

Board of Trustees reaffirms support of President Dell’Omo



Peter G. Borg/Rider University

This is the second no-confidence vote against President **Gregory Dell’Omo** during his six-year tenure at Rider.

By Sarah Siock

FOLLOWING Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) no-confidence vote against President Gregory Dell’Omo, Chairman of the Board of Trustees John Guarino ’82 voiced his full support of the president and his disappointment in the union’s decision, in an interview with The Rider News on Feb. 14.

The Feb. 8 vote passed with an 86% majority and called on the Board of Trustees to remove Dell’Omo from his position at the university. The union’s no-confidence resolution states that the university’s \$20 million projected deficit is a direct result of Dell’Omo’s unsuccessful strategic policies. The resolution points out Rider’s declining enrollment and the legal fees amassed from the failed sale of Westminster Choir College’s Princeton campus.

However, the Board of Trustees quickly responded to the announcement of the no-confidence vote. Within an hour of the vote’s results being made public, the

Board of Trustees sent out a campus-wide email that declared its full endorsement of the president. Guarino said the swift endorsement was due to the board’s annual performance review of Dell’Omo that previously showed full approval of the president’s leadership.

“In the performance appraisal, we went through all the challenges of the university, of higher education and everything specific across campus. Very clearly, we gave our full support to Greg and what he was achieving and trying to achieve in a very difficult environment,” said Guarino.

The Rider News attempted to contact all 28 members of the Board of Trustees, but only Guarino responded to the newspaper’s inquiries.

The no-confidence resolution states, “Gregory Dell’Omo’s strategic policies have led to a weakening of the university’s financial condition that includes but is not limited to multiple years of cash deficits — a first in the history of the university; dramatic



Missing Rider student found safe

By Shaun Chornobroff

AFTER being missing for a week, 26-year-old Rider graduate student Jordan Clark-Sherman was located safely in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on Feb. 9, according to Lawrence Township Police Lt. Chris Longo.

Clark-Sherman was reported missing on Feb. 2 after sending a concerning email to faculty. He was last spotted in Trenton at 6 p.m. on the night he went missing, before being seen in Baltimore on Feb. 4 at 10 a.m and was located five days later in Virginia.

Clark-Sherman is a veteran of the United States Army and is pursuing a master’s degree in homeland security. He is known for his work ethic and intelligence.

“He’s a very passionate, opinionated man, who has no problem standing up for his opinion. I love students like this. They’re not taking anything from you. They will come and fight you for every half grade, for every inch. He’s a great kid,” said Barbara Franz, one of Clark-Sherman’s professors.

During his time at Rider, Clark-Sherman built up a friendship with Rider’s Coordinator of Veteran Affairs Thomas Reddington.

“He’s a good observer of people,” Reddington said. “He can pick up on what’s going on with people. I always told him he should be a counselor because he can just read people really well.”



Courtesy of Lawrence Township Police Department

Jordan Clark-Sherman, a graduate student studying homeland security, was reported missing on Feb. 2 and located on Feb. 9.

INSIDE

MOUNTING LOSSES

Rider women’s basketball racked up two more losses in an unraveling year.

PAGE 11



CALLING ALL STUDENTS

Recent tensions on the administrative level beg for attention from the student body.

PAGE 8

“UPON THE SHOULDERS, WE STAND”

Rider hosts its annual show highlighting Black excellence in musical theater.

PAGE 6



SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SARAH SIOCK

Missing money

The adventures of a wandering wallet. On Feb. 6 at 4:34 p.m., a student walked into the Public Safety office to report missing money from her wallet. Approximately \$1,300 was taken out of her wallet. The wallet was dropped in the main parking lot on campus and turned into Public Safety; it was then returned to the student. She then noticed the money was missing. The incident remains under investigation.

Trapped under

The elevator let her down. On Feb. 7 at 12:34 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Science and Technology building for the report of a female trapped in an elevator. Facilities Management responded to the scene and contact was made with the occupant in the elevator. She reported she was uninjured and wanted to escape the elevator. Facilities Management was able to open the door and get the female out safely. The elevator was put out of order until repairs could be made.

Damaged sign

Exit problems. On Feb. 8 at 9:45 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Gee Hall for a report from Facilities Management that said there were exit signs damaged in the building. When Public Safety arrived they found two exit signs damaged. Photos were taken, and the incident is under investigation.

-Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

AAUP president says trustees' response did not fully address concerns

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

and dangerous increases in university debt; and three downgrades of the university's bond rating."

Union leadership continues to push for a new president at Rider, as Barbara Franz, AAUP president, said the trustees' response did not fully address the union's concerns. Franz added that, outside of resigning, it was "too late" for Dell'Omo to fix the issues presented in the no-confidence resolution.

"[The trustees' response] was vague. It sort of claims that the board is satisfied with Dell'Omo. But here we have a president whose faculty overwhelmingly feel we need to remove him from office in order for the university to survive," said Franz, a political science professor. "This is not because we don't like him or because we don't like his leadership style. It's because we are in such a dire financial situation. It's such a dire financial situation that we got in because of [Dell'Omo]."

Guarino said the university's financial challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the administration having to better align Rider's costs and expenses. To cut costs, this year, the administration launched an academic and administrative prioritization process and a voluntary separation program for non-AAUP members. Both initiatives have been criticized by union leadership, and most AAUP members have refused to take part in the prioritization process, citing concerns that it will result in major academic program cuts across the university.

Guarino said the union's participation in the prioritization process would help facilitate better communication throughout it and is encouraged. Moving forward, in all aspects of the university, Guarino said he wishes to see more conversations between faculty and the administration.

"Frankly, I don't understand why [union members] would not want to be at the table. Of course, there are going to be disagreements. Everybody would not agree on everything that would be discussed, but you want to hear as many voices as you

can. For the union to say, 'don't participate and don't cooperate.' I don't see how that advances any of the goals of the university as a whole," said Guarino.

However, Franz said the union's no confidence in Dell'Omo comes from actions throughout his entire presidency, not only the university's current financial situation.

"We ended up here with decisions that were made prior to COVID. They say [the administration] 'it's COVID there's nothing you can do.' That's not true. Our peer institutions are doing well. They have good numbers in enrollment. They have good revenue streams. It's just Rider is not," said Franz.

From very early on in Dell'Omo's tenure at Rider he has had a difficult relationship with the faculty union. In 2017, less than two years into his tenure, the AAUP passed a no-confidence vote against Dell'Omo after he cut academic programs and attempted to lay off tenured faculty. Franz added that the union is unhappy with the current academic prioritization process due to the administration's unilateral decision to hire the outside consulting firm Credo to help facilitate the process.

"The faculty was always ready to work with Dell'Omo and engage in the governing process. But he didn't ask us to hire Credo or sell the Westminster Choir College. We were not involved in any of those poor decisions," said Franz.

However, Guarino said the trustees continue to speak highly of Dell'Omo's decisions, and also praised Dell'Omo's fundraising efforts.

"We've had great success in fundraising over the past few years under Greg's leadership. Some of the highest we've ever had ... When you look at these donors giving millions of dollars, they're giving with their own money for naming rights ... if they didn't have confidence in Greg, do you think they would be giving millions of dollars?" Guarino asked. "We love the institution; we believe in its future. We just wish the union would join us in reaching that goal; that's really what we want."

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From the director of THAT SUGAR FILM
DAMON GAMEAU

69th Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin Generation
OPENING NIGHT HUMAN RIGHTS ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL

2040

Monday and Tuesday
February 21st + 22nd

7 P.M. | RUE AUDITORIUM (SWEIGART HALL RM 115)

2040 looks at the very real possibility that humanity could reverse global warming and improve the lives of every living thing in the process. It is a positive vision of what 'could be', instead of the dystopian future we are so often warned about all told through beautiful footage, personal interviews and short-stop animation. Damon Gameau's documentary is an accessible, informative and optimistic look at solutions to the climate crisis.



CORRECTION

A story from the Feb. 9 edition of The Rider News about Rider being named a green college, incorrectly stated the year Rider joined the Carbon Commitment. Rider joined The Carbon Commitment in 2007 and in 2010, with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

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THROUGH RIDER BASKETBALL

Friday, February 25, 2022

5 to 6:30 p.m., Student Recreation Center Atrium and Hall of Fame

A pre-game social mixer and raffle connecting students of color with faculty, staff, and alumni

7 p.m., Alumni Gym

Men's basketball game with special recognition for Colorful Connections group

One lucky student will win an HD TV! Raffle tickets will be available at social mixer. Winner will be announced at basketball game (must be present to win). Light refreshments will be available.

Sponsored by Men's Basketball, Rider Athletics, and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

107.7 The Bronc radio station claims national recognition

By Kacey Maldonado

RIDER'S radio station, *107.7 The Bronc* was again recognized at the national level receiving six nominations from the Intercollegiate Broadcast System Media Awards, according to a university press release from Jan. 14.

According to John Mozes, the general manager of *107.7 The Bronc*, this is now the second national nomination that the radio station as an organization received.

This past fall, the radio station was previously recognized for its work by the National Electronic Media Association (NBS-AERho).

Mozes expressed his surprise at being recognized by the Intercollegiate Broadcast System Media Awards since it was the first time *107.7 The Bronc* entered the prestigious competition.

"It's a pretty big deal because it represents the consistency that we're providing our students and listeners," said Mozes.

Sean Harrington, a senior sports media major who does production work for *The Bronc*, is especially proud of his nomination for "best sports update" being that he never expected to be recognized for his work at the station.

Harrington, a transfer student, did not hesitate to get involved at *107.7 The Bronc* and has had much success since his admission to Rider last year.

Harrington said that he initially joined the radio station as a way to gain experience but soon realized, "This is what I want to do for my life."

Production Director Tiffani Britton, a senior majoring in film and television, was recognized for her contributions to "best station ID" as well as "best promo series."

Britton did not hesitate in joining the radio station her freshman year and has been a diligent team member ever since.

"I always knew that 107.7 was a very special place to be," said Britton.

Britton went on to emphasize the importance of "finding your place at Rider," and that through joining the radio station she was able to find her "home."

Mozes expressed that despite Rider being a small university the station holds its own against other larger schools featured in the competition.

"I think that just says to the quality of work that we do," said Mozes.

Mozes expressed that what sets *107.7 The Bronc* apart from other college radio stations is the allowance for students with an interest in radio the opportunity to get involved.

Mozes said, "We harness their passion, harness their creativity and give them an outlet for it."

Mozes' process allows the station to become diverse in the different types of ideas that are presented and curated to the student body.

Winners of the Intercollegiate Broadcast System Media Awards will be announced at the 82nd Annual IBS Conference on March 5.



Photo courtesy of John Mozes

From left to right: Senior marketing major **Kayla May**, general manager **John Mozes**, sophomore elementary education major **Emily Katt** and **Bezan Madan** a graduate student in the business administration program, gathered in one of the recording booths.

Rider has double-digit positives for second time this semester

By Shaun Chornobroff

WITH the omicron variant of the coronavirus posing a constant threat the university did not face last semester, Rider has had 44 positive cases of COVID-19 in the first three weeks of the spring semester, according to the school's COVID-19 dashboard which is updated every Friday.

The dashboard displayed 14 cases from Feb. 5-11, making it the second time in the early portion of the semester that the school has seen 10 or more cases in a given week, something that only occurred three times in the entirety of the fall semester.

The fall dashboard only displayed 44 cases among the student body over the whole semester. The spring dashboard recorded 36 positive student cases as of Feb. 11.

"I'm not worried about it," said Debbie Stasolla, Rider's vice president for strategic initiatives and planning and secretary to the board. "I know for sure, it's something we had to expect given the very contagious nature of the omicron variant."

The school recorded a total of 21 students in quarantine, with 17 of them being on campus and eight students and two employees in isolation.

Among the university's expanded efforts for the spring semester has been the optional surveillance testing of vaccinated and boosted individuals, although Stasolla, who is one of the heads of Rider's implementation team, said it is not being taken advantage of.

"Very few are taking us up on the offer," Stasolla said of the vaccinated students who are chosen. "So we'll have to consider whether we continue offering that or not."

Masks off?

The rise in cases from Feb. 5-11 coincides with New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy announcing on Feb. 7 an end to mask mandates in New Jersey schools and child care centers starting on March 7.

Murphy's announcement did not apply to colleges and universities, leaving Stasolla and the COVID-19 implementation team with a decision to make.

"I was very encouraged to learn of the governor's announcement [last] week," said Stasolla. "It applies primarily to, it appears, school districts and child care facilities. But I'll take it as an opportunity for the COVID implementation team to reconsider our indoor mask mandate in light of this announcement. ... So, in the meantime, the COVID team will begin considering that in the meeting this week."

The implementation team will likely wait for the New Jersey Department of Health to release updated guidelines before making any official announcement, Stasolla said.

A press release from the governor's office announcing the end of the mask mandate partly read, "Prior to the mandate being lifted, the Department of Health will release guidance to help school districts update their policies to align with the risks and unique needs of their setting and student population to ensure safe learning environments."

Despite any reservations, Stasolla said she sees the announcement and the potential discussion for an ending to Rider's mask mandate as beneficial.

Stasolla said, "I am very encouraged, I think it's a step in the right direction to reconsider our indoor masking requirements because it's just another way we're learning to live with this virus."

The Rider News COVID-19 COUNTER

Confirmed Cases:
Last updated: Feb. 11, 2022

44

Cumulative total of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Rider University (Since January 2022)

On Campus Student Testing:

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Feb. 5-11	17	145
Jan. 29-Feb. 4	3	134
Jan. 24-28	5	114

Information courtesy of rider.edu

COVID-19 cases reported to Rider University by week:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
Feb. 5-11	12	2
Jan. 29-Feb. 4	4	2

Rider University reports its testing numbers and other coronavirus statistics every Friday at rider.edu/dashboard

Student Quarantine and Isolation:

Students in quarantine have been identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, are completing their travel advisory required quarantine or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are awaiting test results. Students in isolation have tested positive for COVID-19. This week there are:

- 17 student(s) quarantining on campus
- 4 student(s) quarantining off campus
- 7 student(s) isolating on campus
- 1 student(s) isolating off campus

Adrienne Unfreed / The Rider News

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

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RACE IN SPORTS: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Thursday, February 17, 6:30 to 8 p.m., hybrid event
In-person at Sweigart Hall 115 or through Zoom
Register in advance, rider.edu/raceinsports

Speaker: Marc J. Spears
NBA Writer, ESPN's The Undeclared

So what is race in sports? It's more than talking about racism. It speaks to history and pioneers, celebration, putting a spotlight on challenges, and recognizing triumphs. It is inevitable when talking about race in sports that there is going to be some pain, but there is also an opportunity for progress and conquering adversity. This discussion will highlight what it truly means to cover sports from all angles: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Marc J. Spears, a senior NBA writer for ESPN's The Undeclared. The former NABJ Sports Task Force chair has been covering the NBA since 1999 and has been a sportswriter since 1995. The Bay Area native also covered the Denver Nuggets for *The Denver Post*, the Boston Celtics for *The Boston Globe* and the NBA for Yahoo! Sports. Spears is a reporter for ESPN's *NBA Countdown Show*, co-produced an award winning documentary called *Katrina Cop in the Superdome* and was the co-author of *The Spencer Haywood Rule Book*. The former college basketball player also has a masters in Sports Business Management from Louisiana State University and a bachelor's degree in print journalism from San Jose State.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and Rider Men's Basketball



RIDER.EDU/BLACK-HISTORY-MONTH

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Arts & Entertainment

'Upon the Shoulders We Stand': showcases Black excellence

By Hannah Newman

RIDER'S School of Fine and Performing Arts (SFPA) presented its annual production of "Upon the Shoulders We Stand" which explores the challenges and achievements of the Black community in honor of Black History Month. Production members embraced this history through dances, songs, short acts and monologues on Feb. 11 in the Bart Luedeke Center.

The production also returned after several Title IX investigations took place within SFPA during the 2020-2021 school year.

One report from an investigation found that a professor, which the report does not list by name, created programmatic barriers that resulted in "disparate treatment" during the production process of "Upon the Shoulders We Stand."

Freshman acting major and vocalist Nick Bryant shared his description of the production and its significance to both his community and to humanity as a whole.

"I would describe this show as Black joy. It really shows how we as a community have been oppressed and how we've risen, how we've come from practically nothing and made something of ourselves to prove that

we are just as good and that we are worthy. We are all humans who share the same blood running through our veins, the same bones made of muscle and tissue; we are no different from anyone else, and it's just truly a celebration of Black joy, which is amazing to be a part of," said Bryant.

Throughout the production, videos of historical figures giving speeches on empowerment and clips of crucial points in history were shown via a screen in the background of the play to signify each part of history the performers were displaying.

Bryant pointed out his favorite act in the play and message .

"My favorite number in this show would have to be 'Stand Up' because it is such a powerful number where we all come together and sing. It really sends the message that all of our voices are one and that we are strong and powerful as a community," said Bryant.

Junior musical performance major Alex Lathon also shared the effect that this production had on him.

"My favorite part about being in 'Shoulders' is that it feels very much like a home where I can be myself, which is something I really appreciate," said Lathon.

This production allowed performers to communicate with the audience through their

theatrical talent and love for the stage. Each number symbolized an essential chapter or message about the community or the performer's life as an individual.

Junior musical theater major Tiffany Beckford explained the purpose of this production and what the cast felt their job really was in this show.

"I would say that 'Shoulders' is more than just a show allowing Black people to perform. 'Shoulders' is about sharing the history of African Americans in this country. We go through the time that we arrived here up until present day and detail the struggles we went through specifically as people of color in the performance industry but also just in general. This is a story we are telling. We are using our talents to share our history," said Beckford.

Black History Month runs through the entire month of February and is dedicated to the accomplishments of the Black community in the United States. "Upon the Shoulders We Stand" is built on the passion that performers at Rider feel for their community.

"This is us doing our part to contribute to Black History Month, and it has been a very gratifying experience for me personally," said Beckford.



Scan to watch a video of "Upon the Shoulders We Stand" on The Rider News' YouTube channel.



Hannah Newman/The Rider News

Students perform on stage in monochrome white outfits holding a lit candle.

Coast to coast: Rider's Californian students

By Tristan Leach

STUDENTS at Rider from California get one simple question all the time, "You're from California and you came to New Jersey? Why?" To many people, California sounds like a dream. Sunny, always warm and plenty to do. So why does Rider attract students from another coast?

The question has many answers. Some come for their major, the way the program is run.

For others, it's about the community and connections that can be made. For students like Andrew Dysart from San Diego, who is a junior majoring in finance, these aspects came together when he was picking a college.

Dysart said, "Honestly when I was looking at college, what I knew was that I wanted a small school and to be on the east coast. I wanted to know the professors. Rider has a good finance program and good connections to big companies. I knew I could get a good job out of college and get internships."

The decision to leave home and live 3,000 miles from family is a big one. However, people like Marianne Kollar help to make students feel at home. Kollar is the representative of students from Delaware, Pennsylvania and California and a regional recruiter for Rider. She took the job 10 years ago and hasn't looked back since.

Known affectionately as "Mama K" by her many students, Kollar travels to high schools in California to meet with prospective students. Her warmth and bright laughter can make any nervous student feel right at home.

Kollar said, "Something that seems to be an appeal is the fact that it's [Rider] a smaller campus, most are used to the bigger UCs [Universities of California] and I think

the community is definitely appealing. We really try to pay personal attention starting with admissions and keeping the whole pendulum going."

This year has seen a growth in applications for several of the schools at Rider. "We are getting more and more applications for the business school which is great," said Kollar. "Fine and performing arts is definitely the no. 1, but the other attraction is athletics. We are Division 1 and we have attracted more female athletes."

Rider prides itself on connections. For many, it is a huge selling point. When asked what he would say to other Californian students considering Rider, Dysart made this point.

"Before COVID the community felt strong, and even now it's picking back up," Dysart said. "You can get to know your professors well and there are great connections for work and internships. [Rider] is an all-around school, meeting people, building connections and things for after college."

At the end of the day though, there truly is no place like home. There may always be a California-shaped hole in the hearts of those students.

Kollar said, "When I ask students what they miss one says the weather but then another will say the weather in California is so boring. They also miss Mexican food and In-N-Out Burger. But they always find things they like and appreciate about New Jersey."

New Jersey may not be where they are from, but the people they meet at Rider make many Californians feel right at home.



Photo courtesy of Bailey Adams

Andrew Dysart is a junior from San Diego, California, studying finance at Rider.

The Rider Resource Pantry: 'here to help the Rider community'

By Amethyst Martinez

UNBEKNOWNST to most students, the Rider Resource Pantry can be a major asset to many in the school's community.

The resource pantry offers a variety of items for students in need, including those living on campus as well as commuters and has been open since 2018.

From face masks to canned goods, these supplies can be helpful to those who might need them. The pantry also has a program where food swipes can be donated by students, whose meal plans include five free guest swipes per semester.

The pantry is run by the Office of Service and Civic Engagement with resources entirely from donations and volunteers.

Sophomore environmental science major Ashley Murphy is one of the volunteers who works at the pantry.

"The pantry is here to help the Rider community," said Murphy. "And it does just that."

Located next to Daly's Dining Hall, the Rider Resource Pantry is nestled in the Vona Center, where it welcomes students with any needs.

Murphy said, "Before I volunteered here once a week, I had no idea about the pantry. There's so many items that you wouldn't expect, and that is one of the biggest misconceptions. The pantry offers a lot more than just food."

Giulia Santisi, the graduate assistant for the Office of Service and Civic Engagement, oversees many of duties involved with running the pantry.

"We want to make sure that all students are both academically and individually successful here at Rider," said Santisi.

The pantry provides toiletries such as deodorant, shampoo and toilet paper while simultaneously offering an array of food, including almond milk, cereal, canned goods and more. It also has school supplies for classes and coats for the chilly Northeast winters.

"We are also trying to be more sustainable, so we offer reusable dinnerware... washable plates and silverware, [and] reusable cloths," said Santisi.

According to Feeding America, an organization that targets food insecurity in the United States, 8.2% of individuals in Mercer County struggled with food insecurity in 2019.

Feeding America describes food insecurity as a "lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods."

"The pantry has the ability to help so many students at Rider who might not even know it exists," said Murphy.

Donors to the pantry listed on Rider's website include Whole Foods Market, Trader Joe's, Wegmans and Panera Bread.

The pantry also has an Amazon wish list for things that are needed across campus where anyone can donate.

Additionally, the pantry offers a program for students in dorms to borrow a microwave and mini-fridge for a semester if they need it.

"Things like having a microwave or fridge in your dorm can really change your college experience," said Murphy. "It lets you worry about the important things, like schoolwork, instead of worrying about how you're going to get these specific items."

Santisi said, "We want to make sure that students have everything they need, and they're not having to think of these other necessities."

The Rider Resource Pantry motto is: Take what you need, use what you take, give back what you can.

The pantry is open five days during the school week, Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Ashley Murphy

Items such as canned fruit, peanut butter and jelly are always needed at the pantry.



Photo courtesy of Ashley Murphy

The Rider Resource Pantry offers different canned food items, as well as refrigerated items for students to take as needed.

Volatile tensions: begging for student awareness

THE most recent actions from President Gregory Dell’Omo’s administration, as well as their criticisms, have brought to an overwhelming atmosphere of uncertainty to Rider University. One after another, the selling of the Westminster Choir College’s Princeton campus, the Credo partnership assessing steps for prioritization and the newly announced voluntary separation program have put faculty and staff on edge. The disapproval has been so strong that Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) voted an alarming 86% majority no-confidence in Dell’Omo, preceded only by their 75% vote against the president in 2017 and, historically, called upon Rider’s Board of Trustees for the president’s resignation on Feb. 8.

Equally as alarming? The lack of information shared with the student body as the environment of the university only continues to grow distressing.

Trustee support

While the Board of Trustees Chairman John M. Guarino ’82 released a statement to the Rider community via a mass email on Feb. 8 showing support toward Dell’Omo despite the AAUP’s vote, that is to be expected, considering that Dell’Omo’s administration is enacting changes supported by the board in the first place. But what do these changes mean for the greater Rider community: the faculty, the staff and the often forgotten students?

One thing is certain – the consistent back-and-forth of policy at the highest levels will inevitably permeate the educational environment. It has arguably already caused a clear lack of communication and trust between the faculty and administration.

And while it is no surprise that the board seems to blindly support the president, and so quickly at that, the issue cannot be looked at without considering the reasons for the AAUP’s vehement lack of confidence in Dell’Omo in the first place. The AAUP’s resolution for the vote cites heavily the strategic policies made by the Dell’Omo administration and the negative impacts that they have had on Rider’s financial stature.

The university’s push for change

One point consistently made by Dell’Omo in the defense of these policies is the changing environment of higher education and the need for Rider to change alongside it for the sake of its sustainability as a university. And, while change is natural and important, is enough of a critical eye being taken to the types of changes being made?

It is more than fair to consider the difficulty adjoined to leadership and the inevitability of making difficult and unpopular decisions. However, that rhetoric can not be a scapegoat for decisions made to the detriment of the university. Supporters of Dell’Omo cite the handling of the pandemic and shifting university policies to reflect efforts toward diversity and inclusion, but are these changes not considered the bare minimum, especially in the current social climate?

It is fair to defend arguably positive policies enacted by Dell’Omo and his administration. However, those actions cannot simply be rested upon like laurels.

A disappointing lack of transparency

One of the most concerning aspects of these communications is the lack of information widely available to students. It is fair to assume that the vast majority of students are unaware of the lasting implications of these Dell’Omo-era policies, and why would they be? Rhetoric from the Office of the President consistently revolves around low-stakes talking points and a clear lack of full transparency to the greater student body. A student body of adults, who pay to be educated at Rider.

Take for example the communications sent out on Jan. 24 regarding the voluntary separation program. This email in no way explicitly addressed the \$20 million cash deficit that the university is facing, the fact that if the program does not garner enough success involuntary separations for non-AAUP staff may follow or provide any detail into navigating the university website to find more information about the program. Information, it is worth mentioning, that lives questionably hidden within the subsets of the Human Resources department on Rider’s website.

A needed call for student responsibility

As proven by Guarino’s message in support of Dell’Omo, it is highly unlikely that any sort of presidential resignation will be on the horizon, but that does not change the negative environment that these controversies have created.

Undoubtedly, the actions taking place administratively have and will trickle down to impact student life both small and large scale, whether that be the impacts of staff shortages from the voluntary separation program or the altering of available programs from the ongoing prioritization process. It is imperative that all students put in the work to stay informed on what is currently happening at Rider, because it will inevitably affect them.

It is the value of these students’ degrees, their tuition money and the integrity of their university that is at stake, and that should be a more than compelling reason for students to push back for heavier and more direct communication from the administration, as well as for students to seek out this information for themselves.

*This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board.
This week’s editorial was written by Opinion Editor Kaitlyn McCormick*

Kaitlyn McCormick



Adrienne Unfreed/The Rider News

THE Rider News

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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A closer look at the factors of Rider's financial struggles

In response to any criticism of Rider's financial condition, President Gregory Dell'Omo and his supporters quickly fall back on a series of weak excuses: "a difficult market," "challenging times," or the most common excuse: "it's complicated." But the causes of Rider's fragile financial condition are not complicated. They are rather simple.

Rider's "market" has slowed — the number of high school graduates has decreased slightly, but that decrease is not the cause of Rider's steep decline in enrollments prior to the pandemic. If that were true, then other schools in our market would be in the same financial state as Rider, and they are not.

Rider's peer institutions, the schools which administration frequently identifies as "our market," all posted net-program revenue gains (revenue from students) in the period between 2015 and 2019. Fairleigh Dickinson, Monmouth, Rowan and Seton Hall all posted net revenue gains of between 8 and 23%. Notably, Rowan posted a 22% net program revenue gain, and Monmouth posted a 17% net program revenue gain in that time period. Rider, however, posted a loss of 5% in net program revenue while increasing their total expenses by \$12 million, a combination which clearly accounts for Rider's 2019 losses. So, this loss and subsequent financial losses are not due to uncontrollable market fluctuations. Instead, they are the direct result of president Dell'Omo's key managerial decisions beginning in 2015.

Starting in 2015, disregarding faculty, parent and student opposition concerning the decision to sell Westminster Choir College, President Dell'Omo chose to spend millions on the effort which failed and began a six-year decline in enrollment at what had been a fully enrolled college. Then, in 2019, after having

failed to sell Westminster Choir College, he chose to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and spend millions on duplicating facilities to move from the world-class facilities in Princeton to Lawrenceville, a decision which further exacerbated the enrollment decline at the college. The loss of students from this program alone has drained in excess of \$6 million per year in revenue from Rider's income statement.

The excessive building has also been a hallmark of President Dell'Omo's tenure and has had a significant impact on Rider's bloated expenses. Between 2016 and 2020, Rider's financial statements show \$67 million being spent on building projects positioned as "investments" that would increase enrollment. Rider's cumulative debt load now stands at an unprecedented \$110 million after adding additional bond debt in fiscal 2021. All of this debt must be repaid in approximately 10 years requiring a yearly cash expense of close to \$10 million for the university. So, it's not really complicated. The truth is, Rider's precarious financial situation is not due to the pandemic, 'the market' or 'challenging times.' It is almost entirely self-inflicted. The seeds of this predicament were planted years before the pandemic and are the direct result of strategic decisions made by President Dell'Omo.

Arthur Taylor, Ph. D.
Professor

*Information Systems and Supply Chain Management Department
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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Student Government Association as the voice for students

THERE has been a noticeable shift in morale amongst students since the beginning of the fall semester with concerns over COVID-19, the Credo partnership and, most recently, the voluntary separation program. Oftentimes, the complicated nature of these issues results in confusion, fear and frustration on the part of students, faculty and staff alike, with questions regarding the future of the student experience at Rider. While a clear path forward is hard to envision in the face of tough challenges, the Student Government Association (SGA) is confident that our continued advocacy will result in what's best for Rider and our student body.

As members of the SGA Executive Board, we were elected by our peers to create a culture where the best interests of all students are the first priority. In these roles, we have the unique opportunity to be on the frontline of conversations impacting the student body, good or bad. One of the foundational principles of SGA is holding administration, faculty and student government accountable for transparent and collaborative decision-making. Our role in all of these outcomes is to establish a collaborative approach in sharing how university decisions can and will impact the student body, not to pick a side between administration and faculty.

The idea of transparency among all three stakeholders includes helping students understand the future of their university and the administrative response to problems currently affecting the Rider experience. You may be wondering what SGA is doing to keep students in the loop of decisions made at the administrative level and get answers to questions about larger initiatives. In response to developing information, we are prepared to roll out a series (on the @ridersga social media pages and via email) named "Your Guide To," which outlines the intent behind university-wide initiatives and how they impact

the current students. In doing so, we hope the collaborative nature of these documents will contribute to greater awareness and understanding of complex institutional issues.

As we continue to provide information that helps students gain a deeper understanding of the meaning behind university decisions, it is imperative that students stay up to date and continue asking difficult questions. No matter the intricacies of what has happened or is yet to come, we will always advocate for students, and their elected leaders want to see the longstanding health of Rider just as much as they do.

This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Student Government Association Executive Board.



The 2021-2022 Student Government Association Executive Board

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Calling for a combined effort to safeguard Rider's future

As a proud and grateful Rider alumnus, staff and faculty member, I'd like to express my pride and gratitude to Alexis Bailey and Alex Solomon — both Rebovich Fellows who are now making a very positive mark in New Jersey politics — for their critical reminder in last week's Rider News that whatever our present differences, right now Rider needs all our help.

To this same end, I have a humble request of every one of my fellow members of the Rider community. Take a long, hard look inside. If you find you truly care about whether this special place thrives and survives, please stay and be one of the heroes who puts everything else aside and helps make it happen.

This will be a decisive time in Rider's life, and we need to work together toward the single-minded goal of preserving it. If we are going to prove successful, nothing can detract from this effort.

There are no other options, bailouts or white knights. Rider's history will either be written by those of us who afford it the determination and flexibility that will be necessary to safeguard its future or by those of us who do not.

Micah Rasmussen '92,
political science professor



Professor Micah Rasmussen '92

WRESTLING

Wrestling snaps a four-game losing skid over weekend



Pete G. Borg/Rider Athletics

Graduate student **Matt Correnti** won a major decision in the match against Clarion on Feb. 11.

By **Logan VanDine**

AFTER losing four consecutive matches, Rider Wrestling broke its skid and won two matches on Feb. 11 and Feb. 12, taking down Clarion and George Mason, respectively.

Match 1:

Rider won a hard-fought and gritty match against Clarion on its senior night, 16-15, that snapped a four-match losing streak on Feb. 11.

The battle started strong for the Broncos who took the first three bouts and jumped out to a 9-0 lead, and looking good early on.

The Golden Eagles refused to go down as they stormed back, taking three of the next four matches and deadlocking the contest at 12 entering the final two bouts.

“It was like deja vu all over again, so it was like, okay can we stop the landslide this time, and [junior] Mike Wilson went out and did an awesome job for us. He went out and just fought that kid to death and found a way to win, and that turned back the momentum,” Head Coach John Hangey said on his team’s win.

And turned back the momentum it did. Graduate student Matt Correnti defeated Clarion’s Brett Wittmann 10-3, and that was plenty for the Broncos to take back the lead.

“It felt great. Anytime getting a win is a good feeling, especially when you get a major and a tight

match like this; it’s a great feeling. I did it for the team and the coaches, and it feels good,” Correnti said on his victory.

Hangey gave an overall assessment of his team’s performance and how they were able to hang on and get back to the win column.

“I thought we wrestled the way we practiced all week. We really emphasized positioning, discipline, toughness and finishing. All those things we saw from a lot of our kids tonight. All I ask for everyday is for effort and fight, and they brought it today,” he said.

Match 2:

The Broncos traveled to George Mason feeling confident after a huge win and carried that momentum right into the match. Rider won its second-straight match, 21-13 against the Patriots on Feb. 12, making the Broncos a dominant 19-1 in the all-time series

The Broncos were off to a fast start with three straight bout victories, opening the match and again up 9-0.

The Patriots made it interesting, cutting the overall lead down to two points, but the Broncos never trailed, and they finished the night off with freshman David Szuba’s clinching victory over George Mason’s Austin Smith. This sent the Broncos home happy and content with their fourth win of the season.

“They wrestled hard again. They fought again. The more they fight, the more they’re going to

succeed, so tonight was about duplicating their performance from yesterday, and they did just that. So I was very happy with them,” Hangey said.

Szuba, who sealed the deal for the Broncos, gave his thoughts on his team’s performance and how he was able to finish the Patriots.

“I think we competed tough but not as tough as I think we can be,” Szuba said. “I was very happy about leaving no doubt on the mat. It is what I have to start doing, and I did that tonight.”

The Broncos are now 4-8 on the season with two more regular-season matchups before the Mid-American Conference Championship.

“They’re wrestling hard, they’re fighting for each other, they’re supporting each other and they’re representing the program the way they’re supposed to be, so all things are pointing towards success. So, they just have to stay on this path and see where the chips fall at the end of the season,” Hangey said on his team’s recent success.

The Broncos will look to earn three consecutive wins for the first time this season, as they will head to Philadelphia and play Drexel on Feb. 18.

CLUB ICE HOCKEY

Broncs show inconsistency in final week of season



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SWIMMING AND DIVING

Men’s swimming and diving wins 10th-straight MAAC Championship

- Head Coach **Steve Fletcher** named MAAC Men’s Swimming and Diving Coach of the Year.

- Freshman diver **Sean Binning** was named MAAC Diver of the Year and MAAC Rookie Diver of the Year.

- Senior free swimmer **Kyle Iorizzo** finished first in the 1,650-free with a time of 15:29.48.



Photo courtesy of Rider Athletics

Men’s swimming and diving won its 10th-straight MAAC title on Feb. 12 with top three finishes in all but two events.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Broncs drop two more games as struggles continue



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Sophomore forward **Raphaela Toussaint** comes down with a rebound against Manhattan.

By **Dylan Manfre**

SIXTEEN days into February, and the Rider women's basketball team is still searching for signs that it can make a run into the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) tournament beginning in 23 days.

Two losses to Manhattan on Feb. 10 and Saint Peter's on Feb. 12 do little to show Rider is nearing Head Coach Lynn Milligan's goal of peaking during mid-to-late February, but she remains confident that her team is there.

Rider vs. Manhattan

Two words stood out among what Milligan shouted as she paced the sidelines: "box out."

That was the game plan that Rider did a spotty job of executing in its 56-49 loss to Manhattan on Feb. 10, which dropped the team to 1-8 at Alumni Gym.

Rider dealt with players it did not need to in its first meeting against the Jaspers in early January, one being center Courtney Warley. She leads the conference in rebounding and is a physical force in the paint. The Manhattan graduate student ended the game with 22 points and 13 boards.

Like the last time these two teams met in January, the Broncs allowed Manhattan to erase their lead. It was not 17, this time it was only five, but it was a rough second half for Rider nonetheless.

The Broncs were outscored 21-9 in the final period, and the palpable energy Rider conjured in the opening half dissipated with each missed shot.

"I don't know what throws us off," Milligan said.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Sophomore guard **Makayla Firebaugh** scored 17 points against Manhattan.

"You got to be able to get stops in the fourth quarter and get a good possession and a good shot and we didn't do that good enough tonight."

Manhattan's lead grew because it secured second-chance points and beat Rider 16-2 in that stat. It also had a 24-plus rebounding advantage.

Sophomore guard Makayla Firebaugh said the team has good practices but the issue is that they have not translated to the game yet. She still believes Rider is on track to hit the "peak" Milligan hopes to achieve by mid-February.

"Practices have to be game-like for us and which lately they have been," Firebaugh said. "I think we're on track, I think tonight was a little setback. I think we're gonna win."

The Broncs had palpable energy during the first half. It was ushered in with defensive stops and a few buckets from sophomore forward Raphaela Toussaint, who did not see much action in the first quarter. Firebaugh hit a pair of 3-pointers pulling the Broncs to within one going into the break. She was 4-of-10 from long range and the only player to see all 20 minutes of action in the first half.

Manhattan's top scorer DeeDee Davis was held to four points on 1-for-6 shooting and Brazil Harvey-Carr, who Jaspers Head Coach Heather Vulin said should be in the All-Conference conversation, had five.

Manhattan erased a five-point advantage to start the fourth. The game had the characteristics of the mid-January contest, but a bit more defense from Rider kept the game close by unveiling a tight full-court press.

What plagued the Broncs was a lack of offense in crunch time. Manhattan's lead grew, as the Broncs missed shot after shot. The energy Rider started the second half with vanished.

"I would like to say no but I believe it did," Firebaugh said. "I think our talk went down and I think in the fourth quarter when it's a close game like that, it can't happen. And that's when we need to step up and talk the most, including myself."

Saint Peter's Review

A rematch of the 2020 MAAC semifinals, Rider has now faced every conference opponent once this season. It has yet to sweep a series but can secure another split later in the year after losing to Saint Peter's 69-56 at Run Baby Run Arena on Feb. 12.

Saint Peter's (10-12, 7-6 MAAC) ran its offense through a few different players. The Peacocks had multiple runs facilitated by Kassondra Brown and Kendrea Williams, who is the third-highest scorer in the MAAC. Brown was a dominant threat in the post that silenced Rider's offense for a good portion of the game, especially in the fourth quarter.

"That's the million-dollar question," Milligan said. "We're just not quite getting over that hump of making that big bucket ... It's been kind of an Achilles heel for us, obviously, for a lot of this season."

Brown finished the game with a whopping 20 points and 15 rebounds. Senior guard Lenaejha Evans was the leading scorer for Rider with 16 as the Broncs

shot just over 39% from the field.

Rider made Saint Peter's hustle in transition but had to be careful with the forward passes after plenty was tipped and nearly stolen. Still, the Broncs converted the fast-break buckets into a 10-8 advantage at the end of the game. Despite Brown's presence down low, Rider shocked the Peacocks scoring 28 points in the paint.

The first half was a game of offensive runs. Junior guard Jessika Schiffer paced the Broncs offense as Rider outscored Saint Peter's 12-3 at the second media timeout and shot 62% midway through the second quarter. The shooting infused some life into an at times stagnant offense, that was beleaguered by travel calls.

Saint Peter's rode a stifling offensive run into the fourth quarter that saw the Peacocks go up 47-40 two and a half minutes into the quarter. Once Rider got going, it seemed that it was playing catch-up the entire time.

That has been a common theme for Rider over the last few games. Once the final quarter comes around, the Broncs cannot seem to mount a comeback, especially down nine with 3:30 left in the game. Sophomore guard Raphaela Toussaint fouled Williams from behind the arc and she hit all three free throws putting the Peacocks up 12.

"We're trying to do everything so perfect that sometimes you do it wrong," Milligan said. "The overall feel of that fourth quarter I think we get a little bit either too tight or a little bit too anxious."



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Head Coach **Lynn Milligan** calls out plays on the bench during the game against Manhattan.

MAAC Notes

The Broncs have faced every MAAC team at least once and it will find out on either Feb. 19 vs. Canisius or Feb. 26 vs. Saint Peter's if they can secure a series sweep of a team. Rider's next three games are against Monmouth, Canisius and Marist all at home — a place the Broncs have struggled at all season. It is a league-worst 1-8 at Alumni Gym.

"You want it so bad for them and you know the work that they're putting in every day and what they want, and to not see them get it is hard," Milligan said.

"It's not like we're not practicing or not doing what we're supposed to do. ... You want them to feel that success."

Sports

INSIDE

'WE WRESTLED THE WAY WE PRACTICED'
Wrestling got back in the win column with two wins over the weekend.

FIND THE STORY ON PAGE 10

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Broncs split weekend games as winning streak ends



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

The Broncs had their four game winning streak snapped against Siena on Feb. 13. The team has now won five of its last seven games.

By Jake Tiger and Carolo Pascale

RIDER men's basketball split its weekend games against Saint Peter's and Siena. The Broncs were able to stave off attacks from the Peacocks on Feb. 11, extending their win streak to four, but fell to the Saints on Feb. 13.

Finding ways to win

In a gritty, defensive slugfest, the visiting Rider Broncs toppled the St. Peter's Peacocks 58-49 on Feb. 11, etching yet another tick in the win column.

"You can tell that this team is playing with a ton of confidence right now. The right guys are doing the right things ... and that's why we're winning," said Head Coach Kevin Baggett.

Each team held the other to astonishingly low shooting efficiency, with the Peacocks shooting just 32.7% (17-52) from the field and the Broncs just barely edging them out with 35% (21-60).

The first half was airtight with St. Peter's having a 28-26 advantage at the break, but the Broncs countered in the second half and were able to slowly pull away.

"I thought our guys did a great job, especially in the second half. We stopped over helping, giving up open looks ... That was the key to the second half," said Baggett.

The Broncs smart, unselfish brand of basketball led to a well-balanced offensive attack. In the end, each starter was able to just barely break double-digit scoring, outside of senior guard Dwight Murray Jr. who was just shy of nine points.

"First half, I thought we took a bunch of quick shots. Second half, we moved the ball a little better. Still not good enough, but I'm not gonna complain because I'm happy that we won," said Baggett.

On the opposite end, Rider flooded the box score, finishing with six blocks and 11 steals as a team.

Senior forward Dimencio Vaughn in particular was absolutely fantastic, contributing five steals and bolstering his case for Metro Atlantic Athletic

Conference (MAAC) Defensive Player of the Year.

"We ask [Vaughn] to do a lot: rebound, score, play defense, guard the other team's best guy," said Baggett. "His steals aren't because he's gambling, he's just doing the right things."

By grinding out another win against one of the MAAC's top teams, the red-hot Broncs extended their win streak to four games and proved that they can win in multiple ways.

"One game at a time. That's all we talk about," said Baggett. "We don't get ahead [of ourselves]. We know that we've come a long way, but we've got a long way to go."

'We can't keep making the same mistakes'

After extending the winning streak to four games, the Broncs returned home on Feb. 13 looking to push it to five. This was something the Broncs haven't done since the 2018-2019 season. But walking through the cold, snow-covered doors of Alumni Gym was a team just as red hot as the Broncs; the Siena Saints.

Coming into the matchup, the Saints won five of their last six games, the last one being an upset over the reigning MAAC Champion Iona Gaels just two days before facing off against Rider.

With both teams playing their best basketball of the year, the game was a battle that went into overtime. Heartbreakingly, the Broncs fell to the Saints 76-75, stomping out Rider's winning streak at four games.

"We didn't have to be in that position," said Baggett. "We've been in this position over and over again and we've got to grow up from it. We can't keep making the same mistakes."

As soon as the game started, it was easy to see that it was going to be a close one. Neither team was able to break open the game in terms of scoring until about seven minutes in when Siena jumped out to a 10 point lead.

Just like many previous games, the Broncs clawed their way back into the game, not letting Siena grow

its lead any higher than four for the rest of the first half.

The end of the first half was capped off by a buzzer-beater 3-pointer by Murray, who dropped eight points in that half. Junior forward Mervin James led the Broncs at the end of the half with nine points, and as a team, the Broncs shot well from the field and the three, shooting an even 50% in both categories.

"We gotta execute and pay attention in the huddle," said Murray. "We gotta do better with paying attention and locking in."

The second half saw the Broncs get out to a quick five-point lead off the backs of James and senior forward Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson, but Siena kept it close and eventually tied the game several times.

Rider got the lead back late off a floater from Murray with 1:39 remaining in the half, and Rider extended the lead to four from a jumper off the glass from junior guard Allen Powell.

However, miscommunication and lack of execution was the Broncs downfall as Siena was able to tie the game on a pair of free throws, forcing overtime.

Sophomore forward Nehemiah Benson hit a 3-pointer in overtime that gave the Broncs the lead with 3:10 left on the clock, but committed a foul with six seconds left on the clock which sent Siena to the free throw line. The call drew the ire of the Broncs bench and the fans, and when asked about the play, Baggett said, "I am headed to my office to call a league assigner."

The Saints made both free throws, taking the lead, beating the Broncs by just one point.

"Poor execution down the stretch," said Baggett of the loss. "That's it in a nutshell. Offensively and defensively."

Five Broncs hit double digit points, with James at the top with 15. Powell had 14 points and three steals.

The Broncs will look to regroup on Feb. 18 when they take on Monmouth at 7 pm. The game will be streamed on ESPN 3.

ONLINE MEN'S BASKETBALL PHOTO GALLERY

Check out men's basketball photos from its matchup against Siena on Feb. 13.

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PHOTO GALLERY

Check out women's basketball photos from its game against Manhattan on Feb. 10.

FIND THE GALLERY AT THERIDERNEWS.COM

