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# City of San Diego Launches New Opportunities for Employees to Seek Higher Education

## FOUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WILL PROVIDE DISCOUNTED TUITION, SCHOLARSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR THE CITY'S WORKFORCE

SAN DIEGO – As part of an ongoing effort to recruit and retain a skilled workforce, the City of San Diego is adding new educational opportunities for its employees to further their career growth and development. Today the San Diego City Council approved agreements with National University, San Diego College of Continuing Education, University of California San Diego Division of Extended Studies, and the University of California San Diego Rady School of Management to be the Official Employee Education Program Partners of the City of San Diego.

These partnerships will provide City employees with free and discounted tuition and educational scholarships during the 5-year contract term.

Today's announcement is a direct response to feedback provided to the City during its 2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey, in which 48% of survey respondents stated they were interested in pursuing professional certification or obtaining a degree. These partnerships are also part of the Economic Development Strategy approved by Council in the summer 2023. By providing these opportunities to employees, the City is continuing to provide a culture of learning to its more than 12,000 employees, while providing pathways for career advancement.

**"We are fortunate to be able to offer these new educational partnerships to the City's workforce through our Corporate Partnership Program," said Christina Bibler, Director of the Economic Development Department. "After seeking City employee feedback on existing education and professional development barriers, the City crafted a partnership response to create diverse pathways for growth and workforce development. After months of coordination, we were able to negotiate these four new partners to meet employee needs in alignment with our economic development strategy."**

City employees will be able to receive tuition discounts, varied educational and development opportunities and scholarships through these partnerships. In exchange, program partners will have the opportunity to familiarize City employees with their educational programs and services through promotional offers, participation in on-site events, exclusive informational opportunities, and other marketing and promotional opportunities.

National University will continue its 10-year partnership in which employees have the opportunity to receive a 25% discount on tuition for associate and bachelor's degrees and 15% off doctoral programs and be joined by three new educational partners. These include free tuition for the San Diego College of Continuing Education; a 10-15% discount offered for UC San Diego-Extension programs; and five fellowships to UC San Diego's Rady School of Management will be provided annually.

Additionally, scholarship opportunities for National University and UC San Diego-Extension programs will be made available on an application basis each year.

**"The City strives to create a culture of learning and to provide pathways for career growth and development for every employee," said Julie Rasco, Human Resources Department Director. "Engaging in education partnerships through the Education Partners contract will aid us in removing potential barriers to further progress in that direction and to support all employees' immediate and long-term career goals."**

The partnerships come at no cost to the City of San Diego and the new educational opportunities will be available for City employees to take advantage of immediately.

What the educational partners are saying:

**"At National University, we serve 'And-ers' – students who are seeking degrees AND working fulltime, raising families, or serving in the military," said Dr. Mark D. Milliron, president and CEO of National University. "The hardworking team at the City of San Diego – police officers, firefighters, and city staffers working to make our community better – epitomize these learners striving to make progress on their higher education journeys even as they make a difference in the community. We are delighted to partner with the city to create pathways for these students to advance their educations and their careers."**

**"UC San Diego Division of Extended Studies is delighted to join forces with the City of San Diego in this important partnership. By providing City employees with access to our extensive catalog of high-quality courses and certificate programs, we are confident this collaboration will be instrumental in developing a highly skilled workforce equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community," said Hugo Villar, dean of UC San Diego Division of Extended Studies. "Our flexible program formats and expert instruction, designed with working professionals in mind, will empower City employees to advance their careers and contribute to a thriving San Diego."**

**"We are thrilled to announce a partnership between the City of San Diego and the UC San Diego Rady School of Management," said Lisa Ordóñez, dean of UC San Diego's Rady School of Management. "Up to five qualified City of San Diego employees will be guaranteed tuition fellowships each year for the next five years into one of the Flex programs: Executive MBA, FlexEvening MBA, and FlexMSBA. These programs offer professionals the flexibility to pursue a degree on their terms—whether evenings or weekends—without interrupting their careers. The**

curriculum is designed to foster innovation and leadership, with a strong emphasis on data-driven decision making, entrepreneurship, and real-world application. This partnership reflects Rady School's commitment to supporting San Diego's public sector by making graduate-level business education more accessible."

"We are excited to be an educational partner with the City of San Diego," said Tina M. King, Ed.D., president of San Diego College of Continuing Education. "As a college dedicated to adult education and workforce development, we offer no-cost courses in diverse areas such as Project Management, Business, Information Technology, Healthcare, and more, available across seven locations and online. Our goal is to provide ample opportunities that enhance morale, productivity, and professional growth for City of San Diego employees."



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