

Layoff fears resurface after \$1 million refusal

By Jake Tiger

ONE million dollars over two years or layoffs. This was the choice Rider's administration presented to the institution's chapter of the American Association of University Professors late last summer.

The proposition came shortly after the university president informed the Rider community that low-enrollment programs could no longer be justified on academic viability alone, and cuts were likely on the horizon.

On Aug. 31, the AAUP gathered for a vote: Would it open negotiations with the university regarding possible concessions?

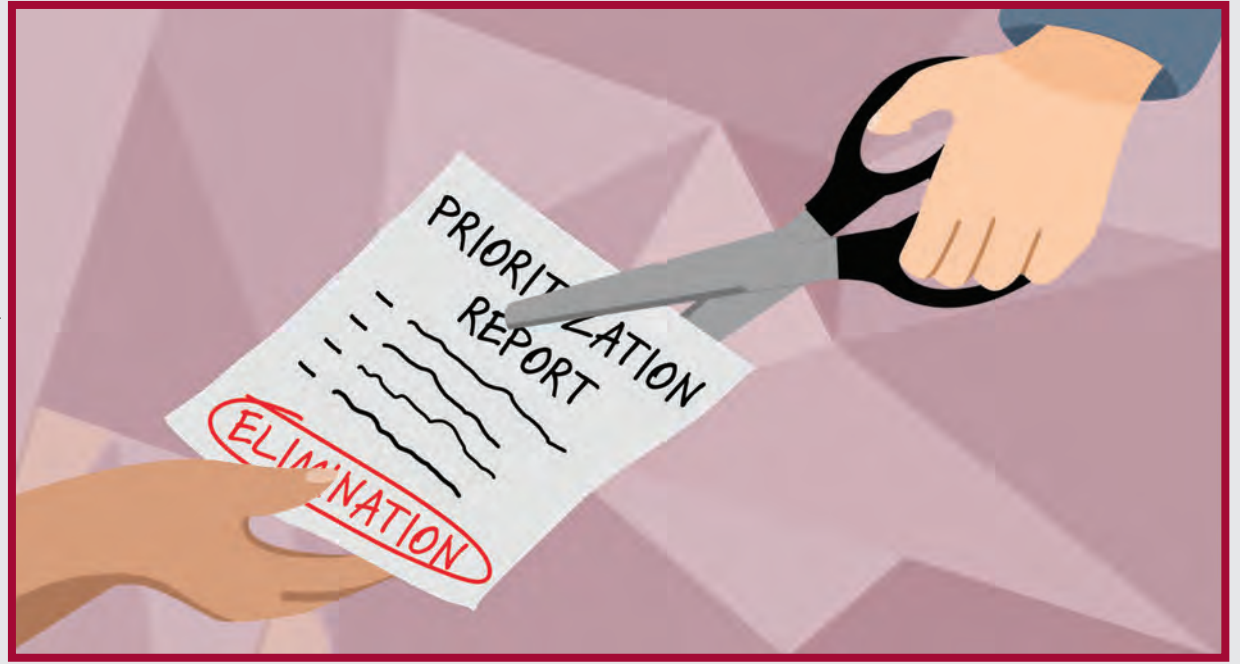
Eleven days later, the union alerted its membership of the result: No.

As an Oct. 31 layoff deadline creeps closer, a task force led by Rider Provost DonnaJean Fredeen is currently working on a new prioritization process that will assess the efficiency of Rider's academic majors and determine which programs and faculty can be cut to save costs.

Eight years ago, a similar process and a swath of 14 full-time faculty layoffs resulted in union professors forfeiting three years of "significant" raises in exchange for keeping their jobs and programs.

Rider's faculty has been here before.

"I would imagine there are a good number of folks who are very stressed and worried about what's going to happen," said AAUP President Quinn Cunningham, an associate professor of business management. "I think people have been feeling that a little bit since the 2015 layoffs, because we know what happened and we know it can happen again any time they want... We say 'death by a thousand cuts.'"



Felicia Roehm and Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

The university's prioritization process has become infamous among Rider's faculty, as it usually results in cuts for smaller programs.

'A very holistic approach'

During a Zoom webinar on July 27, Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo was explicit in his vision for Rider's future, as the university embarks on a three-year, post-COVID-19 financial overhaul.

"In the higher education environment we find ourselves in, we no longer have the opportunity of continuing to offer every low-enrollment program simply on the basis of its individual academic value," said Dell'Omo during the summer webinar. "Each must be evaluated within the context of the university's overall situation."

While Dell'Omo specifically used the term "low-enrollment program," there is much more than just

enrollment when it comes to evaluating, prioritizing, and, in some cases, eliminating programs, according to Fredeen.

She clarified that the process has never been as simple as ranking the size of each program and trimming off those below a certain threshold.

"There's very much a quantitative aspect to this work, but there's also a qualitative aspect," said Fredeen. "We are really trying to do a very careful analysis."

While enrollment and associated revenue are important factors, the administration plans to use a new procedure that will evaluate programs based on enrollment,



Specialist visits campus to assess Rider's DEI work

By Amethyst Martinez

AS Rider looks to adjust to a new dynamic in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives after the departure of the top three DEI figureheads this summer, Damon Williams, a DEI specialist, looked into Rider's past four years of diversity work, assessing where it has grown, but also, where it can

improve.

During his end-of-September visit, Williams hosted events for the university community to become more familiar with his DEI work, including a keynote speech and student workshop with polls that will be used in the overall assessment of the university.

"One of the things that excited me about this residency is the chance to engage in a manner ... where I'm not just ... giving a lot of speeches, but I'm actually getting a chance to listen," said Williams in his keynote speech on Sept. 27.

Williams previously visited campus in 2019, his trip consisting of an introduction to and reinforcement of DEI ideas at Rider. For context, Rider's first-ever Chief Diversity Officer Barbara Lawrence, who was among those that left the university in the summer, was first hired in 2021, two years after Williams' visit.

Since then, DEI has become a key pillar in the university's structure, but it has faced major challenges, too.

This summer, along with Lawrence's departure, Center for Diversity and Inclusion Director Pamela Pruitt also resigned, and Leanna Fenneberg, former vice president of student affairs, had her position eliminated during cost-saving initiatives.

Since then, Lawrence's and Pruitt's roles have been combined and given to CFO Heeyoung Kim, along with her prior duties at the university.

Student Government Association President Naa'san Carr's focus during his campaign was DEI initiatives, and he felt hesitant after their departures in the summer.

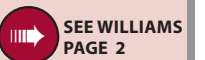
"I'm hopeful for now, but, in the back of my mind, I'm still wondering, is this the right move?" said Carr. "How's it going to affect our student experience?"

This year's visit

In 2023, four years after his initial visit, Williams was gathering information on Rider's DEI initiatives and where they stand now. While researching the university's DEI structure, Williams profiled two things: where the university flourished in terms of DEI, but also, where changes can be made.

"It's really about me listening, understanding and hearing," said Williams in an interview with The Rider News. "I'm generating my insights, and then offering my recommended actions."

Along with the 2023 two-day residency at Rider, documents were given of DEI accomplishments at Rider over the past four years.



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Damon Williams discusses DEI in his keynote speech.

INSIDE BRONCS TAKE MAAC WIN AT HOME

Volleyball hosted two matches, winning one against Siena.

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'SEVERELY UNDERPAID': LIFE AS A CA

A student shares challenges faced as a community assistant.

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RIDER ALUM STARTS SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

Lorelei Colbert discusses her mission as a breast cancer survivor.

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Care Fair brings Rider community together

By Kaitlyn McCormick

RIDER'S first-ever Community Care Fair brought sunshine to an otherwise cloudy day with ice cream, free T-shirts, fun music and, most importantly, the spirit of showing up for one another.

Hundreds of students, faculty and staff funneled through the blocked-off portion of the Campus Mall on Sept. 28 to collect their new Care Fair T-shirt sporting a graphic of A.J. The Bronc surrounded by community members and to meet with the numerous organizations tabling outside of the Student Recreation Center.

Rider's new committee

The event was meant to kick off the official start of Rider's Community Wellbeing Committee, an evolution from the Safety Preparedness Committee that banded together last spring after a swatting incident on Rider's campus caused 52 fear-stricken minutes of lockdown and brought forth a reevaluation about wellness and safety on campus.

"We want to make this an annual event and promote kindness and support for the campus community," said Mike Reca, vice president for facilities and university operations and lead voice in the committee's structure.

The committee will consist of around 20 individuals, split equally amongst students, faculty, administrators and staff, where discussions will be had about better ways to handle the

community during any emergency, according to Reca.

The point of the new committee and the Care Fair was to ensure that "No Bronc walks alone," the slogan plastered on the back of the T-shirts being distributed.

Putting faces to names

Students raced to get their free shirts decorated with "kindness matters" hearts, dropped their raffle tickets into buckets for chances to win gift cards, a speaker or a mountain bike and joined the long line for Mr. Softee.

Many also wandered around the tables manned by members from all corners of the university.

Representatives from Rider Public Safety, the counseling center, facilities management, Office of Information Technologies and more showed up with pamphlets, posters and smiling faces to create connections with Rider students.

"I think a lot of the times we don't always get to know what's happening in the counseling center or other resources that we have available to us because they come through an email or through an announcement where we might not see it right away," sophomore music education major Alexa

Farah said. "So this is a great way to get that sort of publicity."

Another sophomore music education major, Sean Haugh, explained that, as a tour guide on campus, events like the Care Fair are beneficial.

"When I'm giving a tour to prospective students I can talk about these different things and these different experiences so that they can see what Rider's like," Haugh said.

Gauging the turnout

Within the first thirty minutes of the fair, Reca said that they had already run out of the 300 T-shirts allotted for the day and guessed that the total turnout would rise to 500.

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo also made an appearance in the crowd.

"I think it's a wonderful idea," Dell'Omo said, extending congratulations to Reca and the team that made the event possible. "To see [this] kind of turnout is fantastic."

All kinds of community members show up for the first Care Fair.



Photos by Kaitlyn McCormick and Graphic by Jay Roberson/The Rider News

Williams works with university after DEI losses

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The assessment has not been released yet as Williams and his team work on their results.

Williams' keynote speech

Williams covered plenty in his address, from certain governing officials blocking DEI in universities, his work in justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, otherwise known as JEDI, and how faculty, staff, students and administrators must work together to achieve DEI harmonies.

Williams' visit aligned with a time period of DEI pushback in the U.S., especially in the higher education sector.

Universities across the country—more specifically in the majority red states—have faced extreme

backlash in DEI initiatives, with states like Texas and Florida banning DEI offices at public colleges.

"Thank goodness we're at a private institution [that] offers a different type of insulation," said Williams in his keynote address. "It's not about whether your president and your provost [are] committed when the legislature creates new laws at public institutions."

He also discussed JEDI, an expanded term coined for DEI that adds justice to the conversation of inclusion. He attributed the change to the Black Lives Matter movement at the height of the pandemic, and mentioned Black people killed at the hands of police brutality in the U.S., such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray and more.

"For some, it was the first time in their life that they had a personal connection, and moved across our country in ways that we had not seen it before," said Williams.

Obstacles like tech troubles and a bird flying across stage couldn't stop Williams from emphasizing his final point of the speech: the importance of letting all voices be heard and being an upstander.

"To be a great ally, you got to be a scholar of these issues ... and I'm not just talking about publications," said Williams. "We're talking about as an understanding. What are the DEI topics that make the hair on the back of your neck stand up, because they cause you to feel unsafe? You gotta know what's going on. If you don't know, it can't work."

Faculty reflects on prioritization struggles

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retention, quality and connections with other fields of study at the institution.

Fredeen was unable to offer many specifics regarding the new process, only that it is meant to “dive deeper” than previous iterations into the value of each program.

“There are a lot of little pieces here that all come together,” said Fredeen. “It’s a very holistic approach, actually.”

The administration is hoping the analysis will be complete around mid-October, and no plans regarding elimination had been made yet, Fredeen said in an interview with The Rider News on Sept. 15.

According to Fredeen, the administration is not directly consulting faculty during the new process. Instead, faculty involvement is “based upon the degree to which they were involved in the last process,” as the program reports and action plans submitted by departments in 2022 are being used to determine each program’s path forward.

According to philosophy professor Joel Feldman, many of those reports were intentionally left blank by professors as a sort of protest that stemmed from the 2015 prioritization process.

Rider’s faculty has been here before.

Raises lost to layoffs

In Rider’s expansive book of lore, the page on the 2015 layoffs has a folded corner.

The series of cuts still lives in infamy among professors who managed to sidestep or circumvent the reductions, as the event sparked long-lasting tension between the union and Dell’Omo’s administration.

The layoffs occurred just months after the previous president, Mordechai Razinski, was succeeded by Dell’Omo in July 2015.

“That was one of the first things he did,” said Elizabeth Scheiber, who was initially laid off in 2015 and is currently the chair of the Department of Languages, Literature and Culture. “He didn’t really get to know the place, he just laid a bunch of people off.”

That year, the university undertook a prioritization process in which it would assess programs based on a set of varying criteria, the administration filling out quantitative aspects such as costs and revenue, while the departments were responsible for qualitative details like expectations and productivity, Fredeen said.

She also stated that the administration used the scores to sort programs into quintiles, which helped in identifying the programs that were eventually cut.

That was the original plan, at least.

“It was basically rigged to where small programs were going to come out on the bottom anyway. ... [The faculty] went along and tried to do an honest job,” said Feldman. “But in the middle of the prioritization process, on Oct. 29, 2015, the president decides, before this process is done, he’s actually just going to eliminate programs by fiat and he announced layoffs.”

Feldman was laid off in 2015 along with many others, and the philosophy major and minor were eliminated. His job was one of those preserved through union concessions.

About a year later, the administration completed the prioritization process and each department received a set of future-determining quintiles.

The Rider News obtained a copy of the report that was eventually sent out to each department on Nov. 21, 2016. The document includes a breakdown of the quintiles with 15 programs in each, as well as the administration’s recommended actions given their standing.

According to the report, philosophy ended up in the second-lowest quintile with a recommended action of “Reconfigure to Increase Curricular Efficiency.” Still, it was nearly axed entirely a year prior.

Additionally, the report seemingly deemed that most of the bottom quintile was still worth keeping, as only six programs had recommended actions that even mentioned the possibility of elimination,

according to the report.

“I didn’t think the university was in that kind of dire financial situation,” said Scheiber. “I think that they put a budget together that made it look like they were.”

Of the undergraduate programs grouped into the report’s lowest percentile, Spanish is the only one that remains today, as it is the last major standing in a foreign languages department that has been “sliced and diced” over the years, Cunningham said.

According to Scheiber, Rider currently offers Spanish, French and Chinese courses. It once boasted Italian, Russian and German languages as well, but the department has dwindled since the 2015 layoff scare, just recently losing the French major after another prioritization process that began in fall 2021.

“It diminishes our own standing, our reputation, our contribution,” said Scheiber. “The department feels very discouraged ... very unsupported.”

‘Depressing and demoralizing’

For the second prioritization process in 2021, the administration dusted off its criteria and quintiles, preparing for another round of cuts.

After filling out the quantitative data, the administration sent out the reports to each department, but a portion of Rider’s faculty chose not to participate. Fredeen said 56 of 82 total reports were filled out and returned by their programs.

Consequently, when evaluations were returned to departments, any qualitative criteria left blank by faculty were given the lowest possible value, leading to some contradictory results, Feldman said.

On the philosophy major’s prioritization report, just months before the program was cut, its strengths were said to be in revenue and costs, while every other area was considered a weakness.

According to Fredeen, the administration is using these reports for the current process.

Rider’s faculty has been here before.

The criteria used by the university are outlined in a book by Robert C. Dickeson called, “Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance,” Fredeen said.

According to the book, some of the 10 criteria it discusses are history, development and expectations; internal and external demand; quality of program outcomes; size, scope and productivity; and impact, justification and overall essentiality.

Dickeson’s approach, however, has been widely

criticized by faculty at a number of schools across the nation.

“Those were the criteria that we used,” said Fredeen. “We decided how we would rate each criterion. Not every criterion was rated equally, so we put the ratings scale on [the report].”

Fredeen said that enrollment numbers were given a bit more weight than other factors.

After the evaluations, the administration returned the reports to each department and asked that each program create an “action plan” to assess any shortcomings within a five-year timeframe, according to a 2022 prioritization report obtained by The Rider News.

However, Fredeen said the prioritization task force decided which programs would be eliminated before the reports were returned to departments.

Dell’Omo announced the administration’s 25 eliminations via an email in June 2022 that included the cuts of economics, piano and global studies and saw the French and philosophy majors reduced to minors after dodging the chopping block for nearly a decade.

“They scrubbed us from the website, they closed the gates so we can’t accept any new majors ... and now we’re down to one [student with a philosophy major],” said Feldman. “I built this thing and they just wrecked it and knocked it all over and now it’s nothing. It’s depressing and demoralizing.”

According to Scheiber, the cuts and layoffs departments have faced took a serious toll on faculty morale, and, given the university’s current financial situation, any reductions in the near future could be the most drastic the Rider has seen since at least 2015.

In a September presentation to university employees, Dell’Omo projected a \$7.2 million deficit this year.

Until then, professors like Feldman are using what they love as a form of escapism during what could be their last year at the university. For Feldman, it wouldn’t be a first.

Rider’s faculty has been here before.

“The classroom is like a haven from the misery of this place,” said Feldman. “It’s a very depressing way to live, and I absolutely no longer feel a connection to the institution because I don’t feel it values me.”



Emily Kelley/The Rider News

Katelyn Kelly holds up a sign in protest at a November 2015 SGA open forum.

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Fostering Safe Spaces for Dialogue

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1:10 to 2:40 p.m.

PANEL 2

The Great Undoing: The Backlash Against DEI in Higher Education

2:50 to 4:20 p.m.

PANEL 3

Reproductive Health in a Post-Dobbs World

4:30 to 6 p.m.

PANEL 4

"You Ban Books, You Ban Drag": Censorship & its Consequences

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER/POET:

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Students study well-being in Greece

By **Tristan E. M. Leach**

IN 2022, Greece ranked third in “healthy life years” of all the European Union, according to the Greek Reporter, a Greek news outlet.

One year later, in the summer of 2023, 18 Rider students and two professors traveled to the islands for a one of a kind experience in health and wellness.

The class, Science of Well-Being, was taught by psychology professors Stephanie Golski and Anne Law. The goal of the class was to understand how different components of the human experience: relationships, intellect, self-respect and more, make up a happy life or a life of well-being.

Students had the opportunity to explore Greece and also attend events, classes and tours. Through these many experiences, the class explored how Greek people use natural resources and their culture to lead a more productive and fulfilling life.

Anjali Chennapragada, ‘23, was a health care policy major while at Rider. Chennapragada found the class was another great way to understand how public health is perceived and works in another country.

“This was a great trip because I got to see how lifestyle impacts people’s biological health, measures and outcomes. Getting to see how the Greek people automatically integrate that into workplaces, their diet, into their movement and all of that science is there. We also got to see alternative health methods that pushed me to broaden my perspective of what health is coming from a very Western setting,” said Chennapragada.

Throughout the trip there were a multitude of opportunities for the class to see how health and wellness differs from what they have come to know in the U.S. Students went to a beekeeper who makes her honey from scratch, fresh daily. They also danced with and ate side by side with the local Greek people.

Senior mathematics major Emily Russo always had an interest in well-being and how she could better herself through learning more about the body and the mind. Russo appreciated the small class size while on her trip.

“It was a tight-knit kind of group and everyone was super involved. I got to talk to everyone and really get to know everyone. [You] really got to know their perspective on things. When we did cooking

classes [it] was pretty intimate and everything felt super personal,” said Russo.

Throughout their time in Athens and Ikaria, the students learned about Greek culture and traditions. A highlight of the trip was a dance lesson followed by a celebration that locals invited the students to participate in. In addition to dancing there was conversation and music throughout the night.

Chennapragada said, “We did [a] dancing lesson and then we went to a Panigiri, which is a dance celebration all the local people do. It was very sweaty and fun. Everybody was in there and the locals accepted us with open arms as we were dancing. It was so much fun.”

The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, where every student left with a smile on their face. As they went through U.S. customs with their bags loaded with honey, each brought back the knowledge and growth that study abroads at Rider always hoped to have.

Hannah Newman is an editor for The Rider News and participated in the Science of Well-Being class. Newman had no part in the writing or editing of this article.



Photos courtesy of Anjali Chennapragada

The Science of Well-Being class poses for a photo at the Akropolis.



The class with the a Rider flag in Greece, a long-standing tradition of classes that go abroad.



One of the trip’s experiences was a cooking class about healthy living.

Active Minds hosts card writing for kindness event

By **Julia Train**

IN preparation for a hectic semester, Rider’s Active Minds club held their first event of the semester—Create a Card for a Friend—on Sept. 27.

The organization is dedicated to promoting conversation around mental health and decreasing the stigma, per its Instagram.

“We just have a really good message and mission to help anybody here at Rider feel more comfortable and at home, especially during stressful classes,” said sophomore journalism major Grace Bertrand.

Bertrand, who is the club’s public relations officer this year, started attending the club’s meetings last year to de-stress. She noted that the paint by numbers night was her favorite.

A week before the card-making event, the club posted on their account about the occasion, inviting their followers to bring a friend too.

The thought behind it was to make motivational cards for friends or themselves ahead of the semester’s chaos. It was an intimate gathering, with four of the club’s members and six attendees.

The organization’s vice president, sophomore biology major Chloe Bacsik, joined the e-board after coming to the events last year, like Bertrand. In addition to Active Minds, she’s involved with the Student Government Association, Alpha Xi Delta and other clubs and organizations.

“For me, this club was always one hour every two weeks that I could just breathe,” said Bacsik.

Usually, the events contain powerpoints dedicated to certain mental health topics. However, since this was the first of the semester, the members opted to introduce themselves, the club and resources for mental health assistance instead.

Last year, the club’s president led the powerpoints. However, the new one who was appointed has been hard to reach, according to Bacsik, so they’re in the process of reassigning roles.

A table at the front of room 205 in Lynch Adler Hall held supplies for the cards. There was a variety of stickers—even ones that could be colored in—different colors and patterns of cardstock paper and coloring implements.

Attendees went up to the table to grab their supplies and spent the rest of the hour crafting and chatting while listening to calming music.

More information on the club can be found on its Instagram: @rider.active.minds.



Julia Train/The Rider News

The e-board of Active Minds holds the “Make a Card for a Friend” event poster. From left to right: **Chloe Bacsik** a sophomore biology major and vice president, **Alyssa Rodriguez**, a sophomore business administration major and treasurer, **Skylar O’Kelley**, a sophomore acting for film, television and stage major and secretary, **Grace Bertrand**, a sophomore journalism major and public relations.

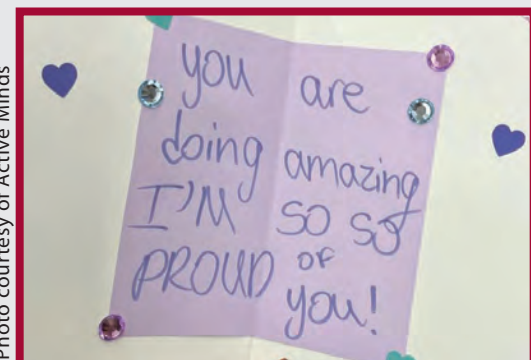


Photo courtesy of Active Minds

A heartfelt note written by a student to be given to a friend.

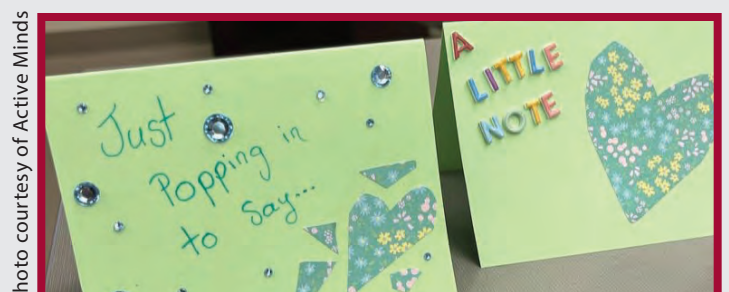


Photo courtesy of Active Minds

Two of the cards made by attendees of the Card for a Friend event.

Rider alum Lorelei Colbert discusses

By Hannah Newman

ONE voice, one act of kindness, one life-changing cancer diagnosis. In summer 2020, Rider alum Lorelei Colbert '14, a 28-year-old newly married woman who had plans to move to Japan with her husband on military orders, was blindsided by reality.

With a need to update health records prior to moving overseas, Colbert made an appointment to discuss birth control options with her doctor and was told that a breast exam wasn't necessary; however, Colbert was quick to challenge her doctor's suggestion after feeling influenced by a nurse that carried kindness with every word she spoke.

"I walked in and she was so kind and amazing... she questioned me about not getting a breast exam when the doctor walked out of the room," said Colbert. "I just thought how profound her one act of kindness made me question the doctor, but it really changed my life."

The exam delivered the news that Colbert had stage two B, grade-three triple negative breast cancer.

As plans were altered and her journey overseas became a path to overcome cancer, Colbert refused to let the physical battle become a mental war, and instead let the people who inspired her become the reason she strives to change the lives of others.

Colbert, with her background in marketing, decided to develop a way for the world to come with her on her journey through chemotherapy by creating the Chemo to Kindness Challenge, a tag on social media where people could embrace acts of kindness they displayed or received as a way of demonstrating her gratitude for the one nurse she met that saved her life by simply looking out for her.

"When you're starting a journey like chemotherapy for really aggressive cancer, you don't know what your future holds," said Colbert. "I knew I was ready to fight like hell. But I knew I wanted to take it on my own way and wanted to raise awareness."

Adversity to achievement

On Oct. 19, 2020, right before entering the hospital for her first treatment, Colbert launched the Chemo to Kindness Challenge on social media.

"I posted the flier and I just said, 'Today's the day I'm starting chemo. I would love it if you join this Chemo to Kindness Challenge with me for the next 16 weeks.' My favorite number was 16. I wanted to go big or go home so I decided 100 acts of kindness a week had to be doable," said Colbert.

With one push of a button, one suggestion to be kind and a single ask for help during a life changing situation, Colbert's kind request spread across the globe.

"Every week, I just got flooded with immense positivity and acts of kindness coming in from all over. I mean, different countries, different states and eventually it started spreading to people I didn't know and there really was the power of kindness," said Colbert. "It uplifted me

in the chair, it uplifted my nurses and other patients that I got to share it with."

The campaign became such a success that Colbert launched a website so that the challenge could spread even further and people were able to interact with not just her, but each other.

The world was given the opportunity to share acts of kindness via a spreadsheet that could be found on Colbert's website and would emphasize the nonprofits they impacted.

"I'm always uplifted when I talk about the Chemo to Kindness Challenge and truthfully, I'm always blown away by the community and by the power that that challenge had," said Colbert. "It guided me through my journey in my own way. And now when I talk to other patients and survivors, I remind them to control what you can and face your journey and whatever feels good for you. And for me, it was just the right thing to do and it's so uplifting."

One year later, about a day after Colbert's 29th birthday, she received a call from her surgeon which marked the end of her long battle fighting breast cancer.

"I could barely even lift my arms but I was so excited," said Colbert.

After extending the news to her family, she made sure that the community behind her, which became her biggest fans, were given an update. At that point in her journey, Colbert had created an entire diary of herself that was shared with the world and the acts of kindness multiplied by the second.

"At that point, we have this, this community of kindness behind me and all these people rooting me on because I was doing the challenge. I would sign on every week and give an update. 'Hey, we know 700 acts of kindness. We're at 892 this week, but also this is where I'm at in my journey. My hair fell out this week. It was hard. I'm having a lot of bone pain this week. There was one time where my vision was blurred because of the medication.' So I had a lot of people rooting me on," said Colbert.

Although her long-fought battle with cancer came to an end, her commitment to changing the world was only just beginning. Colbert wanted to continue sharing her story.

In October 2021, she began her next journey as an advocate speaker for a women's group. Colbert now travels around the country to advocate for change and share her story as a way of sharing the notion that adversity is the elevation to achievement.

Back to where it all began

Colbert has returned to Rider on several occasions to be a guest speaker and visit those that have impacted her college career. As a college student, Colbert was heavily involved on campus ranging from the women's basketball manager to student-body president.

Those that she left behind at Rider knew what she

was capable of and how monumental her strength was.

"She is one of those people that can get along with anybody, that can read the room and know what needs to be done to put everybody in a successful situation," said Rider women's basketball Head Coach Lynn Milligan. "When she walks in a room, you know that she's walking in the room, because I just think she has kind of that infectious personality."

The environment she created when in her presence has drawn the student body to her instantly according to her prior roommate, Jessica Richardson, Rider alum.

"She's one of those people that has such a warm, welcoming presence and a way to resonate with people and connect with all different backgrounds and I think that's what drew me as a friend," said Richardson. "She's meant to do big things. In my eyes, she's that type of person that doesn't have to ask anything, like if Lorelei says she's gonna do something she's gonna do it and she's going to give it 100%."

In addition to becoming a guest speaker, Colbert has also developed her own merchandise, including note cards and hats.

"I dipped my toe into merch with cards. They were an immediate extension of my experience going through chemo," said Colbert. "I started painting again and like I said, going through a journey like facing cancer, puts things into perspective. 'Am I living my life the way I want to be living it? Am I feeling joy? Am I doing all these things that make my heart happy?'" One of those things was that I used to paint when I was little."

Colbert first conducted a fundraiser by selling the personalized cards and gave the money she raised back to the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation.

A store in North Carolina where Colbert resides decided to buy her cards and sell them in addition to their opportunity for purchase on her website.

Some of the hats include slogans such as 'Be Kind' and the French word "Survivre," which means survive. Survivre, when broken down into its root words means "on to live" which is a saying that Colbert has held close to her heart throughout her journey and beyond.

When I think about opportunity after adversity, that's exactly what survive represents," said Colbert. "It doesn't matter what you're facing, but it just means to keep going forward."

Recently, after being cancer free for a couple of years now, Colbert reconciled with the nurse that recommended her for a breast exam and in that moment, everything circled back to the one moment that changed everything. Just a single act of kindness.

"After almost three years we met in person, and she remembered exactly what I was wearing that day, even though we both had masks on and everything," said Colbert. "I told her 'You know you saved my life. And turns out her mother had breast cancer at 27 and that is why she always advocates for young women. I'm tearing up thinking about how amazing that is.'"



Photo courtesy of Lorelei Colbert

Rider alum Lorelei Colbert '14, is a speaker at Premier Real Estate in North Carolina.

how kindness is the key to survival



Student shares difficulties as a community assistant

COLLEGE is an expensive endeavor. From tuition to just basic necessities, students and their families foot an expensive bill. This is very true for me, especially when being an out-of-state student is factored in. In an effort to help with the expense of living on campus, I took on the role of community assistant.

Being a CA meant that I had a lot of responsibilities. I was in charge of roughly 30 residents; however, one CA could have up to 60 residents at a time. I was responsible for decorating two bulletin boards monthly and having at least one program a month. I also had to create door decs (CA terminology for decorations), place work orders and hold one on one meetings with each resident (some of whom decided they didn't have to show up). There were five CAs in my building and one community director. We met with our CD every other week and had a staff meeting twice a week at night. The biggest responsibility was being "on call."

One to three times a week myself and the four other CAs in my building rotated 12-hour shifts of being "on call." Equipped with our early 2000s flip phone and a set of keys, we would sit at the duty desk for three hours and then retreat to our rooms. After completing three rounds (a check of the condition of the building) we would fall tiredly into our beds. Some nights the phone wouldn't ring and we would wake promptly at seven to return the items to the office. Some nights, however, were the definition of chaos. Several times I received calls about mice running through the halls (do I look like an exterminator?), and there were situations that we had been trained for but in the moment the panic sets in. The reality of the job was that when you were on call, nearly 200 people in the building were relying on you.

A lot of times I walked away from a situation thinking, "I do NOT get paid enough for this." I had experiences that scared the life out of me and I heard things that made me worried for my residents. A lot of times I felt unappreciated and overworked. Some people would say that my experience was what I made it and I can tell you that that is simply not true.

CAs are severely underpaid for the amount of hours they put in. From one-on-one meetings to decorating the dorms and duty, hours and hours of their lives go into taking care of others. You may be reading this and thinking, "Well yeah, that's what you signed up for." And you're right, CAs do know how much they're going to have to do, but that doesn't make the job easier or more enjoyable. I want it to be known that I am in no way upset about what I got as a CA. I was lucky and I know for a fact that Residence Life Dean Roberta Butler and her staff have been working to secure better wages and free housing for their CAs.

At Rider, CAs have it pretty good, the housing is discounted at 75% and there is a stipend. Some universities don't compensate their CAs and are instead given free housing only. While free housing is great, it does not at all make up for the amount of work put in.

Being a CA is a tremendous task. It takes a special person to do the job and there are several CAs that I worked with who I am so happy returned to the job. For me, as much as I love being a leader, my mental health took hit after hit and I knew that I couldn't continue to serve the community in this position. I personally felt very bogged down and unwell after long nights, I also felt like I couldn't be everything else I was supposed to be. At my job as an editor for The Rider News, I felt I lacked my creative spark. In class I felt exhausted constantly and in my clubs I felt like I had no time to plan. There is a lot to be said about those who can balance this job with their other huge responsibilities.

I am grateful for my experience and I have made friends with amazing people. I can confidently say that I know how to handle conflict and other hard situations because of this job. Residence Life is an integral part of any university and the staff they chose make the dream of a home away from home come true.

*Tristan E. M. Leach
senior journalism major*



Felicia Roehm/The Rider News

Tristan E. M. Leach shares their struggles and responsibilities as a community assistant.

THE Rider News

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ALBUM REVIEW

Jorja Smith's sound matures on sophomore album

"I still feel like I'm still at the beginning, even though I've done so much already, but it still feels like the beginning to me," stated Jorja Smith in a recent Apple Music interview posted on Sept. 29. The 26-year-old British singer-songwriter has returned with her sophomore album, "Falling or Flying," and while it may still feel like the beginning to her, this album presents listeners with a more mature sound in comparison to her debut 2018 album, "Lost and Found."

The 16-track, 43-minute-long album, released late September, is a fusion of sounds. While the album is R&B, other genres influence the songs, such as the upbeat dance track "Little Things," or the indie pop track "GO GO GO." Smith is an artist that is known to not just stick to one strict sound, as the singer-songwriter has had previous collaborations with artists such as Drake, Burna Boy, Popcaan, Shaybo, Kendrick Lamar and more.

In the first song titled "Try Me," Jorja Smith sings the first line, "Ask me about me again," following up with the chorus stating, "Go 'head try me/'Cause I'm safe behind these walls/Think you can take me through the fog where I'm no challenge/Childish (childish), childish/Yeah, you, you can try me." Smith comes out of the gate swinging with lyrics that contrast with messages in her debut album.

However, the title track of the album "Falling or Flying" released as a single prior to the release of the album, still voices the feelings of uncertainty with love that Smith has expressed in her previous works. The first verse reads, "This ain't what your mother told you, it's night and day/If you're waitin' for a sign to come and hold me/Well, you might as well spend all your night guessin' (Oh)/If this ain't what your mother told you, forget what she said (Oh-oo)/If you want this to be real, then show me you want me/Don't play it safe with me."

She continues this sentiment in the pre-chorus with the first two lines reading, "Won't work if I'm numb/Won't stop if I love." This song is similar to past music from the artist, in terms of the themes being discussed, but the sound is different and a bit more refined in comparison to the singer-songwriter's other projects.

As we continue through this album, we get to hear Jorja Smith shine a more positive light on her experience with love on the ninth track, "Greatest Gift" featuring Jamaican singer-songwriter Lila Iké. Smith sings, "You're the greatest gift I found/My time with you is everything," in the first two lines of this slower laid back song.

Listeners continue to hear Smith speak positively about love as she reminisces about a past relationship in the second to last track on the album titled "Backwards." She sings the chorus, "How you held me, oh/I hope that you see/There's no way you'd know/How, how you helped me," in a soft falsetto followed by string accompaniment.

The final track, "What if my heart beats faster?" slows the album down even more, as we get to hear Smith discuss her self awareness during the collapse of a relationship. The chorus reads, "If I ever find/My heart beat faster/I could love for miles/And still not open up/I should call this off/Knowin' that I'll never feel how they could/Funny how life will change, but they never figure you out."

This album is a clear example of an artist elevating the sound that made them stick out in the first place. Smith did not abandon what makes her special, and yet she was able to give listeners an album with new messages and something different to take away from it.

Asha Burtin
senior music production major



Eric Buckwalter/The Rider News

Jorja Smith shares her mature and creative voice in her sophomore album, "Falling or Flying."

JUNIOR JOURNALS

See.Hear.Now music festival returns to Jersey Shore

On the weekend of Sept. 16 and 17, the Sea.Hear.Now music festival made a triumphant return to the Jersey Shore. Since 2018, the beaches of Asbury Park, New Jersey, have been home to a unique mix of art, surf and music that perfectly encapsulates the town's history as an artistic hub.

This year was no different, as countless legendary bands took the stage to celebrate the final days of summer. The festival is split between three stages. The Park stage is set in front of the famous Convention Hall and was home to smaller indie acts. The other two stages, named Surf and Sand, sat right on the beach. On the sand in between the two stages sat sculptures and paintings from local artists, while the ocean featured constant surfing.

The first day featured great music across all three stages. The Park stage kicked off with Yawn Mower, the first band heard for many guests as they entered the festival gates. Highlights for the secondary Sand stage included the fun loving Philadelphia band Snacktime, hard hitting garage rock duo Royal Blood and legendary funk metal group Living Colour.

The Surf stage was home to some huge names. Sheryl Crow soaked up the sun in an incredible afternoon show. Greta Van Fleet was highlighted by a flamboyant twelve minute guitar solo. The night one headliners were Vegas legends The Killers. As a band who idolizes Asbury native Bruce Springsteen, they were a perfect choice for the event.

The second day was arguably bigger in terms of star power. On the Park stage, the hottest names were Steven Sanchez and Mt. Joy, the latter of which especially had people flocking to see. The Sand stage saw unfortunate news, as Tegan and Sara were forced to cancel due to illness. The stage headliners, The Breeders, still managed to put on a show strong enough to fill the missing gap.

Over on the Surf stage was perhaps the most fitting band to play a beach, the Beach Boys. Joined by superfan John Stamos, the band's remaining members played a show at 80 years old that would have you think they were still young, packed with hit songs that transcended generations. Following them was Weezer, who had fans hooked from the moment they walked out, keeping energy high all through the classic "Buddy Holly" guitar solo that closed out their set.

The weekend's headliners, the Foo Fighters, played a massive two hour set that could have filled a stadium. The show featured a tribute to their late drummer Taylor Hawkins, who passed away last year. Dave Grohl even mentioned the festival "is definitely Taylor's vibe."

There was no better climax to the weekend than the cathartic performance of "Everlong." Sea.Hear.Now was an incredible experience, with music that keeps the spirit of Asbury Park alive.

Elijah Nevlín
junior marketing major



Photo courtesy of Elijah Nevlín

Weezer performing at the See.Hear.Now. music festival.

VOLLEYBALL

Rider splits weekend series, sit at 4-10

By Terrell Munford and Glendale Eversley

AFTER sweeping Saint Peter's on Sept. 23, Rider volleyball added a 3-1 win against Siena on Sept. 30, and 3-1 loss to Marist the next day during a two-game homestand.

The Broncos sit at 3-3 in Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play, and 4-10 overall.

Aggressive play

On Sept. 30, Rider started off their first game of their homestand this weekend against Siena.

With the final score of 3-1, Rider volleyball was able to pull off a win and "set the tone," according to defensive specialist Molly Strah.

Rider went "full force into the game," said freshman middle hitter Molly Rohde, who led the team with seven blocks throughout the game.

Rider was aggressive in the first two sets as the team led in attacks with the Broncos having 30 and the Saints with 22.

Even though losing one set was the cost, the Broncos finished the contest with an organized game plan of having fun and playing strong in the third and fourth sets after their previous set back. The Broncos won back-to-back sets to close it out at home.

Rider ended the game with 56 kills over Siena's 42, showing that Rider was in attack mode with less mistakes in the game.

Outside hitter senior Jenna Amaro took charge as she led the team in kills with 16.

The team embodied the aggressive mindset of starting off hot and they intend to utilize it in their next match against Marist on their home court.

Rider falls again to Marist

On Oct. 1, Rider faced Marist, the second game of a double-header this weekend. Rider lost the match 3-1.

With the loss, the Broncos fell to 4-10 on the season and 3-3 in league play, while the Red Foxes improve to 7-10 on the season and 5-1 in MAAC matches.

The Broncos started off strong, Tied 1-1 in the opening set, senior middle hitter Gabby Polynice and



Kenneth Sewerd/The Rider News

Rider volleyball prepares an attack against Siena. The Broncos won the match 3-1.

sophomore outside hitter Kiannisha Santiago had a pair of kills during a 4-0 run.

The Broncos extended their lead 12-7 before Marist responded with a 7-1 run to regain the lead.

Tied 17-17, the Broncos took control of the set going on a 5-1 run lead by a kill and an ace from Santiago winning the set 25-23.

Tied 10-10 in the second set, Marist went on a 7-2 rally to take the lead.

Down 18-23, a kill, an ace and an assist by junior setter Ryley Frye brought the Broncos within one, but the Red Foxes got the side out to take the set.

Marist took early control in the third set, taking a 5-1 lead, and would later extend their lead 10-3.

Down 12-6 Polynice and Santiago had three combined blocks during an 8-2 run to even the set at 14-14. Up 18-17, the Red Foxes went on a 4-0 run to take the set 25-23.

In set four, Marist jumped out to an early 12-7 lead. Trailing 15-11, Amaron had three kills during a 5-0 run to take back the lead.

Marist countered with a run of their own, scoring four-straight points and grabbing control of the set and the match.

Head Coach Jeff Rotondo spoke to the aggressive mindset his team should uphold and how he reminded them in set four. "We know what their athletes can do; we know they can hit, we know they reach high, can swing really hard, they're really good at what they do, it was just a matter of us dealing with some of the adversity," he said.

"I think in those sets, our energy dipped a little bit, I think we just need to do a better job of over communicating in situations like that especially when we're down and just find a way to push through that and over communicate," said Rohde.

FIELD HOCKEY

Broncs stop skid; experience scoring wave

By Kadie Diguseppe

THE Broncos rolled into town with two wins, a stark contrast following their back-to-back road losses.

Rider outscored Merrimack 5-1 on Sept. 29 and Lock Haven 2-0 on Oct. 1 to start their stretch of home games.

Rider takes on Merrimack

On a cold Friday afternoon in Massachusetts, the Broncos gave the Warriors a run for their money in Rider's highest-scoring game of the 2023 season.

The first quarter was back and forth, leaving both teams to have only one shot on goal in the period.

Things started clicking for the Rider's offense in the second quarter when freshman forward Emma Bonshak scored halfway through, making her first goal as a Bronc.

Minutes later, Merrimack bounced back and scored their only goal of the game, tying it at 1-1.

Rider freshman forward and midfielder Willemijn Ephraim responded, scoring her third goal of the season making the score 2-1 at halftime.

The Broncos' offense was electric the rest of the game, racking up three more goals by graduate student forward Carli Ciocco, freshman forward and midfielder Liv Cox and even a goal off a penalty stroke by sophomore forward Valeria Perales.

Rider closed the game with 20 total shots and nine offensive corners.

Broncs take down Lock Haven

Coming off of the explosive road win, the Broncos played at home for the first time since their Alumni

game on Sept. 10 and gave the fans in attendance just what they wanted.

The intensity was high the entire game, especially during the first half after both teams attempted shot after shot, but nothing got past the defenses.

Rider opened the third quarter with a bang when freshman midfielder Ang Borisow scored the first goal of the game off a corner, making it her second goal of the season.

The evenly matched game had many intense corners for both the Broncos and the Bald Eagles, ending the game with 20 corners from both teams combined.

Junior forward Lyric Scott said, "We took this past week to focus on our corners and we felt really prepared. We took it seriously all week and I think that showed on the field today."

Rider scored both their goals off of offensive corners, including Scott's goal with three minutes left in the game and were locked down on defensive corners all day, or as Perales would put it, the defense "defended hard" on all their corners.

"We always want to defend our home field and we have a lot of supporters that come out and watch us play," said Borisow about the home-turf win. "We just wanted to execute and score more goals."

The Broncos are 4-6 on the season so far, facing Saint Francis at home on Oct. 6 at 4 p.m. The game will be streamed on ESPN+.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Sophomore forward **Semra Said** takes the field. She had a shot on goal against Lock Haven on Oct. 1.

MEN'S SOCCER

Broncs draw against Bobcats to stay lossless since opener

By Aidan Brager

AFTER a 2-0 win against Fairfield, 5-1-2 Rider men's soccer had all the momentum they could've asked for as the team traveled to Connecticut on Sept. 30 to face off against the 2-4-2 Quinnipiac Bobcats.

The game kicked off like many other Rider matches this year. Rider kept possession well and consistently put together creative and promising attacks on goal.

That was until the Bobcats were able to push the ball into the Broncs' final third. A couple of quick passes and a right-footed strike from Quinnipiac ended in the back of the net, giving the Bobcats a 1-0 lead just 23 minutes into the game.

"We have a quote, 'Be together, stay together.' It's all for those types of moments so when it doesn't go our way we have the ability to face adversity," said Head Coach Chad Duernberger.

And it showed. The Broncs kept up the pressure on the Bobcats defense and, after an errant pass from the Bobcats midfield back to their defenders, Rider's Babacar Diene capitalized. He was able to intercept the pass and get a great shot on goal, which tied the game 1-1 just moments after Quinnipiac's opening goal.

"I was really pleased with the guys to find a way to stay together on the road and get a goal in the first half to bring it back 1-1," said Duernberger.

The game continued with Rider keeping possession and efficiently creating chances to get shots. The game would stay 1-1 through the final whistle as the game ended in a draw.

The Broncs, who had 17 total shots, almost doubled the Bobcats in shots, although just 5 were on target.

On the Broncs' high shot number but low goal number, Duernberger said, "Statistically, I think it does show a lot of shots but I wouldn't say those



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Junior midfielder **Dylan Kotch** gallops over a teammate against La Salle on Sept. 19.

shots were all dangerous enough to score goals."

Duernberger went on to say the Broncs will use the next week to focus on how they could turn those opportunities into goals.

"We'll look at the chances and look if we could've made one more pass or find one more open player in the final third that will help create a more dangerous chance for us," said Duernberger.

With the draw, the Broncs have extended their undefeated streak to over a month since losing their season opener to Seton Hall, 1-0 on Aug. 24.

Despite this hot streak Rider has been on, Duernberger didn't celebrate prematurely.

"We've just taken it game by game. (We've) not looked ahead or behind us and just stayed focused on whatever the next task at hand is," said Duernberger.

Rider will attempt to continue their streak when they travel to New York to take on the Manhattan Jaspers who currently sit in first place in the MAAC standings. The game will get occur on Oct. 7 at 2 p.m and can also be seen on ESPN+.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Rider falls to reigning MAAC champs, now at 3-6-1

By Benjamin Shinault and Dain Smith

COMING off a tough loss to the Fairfield Stags on Sept. 23, the Broncs were ready to get back in the win column, but they're going to have to wait a couple more days, as they lost to the defending Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference champions, Quinnipiac Bobcats on Sept. 30 by a score of 1-0.

It was Alumni Day at Ben Cohen Field, but the good mojo in the complex did not assist the Broncs, as they found themselves only amounting four shots and a measly one shot on goal the whole match.

After the match, Head Coach Drayson Hounsoume addressed how his team fared against the Bobcats in the past and how they played in their most recent matchup.

"You have to put it into perspective with who we played, four shots against this team, we had no shots last year," Hounsoume said. "So in perspective, that's fantastic."

Throughout the game, tensions were high as there were many collisions, slide tackles and some cautions called on both teams. Hounsoume elaborated on how he viewed playing the more aggressive approach.

"I like us to play physical, I like us to win tackles but I don't like us to be dirty," Hounsoume said.

Coming out of halftime, things didn't go so well for the Broncs. The Bobcats scored on the back of the net coming off a crosser with 43:47 in the second half.

The Broncs couldn't get anything going offensively, with the Broncs only attempting one shot. It seemed like they defended the goal the whole 45 minutes just trying to get by.

This cold spell isn't new for the Broncs as they have only scored two goals in their last four games. "Scoring is the hardest part of the game," Hounsoume said about the value and impact of



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Freshman midfielder **Ava Ferrie** runs off as the Broncs lose their second straight and three out of their last four.

scoring. "Goal scorers cost a lot of money and if you got the money to invest in a goal-scorer then you got a chance."

With the Broncs sitting at 3-6-1 after their latest loss to the Bobcats, Hounsoume spoke about his views on his team this season thus far.

"One nothing loss against a team that was in the NCAA tournament and a dominant in the

conference last year, so it shows where we're at," Hounsoume said. "I think we are a much improved team from last year and we are not far from where we need to be."

With the Broncs now on a two-game losing streak as well as losing three out of their last four, they are looking forward to their next matchup against the Saint Peter's Peacocks on Oct. 4.

Sports

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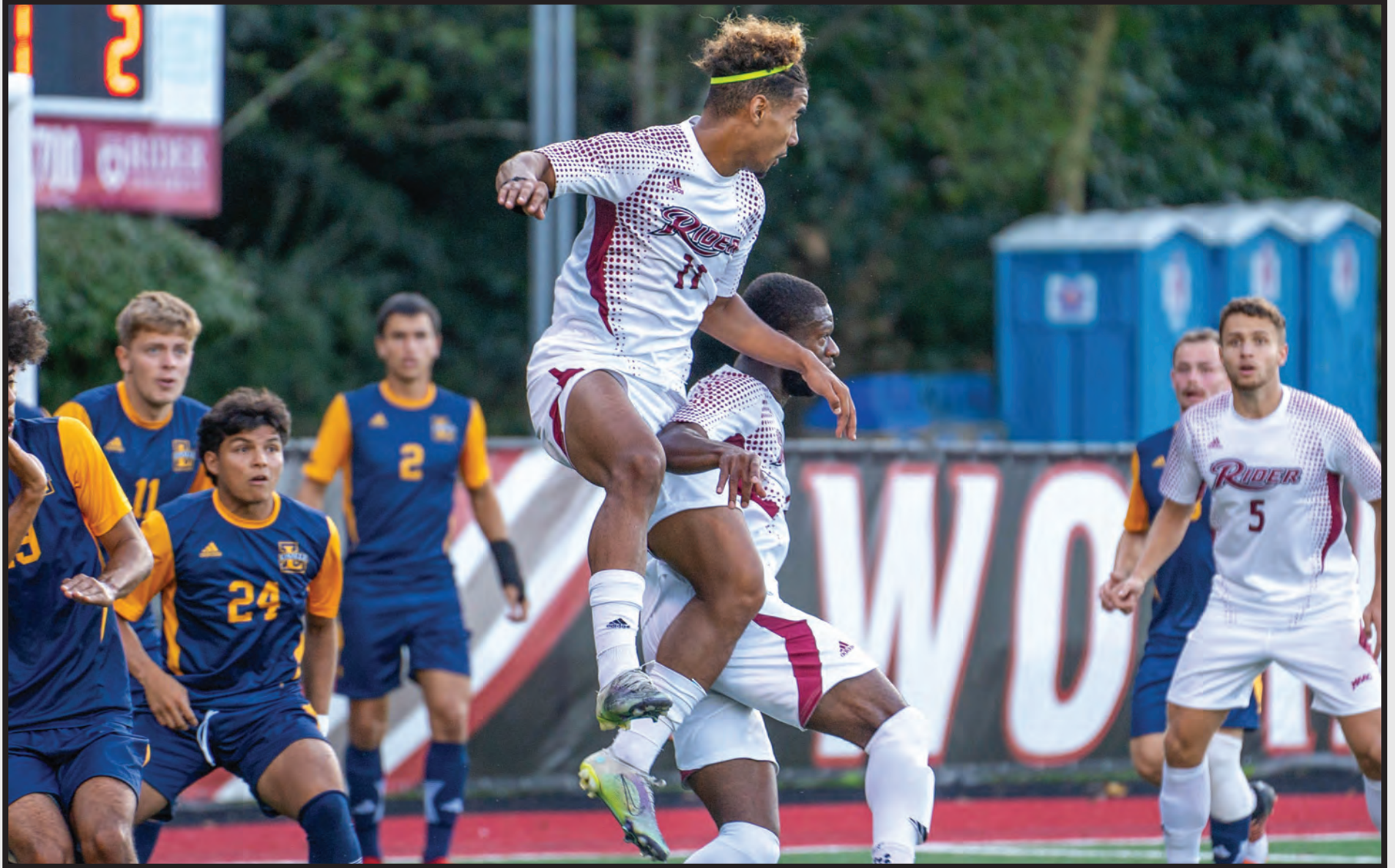
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MEN'S SOCCER

Top scorer returns to 'extreme' self after injury



After an injury-plagued 2022 season, graduate student forward **Zaki Alibou** is making his presence felt in 2023 for Rider men's soccer.

Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

By **Logan VanDine**

THROUGH nine games, Rider men's soccer already has more wins than it did all of last year, and is on pace for Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Championship contention in 2023.

One of the players responsible for the turnaround is graduate student forward Zaki Alibou, a former MAAC offensive player of the year who is back to full health after playing just two games in 2022.

Originally from soccer-centric Meknes, Morocco, Alibou started playing the game at a very young age.

"Soccer is the main sport in Morocco, everybody was trying to play it and try to get professional," said Alibou, who joined his first soccer club at just 10 years old. "I would start playing with my friends."

Thanks to the support of his dad and other family members, Alibou instantly fell in love with the game.

"My dad got me interested," he said. "All of my family loves to watch soccer. They're Barcelona fans, and my dad would always love to go to the coffee shop to watch the games and stuff, and my older brother was a really good player. ... I fell in love with the sport."

When it came to picking where Alibou wanted to play at the collegiate level in the U.S., despite coming from a place where college was not a thing, he explained how he got offers from multiple universities, including Rider, and eventually decided to play for the Broncos.

"I started talking to the former assistant coach, Coach [Victor] Kotynski ... and I felt so comfortable talking to him and I had a lot of belief in the program," Alibou said. "He helped me a lot with the process and everything and he was trying his best to get me in and ... I said yes to their offer."

Alibou said that the COVID-19-shortened season in 2021 does not count for him, so he described what it was like to play in a college game for the very first time, despite him playing in 2021.

"My first game was against Villanova and we lost 2-0 ... but I played really well in that game and I had the opportunity to go and see the university and it got me excited because you go to play your first game at a big school and all the facilities and buildings were really nice," he said.

During his first full season in 2021, Alibou put the MAAC on notice as he led Rider in goals and points, becoming the Broncos' first-ever MAAC offensive player of the year.

In 2021, Alibou was also a first team All-MAAC and MAAC all-academic honoree.

"I set my goals really high because my main goals are to [go] professional and coach the MLS ... I know in order to achieve those goals, I need to play a really good season," he said.

Head Coach Chad Duernberger, who's in his first season coaching for the Broncos, had nothing but praise for his star forward.

"I'm very thankful to coach a player like Zaki," Duernberger said. "He has so many qualities to go at defenders in different ways. He can handle the physical battles but he also has the ability to dribble at pace and go by you one-versus-one."

While Alibou was a player to be reckoned with for the Broncos during his first season on the men's team, a groin injury cost him the majority of his 2022 season as he played in just two games against Seton Hall and Rutgers.

Now, Alibou is healthy and back on the field with his teammates.

"The first game was a little painful, I had some pain at the start and the first four or five games. I had a lot of ups and downs, which is going to happen, but the last few games I've felt pretty good," said Alibou. "I think the last game we played against Fairfield, that was the extreme Zaki, like I felt myself back."

As a graduate student with an international business major and a minor in sports management, Alibou spoke about what his future holds after he leaves Rider. "Soccer first. I would love to do that first," Alibou said. "If not, something hopefully related to sports, or running a business for people, or being a manager for a sports team. I think I have the skillset for that."

At 5-1-2 on the season and in second place in the MAAC, the Broncos are looking to capture their first MAAC Championship since the 2018 Season.



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