

Dell’Omo’s tenure extended, announces plan to retire

By Amethyst Martinez

AFTER the Board of Trustees announced Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo’s one-year tenure extension, making him president of the university until 2025, he revealed in an interview with The Rider News that he plans on this being his final extension before retiring after a full decade at the university.

Before his presidency at Rider, Dell’Omo spent a decade at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, from 2005 to 2015.

“An older president who I was very fond of as sort of a mentor today, once told me ... ‘Greg, max out at 10 years,’” said Dell’Omo. “That’s because 10 years [is] like a magic number, because after that, you’re not really adding much value.”

Dell’Omo, 67, who has served as Rider’s president since 2015, said that his main goal until 2025 is to increase student recruitment numbers and make the university financially viable.

The announcement of the president’s contract extension was made via email to the Rider community on Jan. 17, stating that the board voted unanimously to extend Dell’Omo’s previous appointment from July 31, 2024, to July 31, 2025.

The email read, “In making this decision, the board took into account many of President Dell’Omo’s accomplishments realized during his tenure, including his current ambitious and comprehensive plan to transform Rider University into a financially viable institution able to withstand the many challenges facing higher education today.”

Dell’Omo’s contract extension does not include a raise, according to Kristine Brown, associate vice president for university marketing and

communications. “President Dell’Omo is continuing his 15% salary reduction he voluntarily implemented in the beginning of this fiscal year,” said Brown. “This extends his previous salary reduction that dates back to the beginning of the pandemic.”

The email also stated that the Board of Trustees are confident in the president’s ability to lead Rider through a time of change and renewal.

Dell’Omo’s presidency has been filled with fierce opposition from Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), whose members passed a no-confidence motion against Dell’Omo twice during his tenure, most recently in 2022.

AAUP President David Dewberry said, “While the board is unwavering in its support of the president’s leadership, it’s clear faculty and staff are not.” Dewberry also said that the union is planning on taking action against the Board of Trustees, though it has not been specified what that could entail. He had no idea of Dell’Omo’s plans to retire from Rider in 2025, and said he would wait for an official announcement before speaking fully on the topic.

This is the third time Dell’Omo’s appointment has been prolonged by the Board of Trustees, which has stood behind the president since his inauguration despite criticisms: the first was in 2018, when his contract was renewed for another four-year term, and the second in 2020 when his tenure was extended two



Andrew Xon/ The Rider News

President Gregory Dell’Omo announced his expected retirement exclusively to The Rider News in a Jan. 27 interview.

years until 2024.

Dell’Omo said that he believes that retiring in 2024 would have been difficult in what he described as “a critical time for the university to change leadership.”

Dell’Omo said, “Even though people out there don’t agree with what I do and how I handle the job, there is a lot to be said for stability.”

Months later, union, administration still have contract disputes

By Shaun Chornobroff

With the threat of a strike looming over the student body when the school year commenced in September, David Dewberry, like many Rider professors, started his classes in a manner he wouldn’t have in prior years. The faculty union president explained his role as the leader of Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), what had been occurring and prepared students for the possibility of a work stoppage.

Ultimately, any worry of a strike subsided when a five-year contract agreement was announced on Sept. 11. With “the issue not as present or public as it once was,” Dewberry did not have to greet his classes the same way on the opening day of the spring semester.

The stress of the negotiations is still prevalent for AAUP leadership. Due to unfulfilled promises pertaining to the agreement, the union continues to express dissatisfaction, and more than four months after the tentative agreement was announced, a written contract has yet to be signed.

“Making a decision is great, and coming to a conclusion is great, but you still have to implement all that and that’s what we’re struggling with here,” Dewberry said in a Jan. 25 interview with The Rider News.

Rider’s Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications, Kristine Brown, said the administration has provided the AAUP with a revised contract and is awaiting the union’s response.

“The collective bargaining agreement is a very extensive document which is several hundred pages long. It typically takes some time, post-settlement, for the parties to incorporate the agreed upon changes into this labor agreement. The parties are in the middle of that process now,” Brown said in a statement to The Rider News.

Dewberry cited multiple examples of contract disagreements, regarding pay cuts, replacement technology for computers and changes to health care policy, which he explained the union had to fight against.

When asked by The Rider News in a Jan. 27 interview, Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo affirmed everything agreed to in the contract had been implemented, and said any delays or disagreements are not malicious.

“It’s not because anybody’s trying to manipulate or create dissatisfaction, it’s just working through those processes,” the university president said. “Sometimes the union may feel that they have to try [to] exert more pressure and expediency to issues by filing grievances and stuff like that. ... It’s not a matter of simply saying ‘we negotiated x and therefore the administration’s reneging on something.’ ... You can’t do that, it’s not legal.”

After multiple one-year extensions, coming to a five-year agreement instead of the traditional three-year contract gives the university and union a steadfast outlook for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic, leading Dell’Omo to call it “historic.”

“I would like to think that for most of the members

they felt ‘yeah, we went to negotiations and at least we have an idea of what’s going to be happening for the next five years,’” Dell’Omo said. “There’s a lot to be said for having a little bit of stability in your environment.”

At a Jan. 31 union meeting, the first of the spring semester, Dewberry said faculty were open about their concerns regarding the agreement.

“There doesn’t seem to be a meeting of the minds over what we talked about at the table,” said Dewberry. “There’s questions of well, do we have a contract in place, given that we’re still disagreeing over what we agreed to last semester.”

Dewberry has been a member of multiple contract negotiations as faculty. The husband and father of two had an idea of what to expect at the end of last school year, knowing it was time for him and his family to “endure the hurricane” when heading into expectantly tenuous negotiations over the summer. Months after the negotiations’ public conclusion, Dewberry says he is copied on emails daily about conflicts within the agreement and now has a sub-folder on his email dedicated to “the fallout” of the negotiations, “because we still have to follow up on so much more.”

“I can see why some people think ... ‘OK, it’s done. We can go relax and go back to regular work,” said Dewberry. “We’re still dealing with the ramifications and the implementation of this whole process that we went through.”

INSIDE

MISSING PIECES

Rider women’s basketball enters the latter half of conference play on a 4-game losing streak.

PAGE 10



SAFETY IN LGBTQ+ SPACES

The LGBTQ+ community risks their lives everyday by being themselves.

PAGE 9



MEET THE PRESIDENT

SGA President Andrew Bernstein discusses accomplishments and future plans.

PAGE 5



Cabinet restructure includes Title IX office overhaul



Adrienne Unfreed/The Rider News

The newly announced cabinet restructure includes noticeable changes to the university's Title IX Office.

By Amethyst Martinez

As President Gregory Dell’Omo announced a major cabinet restructuring, the Office of Title IX and Institutional Equity is facing a massive overhaul, with two new employees expected by March 1.

In an email sent to Rider faculty, staff and students on Jan. 20, Dell’Omo outlined many changes to his cabinet, set to be in effect Feb. 1. The switch was attributed to an “ambitious” goal of seeking financial stability and increased student retention for the university amid economic difficulties.

Restructuring the Title IX office

The Title IX office, however, is facing the biggest structural change with both workers being replaced by March 1. The office is currently occupied by external attorney Christine Pickel, interim director of Title IX and Equal Opportunity compliance, who has served in the position since December, when former director Pauline Lloyd abruptly left Rider after just three months on the job. Her exit is joined by Barbara Lawrence, vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, Title IX coordinator, who has served in the Title IX office since July but will no longer serve in that role under the restructuring.

Both Pickel and Lawrence declined an interview with The Rider News.

The office has faced serious staffing issues over the past year with at least five workers holding the director position and two holding the coordinator role. Students have voiced concerns over the constant change of staff, with instances of cases being open for over a year without responses from Rider officials.

After a Rider News article outlining student issues with the Title IX office was published on Nov. 9, an anonymous concerned parent asked Dell’Omo to respond to these issues in an email sent to him on Nov. 13. Dell’Omo responded the same day, saying: “We are well aware of the cases mentioned in [The Rider News] and are following up on each one.”

However, in the months since the article was published, none of the victims have been reached out to, and one student dropped their case after expressing frustration with the lack of communication and action.

When asked about the lack of response for these cases from officials on Jan. 27, Dell’Omo said, “As we talked internally about these situations, I was under

the impression that people were being contacted or reached out to at one level or another ... So that’s [a] concern for me, and I will follow up on that.”

Debbie Stasolla, a member of Dell’Omo’s cabinet and Rider’s vice president for strategic initiatives and planning and secretary to the board, is beginning oversight of the Title IX office on March 1, taking Lawrence’s coordinator position.

“I’m very much aware of that turnover and the effect that it’s had,” said Stasolla. “I’ve been at Rider for 30 years, and there’s a reason I’ve been asked to take on this role.”

The director position has yet to be filled, with Pickel leaving her temporary role on Feb. 8. Stasolla said she will also take on the role of interim director when Pickel leaves until a permanent employee is found, which she expects by March 1 when she transitions to Title IX coordinator.

Stasolla has experience with Public Safety for over a decade and also helped establish and write the first Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy used by Rider. She also plans on redoing the policy to make it easier for students to navigate.

“I hope that some of my background, my commitment to the position, and the fact that I do work closely with those who report to me [and] who have reported to me over the years, that together [we] will make a good team,” said Stasolla. “But the student body is going to have to just take it a day at a time, and you’ll see how it works ... words are not going to be enough to convince. It’s going to have to be action.”

Other cabinet restructuring

Other cabinet members are also being placed in different roles, which is expected to be in effect Feb. 1. According to Kristine Brown, associate vice president for university marketing and communications, the cabinet will also take a 5% salary reduction beginning Feb. 1 for the next year.

DonnaJean Fredeen will take the role of senior vice president for academic affairs and provost reporting to Dell’Omo. Leanna Fenneberg, vice president for student affairs and Lawrence, along with their divisions and departments, will report to Fredeen. Lawrence will no longer be a part of the Title IX office and will now only serve as her role of vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion and chief diversity officer.

“I believe by directly aligning Academic Affairs

with Student Affairs and the Division of Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, we will take a significant step forward in creating a culture rooted in a shared philosophy, strategy, and responsibility for student success, retention, and persistence to graduation,” said Dell’Omo.

James Hartman will take on the role of senior vice president for finance/treasurer and chief financial officer and report to Dell’Omo. Robert Stoto, vice president of human resources and affirmative action, and Michael Reca, vice president of facilities and university operations, along with their divisions and departments, will report to Hartman.

“The purpose of consolidating essential business functions under [Hartman’s] leadership is to establish an enterprise-wide focus on identifying new sources of auxiliary revenue, economic growth strategies and future workforce needs,” said Dell’Omo in an email.

Dell’Omo ended the email by saying that these changes are imperative to solidify revenue sources, and will result in better synergies and efficiencies among his cabinet.

“I think that it’s going to have [a] dramatic impact not only on the experience, but to finance the university to be much, much more efficient,” said Dell’Omo.



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Debbie Stasolla will play a major part in alleviating transitional Title IX issues.

CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S SECTION HIGHLIGHTS

NEWS

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



RIDER'S CAMPUS IS READY TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH. FACULTY AND STUDENTS ARE HIGHLIGHTING WHY THIS MONTH SHOULD BE TALKED ABOUT IN COLLEGE SETTINGS.

PAGE: 4

FEATURES

SHEDDING BLACK EXCELLENCE: SHAUN WILLIAMS



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SHAUN WILLIAMS DISCUSSES LEADERSHIP AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH.

PAGE: 7

OPINION

LGBTQ+ SPACES AREN'T ALWAYS SAFE




MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY RISK THEIR LIVES EVERYDAY BY BEING THEMSELVES, AND QUEER NIGHT CLUBS ARE NO EXCEPTION.

PAGE: 9

SPORTS

ATHLETICS



RIDER BASEBALL HEAD COACH BARRY DAVIS HOSTED A LEADERSHIP SEMINAR ON JAN. 25, FEATURING MULTIPLE FORMER RIDER STAR ATHLETES WHO KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO COMPETE AT THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL.

PAGE: 10

Westminster property sale stuck in lawsuits

By Shaun Chornobroff

RIDER President Gregory Dell’Omo has proved himself an avid supporter of the university’s sports teams and can often be seen at athletic events, even accompanying the men’s and women’s basketball teams on a trip to Ireland last fall.

However, when it comes to the potential sale of the sentimental property that was once home to Westminster Choir College, Dell’Omo is stuck playing a game he would prefer not to participate in: what he calls “a waiting game.”

The revenue from the Princeton property could be a godsend for a university finding its way back to fiscal security. However, due to multiple lawsuits surrounding the attempted sale and discontent fueled by the subsequent relocation of the Westminster student body to Rider’s main Lawrenceville campus, Dell’Omo remains unable to sell the valuable land.

“We think in the back of our mind, if we had those resources from that transaction it would make things a lot easier for this institution,” said Dell’Omo in a Jan. 27 interview with The Rider News. “It would give us a lot more breathing room to not only look at how we structure the university, but how we can add more investment to the university.”

Dell’Omo initially announced plans to move the

choir college to the university’s main campus in 2016, often citing financial difficulties related to the cost of operating the separate choir college as a main factor.

The university is awaiting results of multiple lawsuits against it, from Westminster faculty, alumni and donors, as well as students of the school, and from the Princeton Theological Seminary, who claims they have a right to the land.

In a Jan. 20 partial summary judgment hearing, the state attorney general’s office opposed the legality of the transaction that led to Rider taking control of the Westminster property in 1992, which the university claims saved the choir college from extinction.

Despite the protest from the theological seminary, who claims to have rightful ownership of the land, Dell’Omo maintains that the school has a strong legal claim.

“We ran [Westminster] for 30 years under the full impression that we owned it,” Dell’Omo said. “We made major investments in the operation, we’ve lost a lot of money over those 30 years and therefore, from an equity standpoint, even though someone else may own it, you owe us some of that equity back because of what we invested into Westminster.”

Constance Fee, the head of the Westminster Foundation — a group dedicated to saving the choir college and returning it to its Princeton

campus — declined an interview via an email, only emphasizing the organization is in a similar position to the university, waiting for the legal system to play out.

Jordan Mongell, a senior theory composition major, is one of the last students at Rider who was at the Princeton campus. After four years of prying for his voice to be heard, hoping for change and seeing much of what he was promised lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mongell admits he feels drained as he prepares for graduation.

“I think if there was a bigger presence of other Westminster students following up on the lawsuits, going to events, it’d be a bigger incentive for me to care a little more,” Mongell said. “Also, I’m at the point where I’ve been here for four years and nothing has changed, so I don’t really have any expectation for anything to change anymore.”

The case with the theological seminary is on its fourth judge. The cycle of decision makers has only prolonged any possible conclusion, but even if a decision is made, Dell’Omo expects there to be appeals, only extending the timeline for any potential sale.

“It’s a waiting game, but we prefer to have it happen sooner rather than later,” Dell’Omo said. “It would help everybody out, but we still got to work through the legal process first.”

Organizations prepare for Black History Month

By Olivia Nicoletti

DURING Black History Month, multiple events at Rider will pay tribute to and celebrate the successes of African American people throughout history.

This month, organizations on campus will host events to raise awareness and bring support to those who deserve to be recognized within the Black community.

The university website highlights 13 events that will be held throughout the month for Rider students, faculty and staff.

Rider’s Executive Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Pamela Pruitt said, “The event lineup we have at Rider for this month enables us to remember our Black history and how we got to where we are today.”

Junior global studies major and President of the Black Student Union (BSU) Kayla McIntyre oversees a majority of the events regarding diversity and inclusion.

BSU is an organization that was implemented to “create a community for African American students on this campus in order to feel like they have a support system,” McIntyre said. “We’d like to focus on the history of how we got to where we are and how we progressed from there ... we really want to emphasize the contributions of those that came before us to essentially put us in a place where we can talk out about these issues.”

On Feb. 1 at 11:30 a.m. at the Bart Luedeke Center (BLC) plaza, Black History Month will be kicked-off on campus with a Black Lives Matter flag raising, according to the BSU Instagram page.

“Diversity and Inclusion is something that is not limited to Black History Month,” McIntyre said. “[Black History Month] gives us a chance to really narrow in and give a broader focus to issues not only that happen around the country, but also on Rider’s campus ... [The] Black Student Union wants to basically help with these conversations and bring them to the table of higher ups.”

Pruitt echoed that sentiment, saying, “We cannot eradicate racism unless we talk about race. Learning about our past can only help us to grow toward a better future as a people. While we celebrate this month and the multitude of contributions from those who came before us, we must make every effort to build up our communities to persevere through the ongoing challenges that we still face.”

FEBRUARY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
at the BLC Plaza

Flag Raising

6:30 - 8 p.m.
at SWG 115

Silver Mics
on the Silver
Screen

12 - 1 p.m.
Register on
Zoom

TALK BACK -
Black Panther:
Wakanda Forever

7 p.m.
NJM Room

Taste of Africa
Banquet

12 - 1 p.m.
Register on
Website

Guest Speaker:
Henry Beard

6 - 7 p.m.
at SWG 115

REAL TALK:
Black at Rider

5 - 7 p.m.
NJM Room

Black
Excellence
Expo

5 - 7 p.m.
LAH 202

The Birth of
Hip-Hop

7 - 8 p.m.
LAH 129

Divine Nine:
History of
Service *

3-4:30 p.m.
Mercer
Room

Loving Our
Curly Kinky
Strands

4:30 p.m.
at Daly's

Soul Food
Sunday *

QR

Visit the website for
more information:



Olivia Nicoletti/The Rider News

Days on the calendar with an asterisk (*) have multiple events on those days. Information on those events are on the university website.

Get to know SGA President Andrew Bernstein

Photo courtesy of Andrew Bernstein



Senior political science major **Andrew Bernstein** poses with AJ the Bronc in his Sigma Phi Epsilon jersey.

By **Hannah Newman**

WITH only two hours left in student government elections, senior political science major Andrew Bernstein walked in the Student Recreation Center (SRC) dressed in his suit, hoping to make the most of his last moments campaigning for student body president.

He introduced himself to a few students and asked them what changes they would like to see at their school. Their answers reflected more than just hopes for the future of their university, but also the gratitude for being able to voice their opinions directly to someone who had the ability to make a difference.

At that moment, Bernstein knew Rider needed more than just change — it needed to cultivate a stronger culture that strives for student success and well-being.

“Not everybody is going to like what you’re pursuing. Not everybody is going to like what you do, what you are pursuing and the prioritization of your goals. But I think that is something you can get over if you know what is important to you and what is important to the people you are serving,” said Bernstein.

Soon after winning the election, Bernstein took it upon himself to empower a cultural change at Rider, helping sketch the blueprint and facilitate the planning and funding for a new space on campus dedicated to prioritizing students’ mental health.

Better known as the Zen Den, this study lounge is filled with a variety of seating options ranging from bean bag chairs to swinging chairs surrounded by vibrant green walls that create a tranquilizing atmosphere. This idea came from the counseling center and was put in the works prior to Bernstein’s presidency, but the finalization of the Zen Den was introduced on Sept. 15, 2022 and has been used nearly everyday since.

“It took a lot of time to plan and a lot of time to figure out what we wanted to do, but to see people

actually use it and to see the vision of students having a place to go and take care of their mental health and well-being and utilize it for that, I’ve realized I could shape the narrative here because if some things are not pressed by students, they are going to get overlooked,” said Bernstein.

With the goal of becoming a judge, Bernstein has taken positions throughout his college career that analyze concepts of problem solving, such as being an embedded tutor.

“When I was a tutor, I was not only trying to help people learn about writing and English, but I was trying to provide constructive feedback to critique them too, and I think that also applies to this role [SGA president] as well,” said Bernstein.

Junior global supply chain major Drew Gerber, a student of Bernstein’s embedded tutoring class, felt that Bernstein’s ambition for student excellence was consistently present in his work.

“Every Monday before Andrew’s tutoring session he would log onto Zoom early and do an individual breakdown of my work to help me better utilize his tutoring sessions and increase the level of work that I could attain in the class,” said Gerber.

In addition to becoming an embedded tutor as a sophomore, Bernstein was also chaplain, the risk reduction and education chairman for Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity where he enforced the safety of brothers and was a first responder to situations that required mediation attention.

Senior finance major and former vice president of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity in the 2020 school year Ryan Marut said, “Andrew is one of the easiest people to work with. He is attentive to all aspects of his work and perfects his craft through thorough communication with the people he works with. All of these key skills on top of his ambitions to challenge the process contributes to how successful he is and will be in life.”

Bernstein never imagined himself joining a fraternity before college. The negative stereotypes associated with Greek life deterred him from rushing. However, his personal experience dispelled the stigma he had toward Greek life and gave him reason to encourage others to consider joining.

“I had no intention of joining Greek life given the stereotypes around hazing and traditional fraternities, yet when I joined and met people who shattered those stereotypes, I knew I found an organization worth being involved in,” said Bernstein. “Throughout my time, I think my biggest takeaway is the importance of appreciating the uniqueness of others. For many people, it’s easy to criticize and exclude others who aren’t similar, but in reality, appreciating people’s diversity of experiences not only enriches your own self-growth, it also creates a stronger overall campus

community.”

One other leadership position that has immensely impacted the Rider community was Bernstein’s job as a tour guide.

Sophomore political science major Christina Natoli who was a new student that Bernstein took on a tour before she attended said, “When I went on my tour with Andrew, he was not only very involved on campus, but passionate about everything he was part of. I put down my deposit right after I came home from my tour that day. He always offered his support, even after the tour, which I was so appreciative of as a new student.”

During Bernstein’s reflection on his years at Rider, he recalled the moment in time when he felt Rider was ill-fitting for him and was thinking of transferring. His apprehensiveness slipped away once he started to find that opportunities to lead others was prominent in his community. This thought has evolved into a chuckle for Bernstein as he considered his accomplishments since he made the decision to stay.

“I almost transferred my freshman year. After talking to a close professor of mine who explained what Rider had to offer and what I could do here, I decided to stay. That has probably been the best decision I have made so far in my life,” said Bernstein. “The thing that gives me the most joy about being at Rider is the opportunity to be a part of a supportive community — and I call it an opportunity intentionally because it’s only there if you seize it. I’ve been able to accomplish more than I would have ever imagined here simply by forcing myself to become involved.”

Even though this is Bernstein’s final semester, he explained that the end of his time is only the beginning for upcoming advancements, improvements and passion for the university among students in the near future.

“When it is my time to go, I hope they will remember that my goal through everything I have done here was to improve the student experience,” said Bernstein. “It’s one thing to have a vision and want to improve the student experience, but to be listened to by folks able to make these changes is something I’ve come to value about student government and is something that really brought me joy.”

Photos courtesy of Andrew Bernstein



The current SGA executive board poses with the previous executive board for a photo.



Bernstein smiles for a potrait on a sunny day at Rider University.



Bernstein chuckles with AJ the Bronc just outside the library.

Peter G. Borg/Rider University



Rider's Got Talent and some to spare

By Tristan E. M. Leach

As the first week of the spring semester came to a close, excited students made their way to the Yvonne theater for the first big event of the semester — Rider's Got Talent.

On Jan. 27, eight talented Rider students performed for their peers in a show that featured a blindfolded piano player, poetry and much more. The prize for one of these talented students? A 43-inch television and a chance to perform at this year's Relay for Life.

To kick-off the event, hosts Brandon Rios, a senior sports management major, and Darren Rush, a senior criminal justice major, introduced the show and the prizes. Rush and Rios explained the voting process and then revealed that this school year's R Factor winner, Will Dusingberre, a sophomore film major, would be performing.

First up to perform was Andrew Snyder, a junior history major, and his band, Aliens Exist. The band impressed the audience with their musical skills and received great applause at the end of their set. Snyder revealed that the band had been performing for four years and that his greatest dream is to tour.

Next up was McKaella Jones, a senior majoring in marine science. Jones had previously wowed audiences in last semester's Rider's Drag Race, but this time, Jones chose to show off her tap dancing skills and danced her heart out as the audience cheered.

Sanjana Butala "What made me start tap dancing? My history. Black History," said Jones proudly to the audience. Jones told Rios and Rush that she had been tapping since she was four years old. After Jones was Randall Stys, a senior majoring in psychology. Stys, who went by the stage name M.I. Stys, performed spoken word poetry. In his poem, Stys expressed extreme feelings of loneliness and rising up in the world. "I rewrote the narrative so now I'm the man," said Stys in his performance. At the end of his poem, the

audience clapped and cheered. Next up was freshman Najee Davis, a music production major. Davis is known for playing trumpet around campus and can often be heard playing at late hours of the night. For his act, Davis wowed the crowd by playing the piano blindfolded. Stunned silence filled the room as all eyes focused on Davis and his hands. For a moment after he finished, the silence persisted and then thunderous applause met the ears of Davis. After the first four performances there was some audience interaction. Rios and Rush went into the audience and asked members who their favorite performer was and if they had any hidden talents. The second half of the show was kicked off by Sanjana Butala, a senior biology major, who did Kathak dance, one of the eight major types of classical Indian dance. Butala performed to a mix of Indian music, Spanish and American music. Butala sported a traditional Indian dance outfit and wore jewelry and henna on her hands and feet. "I call Kathak my passion and medicine, my profession, but I do want to pursue the art form as many years as I can," said Butala. The audience cheered for Butala as she left the stage. Next up was Naa'san Carr, a junior political science major, who performed poetry. Carr's piece focused on the beauty of Black Women and their strength and resilience. At the end of his performance Carr talked about how he had been writing poetry since fourth grade. When asked if he had any advice for people who want to write poetry, Carr said, "Everybody has a story. Poetry is you." After Carr was Toby Trish, who is a freshman majoring in general liberal arts. Trish break - danced to a mash up of "Everybody Dance Now" by C+C Music Factory and "Can't Stop the Feeling" by Justin Timberlake. The audience was cheering excitedly for Trish. At the end of his performance, Trish was asked how he got to be so good. "A lot of practice, a lot of practice," said Trish. The final act of the night was junior Marissa Harding an English major. Harding played the piano and had the crowd cheering. She played her heart out and spoke about how passion is one of the most important things. Finally it was time for voting. Each contestant came out on stage with a number that people could text to vote for their favorite performance. While the votes were being tallied, Dusingberre took to the stage. Dusingberre sported cowboy boots and played the acoustic guitar, performing an original song about two friends who rob a liquor store and one of them gets shot and arrested. Dusingberre charmed the crowd with his smooth voice. At the end the crowd cheered just as loud as they had at R Factor when he won. Finally it was time to announce the winner. When it was announced that Trish had won, the audience leapt to their feet in applause. Trish was extremely grateful for the victory and told the audience that he would be taking the television home for his family to enjoy. When asked if he was excited for the Relay for Life performance, he said, "Yes, I am. Yes, I am." As the show ended, excited students left the theater discussing their favorite performance of the night. Kai Jones, a sophomore criminal justice major, said, "I like number three [McKaella Jones]. I feel like tap dancing itself is mad hard, but tap dancing to a beat, that's cool." As students emptied into the chilly night, singing, laughter and excitement filled the air, all signs of another successful night of entertainment.



Najee Davis



Toby Trish



McKaella Jones



Sanjana Butala



Naa'san Carr



Andrew Snyder



Scan the QR code to see more about Rider's Got Talent.



Marissa Harding



Toby Trish, a freshman gneral liberal arts major and Naa'san Carr, a junior political science major, share a hug after Trish's win. Other competitors applauded the sweet moment.



Randall Stys



Shedding Light on Black Excellence: Shaun Williams

By Hannah Newman

AS 2022 neared its close, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion welcomed Shaun Williams, a graduate student in education leadership as its new assistant director. Williams, originally from St. Louis, Missouri, spent time growing up in South Jersey. He is a songwriter, singer and recording artist and holds a strong passion for music in his life.

Aside from dedicating time to his music, Williams strives to make diversity and inclusion an essential part of his daily life and has dedicated time to researching these matters and finding different ways to get heavily involved in educating the communities he serves. Williams holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from Bloomfield College in New Jersey, where he now serves as an adjunct professor along with Camden County Community College and a masters degree in educational leadership from Montclair State University. Williams has over seven years of experience in higher education consisting of graduate admissions, disability resources, new student orientation, accounting, resident life, academic support and graduate life programming.

Williams' passion for higher education was sparked his senior year of college when his English academic adviser inspired him to follow a similar career path; however, after receiving his master's degree, Williams knew he wanted his career to be supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.

"I know its hard for people to accept things that they don't understand.... People, they often rebuke or may act out in fear or anger of things they don't understand among different sets of people, but just building up that level of respect to accept that there are differences and that it's okay: that is what makes being diverse a beautiful thing," said Williams. "That is a never-ending fight that I have had since I was a kid up until now. It's still that same notion of 'we can all be different, we all are human, but we have differences, and that needs to be reflected.'"

Executive Director for the Center of Diversity and Inclusion Pamela Pruitt shared her sense that Williams can shape the narrative of the Rider community and close gaps between different groups of people due to the several positions he holds at the university.

"Shaun's perspective is probably going to be different from most candidates because not only is he the assistant director, but he is a student and I think that will bring another dimension to it because he is

who we serve," said Pruitt.

In terms of Black History Month, Williams expressed that this month defines more than just the celebration of Black excellence in his eyes. It is a monumental moment in time for humanity which is something he hopes to stress during his time as assistant director of diversity and inclusion.

"Black History Month is for everyone. It's not only a celebration of African American history, but it just goes to show that African Americans are not only powerful people and powerful figures, but we are just like everyone else and I love that it is a month that we get to honor each other, we get to learn about each other and great things that have happened... I think it's also an important moment for everyone to come together to not just celebrate black excellence and black figures, but to lift one another and everyone up during this moment of celebration," said Williams. "I think that it's not just the past and the present, but I think it's a preface of goodness to come in the future too."

Over the course of history, both recent and centuries ago, oppression has always been present. However the opposing forces toward this act over the course of time are a product of unity that has strengthened immensely over the past decade, something Williams has seen as a result of being fed up with feeling silenced by these continuous acts.

"I think that people are tired. If you go over the last couple of years its very obvious that many challenging things have happened," said Williams. "It's all in the news media, but I think some personal things that I have seen [that] make me happy is that people are speaking out [about] discrimination, gun violence, LGBTQ+ rights; people of color, especially women of color, are advocating and talk about how they are not being represented or treated fairly."

Williams reflected how far society has come in terms of speaking out against discriminatory acts over the last decade since he was a college student himself.

"I am starting to see a shift with different things, but this type of work is ever evolving and there are always new things that are on the rise," said Williams. "To now know that this is something that is an initiative that is going around and that it is being pushed even more than it was, that lets me know that we are on our way to some good. That keeps me inspired and it keeps me going and it lets me know that I still have work that I need to do not

just for students and others but for myself. We all are different, we all have different sets of challenges and I think the only way that we can get over those challenges is if we all come together to work for the greater good."

In order to contribute our efforts to building a greater sense of unity to the world, the Rider community will be hosting a series of events throughout February beginning on the Feb. 1 with a flag raising at 11:30 a.m. hosted by the Black Student Union (BSU) in the Bart Luedeke Center (BLC) Plaza.

"I want to see more white faces, blacks know the story and then there are blacks that need to learn the story, but we need others to come see and learn about what we have to offer and to become more acclimated to the black culture," said Pruitt.

Williams has found that his position within diversity and inclusion has taught him a lot already, but the lessons learned from this experience will be ongoing as he hopes to learn from the students and faculty around him.

"It gives you the resources and knowledge that you need to be the change and to make the changes and that's what I hope to gain from this experience," said Williams.

This article is part of the Sheddong Light on Black Excellence, a February series by The Rider News to showcase impactful Black figures at Rider University.



Photo courtesy of Shaun Williams

Shaun Williams is the assistant director of the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri,
Feb. 3

Greek Night @ Men's Basketball
7 p.m. | Alumni Gym

Sat,
Feb. 4

Build - A - Bronc
12 p.m. | SRC Atrium

Sat,
Feb. 4

The Feud
7:30 p.m. | BLC Theater

Sat,
Feb. 18

Cranberry & White Affair
7 p.m. - 11 p.m. | Cavalla Room

Spring semester has just begun and students are already stressed

THE spring semester has just begun, and after a five-week break, students were ready to return to school to see friends and go to events; however, the stress and work has already piled on for most. Feeling overwhelmed in college is common, but the first week is always busy and difficult for students as they get back into a routine.

On my first day back to classes I was already feeling swamped with homework. I usually try to finish my school work by 6 p.m. every night, but I stayed up till 10 p.m. the first night working and planning my next few days. I felt stressed and anxious looking at Canvas again knowing I had a lot of work ahead of me.

However, I am not the only one stressed. Allison Fama, a sophomore dance science major and psychology minor, had many concerns when returning to school. She said, "I personally stress and worry most about my work load. I'm always concerned that I'm not going to be able to keep up and will fall behind and will fail." She also worries about having enough time to fit everything she has to do into her schedule including homework and club activities.

It is especially important to prioritize mental health to help prevent burnout and exhaustion.

Mental health is discussed much more today, especially in college. The Chronicle of Higher Education published an article titled: "Trauma and Social Anxiety Are Growing Mental-Health Concerns for College Students," written by Kate Marijolic. The article explains that college students' mental health concerns have increased in the past few years, but more students are reaching out for help and most colleges have counseling services available. The article was written about a report that collected data from 180 counseling centers at different colleges.

This report represents almost 200,000 college students between 2021 and 2022. The report concluded that academic stress slightly decreased, but anxiety and depression slightly increased; however, academic stress was still at a higher level than before the COVID-19 pandemic, and students' mental health concerns, including depression and anxiety, have slowly risen.

Academic stress may be decreasing, but social anxiety has drastically increased due to the pandemic. From having to learn through a screen and spending more time on social media, to returning to school and the office in person has caused more social anxiety in many people.

The article interviewed Brett E. Scofield, the executive director of the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, who said, "When students improve during treatment at counseling centers, they're more likely to remain in school." He believes that counseling services are extremely helpful for college students and that every student should take advantage of it. Learning to manage stress is vital and United Healthcare has some tips. United Healthcare recommends organizing and prioritizing what has to get done and always remembering to get enough sleep. They also recommend going on walks or moving in some way and looking at different counseling services to see if they could be of any help. Rider University also has resources to help students.

You can reach out to the Counseling Center by emailing them at counseling@rider.edu or calling them at 609-896-5157.

Felicia Roehm



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

THE Rider News

Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
©2022 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

Executive Editor
Shaun Chornobroff
Managing Editor
Amethyst Martinez
News Editors
Olivia Nicoletti
Kaitlyn McCormick
Jay Roberson
**Features and Arts
& Entertainment Editors**
Tristan Leach
Hannah Newman
Opinion Editor
Felicia Roehm
Sports Editors
Carolo Pascale
Jake Tiger
Photography Editor
Andrew Xon
Video Editor
Bridget Hoyt

Copy Editors
Bridget Gum-Egan
Logan VanDine
Michelle Pellegrino
Madison Lewis
Social Media Editor
Asia McGill
Design Manager
Adrienne Unfreed
**Business/Advertising
Manager**
Shawn Ballingall
Circulation Managers
Jordan Wilson
Karagh Tait
Faculty Adviser
Dr. Jackie Incollongo

The Rider News serves as a public forum for student expression and welcomes letters to the editor from all members of the university community. Letters must include the writer's telephone number and email address for verification. Letters that constitute personal attacks on individuals or groups are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters to the editor for length, clarity, accuracy, grammar and libel. Letters must be appropriate in terms of taste and civility. Brevity is encouraged. All decisions are at the sole discretion of the editorial board, which may reject any letter. Send to The Rider News via email at ridernews@rider.edu. Letters must be received by midnight on the Monday preceding publication. Any tips or suggestions can be sent to ridernews@rider.edu.

 @theridernews  @RiderNewsSports
 www.theridernews.com  @theridernews
 facebook.com/theridernews  ridernews@rider.edu

JUNIOR JOURNALS

The LGBTQ+ community risk their lives by being themselves

If you’ve never listened to track 11 on the “Queen + Adam Lambert Live Around The World” album, I recommend it. The song is “Who Wants to Live Forever,” and before the song starts Adam Lambert says, “ This song is dedicated to those that lost their life last night, in Orlando, Florida and anybody that has been victim of senseless violence or hatred.”

Lambert is referring to the Pulse Nightclub shooting that took place in 2016. Pulse is an LGBTQ+ nightclub that many went to in hopes of finding a community and a safe space. Instead, 50 people lost their lives due to a senseless act. Since then, many LGBTQ+ safe spaces have been targeted in a string of shootings which has led to a loss of safety, connections and the lives of friends and family.

Queer people are no strangers to violence, discrimination and hate. Just as America is no stranger to gun violence and mass shootings. The unfortunate truth is that hate and easy access to violent weapons have resulted in hateful acts. Just last year the Club Q shooting rocked the nation. Five people died and two people inside the club subdued the shooter. There were thoughts and prayers posted online and that was the end of it.

However, for those of us who are queer this was not so easily forgotten. As a lesbian growing up in the 21st century, these events impact my mental health and my sense of safety in queer defined spaces. It would be safer for my queer friends and I to stay at home than go out. It would be safer to throw our own dance party than to go to an LGBTQ+ club. It would be safer to miss out on life than lose ours.

Yes, everyday we take risks when we step outside our homes. The world is full of dangers and sometimes you have to take risks, but sometimes the risk is too high and there is no reward. There will be no memories, no reminiscing if the risk turns out to be in vain.

LGBTQ+ people and other minorities have to work harder to have a space of their own. We are valuable, we are worthy of safety, we are worthy of the life we were given when we came into this world. So when our safe spaces are violated, our people are hurt, our lives torn apart, we have no faith and we are left to pick up the pieces.

I think about my queer elders who came before me. They had to face violence and hate to create the spaces that we have now. Artists, activists, mothers, fathers, cousins, brothers and sisters, came together to create spaces that no longer feel safe. Our elders must watch as their next of kin suffers the same pain as them. Our elders must watch as the violence continues and our spaces are no longer safe.

As I write this I am listening to “Who Wants to Live Forever.” I think of how Freddie Mercury created a space that Adam Lambert now takes up. Freddie and Queen became many people’s safe spaces. Brian May, who wrote the song and is the guitarist for Queen, found a way for Freddie to live forever. Freddie, a queer icon and gay man, will live forever simply because he was a safe space.

Who wants to live forever? Us, we, the LGBTQ+ community do.

Tristan Leach
junior journalism major



SOPHOMORE SIGHTINGS

'The Great War' of buying Taylor Swift tour tickets

When Taylor Swift wrote “The Great War” for her newest album “Midnights” did she know that her fans would use the song literally when describing their experience getting tickets to her tour?

Swift has not toured since 2018 for her sixth studio album “Reputation,” and was supposed to tour after her seventh studio album “Lover” came out, but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the last time Swift toured, she has released five albums: “Folklore,” “Evermore,” “Midnights,” “Fearless (Taylor’s Version)” and “Red (Taylors Version).”

Swifties, a term coined for her fans, were eager for her to travel the world again, and knew it would be a bloodbath to get tickets (and as you can probably guess from the title, it was.)

Taylor’s team partnered with Ticketmaster to set up a Verified Fan purchase, which they have done in the past. The process asked people interested in buying tickets to fill out their contact information, what show (or shows) they were interested in attending and how many tickets they were requesting. This process was intended to keep the tickets away from bots and resellers. It was then randomly decided who would get tickets.

On Nov. 1, Swift announced that she was going on tour, and the website to sign up for Verified Fan presale went live, to the excitement of many.

Personally for me, I was with my friend at the time and both of us were able to sign up for the presale within minutes. But later, I heard on social media that the wait to get into a website was at least 30 minutes. This would eventually foreshadow how the process of getting tickets would go.

Two weeks later on Nov. 14, the emails and text messages started coming through from Ticketmaster. The emails informed individuals of what show they were approved for, and everyone approved got a personalized link to buy their tickets from.

And then the games began.

The next morning on Nov. 15 at 10 a.m., tickets for the tour titled “The Era’s Tour” went on sale. I remember getting launched into the queue at 10 a.m. and seeing there were more than 2,000 people ahead of me. I thought that the process would be quick: It was not. The queue remained for about an hour.

While the queue was paused, I remember seeing screenshots on social media of resale sites like SeatGeek and StubHub where tickets for the tour were already being re-sold for at least \$1,000. The process of trying to keep resellers and bots away so fans would be able to see Swift seemingly didn’t work. By 1 p.m. that day, I made it to the screen to buy tickets. The map showed that there were still tickets available, but every time I tried to check out with said available tickets, it said those were unavailable. I had no choice but to give up and try again on Friday (the general on-sale.)

The same day at 1:30 p.m., there was supposed to be another presale specifically for CapitalOne card holders. But due to the fact that there were no more tickets available and people were still in the queues, the CapitalOne presale was pushed to the next day, Nov. 15, and when that pre-sale ended, all the tickets were gone.

The third and final sale was the general on-sale that was set to take place on Nov. 18, but the day prior to the sale, Ticketmaster released a statement via Twitter stating that the public on-sale would be canceled. They claimed that there was an insufficient amount of tickets to meet the demand for the general on-sale. This statement from Ticketmaster made it seem like there would not be another chance for people to buy tickets.

At this point, I felt defeated, upset and cheated by Ticketmaster, but I had hope that I would be able to get tickets.

When I woke up on the morning of Dec. 12, the first thing I saw was a strange email from Ticketmaster. The general basis of the email was any “Verified Fan” who didn’t get tickets during the presale was able to sign up to get two tickets to the show they were verified for.

At first I was suspicious. I did not know why I was getting this email and was weary as to if I was being scammed or not. But after seeing that the sender of the email was legit and finding out other people received the email, I signed up to get tickets.

So finally, a month after this whole fiasco started, on Dec. 18, I finally was in possession of tickets to “The Eras Tour.”

“The Great War” of getting tickets might be over, but who knows what else will occur when the tour takes off.

Adrianna Jaccoma
sophomore journalism major



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

NOTEBOOK: Broncos weighed down by pitiful defense

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News



Head Coach **Lynn Milligan** observes her team's play. This season, Rider's opponents are shooting 37.3% from three, the highest in the MAAC.

By **Jake Tiger**

DESPITE an offense that has taken a giant leap as of late, Rider women's basketball's astronomically awful defense has prevented it from even reaching the same solar system as the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference's (MAAC) top teams.

The Broncos, now on a brutal, four-game losing streak, enter the latter half of MAAC play with heaps still to address.

"We've got to take this last month and find our balance. I mean, it's as simple as that," said Milligan. "I believe in these kids. I believe in how we're doing things."

'Missing pieces'

Opposing offenses salivate when they see the Broncos on their schedule.

Rider's defense is allowing a whopping 70.9 points

per game this season, the most in the conference and 43rd most in the country, and that number has continued to trend upward.

"It's just that defensive grit that we're just consistently missing pieces of," said Milligan. "It's not for lack of effort. It's not for lack of want. It's not for a lack of awareness. I just think we've got to find that piece that kind of levels out our defense and offense."

In their last three games, the Broncos have given up more than 90 points to opponents, including a 90-point meteor shower from Iona on Jan. 19 that was arguably the greatest team three-point shooting performance in NCAA history.

"We want to make [defense] one of our priorities and we know defense gets stops," said junior guard Makayla Firebaugh. "Holding people to under 65 [points] is a goal of ours."

After Rider's 94-63 loss to Siena on Jan. 26, its average scoring margin dropped to -10.6, as they've now lost by 20 or more points eight times this season. Just over their four-game losing streak, the Broncos were outscored 241-315.

"I thought we'd be a little bit more balanced at both ends of the floor. I really did," said Head Coach Lynn Milligan of her preseason expectations. "We do have some veteran players that have been through the league before, and kind of understand the grind of it, so I did think that we'd be a little bit more balanced than we are."

'We're clicking'

While the Broncos' persistent defensive woes have kept them out of the win-column, their offense has managed to find a sort of rhythm in recent showings, scoring more than 60 points in each of their last three games.

"I think our offense is growing every day," said Milligan. "If the offense is at 75% and the defense is

hovering around 50%, we need to get the defense to meet us at 75%."

Firebaugh and junior forward Raphaella Toussaint have led the Broncos' through their three-game scoring spike, with both players cracking double-digits in every game.

Graduate student guard Amanda Mobley has also continued to do a stellar job as Rider's floor general, often being the catalyst behind many of Firebaugh and Toussaint's baskets. This season, Mobley leads the MAAC in assists per game with 6.1 and total assists with 121.

"On offense, we're on the same page, we're clicking, we're doing what we need to do," said Milligan. "Defensively for some reason, we're just not."

An offensive leader like Mobley could be exactly what Rider needs on the defensive end, but it's unclear who would be the player to step into that role.

"I think we're almost there," said junior guard Molly Lynch. "We just have to be locked in defensively and offensively. We pick up our defense when we get that flow on offense."

At 2-9 in conference play, the Broncos sit at 10th in the MAAC standings, two games above 0-11 Saint Peter's and one game below 3-8 Canisius.

Rider has nine games remaining before the MAAC Tournament on Mar. 7, and if the Broncos are able to go on run, they could find themselves toward the middle of the pack by March.

"Regardless of where we are in the standings and all that, we're going to work our hardest, and be peaking at the right time and set ourselves up the best we can for March," said Milligan.

Rider returns to the court on Feb. 6 when they visit third-place Quinnipiac for the first of two meetings this season. The game begins at 6 p.m. and will be streamed on ESPN3.

ATHLETICS

Davis talks leadership with Rider athletics royalty

By **Jake Tiger**

STANDING before a crowd of Rider's aspiring leaders in the Bart Luedeke Center Theater, Rider baseball Head Coach Barry Davis opened his seminar on Jan. 25 with the existential question he asks himself everyday: "Do you really want to be great, or are you just saying you want to be great?"

Davis' leadership seminar was organized with the intent of helping those in attendance, mostly Rider student-athletes and coaches, develop the necessary, disciplined vision it takes to become elite at anything.

The event featured a panel discussion with former NBA player Jason Thompson '08 Nick Margevicius '17, pitcher in the Seattle Mariners organization, as well as three-time Olympic bobsledder Jazmine Fenlator-Victorian '07 who attended via Zoom.

"All three arrived as winners and left as serial winners," said Davis before the seminar. "If you want to be the best, you have to be associated with the best. Nick, Jason and Jazmine check those boxes."

With a Ph.D. in sports leadership from Concordia

University-Chicago, Davis hosted the seminar to share with Rider's student-athletes, coaches and faculty what he knows about becoming the type of "serial winner" that society requires.

"There are two types of people. There's people that do, and there's people that don't, and whether you like it or not, you're in a competitive culture," said Davis during his introductory presentation. "Life is a competitive game. ... When you got the job, somebody else didn't. When you got into [graduate] school, somebody else didn't."

After Davis' opening speech, Thompson, Margevicius and Fenlator-Victorian joined him on stage where they answered questions submitted by the students-athletes in attendance.

All three of Davis' guests dominated at Rider before competing professionally, and during the seminar, they offered multiple glimpses into the eye-opening reality of being an elite athlete.

"To be honest, probably 70% of the time, I'm unmotivated," said Fenlator-Victorian, who set school records in shot put and discus for Rider track and field. "We're all humans. We've got other stuff going on: emotions, life circumstances, bills, stress, whatever the case may be."

The former Rider athletes also divulged the importance of setting goals, having a routine and establishing a culture, but as the night went on, the common theme that emerged from the numerous recollections of triumph and growth was the importance of failure.

According to Davis and his guests, becoming elite was a matter of "winning and learning," rather than winning and losing.

"You need to fail fast and fail hard," said Fenlator-Victorian. "If you're always winning or everything's always perfect, you're not really learning or growing. ... [Don't] put your self worth and value on every outcome."

Thompson echoed Fenlator-Victorian's sentiment, having learned his share about adversity and leadership during a seven-year tenure with the

Sacramento Kings where he had to transition from a rookie to a veteran leader for incoming rookies.

"I was just really leading by example, and kind of learned from the vets that I had," said Thompson. "It's easy to be a leader when everything is going good, but how are you dealing with adversity? Who are you through that losing streak? That leader still has to have their head up."

After the formal conclusion of the seminar, Thompson, Margevicius and Davis were available for photos and any additional questions from the audience.

In the future, Davis hopes to organize similar events n Rider's campus covering a variety of leadership-adjacent topics.

Now, Davis enters his 19th season as head coach of Rider baseball, determined to grow from Rider's loss in the 2022 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship.

"I never liked to talk in front of groups. Thirty years ago, I was scared to death," said Davis in an interview with The Rider News. "Don't be afraid to fail. ... You make mistakes. I'm sure I said some things up there that I probably wish I said differently, but that's okay. I'll fix it next time."

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News



Nick Margevicius '17 (far left), **Jason Thompson '08** (left), **Jazmine Fenlator-Victorian '07** (center) and **Barry Davis** (right) discuss leadership on the Bart Luedeke Center Theater stage.

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News



Rider baseball Head Coach **Barry Davis** talks about setting high expectations, and striving to reach them rather than lowering.

WRESTLING

Rider wrestling drops both weekend matches

By Logan VanDine

It was not the best weekend for Rider wrestling. After winning a huge matchup against Princeton, the Broncos were feeling good as they began a two-match weekend against Lock Haven and Bucknell. Unfortunately, luck did not go the Broncos' way as they dropped both of their matches 21-12 against Lock Haven and 19-15 against Bucknell dropping Rider 4-4 on the season.

'It was not our best performance'

Looking to build off an impressive victory against Princeton on Jan. 21, the Rider Wrestling team was looking to continue its momentum when it traveled to Pennsylvania to take on Lock Haven. But its steady climb came to a screeching halt, as it did not stand a chance against the Bald Eagles, falling 21-12 to begin a two-match weekend.

After the Broncos lost their first two matches, and in a 6-0 hole, they were able to get on the scoreboard thanks to junior No. 24 McKenzie Bell pitching a shutout against Ty Linsenbigler.

Rider never stood a chance the entire night, as they were only able to win two more bouts thanks to freshman Hunter Mays and No. 7 Ethan Laird to give the Broncos just 12 points on the night.

"It was not our best performance, we started slow and wrestled down several points in most matches. We blew an opportunity to make a statement in the Mid-Atlantic Conference (MAC) today, we have our work cut out for us moving forward," Head Coach Jon Hangey said.

'They wrestled terrible'

In a match they were once up 11-4, the Broncos crumbled down the stretch, falling to the Bucknell Bisons 16-15 on Jan. 28 to lose both weekend matches.

The contest started out promising for the Broncos as they took an early 5-0 lead thanks to a strong performance by junior Tyler Klinsky. After redshirt senior Richie Koehler lost the second bout of the night, the Broncos went on to win the next three bouts, one of them being a thrilling back and forth bout



Head Coach **Jon Hangey** and Assistant Head Coach **Nic Bedelyon** shout advice to their wrestlers from the bench.

with junior McKenzie Bell coming out on top, helping Rider to an early lead.

"[Bell] wrestles every second, constantly he's looking to improve, to score and the positions changed and he doesn't stop wrestling, he keeps wrestling one to the next to the next and that's how you beat good kids and he wrestled a good kid he's ranked No. 20 in the country for a reason and that's what you have to do, you have to bring the energy to beat the better kids, you can't just go out there and get one takedown and think you win a match," Hangey said.

Bell also talked about how he performed individually and how great he is feeling right now during the middle of the regular season as the team is out to a 2-1 conference record.

"I feel great right now," the wrestler said. "My diet's on, my workout schedule is going perfect right now and as long as I don't get hurt I feel like I can really do some damage this year."

Despite Bell's strong performance, the Broncos fell apart after a short intermission, and lost five out of the final six bouts to go from being up by seven at one point to an embarrassing 19-15 loss at the Alumni Gym.

"They wrestled terrible, other than McKenzie [Bell], Tyler [Klinsky] and Ethan [Laird] everybody wrestled terribly, they did not bring energy, they didn't wrestle smart, they didn't wrestle strategically, they didn't wrestle well positionally, they just looked like it was their first day doing the sport so we have a lot of work to do," Hangey said of his teams lackluster performance.

Bell too was disappointed in his team's effort saying, "For the kids who won, we did our job, we won all the positions we should've but the kids that lost obviously weren't giving it their all, all we need was one match and it was in our fingertips so I'm at a loss for words."

The Broncos will have a week off to prepare for their next opponent when they head to the Sooner State to take on Oklahoma on Feb. 5.

With that week off to prepare Hangey emphasized the key details to get better as a team.

"We need to pay attention to details, hand controls on bottom, don't dive in and land on your stomach, ride people, fight now and have pride. We are missing a lot of that stuff," Hangey said.

FIELD HOCKEY

Hussong retires after decorated, 23-year career



Head Coach **Lori Hussong** talks with her team during the Fall 2021 season.

By Jake Tiger

FOLLOWING a 23-year tenure with the program, Rider field hockey Head Coach Lori Hussong announced her retirement on Jan. 30, according to a Rider Athletics press release.

Hussong leaves Rider as the winningest head coach in program history, tallying 294 total wins and reaching a career winning percentage of .661. Those

marks respectively rank 12th and 11th among all active NCAA Division I field hockey head coaches.

"Coaching at Rider has been an amazing journey and I am thankful to have been part of such a special place," said Hussong in the Rider Athletics press release. "Special thanks to my family for the many sacrifices made and support given while we were out pursuing our passion."

Along with Hussong, her husband and top assistant coach, Dan Hussong, announced his retirement in the same press release, leaving an additional vacancy at the core of Rider field hockey's staff.

"Most importantly, thank you to the many players, past and present for choosing Rider and the chance to be your coach," said Lori Hussong in the Rider Athletics press release. "You will always be family to me. It's been an honor to coach players who are not only tremendous student-athletes, but more importantly even better people. Your contributions to our program and your continued support have given [Rider field hockey] so much to be proud of and I am forever grateful."

With her retirement, Hussong's career-long playoff streak ended, as she led the Broncos to conference playoff appearances in 23 consecutive seasons.

Hussong capped off her final season with a Northeast Conference (NEC) Championship, the eighth of her career and second in three years. Hussong won her sixth NEC coach of the year award for her work during the 2022 season, leading the Broncos' to the conference's best record at 6-1.

"Lori represents everything I value in a Rider Head Coach," said Athletic Director Don Harnum in the Rider Athletics press release. "Her teams played extremely hard and with tremendous pride, the program was well organized, her players did well academically and represented the program, the

department, and the university in a positive manner both on and off the field. She made it easy to root for her team. A lot of programs overuse the words family and family atmosphere, but Lori and Dan truly did create a family atmosphere within the Rider Field Hockey program and with alumni. As much as I don't want to see her go, I am thrilled to see her go out with a championship and I truly appreciate and value her accomplishments and our working relationship."

The search for Rider field hockey's next head coach will begin immediately, according to Rider Athletics.



Assistant Coach **Dan Hussong** watches his team from the sideline of Ben Cohen Field.

Sports

ONLINE

SENIOR NIGHT SHOOTOUT
Check out pictures from club ice hockey's high tension, Senior Night shootout win against Seton Hall.
FIND THE PHOTOS ON THERIDERNEWS.COM OR SCAN THE QR CODE



MEN'S BASKETBALL

NOTEBOOK: Rider catches fire at the halfway mark

FIVE GAMES. FIVE WINS.

**70-67 W**

**65-62 W**

**67-65 W**

**68-52 W**

**78-69 W**

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Navraj Sandhu/Rider Athletics



Rider men's basketball has been on a roll through its last five games, winning five straight to earn themselves the second place spot in the MAAC.

By Carolo Pascale

AFTER senior guard Dwight Murray Jr. worked his magic against the Iona Gaels on Jan. 15, once again draining a game winning shot against them, there has been nothing but great vibes and success for this never-say-die Broncs squad. After Rider's most recent game, a tense and hard-fought 78-69 win in overtime against Fairfield on Jan. 29, the Broncs have won five straight and sit at second place in the conference with nine games remaining before heading to Atlantic City, New Jersey for this seasons Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament.

Now past the midway point of their MAAC games, the Broncs are 8-3 in conference play and have thrived in many key areas. But there is still more to be desired, especially if they want to pass Siena for the No. 1 seed in the conference.

Murray and Mervin

If you're looking for what's gone well for the team this year, look no further than Murray and senior forward Mervin James. The former Pebblebrook high school teammates have taken it to another level this season, with both having All-MAAC years that have solidified Rider as a force.

Starting with Murray, he's played as advertised as a certified All-MAAC guard, and is even making a case for the player of the year award. The "Iona Killer," as James calls him, has averaged 14.9 points per game against MAAC opponents, while averaging 16.5 on the entire season, the third most points of any player in the conference at this point in the season.

"He always wants the big shot, and even if he misses he's going to want it again," said Head Coach Kevin Baggett.

Murray's shooting at an impressive 42.1% clip from the field, while knocking down 36.5% of his three-point attempts. There's only one other Bronc that has a higher percentage than him, that being sophomore guard Adetokunbo Bakare, who's been a revelation for the Broncs from behind the arc as of late. The

sophomore has made 11-of-18 threes this year for an outstanding 61.1% from long range.

Also of note for Murray, he leads the team in minutes and is second in the league in that category, having already tied his 28 steals from last season in 13 less games played.

"I'll be in the gym every day. Coach will tell you, you'll see me every day," said Murray.

As for James, he's about to find himself with a nickname as well, becoming this squad's "Mr. Consistent."

In MAAC play, James has been nothing short of dominant and determined. He's second on the Broncs in points per game against conference opponents with 14.1, having only scored less than 12 points once in MAAC Play, and averaging 13.2 points on the season. He also leads the team in blocks with 11 and has been the Broncs best board snatcher by a wide margin, sitting fifth in the conference in rebounds with 6.9 per game.

"He just goes out and plays on his strengths. He's being aggressive around the basket and has taken whatever the defense has given him. He's consistent in practice, in the games and off the court as well," said Baggett.

On top of that, James has been shooting well this year, sitting at 49% so far. But besides his shooting, the consistency in conference play has really shown that James is having a fantastic season. With Murray and James being as good as they have been, it has also allowed players like Bakare, junior forward Tariq Ingraham and senior guard Allen Betrand to thrive when the Broncs needed some more scoring support.

"When everybody clicks like we did in last year's MAAC Tournament, when everybody's on the same page, we're going to be a problem," said James.

Something about threes

Despite the great play from Murray, James and most of the Broncs, there is still something that's keeping this team from reaching its full potential: defending and making threes of their own.

Since the beginning of the season, both of these problems have stood out as something that needs to be fixed within the Broncs system. But even though they've passed the halfway mark, neither problem has been fully rectified.

Out of all Division I programs, Rider ranks 249th out of 352 teams in three point percentage against, allowing teams to make 34.7% of their attempts. They have recently been better in this category and are trending in a better direction, but still sit lower than seven of their fellow MAAC members. On top of that, they have also had the most threes attempted on them in the conference, with nearly 500 attempts from opposing teams coming from deep.

"Once we figure it out, then we're fine. But we gotta figure it out a little sooner," said Baggett.

Alongside the three-point defense being a problem, Rider's own three-point attack has been nearly non-existent at times this year. It's been a struggle for the Broncs to sink the rock from behind the arc, making just 31.9% of their attempts, which puts them ninth in the conference. Through 20 games, the Broncs have only made 4.8 threes per game and 96 total three-pointers, which is by far the lowest in the conference.

Baggett was asked about the lack of three point shooting after a Jan. 2 61-59 loss against Niagara, with him saying "Our game plan was not to shoot them."

Even though Baggett said that, the Broncs have still attempted an average of 12.7 three-point attempts per game against MAAC opponents. They have been consistent at trying the three, but have to improve on making them if they want to consider themselves the best team in the conference.

With nine games left in the season, the Broncs have nearly put all the pieces together to be a true contender for a MAAC title this year, but still can work on some lingering problems that need to be worked out as March inches closer and closer.

Rider will look to continue its winning ways back at Alumni Gym against the Saint Peter's Peacocks at 7 p.m. on Feb. 3. The chase for six straight wins will be streamed on ESPN3.