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Rider's American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees chapter filed a document against the university for time unpaid during the transition to an online timesheet program.

Grievance filed after employee pay discrepancy

By Amethyst Martinez

After a plethora of problems arose with salary payments due to the summer timesheet change, Rider's chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents over 50 members of Rider staff, filed a grievance document against the university near the beginning of the school year.

From July 15 to Aug. 5, members of the union, who say they are some of the university's lowest-paid employees, went without a paycheck after Rider transferred from an in-house timesheet program to outsourcing its payroll through the private company ADP (Automatic Data Processing) at the beginning of August.

Kristine Brown, associate vice president of university marketing and communications said in an email to The Rider News, "Members of the Administration and AFSCME leadership have been in discussions throughout the summer on the impact of the payroll change. The grievance related to this change was originally filed on September 2, 2022."

Lynn Rugg, co-president of Rider's AFSCME chapter, who works as a sports information administrative associate, said that the missing paycheck was due to the change from a semimonthly pay period to a biweekly period. This, in turn, will make their pay schedule go from 24 semimonthly paychecks a year (at the middle and end of each month) to 26 biweekly paychecks, every other Friday. Since the timesheet change occurred in the middle of the year for the 2022 pay period, members were paid 13 semimonthly payments plus 11 biweekly, which led to a pay discrepancy for the year.

According to a spreadsheet obtained by The Rider News that the union created as a visualization of missing funds, the previous annual starting salary for an administrative specialist for 2021 was \$41,516.16 with a semimonthly paycheck amounting to \$1,729.84 per check. With the new biweekly system, each paycheck after July 2022 only amounts to \$1,596.77 — \$133.07 less than the amount that was received with the semimonthly system. With this change, the document states that the annual salary

for the same position will come out to an amount that is \$1,463.72 short from the previous year. The 2023 salary will be the same as 2021, meaning that the pay discrepancy will not be accounted for in the next calendar year.

"It's not like they eliminated the semimonthly payroll dates," said Rugg. "They still have it for managers and faculty, but they decided to take us out of it because we're hourly employees. ... It's a well established past practice, and then they switched us to every other week. There's been [a] negative impact on the employees. From not getting paid the right hourly rate, to pension money not going in in a timely manner, accrual sick time and stuff is not being listed on pay stubs properly."

Rider's chapter of AFSCME represents 55 members on campus who are labeled as "support staff." According to Rugg and Alison Neu, academic associate for the department of English and Languages, Lite and member of AFSCME. This includes workers in athletics, student affairs, academics, admissions, the library and more. Neu said that members faced serious financial difficulties during the pay lag this past summer. "Several of us live paycheck to paycheck, and [to go] without pay for three weeks from July 15 to Aug. 5, right at mortgage time ... was a hardship for several members," Neu said. The union also claimed that its members are among some of the lowest-paid Rider employees.

Victoria McLendon, co-president of Rider's chapter of AFSCME and a student affairs administrative assistant said, "I don't think any of us make \$50,000 a year yet after being here all these years." McLendon has had a permanent position at Rider for over two decades.

Another document obtained by The Rider News showed that a semimonthly pay period was a part of the union's collective bargaining agreement, which was just renewed for a one year extension in August.

Rider's Vice President of Finance, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer James Hartman said, "Now they're paid on that week lag for those two weeks that they work. So they get paid the hours they work, they get paid for their overtime, everything gets paid, currently, just on a one-week lag."

Both Hartman and Rugg confirmed that they met in September for a meeting, along with McLendon.

"It's the one-week lag that's causing them to say [they had] gotten paid less this year, and this is what the basis of the grievance is," said Hartman. "I tried to explain, you're still making the same amount of money ... just on a one-week lag."

Rider's chapter of AFSCME recently received a response from management for their amended grievance relating to the terms of their labor contract being violated, and are due to meet on Nov.

Rider has been extensively cutting costs in all sectors of the university. One of the reasons for implementing ADP for all Rider employees was in an attempt to "reduce costs," according to Brown.

Rugg, however, said, "We know the university is struggling financially, and believe us, we've done our part." Neu said that many of the members had a two month unpaid furlough in 2020 due to the pandemic. They also said that university management was invited to one of Rider's AFSCME meetings, but declined.

"We're answering for 50 other people," said McLendon. "We go before H[uman] R[esources] management ... they should be hearing this from everybody. They need to hear everyone else speak, and we ask[ed] them to go attend a general meeting rather than be the retriever of concern, and [were] denied." During these meetings, many union members have aired their grievances, according to McLendon.

Hartman said that if employees were having financial troubles due to the timesheet change, the university was ready to help, one example being a payment advance, which Rugg confirmed.

The union hopes to resolve these issues by receiving their missing pay by the end of the calendar year instead of when they leave the university.

"You don't screw around with people's money," said Rugg.

HOOPS FORECAST

Checkout the men's and women's basketball previews in the sports section.





BEING A TWIN

Growing up as a twin is like growing up with a built-in best friend.

HALLOWEEN SPREAD

The staff of The Rider News dress up for their annual Halloween issue.

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Rider's Gender and Sexuality Studies program welcomed speakers who answered questions from English professor Laurel Harris.

Rider hosts expert panel to discuss next steps post-Roe

By Kaitlyn McCormick

Gender and Sexuality Studies (GSS) program hosted a diverse panel of experts on Oct. 19 to discuss the implications of reproductive legislations affecting the country in "Talking About Roe."

The panel, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), welcomed speakers who took turns answering questions posed by moderator and English professor Laurel Harris.

Though a Unity Day panel scheduled eight days earlier discussing Roe v. Wade and abortion access was canceled due in-part to concerns for protest, the Oct. 19 engagement went smoothly with no interruptions as students and faculty alike sat in on the event.

Senior music education major Grace Rykaczewski, founder and president of Rider's chapter of antiabortion group Students For Life America, told The Rider News that she had originally intended to host a protest for the event, but had to cancel due to scheduling conflicts.

GSS Program Director Erica Ryan explained that the idea for the panel came about when she and Harris were first processing their "shock" and "sadness" from the U.S. Supreme Court's June

decision in Dobbs v. Jackson, which overturned Roe v. Wade, a longstanding precedent establishing and protecting constitutional rights to abortion.

"We wanted to put something together for students because we thought students would feel similarly," Ryan said.

She also detailed the thought behind selecting the four members who came to speak to and educate Rider students; "We wanted it to be activists, but we also thought it was really important to bring in a historical perspective. ... And within the activism mix, we wanted it to be as representational as it could be in terms of different communities."

The panel included Carol Watchler, community outreach coordinator from the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice, Saray Ramos, health justice coordinator for the N.J. Latino Action Network, Gillian Frank, a historian from Princeton's Center for Culture, Society and Religion and Braeden Perdue, deputy director of digital communications from Planned Parenthood Action Fund N.J.

Multiple speakers stressed that abortion rights, queer rights and the rights of people of color are all intersected and work hand in hand with one another.

Junior film and television major Ashley Morales explained how the diversity on the panel caused her to think differently about the abortion conversation, especially Ramos' comments.

Morales said she realized there is "so much more" she can contribute to her family and community. "It's all intersectional," she said.

Although abortion rights are currently protected in New Jersey, Perdue, who works closely with Rider's chapter of Planned Parenthood Generation Action, explained that it's "not an excuse ... to be complacent about these issues."

He also explained that restrictions in other states have already impacted N.J. Planned Parenthood clinics, namely through an increased number of out-of-state patients.

"We're currently working on extending hours ... hiring staff ... making sure we never ever turn a patient away for any reason," Perdue said.

One of the biggest points brought up on the panel was how important it is for students to speak up in the quickly approaching Nov. 8 congressional election.

Ramos said, "voting is a very important right that we have and a very important job that we have to do. ... I can guarantee you that had Gov. Murphy not been in the position that he was when the [Dobbs] decision came out, this state would be looking a lot different than it is."

Watchler urged audience members to "anoint [themselves] as someone who can really make a difference," through not only voting but educating themselves on the matters at hand.

Leadership program cut leaves students confused

By Jay Roberson

5 Rider continues to make cuts to programs in attempts to pull itself out of the debt exacerbated by COVID-19, more and more programs are disappearing on campus. One of these programs is the Leadership Development Program (LDP).

LDP is a program that is designed to allow students to develop their leadership skills through teamwork, coaching and hands-on experiences. LDP graduate assistant Brooke Zindman spoke about the significance of the program in students' futures.

"They're always going to have that certificate of leadership on their resume. So it kind of puts them before anybody else when it comes to applying for jobs or applying for any other type of graduate school." Zindman said.

Since the program proves to be very impactful, many students were unsure of why the program would be cut from Rider. In an email to The Rider News, the Dean of the Norm Brodsky College of Business and advisor of LDP, Eugene Kutcher said, "The Leadership Development Program (LDP) was discontinued as part of the larger effort to re-assess and prioritize programs and operations across the University."

Students who actively participate in LDP have expressed their disappointment in Rider's inability to continue the program.

"I think it's really a shame. Honestly, I feel bad for the freshmen because they don't get to experience LDP. It's a great program and a great opportunity for college students to get more leadership training that they can apply to leadership positions on campus." Senior elementary education major Angela Rizzo said of her feelings regarding the cut.

Junior Arts and Entertainment Industries Management major Megyn Kukulka is an LDP student who says she benefited from the program.

"I was allowed to grow as a leader and that helped me gain leadership roles at Saxbys and other places as well. It just kind of put me on a good start to my college experience. I also created relationships there that I'm very happy with, friendships and mentors," said Kulkulka.

Kutcher emphasized that students who are already in LDP will have the ability to complete the program.

"While the program is not recruiting any new students, we are dedicated to doing right by all of the students who have already committed to the program. All students currently enrolled in the LDP will be able to earn their leadership certificates if they complete the requirements of the program."

Although LDP will allow current students to graduate, some students who were actively involved in LDP have decided to drop out of the program due to the ever changing nature of it since the removal of former director Laura Seplaki. Sophomore Dance Science major Alli Fama, who dropped the program, expressed concerns with the way LDP was being handled.

"I understand needing the money and being financially in debt, but I think there should have been more," Fama said. "... And I know a lot of people have dropped it including myself because of how, I hate to use this word, but how bad it's become since Laura's not running it."

Zindman said, "A lot of the classes that people have to take is already built into their major regardless, so you still have to take those classes. It's not like we have to pay any extra money for professors, or any type of additional funding."

Zindman also spoke about the fact that freshmen signed up for Lead Camp, a program where freshmen come to school a week before move-in, and found out it was canceled.

She explained a situation where an incoming freshman signed up for lead camp and was confused and disappointed by the cancellation. The freshman asked why Lead Camp got canceled. Zindman had to break the news and tell her that the program was cut from Rider and not accepting new applicants.

The loss of the program will have a great impact on Rider students and the community created within the program.

"I think out of all the programs to cut, LDP kind of went under the rug, but I feel like it's going to have more of an impact than they think it's going to because if Rider wants to prepare their students for the real world," Rizzo said. "I think leadership is one of the most important skills that you can learn and college is a great time to learn that."

News editor Kaitlyn McCormick and copy editors Bridget Egan-Gum and Michelle Pellegrino are a part of the Leadership Development Program and had no part in the writing or editing of this story.



Cuts to overload salary cause issues for seniors

By Kaitlyn McCormick

ENIOR year for college students is synonymous with the stress of checking off those last class requirements; this year's seniors, however, are jumping through additional hoops for capstones and supervised studies after a new contractual pay cut has resulted in some faculty members taking a step back from overload work.

Though an agreement was reached between Rider's administration and the university's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) following an intense negotiation process that almost resulted in a faculty strike, the affects of where certain issues landed on the bargaining table are continuing to trickle into the semester: namely a 20% pay cut to full-time faculty overload pay.

AAUP president and communication professor David Dewberry explained that an overload is considered to be any additional class that a faculty member teaches outside of the contractual course load, and, while these can be any classes, supervised and independent studies are most well recognized as overload classes.

"Unfortunately, the university has to make those types of cuts," Dewberry said. He also mentioned that the AAUP is putting out the message to faculty that "until the university recognizes and pays us our fair wage, which [is] what we had before, that people should not be teaching overloads ... unless they're in a financial situation ... if they can't pay their bills."

Senior graphic design major Danielle Pereira is just one of the students who have had to pivot their supervised study plans this year.

After already beginning to work on an independent study with professor Jessi Oliano, Pereira had to change plans after the pay cut

resulted in Oliano canceling the project.

Oliano opted to provide The Rider News with a written statement rather than partaking in an interview.

"It's unfortunate that the university decided to do this and pay us less; it's a real disincentive to teach overloads, and now we have to go out and find qualified adjuncts which is getting hard to do," Oliano said.

Pereira expressed that she empathizes with the professors who have had to reject independent and supervised studies.

"When I first heard of it, I was really disappointed for the professors," Pereira said.

She also expressed grievances with the university's direction from a student perspective, mentioning that Rider seems like a very "money minded" institution, but that the student experience seems to be taking a hit as a result.

"Rider is a private university and you're paying so much more money to get a better education here, but it doesn't feel like it's better," Periera said. She explained that she came to Rider in the first place because of the classes and the "in-depth learning" opportunities to do one-on-one studies with professors, but "I don't feel like that's going to happen anymore," she said.

Cara DiYanni, a psychology professor and director of the Baccalaureate Honors Program (BHP) explained how the overload pay cuts have impacted students looking for faculty to fulfill their BHP capstone requirements.

"I've had professors who would normally supervise projects tell me they won't, so I've been sort of cautioning [students]...and just saying that we're going to do our best, 'DiYanni said.

While she mentioned that so far 24 out of the 26 BHP students that need to complete capstones

this spring have been able to find willing professors, DiYanni said she can "foresee this being a problem" for her 57 rising juniors if cuts continue.

"You know, these are my colleagues and these are my peers, so I totally get where they're coming from." DiYanni said, explaining the balance between empathizing with her fellow faculty while also managing the stress of navigating this change and feeling responsible for her BHP students.

Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown delivered the following statement to The Rider News:

"The University Administration and AAUP bargaining teams worked through many very challenging issues this summer and, ultimately, reached a mutual agreement that was acceptable to both sides and entered into in good faith. This agreement was then ratified by the full membership of the union. The Administration has every expectation that the parties will live up to the terms of the agreement and that the union leadership will not work to subvert it, through a concerted action, with the hope of changing the agreement made just last month. We are confident that our faculty will continue to fully support student needs as they always have."

Dewberry stressed heavily that the AAUP wants to see students at Rider succeed, and that neither he nor the union intend to stand in the way of graduation requirements for students, and condone faculty taking an overload if necessary.

"We're not here to keep students from graduating," Dewberry said. "We are all in this business to teach people and get them educated and [to] graduate in a timely process."

Eco Reps host annual Sustainability Day



Students participate in decorating their own recycling bins for their rooms to help support sustainability on campus.

By Olivia Nicoletti

bin, tie dye shirts and freebies: the Office of Sustainability had another hit at Sustainability Day on Oct. 20 on the Campus Green in front of Cranberry's.

This day was in promotion of National Campus Sustainability Day which means it was an event that went further than just Rider's campus. Rider participated alongside other college campuses across the country, according to Director of Sustainability Melissa Greenberg.

There was no doubt that this event would take off once again this year, but Greenberg echoed that sentiment, saying, "it's been a very positive vibe; everyone seems to be enjoying it, and the weather is just beautiful."

There was a plethora of tables that lined the patio of Cranberry's where different organizations represented their reason to support sustainability.

Each year the clothing swap is highly anticipated by students. The swap, also known as the pop-up thrift store, is put in place to promote "donating clothes and getting used clothes instead of brand new," according to junior environmental science major Madison Beucler.

Juliette Manners, a sophomore musical theater major, hosted the Broadway Green Alliance table where she promoted sustainability in musical theater, plays, operas, dance and any other performance areas.

The alliance supports measures like using a QR code instead of multiple sign-in sheets during rehearsals and encouraging recycling drives for stage makeup and electronics.

Manners said, "Our biggest goal right now is to switch out all of our lights in all the theaters to LEDs to save that energy, because that will make a huge difference over time."

The idea is to continue to keep sustainability in mind when working on productions at Rider.

"It could be a cast member, it could be someone on crew, a stage manager, costume designer — anyone involved in production just reminding people to use reusable water bottles, reminding people to pick up their bobby pins instead of throwing them out in the trash and stuff like that," Manners said. "A little bit goes a long way."

The Transfer Student Association had white T-shirts with the slogan "Rider Ready" so students

who have transferred to Rider could tie-dye their own shirts.

Their involvement in the event was a part of National Transfer Student Week which was from Oct. 17 to 21.

The Eco Reps had a station dedicated to making mini recycling bins for student's rooms in hopes they begin separating their trash before taking it out.

"There's a lot of people on campus and they just have their trash can in their dorm and they just end up throwing away all their recyclables but now you can make your own bin and then we go take your trash out you can bring your recyclables as well," according to Eco Rep and junior environmental science major Ashley Murphy.

Greenberg recognized this event to be more than just promoting sustainability, she said, "It also is just an opportunity to talk to students about sustainability in general. Get them to participate in our programs, let them know about different initiatives we have going on and give them a chance to have some face to face meetings with our Eco Reps."

By the middle of the event Greenberg had already seen that a lot of people had signed up for the affiliate program, she saw a lot of people making their own recycle bins and taking clothing from the Swap Shop.

The Eco Reps continue to host events on campus and they are excited to promote upcoming beach sweeps and on-campus events to help promote sustainability to students.





CHECK OUT THIS WEEKS

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SUSTAINABILITY DAY



RIDER SUCCESSFULLY CELEBRATED CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY DAY WITH A CLOTHING SWAP, TIE-DYING AND MORE.

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SCREAM SCREEN



SCREEN SCREEN RETURNS FOR ITS 7TH YEAR, WITH LOTS OF FOOD, LOTS OF FUN AND A LITTLE BIT OF "SCOOBY DOO."

PAGE:



OPONON BEING A TWIN



GROWING UP AS AN IDENTICAL TWIN IS LIKE GROWING UP WITH A BEST FRIEND!

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GPORTIOHOMECOMING



GRADUATE STUDENT ZAHRION BLUE MADE A DREAM OF HIS COME TRUE BY JOINING A STACKED RIDER MEN'S BASKETBALL SQUAD. THE PRINCETON NATIVE NOW REPRESENTS THE AREA HE CALLS HOME.

PAGE:



Oct. 26, 2022 Ø The Rider News

I scream, you scream, we all scream for 'Scream Screen'



The popular Halloween event, "Scream Screen," is open to Rider and the surrounding community. Excited students, staff and families enjoyed the many activites offered at the event.

By Madison Lewis

ghouls and goblins of all ages with its countless games and activities. There was upbeat music surrounding the venue as people indulged themselves in an abundance of delicious food and drinks, trunk-or-treated and relished in the activity

Ongoers could get in touch with their creative side with pumpkin painting, release some stress by competing in the mini-golf course and for the thrill seekers, a mechanical pumpkin ride awaited with the intention of knocking the rider's flat on their back.

Some of the attendees even wore their best Halloween attire, with costumes ranging from recognizable movie, television and video game characters to staple halloween ensembles. The crowd took advantage of all the free refreshments the vendors provided as well.

Before starting the student-selected movie, "Scooby-Doo," the audience had the option to watch "Spongebob, The Legend of Boo-Kini Bottom," on a 40-foot-tall inflatable screen. Eager listeners tuned their car radios to channel 88.9 to listen to the audio

of the films on the big display.

The most notable moment of the night, however, was watching "Scooby-Doo" on the enormous screen that towered over the staff parking lot. Children, parents and students waited in their vehicles in anticipation.

John Mozes, the general manager of 107.7 the Bronc, organized this event. He labels "Scream Screen" as a "longstanding tradition," and praised the radio station for giving "Rider students the opportunity to feel like a kid again." Judging by the smiling, delighted faces with eyes glued to the film screen, Mozes fulfilled his mission.

But what is a movie night without food? Scream Screen had many delicious choices when it came to a quick bite. Students and families sank their fangs into foods from the various trucks, including Bronc Bites, Thai Cha Chack, Yooo Cuz and much more. Guests were served pizza and chicken wings, among other desirable dishes. Free Monster energy drinks were also handed out in the original and pineapple flavors, that could be enjoyed in their vehicles as they watched the film.

People attending "Scream Screen" had a lot

to say about this year's fearful festivities. Bryonna Malave, a freshman elementary education major said, "My favorite activity offered was the pumpkin painting," and at next year's "Scream Screen" she would like to see a, "scarier movie for the second movie, but [she] did enjoy the more family-oriented one."

Cameron Snyder, a junior game and interactive media design major, said he enjoyed the trunk-ortreating because, "free candy is fun." Even with his all-around positive outlook on the event, Snyder expressed that at next year's "Scream Screen," he'd like to see the laser tag that was offered the year before.

Ultimately, the seventh annual "Scream Screen" was a resounding success. It goes without saying that "Scream Screen" resonated with families and students alike and surely lifted everyone's spirits.

Logan VanDine is a copyeditor for The Rider News and works for 107.7 The Bronc. VanDine had no part in the writing or editing of this article.



AJ the Bronc dressed up for the event, sporting a Halloween themed jersey.



Students went from trunk to trunk collecting candy and other items from many organizations.



One of the trunks for the trunk-or- treat portion of the evening.

Arts & Entertainment

Getting in the spirit: The Rider



Photos courtesy of Amethyst Martinez and Kaitlyn McCormick

Graphic by Angelina Fierro and Adrienne Unfreed

News staff celebrates Halloween



What is it like growing up as an identical twin?

for me, I was born with my best friend. I am an identical twin. My sister Francesca and I were born less than a minute apart. Our bond has lasted our entire lives, so we have always been extremely close. We have had the pleasure of growing up together and doing a lot of the same things. We are both dancers, both of us work at Dunkin' Donuts and we both attend Rider. We are often asked, "What is it like to be a twin?" but we both don't know any other way. Although we do a lot together, there are a few

ANY people meet their best friend through school, clubs and jobs, but luckily

We both took our first dance class at four-years-old and since then, we have fallen in love with dance and both competed for the past five years. My favorite style of dance is contemporary, and Francesca's favorite type of dance is the classic type of jazz. I am majoring in journalism, and love to read and write, but Francesca, who I call Frankie, is an entrepreneurial studies major who aspires to create her own company one day. We do have a few different interests, but even in college, we are still involved in a lot of the same activities. We are both dance minors and are in the Rider Dance Ensemble as choreographers. We are both in The Gail Bierenbaum Women Leadership Council and are event co-chairs for the council as well. We usually have the same friends because once someone meets one of us, they most definitely will meet the other.

The question of whether twin telepathy exists is very common, and to an extent I think it does. There are many times when I know exactly what Frankie is thinking, but I will never know what she is thinking at every minute of every day. I also believe that since we know each other so well, I understand how she acts and reacts to different situations.

We also get asked a lot whether we have ever messed with someone by pretending to be each other. Unfortunately, we have not, but in Francesca's first semester of freshman year, she was in a sociology class and never told her professor that she is a twin. I will now be taking the same class next semester, so that professor is going to be in for a jarring amount of deja vu.

Being a twin is more than just having a sister or any sibling. I couldn't imagine my life without Francesca. I am so grateful to have a twin that I can always rely on. We continue to support and help each other every day. Elvis Presley was actually a twin, but his twin brother Jesse died at birth, and Elvis said that he felt like a part of him was always missing. I think that if I didn't have Francesca, I would feel like a part of me was missing as well.

Felicia Rochm







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GREEN CORNER

The woods at Rider and the deer overpopulation issue

RE you tired of doing schoolwork and need a nature break? The Rider University woods, located in the back of campus, is the place for you. These woodland areas include a scenic stream that stretches through its entirety, ever-growing plant life and plenty of wildlife. The species you can find in the woods range from the salamanders you spot underneath a log to the families of deer you see grazing the woodland floor.

But did you know these deer are extremely overpopulated in New Jersey? Due to the dense population, our woods aren't as lush as they should be. The reason behind this overpopulation is the lack of predators for deer on campus and throughout the United States. The effects of this are very apparent when you take a stroll through the campus woods. When looking down nature's path, it is obvious where the woods begin and end. This is the largest sign of overpopulation. This occurrence is from deer overfeeding on the understory. Each spring, new saplings pop up through the woodland floor in an effort to grow into new trees. These species include, but are not limited to American Beech, Pignut Hickory, Sweet Gum and Red Maple. Yet, these tree species have a low probability of growing to their full potential due to deer intervening and consuming new growth. The large population of deer is constantly in competition, causing many to starve due to the scarce resources.

If you ever stumbled upon the deer fence in Rider's Woods, there is a current experiment being conducted to understand what our woods could look like with a controlled number of deer. Kerrie Sendall, Ecology professor, initiated this experiment on our campus two summers ago. Rider students have been tracking new growth within the fence to see what new species appear in the absence of deer. The number of new saplings each year has been slow and steady, yet impressive so far in comparison to outside the deer fence. During the summer months, the enclosed fence is emerging with new growth. This is just the beginning of what our woods should look like. A study published in Canadian Journal of Forest Research conducted in 2015 experimented with multiple deer fences at a larger scale with similar tree species as those in the Rider woods including maples, beech and oak trees. They found little change within the first five years, but 11 years later, their deer fences are booming with biodiversity. Due to this we do not expect a drastic change in Rider's deer fence for at least three more years. With new growth safe, saplings have a chance to thrive and reach their mature size of trees in the Rider woods.

As these studies continue, these woods located right on our campus are still a wonderful place to decompress from all of your schoolwork. Rider's community is incredibly lucky to be surrounded by amazing nature trails that all can appreciate.

Many students go to the woods for relaxation time, projects and to just appreciate their surroundings. The trails can be found across the back of campus, all leading to beautiful scenic views. Brenna Edwards, a junior liberal studies major, said "The Rider Woods, for some reason, has an incomparable amount of gorgeous, gorgeous scenery. ... I always love a jaunt in the woods."

There will be an upcoming Woods Walk & Talk with the Eco-Reps on Oct. 27. Look out for advertisements on campus, or email us at broncsgogreen@rider.edu for more information!

> Ashley Murphy Rider Eco-Rep



JUNIOR JOURNALS

The art program at Rider has been diminished

HEN I was picking out my classes my freshman year in fall 2020, I realized something bleak. Yes, I'm a journalism major, and my life revolves around that, but there is something that I never even considered not being able to do in college that shaped me into the person I am today.

Creating visual art.

I glanced around the course rosters, scrolling aimlessly, hoping to find just some sort of sentiment of traditional mediums or anything where I could get my hands dirty, and then I realized: Rider had absolutely no art class that checked this box offered in the semester.

'How could a university just not have that?' I questioned myself as I continued picking out my courses. That got me to thinking: Why does Rider have such a small amount of traditional medium art classes?

As a university that has majors like game and interactive media design and graphic design, I was confused as to why our fine arts department was so lackluster. Everyone could benefit from these classes who are seeking a liberal arts degree, and even those who aren't.

Every day, I walk into the Fine Arts building to go to my classes, but how could they even call it that? Once upon a time, Rider used to have a fine arts major, and even a gallery that was popular among the artist community and noticed by major publications like The New York Times.

In a letter to the editor sent to The Rider News in 2021, Deborah Rosenthal, who once taught art classes such as painting, drawing, printmaking and more at Rider, talked about this change that took place. "In 2015-16, 'academic prioritization' was set in motion by the university's administration," said Rosenthal. "This bland phrase put a neutral face on the process that in fact trashed essential disciplines — firing tenured faculty, whittling down course offerings, eliminating majors and minors in basic disciplines of the arts and humanities — and is steering the university toward a future as a vocational school."

It sounded eerily familiar to the recent prioritization that took place this summer with a multitude of majors and minors being snipped away.

I think one thing that all liberal arts students should consider is this: are we receiving a well-balanced arts education with so few traditional medium art classes being offered?

In a recent interview with The Rider News, Rosenthal spoke about the now widely-diminished art program.

"It was a small program, but very intense," said Rosenthal. "It was just people who wanted to do a lot of work in painting and drawing. ... I had, over the years, a bunch of students who went on to graduate school in painting, and I had artists coming out to speak to students, [and] we went to New York regularly."

Harry Naar, past professor of these traditional medium art classes at Rider, also mourned the loss of such an intricate program.

"If you're thinking about a liberal arts school, I think the visual arts should be a very important part of the liberal arts education," said Naar. "I think of the kind of education that we were given that allowed them to want to pursue the visual arts, and also that showed other people in other administrations and programs the high quality and caliber of the students."

The course roster for the Spring 2023 semester does offer some hands-on art classes, such as fundamentals of drawing, which makes me wonder what the future could look like for this type of art at Rider and gives me some glimmer of hope. I will also say that Rider does have amazing art programs, such as musical theater, graphic design, game design, film and television and so many more; however, I think this issue speaks to a broader picture of how academic prioritization that involves major and minor cutting can affect our education here

> Amethyst Martinez junior journalism major



Salina Almanzar Art Exhibit at Rider University in 2019.



Junior forward **Nehemiah Benson** celebrates Rider's 71-70 MAAC Tournamment quarterfinal win over Iona on March 9 (Andrew Xon/The Rider News).

By Carolo Pascale

LASHBACK to the night of March 9, down by one and pinned in a double team, senior guard Dwight Murray Jr. let a desperation shot fly. The ball floated in the air, and as it swished through the net, 7.5 seconds stood on the clock.

Just 7.5 seconds to close out one of the biggest games in Rider history. The Broncs did just that, and chaos ensued as Rider did the unthinkable.

First, they defeated the dreaded Iona Gaels, led by Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino. Second, they casted out the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament quarter final curse that has haunted Head Coach Kevin Baggett for the last 11 years.

Those 7.5 seconds is all it took to show that the Broncs are a team not to be messed with and are ready to make a run at a MAAC Championship title.

And with the 2022-23 men's basketball season just a few days away, the words of Murray, who's clutch abilities crafted that moment of glory, have been ringing throughout the ears of the Broncs all offseason: "We're going to be the No. 1 team next year."

The 2022-23 Rider men's basketball squad is shaping up to be one of the best the program has seen since 2018, when the Broncs were the regular season champions.

In the MAAC's preseason poll, the Broncs were ranked third, just behind Manhattan and top-ranked Iona. Rider and Manhattan were seperated by just MEN'S BASKETBALL

Broncs look to contend for MAAC title

three ponts in the poll.

Three Broncs made preseason All-MAAC teams, highlighted by Murray earning his second preseason All-MAAC First Team honor. Senior guard Allen Powell and senior forward Mervin James both earned preseason All-MAAC Third Team honors, their first-ever all-conference nominations.

"We're excited. We have a veteran group, we have a lot of returning players," said Baggett. "We've got some new guys and some freshmen. It's just a matter of just trying to bring everybody together and figure out where we go from there, and get ready for the start of the season."

Of the returning players that Baggett mentioned, four of them were starters, those being Murray, Powell, James and MAAC Tournament standout, graduate student forward Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson.

Starting with the guards, Murray and Powell are still arguably the best one-two punch in the conference, and having this duo back is key to this team. When they are on and generating at their highest levels, there might be nobody that can handle them.

It doesn't stop there at the guard position for Rider either, as it has arguably the strongest depth at the position in the conference, with the likes of returning defensive specialist junior Corey McKeithan coming off the bench. The guard group also has some newcomers in Rhode Island transfer senior Allen Betrand and graduate student Zahrion Blue from Division II Lincoln, the 2021-22 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Player of the Year.

Blue, a Princeton, New Jersey, native, offers a lot of experience and versatility to a team that lacked a player like that last year.

"I'd like to put him at the sixth man and try and get him to be the sixth man of the year," said Baggett. "He was great at Lincoln, so I'm hoping that experience will translate over here, bringing him off the bench."

The Broncs also have a lot of depth at the forward

position. James, who was forced to play as a center last season due to injuries, will return to his natural power forward position this year, as will returning junior Nehemiah Benson. Along with them, Ogemuno-Johnson will have some help at the rim with redshirt senior Tyrell Bladen returning from an ACL tear that kept him out all last year. Rider also added to its post presence with a transfer from Wake Forest in junior Tariq Ingraham.

"Anytime we've had good posts, depth and good post presence, we've normally had good seasons," said Baggett. "It's important to have good balance across the courts, especially in the posts."

With depth at nearly every position, the Broncs can roll up to a 11-man rotation with multiple options that allow Baggett, and the rest of the coaching staff, to figure out the best combinations to have on the floor at all times.

Part of that coaching staff now includes legendary Bronc Jason Thompson as a special assistant to the head coach.

"They should be sponges and learn from Jason and take everything that he's saying to them because he's been there," said Baggett. "I coached Jason when he was here, and then him getting to the highest level, I can't teach that. I've never been at the highest level in the NBA. He's been a great value for the program."

With a core of experienced players, as well as some possibly crucial incoming talent, the Broncs look ready to take the next step to contend for a MAAC Championship.

Rider will kick off its season on Oct. 28 in an exhibition matchup against Division III opponent Cabrini as the main attraction of Homecoming weekend, taking on the Cavaliers at 3 p.m.

After the exhibition, the Broncs will kick off the games that really matter on Nov. 8 when they take on Providence at 6:30 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

A dream becomes reality for Princeton native

By Carolo Pascale

RINCETON High School and Rider are just a 15-minute drive from one another. With both Rider and Princeton University in the area, both athletics programs scout their own area for prospective high school athletes that want to play at the Division I level.

Yet, a student-athlete who scored 1,000 career points for Princeton High School's men's basketball team slipped through the fingers of both schools.

That student went on to be a program changer at Division II Lincoln, earning the 2021-22 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Player of the Year award, averaging nearly 19 points a game and finishing top-five in the conference in rebounding, field-goal percentage and steals.

That student was Zahrion Blue, and with his four years at Lincoln up after last season, Rider men's

basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett gave him an opportunity to return home.

The graduate student guard couldn't say yes quickly enough.

"The feeling is wonderful," said Blue about playing just a couple minutes from where he grew up.

Being local, Blue actually wanted to be a Bronc after high school. He already had a connection to the university, with one of his five siblings graduating from Rider in 2019.

"When I was in high school, since I was so close, I did actually want to go to Rider, I actually did. My sister actually graduated from here," said Blue. "It was like a dream come true."

Baggett who said he didn't have Blue on his radar when he was starring in high school, were able to snag the 21-22 CIAA player of the year the second time he was available.

"I think he's really come a long way," said Baggett.
"To have an opportunity to grab him the second go round, it was definitely a great opportunity for us. This is the first time we've legitimately got another guy that's in our backyard."

Returning home to play at Rider also comes with the ability for Blue to get all of his family and friends to watch him ball with the Broncs at Alumni Gym.

"It actually feels amazing. There's a lot of family members who have always wanted to see me play," said Blue. "When I was up in [Pennsylvania], my grandmothers and grandparents, they couldn't really make it, but now that I'm here, 15 minutes, even 12 minutes away, I think we could get a whole crowd at the games."

The process to get to Rider was an interesting one

for Blue, as he actually had to pass a summer class just to become a Bronc. Due to him having to pass to graduate from Lincoln, the guard wasn't able to participate in Rider's trip to Europe over the summer, according to Baggett.

He eventually passed the class, officially becoming a Bronc and making his return to play for the team he dreamed of playing for in high school.

"He was close to graduating, so he didn't need to have a waiver if he graduated," said Baggett. "He needed that last class to graduate. In fact, he didn't play with us in Europe because he was finishing up there."

Coming into the 2022-23 season, Blue, who stands at 6'4 and 210 pounds, will likely be a core contributor for the Broncs coming off the bench. Playing a different role at Rider than he did at Lincoln, he'll be a jack of all trades player for a Rider team that needed someone with his skillset last year.

"I'd like to put him at the sixth man and try and get him to be the sixth man of the year," said Baggett. "Bringing someone off the bench that's capable of scoring, having experience ... he was great at Lincoln, so I'm hoping that experience will translate over here, bringing him off the bench."

Blue himself has Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship aspirations for the Broncs, and hopes he can be one of many key members to help them get there.

With the season just four days away, Blue wants to make every minute count.

The guard said, "I just want to play my role, be a team player, win a MAAC Championship, get deep in the tournament and to make some history."



Graduate student **Zahrion Blue**, the 2021-22 CIAA player of the year, returns to his home turf to play for the Broncs. (Photo courtesy of Rider Athletics).

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Rider returns healthy and hungry

By Jake Tiger

FTER a year lost to injuries and inconsistency,
Rider women's basketball is back to full strength
and poised for a season that will surprise
doubters

The Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) preseason poll had Rider and Marist tied for sixth in the conference, despite the Broncs finishing as the ninth seed last season.

"If there's a dark horse this year, it's [Milligan's] team," said Marist Head Coach Brian Giorgis during a preseason coaches' call with the media. "They've got a lot of experience and kids that just didn't play to their potential last year, and you know when that happens, they get real fired up. ... They are gonna be one tough out."

In the same poll, junior guard Makayla Firebaugh was voted to preseason All-MAAC third team, the only Bronc to make any of the teams. The honor is a demotion from her second team distinction last season, as many, including Firebaugh, felt that her 2021-22 campaign was a bit lackluster.

"I think last year, and [Firebaugh] will tell you this, she had a solid year. It wasn't the year that she wanted," said Milligan. "She wants to be great, so I think she felt like she left some stuff on the table last year. She really got in the gym this summer, particularly in the weightroom. She's a different looking kid. ... She got beat up a lot last year and ... she took that a little personally."

While Firebaugh is a lock for Rider's starting five, there are still a number of questions on who exactly the Broncs will roll out for their exhibition game against The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) on Nov. 2.

The starting lineup will likely feature a backcourt of graduate student guard Amanda Mobley and senior guard Maya Hyacienth, along with a frontcourt of Firebaugh, junior forward Raphaela Toussaint and senior center and captain Victoria Toomey.

"We have veterans that were a part of that [2020] championship team in Amanda, Victoria and Maya... their first years, they were at the mountain top and they know what it takes," said Milligan.

Mobley started at point guard for the Broncs in her sophomore and junior seasons, and in the first three games of last season before Lenaejha Evans played her way into the lineup. With Evans departing for Elon and Mobley's experience, she'll no doubt be running the point again for Rider. In the 2021-22 season, Mobley averaged 4.0 points per game and 3.6 assists per game.

Like Mobley, Hyacienth also started in three games for the Broncs last season, but she suffered a season-ending knee injury in her third start against St. Francis Brooklyn. As she has been in the past, Hyacienth should be a useful two-way threat for Rider, providing reliable defense and complementary scoring to Mobley and Firebaugh. As a sophomore, Hyacienth put up 7.3 points per game and almost a steal per game.

However, there is a chance Hyacienth's replacement, senior guard Jessika Schiffer, retains her spot as starting shooting guard due to her stellar play last season. In Hyacienth's stead, Schiffer proved to be more than capable, averaging 9.6 points per game and capping off the season with a 19-point performance against Iona in the opening round of the MAAC Tournament.

It is impossible to talk about the impending season without discussing the departure of guard Lenaejha Evans, as she transferred to Elon University in the offseason. In the 2021-22 season, Evans averaged 14.0 points per game, the highest of anyone on the team and the seventh highest in the MAAC. With a substantial chunk of offense vacated, it is unclear how exactly those points will be redistributed.



Senior guard **Jessika Schiffer** will be a pivotal piece for the Broncs, as her scoring off the bench could give them a major advantage (Andrew Xon/The Rider News).

Along with Evans, forward Teresa Wolak left the team after graduating, leaving two open spots on Rider's roster. Rather than bringing in freshmen, Milligan opted for two junior college transfers in junior forward Toni Blanford and junior guard Daja Wentz. The pair of juniors better match Rider's timeline and are ready to contribute now, while also adding much-needed depth to a team that was dealing with injuries for most of last season. As former teammates at Monroe College, Blanford and Wentz should make for a respectable duo off the bench.

Other key reserves for the Broncs include Schiffer and senior forward Anna Ekerstedt, who each started in double-digit games last season.

If Rider can stay healthy this time around, its depth could end up being its most valuable asset.

"Every single day, we've worked to get 1% better. That's definitely [Milligan's] motto," said Blanford. "We like to be the underdogs. We like to have people not know what to expect out of us."

The Broncs' look to get warmed up for their redemption tour on Nov. 2 when they host TCNJ for an exhibition game. Their first regular season game will be against the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) on Nov. 7.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

'Sweet and sour': transfers bring new flavor to Broncs

By Jake Tiger

room after the 2021-22 season, Lynn Milligan had to use them wisely.

The veteran head coach of Rider's women's basketball felt her team was on the cusp of something great despite a disappointing finish to the season, and with the right moves, the Broncs could take the leap back into Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship contention.

Through the transfer portal, Milligan concocted a pair of storybook-esque moves by bringing in two junior college players with unexpectedly interwoven bistories.

Now as Broncs, juniors forward Toni Blanford and guard Daja Wentz will once again share the same court and old, discolored carpet, as they reconvene as both teammates and roommates.

And they were roommates

Sharing the same dorm as freshmen at Monroe College, a highly-touted junior college in the Bronx, New York, Wentz and Blanford were valuable components of a 19-11 team that won the Northeast District Championship in 2020.

Starting at point guard for most of the season, Wentz led the Mustangs in scoring with 11.1 points per game and 323 total points in 29 games. Blanford, playing the role of a stretch forward, was not far behind, posting 8.8 points and 5.3 rebounds per game to go with 30.8% shooting from three.

Wentz remained a Mustang for her sophomore season, while Blanford searched for a bigger role as a transfer, briefly spending time at Coppin State before ultimately ending up at Union County College in Cranford, New Jersey, as she felt she was not yet ready for Division I basketball.

"I think it humbled me, for sure," said Blanford.
"Just to know what the Division I life is like. It kept me motivated. To get that... stripped away from you, it keeps you humble, hungry."

In their solo acts, both Blanford and Wentz saw an uptick in production, and separately, they each felt it was time that they take the leap. Luckily, a nearby head coach was trying to do the same thing with her team.

"It was like a happy accident that they had some familiarity with each other already and then both came here," said Milligan. "We felt like we needed a little bit of athleticism and speed on the perimeter, and then another post-scorer to help us out. Both of them fit that bill really well."

'The stars aligned'

Miraculously, the former Mustangs had crossed paths once again, each ending up in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, at the same time and with the same purpose.

"Honestly, I had no idea she was coming to Rider," said Wentz. "I guess the stars aligned."

As they both grow accustomed to their new team and living arrangement, the built-in chemistry between Blanford and Wentz has created a sort of buddy system, as they work together to find their place in Division I basketball and at their new school.

"It definitely helps because you don't feel alone," said Wentz. "Just being comfortable with each other. ... I think we're navigating it well together, having each other by our sides."

On the court, the juniors project to be a formidable duo off of Rider's bench, already knowing how to play off each other in the halfcourt and in transition.

"I know when she wants to pass to me. I know that she'll throw the ball up to me if I'm running. I think she trusts me with that," said Blanford. "You can tell the connection's there."

Pre-established chemistry aside, they also provide unique traits that could allow the Broncs to dominate against certain matchups. Wentz can blow by slower guards with her elite speed, while Blanford can open up the paint with her ability to score on all three levels.

"I think both of them will play a significant role in what we do," said Milligan. "They're two very different people. Daja's a little more quiet, a little more behind the scenes. Toni is a little bit more boisterous... putting herself out there, so they're very different types of players."

In an unexpected turn of events, the pair of roommates are perhaps Rider's two most intriguing pieces entering the season. The complementary personalities and playstyles of Blanford and Wentz may very well be what finally gets Rider back over the hump.

"[Blanford's] definitely loud, but it's a good energy. I'm more of the quiet one," said Wentz. "Sweet and sour, I guess."



New Broncs junior guard **Daja Wentz** (left) and junior forward **Toni Blanford** (right) shared the court at Monroe College (Photos courtesy of Rider Athletics).

Sports

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