

Tax forms show Dell'Omo's deferred compensation

By Amethyst Martinez

RIDER President Gregory Dell'Omo received an undisclosed amount of deferred compensation in the school's most recent tax forms, but, like many of the university's employees, he will be taking a reduction in retirement compensation this year, according to the school's chief financial officer.

Dell'Omo, Rider's highest-paid employee, earned \$661,936 in salary and benefits in 2021-22, the highest level since he joined the school in 2015, according to the tax forms. Over his years at the helm, Dell'Omo has repeatedly stressed Rider's precarious financial position and the university's bond rating has plummeted.

CFO James Hartman, who was listed as the third highest paid employee in the tax forms, declined to say what Dell'Omo's deferred compensation was. In August, Dell'Omo announced that non-union workers' retirement benefits would be slashed from 5% to 2.5% due to the school's "dangerously uncertain" financial position, and Hartman said in an email to The Rider News that Dell'Omo would follow suit. This month, Rider's unionized support staff agreed to a similar retirement cut but Rider's faculty union members refused to give up any retirement benefits after years of stagnant wages.

Hartman declined an in-person or phone interview with The Rider News regarding the president's finances.

Rider's most recent tax forms unveiled a multitude of differences regarding its finances from the past year's filing, as the university has made numerous cuts from retirement slashes to staff layoffs due to its economic struggles.

According to the forms, Dell'Omo's salary and benefits amounted to a \$56,420 jump from the 2020-21 tax form to the most recent.

In the fiscal year that spans from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, the president's salary and benefits amounted to \$661,936, with the previous tax form totaling to \$605,516. The prior form featured administrator pay cuts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where Dell'Omo took a 25% voluntary cut from May to October 2020, and a 15% cut from November 2020 through June 2021, according to Kristine Brown, associate vice president for university marketing and communications.

Via email, Hartman said that outside of the president's base salary, which amounted to \$569,702 in the most recent tax filing, the president's benefits included payment for a life insurance policy, disability insurance, a car allowance, use of the house on Lawrenceville Road adjacent to campus and deferred compensation. The benefits cost the university an



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo's base salary amounts to \$569,702 in addition to \$92,234 in benefits in recent tax forms.

additional \$92,234 to his base salary.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year tax filing, Dell'Omo's salary and benefits amounted to \$620,112, according to university tax forms.

Hartman blamed the sizable increase on the "value of non-salary-based benefits," which he explained as salary reductions and deferred compensation. Hartman refused to disclose the amount of deferred compensation, or what the

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New technology introduced to Rider classrooms

By Jake Tiger

AFTER a year-long plague of bugs and befuddlement, Rider's Office of Information Technology hopes to regain trust this fall with a new regime and a \$400,000 plan to modernize dozens of classrooms across campus.

"We want to get our street cred back," said Mike Reca, Rider's vice president for facilities and university operations. "There was consternation with Ellucian for a while because it was a little rocky, but now I think we're hitting on all cylinders."

Since the administrative restructuring in July, Reca has been responsible for Rider's OIT and has spearheaded the department's upgrade project alongside another new face, Chief Information Officer Moe Rahman.

Rahman was announced as Rider's new CIO in April 2023, becoming its first in the position since fully partnering with Ellucian in 2022.

Rahman, who joined Ellucian in 2013, worked previously at Kean University, his alma mater, Brookdale Community College and Yeshiva University, fulfilling a variety of roles throughout his career.

"Now we have an invested CIO," said Reca. "It's making it a lot easier to transition into, 'Let's get stuff done.'"

Fifty-five classrooms across campus were approved for technological upgrades, with most classrooms having their new equipment installed prior to the first day of classes. The upgrades include new smart displays, projectors and processors, which Reca called the "brain" of the classroom.

In all, the project's total will fall somewhere in the \$400,000 range, according to Reca.

"We vetted this with an organization that's part of the faculty union called the facilities monitoring committee," said Reca. "We had some faculty engagement, we had administrative engagement, so there was a lot that went into choosing what we chose, because you didn't want to have it be too technical either, where you have to have a Ph.D. in astrophysics to use it."

The Fine Arts building and Bierenbaum Fisher Hall were the two main beneficiaries of the advancements, seeing new technology in 18 and 17 classrooms, respectively.

Of the 55 approved classrooms, 32 have already been outfitted with smart displays that feature a writable

surface and adjustable mount, with screens of 86 or 75 inches. Each new display cost the university approximately \$9,000 for hardware alone, Reca said.

According to Rahman, rooms 207 and 208 of Lynch Adler Hall are also slated for upgrades in the coming weeks, being the final two rooms to receive new screens.

"So far, it's been good. I was a little worried at



Rashe Mishra/The Rider News

After receiving approval for technological improvements, classrooms throughout campus acquire new smart displays.

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INSIDE BRONCS GET SHUTDOWN

Women's soccer opens up MAAC play with a scoreless loss.



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STUDENT REFLECTS ON SEMESTER ABROAD

Rider student unveils an "entirely new way of life" during trip in Rome, Italy.



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DRAG RACE HAS AUDIENCE ON THEIR FEET

The beloved tradition made a return with an 80s theme and glamorous queens.



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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY AMETHYST MARTINEZ

Intoxicated in Switlik

Too intoxicated. On Sept. 9, at 10:15 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Switlik Residence Hall for the report of an unconscious student. When Public Safety arrived, along with an ambulance crew, the unconscious student had left the area. Upon a brief investigation, the student was identified and found in their residence hall room. The student was intoxicated and found in the presence of alcohol. The ambulance crew evaluated the student. This incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Ashes to ashes

A mysterious smoke. On Sept. 11, at 11:15 a.m., Public Safety was contacted by Facilities Management who reported that someone had been smoking in the basement of Olson Residence Hall. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with Facilities Management employees who informed them that they had found one of the basement doors propped open with a piece of paper and several chairs arranged in a circle. In the center of the chairs, on the floor was ash and other evidence of smoking. The Lawrence Township Fire Marshal was notified of the incident and Public Safety is investigating.

Fractured glass

Broken windows. On Sept. 11, 2023, at 1:30 p.m., Public Safety was on patrol in the area of Lincoln Residence Hall when they met with the Residence Life Staff of the building. The Residence Life staff informed Public Safety that during a walkthrough of the building, they had discovered a cracked window. Public Safety found the cracked window in the center stairwell and documented it. Facilities Management was contacted to have the window repaired.

- Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

University continues wellness efforts with expanded committee

By Kaitlyn McCormick

AFTER a 52-minute shelter in place shook the campus community last spring, everyone at Rider knew that stronger efforts needed to be made to promote safety and preparedness.

The result? The evolution of the Campus Safety Preparedness Committee. Now, going into the fall 2023 semester, this initiative has evolved to encompass wellness in all forms and avenues, newly named the Community Wellbeing Committee.

Mike Reca, vice president for facilities and university operations as well as a key leader in the committee, said that health and safety initiatives have always existed at the university, but the events of last spring served as a wake-up call.

"It wasn't until that incident that it really brought to the forefront the more of the safety side of things," Reca said. "And that's when [Rider] President [Gregory] Dell'Omo said, 'Hey, we have to get a cross section of people to give a lot of input to find out where we possibly could be deficient.'"

Inside the committee

The new Community Wellbeing Committee consists of the steering committee from last spring as well as four subgroups: facilities and physical space access, communications and technology, emergency response and training, and community wellbeing.

Former Chief Diversity Officer Barbara Lawrence had chaired the steering committee with Reca before her departure in June.

While not all committee members' names were disclosed to The Rider News, the grouping consists of an intersection of staff, students and faculty.

"Last spring we had to move fast," said Reca, explaining that it was important to maintain the attention of community members after the shelter in place to put an emphasis on safety preparedness.

After sifting through information from the subcommittees, Reca said the team came up with a plan by early June and implemented as much as they could over the summer.

Student Government Association President Naa'san Carr was a member of the facility and physical space access subcommittee last spring, along with many other prominent SGA voices.

SGA, Carr said, is just the "centralized voice" of all students on campus.

"We try to get all of the opinions of students and come together and bring all those concerns to committees like this," he said.

'It's horrible that we have to plan for something like this'

Multiple changes and investments have been made to the university to directly address the threat of campus violence and safety following the swatting incident last spring.

Immediately, facilities took inventory of all classrooms and outside doors in every building.

According to Reca, advancing to intruder-proof and

heavy-duty locks was an initiative that had started in 2018 with 88 classrooms, but was never finished.

Now, 98% of the classrooms and more exposed meeting rooms on campus are completed, with facilities just waiting on specialized hardware for a few unique doors. Reca said the updates totaled at 76 doors across 60 rooms.

Largely at the request of the SGA, 14 new security cameras were installed since last spring, mostly around the residence halls, and 10-15 more are planned to be added around campus moving forward.

Carr said the focus was adding security to spaces that "might be blindspots for predators to go into."

Safety training sessions held last spring, which had 511 participants, are also expected to continue. Reca said there are eight sessions planned for the fall and a probable 11 in the spring.

'This will be a committee of action'

Changes aren't just being made to equip the community in case of an active shooter.

Reca says that the committee is looking to be prepared for all types of wellness, from threats of violence to extreme weather conditions to Americans with Disabilities Act concerns and everything in between.

"We should be dealing with all the issues," Reca said.

A key part of this is updating the Rider Alert system, which will be transitioning to a platform called Rave Mobile Safety over the next 4-6 months.

According to Reca, the platform will be easier to work via phone and from anywhere on campus with higher speeds and a broader bandwidth. He described it as "much more functional and nimble."

Lastly, mental health is becoming a key part of acknowledging wellness on campus.

After the initial problem-solving mode necessary for improving physical aspects of safety on campus, Reca said he realized just how important it is to support mental wellbeing for staff, faculty and students, which is why partnering with the university's counseling center will be so vital.

"After the [shelter in place], there was an increased amount of people who wanted to talk about it, so we have to be prepared for that," Reca said.

In addition to leaning on the Rider Counseling Center as a resource for students, Rider's Human Resources department has an employee assistance program to provide aid to faculty and staff.

Investing in safety and wellness

The laundry list of safety changes made to Rider's campus didn't come cheap, but luckily the



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Locks are installed on doors in Lynch Adler Hall to increase classroom safety.

university was able to pull from outside funding.

According to Reca, the university used \$150,000 granted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency during the COVID-19 pandemic to fund the safety improvements.

Reca said that the changes to the doors on campus ranged between \$75,000-\$80,000, the Rave system cost \$20,000-\$25,000, new cameras around \$40,000-\$50,000 including the \$25,000 that was contributed by SGA, and other miscellaneous items including preparation for Rider's first "Care Fair" later this month cost around \$5,000.

Allowance for the committee and its initiatives will also be worked into the university budget moving forward, and meetings are expected to take place once a month.

On Sept. 28, Reca is inviting all members of the Rider community to attend the university's "Care Fair." The event will take place on the campus mall and allow all members of the university to pop by tables from groups like the counseling center, public safety and Lawrence Township first responders to get a closer look at the versatility of wellness efforts at Rider.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Security cameras are added outside of Lincoln Hall.

New faculty hired amid union contention, concerns

By Jay Roberson

TRANSITIONING into a new school year can be a stressful time for faculty as they begin their classes and research.

At Rider, professors face an added stressor: the looming possibility of potential layoffs as the university struggles financially.

During a time of unknowingness for current faculty members, Rider has hired 14 professors to programs with growing enrollment numbers in an effort to attract students.

Rider's American Association of University Professors Chapter President Quinn Cunningham spoke about the ways in which potential layoffs are affecting newly hired faculty members.

"We are constantly trying to attract new talent and people that are going to hopefully come to Rider and stay here for a long time and be good colleagues," said Cunningham. "Then, to have to come into this year with the threat of layoffs, I can only imagine is extremely stressful."

Some of the programs new faculty are joining include marketing, mathematics, social work, nursing and more.

New faculty member Tiffany Rikard, a professor of leadership and counseling, was unaware of the tensions between faculty and administration, but is looking to join the AAUP.

Rikard said, "In North Carolina, we also don't have unions, so things are a little different, and I'm learning that."

After teaching an undergraduate program at Pfeiffer University, Rikard decided to come to Rider because of an opportunity to teach a graduate program, and her family lives in the area.

"I'm really not aware of a lot of what's going on. Maybe if I had more information about that, I don't know what my level of concern would be," said Rikard.

Longtime faculty member and professor of music theory and composition Joel Phillips, who is leaving the university after this school year, expressed disappointment in Rider's administration, saying he didn't have a choice but to take the early retirement incentive offered to professors.

"The first reason [to take the incentive] is, I have no more students to teach because they have destroyed our program. But the second reason is to protect my junior colleagues from being laid off," said Phillips.

Through the period of uncertainty, the protection of junior staff members, who were hired more



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Tiffany Rikard, one of Rider's new faculty members.

recently and are lower in rank, seem to be the AAUP's main concern.

Phillips said, "I can retire and they can't. Therefore I will leave, and it will help to protect them. But [Westminster Choir College] is in such dire straits now that the protection is temporary still."

Similarly, Cunningham explained some of the ways that she hopes to help the junior faculty members through this period.

Cunningham said, "We really try to protect our junior faculty as much as we can through some of this, so to make sure they're getting all the information they need and to make sure they understand what's going on. But we're also trying to let them just focus on getting those first classes going."

Phillips emphasized that he did not want to leave his career as early as he did, as he felt he was in his prime years of teaching.

"That's not the way you want to go out of a career, but there's literally no choice. Right? My own original plan, if my health was good, I would have taught at least five more years," said Phillips.

Through his years teaching at WCC, Phillips saw a number of majors and programs disappear, and he says this has only discouraged faculty and students.

"The people I had recruited, the school actually sent letters to them and said, you know, we're just not going to do that anymore," Phillips said. "You can still come if you want. We're just not going to do it and I couldn't believe that people still came."

As more faculty are hired in the midst of a financial deficit, Cunningham spoke about how it is more worth it than not to join the AAUP. Those who opt out of joining the union pay related fees, but they get sent to the AAUP office and are distributed elsewhere.

"If you were a conscientious objector, you still pay the dues, but it goes to a scholarship fund," said Cunningham.

Attempting to save junior faculty from layoffs through the early retirement incentive and keeping them informed is all that the AAUP can do to help them at the moment. Phillips reflected on his 39 years at WCC and his time at Rider, while entering his final year of teaching, although it's a choice he didn't think he'd have to make.

"All those students I've had taught me so much," said Phillips. "So, to have someone else come in and just destroy it all and not be able to do anything to stop it is really horrible. That's just horrifying."

Rider modernizes classroom resources

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first because I'm not a tech person," said professor Joel Feldman, who has been lecturing with a smart display. "The projectors would always stop halfway through, I'm not having that problem. ... I haven't found it that complicated."

The remaining 21 classrooms were approved for new projectors and/or processors based on the needs of each room.

Some of the more high-end projectors cost around \$3,000, but most were on the cheaper side, Rahman said.

"We have toured every room, we figured out, 'OK, that projector is not really made for that kind of room, so your experience is going to be crappy to begin with,'" said Rahman. "This time it was like, 'What is the right size projector you're gonna need for this?' I don't want to overkill it, I don't want to undercut it, so that kind of thing came into it too."

OIT's goal in the process was to not only modernize classrooms, but ensure that professors could utilize the new equipment without rigorous technical training; however, the department does have educational resources available regarding the new classroom equipment.

The Teaching and Learning Center and OIT have created a handful of training videos that

explain how to use the newly installed smart displays and projectors. The tutorials can be found on Keep Learning, the TLC's YouTube channel.

The TLC also hosted three optional training sessions for faculty before the start of the semester, and, during the fall, OIT plans to offer training on a case-by-case basis.

"[OIT] didn't host sessions," said Rahman. "We actually open it up to faculty saying, you tell us what you want it to be, when you want to meet us and where."

"A concierge service," Reca added.

Along with OIT, Reca acknowledged facilities as a key cog in the process — for example, any new projector or screen requires new holes in the walls and ceilings.

Reca now oversees both facilities and OIT, and both Reca and Rahman claimed that the overlap between departments has made it possible to discuss, plan and take action in a way that was not possible a year ago.

Reca confidently said Rahman was "the best CIO" he had ever worked with.

"Mike has been extremely supportive with anything that we needed so far," said Rahman. "Him and I have a very good synergy going on, so I'm really, really rooting and banking on that, because that's going to be needed."



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Look online:
9/11 memorial
photo gallery



University, SGA fund campus upgrades for students

By Madison Lewis and Sarah F. Griffin

In an effort to entice more students to dorm on campus and increase university profit, the Student Government Association and Rider officials allocated funds to upgrade its residence halls and community areas.

Money was withdrawn from both the university operating and SGA budgets to make aesthetic renovations and other improvements to campus facilities used by students.

Residence upgrades

Vice President of Facilities and University Operations Mike Reca commented on the modest nature of the changes made to the residential buildings.

“Since 2016, we’ve invested about \$26 million into residence halls and right now we do not have the capacity to do that,” said Reca.

Residence halls Poyda and Olson saw \$250,000 and \$220,000 for upgrades, respectively, funded by Rider’s operating budget.

Poyda was refurbished with new paint, flooring and LED lights in hallways, and every third room received window unit air conditioners.

Olson received air conditioners in every room and minor improvements to the bathrooms.

Students should expect new lounge chairs in the next couple of weeks in both Poyda and Olson, according to Reca.

Rider’s SGA allocated \$53,713 of its budget for residence hall lounge furniture, according to Barbaty.

“Every improvement we make in a residence hall helps with retention and recruitment. And every dime spent is valuable in that regard, because the more we could improve the residence halls for the students, the more they’ll want to stay here,” said Reca on the financial viability of the renovations. “It also gives you a better academic experience when you live on campus because you’re more engaged.”

Housing has been a major revenue stream that the university is trying to reestablish after the COVID-19 pandemic caused a drop in residence of over 1,000 students from 2019 to 2020.

As of Sept. 4, Vice President for Enrollment Management Drew Aromando reported 1,665 resident students, a 58-student increase from last fall.

SGA contribution

Along with the money from the operations budget being allocated to cosmetic renovations, SGA provided funds for its own additions to campus.

SGA’s project funding budget for fiscal year 2023 was \$430,762, which was taken from the unspent \$290 student activity fees from previous years, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The budget is set for facilities projects from the SGA at the end of each fiscal year,” said Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs Nicholas Barbaty in an email to The Rider News. “What that means is that if there’s money left over at the end of the



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Students enjoy the new gathering area on the residence quad.

year where clubs and organizations didn’t use it for programming, a portion of it goes into the SGA facilities project fund account.”

From there, SGA determines what improvements take precedence to promote student engagement, satisfaction and overall experience at Rider.

Students may notice new outdoor seating and study areas on campus, like the upper Bart Luedeke Center patio and the residence quad near Lincoln Hall.

Barbaty said that \$300,000 was reserved for the spaces. Security cameras for the seating areas and student spaces totaled an additional \$25,000.

Additional funds were allocated from SGA to damaged student gathering accessories, like the hammock area near the Centennial Lake and the lights that were vandalized in the Zen Den on the second floor of the BLC.

SGA, according to Carr, has considered renovating certain dorm halls.

“We’ve been in meetings since the spring semester of last year to talk about residence halls specifically,” said Carr.

The SGA president explained why the university is having difficulty funding dorm hall renovations.

“On a university level, no one is donating to residence halls — SGA cannot use all of our budget to repair the dorms. We are trying to do minor things that will help enhance the dorms, like getting carpet replaced or fixing showers,” Carr said.

Carr said students are now able to enjoy other newly renovated places on campus.

“As of now, the patio is complete. We might be talking about an expansion, but what you see is really what it’s going to be for right now,” said Carr of the patio outside the Cavalla Room.

Carr expanded on the SGA’s role in university-wide building projects, saying, “We don’t really deal with logistics,” and that the student government does not “deal with the outside things,”

such as which contractors to hire or what materials to use during building renovations.

“Student government just formulates the idea and vision for projects, and we leave the rest in the hands of Mike Reca. He takes care of all that stuff,” said Carr.

Reca added a statement of hope and urgency describing how imperative it is to make aesthetic changes to promote Rider’s housing and its campus.

“If we don’t continue to follow up on these [renovations] and continue to improve, we’ll hurt ourselves,” said Reca. “We need to start making bigger investments in the residence halls, and right now we do not have the capacity to do that, but for the future, it is going to be necessary.”



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Poyda Hall, a newly upgraded residence.

University asks faculty union for \$1 million back

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Retirement percentages

According to Hartman, in 2021-22, the year of the most recent tax returns, Dell’Omo had a 5% retirement contribution. The new reduction in retirement benefits went into effect on Sept. 1.

Before the semester began, Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors said the university — in year two of a five-year contract — was asked for \$1 million back.

This came after lengthy contract negotiations between the university and the faculty union and the threat of a fall 2022 faculty strike, before a new contract was ratified on Sept. 11, 2022.

On Sept. 11, 2023, the union announced members voted against authorizing the AAUP Executive Committee to enter negotiations regarding

the requested concessions.

“I think part of the reason that some of the membership may be unwilling to even enter discussions is that we had a really awful negotiation period only a year ago,” said AAUP President Quinn Cunningham in an interview with The Rider News.

Although the university did not go into specifics with the union on what the \$1 million back over the next two years could mean for members, Cunningham said that it was assumed that it would be the 2.5% retirement cut that non-union employees received in September.

Faculty layoffs for low-enrollment programs were hinted at in a summer webinar by Dell’Omo, with Cunningham saying that it could be on the horizon. In order for faculty to be laid off, the administration would have to let the union know by Oct. 31.

After the union informed the university of

the vote rejecting new concessions, Robert Stoto, vice president of human resources, responded to the union, saying, “Understood. We will proceed accordingly, and pursue whatever cost reductions are necessary, given ongoing financial developments, through channels available within the collective bargaining agreement.”

In 2017, Moody’s Investors Service revised Rider’s outlook from stable to negative. Three years later in 2020, Moody’s downgraded the university’s revenue bonds to “junk” status. In 2021 and 2023, the rating declined further, according to Moody’s Investors Service.

Rock Fest returns with 'Steal The Sky' indoors

By Julia Train

THE roar of music and students excitedly chattering filled the Student Recreation Center courts.

Rider Rock Fest, an annual "Welcome Week" tradition that is loved by the community and known for bringing live music to campus, is usually held in the Ben Cohen Field parking lot.

Food trucks, inflatables and crafts are brought into the area, giving the event the vibe of a block party and concert at the same time.

Although the time of year and outdoor location have varied in the past six years since the first event, the show was moved indoors "due to the uncertain weather," which turned out to be a clear sky.

The final rain call was made by Nick Barbati, assistant vice president for student affairs, and the notification of the switch was sent out to the student body via email Friday morning.

"We had a plan in place [for if] we moved inside, but it was mostly communicating how it was really going to work inside," said Emily O'Connor, the live entertainment chair of the Student Entertainment Council and sophomore arts entertainment industries management major. "We have Wednesday meetings and it was brought up that it might be brought inside because of the impending weather."

O'Connor's job within the SEC is planning live entertainment events with entertainers, such as comedians, musicians and illusionists that come to Rider.

By the time the doors opened at 7:30 p.m., students were lined from the SRC court entryway to the Alumni Gym court doors, eager to receive free T-shirts that were given to the first 300 people.

When the students were allowed in, they rushed past campus safety officers as they asked to see their Rider IDs.

A handful of students left directly after they obtained their free swag, while others stayed to take a look around.

After hustling past the SEC members handing out the white T-shirts, event goers were greeted with the pounding bass of the music.

In the SRC, there were inflatable games, henna tattoos, caricature artists and a wax hand mold station.

In front of the wall opposite of the Schimek Family Fitness Center, Steal the Sky performed their covers on a stage for their third time at the annual event.

Outside of the SRC, four food trucks lined the curb: "Yooo Cuz" served chicken tenders and fries, "Mister Softee" gave out ice cream cones, "La Coqueta" distributed tacos and "Empanada Guy" dished out its namesake.

Students were seen chatting, enjoying their food and taking photos, but some couldn't help but notice how much the event's different location impacted Rock Fest.

"It just felt better being outside because it was more open. You could just run around and inside it just feels so weird," said Grace Ramsey, a senior information systems major.

Ramsey and her friend Jamie Kuminski, a junior behavioral neuroscience major, both liked it better when it was fully outside.

"There's no drinks anywhere. I was so thirsty. Last year, there was free Monster and more free stuff," said Ramsey.

The year prior, there were coolers with water and sodas located around the parking lot, but this year, the cooler with water bottles didn't show up until later.

"I heard there were less shirts this year too," Kuminski noted.

Usually concluding with a fireworks display, the event finished with the band.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Steal the Sky steals the room's attention with their performance

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Sophomore marketing major **Amanda Larosa** and sophomore criminal justice major **Jasmin Garcia** smile together for a photo.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Students enjoy the blow-up fun that was available at Rock Fest.

Photo courtesy of Marge O'Reilly-Allen



Five Rider students pose for a photo in their wet suits after surfing.

Ireland brings new perspective to business students

By Hannah Newman

IN 2017, the Wild Atlantic Way, a trail that spans the west coast of Ireland, was named the coolest place to visit by National Geographic.

Thanks to two professors from the Norm Brodsky College of Business, Marge O'Reilly-Allen and Larry Newman, who passed away in 2022, Rider students were granted the opportunity to study there beginning in 2018.

In 2023, the trip was led by O'Reilly-Allen and Cynthia Newman, Larry's wife.

"We've been running short-term study tours to Ireland for a number of years. We have the connections on the ground and we thought this would be a great opportunity," said O'Reilly-Allen.

The three-week experience in Ireland allows students to study business in sports where they had the opportunity to learn the different angles of sports management in just under a month's time.

"Rider offers whole semester study abroad opportunities and short eight-to-10-day study tours. But the faculty wanted to add something to the engaged learning portfolio by offering a three week experience," said O'Reilly-Allen. "I can't do a full semester abroad, but this really simulates that experience."

While living in a large manor house, 13 Rider students had the chance to meet executives and entrepreneurs while also absorbing the knowledge of sports marketing, history and how to develop the funding for the business of sports.

"Many of these experiences provide transferable strategies and apply to American businesses, while some of them are very unique to the European Union and Ireland," said O'Reilly-Allen. "Students had a real blend and exposure to both."

In addition to the knowledge offered by the experience, students also got to participate in hands-on activities including surfing, kayaking, golf, horseback riding, deep-sea fishing, hiking and cycling.

"My experience surfing on the coast of Bundoran stands out to me as one that I will never forget," said sophomore sports management major Sam Kirkpatrick. "I had never been surfing before, but I picked it up quickly thanks to our helpful instructors. Trying something new and having it go so well really set the tone at the beginning of our trip."

Nine out of the 13 students were members of Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity, which contributed to the comfortable atmosphere for students on the trip.

"As someone who has an Irish heritage, I definitely

love being able to actually go visit and learn about the culture in Ireland, but also being with the students on the trip," said junior finance major Lauren Turnbull. "We all became very good friends and brothers and enjoyed being together in building those connections."

Turnbull also mentioned how supportive both O'Reilly-Allen and Newman were on the trip and especially O'Reilly-Allen's son, Ryan Allen, who founded Irish Gap Year, a program located in south west Donegal, Ireland, who played a critical part in the facilitation of the program.

The trip not only attracted sports management majors, but a variety of different business related disciplines that enhanced the learning experience of students in the many different angles of business studies, along with contributing to the growth of students' life experience.

Rider alumnus Jesus Rodriguez '23 said, "I found it valuable to reinforce the idea that while you cannot control the events and things around you, it is important to be able to control what you can, which would be your own actions and thoughts particularly in response to the things around you."

Rider drag gives glitz and glamour



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Tastie wows the audience in her dramatic get-up, reminiscent of David Bowie, Elton John and Freddie Mercury. She was a last minute-addition to the show.

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

THE infectious excitement was felt the minute the doors to the Yvonne Theater opened. Dressed in their best and adorned with feather boas, students took their seats in the quickly packed theater. The lights went down and the cheering began. It was time for the annual Rider drag show.

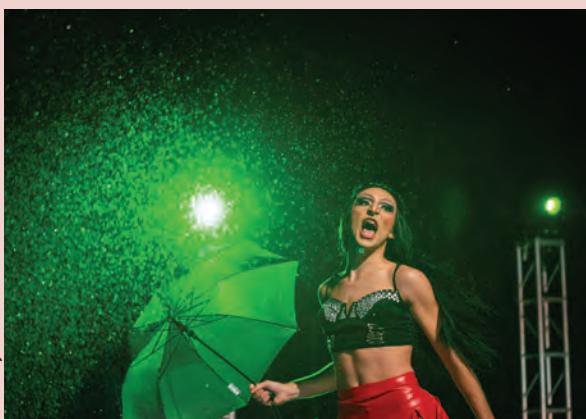
On Sept. 9, the Student Entertainment Council welcomed back the beloved Rider tradition. All 400 seats in the Yvonne Theater were filled with excited students, many of whom had never been to a drag show before. The theme for the night was the 80s and the queens certainly delivered with their stunning performances.

The show featured a total of eight queens, five being professionals: Jolina Jasmine, Vanity Ray, Octavia Anyae, Kimmy Summony and Tastie. Three student drag queens Miracle Monroe (Cole Capriotti, a freshman film and television major), Naughty Nurse Barbie (Joe Giambelluca, a senior Spanish major) and Lexie Legato (Lincoln Funderburk, a senior musical theater major).

Throughout the night, the queens dazzled with stunning outfits and performances that had the audience screaming and on their feet. As in the years before, each professional drag queen performed two stunning numbers.

Jolina Jasmine, a returner to the Yvonne Theater stage and introduced as the "Honorary Miss Rider" by Nick Barbat, MCed the show after a ravishing performance full of acrobatic tricks and audience interaction.

"I was heavily inspired by Beyonce's Renaissance tour. I've been watching all the videos on TikTok and Twitter. [SEC] said they wanted something disco-esque theme tonight. So I figured why not do Beyonce," said Jasmine.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Senior musical theater major **Lincoln Funderburk** performs under the name **Lexie Legato** and makes her drag debut at Rider.

She introduced the next queen, Vanity Ray, who wore a Dolly Parton-style wig and a shimmering, purple bell bottom jumpsuit. With a medley of ABBA songs, the queen had the audience singing along. In her passion for the performance Ray's earrings flew off and onto the stage.

Octavia Anyae followed in a gorgeous look reminiscent of music icon Tina Turner. Her beaded dress caught the stage lights and cast rainbows onto the audience in what was a pride-filled moment. Kimmy Summony gave a diva inspired performance, draped dramatically in cheetah print and fur hangings.

Tastie was the last queen to perform before the student drag queens got their chance on the stage. In a red jumpsuit adorned with a cape and feather lapels, Tastie put on one of the most dramatic and attention grabbing performances of the night. In makeup and hair reminiscent of David Bowie, Elton John and Freddie Mercury, Tastie wowed the audience.

After five stunning performances from the professionals, it was time for the student drag queens to showcase their talents. To kick off the portion of the show, Miracle Monroe took to the stage. In a neon ensemble, the queen performed to Olivia Newton John's "Physical" and transitioned into ABBA's "Money Money Money." Monroe's performance was extremely ambitious and featured many breathtaking tricks such as flips and jumping over a chair.

"What got me into drag was definitely the culture and definitely the atmosphere. I love being a performer and I thought might as well push myself out of my comfort zone," said Capriotti.

Next up was Naughty Nurse Barbie. In a nurse outfit and sporting a pink wig, the queen made the audience cheer with her fun and funky dance moves. After her performance, the queen stole one or two extra bows.

To close out the student section of the performance, Lexie Legato made her drag debut. In a sheer, frilly black robe (known as a murder robe in popular culture), a sparkly black top and a red mini skirt, Legato performed to the iconic song, "It's Raining Men," which was made famous by The Weather Girls. Legato's performance included a glitter filled umbrella that sprinkled the front row with drag magic.

Back to the professional drag queens, Vanity Ray reappeared on stage in a purple and black cigar girl outfit. For her second performance, Ray spiced it up by laying on laps and dancing her heart out in the audience.

Octavia Anyae made her way back to the stage and changed her outfit twice while passionately lip syncing to Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Freshman elementary education major **Isabella Pero** tangoes her way across the stage with drag queen **Octavia Anyae**.

Somebody." During her performance, Anyae pulled Isabella Pero, a freshman elementary education major onto the stage to dance with her. The two tangoed across the stage together and spun each other around. Pero laughed with joy and excitement as she danced.

"This was my first official drag show, so I've never been in this environment before. I felt so cool and like a celebrity. It was so cool," Pero said with joyful laughter.

Kimmy Summony took the stage in a dramatic red outfit as she performed "I'm Every Woman." Summony's performance had attendees whooping as she strutted around the stage in thigh-high boots.

Before Jolina Jasmine made her way back on stage, Tastie came back to perform "Dance the Night," by Dua Lipa, a song made popular by the recent Barbie movie. Students sang along and jumped out of their seats to dance to one of their favorite songs.

Jolina Jasmine was the last of the night in a cheetah print jumpsuit. Once she finished her performance, each queen got to come on stage to bow.

To thank everyone for attending, the eight queens put together an impromptu performance of the Spice Girls' "Wannabe." The queens made their way into the audience, singing and dancing with each other and the overjoyed students. The song ended with the queens throwing white streamers into the audience. The performance was met with a standing ovation and the queens all took one final bow together.

As the theater cleared, students took pictures with the queens and excitedly chatted with their friends. Rider Drag had successfully done what it has always set out to do: bring Rider together in pride.

Rider's glitter-strewn drag show: Photo gallery

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Jolina Jasmine, makes her return to the Yvonne Theater stage to perform and host the event.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Vanity Ray wears a purple cigar girl costume for her second performance of the evening.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



In a look reminiscent of Tina Turner, **Octavia Anyae** graces the stage.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Kimmy Summony throws streamers into the crowd at the end of the queen's impromptu performance of "Wannabe" by The Spice Girls.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Senior Spanish major **Joe Giambelluca** performs as **Naughty Nurse Barbie** with some impressive tricks.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News



Freshman film and television major **Cole Capriotti** goes all out with the 80s theme and performs as **Miracle Monroe**.

Scan the QR code to watch *The Rider News'* video of *Rider's drag show*



Over a year since the overturn of Roe v. Wade

AFTER a little over one year living in a post-Roe world, the state of reproductive rights and health has taken a turn for the worst. As a woman, these issues directly affect me and my future. On top of that, as a woman with a disability, I became even more concerned. I know that my life isn't guaranteed over a potential fetus's if I have medical issues while pregnant, which is a real possibility. But this new dystopia-fueled reality made me examine the state of reproductive health.

The Dobbs decision was made by a 6-3 ruling in a primarily conservative leaning Supreme Court. Anyone who is well-versed in reproductive health issues was not surprised by what followed. As predicted, this decision made abortions scarce, dangerous, deadly and harmful to both fetus and parent. According to The Hill, the likelihood of having a pregnancy-related death is three times more probable in a state that bans abortions than in one that doesn't.

More precisely, the Dobbs decision stripped away the constitutional right to get an abortion. By doing this, the door has opened for each individual state to make its own legislature around abortions. Essentially, the states can be categorized into three areas: total or near total bans, partial bans and no bans or very minimal. For example, Texas has a total ban, while Kansas has the ban in effect during or after 18-22 weeks, while New Jersey has absolutely no cut-off for abortions. Obviously, these bans are very politically aligned, in that, more red states that lean conservative have more restrictions, while blue states have less restrictions or none. However, these divisions leave what are called "abortion deserts" throughout the country, primarily in the south and midwest.

As was expected, and feared by many, the news has been filled with abortion horror stories this past year. For example, in South Carolina, there is a bill gaining support that would institute the death penalty for those who get an abortion illegally.

Another example is the story of a woman with multiple serious medical and health issues who was informed she was pregnant and wouldn't be able to carry the baby to term, essentially keeping a fetus in her that would only live for days at most after it had been born. People facing these struggles with fetuses that have terminal illnesses or life-threatening conditions are forced to carry the fetus, deliver it, and watch it as it slowly dies. Not to mention that these conditions are painful for the fetus. Some states unfortunately don't allow abortions for fetuses with life-threatening conditions.

In Mississippi, a 13-year-old girl was raped by a family member, causing her grandmother to take her to a different state to get an abortion because it was illegal in her home state. Some states that have bans don't allow an abortion in the case of rape or incest. Many rape and incest victims are now faced in the nightmarish decision to either carry that child to term, or risk traveling out of state to get an abortion, which some states also consider to be illegal. Some other states where abortions are illegal include Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas.

Not to mention that pregnancy is often dangerous and risky for the person carrying the fetus. Even if you are the picture of health, things can go wrong. You can go into labor early. You can develop preeclampsia, which is a life-threatening condition. In states with strict abortion bans, the mother's health is often a lower priority than the fetus's and exceptions aren't made for the mother's help. On top of everything else, doctors are extremely concerned about all of these laws. Some doctors lost their jobs. Others, unsure that aspects of reproductive health are banned, are uncomfortable providing all kinds of reproductive care because they don't want to lose their licenses. Some are specifically told not to act until the parent's or fetus's life is in grave danger because it could be seen as providing illegal reproductive care.

People have a lot to fear. It was recently announced that some period tracking apps collect your data and allow others to have access to it, potentially seeing when you could've gotten an abortion illegally. This kind of "access weaponizes a tool meant to help people manage their reproductive health.

There are a few positives to look forward to. Since abortion bans are primarily a concern dominated by conservatives and republicans, the Dobbs decision actually helps to divide this previously unified group of people. While a lot of republicans support abortions, they each have different ideas as to what an appropriate ban looks like. These debates fracture the party, leaving democrats, who typically support abortion access, the opportunity to make some gains for better reproductive rights.

Also, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the use of the drug called mifepristone, which is used in medication abortions. This case is currently working its way through the court system as two separate federal court judges ruled in opposing sides, meaning one believed that the FDA had this power, the other claiming it didn't.

I recognize that reproductive rights and health issues are controversial and not everyone agrees with my position of being pro-choice. I don't expect everyone to. My firm belief is that being pro-choice leaves the option to get an abortion open, not that you have to get one if you get pregnant. I also strongly agree with Rachel, from the TV show "Friends:" "No uterus, no opinion." If this isn't an issue that you personally have to deal with, I'm not sure why your opinion should have as much weight as mine, someone who may need to deal with this in the future.

However, I also believe that there are more appropriate ways for those who are pro-life to support their beliefs and agendas. For example, getting rid of the death penalty, as that takes away a life. Or you can try to work for free and equal access to healthcare to improve and help lives that are already on this plane of existence. Donate time, money, and/or food to those in need. Support government programs that provide aid to those in poverty or in a lower socioeconomic status. You can even adopt children in the future. There are just so many other ways to support life on this planet. Leave reproductive rights to those who will be putting their bodies through that experience.

*Bridget Gum-Egan
senior English major*



Raashee Mishra/The Rider News

Since Roe v. Wade was overturned a year ago, reproductive healthcare has changed around the country.

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JUNIOR JOURNALS

Student reflects on semester in Rome

How often do you get the chance to embark on a global adventure, not just as a tourist, but as a resident of a distant land, free from the constraints of mortgages, parental responsibilities or the complexities of dual citizenship? Not many! Knowing that the window of opportunity for global exploration without serious ramifications was short, I eagerly seized the chance to study abroad during my college years. This past spring semester, I was granted the incredible opportunity to immerse myself in the heart of Rome, Italy, as a student at John Cabot University thanks to the Rider exchange program. It may sound cliché, but this experience was nothing short of life changing.

Living in Rome unveiled an entirely new way of life to me. Each day, I strolled through the enchanting streets of Trastevere on my way to class, savoring local, authentic Italian cuisine, and engaging with fellow international students. Furthermore, I had the privilege of residing in a historically rich area brimming with ancient charm. My education took me beyond the classroom, with on-site classes at locations such as the Vatican, Pantheon and even the Trevi Fountain. To fully take advantage of my European residency, my peers and I explored other countries and cities during our three-day weekends, leading to adventures like sightseeing in Hungary, dune surfing in Morocco and hiking in Croatia.

Despite the glamour of living abroad, there were initial challenges to overcome. For context, I am a commuter here at Rider and have never lived anywhere but my home in New Jersey. You could imagine how disorienting it was to move out and into a city with an entirely different language, culture, and eight roommates. I was suddenly thrust into the world of self-sufficiency, having to master the art of cooking, navigate unfamiliar streets alone and essentially assume the responsibilities of an independent adult. Surprisingly, as I found my footing, these once-daunting tasks became attractive and empowering. I even grew to love cohabiting with my roommates and building close, lasting friendships with them.

During my travels, I had the privilege of meeting people from all corners of the globe, hailing from countries like Germany, England and Singapore. The European-style classes I attended offered a novel educational experience and insights into professional settings beyond the borders of the United States. Living abroad and attempting (mostly unsuccessfully) to grasp the Italian language taught me to embrace and actively seek out new and uncomfortable situations for the sake of personal growth. Yes, I may have found myself lost in the streets of Marrakech and incurred fines from the unfriendly "bus police" in Rome, but such adventures are best experienced while youth and opportunity coexist. I wouldn't trade my time studying abroad for anything, and I wholeheartedly encourage everyone to pursue this life-enriching experience if the opportunity presents itself.

Caheil Powell
junior marketing major



Photo courtesy of Caheil Powell

Junior marketing major **Caheil Powell** posing in front of the Colosseum in Rome, Italy.

JUNIOR JOURNALS

Why does everyone get sick in college?

It seems like every college student gets sick when they start a new year. With the lack of sleep, different food and lots of stress, it's normal to feel under the weather. With only a week into the semester three of my friends and myself tested positive for COVID-19. Some of my other friends caught a cold and others' allergies were out of control.

An article by The Washington Post titled, "Getting sick in college: How to teach your child to cope on their own," explains multiple reasons why students get sick so quickly in school. One reason is that students live so close to each other and they all touch the same door handles, sinks and stair rails. Students also tend to share drinks and snacks especially during study sessions. The article says, "The transition to college and all it entails — ramped-up academics, new social scene, different food, sharing a small room — is all new and stressful even if it's exciting, and stress does a number on the immune system." The Washington Post recommends students to wash their hands, get some sleep, try and manage stress and get all the up to date immunizations, like the flu shot. They also recommend creating a cold kit which could include Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Mucinex, Dayquil or Nyquil.

However, we unfortunately still have to worry about COVID-19 even though it is not a public health emergency. I tested positive for COVID-19 the day before the first day of school. I got it from one of my roommates and since then, two other people in my life have tested positive for the virus. This was my second time with COVID-19, and I felt awful, but luckily in 48 hours I felt good as new. However, it's spreading again because a new variant is active.

An article by northjersey.com, "As school begins in NJ, here's how to prepare your kids for flu, RSV and COVID," reports that there is a new COVID-19 variant called the EG.5 which is a subvariant of omicron and is nicknamed, "Eris." The strain has been causing a rise in cases in New Jersey but severe symptoms, ventilator use and ICU admissions have remained low. Katharine Clouser, a pediatrician and the vice chair of clinical affairs for Hackensack Meridian Health said, "A new vaccine that targets omicron subvariants will likely be available this fall."

The article recommends getting the flu shot because last year was one of the worst flu seasons ever. Some pharmacies ran out of Ibuprofen and antibiotics. Luckily this year is looking better. The article states, "Public health experts believe the flu season will return to a more normal pattern, with the onset in October and November. Flu shots will begin rolling out in September, but doctors recommend starting to get them in mid-to-late October to last the entire season." So, this semester, remember to take a break, rest up and try to manage the stress of it all.

Felicia Roehm
junior journalism major



Angelina Fierro/The Rider News

Many students get sick at the beginning of a new semester due to different surroundings.

VOLLEYBALL

Broncs drop three consecutive matches, fall to 1-7

By Andrew Smolar and Glendale Eversley

RIDER volleyball started the season off slow as their struggles progressed when they dropped all three of their weekend matches putting them in an immediate hole.

'I think it was definitely nerves'

In its home opener, Rider was looking to put on a strong showing against Rutgers at the Broncs' Zoo but came up short as they lost the match, 3-1 in the first of three volleyball games on Sept. 6.

Rutgers got the best of Rider at Alumni Gym. "I think Rutgers' experience and size kinda helped them pull away from us in sets one and four. ... I think it was definitely nerves," said Head Coach Jeff Rotondo.

Besides the tough loss, sophomore outside hitter Kiannisha Santiago had 10 kills and strong moments through most of the contest. With the great effort from Santiago and her teammates on the floor, the Broncs made things interesting early as the second set of the contest went to win by situation where Rider managed to pull off with the score of the set 27-25.

"We were definitely excited to take the set," Rotondo said on the set.

But it wasn't enough for Rider as two stars from Rutgers combined for 23 kills throughout the game.

'Self-inflicted wounds'

On Sept. 9, the Broncs were swept by the Wildcats in the start of the Delaware Invitational. The first set started with the two teams going point for point until it was 3-3. Rider then scored three straight points to go up 6-3. The momentum was quickly erased by Villanova going on a 4-1 run to knot the set at eight.

The Broncs then scored another three unanswered points to take the lead back at 11-8. They would hold that lead until a 5-1 run by the Wildcats which turned the set in their favor and gave them a 16-15 advantage.

Rider wasn't done, responding with another 3-0 run to taking the lead once again at 18-16. They would remain in position to win the set as they held a 22-21 lead, but allowed Villanova to score three in a row before they were able to score two points of their own to tie the set at 24.

They couldn't seal the deal as the Wildcats scored the next two points to win the set 26-24.

Despite the loss, Rotondo was pleased with a few different things, minus the errors. "I liked our ability



Head Coach **Jeff Rotondo** (center) assesses his team from the sideline.

to sideout early and block and defend," Rotondo said. "However, we can't have eight service errors in a set, that is just really difficult to overcome."

The second set saw Villanova build up a big lead and hold on rather comfortably. The only lead the Broncs held during the set was when they led 2-0 at the start.

Three Wildcat points quickly erased that lead and Rider never was any closer than a 4-4 tie. Villanova would then go on a 4-0 run to go up 8-4 and never looked back. After leading 9-7, the Wildcats went on a 9-2 run which included six unanswered points to double up the Broncs at 18-9.

The run was more an issue of self-inflicted wounds, according to Rotondo.

"Villanova executed a little better, but we just lost our edge and determination after the 1st set did not go our way," Rotondo said.

Rider went on separate 5-1 and 4-1 runs down the stretch to make the final look a bit closer but would never seriously threaten Villanova who won the set 25-20.

The final set of the day saw the Wildcats build up a lead early before the Broncs rallied to make things interesting.

After allowing Rider to get the set's first point, Villanova scored the next four. A separate 3-0 run later on put the Wildcats up 10-6.

The set would then go back and forth for a while before the Broncs provided a surge to even things out. Trailing 15-11, Rider would go on a 5-1 run to tie the set at 16.

Unfortunately for the Broncs, they didn't have it in them to keep the momentum going after that

as Villanova immediately responded with a 7-1 run that was part of an overall 9-2 run to complete the sweep and win the last set 25-18.

Rotondo was not happy with falling behind early, which has seemed to be a big issue this season.

"More disappointed we got that far behind early," Rotondo said. "Obviously we like the fight late in the set, but there needs to be a deep dive as to why the beginning of sets with low energy is occurring, because it needs to stop."

Despite the lopsided final two sets, the team statistics were virtually even in kills (32-30), aces (8-6) and blocks (8-5). It was a notable performance for freshman Paige Giechtbrock, who had a whopping 16 kills.

'No heart'

They were defeated by Delaware on Sept. 10, leaving the Delaware Invitational winless as the Blue Hens defeated the Broncs 3-1 with no set being closer than seven points.

"To be honest, I did not see a lot of good we could take away from the last 3 sets," Rotondo said. "There is no reason we should play Towson and Rutgers as tough as we did, and then only score 13, 11 and 10 points versus Delaware."

Unsurprisingly, the team statistics were rather lopsided as the Blue Hens had more kills (50-32), aces (9-4) and blocks (9-5). On a positive note, sophomore Kiannisha Santiago provided 10 kills for Rider.

The Broncs will hit the road again as they are set to take on Iona at 1 p.m. on Sept. 16.

FIELD HOCKEY

Broncs ends scoring drought, splits weekend games

By Logan VanDine

WHILE a 3-1 loss to La Salle on Sept. 3 sent Rider field hockey to its fourth straight loss, the Broncs got back to their winning ways, taking the victory in their second matchup against Georgetown, 1-0 on Sept. 10.

'Improving every single game'

Searching for any kind of spark, the Broncs hard times continued as they dropped their fourth straight to Drexel on Sept. 8 by a final of 3-1.

The game did not get underway until around 8:30 p.m. due to a lightning delay, but once the matchup began, it remained tight through the first half.

The offense came alive in the third quarter, as Rider finally broke the tie when sophomore forward Semra Said drained the first goal for the Broncs in over a week, giving them a 1-0 lead.

"I knew that the girl from Drexel was right on me, but I still tried to get the shot off because it was a good angle to shoot," Said stated.

The Dragons kept things interesting by scoring the equalizer less than a minute after the Broncs scored off a penalty shot.

Later in the quarter, the Dragons again scored on a penalty corner, giving them their first lead of the night at 2-1.

The score remained that way heading into the fourth quarter, and Drexel got some much needed insurance as they once again had a clutch corner goal that extended the Dragons lead by two. They went on to win by that same margin and sent the Broncs home with their fourth consecutive loss.

"We are improving every game, but unfortunately our energy changed when Carli [Ciocca] came out of the game. It was nice to get the lead, but we need to play all 60 minutes," Head Coach Alicia Govannicci said.

Said agreed with her coach that despite the four-game slide, she feels the energy is still there.

"Even though we lost, I am so proud of this team. The energy was so high from the start and no matter that the game was delayed our energy stayed high till the end of the game," Said stated.

Alumni Day

With the Broncs desperate to get back in the win column on Alumni Day, they did just that with a score of 1-0 over Georgetown on Sept. 10.

With Rider field hockey alumni on hand, including former Head Coach Lori Hussong, both teams were in a defensive battle that resulted in a scoreless first half.

Both teams returned to Ben Cohen Field to start



Graduate student forward **Carli Ciocca** scores the winning goal for the Broncs.

the second half, with Rider scoring first thanks to a goal made by graduate student forward Carli Ciocca, making the game 1-0 and the eventual win for the Broncs.

The Broncs now move to 2-4 on the season and will have a week of rest to get ready for their next matchup against Towson on Sept. 20. Beginning at 3:30 p.m., the game can be seen on FloSports.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Broncs shut down by Marist, sink to 2-4-1

By Benjamin Shinault

WITH gray clouds hovering over Ben Cohen Field on Sept. 9, Rider women's soccer was shutout 1-0 by Marist to kick off Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

From the start, the fans in attendance got a preview of what the game would ultimately unfold to be: a defensive slugfest.

For a bulk of the first half, the ball was mostly in possession of the Red Foxes, but the defense of the Broncs held strong with Marist only getting nine shots off on the Broncs.

Head Coach Drayson Hounsome broke down what he saw from his defense following the first half.

"I don't think there was much defense to do, shots were coming in from distance ... it's more a case of us turning the possession over so then they are on our side of the field," said Hounsome.

The Broncs had few opportunities in the first half to get a shot on goal with only two, but they did almost capitalize on a kick off the foot of Hannah Freeman, who had plenty of momentum after a two-goal performance against Delaware State. However, it sailed into the waiting hands of the Marist goalie.

Heading into half with the match knotted up at 0-0, Hounsome recapped what he told the team in the locker room: "Just try to be quicker. We knew they weren't going to high-press and we saw them sit off, but our build up play was too slow and when we got into the attacking third, our attacking was too slow."

Out of the locker room and heading back onto the wet turf, the Broncs continued to struggle to keep their half of the field untouched by the Red Foxes. With Marist fast approaching the 18-yard



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Graduate student forward **Chloe Fisher** loads up to kick the ball down the field.

box, Broncs senior goaltender Ellie Sciancalepore left her position and the Red Foxes ended up taking advantage of the blunder to make the score 1-0.

The Broncs second half attack was more prominent but Rider just couldn't quite set up anything offensively, leading to the team being shutout in the opener of MAAC play.

The closest the Broncs got to putting one in the back of the net came within the 88th minute when

freshman midfielder Ava Ferrie blasted one that rolled past the right side of the net. The sound of groans echoed throughout Ben Cohen Field.

Hounsome repeated after the game what he wants to see out of the girls moving into the thick of the season. "It's only about getting enough points to get in ... it's not about getting too down about the defeat, it's about figuring out how to be better," said Hounsome.

MEN'S SOCCER

Alibou returns, helps Rider to two draws

By Trey Wright and Georgia Tarullo

IN two hard fought battles against the NJIT on Sept. 8 and the UPenn on Sept. 12, Rider men's soccer battled to two ties, while graduate student forward Zaki Alibou suited up for his long-awaited return.

Gained a point

After their fourth consecutive game on the road, Rider brought their record to 2-1-1. With Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play fast approaching, the Broncs faced the NJIT Highlanders on Sept. 8 in quite a competitive match up.

Throughout the duration of the first half, Rider was able to have the bulk of the possession, moving the ball fluently as well as combining passes through the midfield. The Broncs collected six shots with two on frame, as well as forcing the NJIT goalkeeper to make two saves.

During the 63rd minute of play, the Highlanders slipped one past sophomore goalkeeper Adam Salama, bringing the score to 0-1 and putting the Broncs in a position to chase the game.

The instant response from Rider showed grit and perseverance as a unit.

Just 10 minutes later in the 73rd minute, Rider was awarded a free kick to which senior midfielder Adel Al-Masude sent one past the Highlanders keeper for the equalizer.

"I think the biggest contributor to the game was our mentality ... This team doesn't give up and I think that will continue to be a contributing factor to our success," said graduate student midfielder Ethan Shaw on the hard fought draw.

Shortly following that goal, the physicality of the game was raised significantly and the referees distributed seven yellow cards to both teams, with a total of nine for the game.

The team worked well together, they moved the ball with ease and communicated well, a worthwhile result of the team's chemistry this season.

"I have been here since 2020 and this is the most

united Rider men's soccer team I have ever been on, no question," said graduate student back Brendan Fischer. "Ignore all the talent we have, this fact is actually what should worry opponents the most. There's really a lot of love in the locker room."

After battling four consecutive away games, the Broncs are ready to come back home, "It's never easy playing games on the road, especially four of them in a row. To come out with a 2-1-1 record is solid," Shaw said.

'I was proud of these guys'

After starting the 2023 regular season with a 2-1-1 record on the road, Rider opened their four game home stand with a scoreless first foray at Ben Cohen Field this year.

The match was personal for Head Coach Chad Duernberger, as UPenn had previously upset #14 ranked Penn State on Sept. 8, the team Duernberger coached before Rider.

Things nearly got off to a rocky start when sophomore goaltender Salama tried to play the ball inside the eighteen and lost possession, nearly allowing a prime scoring opportunity for Penn four minutes into the matchup. A few more defensive turnovers by the Broncs went in favor of the Quakers, but were unable to pull the trigger on the quality scoring chances.

Alibou came alive in the first half, with the 2021 MAAC offensive player of the year being a part of the first three scoring chances for the Broncs, two of which were directly on the net.

"I love coaching Zaki," said Duernberger. "And for me we're trying to get him back into playing 90 minutes."

Alibou only played 87 minutes across two games in 2022.

"It's my first game," said Alibou. "I take this as a step forward and go ahead for the next games."

Rider was defensive throughout the match, only allowing one shot on Salama on the night, and four

shots total.

Offensively, the Broncs had 17 chances in the 90 minute span, five of them on goal, and three so close you could taste the net.

Wild scrambles, missiles from outside the eighteen, and even an attempted bicycle kick from senior forward Babacar Diene highlighted the second half. One of those blasts came from senior midfielder David Ogbonna, who doinked a shot off the top right corner and somehow stayed out.

Another prime opportunity came from junior midfielder Dylan Kotch, who shanked a point-blank chance wide, keeping the game scoreless.

A last minute push from Rider came up short in the end, and the Broncs ended the week with back to back ties, finishing out of conference play with a 2-2-1 record.

"I'm happy with the performance but sad with the result," said Alibou after the game.

"I was proud of our guys, you can look at things as a negative, but we're looking at it as 'we outshot them, we're unbeaten through four [games]," said Duernberger, "I'm really pleased with how we battled tonight."

The Broncs are back at it again this upcoming week, opening MAAC play against Siena on Sept. 16 at 2 p.m., and taking on La Salle on Sept. 19 at 5 p.m., both matches taking place at Ben Cohen Field.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Graduate student forward **Zaki Alibou** dribbles by a defender on Sept. 12.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

Buckets for Weeks: brothers transfer to Rider



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

Tyriek (left) and T.J. (right) Weeks, two transfers, are bringing a literal form of brotherhood to the Broncos this season.

By Benjamin Shinault

WHEN one thinks of a basketball team, they think of brotherhood, and Rider men's basketball's recruiting staff took that literally, bringing in two brothers from Warwick, Rhode Island, named T.J. and Tyriek Weeks.

T.J., a graduate student guard, spent his previous four seasons at the University of Massachusetts where he was a starter who averaged 8.8 points, 1.3 assists and 3.7 rebounds per game last season.

"I'm very good at using my speed to get by defenders, and creating shots for myself and others on the court," T.J. said.

Tyriek, on the other hand, is a sophomore forward who transferred from Miami Dade College, a junior college where he shined offensively with averages of 14.3 points, 7.4 rebounds and shot 40% from three.

"I bring a good post game, I play with finesse and know how to cut without the ball and rebound the ball well," said Tyriek.

Both brothers will bring something different to the team this upcoming season, but with an age gap between the siblings, T.J. plans to use his veteranship to help out his brother with navigating through the tough world of collegiate basketball.

"I told [Tyriek] that college players are faster and stronger but most of the game is mental," T.J. said. "I told him that he can do anything that he puts his mind to and all he has to do is put in the work."

While Tyriek was still in high school, T.J. was already getting his feet wet in college basketball when he played at UMass. Tyriek witnessed his brother live

out his childhood dream, hoping that one day, they could take the court together.

"I've always loved watching T.J. play, and especially when he was at UMass," Tyriek said. "I used to sit and imagine myself out there helping him in battle and doing the things he did. Now that I have an opportunity to do that it feels surreal."

The Weeks have helped each other become better players, whether it be mentally or physically.

"He's helped a lot by explaining to me how hard the Division I level is, especially the physical and mental aspects," Tyriek said, "We worked on playing each other a lot, helping each other get better, competing against and pushing each other."

Before college basketball, the Weeks brothers grew up playing summer league basketball, but have yet to play a full season with each other.

"I wasn't ready to play with T.J. in high school," said Tyriek. "I still had to mature and get better, and I've finally done that."

With T.J. and Tyriek both being potential difference makers on the court, plenty of basketball programs up and down the east coast would've loved to have one of them on their roster, but for them, family came first.

"Our mom has always been saying it's her dream for us to play together ever since we were kids," said Tyriek. "When the opportunity came, it was a no-brainer that this year, we were going to play together."

The basketball blood in the brothers' veins runs deep, as their father, Tyrone Weeks, also played basketball for UMass.

"Just knowing what our dad did back in the day at the University of Massachusetts, he was a part of something really special when he played. He is always in the stands cheering and coaching us," said Tyriek.

The brothers also had their mother with them in and out of the gym doing whatever she possibly could to make their lives easier.

"Our mom always took care of us, doing the little things in our lives, spending countless hours with us in the gym, even rebounding for us," Tyriek said. "She stays on us about ball and our school work, especially."

The brothers knew that no matter what team they played on, family was always in their corner.

"We're truly blessed to have the both of them and they inspire us to be great everyday," said Tyriek.

When T.J. and Tyriek first suited up in their matching cranberry garbs a familiar comfortable feeling was in the air.

"When we arrived, there was already a strong family-like bond here, so it was very easy to fit in," Tyriek said.

"We all have a common goal which is to outwork each other and compete extremely hard and to win," T.J. said. "When everyone is on the same page and it feels like a family already, it's easy to support each other and build day by day."

With Rider still reflecting on how it wrapped up this past season, T.J. and Tyriek shared what fans can expect from the new-look Broncos: "A Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Championship and an NCAA Tournament berth is always the goal, but you should expect all of us to get better each day and compete."