

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
PROPOSED INCREASE TO INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES (IRA) FEE

SDSU is considering the increase of the mandatory Category II Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) Fee to support intercollegiate athletics. This fee increase would support maintenance of shared facilities, Student-Athlete well-being, student spirit enhancements, and student employment opportunities. Additionally, a portion of the fee would be allocated to support club sports.

All SDSU students currently pay \$290 per semester in support of instructionally related activities, which include: Intercollegiate Athletics; +75 instructionally related activities within the academic colleges; Aztec Student Media; student sports clubs; several student licensing and insurance programs; and, academic initiatives within the cultural centers. This proposal would increase the fee by \$130 per semester to support Intercollegiate Athletics and club sports. The new fee amount of \$420 per semester would take effect in Fall 2026. Consistent with the current fee, it would be adjusted annually by the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).

To gain a complete understanding of the proposed fee, the university will host a series of consultations with interested SDSU students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Background

Athletics at SDSU is more than just competition—it is a unifying force. It brings energy to campus, builds community, engages alumni, and raises the national profile of our institution. A strong athletics program creates unforgettable experiences, unites Aztecs across generations, and adds value to every SDSU degree. Athletic success has had a direct correlation to academic success and growth. SDSU applications nearly doubled from ~70,000 (2010) to 117,000+ (2024) with growth spikes aligned with men's basketball NCAA runs in 2011, 2014, 2020 and 2023. During this same time period, SDSU US News and World Report rankings rose from 165 in 2011 to 109 in 2023, and SDSU achieved R1 status in 2022.

Additionally, a high visibility athletics program increases shared giving across campus partners. Athletics provides a lasting connection point with non-alumni donors and a way for engaging those donors on campus, which leads to conversations and support for many University initiatives. Donors who have contributed at least \$1m to athletics have given \$65.3M to other University initiatives including scholarships, \$5m more than they have given to athletics.

SDSU last increased its IRA fee to support Athletics in 2009. Since then the Intercollegiate Athletics landscape has changed, and we have changed with it, most recently as we prepare to join the Pac-12 Conference in 2026. These changes bring real costs. Athletics faces rising expenses in scholarships, facilities, coaching, and student-athlete support. Athletics will continue to raise philanthropic dollars and to grow revenue streams in ticketing, sponsorships, and Snapdragon Stadium event rentals, but must also seek sustainable and reliable support to compete at the highest level.

Uses of the IRA Fee Revenue Increase, if passed

The revenue generated by the increase to the IRA fee will support the following areas:

Club Sports (5%):

To strengthen the safety and success of our vibrant club sports community, a portion of the proposed student fee increase will provide funding for sports medicine and coaching staff serving club sport athletes. With hundreds of students actively participating in club programs, this investment ensures they have access to care and injury prevention resources that varsity athletes receive.

Repairs & Maintenance of Shared Athletics Facilities on the mesa (40%):

Athletics facilities are not just for athletes—they are shared spaces that reflect our university pride and provide hubs for connection. It is a priority to ensure these spaces remain safe and functional for all users. On an on-going basis these facilities require updates such as turf replacement, court resurfacing, and lighting and sound upgrades. These spaces include shared practice fields, Peterson Gym, Sports Deck, Tennis Center, and the Fowler Center Auditorium.

Student Athlete Well-being (40%):

Providing student athletes with holistic support for competing at the highest level includes expanding investment in sports psychology, sports medicine, sports performance, and nutrition.

Student Spirit Enhancements (10%):

Elevating the energy and pride across campus is central to building a strong student community. The fee increase will provide resources to the spirit groups who energize game day and beyond. A portion of the fee will be invested in hosting student events to foster belonging, and providing giveaways to students attending athletic events.

Student Employment Opportunities (5%):

A portion of the proposed student fee increase will be used to expand part-time student positions and internships within Athletics, creating hands-on learning and professional development opportunities across multiple disciplines. These roles provide valuable real-world experience while supporting the success of our programs and events.

Impacts to Athletics, if not passed

Without the proposed fee increase, Athletics will need to adjust its priorities. In the short term, funding for planned improvements in the following areas would be impacted:

- Student spirit and engagement enhancements would be scaled back which would impact student attendance at athletic events.
- Shared facility projects on the mesa would be delayed which would impact the safety and availability of those facilities to be used by athletics and the general student body.
- Student internships & practicums in marketing, broadcasting, event operations would be reduced.

In the medium and longer term, funding for planned improvements in the following areas would be impacted:

- Reduced competitiveness in Athletics as it would be harder to sustain top-tier basketball and football programs due to rising costs for coaching salaries, recruiting, and travel. Student jobs created to support athletic events in Viejas and Snapdragon could be reduced. Decreases in national visibility which could reduce

demand to attend the university and therefore applications, and US News and World Report rankings.

- Alumni engagement, giving, and enthusiasm may cool, limiting growth opportunities.
- Reduced ability to attract new donors through athletics programs and eventually reduced the amount of scholarships raised.
- Student experience would be less vibrant, limiting opportunities for connection.

Financial Analysis

The fee increase will generate approximately \$10.2m for Intercollegiate Athletics and Sports Clubs. As the needs of the Athletics program has grown, it has primarily leaned on alternative funding sources. When the IRA fee was last increased for Athletics in 2009/10, student fees funded 31% of the Athletics budget. In the current year, that student fee support hovers around 17%. With the additional \$9.7m generated by this fee increase, student fees will fund 22% of the Athletics budget. The overall funding from external sources have increased significantly both in gross dollars, and as a percentage of total funding; however, the increasing cost of remaining competitive continues to grow.

Sports Club support from the IRA fee will almost double over the current allocation, increasing by approximately \$500k.

Statement in Favor of the IRA Fee Increase:

I believe the IRA fee is an important step to enhancing SDSU athletics and student access to the sports related job opportunities. As the Student Athlete Advisory Committee president and senior on women's soccer, I have seen a great need for a nutrition station, psychological support, and increasing networking/internship opportunities. Especially for women's sports, a nutrition station will allow athletes to get in their protein needs and make it easy to grab food between quick transitions from training to class. Far too many times, myself, my teammates, and friends on other teams do not have enough time to get a nutrition packed meal, resulting in slower recovery, hard time focusing in class, and low energy. In addition, we just hired a sports psychologist, Austin, who has been a tremendous help to some of my teammates. But a 450 to 1 ratio makes it difficult to connect with every athlete that needs support. Increased funding could allow another hire of a sports

psychologist or provide planned educational events for athletes to acquire skills to handle the immense workload playing a D1 sport provides. Furthermore, due to how much time and energy is put into our sport, it is more difficult to find job opportunities and commit to a required schedule. Funding could allow us to do more networking events and increased AGP summer internship opportunities. All students at SDSU can benefit as well. More jobs to work within SDSU athletics can help students build experience working in sports.

Senior, Class of 2026

Rebuttal to Statement in Favor of the IRA Fee Increase:

The Campus Fee Advisory Committee chose to not include rebuttal statements.

Statement in Opposition of the IRA Fee Increase:

The proposed \$130 per semester increase to the Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) Fee would place an added financial burden on all SDSU students, many of whom are already struggling with tuition, housing, and the high cost of living in San Diego. While athletics contributes to school spirit and visibility, 95% of the new funds would go to Intercollegiate Athletics, leaving only 5% for club sports and none for the 75+ other instructional programs also supported by the IRA, raising concerns about equity since the majority of students are not varsity athletes. Athletics already benefits from substantial external revenue streams such as ticket sales, sponsorships, donations, and stadium rentals, while academic and cultural programs do not enjoy the same resources. Requiring all students to subsidize a program that directly benefits a small portion of the student body is not financially responsible, and alternative funding sources should be pursued before shifting more costs onto students.

Sophomore, Class of 2028

Rebuttal to Statement in Opposition of the IRA Fee Increase:

The Campus Fee Advisory Committee chose to not include rebuttal statements.

Information pamphlet approved by the Campus Fee Advisory Committee (CFAC).

Submit a comment/question to CFAC cfac@sdsu.edu