

Union negotiator says strike is more likely than not



Graphic by Adrienne Unfreed

Photo by Andrew Xon/Amethyst Martinez

President Gregory Dell'Omo watching the faculty union picketing event during new student move-in.

By Shaun Chornobroff

AFTER a summer of tension-filled negotiations between Rider's faculty union and the administration regarding a new bargaining contract, union leadership said it is more likely than not that a strike will occur during the school year.

Despite progress in the negotiations in recent weeks and both parties saying they want to avoid any strike, Rider's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is still far from satisfied with the latest proposal, while the administration remains much more optimistic.

"While there was some movement, the parties are still far apart. There's going to have to be significant further movement if we are going to be able to settle," Jeff Halpern, the head of the union's negotiating team, said during AAUP's informational picketing on Sept. 5.

Along with salary and benefits, the two sides remain distant on issues such as tuition remission and increasing professor's workload from three courses a semester to four.

"They're pretty committed to a position of increasing our work, cutting our pay and cutting our benefits," AAUP President David Dewberry explained. "So more work for less."

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo declined to comment on the potential removal of tuition remission and cutting benefits, but did explain that it is not uncommon for professors to teach four classes at a school like Rider's, especially considering the university is frantically trying to stabilize its finances in the wake of the pandemic.

"A lot of our faculty are already teaching four courses a semester. They teach an overload, they get extra pay for it. ... We're saying 'no, let's make that part of the regular teaching load and figure out how to make that work,'" Dell'Omo said.

Even with the union's dissatisfaction, Dell'Omo remains hopeful a strike will not be needed and viewed the latest proposal from his administration as a step forward.

"I think the last offer we made to the union was a way to begin to create not just the savings we're looking for, but to create a more partnership environment," Dell'Omo said in a sit-down interview with The Rider News. "Because the biggest problem is change is happening so quickly, it's hard to commit to a very structured future without having some flexibility built in on both sides."

After two temporary extensions of the contract between the union and the administration, it is officially set to expire on Sept. 9.

The union has long been critical of Dell'Omo and has passed two votes of no-confidence in the president's seven-year tenure. The most recent vote occurred in February, when 86% of the AAUP voted no-confidence, and the union called on the Board of Trustees to remove the president from his position.

On Sept. 1, prior to the fall convocation, almost 100% of Rider's union membership voted to give its leadership the authority to deploy a strike at any time.

The union militantly protested the convocation, entering single-file in matching cranberry T-shirts that read "invest in Rider's future, invest in Rider's faculty."

During move-in days on Sept. 4 and 5, the union picketed on the Campus Mall and handed out flyers headlined "Possible Strike!" to students and parents.

How a strike affects the community

The union and administration negotiating teams will meet again on Sept. 9, meaning teachers will be present for the first day of class and another temporary extension remains a possibility, Dewberry said. However, he said that he is unsure if an extension will happen.

Should a strike go from possibility to a reality, it may put the university in a compromising position.

"It would not help the university in any way," Dell'Omo said. "I get the give and take of the process, but I think we have to be realistic as to what will further advance the best interests of the entire university going forward."

Student Government Association (SGA) President Andrew Bernstein said he wants it to be known that "no matter the outcome of the contract negotiations, there's a plan in place to make sure the semester continues as planned."

"It would be unfortunate to start the semester with a strike, I certainly hope it doesn't resort to that. But of course I acknowledge the union's right to picket, to strike for working conditions," Bernstein said.

Should a strike happen, not only would professors not teach classes, but athletic trainers and sports coaches are part of the AAUP and may strike as well.

"If we do end up striking, we will not be providing any healthcare services to any of the student athletes. We will be out here picketing; we will not answer any texts," said Priya Mehrish, an athletic trainer who was picketing during move-in days.

When questioned, Dell'Omo said sporting events are "a work in progress. It'll be a game time decision."

The university has posted job openings for interim professors online, and Dell'Omo assured that there are contingency plans should a work stoppage occur. However, many faculty members may not be enforcing "scab" professors' work in the event of a strike.

"They won't be held responsible for the work a substitute did," Halpern said. "When we all return to class we will make the necessary adjustments."

Faculty advisor Jackie Incollingo had no participation in the editing of this story due to the conflict of interest.

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Rider will be adding a Division I women's lacrosse team for the spring 2024 season.



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SGA President encourages students to not be discouraged by recent adjustments to the Rider Community.

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University welcomes back their annual Cranchella event.



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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SHAUN CHORNOBROFF

Bumper Trucks

A smashing start to the semester. On Aug. 31 at 3:01 p.m., Public Safety was contacted for the report of a motor vehicle accident in the Kroner Lot. Upon their arrival, they met with a witness that observed a truck strike a parked vehicle as it moved out of the adjacent parking space. The truck then drove away from the area, but was quickly located while on their way to report the accident to Public Safety. The drivers of both vehicles were located and the matter was turned over to the Lawrence Township Police.

Midnight Marijuana

What's that smell? On Sept. 5 at 12:12 a.m., Public Safety responded to Ziegler Residence Hall for the report of the smell of suspected marijuana. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with the Residence Life staff who reported the incident. They proceeded to check the building to locate the source of the odor, but were unable to find where it was coming from.

Heaven's Gates

They shall not pass. On Sept. 1 at 12:15 p.m., Public Safety responded to the Memorial Parking Lot for the report of a motor vehicle accident. Upon their arrival, they discovered a vehicle parked underneath the gate arm. The driver of the vehicle reported that they swiped into the lot, the gate arm raised up, but then came down on top of their vehicle. The gate arm was raised so the vehicle could pass through and Facilities Management was later contacted to repair the damage.

- Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

Faculty union welcomes students with informational picket signs



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Tim Lengle, head athletic trainer, attended the picketing event on the day of new student move in.

By Amethyst Martinez and Kaitlyn McCormick

OVER Labor Day weekend, new and returning students moving onto campus were met by a sea of poster boards and professors during informational picketing by Rider's chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), sparked by ongoing contract negotiations between the union and administration.

Around the Campus Mall following the flow of move-in day traffic, faculty and supporters dressed in cranberry and baby blue AAUP shirts, held up picket signs with phrases such as "AAUP preserving Rider for future students," and, "We don't want to strike, treat us right," and handed out informational fliers to students and family informing them of a possible strike. Some faculty also brought their children to the picketing.

"It is important that you know that at this point, years of mismanagement by Rider's Administration has left the school in a very difficult financial situation," the flier read in part. "Now, as usual, the Administration would like faculty to pay for its mistakes."

Students and families were notified of the picketing prior to move-in via an email sent out by the University's Vice President for Student Affairs, Leanna Fenneberg, which assured recipients in bolded letters that AAUP members were not actively on strike and would continue to coach and teach during their contract extension.

Union reasoning

Philosophy professor Joel Feldman spoke to the Rider News while picketing to illustrate his concern for the university and its professors.

"The whole thing that's great about Rider is the amount of attention we're able to give to the individual student. And if you start having four classes per semester instead of three, you can imagine what that's going to take away from the quality," Feldman said.

Feldman also said that students can be taught something from seeing the union picket during the move-in days.

"It's a good learning experience for them, right, to see, you know, how one stands up for oneself and organizes for justice. ... People can make a judgment for themselves looking at the proposals on both sides; that's an important learning experience," Feldman said.

He added that if he were in the shoes of parents he would be concerned not only about a potential strike, but that the "quality of the education is being hollowed out."

Head athletic trainer Tim Lengle explained that, although a lot of people may not realize initially, the ongoing negotiations "severely affect the athletics department as much as they do the faculty."

Lengle said that his biggest concern is that the university needs to "start making some better decisions about where [its] money is going."

He added that while it is great that more teams and opportunities are being brought in to meet Title IX obligations, the problem is a lot broader.

"You're adding teams, but you're not adding medical staff. You're adding teams but you're not giving them the appropriate level of coaches. We have teams on this campus, 40, 45 or so kids, that have one coach and one part-time coach that doesn't get paid very well," Lengle said. "It's very difficult to give them the kind of experience that they expect when they come to a division one institution with that level of coaching."

With a potential strike on the horizon, many have questions about how sporting events may be impacted.

"I know that in the past negotiations, the administration has said that they would coach teams or teams would coach themselves, so they would have captain's practices and administration would coach games. I think that the big question mark is, 'Can you hold home events without medical staff?' And I say no," Lengle said.

Student athletes were seen supporting their union coaches and trainers, though they were instructed not to speak with the media.

Student and family response

Tania Eaton, the mother of a freshman student, said during Sunday's move-in that after she received the email about the picketing, she looked up Rider and found a lot of criticism from alumni regarding the handling of Westminster Choir College as well as the pay rates of upper administration, such as President Gregory Dell'Omo.

"It gives you pause," Eaton said, "and then now you're sending your daughter here." Eaton continued that her hope is that both parties are able to reach a "happy and equitable" agreement.

Scott Eaton, the student's father, also added that the family's "main concern" was that students' education and sports programs wouldn't be interrupted.

"We just wrote a massive check," he said.

Other parents seemed more off-put by the demonstration. One mother of a returning sophomore, who requested to remain anonymous, regarded the picketing as "inappropriate."

"It's not like the kids have a say in any of that," she said.

Some returning students, like junior actuarial science major Elizabeth Malicki, were less concerned about the AAUP and administration reaching an agreement. "I think that the professors have a firm ground of what they want, and I'm confident that they're not going to budge," Malicki said. "I'm glad that they're doing it because I want them to fight for what they need."

Faculty advisor Jackie Incollingo had no participation in the editing of this story due to the conflict of interest.



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Student athletes coming out to support their trainers and coaches at the picketing event on Sept. 5.



Scan the QR code for more photos

Tensions rise following faculty and staff convocation

By Amethyst Martinez and Kaitlyn McCormick

RIDER'S annual faculty and staff convocation, an event that largely emphasized the financial improvements Rider has made over the past year, ended with a heated Q&A segment.

AAUP Presence

Dressed in cranberry shirts which read, "Invest in Rider's future, invest in Rider's faculty," the AAUP shuffled into the Sept. 1 convocation in the Yvonne Theater as President Gregory Dell'Omo took center stage to explain a wide variety of topics in regards to the university, including admission rates, annual budgets and updates on the looming cash deficit impacting Rider's finances.

Following the presentation, AAUP member and film and television professor Barry Janes took to the mic as the floor was opened up for questions.

Janes mentioned that one thing bothering him was the amount of sacrifices that members at the university are being asked to make.

"We've made tremendous cuts. I don't even know who works here anymore. ... I really wonder what kind of changes are being made at the cabinet level," Janes said.

He also expressed concern for the attempted selling of and litigation surrounding the Westminster Choir

College's Princeton Campus.

Janes's questioning garnered extensive applause from AAUP faculty.

Dell'Omo's response included mention that the university was losing \$2-3 million a year due to Westminster and that the ongoing legal issues surrounding selling the campus is what prevents it from being talked about and factored into current fiscal conversations.

Dell'Omo reiterated that 90 staff positions were lost following the Voluntary Separation Program last semester, which resulted in applause from many non-AAUP members of the audience.

In an interview with the Rider News, Janes did disclose that he and Dell'Omo met privately to further the conversation started during the question and answer forum.

University numbers

The first topic Dell'Omo covered in his presentation was fall enrollment and financial updates. The freshmen class is larger this year with 823 students, in comparison to last year with 677. Transfer numbers have held steady, but returning students are below last year's mark, according to Dell'Omo. The university has continuously tried to raise enrollment numbers in hopes of bringing in more revenue. He also stated that the university is nowhere near full capacity of students living on campus.

One of the most prominent topics in the president's speech was the new deregistration policy, which Dell'Omo referred to as a "call to change." 459 students have faced deregistration from classes for the Fall 2022 semester, mostly due to financial issues.

"Essentially, while we have always had good intentions in looking out for the best interest of students, trying to be kind to them, to help them with financially difficult situations, ultimately, we are not retaining them," said Dell'Omo.

According to Dell'Omo, over half of the students who were deregistered have completed obligations for re-registration.



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

President Gregory Dell'Omo delivers updates on the stage of the Yvonne Theater.

Updating university finances

Dell'Omo also discussed the \$16.6 million deficit the school faced last year. The 2023 budget for the deficit is \$10.7 million.

Inflation has had its effects on campus this year in all sectors, more specifically dining, and is expected to affect the budget.

In light of financial issues, Dell'Omo described the plan for an institutional transformation. The university hopes to strengthen its non-tuition revenue by utilizing the Westminster Conservatory, entrepreneurial endeavors, and consumer banking partnerships among other avenues.

The success of campaigning in 2022 was also mentioned, with a little over \$15 million raised in cash, which Dell'Omo touted as Rider's highest total in a single year.

Rider's Day of Giving, a 24-hour fundraising campaign, raised over \$100,000 from 651 donors.

Dell'Omo ended his speech with a look ahead to the 2026 fiscal year, hoping for a multitude of initiatives to be added onto Rider's repertoire until then, including women's lacrosse and new academic programs.

Faculty advisor Jackie Incollingo had no participation in the editing of this story due to a conflict of interest.



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Members of the AAUP sit together in matching cranberry shirts during the Sept. 1 faculty and staff convocation.

COVID Counter: 2022 updates

By Olivia Nicoletti

AS the pandemic has taken a turn for the better, regulations at Rider's campus are slimming down.

The COVID-19 contact tracing and case management will no longer be facilitated at Rider during the 2022-2023 academic year. This will include any housing on campus dedicated to quarantining and isolation, according to the university website.

Students and staff are asked to monitor symptoms daily and not come to campus if they are symptomatic.

According to the university website, vaccinations are still required on campus for those who are not enrolled in a fully online program or have a religious or medical exemption. The vaccination could be a single-dose series or a two-dose series; however, the booster is still not required in order to be on campus.

"I think it's the fact that the virus is moving to a more endemic stage as opposed to pandemic, which means it's prevalent throughout society. It's also waning in terms of its severity," said Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary of the Board Debbie Stasolla. "There are more tools at our disposal for each of us to take personal responsibility to protect ourselves and others."

Stasolla said that there is always potential for the situation to change but the university is prepared if that does happen.

"The virus is following what


scientists say is the typical course of a virus where it gradually weakens and weakens, but who's to say, so we should be prepared," Stasolla said. "Given that the virus for most individuals is not severe, and that we can each make choices about our own health and how to protect ourselves, right now, we feel this is the proper course that we've taken by pulling back on many of the requirements that we had in place previously."

Andrew Bernstein, a senior political science major and president of the Student Government Association (SGA), has served on the SGA board since the start of the pandemic.

"I think we've been really diligent throughout the entire pandemic. Especially keeping in line with CDC and state guidance," Bernstein said.

Stasolla commends students, faculty, staff and visitors for abiding by the guidelines that the COVID-19 Implementation Team has put in place during the past two years.

"We couldn't have done it without everyone's cooperation and understanding," Stasolla said.



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Wednesday @ 4:30 p.m.

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Or

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Adrienne Unfreed/The Rider News

University reacts to supreme court Roe v. Wade reversal

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



The United States Supreme Court's June 24 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* has garnered strong reactions across the country after reversing longstanding abortion precedent established by *Roe v. Wade*.

By Kaitlyn McCormick

FOLLOWING months of anticipation, the wait to determine the fate of abortion access across the country culminated on June 24, when the United States Supreme Court ruled in the *Jackson v. Dobbs* case that the United States Constitution does not grant a right to abortion, effectively overturning the longstanding precedent of *Roe v. Wade*.

President Gregory Dell'Omo released a statement via email on June 27 regarding the decision, reiterating the services available to students and staff while also maintaining that "Rider has always stood, strongly and proudly, for the advancement of women's rights."

According to an emailed statement attributed to Rider University's Health Center Director Elizabeth Luciano, the center's goal "has always been and will continue to be providing safe, high quality reproductive health care."

Students are able to utilize services such as birth control consultations and prescriptions, women's health exams including gynecological exams, pregnancy testing and individual medical counsel to assist students in making informed decisions regarding reproductive health, with referrals available if warranted.

While abortion access remains legal and available in New Jersey, codified into law by Governor Phil Murphy in Jan. 2021 through the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, the upcoming election season may bring challenges specifically for students or staff commuting from out of state. For example, the upcoming Pennsylvania gubernatorial election has the potential to alter abortion access in the state depending on which candidate wins.

Laurel Harris, English professor and Planned Parenthood Generation Action's faculty advisor, expressed the "horror" she initially felt after the decision, as well as an admitted sense of naivety after not imagining that a precedent such as *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned.

Although a New Jersey native herself, Harris mentioned concern for the legalities surrounding abortion rights and helping friends or family in adjacent states: "If abortion is illegal in the neighboring state, am I then legally implicated in aiding and abetting an abortion right?"

Generation Action is planning a march on campus for reproductive rights toward the end of September with the hopes of ushering interested students to attend the Trenton Fall Legislative Summit on Sept. 29.

Rider's gender and sexuality studies department is also planning a reproductive rights panel for Oct. 19 that will consist of four panelists from the Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey, the New Jersey Latino Action Network, the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice and Rutgers University.

In contrast, Rider's chapter of Students for Life America plans to continue tabling.



Courtesy of Rider University

Professor Laurel Harris provides comment on court ruling.

Rider loses former dean, highly respected business professor

Courtesy of Rider University



Professor Larry Newman was highly respected at Rider.

By Shaun Chornobroff

An influential member of Rider's Norm Brodsky School of Business, Larry Newman, passed away on Aug. 29 at 71-years-old.

Newman was a figure at Rider University since 1984 and was a crucial part in building the business program into the renowned program it is today.

Newman held a plethora of titles during his nearly four decades at Rider, including serving as chair of the Department of Marketing from 2001-2004 and dean of the school of business from 2004-2012.

"Larry's one of those people that you sort of identify with the university. When you think of Rider,

there's a handful of people that come to your mind, they're sort of connected to the university, and Larry's one of those people," said university president Greg Dell'Omo.

While serving as dean, the college was awarded two Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International Maintenance Reviews in business and accounting, established five centers of excellence and built international partnerships, among a number of other changes which have formed the business school.

Leading up to his death, Newman continued working with students as an associate professor as well as the co-director of EXCEED, the university's Executive Center for Education and Development.

In the spring, Newman coached a team of Rider students to victory in a Johnson & Johnson national case competition, defeating schools such as Rutgers, Villanova and the University of Southern California among other prestigious institutions.

Newman's passion for higher education was incredibly evident throughout his life. From 1990-2007 he served on the Bucks County Community College Board of Trustees, which included two years as the chair.

Newman was also a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges Council of Board Chairs, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Graduate School Alumni Society of Pennsylvania State University.

Newman earned his bachelors and doctorate degrees from Penn State, while earning his masters from Drexel University.

Newman was born in Philadelphia, but had lived in either Bucks County, Pennsylvania or Lawrenceville, New Jersey for most of his adult life.

Newman is survived by Professor Cynthia Newman, his wife of 25 years and a professor of marketing at Rider; his sons and daughters-in-law, Matthew and Jessy (Hughes) Newman and Jared and Erin (Paukert); his daughter and son-in-law, Jenna Newman and Peter Renaud; son Zack Newman and five grandchildren; Gwen, Sarah, Will, Charlie and Alice.

A memorial service for Larry Newman will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17 at Crossing Community Church, 80 Lower Silver Lake Road, Newtown, Pennsylvania. Visitation with the family will begin at 9 a.m.

Following the service, the Newman family will pay tribute to Larry's beloved alma mater, holding a white-out tailgate in his memory, while the Penn State football game is available for viewing.



Photo Courtesy of Rider University LinkedIn

Larry Newman led a team of students who won the 2022 Johnson and Johnson National Business Case Competition.

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Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Friends wait in line for matching air brush tattoos while excitedly discussing the upcoming school year.

University welcomes back beloved tradition: Cranchella

By **Tristan Leach**

ON Sept. 5, the much loved welcome week tradition, Cranchella, made a return. The event is a Rider student and staff favorite with hundreds turning out for their favorite activities. After several stressful days of moving in, students were ready for some much needed fun.

Cathryn Vanbogelen, a sophomore sports management major, said, "It's a great way to meet everybody once you're moved in."

Just like last year's event, Kona Ice made a return to campus. Eager students and staff lined up to customize their own sweet, icy treat. Students smiled and showed off their now colorful lips in a range of blues, purples, greens and reds, showing how much they enjoyed the dessert.

While many students lined up for the shaved ice, others engaged in some competition. Cranchella featured four

inflatable games, an obstacle course, platform dodgeball, wrecking ball and a wipe out game. Excited students raced to be first through the obstacle course. Friends laughed as they bragged about how they were going to win.

Behind the inflatables was a game of cornhole. A small group of students waited their turn as they watched carefully aimed throws of bean bags. The popular game had students cheering as they watched their fellow students make the winning shot.

For other students, the airbrush tattoo booth was calling to them. With over 50 designs to choose from, students could be seen sporting green dragons, multi-colored stars, pink skulls and many more.

Along with the fun of games and delicious sweets was the opportunity for bonding. Returning students excitedly greeted their friends and

talked about summer and the upcoming semester. New students arrived with their roommates or alone. Some happily introduced themselves to new friends. Others who felt a little more shy were approached by other students. Soon, new friendships were formed all over the campus.

Riley Mozes, a senior health science major, said, "The thing I enjoy most about the event is just seeing all of the new students and current students getting together. I think it's really cool to see how everyone's interacting and how a lot of the current students will come up and introduce themselves to the new students."

As the festivities continued, more students joined in, excitedly greeting friends and enjoying the summer air before the start of another school year at Rider.



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Students gather with their friends for a some friendly competition and sweet icy treats.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRI, SEPT. 9

Rock Fest
7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Ben Cohen Turf Field

SAT, SEPT. 10

Drag Race
7 p.m.
The Yvonne Theater

MON, SEPT. 12

A Diverse Welcome Reception
5 p.m.
Cavalla Room

FRI, SEPT. 16

R Factor Auditions
7:30 p.m.
The Yvonne Theater

Opinions and politics: conservative organizations at Rider

By Kaitlyn McCormick

FROM the front of Sweigart room 119 near the end of the spring 2022 semester, Grace Rykaczewski asked a group of around nine students to introduce themselves with a fun fact and favorite ice cream flavor before they spent the next hour discussing a “post-Roe” America. Mere months later, the United States Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* effectively struck down the long standing precedent to abortion rights established by *Roe v. Wade*.

Rykaczewski, now a senior music education major, is just one of the number of students active in conservative organizations on Rider’s campus, such as the university’s chapters of anti-abortion organization Students For Life America (SFLA) and self-proclaimed “community organizers of the right,” Turning Point USA (TPUSA).

At a time when social and political climates are so polarizing, a look into this generation’s conservative population could be telling.

Unfolding conservative ideologies

Rykaczewski, president and founder of Rider’s SFLA chapter and secretary of TPUSA, was not always so outspoken about her passion for conservative ideals, a notion that not many would guess from her social media presence under the handle @ProLifeBarbie and what seems like a never-ending wardrobe of pink T-shirts splattered with political slogans.

“Growing up as a kid, I was always really soft spoken. I was really shy, believe it or not ... but that’s just the way I naturally was,” Rykaczewski explained from the corner of the empty classroom following the departure of the SFLA attendees after that spring semester meeting. “But, because I had a conviction to speak up about the things I believed in, I was kind of put in these situations where I was forced to grow a very thick skin.”

This conviction led her to be an active member with SFLA as a national organization, engaging in speaking events across the country to speak out against abortion, which she described as a “mass genocide, a slaughter of millions of innocent human beings.”

Senior geology major Jake Lee, vice president of both SFLA and TPUSA, as well as TPUSA’s campus coordinator, faced a similar journey in confidence before identifying openly as a “huge outspoken conservative.”

Lee goes by @BasedShark on Instagram, his indicated pronouns “ne/ver.”

After attending a TPUSA event his freshman year,

Lee found the courage to be open about his political viewpoints.

Wearing a dark blue shirt with “real men protect preborn lives” in bold letters, Lee explained in an interview, “My door was painted, it was covered in Turning Point posters, my backpack has a million pins on it. I do it because I realized that there are so many people on this campus and in the world that are so afraid to voice their opinions like I was.”

Campus reception

SFLA and TPUSA’s heavy exposure at Rider with consistent tabling, speaking events and prominent social media presences have resulted in pushback not only from members of the general Rider community, but on a personal level for these conservative students.

Lee explained that many of the SFLA and TPUSA members are intermingled between organizations, and Rykaczewski noted that many of these students found a community within each other after losing friends due to their politics.

In an updated interview with the Rider News this August, Rykaczewski, who was present at the Supreme Court for the *Roe v. Wade* reversal, said she experienced a lot more “hostility” from fellow students, even some she would consider friends, for her viewpoints.

“They were coming after me on social media, calling me a horrible person for being pro-life,” Rykaczewski said. “When abortion was the law of the land, then it was fine to be friends with someone who is pro-life because they weren’t successful yet.” Now, she explained, it has been “surprising” to get a “different kind of hatred” since the Supreme Court decision.

Students like junior psychology major Kayla Ailey, the vice president of SPECTRUM, Rider’s LGBTQ+ club, was asked about the ways in which conservative rhetoric has the potential of being received, not only on a campus level but in the greater scheme of national dialogue related to controversial politics.

Ailey said that a lapse in a clear mission statement may contribute to campus reception of these conservative clubs: “I think that’s why sometimes they get a lot more backlash than other clubs. ... I don’t think people understand what they’re trying to do.”

Although students like Rykaczewski and Lee cite being “shunned” by peers after “coming out” as conservative, Ailey said about SFLA and TPUSA’s presence tabling on campus and then seeing students in class, “When you have a point of view that’s harmful to others, it can affect other people’s learning environments.”

Senior Spanish major Joe Giambelluca, president of Rider’s Planned Parenthood Generation Action

chapter, said that his experience on the opposite side of controversial topics like abortion rights at Rider had been vastly different than his conservative counterparts.

“The only pushback I experience is from Turning Point and SFLA,” Giambelluca said.

Hypothesizing why these organizations are received differently in the Rider community, Giambelluca explained his belief that TPUSA’s events especially “spread a lot of anger and debate and confusion among the community.”

Last fall, a TPUSA event discussing critical race theory from a conservative lens was counterprotested, and a petition was started on change.org to have the chapter removed from Rider’s campus.

The Rider TPUSA Instagram page is riddled with conservative memes and graphics. “We are women. Not Womxn,” one photo read, with the caption, “Happy WOMEN’s history month!!”

Another post depicted organization members holding signs with slogans like “capitalism cures” and “only criminals wear masks.”

Rykaczewski’s Instagram page, tag lining her as a “walking political scandal,” features pink and pastel conservative talking points and anti-abortion rally snapshots. A video of Rykaczewski’s pink sparkly handgun resided just a few rows up from a photo of her cosplaying in an orange wig for her job as a children’s party princess.

Inviting civil discourse

The presence of groups like SFLA and TPUSA, as well as the reactions they have garnered, play a direct role in a greater conversation surrounding the value of civil discourse and contribution to the marketplace of ideas. What many people grapple with, however, is the line between accepting a difference of opinion and acknowledging rhetoric that some may receive as harmful or offensive.

And yet, despite this reception, members of these organizations remained adamant about wanting to engage in conversation.

Rykaczewski said, “One of the things that is really hard for people is we’ve gotten to a place in our society where we don’t talk with each other, we talk at each other.”

Lee shared that while he has changed people’s minds about various topics in the past, he has also had his views swayed on issues like the death penalty through conversing with people whose opinions differed from his own.

Lee said, “I would say that, if you’re on the outside of TPUSA or SFLA and looking at us, just know even if you don’t share the same beliefs as us, we don’t hate you ... and I don’t want you to hate us.”



Kaitlyn McCormick/The Rider News

Senior geology major, **Jake Lee**, is vice president of both Rider’s chapters of Turning Point USA and Students For Life America.



Kaitlyn McCormick/The Rider News

Senior music education major, **Grace Rykaczewski**, has a collection of pink t-shirts with many political slogans.

Students express deep concern of Rider's future as faculty union consider striking

OVER the past year, The Rider News has extensively covered the growing tensions and contract negotiations between Rider's chapter of American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the university's administration that has led to the point of a potential strike.

On Sept. 4 and 5, Rider faculty were picketing outside the Campus Mall as students moved into their dorm room. The AAUP represents many university faculty members, including professors, librarians and coaches. Throughout the summer, AAUP and the administration have attempted to renegotiate the employment contract for all faculty. However, at the time of publication there is no resolution/.

The Rider News editorial board stands by the AAUP and their right to protest for what they believe they are entitled to. The editorial board hopes that, eventually, a contract suitable for both sides can be agreed upon so our education can become the main focus once again.

What do students think?

As students, it feels like there's a lack of support for professors, who are the heart of the university. The students know that the professors come to Rider to teach their passion and cannot thrive in the university's current environment, which feels increasingly hostile from an outside perspective. A great deal of pressure is on the professor's shoulders, and the looming threat of jobs being at stake can be stressful and scary. Some departments are getting more attention than others, each may not get an equal educational experience. If programs continue to be cut, students could get fewer opportunities than others depending on their major. It is common for schools to focus on one aspect of education more than the other, but at Rider, there is a variety of majors that should all get the same attention.

The future of Rider

This situation could tarnish Rider University's reputation, and it raises concerns among students that future employment upon graduation could be at risk. Students look up to their professors as mentors and want experienced professionals leading their classes. They want to pay for a valuable education that will serve them in their career field, but students are afraid that professors' inability to obtain the resources they need will jeopardize their education. Hopefully, an agreement can be made among both parties in this negotiation, and Rider is able to keep professors who not only love this university and its students, but are also some of the most knowledgeable and respected individuals in their fields. Students have to remember that they are a stakeholder at Rider, and their opinion matters now more than ever before. This decision impacts everyone, and students may be the ones who have to pay the ultimate price for these negotiations.

This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board. This week's editorial was written by Opinion Editor Felicia Roehm.

Felicia Roehm



Olivia Nicoletti/The Rider News

Members of the AAUP picketed on both student move-in days, which took place on Labor Day weekend.



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Bronc Buddies helped students move into their dorms as faculty protested outside.



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Joel Feldman, an associate professor, holds a sign saying "AAUP=Unified and strong!"

THE Rider News

Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

©2022 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

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JUNIOR JOURNALS

With Roe v. Wade was overturned, reproductive rights are more important than ever

THIS summer has been a very frustrating and confusing time for the political climate of the United States. We now have a 6-3 conservative majority in the Supreme Court, three of which were appointed by former President Trump. This unequal political climate has caused the Supreme Court to pass laws that would be considered more conservative, including the overturning of Roe v. Wade. The decision to declare the right to an abortion as unconstitutional has far-reaching implications in our society.

In response to this decision, everyone has had different reactions. Some celebrated, but many protested because they previously had protection and access to a medical service for almost 50 years. While an issue like this one should theoretically affect everyone, it is important to know who will be hit the hardest. For example, some people believe that abortion access is solely a women's rights issue, but it affects anyone who gets their period. By framing this problem from only one perspective, it is not only exclusionary, but we also forget to give other people the opportunity to speak about an issue that affects them. Another problem is that people of color will be disproportionately affected by these bans because they are more likely to obtain abortions, have limited access to health care, and typically have less access and resources that would enable them to travel somewhere to get an abortion, according to Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), a nonprofit focused on national health issues.

After documents from the Supreme Court had been leaked on the internet, many people had a feeling that Roe v. Wade was going to be overturned. In preparation, many conservative states had laws on the docket to immediately come into effect after the decision had been made. According to the Center for Reproductive Rights, 11 states have made abortion illegal, which has criminalized anyone who takes part in getting an abortion, four states and territories do not protect access to abortion, and 16 states and territories are classified as "hostile," meaning that there are laws in place that restrict or prohibit access to abortion. Most of these laws put in place to ban abortion also have no exemption or special circumstances cases, meaning there are no abortions allowed, even in the case of rape, incest or medical emergency.

Abortion access isn't as simple as just not being able to have an abortion. Given these restrictions based on the individual state, those who may want or need to have an abortion will have to travel to a state that allows them to do so. This pattern will put a financial strain on the states that protect abortion, as well as a resource strain because there will most likely be overbooking and increased waiting times. The strain could be potentially dangerous for individuals who need abortions. Maternal mortality is a serious problem during pregnancy and childbirth to this day, even in

developed countries. Unfortunately, because of these bans, the estimated maternal mortality rate would be 24%, up 14% from 2017.

To make the situation even worse, there are other rights that could be under attack soon. After Roe v. Wade was overturned, Clarence Thomas, a conservative Supreme Court justice who voted to overturn Roe, wrote his opinion on the law and other laws he believes should be re-evaluated. These laws include the access to contraceptives, the legality of same-sex relations and marriage and interracial marriages. As of July, the House passed a bill to make access to contraceptives a federal right; however, it faces slim chances in the Senate because it does not have a lot of Republican support. In July, the House also passed the Respect for Marriage Act, which protects same-sex and interracial marriages. Since this bill passed with significant Republican support, it is predicted that it will also pass in the Senate.

Ultimately, the conservative majority in the Supreme Court is a big concern for many minority groups in the United States and can make their lives much more challenging. It is important to respect people's individual rights and choices, especially when it doesn't impact or affect anyone else's life. Freedom and equality are the ideals on which the United States was founded, and when individual rights begin to be taken away, it makes you question the values of the country.

*Bridget Gum-Egan
junior English major*



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Pro-choice protests took place across the country in wake of Roe v. Wade being overturned.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SGA president encourages students to think positive for school year

I write with great excitement to begin the new school year and to be back on campus! With the buzz of enthusiasm surrounding Welcome Week events, the anticipation of attending on-campus sporting games and the eagerness to meet new friends, there is of course some uncertainty regarding recent university-wide changes.

Whether it be restructuring or the negotiation of the faculty contract, many things are undoubtedly confusing and can be anxiety-inducing. The good news is that the Student Government Association (SGA) is here to provide as much information as possible and to support what is guaranteed to be a fruitful school year.

Our approach has been, and will continue to be, advocating for the best interest of the student body when discussing various university changes. As the year progresses, SGA will continue to have conversations that prioritize student voices and opinions. We will also continue hosting and supporting student-centered initiatives and events to benefit all Rider Broncs.

Many of us have chosen to attend and stay at Rider because of our sense of community and common purpose; let's not lose sight of this even in the face of uncertainty and change. I encourage you to filter through the divisive rhetoric, search for answers, and not let these potential adversities dampen your enthusiasm for being a Rider Bronc. Please don't hesitate to voice your concerns, ask questions, or simply reach out to your elected representatives in SGA. You can contact us on social media (@ridersga) and/or email us at sga@rider.edu. And always remember: it's a great day to be a Bronc!

Your voice matters, so make it heard!

*Andrew Bernstein
senior political science major
Student Government Association President*



Photo courtesy of SGA



Andrew Xon/The Rider News
SGA President Andrew Bernstein is hopeful for the year ahead.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Stellar defense earns Broncs three shutouts in five games

By Logan VanDine

COMING off of a disappointing 2021 season, the Rider women's soccer team wanted to start off their season strong, and they did. The Broncs won three out of their first five matches, including back to back shutout victories.

A trio of shutouts

The Broncs made a statement victory for their first game of the season, as they won a nail biter 3-2 against Wagner in Staten Island on Aug. 18.

The scoring began just four minutes into the match when senior midfielder Camryn Dees scored her second career goal to instantly give the Broncs a 1-0 lead.

The Seahawks made it close in the second, cutting the Broncs lead to 3-2, but could not tie it from there and the Broncs were able to hang on.

"The season opener is always a challenge with the limited preparation time in preseason, so any positive result is a plus. We actually played pretty good also, and looked dangerous in the attack," said Head Coach Drayson Hounsome.

In their second straight road game on Aug. 25, it was another close, contested match as one goal was all the Broncs needed to secure a 1-0 win and the team's first ever victory over Villanova.

After a scoreless first half, the Broncs were finally able to break the ice when senior forward Makenzie Rodrigues scored the game-winning goal.

"Conditions were very tough today with the excessive heat," said Hounsome. "We had a game plan that went nowhere in the first half, and to be fair, Villanova had the better of the game by a mile. That being said, we defended with discipline and Ellie [Sciancalepore] was strong in goal, giving us a chance to change tactics at halftime."

Three straight road games proved not to be a problem for the Broncs. They completed their second straight shutout, this time over Delaware State by a score of 6-0 on Aug. 25.

The Broncs dominated the entire game, and one player who really stepped up was Rodrigues once again.

Rodrigues recorded her first career hat trick in the



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Junior goalkeeper **Ellie Sciancalepore** made six saves against Temple on Sept. 3.

victory, as she scored goals in the 19th, 22nd and 61st minutes.

"It was so exciting to get my first career hat trick and join a group of other players to do the same," said Rodrigues.

'All we can do is compete'

The Broncs were looking to make it four straight road wins to begin the season, but ultimately that goal fell short as they dropped their first game of the season to Albany 3-1 on Aug. 31.

The Broncs started out strong with senior midfielder Lindsey Maslow scoring the first goal of the game, but that was all the Broncs were able to do in the highly contested matchup.

Albany then went on to score two straight goals to close the first half and one more in the second half to put the icing on the cake for the Broncs first loss of the season.

"Disappointing outcome tonight, but to be fair, we were the second-best team on the field for large periods. Up 1-0, we gifted them a couple of goals with basic errors. We will learn from these and look to bounce back on Saturday," said Hounsome.

If you like defense, then the game on Sept. 3 was the game for you to watch. Both Rider and Temple's defenses were phenomenal as both teams could not

break the ice as they fell to a tie at zero.

The biggest reason why this game remained tied all throughout the match was thanks to junior goalkeeper Ellie Sciancalepore with her six saves that prevented the Owls from scoring.

"We looked forward to our game against them after a very competitive tie last year. Although we would have loved to come away with the win, defensively, we were happy to come away with a shutout against a solid Temple team. Looking to have shutouts is important for us as a team and is just one of the ways that we can achieve our goals within the MAAC this year," said Sciancalepore.

Hounsome also gave an overall assessment of his team's scoreless tie.

"I think we played well. We responded against a tough team. We tied them last year, but I think they got the better of us a few years before then. We kept a shutout, our third shutout in five games. All we can do is compete, work hard and play well, and if their keeper happens to have a really good day, that's just the way it is. I'm not disappointed with a nil-nil draw," Hounsome said.

The Broncs next test will be against Fairleigh Dickinson as they head to Teanack for a hopeful victory on Sept. 7.

THE Rider News

Come to our weekly meetings:

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ONLINE

'WE JUST DID NOT SHOW UP'

Volleyball drops two of three games in Lehigh Tournament, falling to a 1-5 record.

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WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Rider adds women's lacrosse to athletics lineup

By Carolo Pascale

ONE of the fastest growing sports in the United States is officially becoming a Division I program at Rider.

Women's lacrosse was announced to be added to the university's athletic program by Athletic Director Don Harnum on Aug. 23.

"We are excited to be adding women's lacrosse to our portfolio of sports offerings for women," said Harnum. "Women's lacrosse is a sport that continues to grow and thrive, both nationally and in the MAAC (Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference), and fits extremely well into our geographic recruiting footprint."

Women's lacrosse as a whole has surged in terms of popularity over recent years, with a staggering 300% jump in viewership from the Division I National Championship game from 2021 to 2022. On a worldwide scale, the United States won the gold medal in the 2022 World Lacrosse Women's World Championship in July, with the sport now being considered for the 2028 Olympics.

Rider will join nine of its other Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference members in offering a women's lacrosse program, becoming the 10th university in the conference. Rider is also the 61st Division I program to add the sport since the turn of the century.

The other MAAC members that offer a Women's Lacrosse program are Canisius, Fairfield, Iona, Manhattan, Marist, Mount St. Mary's, Niagara, Quinnipiac and Siena.

As for what the coaching staff will look like, Rider has already begun its search for the program's first head coach.

"The search for the women's head lacrosse coach is a nationwide search," said Associate Vice President of University Marketing and Communications Kristine



Photo courtesy of Rider Athletics

Ben Cohen Field will play host to the women's lacrosse inaugural season in the spring of 2024.

Brown. "It is early on in the search process, as the position was only posted a short time ago, but there has already been interest in the role."

The incoming head coach and assistant coaches will have to build the team from the ground up. Fortunately, lacrosse is rapidly growing in the Northeast and has been for over a decade.

Due to this, the university believes that it will not be difficult to recruit players for the program's inaugural season.

"According to an NCAA study, women's lacrosse was one of the fastest growing sports in America over

the past 15 years. Participation at the youth level is growing across all demographics, but particularly in the Northeast where Rider tends to recruit a majority of its students," said Brown. "For all of these reasons and more, including the fact that Rider's program is Division I, we believe it will not be difficult to recruit new women's lacrosse student athletes."

As of right now, there are no plans to add any additional sports to the athletics lineup besides women's lacrosse, and the program will begin its inaugural season in the spring of 2024.

FIELD HOCKEY

NOTEBOOK: Reloaded Broncs impress early on

Budding Broncs

The Rider brass managed to bring in a substantial freshman class in the offseason, totaling nine players in all. As a result, the starting lineup consists of six underclassmen and just five upperclassmen.

"We focused our recruiting on bringing top notched goal scorers to replace what we had lost through graduation, as well as talented versatile players who could play midfield as well as help out on the defensive end, and we feel we have accomplished that with this year's freshman class," said Hussong.

The meshing of experience levels went surprisingly well to begin the season, as the Broncs showed no signs of inexperience. In their first two games, they consistently found the back of the cage while holding firm defensively, earning a couple of convincing victories.

The first of Rider's wins came on Aug. 26 when it opened the season with a 4-1 triumph over Bellarmine University, before following it up with 5-1 win in its game against Colgate University.

Particularly in its matchup with Colgate on Aug. 28, Rider played with a considerable amount of poise and connectivity. Some offensive possessions seemed almost telepathically fluid, with defensive stops quickly transitioning into fastbreak flourishes.

Multiple players have stepped up to fill in the gaps left by Divorra and Brosious, but Rider's new offensive attack has no doubt been spearheaded by freshman forward Valeria Perales. Similar to Divorra before her, Perales was recruited from Spain and has been lethal around the goal. Of the nine goals Rider scored, the freshman punched in five of them.

"We knew Valeria would be an impact player as a freshman," said Hussong. "She is one of the hardest working players on the team and has a nose for scoring. Adding her into the mix with Sierra [Giuliano] and Lyric [Scott] makes for a very fast, exciting and dynamic front line."

While Perales has dealt out the majority of Rider's goals, senior midfielder Sierra Giuliano has been the

perfect complement, posting three assists and two goals of her own over the first two games. Primarily a defensive player in 2021, Giuliano has taken on a more significant role, providing excellent passing, scoring and defense while also adding much-needed veteran leadership and experience.

Growing pains

After blowing by their first two opponents, the Broncs hit a sudden speed bump on Sept. 2 against Appalachian State, suffering a brutal 1-0 loss in double overtime.

The Broncs and Mountaineers took 28 combined shots but were locked in a scoreless stalemate, as neither defense would break. In the end, Appalachian State came out on top after a deflected ball ended up in Rider's goal.

"I was really happy with our performance," said Hussong. "We matched their intensity and they're a really good team. It came down to who could get a ball around the goalie instead of through them."

Rider had multiple chances to take the lead, totaling 17 shots and nine shots on goal, but they consistently failed to seize those opportunities, whether it be from self-inflicted mistakes or rigid defense by the Mountaineers.

"Their goalie played an amazing game, and the bottom line in a game like field hockey is that you need to score to win, and we fell short," said Hussong. "Had we done a better job on our attacking corners and taking advantage of our opportunities, we may have gotten a better result."

Perales alone took nine shots, seven of them being on goal, but nothing would go.

"We hustled hard, we out-played them and it's unfortunate that we couldn't capitalize," said senior goalkeeper Kaitlyn Tomas. "It is what it is, and that was the final score."

The Broncs hope to bounce back from their first loss of the season at Towson University on Sept. 9 at 4 p.m. The game will be streamed on FloSports.



Peter G. Borg/Rider Athletics

Senior goalkeeper **Kaitlyn Tomas** was the anchor of Rider's defense against Appalachian State totaling four saves.

By Jake Tiger

AFTER falling to the Fairfield Stags in the Northeast Conference Tournament (NEC) and failing to defend their title, a disappointed Rider field hockey squad braced for a crucial and challenging offseason of uncertainty and difficult decisions.

With forwards Julia Divorra and Carly Brosious both graduating, the bulk of Rider's prolific offense would be vacated, as the two seniors accounted for 27 of Rider's 40 goals in 2021.

"It's going to be a rebuilding season next year. We do have a more experienced defense, but we are going to be lacking on the offensive side," said Head Coach Lori Hussong after the loss in November.

Despite this heavy offensive turnover, the Broncs were remarkably competitive with their reconstructed roster of fresh and former faces, scoring nine goals and achieving a 2-1 record through their first three games of the season.

Sports

ONLINE

'WE HAD A HORRIBLE START'
Men's soccer had a tough beginning to their 2022 campaign, going 0-3 in their first three games.

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COLUMN

The consummate commissioner

A thank you to Rich Ensor

By Carolo Pascale

THE word consummate is synonymous with being skilled, exemplary, accomplished and professional, and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

Commissioner Richard J. Ensor has been all of those throughout his illustrious career as commissioner.

From August of 1988 to now, Ensor, known as Rich to most people, has been the leader and voice of the MAAC. Ensor is the longest tenured NCAA Division I multi-sport conference commissioner and his 34 years of service makes it the longest Division I commissioner term in NCAA history. And with his 35th year nearing its beginning, Ensor announced on Aug. 17 that he will retire at the end of the 2022-2023 season.

"It has been a privilege to serve as Commissioner of the MAAC since 1988 and represent a conference dedicated to achieving success in academics and athletics," said Ensor in the announcement.

With soon to be 35 years dedicated to being commissioner of the MAAC, Ensor has helped evolve the conference since his arrival. The conference has grown from 13 sports to 24 in his tenure and even sponsored up to 26 in 2002-2003.

Along with adding more sports, Ensor helped raise the MAAC's NCAA Championship automatic qualifications from just two to 15 in his time leading the conference.

A total game-changer

Ensor has also been a huge proponent of equity and equality, and his incredible work with women's sports, specifically women's basketball, has been invaluable to the conference and D1 athletics as a whole.

"Rich has had a huge impact on Women's Basketball specifically during my time, not only just in the MAAC, but nationally. He is so well respected and represents the MAAC and other mid-major conferences on the national level," said Rider Women's Basketball Head Coach Lynn Milligan. "I truly appreciate what he has done to help women's basketball in the MAAC move forward and be extremely relevant."

Ensor played an integral role in combining the women's and men's basketball tournaments in 1992, having both tournaments run at the same time at the same neutral site for three decades, which is the longest running combined neutral site tournament in Division I.

His care for giving student athletes world class championship experiences has also played a huge part in the MAAC's success. In 1998, the conference partnered with Disney's Wide World of Sports (WWOS) and the partnership has expanded to have several of the conference's sports host championships there annually.

Ensor has also played a huge role in getting the MAAC attention on a national level and helping to grow the game of basketball on an international scale. The MAAC has traveled to Japan, China, Ireland and England in Ensor's tenure, with the conference going to Ireland for the MAAC/ASUN Dublin Challenge and England for the London Basketball Classic this fall.

"I think Rich has done an unbelievable job being the commissioner in the MAAC. He's done a good job of making our league visible," said Men's Basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett. "I just know that this next commissioner has some big shoes to fill in all the wonderful things that Rich has done over these past 35 years. Rich eats, sleeps and breathes the MAAC."

And when stateside, the MAAC has been showcased on channels such as ESPN, MSG Network, SportsChannel-NY and more, but the partnerships with ESPN have been arguably one of the MAAC's and Ensor's biggest successes with him as commissioner.

Ensor helped broker a deal in 1995 with ESPN that set in motion a great deal of success and growth for the conference that culminated in a 2014 deal that saw the launch of the MAAC branded ESPN3 channel and

school produced ESPN3 broadcasts. And in 2016, a new eight-year agreement with ESPN included annual broadcasts of the conference on ESPN2, ESPNU, ESPN3 and ESPN+.

"I believe one of the best things the conference ever did was partnering with ESPN to bring live telecasts to any device that employs the ESPN Watch App," said Pete Janny, former sports editor of the Quadrangle, who graduated from Manhattan College in 2022.

"That was totally a game-changer for me, and I'm sure my counterparts at other MAAC schools probably feel the same."

The agreement also launched the ESPN3 school productions into a new era with all MAAC member institutions having fully operational ESPN facilities/trucks and all schools producing and broadcasting games to ESPN.

'I was always taken care of'

Along with the addition and enhancement of the ESPN school productions, Ensor has been a major proponent of student journalism in the conference, and has left a major impact in that regard.

Within power-5 and high major conferences, it is incredibly difficult for student journalists to talk to players and coaches, let alone the commissioner of that conference. But Ensor has been nothing short of a blessing for the MAAC's many student journalists.

"Rich has definitely been a huge help for student journalists all across the MAAC and it's great to see a conference commissioner be such an advocate for them," said Aidan Joly, former Editor-In-Chief and sports editor of the Canisius Griffin, who graduated from Canisius College in 2022. "I feel like in a lot of other instances student media is seen as second-class, but definitely not in this case."

Something that several student journalists praise Ensor for is his availability for interviews, questions, or even just to talk, especially during the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"That moment in Atlantic City in 2020, when he announced the tournament was shutting down, he became very accessible to myself, and other student media too," said former sports editor of The

Rider News, Dylan Manfre '22, "Especially with COVID-19, Rich was very open with that stuff when a lot of other people weren't."

Something special that many of the sports editors in the conference look forward to is the MAAC Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament in Atlantic City. At the tournament, Ensor makes sure that everyone has a seat at the table and is taken care of.

As mentioned by Joly, Ensor makes sure everyone has a chance to ask questions during press conferences and are all treated like professionals in every sense, but he also makes sure that all student journalists have great experiences while reporting on games.

"I don't think the MAAC basketball tournament would be what it was without Ensor. As a student media member, I was always taken care of," said Riley Millette, a graduate student at Quinnipiac University, and former sports editor of the Quinnipiac Chronicle. "More important than anything else was the amount of fun I had in Atlantic City and it starts at the top."

And with Ensor's last year as commissioner of the MAAC on the horizon, his replacement will have large shoes to fill. The conference has already announced that a national search will be conducted.

Until the year ends, every MAAC coach, student athlete, student journalist, and many others will get to work with Ensor for one final year, making it the best year they can, because

that's exactly the kind of work that he's helped thrive for nearly 35 years, a truly consummate commissioner.

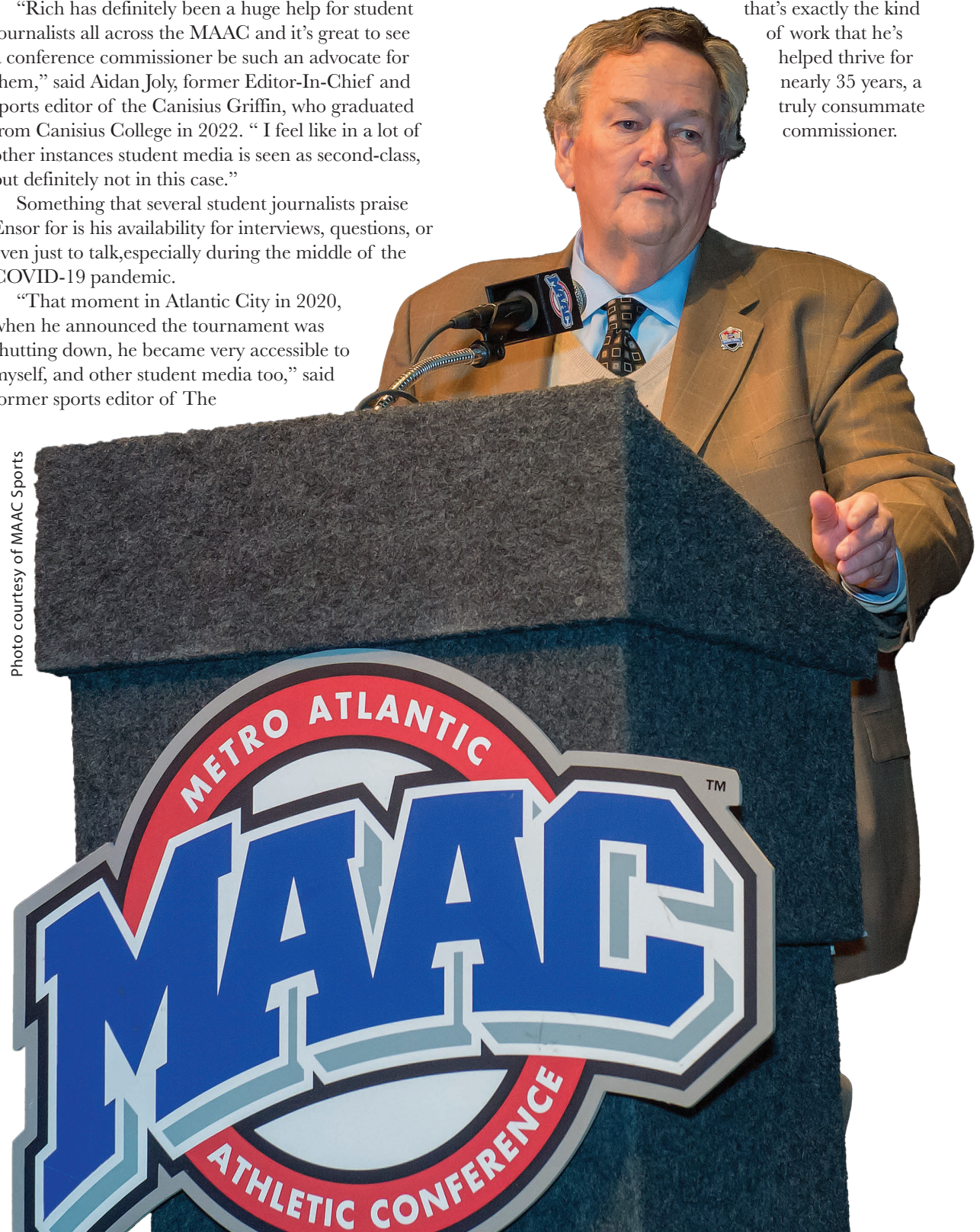


Photo courtesy of MAAC Sports

MAAC Commissioner Rich Ensor has served as the head of the conference for nearly 35 years, the longest Division I commissioner term in NCAA history.