In Sacramento, the sports community has a proud history of making a significant impact on the health and prosperity of our great, diverse, and vibrant city. Sacramento State Athletics is driving this momentum through the efforts of our dedicated faculty and coaches. We support our student-athletes’ pursuit of excellence on and off the field and their drive for positive change in our region and beyond.

We are proud to support 500 individual student-athletes who are working hard to graduate with the skills needed to be successful in the workforce, whether their careers be in sports or elsewhere. In spring 2019, the overall GPA for student-athletes at Sacramento State was 3.105. This is even higher than the already impressive overall GPA of the average Sacramento State student, which is 2.968. The NCAA’s most recent report on graduation success rate also showed that 100% of our teams have exceeded the national graduation rate.

Our student-athletes are also seeing success on the field and court. For the first time in the 26-year history of the Division I era, the Sacramento State Hornet football team became Big Sky Conference champions while earning an opportunity to compete in the NCAA FCS Playoffs.

Our student-athletes rise to every challenge during their time at Sacramento State. They work hard juggling practice demands, team activities, volunteerism, and their studies. All along the way, the Sacramento State Athletics teams, coaches, and staff are there to support them to ensure they can exemplify what it means to be a Hornet including the tenets of the University’s five imperatives: student success; diversity, equity, and inclusivity; community engagement; philanthropy; and safety.

With a gift to the Athletics Department, you can help more student-athletes thrive at Sacramento State and beyond.
Lonie Paxton, a three-time Super Bowl champion with the New England Patriots, was a senior majoring in Communication Studies at Sacramento State when his football career took off.

In spring 2000, Paxton was invited to player tryouts for the National Football League, an opportunity he couldn't miss. He knew he was ready to turn pro. With only a few credits left to graduate, Paxton put his studies on hold and tucked away his dream of a college degree.

Paxton enjoyed a successful 12-year career in the NFL as a member of the Patriots and the Denver Broncos. With spot-on consistency, Paxton snapped on nine of Adam Vinatieri’s game-winning field goals during four seasons, including a 48-yard game-winning snap at the end of Super Bowl XXXVI.

After the NFL, Paxton forged a new career as a global entertainment marketer for GoPro, Inc. before starting his own business, Dotted Line Ventures, LLC. A longtime supporter of Sacramento State Athletics, Paxton returned to campus in 2019 for Global Entrepreneurship Week. He shared his story as an athlete turned entrepreneur and a desire that never left him to finish his degree.

Paxton learned about innovative degree completion programs at the College of Continuing Education and ProjectAttain!, an initiative aimed at working-age adults who want to finish their education. In the Sacramento region, an estimated 400,000 adults have some college but no degree, and more than 60,000 have a semester or less in completing their degree.

For many, a degree is transformational, and Paxton says his degree will be a personal victory of achievement and purpose. And he wants to set an example for his four children, all under the age of 10, by becoming the first in his family to earn a college degree.

Lonie Paxton
From Hornet football to entrepreneur

Student Success

The goal of the $225 million On the Rise campaign is to amplify Sacramento State’s impact in the region, the state, and the world by doubling our current level of private support. The campaign has three priorities: supporting students through increased financial aid and student programs; advancing knowledge through innovative learning approaches; and strengthening the larger Sacramento community through diverse, engaged and impactful teaching and research.

On the Rise campaign is committed to uplifting generations of people in an equitable and sustainable way.

Student Success

• Attract and retain coaching talent so our student-athletes can compete at the top level of performance nationally.

• Provide a holistic approach to the student-athletes’ health and wellness, including access to healthy food choices and more study areas.

Facilities Enhancements

• Continue to give our student-athletes, coaches, and community a competitive edge by bringing key Athletics facilities up to the modern standards of an elite program. Together, we can create an event center and sports complex that matches the high caliber of our students and community.

Campaign Priorities