

Shooting threat spurs campus safety conversation

By Amethyst Martinez and Kaitlyn McCormick

WITH a petition of over 400 signatures calling for action regarding campus active shooter preparedness, the impacts of a recent threat and shelter-in-place have reverberated throughout the Rider community, prompting many to be their own change-makers.

Rider students have taken to grassroots efforts on social media to air their grievances with the university's response to the active shooter threat on April 3 and trailblaze movements to spread awareness on gun violence, while also demanding action from Rider officials.

The change.org petition, titled "Rider University Needs to Change," which has amassed hundreds of signatures over the course of a week, is a student-led initiative spearheaded by freshman musical theater major Fiona Hodgson.

The petition called for the university to accomplish three tasks in the wake of the incident: a training program for professors, a clarified system of alerts for the Rider community and the addition of locking mechanisms to all classroom doors on campus.

"It's just sad that it had to get to this point for these things to take place," said Hodgson. "If this was something real, there's no way to go back."

Another student-led movement took place

on April 11, calling for students to wear orange for gun violence awareness. The initiative was started by sophomore sociology major and Nashville, Tennessee, native Jennie Mae Sprouse, who called the movement a "protest statement" against gun violence after the recent school shooting in her hometown took the lives of three adults and three children. Exactly one week after that shooting, Rider's 52-minute shelter-in-place rattled students, faculty, staff and administration alike.

"I was just trying to find some sort of way to sort of make a statement to the university that one, gun violence is real, [and] two, it needs to be taken more seriously at this school," said Sprouse.

The university's response

Following the April 3 shelter-in-place, the university implemented a Campus Safety Preparedness Committee and subsequent universitywide

emails have provided updates and information regarding its progress.

The committee is co-chaired by Barbara Lawrence, vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, along with Michael Reca, vice president for facilities and university operations.

After multiple attempts to schedule an in-person interview, Lawrence failed to make herself available, but did answer questions from The Rider News via email.

Lawrence said in an email that her hope for the committee is "to create an engaged campus-wide committee that will promote a comprehensive and strategic approach implementing and assessing our institutional safety risks and formulating sound solutions to protect the University for different types of incidents."

Others on the committee include Kristine Brown, associate vice president of university marketing and communications, David Burns, commander of emergency management and preparedness, Roberta Butler, associate dean for Residence Life, Eugene Kutcher, dean of the Norm Brodsky College of Business and James Waldon, director of Rider Public Safety.

"My hope is to identify if there are deficiencies, address those deficiencies and

Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News



Rider students wear orange on April 11 to protest gun violence after threats were made to campus.

SEE SHOOTING PAGE 4

New AAUP president hopes to bring more positivity

By Shaun Chornobroff

AFTER a long period of uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and a school year that nearly began with Rider's faculty union striking after a summer of futile negotiations, Quinn Cunningham hopes to bring ease to her new role outside of the classroom.

Cunningham, an associate professor who served as the union's vice president for the past two years, was elected president of Rider's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) on April 4 and will serve in the role for the 2023-24 school year.

"I think faculty are tired too, just generally from the world," said Cunningham. "I think there are good things going on, so I do want to try and highlight those and hopefully, within our membership ... just try and get some of the good things highlighted again."

Cunningham will succeed David Dewberry, who she said recruited her to be an at-large member of the executive committee in 2019. Not long after, she was promoted to vice president before her ascension into the top office was decided.

Under the cloud of a looming strike, the union hammered out a five-year agreement with the administration on Sept. 11, although the deal had yet to be officially signed as of April 10.

Additionally, Rider's woes within the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) have resulted in much of Dewberry's tenure being spent fighting for adequate technology within the classroom. On April 4, Rider's Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer James Hartman said in an email that the university will begin installation on new technology over the summer for the majority of the classrooms to be outfitted for the fall semester.

Dewberry said he expects these issues, plus Rider's recent exodus of professors, to remain prevalent during Cunningham's tenure. In February, The Rider News was informed that 26 full-time professors and 11 long-term adjunct faculty took incentives from the university, agreed as part of the September labor contract to retire from the university.

"I think a lot of those are going to carry over. If a lot of these issues haven't been resolved by now, I'm not optimistic that they're going to be resolved in the next week, two weeks, three weeks or over the summer," said Dewberry. "I hope that's not the case. But I think it's just dealing with the continuation of what's been going on."

Cunningham arrived at Rider in 2014 and it was not long before a colleague encouraged her to attend union meetings. In 2019 she became an at-large member of the executive committee and over her

time in the AAUP, and particularly over the past year she noticed "how great" the membership was, especially in how they galvanized together in the face of negotiations and a potential work stoppage.

It's a group that Cunningham now looks forward to leading herself.

"I'm excited to play my part in the sense of giving back," Cunningham said. "I had no idea how helpful a union could be for faculty before coming here, so I feel like this is my piece to give back."



Quinn Cunningham will take over as AAUP president.

Photo courtesy of Rider University

INSIDE MEN'S TENNIS TASTING SUCCESS

Men's tennis could make the playoffs for the first time in program history.

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SHELTER-IN-PLACE

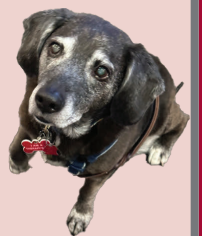
Students share where they were and what they were doing during the shelter-in-place.

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THERAPY DOGS RETURN FOR SEMESTER'S END

Active Minds welcomed therapy dogs to help relieve the stress of school.

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The Route 206 Project: how the pandemic killed Rider's college town

By Shaun Chornobroff

WHEN looking at TCNJ, Rowan University, Rutgers and a number of the institutions Rider competes with for students, they all have college town areas laden with spots for food and shopping, appealing to both prospective and current students.

In March 2020, Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo walked into a meeting with the university's Board of Trustees and gained approval for a bond set to finance a college-town project he hoped would modernize the university, titled, "The Route 206 Project."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that eliminated the final months of the 2019-20 school year and put immense strain on Rider's already recovering financial state, the project quickly became obsolete, and more than three years after the Board of Trustees' approval, there were no imminent plans to add a college town to the university.

"If we can get the university to get to a more sustainable financial model, I think it's something we really need to explore in more detail. I think it can have a lot of value to the university on a number of fronts, but right now we're just not in a position to," Dell'Omo said in a March interview with The Rider News.

Dell'Omo's desire for a strip representative of a college town goes back to the beginning of his tenure at the university. A Rider News article from February 2016, less than a year after his arrival, detailed the university president's desire to transform the land by the main entrance of Rider's Lawrenceville campus.

Accompanying Dell'Omo's want for an attractive college town is the need for the modernization of the university's outdated dorming. Rider's residence halls were rated the worst in the country by Princeton Review in 2018. As a result of the discontent, there was a consistent exodus of students who made the decision to commute, cutting into potential housing revenue necessary for the school's financial future.

The Route 206 project was a potential fix to both obstacles.

"That project was something that we know was needed here on this campus. We need more suite-style apartments," said James Hartman, Rider's senior vice president for finance and chief financial officer. "We want to try and get more upperclassmen back on campus, right? Certainly, you get more people back on



Gregory Dell'Omo makes plans for a college-town, but COVID-19 pushes it back.

campus, that's going to raise your room revenue. It's also better from a community perspective; having more students on campus, it's a more lively campus."

On the higher levels would be new, apartment-style housing reserved for upperclassmen. The bottom floor, which Dell'Omo called that the "heart" of the project, was going to be filled with retail, coffee shops, potentially a medical center and dry cleaner, and other ideas in hopes that it "services not only the community, but services our own students."

Postponed by the pandemic

In the years preceding the approval of the project, the university had made substantial progress, according to Dell'Omo and Hartman, in trimming a debt Dell'Omo projected to be \$10 million in the 2017 fiscal year. In 2017, the university had its largest freshman enrollment and as a whole, the university was heading toward a more stable future after drastic cuts that accompanied Dell'Omo's 2015 arrival.

Hartman was at the 2020 board meeting when the bond was approved and visibly remembers an applause at its conclusion.

"We were so excited about moving forward with something like this, a plan to make sure that Rider was going to be sustainable for years," said Hartman.

The elation lasted mere days. The pandemic swept its way through higher education and the initiative was cast aside as its repercussions became more evident.

"Our focus shifted more towards survival than moving forward with a project like that," explained Hartman.

The cash approved for the bond was repurposed and used to enhance the university's cash in a time of

uncertainty, according to Hartman.

'We'd love to do that down the road'

Both Dell'Omo and Hartman said there are no imminent plans to bring back the Route 206 Project; however, neither eliminated the possibility should the situation arise where it made sense for the school.

"We have a good idea of what it would look like, it's just as we in a position to fund something like that at this point in time?" said Dell'Omo when asked about the chances of the Route 206 Project being restored.

In the meantime, Rider remains committed to improving its residential housing. According to Hartman maximizing the quality and current housing options is the priority, specifically citing the plans to repurpose the unused Poyda Hall dorms as single rooms for the upcoming school year.

"We need to look at opportunities to sort of reinvest in student life and student activities and keep people on campus," said Hartman. "That's going to continue until we're in a position to actually borrow some more money and reinvest in some of those residence halls and maybe someday build that residence hall out front with that retail, healthcare type of situation on the bottom floor of it."



Jim Hartman discusses the possibility of the Route 206 Project happening in the future.

Counseling searches to rebrand mental health care

By Kaitlyn McCormick

DESPITE the unassuming appearance of Zoerner House, home of Rider's counseling center, just through the bright red door, a rebranding of college mental health services is stirring.

Anissa Moody, staff psychologist and director of the counseling center, is looking to change conversations surrounding student mental health, starting with how it should be treated.

A shift in mindset

As a generational shift in what the healing process looks like occurs, Moody wants to show students that Zoerner House is staying current.

"I think students aren't aware that we're in line with that and a lot of services that we provide are definitely aligned with modern-day treatment and healing. ... Therapy's not only individual work, sitting in a chair one-on-one with a person," Moody said.

The center has pivoted to include a number of

creative services and approaches that take on a more holistic approach to wellness, aiming to treat the individual as a whole. These tactics include tools like a weightless chair and light therapy, stress relief activities like coloring books and sand therapy, as well as an outdoor garden space for ecotherapy, one of Moody's personal favorites.

"When people are depressed or anxious, doing something or participating in a process outside of themselves...represents a healing process," she explained.

Moody and her team of counselors also offer a plethora of what they call "safe spaces," which allow students to connect with their peers who may be struggling with or have interest in similar issues. These spaces include those designed for Black indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQIA+ students, male students and students who just want or need more resources for communication and interpersonal skills and more.

Staff psychologist Jill Siletski, who works closely with many of these safe spaces, said, "We have a really bad business model, that we want people to stop seeing us because they're better. ... It's all about giving [students] skills to be able to help cope in the moment."

Through each room of Zoerner House, the personalities of its counselors shine through, from Siletski's mood lighting and emotion-wheel throw pillow to counselor Kyle Pawlowski's array of colorful fidget toys for students to use.

"One of the things I'm very proud of is that, not only do we have diversity in terms of ethnicity, but we have diversity in terms of gender, in terms of age in the counseling center, so students have access to see providers who represent different parts of themselves," Moody said.

New tools, new outcomes

The counseling center isn't shifting solely in its treatment, however. As the ways students interact with counseling services change, so does the best practice for supporting appointments, scheduling and outreach.

Moody's staff, like many in today's digital age, have utilized Instagram for student outreach to provide followers with event updates, daily advice and more.

The account and most of the center's outreach initiatives are run by its graduate assistants, who also spread awareness about new initiatives each month. For April, they are focusing on sexual assault awareness and hosting events all over campus throughout the month to reach students.

Last fall, the counseling center also moved to outreach student athletes specifically, embedding doctoral intern Richard Felicetti within the athletic department.

Felicetti said, "Instead of coming to the counseling center, we kind of bring the counseling center to the athletic center."

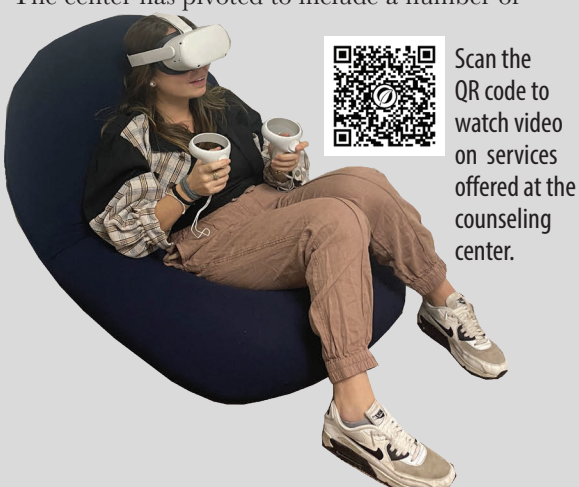
Moving forward

Through its outreach efforts, array of therapeutic tools and individual and safe space counseling options, Moody and her staff have tried to provide opportunities for every student that walks through the door.

Siletski said, "We really try to tailor your experience to fit your needs."

Moody, standing in the community garden with the flowers blooming in the center's designated plot, said, "We're a full-fledged center that focuses on emotional wellness, and we're proud of that."

Kaitlyn McCormick/The Rider News



Graduate Assistant Kristen Kreutzberg demonstrates sensory therapy tools.



Scan the QR code to watch video on services offered at the counseling center.

Meet McKinney: Rider's new Title IX director

By Amethyst Martinez

NEW permanent Title IX director Ryan McKinney is hoping to change the current reputation the Title IX and Equal Opportunity Compliance office has acquired over the past year, stemming from concerns with case handling to a multitude of others holding McKinney's position, causing frustration not only from students, but others in the Rider community.

McKinney is at least the fifth person to hold this position since last March, including others who left the university such as Thomas Johnson and Pauline Lloyd, as well as those who held interim roles including Christine M. Pickel and Debbie Stasolla, the current Title IX coordinator.

McKinney comes from the prior position of deputy Title IX coordinator at Moravian University located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he started his career in Title IX in 2018 as an investigator.

Stasolla, the only other worker in the Title IX office, said, "It's been incredibly helpful, the breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise that [McKinney] brings to the table in the Title IX space."

Before he began working in Title IX at higher education institutions, McKinney worked for the Bucks County Department of Corrections for 12 years before making the transition.

"I get to be my authentic self in this role," McKinney said while speaking about the Title IX director position. "I get to engage with people much differently than the criminal justice system."

McKinney is also a member of the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA), which the university recently bought an institution-wide membership for. ATIXA provides Title IX training courses and certifications for coordinators, investigators and administrators.

"They're, in my opinion, the leading organization in Title IX," said McKinney. "We have access to all sorts of resources that will be very helpful for us, no matter how simple or how difficult the case may be."

For the hiring process, Stasolla, who chose McKinney, sought different perspectives for the new hire, and had a search committee put in place for the job opportunity. The list included those who previously served in the office, such as Barbara Lawrence, a past Title IX coordinator, as well as students and administration to help choose the new director.

"It was important to me that we had a number of

different individuals to interview him," said Stasolla. "This position works a great deal with students, so it was really important to have students also interview [McKinney], who was our only candidate who came on campus, and the feedback was very, very positive."

Jenna Muller, a senior human resource management major and student worker in Rider's Human Resources office, was one of the students who met with McKinney before his hire in March.

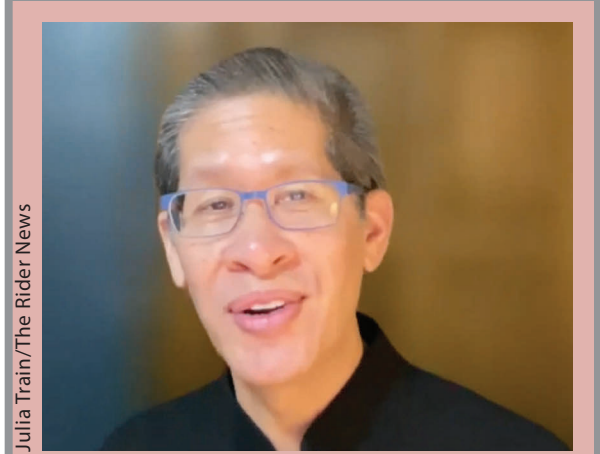
"I was looking for, really, somebody with compassion, with empathy, and he really hit all of the points with that," said Muller. "There was just something about him that you could tell he wasn't just being fake, and I think that's what I was really trying to be cautious of."

McKinney, who started at Rider at the end of February, is still working with Stasolla through the current caseload as well as new cases, which is their main priority until the end of the semester. The office also plans on doing more training to faculty, staff, and students and hopes to update policies to make the Rider community more engaged with Title IX issues.

"Despite some of the challenges that this office may have faced in the past, I hope people feel confident and students feel comfortable, heard and respected," said McKinney. "This type of work is very challenging, and every situation is unique, and I hope that students feel my respect and compassion for this type of work."



Ryan McKinney finds footing as the new Title IX director.



Father Ricky Manalo visits Rider via Zoom.

Sounds of spring: sacred music

By Julia Train

THE Sacred Music Department of Westminster Choir College (WCC), in collaboration with the Kemp Church Music Symposium, features a different musician each week in their Sacred Music Series, and while not many may link Broadway music with religious music, guest speaker Father Ricky Manalo shared his unorthodox journey to finding a passion in Asian liturgical music.

In order to put this series together, associate professor Tom T. Shelton Jr. and colleague Steve Pilkington discussed who they felt weren't being represented enough on campus, designing their program and choosing musicians that could incorporate those groups.

"We have a good Catholic population, and so we wanted to make sure that we were doing something that touched on Catholic music. Tonight we have Father Ricky Manalo, and I was given his name by one of our Catholic students," said Shelton, chair of choral studies, music education and sacred music.

Manalo presented over Zoom on April 10 and represented the Asian community by sharing his view on composing Asian liturgical music.

"I think sacred music is all-encompassing, in terms of anything that is religious in nature. So, that could be Jewish music. It could be Buddhism," said Shelton. "I just thought it encompasses all even though most of the people in our program are church musicians, and when Westminster was founded, their biggest degrees when they first started were organ and church music."

Shelton popped up on the screen and was seated in his office, which was converted from a dorm room in Omega House, and introduced Manalo with a few facts.

Manalo shared his screen and began his presentation about how sociology and cultural identity work together.

He took seven minutes to give his overview, in which he revealed he originally wanted to get into composing for Broadway before he found his calling for liturgical music.

Manalo also shared that he's a Roman Catholic and how his Asian identity relates to his music.

"I was domestically brought up in an Asian household with Filipino and Chinese, but socially I was being brought up in the United States, which is mostly a European paradigm," said Manalo.

He shared a handout and Spotify playlist with the five recordings he played.

He played each song and explained the story behind them in between the excerpts, by explaining the lyrics and music, from the notes to their ties to both Asian culture and Christianity.

His songs featured flutes and choral singers from Oregon Catholic Press.

After he concluded his presentation, 20 minutes were allowed for questions about the creating process and his background from the audience.

Bacterial disease spreads near campus

By Jake Tiger

MERCER County towns have reported two deaths and seven total cases of a pneumonia-like sickness known as Legionnaires' disease, with Lawrenceville, New Jersey, sitting just outside of the affected area.

Since December 2021, confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease have surfaced in nearby Trenton, Ewing, Hamilton and Lawrence, all of which are served by Trenton Water Works (TWW) — the source of the contamination, according to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH).

According to the CDC, Legionnaires' disease is a "serious type of pneumonia" caused by Legionella bacteria that travel through water vapor, often from showers and large, complex air-conditioning units.

Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease include coughing, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches and headaches, according to the CDC.

As the weather heats up and Rider's heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are turned back on, Legionnaires' disease will become a more prominent threat, with older people and those with compromised respiratory systems being primarily at risk, according to professor James Riggs.

"I think the risk of transmission is low based on the general demographic being a young, healthy community that isn't exposed to too much air conditioning mist," said Riggs, who specializes in microbiology and immunology. "I don't think students are at risk as much as the old administrative people are. ... There's a higher concentration of

older people breathing in the same air."

However, Legionnaires' disease popping up at Rider remains unlikely.

Walter Eddy, Rider's executive director of facilities management, confirmed that the university does receive its water from TWW and is aware of the cases, but also stated that his department is taking steps to protect the community.

According to Michael Reca, vice president of facilities and university operations, the facilities department found out about the cases of Legionnaires' disease in a news article during the summer of 2021.

The department then contacted its environmental consultants who recommended that they flush their water systems regularly to ensure that water continues to circulate. If water is still for too long, bacteria like Legionella can cultivate on its surface.

"Every couple of weeks ... we flush some of the hydrants around campus, and we'll tell the custodians to run the showers," said Reca. "That's what keeps the water moving so it doesn't build up."

Reca stated that all of the water used in Rider's HVAC systems is treated, greatly reducing the risk of contamination.

"I feel pretty good about what we're doing. We try to stay a step ahead," said Reca.

On March 27, NJDOH stated it began an investigation into the outbreak of the disease within the areas served by TWW and recommended that water heaters be set to 130 degrees Fahrenheit to kill any harmful bacteria that may be present.

University response to campus threat opens greater discussion

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

implement as much as we can over the summer,” said Reca.

Reca said the day the threat happened, he, Public Safety Officers and six facilities staff members began a campus sweep, identifying any potential problems, such as doors that don't lock or blinds that may need to be added. As they continued to inspect and decipher issues on campus, they created a list of items that need to be addressed and repaired.

“We can be very strategic about it, and that's what we're going to do,” said Reca.

Expanding voices

No students or faculty members were named to the committee in its initial announcement, but Reca said plans to announce such sub-committees are to be released on April 13.

As of April 11, David Dewberry, president of Rider's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) said he had yet to hear of any official request for faculty members to serve on the committee.

Dewberry said, “I see no students, I see no faculty on those committees, and it would be nice to have those included. ... I hope in good faith that they're trying to do the best they can, but there was a certain lack of information.”

Although students and faculty were not publically included in the committee details, a group of 10-12 students was compiled by Andrew Bernstein, Student Government Association (SGA) president.

Bernstein, a senior political science major, said he was approached April 6 by the Campus Safety Committee co-chairs to gather a group of students who may be interested in serving on a sub-committee.

Bernstein said, “I think students have a lot to say on this. Giving them the outlet is not only going to

come up with some great ideas, but I think will help address things that may be overlooked by people who aren't living on campus 24/7.”

Faculty weigh in

Since Dell'Omo's announcement of the Campus Safety Preparedness Committee, many have made clear their disappointment that faculty and student voices were not being included from the beginning of the committee process.

Sociology and criminology professor Sarah Trocchio, who was on campus teaching during the April 3 shelter-in-place, expressed multiple points of disappointment in both the university's response the day of the incident and subsequent committee compilation that, at the time of its April 5 announcement, included no student or faculty perspectives.

Trocchio said it shows how “out of step” some of the upper-level administration was with tackling this issue.

Faculty members also recalled feeling hurt and frustrated by what they described as a lack of concern from the administration immediately following the shelter-in-place, as classes were expected to continue that afternoon and evening.

“There was no actual support extended to our community,” Trocchio said. “There was no follow-up to faculty, checking in ... having a listening session, I haven't heard anything like that in the immediacy of this extremely traumatic experience even offered to students.”

Though some faculty expressed discontent with the university's response specifically regarding the emotional and mental wellbeing of faculty, resources from the counseling center were shared universitywide in the aftermath of the event.

Rider Counseling Center Director Anissa Moody shared that there had been an uptick in traffic since April 3.

“[Students] wanted to come in and process and talk about things, so we worked pretty quickly to make sure that students were able to come in and have their space and time to talk about it,” Moody said.

Complaints like Trocchio's are ones that Dewberry said he heard anecdotally from those represented by the AAUP.

“I think right now we're still kind of feeling the trauma of the situation,” Dewberry said, “And more help is always better than less help. ... I think this might be a bigger situation than your ‘normal’ incident that might require some intervention.”

A focus on training

The committee announced April 9 that it would hold 10 training sessions on emergency preparedness for hostile intruders and active shooters before the end of the spring semester.

Faculty like English professor Megan Titus, however, feel that the shelter-in-place that scared many in the campus community taught an unfortunate lesson.

“How do we manage? Where are the students going to go? What's the size of the classroom? Where's the door? ... At the beginning of each semester if I'm in a new classroom, I'll be assessing,” Titus said.

According to the Lawrence Police Department, the investigation is still ongoing for the swatting incident that caused the uptick in active shooter preparedness concerns at the university, and the investigative division is working with state and federal law enforcement to identify potential suspects.

Trocchio said, “We were the ones that were, in many ways, most directly impacted. ... Many of us that were in class are in a different situation [than] upper-level administrators who may have had their own offices to privately lock.”

Professor named to governor's education task force

By Jay Roberson

PRIOR to the COVID-19 pandemic, America was facing a shortage of teachers, and the pandemic has only increased that demand. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy has put together a task force to address the decrease in teacher candidates in New Jersey and Rider adjunct professor David Aderhold is one of 23 people appointed.

Aderhold's 25 years in education and title as superintendent of the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District made him a candidate for the task force. He spoke about the reason for the decrease in educators prior to COVID-19 in an interview with The Rider News.

“If you go back about a dozen years, there were a series of changes in laws, pensions, certifications and there was a lot of negative discourse around teachers in general that was happening in New Jersey,” said

Aderhold. “Since that time, we've seen the numbers decline for almost ten straight years.”

Professor of education Mark Percy explained he thinks less people become teachers due to a lack of respect for the profession.

“The way you fix the teacher shortage is drawing more people into the field and the way you do that is you pay them more, you allow them more autonomy in what they teach and how they teach. You give teachers the respect that you allegedly claim that we already give them,” Percy said.

Due to COVID-19, many educators retired early or quit due to high stress. Susan Dougherty, the chair of the department of education, also noted that many young people's opinions on education were swayed by COVID-19.

“I think it's partially because the pandemic years were hard years for students who might have typically gone on and thought about becoming a teacher, but their high school experience was tough, so they weren't really thinking about spending their career in a school anymore,” Dougherty said.

Aderhold spoke about some of the changes he would like to see in education in order to bring in more teacher candidates. He included that some barriers had been addressed, such as the removal of the educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), which is a performance-based assessment for educators, but there are still ways to bring in more educators.

“I really think that we make it too hard for people to come in. We need to pay more when they're working. And we need to make sure we're supporting them when they're in the profession,” Aderhold said.

Elementary education major Lindsay Sherman spoke about gun control and why she thinks her peers are not choosing education.

“A lot of the government doesn't agree with gun control, which is ultimately what would help,” Sherman said. “I also think pay. People don't want to be a teacher because you don't get paid enough. There's so much work that you have to do outside of

school.”

One of the major reasons people do not choose teaching as a career is because of the low compensation. Aderhold hopes to address this issue while appointed to the task force.

“We really need to relook at the whole system of how we fund public education in New Jersey. It's a really big conversation. But if we don't do it, what's at risk is are we going to have enough teachers to meet the needs of our students in New Jersey?” said Aderhold.

Though there are many barriers that prevent people from choosing education as a career, Dougherty emphasized that the positives outweigh the negative.

“You absolutely feel the impact you're having on children, on young people in our society, in your role as an educator, and kids are amazing. ... There are definitely great benefits and payoff to becoming a teacher,” Dougherty said.

The New Jersey task force hopes to find ways to better support current and future educators in order to fix the teacher shortage. In order to retain more teachers, changes need to be made.

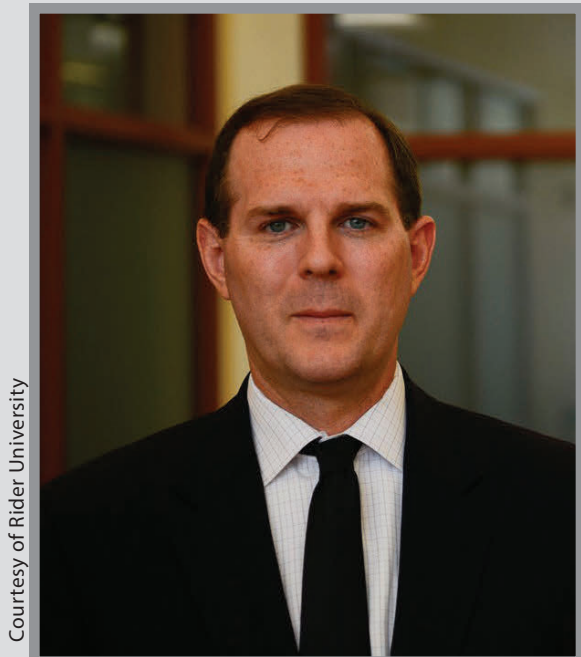
“It's the greatest job in the world,” Percy said. “But as a nation you can't just rely on people's passion. You have to show appreciation for them.”

Read more online:
University holds annual
Students with Disabilities
Panel.
By Bridget Gum-Egan



CORRECTIONS

In the April 5 issue of The Rider News, an article misspelled Emily Porter Siegel's name. The Rider News regrets this error.



Courtesy of Rider University

Adjunct professor **David Aderhold** is one of 23 serving on Gov. Murphy's education taskforce.

Rider's women's wrestling club takes on the mat

Photo courtesy of Timothy Trivisonno



Freshman business administration major **Emma Matera** took second place in the first tournament of the school year in November.

By **Hannah Newman**

THE athletic community at Rider continues to reach new heights and expand opportunities for students, most recently with the university's up-and-coming club sport offering the rare opportunity for women to participate in college-level wrestling.

"Personally, I'd love to make it a Division I sport. But I recognize the challenge that it's not as simple as, hey, let's do it," said Director of Recreation and coach of the women's wrestling club Timothy Trivisonno. "The main thing I think with any program is growth and increasing visibility and opportunity."

The women's wrestling club was established in the spring of 2021 with Trivisonno, '11, taking on the position of coach hoping to broaden the club and making it as legitimate as possible.

Trivisonno wrestled at Rider during his college years and now has 24 years of experience within the sport, including 15 years coaching and working with the men's wrestling team at Rider.

Trivisonno said the opportunity for women's wrestling is not a prominent concern in the eyes of many institutions. There are many that have not taken the time to set up an opportunity for women wrestlers to pursue their sport as opposed to men's wrestling, which provided motivation for Trivisonno to take the time and figure out the best way to make the idea possible.

"There's a lot of opportunity at the high school level, and then it kind of bottlenecks because there's not as many opportunities that come right out of high school," said Trivisonno. "We're trying to increase the opportunities for these young ladies to compete and I think Rider's the perfect place; we have a diverse group in the sense of experience and you know, background which I think is vital to a healthier environment."

In addition to Trivisonno feeding his unconditional love for the sport, he mentioned the Women's

Wrestling Movement which helped women's wrestling reach the criteria for the NCAA to sponsor it as a varsity sport.

This effort has become the catalyst for women to get back on the mat after many of their careers as athletes ended after high school.

There are currently eight members involved in the club, who joined from Broncapalooza and word of mouth. The students were recruited in the fall of 2022, one being sophomore accounting major Sheila Cortez who transferred to Rider solely for the opportunity to wrestle again after her journey on the mat was cut short after high school.

Cortez mentioned that her high school coach was good friends with Trivisonno. She realized she missed the sport, and wanted to make it a part of her career after a year at Ocean County College.

"I was still practicing but I didn't think I was ever going to wrestle again," said Cortez. "I would go to my high school and club and help out the girls while practicing and I would leave saying, 'I miss wrestling.'"

Some other girls joined without having any background experience with the sport at all.

Junior environmental science major Francesca Clarke recalled her study abroad trip to England last spring where she took boxing classes instead of attending the gym due to the expense of going to the gym and the reasonable price to learn how to box.

Clarke came home from her trip yearning to continue the sport and decided to join the Women's Wrestling Club.

Clarke explained that stepping outside of comfort zones results in vast growth for any individual.

"I learned so much in England and [from] wrestling. If you're not trying new things you're not growing and it's just so awesome to be uncomfortable for a little bit to gain traction," said Clarke. "It's such an awesome feeling because I'm like, 'You can just do it. You just don't know where it's gonna go.'"

With the first match in November 2022 versus

Princeton, the club has relied on open tournaments with matches against Princeton and Ursinus where freshman business administration major Emma Matera took second place.

In addition to open tournaments, the club has had about seven exhibition matches that have often been before the men's matches. The club has also been featured in the men's match against Lock Haven and in between their match against Lehigh.

"We're finding every possible avenue to compete in terms of exhibitions, whereas next year, we'll have more of a full lineup, and we'll be able to schedule dual meets," said Trivisonno.

Trivisonno and Cortez noted that the men's wrestling team and specifically Head Coach John Hangey has dedicated time and effort in assisting the club team in their skill and development.

Cortez recalled the times when Hangey would go out of his way to help the girls even if he was just passing through the room.

"We just try to create as much opportunity as possible and like I said, the men's coaches have been terrific. There's times where they'll come in, and they'll show technique or they'll give feedback to the girls. So it's really been an awesome environment to facilitate growth and success," said Trivisonno.

As the club sports at Rider continue to strengthen, the attitude of those involved will remain contagious to those who are looking for a place to pursue what they love while facing disadvantages with opportunity among colleges universally.

"I coached girls lacrosse for 10 years, and I recognized that women's sports were underserved, and that's kind of what motivated me to go into coaching, women's wrestling," said Trivisonno, who mentioned his three-year-old daughter. "I want her to have the same opportunity that I have, especially in a place that is very special to me."

Photo courtesy of Timothy Trivisonno



Coach **Timothy Trivisonno** (center) and members of the women's wrestling club pose for a photo while at a match.

Photo courtesy of Timothy Trivisonno



Members of the women's wrestling club watch a demonstration.

Read Online:
AASA hosts its first cultural slam
By Sarah Griffin



Made for the stage: Rylee Carpenter

By Zachary Klein

FOR junior musical theater major Rylee Carpenter, performing is in her blood.

The Ossining, New York, native grew up in a household where both her parents were involved in the arts, performing in shows and even traveling regionally with companies. Most recently seen at Rider as Cassie in the premiere musical “Clean Slate,” Carpenter has a resumé that rivals someone who has been out of college for several years. And it all started at age four.

As a toddler, Carpenter’s parents enrolled her in dance classes at a local studio, something she continued with through middle and high school. They claimed that dancing would instill discipline in her for years to come. However, Carpenter discovered her true love around first grade: musicals.

“I grew up listening to musicals, but it was around [that time] my mom showed ‘Wicked’ and that was what flipped the switch,” Carpenter said. “That was when I said, ‘I want to do that.’”

Because of her intense dance schedules and yearly performances of “The Nutcracker” at Westchester County Performing Arts Center, Carpenter was unable to star in a musical until she reached high school. She stated that going into her freshman year of high school, she was taking up to 16 different dance classes per week plus rehearsals for upcoming dance recitals.

“There was no free time,” Carpenter said. “I will say, though, I am very thankful for my dance background because throughout the dance, I was performing all the time.”

Throughout her formative years, that high school production of “The Nutcracker” took centerstage, and Carpenter even had the opportunity to play the leading roles of Clara and Snow Queen on several occasions. In describing her intense schedule at the time, she relived the seven-hour, daily rehearsals in addition to a full day of school. She said it was rough, but worth it in the end.



Peter G. Borg/Rider University

Junior musical theater major Rylee Carpenter stands on a platform during a performance.

“It was just a lot by the end of it,” she said. “I didn’t have time to hang out with people. ... Maybe I would get one day off.”

As Carpenter journeyed through high school, she became more involved in the world of musical theater, starring in the lead roles of Velma Kelly in “Chicago” and Wednesday Addams in “The Addams Family” before graduating in June 2020. Like any performer, the pandemic was difficult for Carpenter, going through “dark times” in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I had friends come up to me being like, ‘I’m so sorry,’” Carpenter said, recalling the memory of the shutdown. “I thought, ‘What are you apologizing for?’ It was all so surreal.”

However, Carpenter got through these struggles and started at Rider in September of the same year. Although she opted to complete her first year from home amid the difficulties of virtual instruction, she arrived on campus in 2021 and immediately made a splash within the theater program, bringing her credits in acting, singing and dancing to campus.

During her sophomore year, she had the opportunity to choreograph “Pride and Prejudice” and added that credit to an already impressive resumé.

Puppies lend a helping paw to students

By Madison Lewis

ON a dreary, rainy Thursday night, service puppies lent a helping paw in the fight to protect Rider students from succumbing to everyday stress.

On April 6 in the Student Recreation Center (SRC), students lined up quickly and eagerly, waiting to pet dogs from the Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc., a company that brings therapy animals to schools, camps, hospitals and other events to reduce stress.

A mental health club on campus, Active Minds, organized the event as a means to cope with upcoming finals and promote effective mental health habits.

“Within my first year as a Rider student, I feel quite satisfied with the attention Rider does pay to student’s mental health between clubs like Active Minds, the services the counseling center offers,” said Libby D’Orvilliers, a freshman psychology major and member of Active Minds. “I feel like there’s quite a lot of opportunities for students to receive the help they need and be educated on how to take care of their mental health. I think Active Minds is doing a great job of that by providing events such as the dog therapy event where students can learn some coping skills.”

During this event the students could take their pick of the emotional support animals to pet, ask the pet owners questions about their dogs and relish in the relaxing environment.

There were Layla and Maisey, two black labs, Tony, a lab-beagle mix, a long-haired collie named Buddy and Allie, a Shetland sheepdog.

“It was really calming. ... I felt more relaxed, honestly,” said Mekhia Gwynn, a freshman arts and entertainment industries management major.

This reaction seems to be ideal, as D’Orvilliers explained the mission of Active Minds as well as the way they promote positive change at Rider.

“Active Minds is a club that promotes mental health care. In the club we talk about ways of

navigating mental health challenges, specifically as a college student, including stress management, coping skills and the like,” said D’Orvilliers.

If a Rider student feels down on their luck or down by life’s many challenges, they can turn to Rider’s health services, and maybe they’ll be met with big, fluffy ears, a tail and a set of paws that can provide them mental relief.



Madison Lewis/The Rider News

Allie, a Shetland sheepdog enjoys some soft pets from loving students.

So far in her junior year, Carpenter has exhibited her theatrical range through roles such as Nurse in “Romeo and Juliet” and Carrie in “Carrie: The Musical,” both done by the Rider Student Theater Company, as well as in a mainstage role as Cassie in “Clean Slate.” Each of the roles were very different, and a certain amount of skill is required to master all of them, showcasing Carpenter’s versatility as an actor.

“[In playing Cassie], I dove through the script and tried to make a backstory out of what I could get,” Carpenter said about developing the role in its world premiere. “I just fell in love with her as a person and felt like I experienced her pain through family experiences.”

Junior musical theater major Nicole Duffy played Dion in “Clean Slate” and has known Carpenter for about three years. Although the two actors did not share much stage time in the show, Duffy shared how Carpenter assisted in the show’s development process.

“Rylee always brings a positive, fun attitude and is always willing to try something out to see if it works,” Duffy said. “She is great at taking notes and adjustments and is very flexible and patient because working on a new piece can often require lots of time to figure stuff out and things are constantly changing.”

Carpenter hopes that her career as an actor will continue long after she graduates next spring. She already has her foot in the door, booking the role of Ariel in “The Little Mermaid” at Pickleville Playhouse in Garden City, Utah, over the summer.

Even so, she’ll move through the difficult audition process for departing seniors looking to enter the competitive musical theater market. She maintained her positive attitude and optimism that has gotten her so far.

“We’ll see — maybe I book something and maybe I don’t — and if I don’t I’ll see where I am,” Carpenter said. “[I’ll] figure out what I’m going to do next. Keep auditioning, keep dancing, wherever I can. I am just going to keep it up.”



Scan the QR code to see footage from Active Minds dog therapy event.



Photo courtesy of Tyler Approvato

Approvato (front center) smiles for a photo with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. as a new member.

Senior Spotlight: Approvato embraces early adversity

By Hannah Newman

COLLEGE is a time for students to find themselves through the array of opportunities provided; however, some find themselves through the people they meet and by stepping outside of their comfort zone.

For senior information systems major Tyler Approvato, his peers were the motivation he needed to be a leader, not just for himself, but for Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., a Greek organization that is a part of the Divine Nine: the nine organizations that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council devoted to educating and uplifting the Black community from racial inequalities.

“We aren’t what we are raised to be or what people tell us to be. We are who we want to be and what we want to do, and I think all of those things in nature is to look at people from the inside, not the out,” said Approvato.

Approvato arrived at college unprepared for its reality. As a first-generation college student, he came into higher education uncertain of what he would get out of his experience. He was nearly failing all of his classes, until he met some of the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

The brothers inspired Approvato not just to make something of himself in college, but to find a career path better suited for him. Having been a computer science major since the beginning of his college experience, Approvato then switched his major to information systems, allowing him more opportunities to communicate with people, something he wanted to

pursue in his career.

The guidance given to Approvato by his future brothers lit the path that brought his grades up, giving him the GPA required to become a part of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

Approvato said he now wants manage a company that involves coding or data analytics as a result of switching majors.

“Prior to joining, I would quit and give up on a lot of things.... After failing so many classes I knew I didn’t want to do that. [After] thinking that I could join Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., I could do anything, that was my mindset so I did that,” said Approvato. “I became a lot more confident and set a lot more goals for myself.”

After finding academic stability, Approvato became a brother of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. his junior year. Joining the fraternity gave him a needed dose of self confidence now that he had found an opportunity to be a part of something bigger than just himself.

Approvato fell in love with the concept of Greek Life the further he got into his fraternity experience. He learned a variety of skills that he could apply to other aspects of his life, such as time management and how to embody what he believes in.

The motto of his fraternity is, “We are devoted to the inclusive ‘we’ rather than the exclusive ‘you,’” meaning that a person is judged based on their personality and who they are rather than their physical characteristics. The brothers valued Approvato’s character and proved to him that inclusivity is as real, alive and active as people make it out to be.

His character and contributions were valued so highly within the fraternity during the short time he was a brother that he was elected president last semester.

Junior business administration major and brother of Approvato, Wade Hyshaw, said, “He has always been an open person to go to no matter what the issue is. He’s a main reason why we are close with our interests because he is willing to stretch out his hand and build that firm connection. His term as president has defined the brotherhood and the motivation to do what needs to be done.”

During his term as president, Approvato has hosted roughly 20, events including Miss Phi Beta Sigma, one of the fraternity’s biggest events where Rider students volunteer to compete in a pageant.

Senior entrepreneurial studies major and 2022-23 winner of Miss Phi Beta Sigma Kayelena Brimage said, “I think Tyler has spread inclusivity around Rider’s campus because of the friendships and

relationships he has made over his years at college and I think that he radiates good energy and never has any enemies. He makes a point to want to get to know every chapter and organization on Rider’s campus, which is why I think he is such a well-rounded individual in both Greek Life and at Rider.”

Approvato has proven to himself and his community that change is possible as soon as impossible thoughts can become a source of motivation, not frustration.

“I’m here to show that it does not matter who you are, if you want it you can have it,” Approvato said.



Photo courtesy of Tyler Approvato

Senior information systems major **Tyler Approvato** poses for a photo above Cranberry’s.

This article is part of The Rider News' Senior Spotlight series, showcasing the college experiences and future plans of seniors across campus.



Photo courtesy of Tyler Approvato

Approvato stands with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. at Broncapalooza.

Students share their experience during the shelter-in-place

LAST Monday after arriving at my 1:10 p.m. class in Lynch Adler Hall, a student raised her hand to tell the professor that we needed to shelter-in-place due to an unknown threat. At first, not many of us took it seriously. We just closed the blinds and locked the door. Our professor asked if we were all comfortable continuing the lesson and we all agreed. But when the second message was received a few minutes later: “We have received a threat of a potential active shooter. This is not a drill. Shelter in place. We will continue to provide updates.” Everyone started to have a look of panic, including myself. The classroom became really quiet and all you could hear was the movement of backpacks and chairs as everyone went to the back wall with their belongings. The lights were turned off, and everyone began to text their friends and family. We put tables up against the door and stacked some chairs as a barrier. Students were crying and I spent the entire 52 minutes frantically texting my sister.

Another student who was not in my class tried her best to remain calm and figure out the best place to hide. Megyn Kukulka, junior arts and entertainment industry management major, was sitting at Saxbys next to multiple large windows when she received the first message to shelter-in-place. She was with her roommate, and they both thought that the message was about the weather, due to the shelter-in-place on April 1 regarding the tornado warning; however, they were both confused because it was a sunny day.

“We weren’t sure if it was real or not, and then we started to get more notifications and people started to lock doors across from us. We decided to grab our stuff and go up to the storage room that Saxbys has because that’s the place that’s closed off [and] has limited access, and there’s a door and a window that are both locked,” said Kukulka.

The closet is located on the third floor of Sweigart Hall and once she and her roommate got to the closet and locked the door, they both began to text family and friends letting them know that they were safe. Kukulka went through a similar situation in middle school when her school was put on lockdown due to a potential shooter at a nearby elementary school.

“But I remember specifically sitting in my middle school history class hiding under a desk and all the students were instructed not to text their parents because they didn’t want to overcrowd the front of the school. But there were kids writing their wills on their phones and texting parents, panicking and crying,” said Kukulka.

She believes that a lot more needs to be done to prepare students, professors and faculty for any possible scenarios like this one in the future. She thinks that any threat should be taken seriously and she heard from some of her friends that professors continued to teach throughout the shelter in place, some not even locking their doors.

“For faculty to just kind of blow it off while students are clearly scared and concerned for their safety, then there is a lot that needs to be done,” said Kukulka.

A professor of hers mentioned that the last time she received any training for a possible shooter was five years ago, and she has been teaching at Rider for ten years. Kukulka believes she is really lucky to have found a place to hide and that there is a lot to learn from this situation.

Sophomore secondary education major Jared Hiller was giving a tour to four families, and as he was walking through Cranberry’s, a friend came up to him and told him about the messages. He wasn’t able to look at his phone because he was working, but the employees began to barricade the doors, so Hiller took the families behind the Wendy’s counter. His priority was strictly on the safety of the groups, saying, “It was scary because I had to make sure that the families were fine first because that is my job as a tour guide, to make sure they are OK before I am. But I couldn’t have a reaction because of the fact that they would be scared if I had a reaction.”

He tried to make small talk with them, but it was difficult because everyone was anxious. He told them that if they were not comfortable continuing the tour after the shelter-in-place, he would completely understand and could end the tour early. Hiller personally felt uneasy continuing the tour, but he had to put the families first, and the families were comfortable continuing once the shelter-in-place was over. He explained that one family was nervous, another family was having small talk with Hiller, a father in the third family works at Rutgers University as a public safety officer and was the most prepared for the situation, while the fourth family was relaxed and trying to order Wendy’s.

Hiller continued to update the families with every text he received. He was also texting his family and other tour guides to make sure everyone was alright.

“Everyone was texting us just making sure we’re OK because I understand that everyone was worried and anxious about it, but we couldn’t have those feelings at that moment, so it took extra time to process after the fact,” said Hiller. “On my way home, I began to process how it actually could have been a real thing and it would have been my duty and my responsibility to protect the families at that point.”

Once he began the tour again, he was not as focused and stuttered a lot more than usual. He did miss some small facts, but was also hyperfixated on all the people around him. He kept hearing students walk by and say, “I would never come here after something like this happened while I was on tour.” People were also staring at him and giving him weird looks because he was continuing the tour, but Hiller explained that this was his job and this was what he was supposed to do.

Hiller believes that safety needs to become more of a priority at Rider. He suggested that the university makes sure every door in every building can lock, and to enter a building, the students, professors and faculty have to swipe their ID to get in.

“The fact that we were all scared and anxious, and the fact that also teachers were not self-aware that this could have impacted so many people’s mental health but continued to go on during class, we all need to be more educated on the fact that this can impact more than just one person, it can impact a whole community, and it’s a bigger issue than we all think it is,” said Hiller.

*Felicia Roehm
sophomore journalism major and opinion editor*



Adrienne Unfreed/The Rider News

Students share their feelings and experience while sheltering in place on April 3.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Time to take action against gun violence

I AM sure that everyone in the Rider community was shaken up by the gun violence threat and the resulting shelter-in-place on April 3. The Office of the President has since sent out a few messages about this incident. There is, however, one statement in Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo’s April 4 message that I cannot accept. The statement was, “But unfortunately, we must accept that these types of incidents are a new reality and most likely will continue to occur in the world we live in.”

Accepting these types of incidents as a new reality is like surrendering to gun violence by inaction and the perception that we are powerless and can do nothing to prevent it. We must never accept gun violence in schools, colleges or anywhere else in our communities and country as a new reality. We must educate ourselves and strive to end gun violence.

All Rider community members (faculty, staff and students) need mandatory training for both proactive and reactive situations. Proactive training is learning to spot warning signs before an act of violence takes place and do something about it safely. It also involves building a culture of inclusivity and empathy. A reactive training is about what to do in the event of gun violence. I did not know what to do before the April 3 incident, and have since learned more from links in emails from the Office of the President, the business dean and from The Rider News. The last training that I attended about what to do in the event of active shooting on campus was back in 2007 in response to a spree shooting on the campus of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University on April 16, 2007. That training was, however, voluntary.

I am disappointed that Rider has not invited any gun violence survivors or family and friends of gun violence victims to talk with us about gun violence’s impact and preventions in the face of many shocking and heartbreaking gun violence incidents. This includes the 2022 mass shootings at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas; at a supermarket in a black neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, and at an LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We do need to hear from gun-violence survivors and families and friends of gun-violence victims, and it is important that we are receptive to their pain and the void in their hearts.

The Uvalde school shooting that killed 19 innocent children and two teachers devastated me so much that I started to search for organizations active in addressing gun violence. I came across Moms Demand Action, a volunteer-driven grassroots movement fighting for public safety measures that can protect us from gun violence, and Students Demand Action, composed of young activists committed to ending gun violence.

On April 3, Students Demand Action leaders from Vanderbilt University organized a walkout to the Tennessee capitol in response to the Covenant School shooting in Nashville. On April 5, Students Demand Action groups across the country followed suit and led more than 300 walk-outs in 42 states and in

Washington, D.C., to demand stronger gun laws. Both Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action are part of Everytown for Gun Safety. Together they have helped elect “gun-sense” representatives, senators, mayors and judges to support gun-safety laws, and hold gun-sense events across the country throughout the year, especially around National Gun Violence Awareness Day, the first Friday in June, and the accompanying Wear Orange Weekend.

Although I attended only one event of Moms Demand Action in Trenton last year, this event had a dramatic impact upon me as I was crying most of the time while listening to a teacher whose friend, another dedicated teacher, was killed trying to protect his students from an active shooter, and a mother whose 14-year-old daughter was fatally shot in broad daylight while visiting her grandmother on Bellevue Avenue, Trenton. Attending such an event and regularly receiving emails from Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action give me hope that many people, including gun-violence survivors and families and friends of gun-violence victims, are fighting back to end gun violence in our communities and country.

Another action against gun violence that you can do is to help enforce Extreme Risk laws by reporting to your local police department anyone who promotes violence or fantasizes about killing others, whether in a face-to-face setting or on social media. There were warning signs on Instagram posted by the 18-year-old gunman weeks before he killed 19 elementary-school children and two teachers in Uvalde, Texas. New Jersey has this law, but even if your home state does not have this law, you can still report such an incident or person to the police. A potential gun violence incident at Lawrence High School was averted in December 2021 because a student reported another student who had brought a gun to the school.

The most fundamental every day action to assure safety in our communities is being kind to one another: kind in thoughts, kind in words and kind in actions. Your kindness and empathy can make the difference in those who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others. It takes all of us to uphold the safety of our communities and to end gun violence.

Obeua Persons
accounting professor



Courtesy of Fibonacci Blue/
Wikimedia Commons

High school students protest against gun violence at Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2018.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Compliance isn't care: the issue with Title IX

RECENT months, The Rider News has done excellent work keeping the community up-to-date on the University's ongoing struggle to implement Title IX. It's a struggle that's been exacerbated by a high rate of employee turnover and the constant shuffling of job duties that has made it hard for anyone temporarily responsible for Title IX to develop any kind of consistency or to dig the university out from under its backlog of complaints. As the university works toward being in compliance with Title IX, though, it's important for us to remember that we should dream bigger and demand greater than compliance.

One of the most consistent messages that comes through The Rider News' reporting is that students don't feel cared for while navigating the Title IX process. I want to be sure to make the distinction here between being cared about and being cared for.

Caring about someone is squishy and involves feelings; I have little doubt that many who have worked in and with Rider's Title IX offices care about the students and employees they encounter there. Caring for someone is concrete and active; it means discerning what someone needs and providing it, and it requires institutional resolve and resources.

This is the kind of care that students seem to be missing when they discuss their experiences, and I imagine it's an ideal form of care that many think would be realized when the university is able to better comply with Title IX. But Title IX doesn't require that institutions care for victims of sexual harassment and assault, and it in fact disincentivizes care for those victims.

If this seems counter-intuitive, it's because it is. After all, the point of Title IX, a 1972 amendment to the 1965 Higher Education Act, is to ban sex and gender discrimination in university settings, inclusive of harassment and assault. Title IX, in that sense, definitely cares about sex and gender discrimination, but the way it enacts that care about discrimination somewhat illogically results in a lack of care for victims of discrimination.

In her 2015 essay “Campus Sex, Campus Security,” Jennifer Doyle observes that Title IX attempts to address matters like sexual assault and harassment by forcing the university to experience “its own vulnerability.” A university that is deemed non-compliant with Title IX is in violation of the law, Doyle underlines, and “vulnerable to fines and lawsuits.”

In other words, when a university receives a Title IX complaint from a member of its community, the university, in a state of financial vulnerability, is most likely to figuratively turn away from that victim and toward the federal government in an attempt to proclaim itself blameless. The best outcome for a university is to prove that nothing actually happened to the complainant or, short of that, that it was someone else's fault.

A lack of care for victims of sexual assault and harassment isn't unique to Rider and isn't just a problem with Title IX. Sara Ahmed in her 2021 book “Complaint!” exposes many of the same problems in United Kingdom higher education complaint processes. In the book's first sentence, Ahmed states the problem succinctly: “To be heard as complaining is not to be heard.”

Let's go one more step: to not be heard is to not be cared for. Ahmed traces the same contours Doyle does in documenting universities' struggle to hear victims and their subsequent reticence to provide care for those victims of sexual assault and harassment. We can see in the composite that Title IX is really part of a larger genre of bureaucracy that is meant to manage complaints by minimizing them.

So as we, as a community, continue to ask Rider to fulfill its obligation to be compliant with Title IX, we should also ask for more than that. If Title IX slyly disincentivizes care for victims of sexual assault and harassment, then we must work beyond the boundaries of compliance and consider what our community members need when they bring a complaint to the Title IX office.

This might include the guaranteed presence of a professional who is trained to receive victims of assault. It could include a similar professional who can advocate for someone whose traumatic experience makes it difficult for them to retrieve details that an interviewer may believe should be readily available. It could include resources that connect a victim of assault with ongoing access to trauma-informed therapy with costs covered by the university. And so much more. Because when we recognize that compliance isn't care, we free ourselves up to get to the work of providing each other with what's really needed.

Justin Burton
music professor



Raashee Mishra/The Rider News

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
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MEN'S TENNIS

Men's tennis is brewing something special

By Jake Tiger

RIDER men's tennis has found its footing for the first time in its history.

Under the new regime of Head Coach Thomas Battaglia, a 3-1 start to Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) play has given the program newfound vigor, and with a young, dominant core, Rider is set up to go from worst to first in record time.

"This is just the start of it and to be where we are is absolutely amazing," said Battaglia, who took over the team in 2021. "Sitting at 3-1 is pretty awesome, and I'm excited."

Prior to this season, Rider had only three MAAC wins since the 2015-16 season, and since the inception of Rider's men's tennis in 2007, the Broncos had never won two conference matches in an entire season.

"It's very exciting to me, especially thinking ahead to my junior, senior year," said sophomore Dylan Lachmanen. "Our team is very young; we need the years of experience and growth, and I think once we get that under our belt, then we'll be good to go."

Before a loss to Marist on April 7, the Broncos started MAAC play with a 3-0 record with wins over Fairfield, Mount St. Mary's and Quinnipiac.

The 5-2 victory over Quinnipiac on April 2 was particularly meaningful for the Broncos, as it was their first win over the school since the Bobcats joined the MAAC in 2013. Before Rider's win, all eight of its previous meetings with Quinnipiac had resulted in 0-7 losses.

"Losing matches at 7-0, 7-0, 7-0 every single time, it becomes taxing, not only on them, but me," said Battaglia. "Now, we know every match, no matter who we play against, we have a chance to win."

Rider's sudden turnaround is the result of a fruitful recruiting process by Battaglia, who doubled the size of the roster with a crop of promising freshmen and transfers.



Peter G. Borg/Rider Athletics

Sophomore **Dylan Lachmanen** is pleased with the team's success this season.

The team went from eight to 16 players, including seven freshmen and four sophomores that have carried the majority of the load during the Broncos' hot start, with five of Rider's top-six players being new additions.

"My No. 1 from last year is now playing No. 5," said Battaglia. "We really worked hard recruiting players from all different parts of the world, and they've come in and really gelled and have taken this team to another level."

Before the MAAC Championships begin on April 22, the Broncos have two more conference matches,

hosting Siena on April 14 and Niagara on April 15.

Rider is currently tied with Quinnipiac for the MAAC's top spot, and with a win in either of its last two matches, Rider can clinch the first playoff berth in team history.

"We've got more recruits, we have more talent, we have more players, and I feel like the chemistry with the players that we have now has actually had a great impact on our success," said junior Tommy Fuentes. "[Battaglia is] a very good coach, and we have a team of brothers. We're a good team."

WHO ARE YOUR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PLAYERS OF THE YEAR?

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VOTE!



2022-23 PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

The Rider News' sports editors picked five men and five women athletes from Rider's athletic programs. Now it's up to you to decide who earns the titles of Men's Player of the Year and Women's Player of the Year! The winners will be announced in the April 26 edition of The Rider News.

Voting will be open until April 14

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

WRESTLING

All-American Laird leaves lasting legacy

By Logan VanDine

On the mats of Alumni Gym, many Rider wrestlers have claimed conference titles, been named an All-American and dominated on a national level, but only one Bronc has been dubbed “The Franchise.”

Graduate student Ethan Laird, the latest in an elite Rider lineage, pinned his name in history, as decades of decision and devotion culminated in an unforgettable season.

“Wrestling has always been number one for me; the past six years of my life have been wrestling,” Laird said. “It’s been the number one thing that I have cared about, the number one thing that I have been focusing on, the number one thing I think about, so being at Rider wrestling has been my life for six years.”

Before Rider, Laird was tearing through high school athletics in three sports. Throughout his high school career, Laird gave baseball and football a try, even though it was a demanding schedule to tackle three sports all at the same time.

“In high school, the day after wrestling ended I was at baseball tryouts, and the day after baseball tryouts it would be football tryouts, and the day after football I would go to wrestling practice, so it was always 365 days a year,” Laird said.

Surprisingly, Laird did not give up football in high school to compete in wrestling full-time, becoming his high school’s best quarterback and free safety at General McLane in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

“My senior year, I was all-state in football and after that happened I was like, ‘Maybe I want to play football,’ but then I had a really good senior season of wrestling, and so I knew I was going to wrestle. Even though I knew I liked football, I knew wrestling was my sport,” said Laird. “Once you’re in a sport like wrestling that’s so individual, everything you do is on your shoulders, because once you play team sports, it’s a little different because you can do well and still lose.”

During his high school wrestling career at General McLane, Laird compiled 138 all-time career wins, the best in school history.

“My senior year, I finally had a breakout year where I pretty much dominated everyone and I took second at states. It was 138 wins but a lot of losses, more losses than what you normally would average,”



Graduate student **Ethan Laird's** season is highlighted by a victory over then No.1 Max Dean of Penn State.

the 197-pound athlete said.

Even though Laird had his share of defeats, he was still highly touted in the college selection process.

“I was talking to ten-ish schools, a lot of schools that are in our conference. ... It was more similar to Rider schools that were reaching out and I had a full ride to all of them and a lot of them were closer to home,” Laird said.

Despite the full rides that he was getting from schools, Laird wanted to go to Rider, even though they did not give him a full scholarship.

When Laird first sat down and met with Head Coach John Hangey and Assistant Coach Nic Bedeloy, he knew Rider was the place for him.

“Our coaches Nic and Hangey were just guys I knew I would get along with, they were guys that believed in me from the get-go and they made me want to compete for them,” Laird said of his recruitment. “I needed a little more money from them, they got it for me because even though I had better offers at different places, those were the two guys I wanted to wrestle for.”

Laird immediately made an impact his freshman year, ending with an impressive 17-10 record during the year. He placed second in the Eastern Wrestling League and took second place at the Princeton Open and fifth at the Keystone Classic.

“That was a crazy year,” Laird said. “The college

wrestling season was long and hard. It beats you up physically and mentally so it beats you down, but Nic and Hangey gave me the right things to focus on to get through that year.”

Hangey, who just finished his sixth year coaching at Rider, spoke highly of Laird as more than just a wrestler.

“He’s a kid with just tremendous character and I want every kid in my program to embrace those qualities. [Laird] came from a really good program in high school and had a great coach and great support from his family,” the former Division I All-American said. “He made sure that our culture was correct by leading by example, by holding kids accountable, putting himself in a leadership position, by doing the right things, being a silent leader and when you get nicknamed ‘The Franchise,’ you did the right thing.”

Laird is coming off his final year as a Bronc, becoming a Mid-American Conference (MAC) Champion, placing sixth overall in the NCAA Tournament and being named All-American.

For Laird, the MAC Championship was just another match.

“To be honest, I didn’t feel a thing. It wasn’t anything different from a regular match because being a MAC champ was not my goal this year, being a MAC Champion was something I expected was going to happen along the way to being a national champion,” Laird said.

As he wraps up his Rider career, Laird, who is majoring in business administration, still sees wrestling in his career post-Rider, but this time in a different role.

“I want to coach wrestling,” the All-American said. “I keep telling everyone as they say ‘but you have an MBA and all of that.’ I’ve taken a lot of classes in my six years at Rider and none of those subjects sound quite as good to me as wrestling is and coaching.”

With the coaching mentality, he may already have an opportunity right out of college.

“Our plans are to keep him around as a coach so he can give back,” Hangey said. “He’ll be an amazing coach, because he understands wrestling at a really high level and the best thing about Ethan is that he can get it across.”

TRACK AND FIELD

Efobi and Snyder shine in TCNJ meet

By Logan VanDine

JUST down the road in Ewing, New Jersey, Rider track and field had a strong showing in the TCNJ Invite, headlined by first-place finishes for both the men and women on April 8.

‘We had a good day’

On the women’s side, one of the best showings was sophomore Chika Efobi in the shot put. Looking to get the win for the Broncs, Efobi was able to do just that and win that category with an impressive throw of 13.53 meters.

Efobi continued to have a great outdoor season, taking home first place during the Rider 5 Way on March 26 and second place at the Big 5 Individual on April 1. The Broncs were also able to place second and third overall in the shot put with freshman Maura Baker finishing second with a score of 13.32 meters and junior Samantha Kamara winning third with a score of 12.50 meters.

“We had a good day in many areas. Efobi continued her strong season with a win in the shot put throwing 13.53 meters. She’s very consistent right now and it is exciting to see,” Head Coach Bob Hamer said.

Efobi talked about her performance in the shot put and how she relied on her faith to get her a first-place victory.

“This season I’ve locked in with a God-centered competitive mentality. I have no stress when I remember that I’m doing this for someone whose expectations and standards don’t change,” she said. “This past weekend in particular was an example of my team’s friendly competition. Competing and training alongside someone like [Baker] does not allow you to become complacent so I knew that if I wanted this victory I’d have to reach a new peak.”

‘He is looking better each week’

The men were just as good, specifically in the 800-meter relay. Looking to build on an already great outdoor season, junior Tamrat Snyder had an excellent race in the 800-meter relay, finishing first overall with a time of 1:53.44. It was the first time Snyder competed in the category since winning the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Indoor Title back in February where he finished with a time of 1:49.71.

“Snyder ran a strong race to win the 800 meters. He is looking better each week and he is closer to his desired fitness level,” Hamer said.

Snyder, who was coming back from an injury that kept him out for a substantial amount of time, was happy with his efforts but knew he could have competed better.

“I wasn’t unhappy with the performance but it

also wasn’t my best. This was a good race for me and I can certainly build off this,” Snyder said.

In other distance relays, senior Nick Strain ran a good race in the 1500 meters with a time of 4:00.23 and a third-place finish, and in pole vaulting, junior Javier Santiago ended up in second place with a distance of 4.30 meters.

The Broncs now prepare for two more meets with the Princeton University Larry Ellis Invitational and the Bison Outdoor Classic, set to take place on April 15 and 16.



Rider men’s and women’s track continued its strong spring season at the TCNJ Lion Invite on April 8.

Sports

ONLINE

BRONCS BREAK NINE GAME LOSING STREAK

Softball's losing streak extended to nine games before being broken with two wins on April 11.

FIND THE GALLERY ON [THERIDERNEWS.COM](https://www.ridernews.com) OR SCAN THE QR CODE



BASEBALL

Pitching powers Broncs to third series win

8 SAVES - T-2ND IN NATION
36 STRIKEOUTS - 1.67 ERA

3.32 ERA - 4TH IN MAAC
36 STRIKEOUTS

3.20 ERA - 1ST IN MAAC
35 STRIKEOUTS



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

#12 KIRWIN

#48 DOELLING

#28 HEINE

The Broncs' pitching trio of graduate students **Danny Kirwin**, **Frank Doelling** and senior **Dylan Heine** have been workhorses on the mound and some of the best in the MAAC.

By Benjamin Shinault

RIDER baseball continued its winning ways after taking two of three from the Siena Saints. Rider dropped the first game of the series, but then it was all winning moving forward. Huge contributions came from all around the diamond whether at the plate or on the mound, it seemed as if the Broncs dominated in all facets.

After yet another conference series win, the Broncs nearly kept the winning ways alive against NJIT, but fell just short 7-6 on April 11.

Winning streak comes to a halt

After a winning streak that stretched five games for the Broncs, it finally came to a screeching halt after losing 3-1 to the Saints in the first game of the series of a Friday doubleheader. Senior pitcher Dylan Heine was in charge of controlling the Saints did a solid job, but was not as dominant as his past outings with a line of 6 1/3 innings, eight hits, three earned runs, three walks and four strikeouts.

The scoring for the Saints began in the second inning when they hit a solo shot to left field to get on the board first, a pinnacle moment they would not look back from. Later on, the Saints added two more runs coming off a single up the middle and a wild pitch that scored a run.

The only Rider run came from a solo home run to left field off the bat of junior catcher Brian Skettini.

One of the many Broncs that struggled to decipher what Saints fifth year starter Arlo Marynczak was throwing at them was senior outfielder Brendan O'Donnell.

"He was able to locate his fastball up and got us to chase it," O'Donnell said. "We had opportunities but couldn't get that big hit to ignite the offense."

The beast from the pen

In the second game of the doubleheader, the Broncs looked more like themselves as they wrapped up the ballgame with nine total hits, seven runs and a win. With brisk weathers attempting to pray on the Broncs downfall, they did nothing of the sort and the Broncs split the doubleheader and won the second

game of the series, 7-2.

Graduate student pitcher Frank Doelling took complete control of the game and went deep into his start, going seven innings and striking out five Saints.

Doelling, on the other hand, found himself in trouble, walking four and allowing seven hits, but it kept the ball in the ground as he relied on the elite defense behind him to clean up any potential mistakes.

It's beyond overdue to mention the complete dominance that graduate student relief pitcher Danny Kirwin has been displaying all over the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC).

In the second game of the series, the bullpen beast that is Kirwin closed the game by facing five Saints players and striking out all of them, leaving them whimpering in the batter's box.

"I just think to myself that nobody can hit me, and I'm going to make good pitches," he said.

Some of the biggest contributors on the offensive side were senior infielder John Volpe, sophomore outfielder Richie Sica and O'Donnell. Volpe had four hits on the day, bringing in four runs, while O'Donnell totaled two hits and two RBIs.

'A lot of excitement'

Another day, another win for the Broncs in Loudonville, New York, against the Saints. Whether it was sophomore starting pitcher Brian Young merely pulling the strings of the Saints or O'Donnell's two home runs, no doubt was left in the minds of Rider fans that it was a fun game to watch.

Young was on the mound for the Broncs looking to have a similar outing to the successful one he had the week before against the Niagara Purple Eagles. Young went seven innings, allowed just four hits, a singular walk and struck out seven agitated Saints.

Young wasn't the only Bronc to have a superb performance on the diamond as O'Donnell hit two home runs and accounted for almost half of the team's runs.

O'Donnell gave a descriptive point of view and walkthrough of his two home runs.

"I saw it pop out of his hand and was able to stay through it to left." O'Donnell went on to describe his

second long ball, "It was on an inside fastball, I got a little jammed but was timed up for it and was able to give us an answer."

That second home run from O'Donnell was his 100th career hit, the fourth Bronc to achieve that offensive milestone this season.

Senior outfielder Scott Shaw had a grand slam in the second inning which put the Broncs up four early on in the ballgame. From the grand slam from Shaw and a two home run day from O'Donnell, the Broncs propelled themselves to a 7-4 victory over the Saints and yet another divisional series win.

Came up just short

Ending a successful MAAC matchup against the Siena Saints, the Broncs faced a fellow New Jersey college in the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). After leading early in the ballgame and having their way with the Islanders pitching in the early stages, the Broncs couldn't hold on and lost 7-6 on April 11.

Freshman pitcher PJ Craig got the start for the Broncs and his outing did not go as planned as he allowed two home runs in only two innings pitched. A few other freshman pitchers such as Gavin Hawkes and Christian Aiello both checked in for the Broncs, giving up two earned runs.

The offense of the Broncs did what they had to do, putting six runs up on the board, but this time around it wasn't enough to give them the win. A select group of Broncs had a good day at the plate. Those were Shaw, senior first baseman Luke Lesch and senior catcher Socrates Bardatsos. Shaw and Bardatsos both doubled and Lesch had two runs batted in.

With this loss, the Broncs look ahead to their next matchup against the team they lost to in the 2022 MAAC championship, the Canisius Golden Griffins. The Broncs look to take revenge on April 14 at 3 p.m., with the second game of the three-game series taking place at the Trenton Thunder Ballpark, home of the Trenton Thunder, on April 15.

Tickets will be free for the first 100 students with their Bronc ID and will cost \$5 after.