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Finally NCAA: Concordia celebrates new Division II title with tailgate kickoff

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SPORTS EDITOR

It's official, as of July 14, 2017 Concordia is a Division II member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The Concordia Eagles start off the 2017-18 year after a three year process towards full membership. In the years leading up to now, Concordia had provisional years in which NCAA standards were implemented, but teams were not able to compete in playoffs.

The transition from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) to NCAA is complete and the celebration can begin. A tailgate will be held on Sat., Sept. 16 at 3 p.m. and the very first Women's Volleyball home game of the season will take place shortly after at 5 p.m.

Following the women's volleyball championship season last year, this will be a game not to be missed as the lady Eagles take on the Biola Eagles.

All students are invited to come and enjoy this celebration of all the hard work put into transitioning into the highly competitive DII. At the kickoff there will be music, an obstacle course, food and most importantly, free giveaways. This one time celebration reflects all the effort of the past three years by administrators, coaches and athletes.

President Kurt Krueger said, "We believe that the NCAA Division II model is an excellent fit with our Lutheran heritage, our core values and our approach to edu-



Director of Athletics, Mo Roberson looks at the new logo and future of Concordia Athletics. Courtesy of The Orange County Register

cating the whole person."

Concordia athletes are without a doubt ready to take on the task of competing at the NCAA level as the only NCAA Division II team in Orange County. Previously a part of the Golden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) in the NAIA, the Eagles will now compete in the PacWest Conference.

Pacwest schools include Azusa Pacific University, California Baptist University, Fresno Pacific University, and Point Loma Nazarene University, as well as universities located in Hawaii, the Bay Area and Southern Utah.

Crystal Rosenthal, Head Coach of Softball said the membership further "promotes the mission of the institution because we're bringing in students who excel both in the classroom and on the field. It's more in line with our goals as an institution and pushes us to become stronger moving into the future."

Concordia has about 450

student athletes. Over the last five years, Concordia has won five NAIA National Championship titles in baseball, softball, men's basketball and both men's and women's volleyball.

Eagles will take the field and court this season with newly installed hardwood flooring in the gym and turf on the field, both including the official blue dot NCAA logo.

Concordia is optimistic that the well-known blue logo of the NCAA will bring in many prospective athletes and students. Mo Roberson, Director of Athletics also notes the ability the membership gives "to be better engaged with our CUI community, faculty, staff and alumni in supporting the goals set forth in our mission and vision statements. We want to be academically, athletically and spiritually excellent in all of these areas and represent CUI well in all we do."

The NCAA has some nota-

ble differences when it comes to rules and regulations, but administration is positive athletes will succeed in the new conference. Concordia athletes will have to comply with required breaks; NCAA athletic programs are not meant to run year-round, in hopes that student athletes can participate in other activities and become well-rounded individuals. Roberson believes "NCAA DII will allow our student athletes to seamlessly blend their academic and athletics careers into a balanced lifestyle."

The tailgate event and celebration is open to the public and anyone can attend. The focus is to rally around the athletic program at Concordia for years to come.

Be sure to head out to the tailgate celebration on Sept. 16 and also cheer on the Eagles in action this season, as NCAA Division II athletes. Schedules can be found here: <http://www.cuieagles.com/>

Master Plan: A walk through changes to come on campus

SARAH DIXON
CAMPUS EDITOR

Over the next 18 years, Concordia will be making major changes to improve campus. Students and faculty may have heard the term "Master Plan," but may not know exactly what that means. Concordia's Master Plan started this year with construction during Summer 2017. There are four phases of the Master Plan, which are scheduled to be completed in 2035. The City of Irvine has already approved Phase One for 2017 and Phase Two in 2018, with Phases Three and Four under review.

Phase One proposes to build new music, worship, and theology buildings, expand the Concordia West parking lot and upgrade athletic field lighting as Concordia moves into NCAA Division II. This phase will also include road improvements to help traffic flow better within the campus.

Some of Phase One has already taken place, such as the dorm road realignment. Phase Two is also project ready with anticipated improvements in 2018, such as a CU Center addition, an athletic field restroom and locker building, a track and soccer field viewing deck and sand volleyball courts.

Approving a master plan isn't necessarily easy, and University Services had to work through the plan with the City of Irvine. "We have to go through the city because we are a private school," explained Tim Odle, Executive Director of University Services.

The University Services team also recognizes that there may be challenges with the Master