIZE INTERNAL STAFF COMMUNICATION RELATED TO STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING.**

- *Assemble a diverse committee of athletics staff and student-athletes to ensure we are achieving our overall goal of providing a positive, comprehensive student-athlete experience.*







# 2

## **COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE**

*UC Davis teams will annually finish in the top third of their respective conferences with a goal of winning the Big West Commissioner's Cup.*





## COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE

### **RECRUIT, RETAIN AND DEVELOP HIGH PERFORMING STUDENT-ATHLETES.**

- *Ensure each program's recruiting budget is in the top third of their respective conference.*
- *Explore and strategically implement Alston awards and academic retention awards for elite student-athletes.*
- *Support student-athletes in pursuit of NIL opportunities and create a comprehensive NIL plan for the Department.*
- *Explore a one-year graduate certificate or degree program.*
- *Enhance the student-athlete travel experience.*
- *Assess full-time performance coaches in proportion to the student-athlete population for all conferences.*
- *Enrich fueling options for our athletes with snack breaks, quality meals, and nutrition plans.*
- *Assess sports medicine staff and ensure alignment with NCAA holistic student-athlete experience policies.*





## COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE

### **ENSURE TEAM OPERATING BUDGETS AND SCHOLARSHIP ALLOTMENTS FOR ALL SPORT PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED IN THE TOP THIRD OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CONFERENCE.**

- Assess operational budgets and total grant-in-aid within the Big West, Big Sky, MPSF, and America East Conference.
- Create funding and revenue models to meet this priority.

### **PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING AND COMPETITION VENUES THAT SUPPORT CHAMPIONSHIP PROGRAMS.**

- Develop a department facility master plan with input from coaches, staff and student-athletes.
- Prioritize facility renovations and new construction.

### **ENGAGE IN ONGOING NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS REGARDING COLLEGE ATHLETICS.**

- Attend and participate in NCAA conference and regional meetings to keep UC Davis relevant and adaptable in the changing college landscape.
- Engage in worthwhile initiatives and discussions to share UC Davis position on critical matters.



# 3

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

*UC Davis Athletics will be a model Department for diversity, equity, and inclusion.*





## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

### **PROVIDE DEI CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES, STAFF AND COACHES**

- *Provide student-athletes with ongoing DEI education to support growth and promote cultural inclusion in athletics.*
- *Strengthen DEI-related educational content for staff.*
- *Strengthen DEI-related educational content for coaches.*
- *Create opportunities for student-athletes to engage and impact external community.*
- *Revise philosophy statement and policy actions for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*
- *Provide opportunities for student-athletes and staff to give feedback on their experience, education, and resource needs related to DEI.*
- *Perform NCAA DEI Framework Review every four years.*







FAMILY ZONE

UC DAVIS



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

### **PROVIDE STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH COMMUNITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECT THEM WITH IDENTITY-BASED RESOURCES.**

- *Provide student-athletes with resources to create a sense of togetherness, community, and awareness through DEI-related student-athlete organizations.*
- *Provide student-athletes with opportunities to learn about cultures/identities through engagements that highlight diversity.*
- *Connect student-athletes to identity-based campus resources.*

### **INTENTIONALLY RECRUIT TO INCREASE DIVERSITY OF WORKFORCE.**

- *Create a recruiting strategy to attract a diverse candidate pool.*

### **CELEBRATE GENDER EQUITY AND ENSURE UNIVERSITY'S COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IX.**

- *Maintain and enhance a comprehensive Title IX governance model.*
- *Provide educational programming opportunities that celebrate Women in Sport.*





# 4

## **ASSESS AND VALUE PERSONNEL**

*Attract, develop, and retain high quality, diverse personnel that contribute to a positive experience and meaningful impact.*





## **ASSESS AND VALUE PERSONNEL**

### **DEVELOP A STAFF TALENT ACQUISITION PLAN.**

- *Intentionally recruit and hire high-achieving and diverse personnel.*

### **CREATE A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY AND COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE.**

- *Implement a dynamic employee onboarding program.*
- *Create an engaged employee community culture.*

### **RETAIN HIGH-PERFORMING COACHES AND STAFF.**

- *Have intentionality around identification, recognition, and active management of high-performers.*

### **PROMOTE, CELEBRATE, AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYEES TO ACHIEVE CAREER GOALS.**

- *Foster a culture that supports internal growth.*
- *Develop a new employee recognition program rooted in department values.*
- *Provide year-round career development programming for staff and coaches.*





# 5

## REVENUE GENERATION

*Fund championship initiatives through the enhancement of critical revenue streams.*





## REVENUE GENERATION

### **EXCEED THE RECORDS SET FOR TICKET SALES AND ATTENDANCE FROM PREVIOUS YEARS.**

- Annually bring in \$1 million in total ticket sales by FY28.
- Increase attendance across all sports.

### **AGGRESSIVELY INCREASE THE DONOR POPULATION AND CREATE A BEST-IN-CLASS STEWARDSHIP EXPERIENCE.**

- Grow annual fund to \$3 million by FY28.
- Increase leadership giving and major gifts by closing \$23 million in gifts by FY28.

### **CREATE A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY WITHIN THE FORMER STUDENT-ATHLETE POPULATION.**

- Reinstate a letterwinner program to grow alumni network.
- Increase the student-athlete voice and education regarding philanthropic impact.





## REVENUE GENERATION

### **COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF ATHLETICS TO FANS, STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY AND DONORS TO MAXIMIZE SUPPORT.**

- *Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to maximize engagement.*
- *Rollout a multi-platform marketing and advertising campaign to address investment priorities.*

### **CONTINUED GROWTH IN REVENUE FROM CAMPS, GAME GUARANTEES, FACILITY RENTALS, LICENSING, AND CORPORATE SPONSORS.**

- *Hit revenue share hurdle with corporate sponsorships.*
- *Increase trade for budget relief to \$250,000 annually.*
- *Increase athletics licensing share to \$250,000 annually.*
- *Increase revenue from camps with goal of assisting with coaching staff compensation.*
- *Increase game guarantee revenue.*
- *Increase revenue by hosting large events in collaboration with ASUCD Entertainment Council.*

# UC DAVIS

ATHLETICS



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  @ucdavisaggies  

[teamaggie.com/fuelingourfuture](https://teamaggie.com/fuelingourfuture)