

## Dell'Omo doubles down on budget cuts, layoffs possible



Stephen Neukam/The Rider News

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo previewed a road back to recovery for university finances, including the need for budget tightening and spending cuts.

By Stephen Neukam

**R**IDER President Gregory Dell'Omo laid out a framework for how the university can respond to the financial challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic through budgetary belt-tightening, including the possibility of layoffs, in an interview with The Rider News on Sept. 9.

In the interview, held just weeks after the school unveiled projections of a \$17 million budget deficit next year, Dell'Omo detailed the difficulties ahead and signaled a willingness for deeper and more sustained cost-cutting in the near future.

Dell'Omo, who said last year at a town hall that the deficits the university had been running were unsustainable, faces a tight financial situation with not many immediate remedies, saying, "you can't solve this problem overnight."

While revenues plunged, losing over \$6 million in the spring semester alone, the university took steps to cut costs, including staff furloughs and administrative salary reductions. Dell'Omo admitted that "we have to continue to tighten our belt."

This includes layoffs, the possibility of which is being evaluated, according to Dell'Omo. He did not specify if this move was on the table for staff or faculty.

Faculty union president Arthur Taylor, on information systems and supply chain management professor, criticized Dell'Omo's suggestion that layoffs may be needed, saying the president's "leadership is a concern."

Taylor pointed out that the union warned against the underlying budgetary issues in a 2016 no-confidence vote, which took exception to Dell'Omo's financial decisions, including the unsuccessful attempt to sell Westminster Choir College and the 2015 move to hand down faculty layoffs, which were averted only when faculty voted to give back all raises.

While trimming the budget may help offset some of the immediate impacts of the coronavirus, the real challenge is to grow revenues in the long term for sustainable budgeting, a difficulty across higher education given shifting demographics and increased competition.

Rider has taken steps to invest in career success services to raise the value of the university's education. The school also recently unveiled a new pricing model that will cut the sticker price of tuition by over \$10,000 for new students next year, but maintain the net price in an attempt to be more

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## Consequences of social distancing violations highlighted in Student Code of Conduct

By Austin Ferguson

**A**S colleges across the country began their attempts to return to varying levels of instruction, many schools quickly ran into problems of students failing to obey health and safety guidelines.

Clusters of COVID-19 cases have appeared all over the country, with more than 50 positive cases appearing as close as The College of New Jersey in Rider's neighboring Ewing, New Jersey, despite all of its classes being remote for the fall 2020 semester.

In response, many schools have brought down the hammer of discipline onto students not following rules on social distancing and wearing masks, ranging from fines and forced quarantines to suspensions, loss of housing or expulsion.

Rider University's plan of discipline, though generally outlined in the Student Code of Social Conduct, was not directly clear upon the first release of the university's "Resolved and Ready" plan.

In an interview with The Rider News, university President Gregory Dell'Omo acknowledged the paths that schools have taken in response to safety regulations related to the pandemic and gave Rider's stance on enforcement and the university's approach to managing the pandemic on campus.

"There's been a debate in higher education whether to take a tough love approach or to create a positive environment where we encourage students to do the right thing," Dell'Omo said. "We're trying to take the middle road. We want everyone to be as responsible as possible."

With the university's "middle road" stance, Dell'Omo asserted that the highest priority will still be to protect the health and safety of the Rider community.

"We're trying to take [enforcement] from an educational standpoint. Having said that though, if people are deliberately not following procedures, we will use the code of conduct to enforce that," Dell'Omo said. "We are not afraid to enforce the rules."

Within the Student Code of Social Conduct, a violation of the university's health guidelines is defined as "Failure to adhere to directives issued in response to pandemics and other campuswide emergencies/unusual situations and designed to protect the health, safety and well-being of all members of the Rider community



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

The university is encouraging students to "be as responsible as possible" in order to keep cases on campus low.

including students, faculty, staff and visitors," with directives being able to come from Residence Life, Public Safety, Student Affairs or other faculty and staff.

The Student Code of Social Conduct designates a violation of section 4.12 (Failure to adhere to campus-wide pandemic/emergency directives) as a violation between levels one and five, which runs the gamut of all possible consequences mapped out in the Student Code of Social Conduct.

Within the Residence Life section of the code of conduct, regulations regarding COVID-19 response are outlined, including the restriction of out-of-building guests, properly notifying the university of close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or testing positive themselves, mandatory mask-wearing in public, indoor settings and a strong encouragement of mask-wearing outdoors when social distancing is not occurring.

The lowest level of discipline is level five, which constitutes a warning, a mandatory fine of at most \$25 and a possibility of community or financial restitution or

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### INSIDE DEMAND FOR CHANGE

Kevin Baggett opens up about fears of police brutality.

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### MASS PROTESTS, MASS MOVEMENT

The fight against police brutality goes on for 100 days in all 50 states.

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### RIDER ROMANCE

Blake Horstmann hosts Rider's newest virtual dating show.

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# Interest “grows” in disputed Princeton property

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attractive to families. Even with these efforts, it will be a large task to boost tuition revenue. After 2024, projected enrollment declines sharply due to demographic shifts, dampening the prospects for increased revenue.

In-house spending decisions may be an important part of Rider’s response, but universities everywhere have been left largely helpless by a lagging and incomplete federal government response to the pandemic.

Since the federal coronavirus aid bill in March, which provided Rider with \$3.6 million in support, universities have not been granted any more direct relief. Dell’Omo said that higher education is in need of help from the federal government but lamented that the need for a policy response has taken a backseat to the general election in November.

“With the challenges taking place between the Democrats and the Republicans and it being an election year, it seems like that’s gotten hijacked in the politics of the time,” said Dell’Omo. “That is another area that we need a lot of help and support from.”

Where the university could see a large influx of cash is in the possible sale of the Princeton property that housed Westminster Choir College before the consolidation of both campuses to Lawrenceville. A controversial move, Dell’Omo said the plan is to sell the land but admitted that it would probably not happen until two lawsuits against the school regarding the consolidation are resolved.

While Dell’Omo did not disclose specific potential buyers, he said interest in the property “grows every day,” including from corporate entities seeking “prime real estate” in Princeton.

He maintained that the school’s preference is to keep five to six acres in Princeton

to use for the Westminster Conservatory and university events.



Carolo Pascale/ The Rider News

Rider plans to sell the property in Princeton that Westminster Choir College occupied before its consolidation to Lawrenceville — legal roadblocks continue to hinder sale progress.

# Students could face suspension for coronavirus violation

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what the code of conduct refers to as “assigned tasks.”

The highest level of discipline is level one, which guarantees at least a one-year suspension from the university with a possibility of an indefinite or permanent expulsion. Students who find themselves in this category of discipline do not receive refunds on housing or tuition. To return, students have to re-apply for admission through the dean of students.

Levels two through four include varying combinations of discipline, including suspensions, loss of housing, restrictions of campus access and events, fines and both financial and community restitution.

Dell’Omo emphasized that communication between himself, his cabinet and different departments within the university is key to the maintenance of campus health and safety through the pandemic.

“One of the things I always talk about with the cabinet is getting updates from Student Life, Residence Life, Facilities and Public Safety [is] where people are adhering to [regulations], where they aren’t and how we are following up,” Dell’Omo said. “You want to avoid these problems of larger universities, and even smaller universities recently, who have had major mishaps.”

Though he has not been on campus often, Student Government Association President and senior musical theater major Dylan Erdelyi was pleased with Public Safety’s response to health and safety protocols on campus.

“As far as I know, there have been no major issues [on campus] and Public Safety has been enforcing as necessary,” Erdelyi said.

Dell’Omo is hopeful that students will better understand and cooperate with guidelines as the semester progresses, though he reiterated the duty that the university as a whole has to being safe on campus.

“Hopefully it won’t get to that point, but we all have to be responsible citizens in this community,” Dell’Omo said.

As of Sept. 15, the university has confirmed nine positive cases of COVID-19 from the start of the school’s closure in March.



## COVID - 19 Counter

**Confirmed Cases**  
Last updated: September 1, 2020

# 9

**Cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases at Rider University (since March 2020)**

Arianna Marino/ The Rider News

**COVID-19 case reports to Rider University by month:**

Month / Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
September 2020	0	0
August 2020	3	1
July 2020	0	0
June 2020	0	2
May 2020	0	0
April 2020	0	1
March 2020	1	1

# Students address concerns and make suggestions about 2020 fall semester plan



Carolo Pascale/ The Rider News

Community Assistant in Beckett Village and junior marketing major Meghan Mulhearn said that there is a lot of pressure on her to enforce wearing masks and social distancing.

By **Tatyanna Carman**

Students expressed their thoughts about the fall 2020 semester, with suggestions and concerns coming from preliminary feedback from a Rider News survey.

Some students left suggestions for improvements for the fall 2020 semester such

as a reduction in tuition, more on-campus events and activities, advocacy for either fully in-person or fully remote classes, more enforcement on social distancing and more clear and consistent communication about the fall semester plan.

“Tuition should have been lowered because we are not getting the same enrichment out of online classes. Not even close,” a participant commented in the survey.

Some students left brief comments like, “More social life,” or “The lounges in the dorms need to be opened.”

Vice President for Student Affairs Leanna Fenneberg said that the university has hosted “dozens of events during the start of the fall semester” and that many of these events were planned to be remote “to both minimize the risk of infection, and to be inclusive to all students, the majority of whom may never physically visit campus this semester.”

“However, some in-person, on-campus events are being offered, as long as they adhere to COVID-19 informed safety and planning protocols,” Fenneberg said.

She also explained that residence hall lounges are currently governed by the state of New Jersey guidance, “which states that residential ‘common areas remain closed.’”

Other survey participants had more detailed comments about the fall 2020 semester plan.

“The entirety of the semester should remain online-only. The pandemic is still essentially at its height in the US with the very real potential to get worse come late-fall. To forcefully mitigate



# Rider News survey allows student input about fall plan

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[the] risk that students and faculty shouldn't be trusted to mitigate themselves and for the safety of all, the decision should have been made early on to stay fully remote for the time being. Applying a date to the situation only furthers the scheduling and logistical upheaval we'll find ourselves coping with in the weeks to come," a student stated in the survey.

Sophomore public relations and sociology double major Keyonna Murray said she appreciates the fact that "Rider has put in the effort to design an entirely remote curriculum."

However, she thought that "if they chose remote as a format across the board, it kind of puts everybody on the same playing field, especially when it comes to any opportunities that you get outside of class and things like that or being able to connect with your professors."

Senior psychology major and community assistant (CA) in Beckett Village Alyssa Darden acknowledged the precautions the university established to ensure safety, but expressed concern about the enforcement of wearing masks and social distancing.

"But as far as enforcing it, I don't know how well we are doing with that. Like I see Public Safety, they are walking around, but they are not really saying anything to people who don't wear their masks, as far as what I've observed anyway," said Darden. "And, you know as a [CA], like we do say something to people. We write them up. But you can't really ... be policing or anything all hours of the day."

This sentiment is supported by a comment from a participant of the survey, who said that they wanted, "harsher consequences for those who violate mask or social distancing policies."

Another Beckett Village CA and junior marketing major Meghan Mulhearn explained that there is a lot of pressure on her to enforce the rules and she can only do so much "as a student and the job."

According to section four of the Student Code of Social Conduct, the failure to adhere to campus-wide pandemic/emergency directives, "may be issued specific to Residence Life or to the entire Rider community via email, RiderAlert, and/or instructions given by Residence Life, Public Safety, Student Affairs or other staff and faculty." In addition, consequences can range from level one to level five violations.

She also said that the university should be updating the Rider community about the coronavirus cases.

"[As] I said, I wish they would inform us more if like you know God forbid anyone is getting sick or like anyone in [the] residential halls like I'm living in a residential hall," Mulhearn said. "We would like to be updated if like someone got sick on what wing or whatever, something like that."

However, the university said in a university-wide email sent on Jun. 29 that confirmed coronavirus cases will be listed "as a cumulative tally by month on our website and will not issue individual notifications each time we become aware of a positive case within our University community."

Since March 2020, the university has publicly reported nine positive coronavirus cases, including four in August and none this month as of Sept. 15.

Junior accounting major Patrick McLoughlin said that the timing around the concept of the fall semester plan was "very hasty."

"Rider could've really not had as much of a messed up communication if they had just waited because they said themselves in the email, they did not expect [New Jersey Governor] Phil Murphy to make that announcement so they were just completely caught off guard by that," McLoughlin said. "So it just seems like OK, you had the plan. You were ready to reverse course with that plan and then you were just like, 'well I guess we'll do sort of a half measure of our original plan.'"

He also said that a more "uniform line of planning and thinking" would have improved his image of Rider.

Darden expressed that she would've liked more "frequency" in communication about the fall plan. She also suggested that there needs to be "more communication all in all" since, "nobody really knows what is going on in the spring."

"And we don't know where their head is at in terms of that. And so, come November when we're all going home, those of us who are on campus, are going home to take our finals and have Thanksgiving and all of that, should we pack up all of our belongings or should we not? We don't know," she said. "And it's hard because obviously, they don't know the direction of the pandemic either and so we don't know what to expect, but we just want to prep as much as we can."

Murray shared that she would like to say to students and parents who remain frustrated, "everybody in the administration, all the professors, all the faculty, they are still people too."

"I think that one thing I've realized throughout this whole pandemic is that at the end of the day, like all of these like titles and positions and stuff like that, they really don't mean much of anything. You know, because if we're not taking care of each other as people then what are we really doing?"

Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown declined to comment.

*Students are still able to take the brief Rider News survey by scanning the QR code here:*



# Rider opts out of Trump administration payroll tax deferral



Courtesy of Gage Skidmore

Some federal employees and members of the military have been forced to partake in the deferral, and according to Director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics Micah Rasmussen, many are not happy about it.

By Hailey Hensley

**R**IDER has chosen not to move forward with the payroll tax deferral that the Trump administration offered businesses for the remainder of 2020, a move made in an August executive order.

According to the Sept. 14 announcement that was quietly posted on the Rider Human Resources website, the university felt that taking the optional tax break may place an undue burden on university employees in 2021.

The announcement states that "...after hearing from some employees, the University believes that the Executive Order has the potential to place a substantial financial burden on employees at the end of the deferral period causing a decrease in net pay for the first four months of 2021."

There is also existing uncertainty about who will be responsible for paying the deferred taxes and how those taxes will be collected if the university chooses to utilize the delay.

By not opting into the optional program, the university will prevent employee tax rates from doubling for the first four months of 2021. The social security tax would go from 6.2% to 12.4% from January to April next year.

The executive order, issued on Aug. 8 states that "...while the Department of the Treasury has already undertaken historic efforts to alleviate the hardships of our citizens, it is clear that further temporary relief is necessary to support working Americans during these challenging times. To that end, today I [President Trump] am directing the Secretary of the Treasury to use his authority to defer certain payroll tax obligations with respect to the American workers most in need."

The order explains that this tax deferral is only available to employees who make around \$8,000 a month or less, meaning that even if the university was to implement the tax cut, the university's top earners would not qualify.

Director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics Micah Rasmussen stated that "President Trump's executive order on the deferment of payroll taxes was meant to be an alternative to a new round of stimulus ... It wound up being pretty limited in effectiveness-- to be helpful, a worker would need to have a temporary reason to use the money, but then be ready to repay it in full next year. Critics have called it a payday loan you didn't ask for."

The announcement by the university is concluded by simply stating that "...for this [the uncertainty and undue financial burden] and other reasons, the University will not be implementing this optional program."



## Exploratory committee leads creation of chief diversity officer position

By Tatyanna Carman

**A**n exploratory committee is leading the creation of a chief diversity officer position at Rider, which will be a cabinet position, according to co-chair of the committee and Director of Employee Relations in the Department of Human Resources Clarissa Gilliam.

“Chief diversity officer roles in higher education take many forms, each unique to the institution’s mission, values and goals,” said Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown. “Rider’s core values include a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and this commitment serves as the foundation for this work. The charge of the committee is to develop a report that includes key considerations to reflect upon when developing a [chief diversity officer] position that will be best positioned to advance the strategic diversity, equity and inclusion goals of the university.”

Brown explained that one of the goals of Rider’s Inclusive Excellence Plan led to the idea of the creation of this position.

“While the concept of creating a chief diversity officer position at Rider has existed for some time, the president’s Council on Inclusion’s Inclusive Excellence Plan, which was adopted by the university, outlined a number of key initiatives for promoting inclusive excellence,” Brown said. “One such goal, to signify an institutional commitment to inclusion by enhancing structural support including enhanced leadership for this work at the university level, led us to the point.”

Associate Professor of Communication Sheena Howard is a co-chair of the committee as well. Gilliam said that there are 15 staff, student and faculty members split into sub-committees “according to four different types of goals,” which was “a little over a month ago.” Sept. 10 was the sub-committee’s deadline to submit their recommendations to Howard and Gilliam.

“Sheena [Howard] and I, over the next two weeks, will take all of that information and compose what the model will look like, what cabinet will need in order to have a [chief diversity officer], the job descriptions, the qualifications and even potentially resources that we can use to find that qualified candidate,” Gilliam said. “All of this has to be to [the Rider president], we promised him by Sept. 28.”

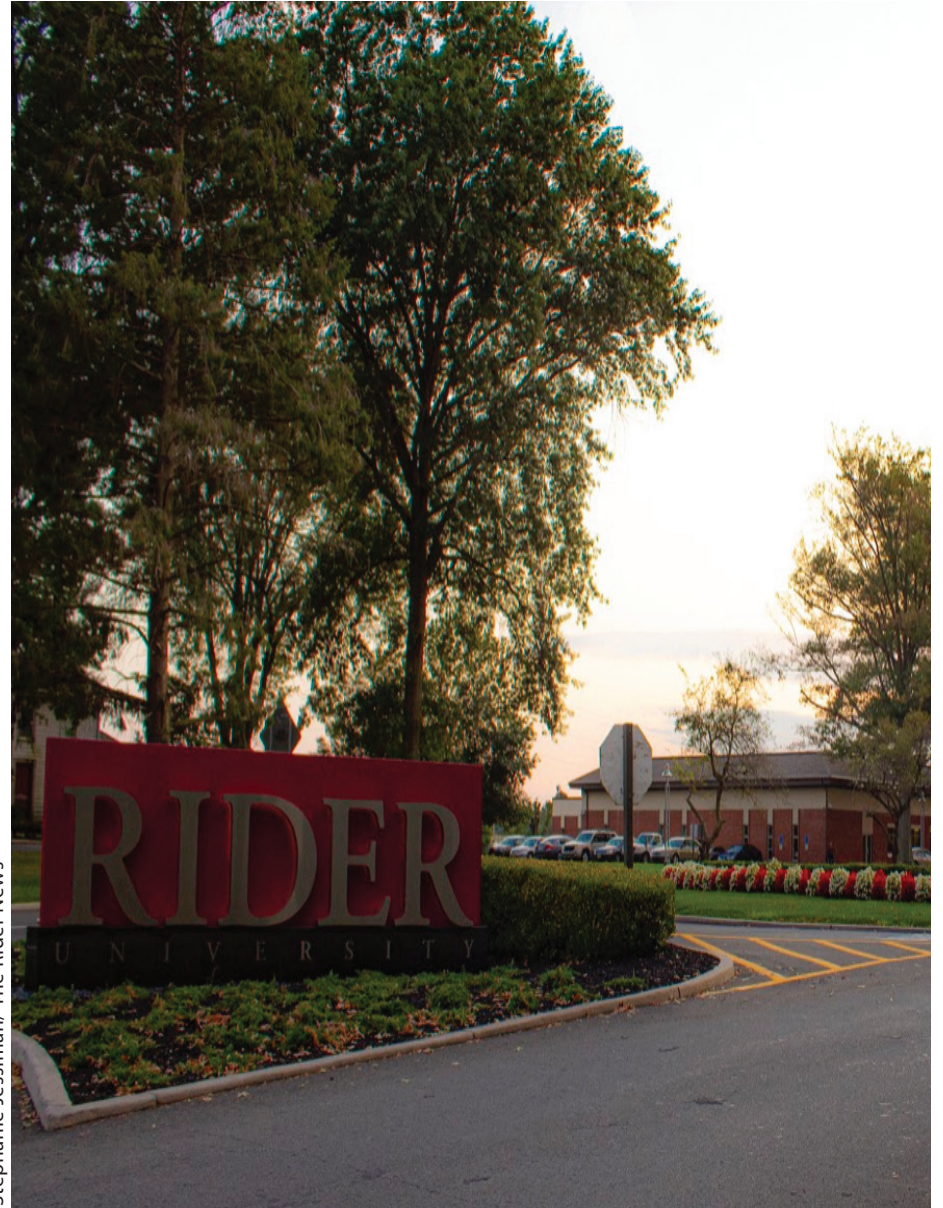
She also explained that the chief diversity officer is going to be “a person for all of Rider” and that “they are going to need to partner in touch with faculty, staff and students at some point.”

Gilliam explained how the position will impact the Rider community.

“So the impact in having a focus level of expertise and experience, I think will impact diversity at Rider to meet not only its goals and objectives, but its overall commitment to humanity. Meaning, you know accepting and respecting people regardless of who they are and what they bring to the table. You know, so that is part of diversity as that old saying says, diversity is inviting me to the dance. Inclusion is asking me to dance. Right. Big difference. And so, the impact is really showcased in the commitment that Rider has to diversity and inclusion as a whole.”

She also shared that Rider has a “genuine commitment to diversity.”

“I started with Rider back in March and I have a strong background in diversity recruiting and like affinity groups and so forth,” Gilliam said. “And so, I’m happy to see and I’ve worked in a lot of organizations inside and outside of higher education, so I am happy to see a genuine commitment to diversity and not just something



Stephanie Jessiman/The Rider News

Co-chair of the exploratory committee and Director of Employee Relations in the Department of Human Resources Clarissa Gilliam said that the chief diversity officer position will be “a person for all of Rider.”

because of what is going on in the world, not because it’s a nice thing to do and so forth, but that because when you have a genuine commitment, you have a better possibility to have sustainability with all of the efforts behind it. So, I’m happy to see that and to be a part of that.”

## Class of 2020 graduates have mixed opinions about rescheduled commencement

By Hailey Hensley

**I**n the wake of the strangest school year many students will ever encounter, Rider’s commencement for the class of 2020 has seen yet another date change, this time being moved all the way to May 2021.

Though the class of 2020 and the class of 2021 will have separate ceremonies, the events will occur within the same weekend, according to an August 27th announcement by the university.

This announcement came after a decision was made in March to postpone commencement for the class of 2020 until November in order to align with the 2020 family weekend and homecoming.

Graduated Student Government Association President Paige Ewing weighed in on the newly rescheduled commencement, saying that “in mid-August, the committee met and we were all crushed that the original plan of having a November ceremony would not take place but we knew everyone wanted to have a day to celebrate with all of our friends and family while also being safe. In the end, after exhausting every plan and option we all agreed that having a May ceremony would be the best way to celebrate everyone’s accomplishments and protect everyone’s health and safety.”

In an email sent to the class of 2020 and signed by university President Gregory Dell’Omo, he speaks about continuing to listen to student leaders from the graduating class. It is stated that the resounding message from the leadership is the desire for an in-person ceremony.

“I realize this is very disappointing news. Our decision was not made lightly. This pandemic has had a profound impact on your lives and the lives of so many across our country and the world. But know



Courtesy of Rider University

The class of 2020 commencement will be held in the same venue as the class of 2021, with one ceremony being held on May 15 and one being held on May 16.

this: we are doing all we can to ensure that you are celebrated for the significant milestone you have each achieved while also ensuring your safety and that of your families,” Dell’Omo said. “We heard this loud and clear from your class leadership - the importance of being celebrated for your unique experiences as the Class of 2020, with your family and friends, and in the style that all proud members of the Rider and Westminster Choir College communities have come to expect.”

Ewing stated that her greatest fear is that students will lose the excitement for commencement due to the long wait they will have to endure.

“I think the biggest worry is that by the time that May comes around people will feel uninterested in a

ceremony. Now that everyone has received their caps and gowns and diplomas they may just move on with their lives,” she said.

A 2020 graduate of the Master’s in Business Communication program Rachael Samonski clarified that she would not be attending the rescheduled ceremony.

“I am not planning on attending the ceremony. I am not excited, the excitement has completely worn off. I’m more concerned about the job market and utilizing my degrees rather than a ceremony a year too late,” Samonski said.

Ewing emphasized that while commencement may be delayed, and that it is less than ideal, there is also a silver lining.

“I also think that it may be a great way to keep class unity and make commencement like a one-year reunion. Overall, having a graduation where everyone can fully celebrate with friends and family is important to the closure of our undergraduate journey,” she said.

Senior class president Rhea Fryer shared an optimistic message regarding the repeatedly rescheduled ceremonies.

“While it has been hard for sure for the class of 2020 not getting to experience their commencement, I am looking forward to the potential of having both commencements within the same weekend of each other, and could be a great opportunity for recent alumni and soon to be alumni to connect,” Fryer said. “Since the ceremonies are on different days to allow for both classes to have their own day to shine and celebrate their accomplishments. Hopefully, things will be better in regards to [the pandemic] and it can look close to a normal commencement ceremony.”



# Student Entertainment Council adapts to creating virtual events

By Sarah Siock

**W**HILE the coronavirus pandemic has changed just about every aspect of campus life this fall, Rider's Student Entertainment Council (SEC) is still working hard to keep everyone connected.

Each semester, the SEC takes on the responsibility of planning campus traditions and various events. Traditionally, the programming board would focus on organizing in-person student activities. However, this semester the council adapted to creating virtual events for students.

"People can expect events we have never had before," said senior business management major and SEC President Goanio Chavarria. "There will be new styles to some already existing events and new events. Being virtual has opened new doors to us."

A brand new event SEC planned for this semester was a virtual dating game show called Rider Romance. The event took place on Sept. 14 and was hosted by Blake Horstmann from ABC's "The Bachelorette." SEC members said the virtual format allowed them to book the high-profile host.

"Blake lives in California. Normally, we would not have been able to fly him in but we can talk to him over Zoom. Overall, it feels like there are so many opportunities to connect with people," said Olivia Orlando, a senior arts and entertainment industry

management major. Orlando handles off-campus relations for the SEC.

Despite events looking different this semester, SEC is aiming to keep campus traditions alive. For instance, SEC shifted Rider's annual singing competition, R Factor, to a virtual event. The show was a success with hundreds of students tuning in via a Facebook live stream to watch.

While the SEC is effectively adapting to the new normal, members admitted that there are challenges.

"As a programming and event planning board, we love to get together and talk. This is when we get to bounce ideas off of one another and try to brainstorm the best events we can put on. Although we have been working well together, the biggest change is not being able to have our weekly in-person meetings," said Chavarria.

For now, the SEC is meeting virtually to organize events, which has been met with some difficulties.

"One thing I have put more effort into is reaching out to my board and making sure everyone knows what they are doing. Since we cannot physically meet, communication is more important than ever now," Chavarria added.

The SEC acknowledged that some events are not suited for a virtual format. Traditional events such as the fall concert and "I Love College Party" will not take place this fall. However, SEC members are still striving to make the most of the semester.

"We are used to large in-person events that are unable to happen right now. The most important thing we discussed in our first meeting was approaching the semester with an open mind and embracing the challenge of planning events in this new format. Even though the events may be virtual, we are all still very committed to bringing the Rider community together," said sophomore digital marketing major and SEC Public Relations Co-Chair Kayla Wagner.

Zoom is a helpful tool that the SEC is using to keep the campus connected. The organization is planning on hosting several live events through Zoom this semester. Coming up, on Sept. 18, the council arranged for Miss New Jersey USA 2017 to speak with students through the video conferencing app.

"Not being able to have these large events that are held annually has pushed me to be more creative and think outside of the box, in hopes of creating new annual traditions," said human resource management major and SEC Traditions Chair Lauren Matticoli.

SEC members said to look out for more virtual events as the semester continues. There are plans for magicians, comedians and special guest speakers. To keep up with the latest events follow SEC on Instagram @rideru\_sec.

"The SEC is working hard to make events not only happen but have them be fun and interactive. Being virtual isn't the same. However, the board is doing its best to deliver the events we can come up with given the times we are all living in right now," said Chavarria.



Courtesy of The Student Entertainment

The Student Entertainment Council keeps Rider traditions alive while frequently introducing new and exciting events.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE DISCUSSED IN OUR FIRST MEETING WAS APPROACHING THE SEMESTER WITH AN OPEN MIND AND EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE OF PLANNING EVENTS IN THIS NEW FORMAT."



Courtesy of The Student Entertainment

SEC members hold their weekly meeting via Zoom to discuss the details of upcoming events for students. SEC members expressed that not being able to meet in person is one of their biggest challenges this semester.



Courtesy of The Student Entertainment

Student Entertainment Council President Goanio Chavarria hosts Rider's annual singing competition, R Factor, virtually on Sept. 11. For the first time R Factor was organized by the SEC as a completely virtual event. The event was a success with hundreds of viewers tuning in live to watch.

"NOT BEING ABLE TO HAVE THESE LARGE EVENTS THAT ARE HELD ANNUALLY HAS PUSHED ME TO BE MORE CREATIVE AND THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX, IN HOPES OF CREATING NEW ANNUAL TRADITIONS."



# Former star of "The Bachelorette" helps Broncs find romance

By Bridget Gum

**D**ESPITE the odd, unprecedented times, Rider has made an effort to provide multiple events for its students in order to make sure everyone stays involved and active in Rider's social community. One brand new event called Rider Romance happened on Sept. 14.

Rider Romance began with Blake Horstmann, a previous contestant for the hit shows The Bachelor, The Bachelorette and Bachelor in Paradise, in a simple Q&A. Students who attended had the option of submitting a question for Horstmann on their registration form.

Since this event took place on Zoom, participants were muted so as not to interrupt the conversation. Horstmann answered a wide variety of questions for about 45 minutes, including subjects about his personal life, dating life and life on the show.

"I really enjoyed the Rider Romance event especially because I'm a fan of all the Bachelor shows," said junior film, TV and radio major Kelly Phillips. "It was a really unique event and a great way to bring the Rider community together virtually."

During the event, it was revealed by Horstmann that the process of getting on the show is an intense one, consisting of multiple questionnaires, a psychological evaluation, personality tests and bizarre interviews with the producers and staff members.

He shared that in order to get on the show, a person not only has to be nominated and go through the lengthy six-month process, but also has to be open about pretty much everything while being witty and quick on their feet with answers.

"I was actually nominated by my mom and little sister," said Horstmann. "But after the initial interview, it's a very intense screening process."

While filming the show, Horstmann says that contestants are, in fact, allowed to eat.

This is apparently a question he gets a lot, as they aren't shown eating on many of their dates. Instead of eating during the dates, as it is annoying to the people on set, he said, when off set and at the hotel, they can order pretty much anything from room service.

"I actually gained a lot of weight during the show," joked Horstmann.

Horstmann also mentioned a strange requirement for the show, which is that all of the contestants aren't allowed to have TV or their phones and the TVs are actually removed from their hotel rooms, but they can be notified if there is a major world event going on.

Horstmann also spoke about the other side of being on the show. While he was extremely grateful for being on the show, since there is a chance of finding love and creating friendships, it has also since negatively affected his life.

Horstmann explained that because everyone can be accessed through social media, he has received many women trying to contact him, but on the other hand he has also received some death threats and hate speech. He understands this is unfortunately a part of being in the spotlight, he still finds it an extremely difficult part of being famous.

The second part of this event was a different type of Q&A. While registering for this event, some students selected to be a contestant for the game show. These students then turned their cameras and mics on to reveal themselves.

The Rider contestants were then asked two rounds of questions. The first round of questions were "this or that" questions, like if they prefer dogs or cats, or pizza or sushi. After about ten of those questions, the second round began with deeper questions, like what the contestants' hopes and dreams for the future were.

For the finale, the students on Zoom were able

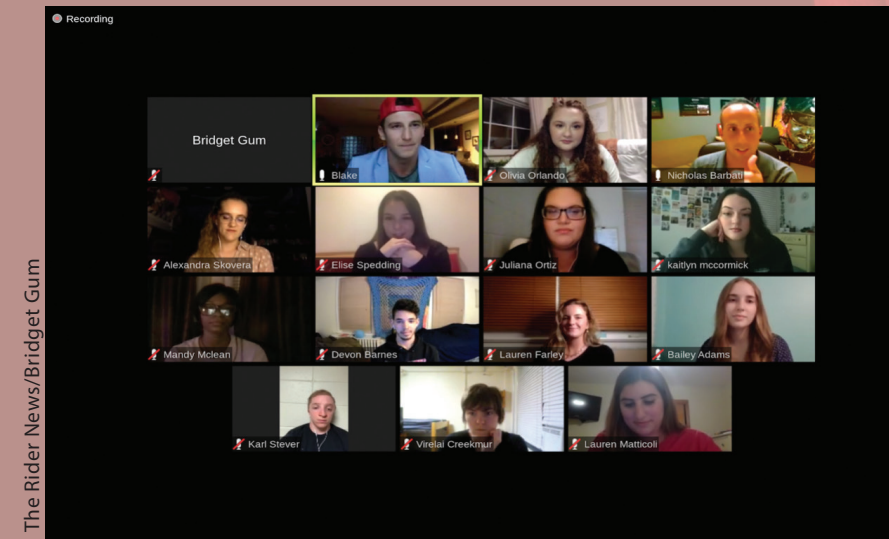
to vote through a Google form for which of the eight contestants they thought was the "best" or "most dateable." Junior health science major Lauren Farley was voted as the winner while sophomore public relations major Elise Spedding was the runner up.



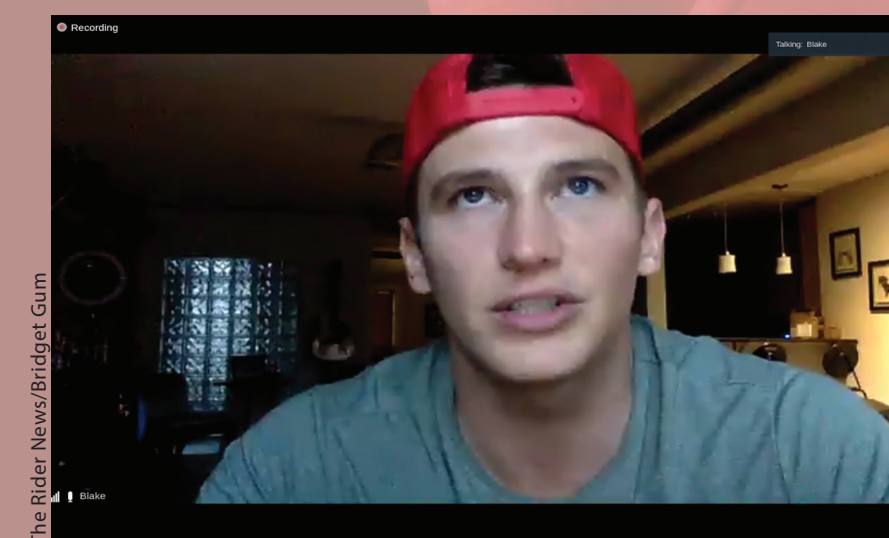
Courtesy of @Balockayeh on Instagram

Blake Horstmann is a former contestant on both "The Bachelorette" and "The Bachelor in Paradise." He provided the audience with lots of behind the scenes information from his time on both shows.

# Horstmann hosts Rider's rose ceremony



Following Blake Horstmann's Q&A, students had the ability to compete to see who was the most "dateable."



Former The Bachelorette star, Blake Horstmann, was the center of the Rider Romance event. He answered many different questions asked by Rider students.

"I WAS ACTUALLY NOMINATED BY MY MOM AND LITTLE SISTER," SAID HORSTMANN. "BUT AFTER THE INITIAL INTERVIEW, IT'S A VERY INTENSE SCREENING PROCESS."



Courtesy of @Balockayeh on Instagram

Horstmann detailed many of his experiences on the show including his interview process and the many rules he had to follow.

# Greek Life adjusts in response to COVID-19 limitations

By Christian McCarville

**W**HILE many classes are online or offer hybrid options, a lot of students chose the option to stay home for the semester. This was a smart decision for many, as it ensures safety and saves money. However, this poses a challenge for many of Rider's clubs and organizations, including Greek life.

It is now harder than ever for students, especially incoming freshmen, to get themselves involved with Rider's many engaging organizations. For Greek organizations, recruitment is essential for maintaining a chapter's growth and on-campus continuance.

Recruiting new members is one of the most exciting aspects of Greek life. As senior members graduate, new faces join the tight-knit community, forming new connections and friendships.

COVID-19 restrictions prevent large indoor gatherings, which makes it very difficult for Greek organizations to meet and interact with potential new members. Some organizations also have upwards of fifty members. This severely limits the number of ways these organizations can interact as a whole.

This semester, it is no surprise that recruitment will be done much differently. Some organizations have opted not to recruit this fall, while others have adapted their recruitment strategy.

Senior criminal justice major Jeylyne Rosas is a current sister of Chi Upsilon Sigma, National Latin Sorority Inc. She gave some insight into how her sorority is handling recruitment and chapter operations in the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We do not plan on having new members this semester, but we do have a specific plan for recruiting women so that we could have new members in the spring," said Rosas. "COVID-19 has negatively and positively affected our organization. Due to the pandemic, we were forced to think of alternatives to programming and recruiting. It did allow us to improve our creativity towards promoting our organization and reaching out to people online."

Senior sports management and marketing major Samantha Pucci also commented on how her sorority, Delta Phi Epsilon, will operate during this unique semester. She is the current president of her sorority and has high hopes for recruitment despite the many obstacles posed.

"We do plan to recruit this semester by utilizing a Continuous Open Bidding format," said Pucci. "This is typical in the fall semester since the National Panhellenic Council does formal recruitment in the spring and informal in the fall. I find that one of the biggest things this semester and carrying it through to the future is creativity. We have so many members of our organization that can be so creative when it comes to creating, planning and implementing while also taking advantage of social media."

Both Pucci and Rosas focused on the importance of creativity during these times of uncertainty. With a heavy reliance on technology and social media, all of Rider's organizations must use their creativity to stay active and get students involved.

Pucci also explained how her chapter supported one another in the months



Courtesy of @AXID\_Rider

Sisters of the sorority Alpha Xi Delta wear masks and pose in front of their sorority's house.

following the university's switch to a remote format.

"When COVID-19 first emerged, being sent home and being away from our sisters was a challenge in itself, but what I found was the most challenging was ensuring we supported each other in every aspect," said Pucci. "Finances, safety, health and overall well being were and are still top concerns for our chapter and I am always working to keep that in mind."

While being physically distanced from one another, the sisterhoods and brotherhoods on Rider's campus are truly put to the test during this ongoing pandemic. However, many students believe these bonds are surely strong enough to prevail against the uncertainty of the fall 2020 semester.

"We also have been working hard to get organized and have a clear path of how we can overcome some of the more difficult challenges such as involvement, finances and the more fun pieces of being in a sorority that we are missing out on," said Pucci. "I am looking to create a more relaxed and easy semester for our members while also keeping sisterhood alive and enjoying the reason we joined, for the memories and bonds created."

# 107.7 The Bronc finds a new home in the Fine Arts Center

By Aaliyah Patel & Victoria Pender

**R**IDER'S radio stations 107.7 The Bronc and The Bronc Retro have found a new home on the second floor of the Fine Arts Center. 107.7 The Bronc/WRRRC-FM is an Adult Contemporary/Adult Alternative station and The Bronc Retro/WRRRC2 is an online news station that plays classic hits from the 50s through the 90s.

Before the move, the stations occupied the ground floor of the Bart Luedeke Center. The space was undergoing renovation with a projected plan to be completed by April. Due to complications presented by the coronavirus pandemic, the project had some setbacks but it is now home to the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Student Navigation Offices.

John Mozes, the general manager of The Bronc, explained what life was like for students before the need for precautionary measures.

"Last year before COVID hit, we just finished our Dessert War's Competition at Daly's Dining Hall. We were getting ready for the egg hunt, the egg hunt blood drive [and] the car contest. When [COVID-19] hit, we had to put the brakes on everything, so we had to redevelop programs," Mozes said.

The radio stations organize many traditional in-person events including Cruisin' From Commencement, a contest for undergraduate and graduate students who are



Courtesy of Rider University

Junior film, TV and radio major Danny Allen uses equipment in the newly relocated 107.7 The Bronc radio station.



Courtesy of 107.7 The Bronc

With 107.7 The Bronc's relocation, the radio station shifted to digital and IP-based equipment.

eligible to walk at the class of 2020's commencement. Now, all of these in-person events have been modified to meet state requirements.

Mozes says, "Our events went from our egg hunt and blood drive to 'Quarantunes,' which we did successfully for four Thursdays in April.

We did a thing called 'Rider Connects' where students could send messages to other students over the air."

Responding to what can be interpreted as a disaster created the opportunity for students to explore engaged learning.

"As we shifted, this facility we are in now makes it even easier because all the equipment is digital and IP-based," Mozes shared.

Ashlee Hunter, a junior graphic design major and the student general manager of the Bronc, shared how virtual recruitment has increased student opportunities.

"The Bronc's strategy was to focus on the student experience of hosting your on-air show ... On the virtual platform of Zoom, we met new students, planned new shows and trained them," Hunter said.

Despite the uncertainties that have come forth this fall semester, certain Rider traditions such as Screen Screen, a fall drive-in-movie and trunk-or-treat experience, will still occur.

Hunter says, "Even though it's going to be virtual this year, I can't wait to participate and share all the fun activities planned with students at Rider ... Students are going to love what our organization has planned for them."

Last year, The Bronc was a National Association of Broadcasters Marconi Award nominee for College Radio Station of the Year.



FROM THE EDITOR

## 100 DAYS OF PROTESTS

**A**MERICANS have had the privilege of protesting their government from the Boston Tea Party in 1773 through Black Lives Matter in 2020. There have been demonstrations of protests all across the country for multiple generations, all exhausted with the current state of governance. In 2020, while we were all at home during the beginning stages of COVID-19, we were forced to watch police brutality take the life of George Floyd, sparking a 100-day protest in all 50 states (for the first time in history) and in over 60 countries. I had the chance to be a part of history.

Just five days after the viral video of Floyd, Newark, New Jersey, held a solidarity rally led by The People's Organization for Progress at the Lincoln Statue outside of the Essex County Courthouse. I saw the tweet about the rally the morning of and thought of ways to tell my boss I could not come in to work. I recall after the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, the summer going into my sophomore year of high school begging my parents to let me go to Newark to show support to the Brown family and the city of Ferguson. All my attempts were shot down by fears of my safety, and my ears were filled with the history of the 1967 Newark riots that left 26 people dead, over 700 injured and caused up to \$10 million in damages. But this time was different; I was an adult and my mind was made. I called out of work and quickly hopped in the shower. Although it was only May, the heat reminded me of July. I packed sunscreen, gloves, hand sanitizer, water, fruit and of course my mask — there was no clue how long we would be there. Before we finally reached the courthouse, there was a harmonic chant coming from a small crowd of people, as I inched closer the words "I am a revolutionary" became so loud that the ground beneath my feet began to hum in rhythm with the chant. I was relieved to see that almost everyone had on their masks and tried to stay as far apart as we possibly could. As we approached the courthouse, there were people clapping and motioning their signs in the air, there were community members of all ages, reading poetry, performing spoken word and encouraging everyone to go out and vote. It was peaceful.

After we dispersed, the rally continued on foot from the courthouse past Newark Penn Station. As my sisters and I followed the crowd, I hear "I Want to Thank You" by Alicia Myers playing in the near distance and a group of young people dancing their life away. Random dance breaks from the electric slide to the cupid shuffle, people of all ages enjoying life in memory of the many lives taken by the hand of senseless violence. As we made our way down Market Street, there were Latin missionaries passing out free food to the protesters, and I watched those same protesters hand over their free food directly to the homeless who were at the park nearby. That was a sight I would never forget, because the

news painted this picture of what was going on outside, a picture my parents believed to be reality as well. But there was something different actually happening in Newark that day. There was unity, respect, strength, love and most importantly peace radiating from the diverse crowd all rallying for black lives and against police violence. I am forever moved by the display I was so fortunate to witness.

But why weren't demonstrations like Newark plastered on every news station similar to less peaceful protests? It makes me believe that there is a specific narrative that is being pushed about what is assumed to be taking place outside. According to Time magazine, "The vast majority of Black Lives Matter protests—more than 93%—have been peaceful, according to a new report published ... by a nonprofit that researches political violence and protests across the world. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) analyzed more than 7,750 Black Lives Matter demonstrations in all 50 states and Washington D.C. that took place in the wake of George Floyd's death between May 26 and August 22. Their report states that more than 2,400 locations reported peaceful protests, while fewer than 220 reported 'violent demonstrations.'" Although there have indeed been violent protests, there has been a significantly less number in comparison to the peaceful parades taking place in all 50 states, so why only broadcast one instead of the other? I believe that some media outlets are selective to what and whom they declare are the protagonists and antagonists of this narrative making it seem like it is police versus "violent" protests. Yet, when I think about Newark's demonstration, the lack of police involvement seemed to set the tone for the overall atmosphere at the rally. "Federal authorities urged local officials to crack down harder on rioters after American cities were rocked by fiery spasms of violence part of a nationwide wave of protests over police misconduct. President Trump and his attorney general, William P. Barr, urged cities to follow the example set by Minneapolis, where the unrest began earlier this week over the case of George Floyd," according to the Washington Post.

This tactic brings up the conversation of police crowd control and if it is actually effective. In the case where a protest becomes violent the goal should be to de-escalate the situation, not intensify the circumstances, and in a lot of cases with police presence it has disrupted the peace at certain demonstrations. "Everything that police do in these types of situations should be aimed at de-escalation, and that is a really, really stunning example of escalation," according to Edward Maguire, a professor at Arizona State University who recently published a guidebook on police crowd-control procedures. "You cannot be shooting projectiles



Qur'an Hansford/The Rider News

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at human beings, unless you have a really good reason to do so. I'm just seeing examples all over the country right now of bad policing," he said. "Poorly conceived strategies for how to handle protests," according to Maguire. Video clips showed that in some instances, police used force to clear streets, regardless of who was there or what they were doing. In another incident in Minneapolis, a CBS TV news crew said they were shooting video of a group of officers standing around in a parking lot when someone fired rubber bullets at them. Michael Adams, a reporter for VICE News recorded himself being pepper-sprayed by police in Minneapolis, even while he was already on the ground, according to the Washington Post. "I've covered protests involving police in Ferguson, Mo., Baton Rouge, La., Dallas and Los Angeles. I've also covered the U.S. military in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan. I have never been fired at by police until tonight," wrote Los Angeles Times reporter Molly Hennessy-Fiske, who said she had been shot with at least one rubber bullet by Minnesota State Patrol officers while standing on a street in Minneapolis.

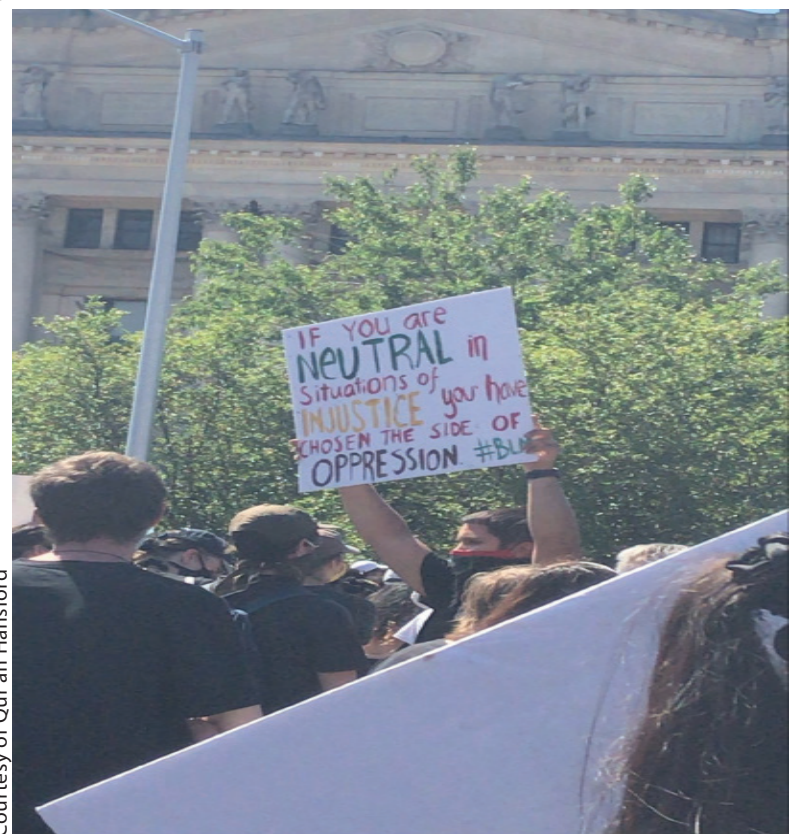
We have seen peaceful protests with the sit-ins in the segregated south in the 1960s and marches on historical landmarks led by Martin Luther King Jr., we have seen more brutal demonstrations like Shay's Rebellion in 1787. The concept of fighting against the government is nothing new, quite frankly it is historic, so when there is push back from a tired people why is there such controversy? Rebellions, riots, and rallies are meant to create change and a lot of times change is met with sacrifice, demonstrators in many cases forfeit their lives to one day impact the lives of many. What sparked in the hearts of millions back in May was anger, frustration, passion and hope for a better tomorrow. Imagine taking summer away from the youth, only issuing a singular payment of \$1,200 to some citizens to survive off of, staggering unemployment rates, racial injustice still flagrant, all while a global pandemic was taking place, you are going to have some pretty upset civilians. How I felt in Newark back in May is a feeling that will forever stick with me, the unity and pride of a people that is so resilient and forward-looking moved so many that were there that day. Black Lives Matter began as a challenge against police brutality but became a vehicle for all who are marginalized and to advocate for human rights for all people, a vehicle so forceful it lasted 100 days in all 50 states. Perhaps, in the words of Sam Cooke, change is gonna come.

*This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board. This week's editorial was written by Opinion Editor Qur'an Hansford.*

*Qur'an H.*



Courtesy of Qur'an Hansford



Courtesy of Qur'an Hansford



Courtesy of Qur'an Hansford

SOPHOMORE SEARCHINGS

# College during COVID-19: Living on campus during a global pandemic

"We are living an unprecedented time," is the phrase I'm sure we are all sick of by now.

After hearing it constantly for months, whether from commercials that adjusted their ad campaigns to the COVID-19 outbreak in record time, government officials or news broadcasts, it is practically unavoidable. As irritating as the phrase has become to some, it is undeniably true, and during these "unprecedented" times, it is hard to know if you're ever making the right decisions. Choosing to go back to school this semester and live on campus was no exception to that. It was a decision that I spent many sleepless nights contemplating and weighing out every option, until ultimately deciding to live back on campus.

The beginning of this year felt like entering freshman year all over again — everything was different, there were new rules to learn, social etiquette to be conscious of, a new learning style to adjust to and, frankly, I was petrified. Now that I've moved onto campus, I am worried about getting sick and spreading the virus to someone else. The process of getting something to eat on campus makes me a nervous wreck every time. I am so worried I will make a mistake in the procedure, which feels like it has no room for error, that by the time I reach the temperature station, I am sweating so much I worry that I may have stressed myself into a fever. To top it all off, I have to fear someone insulting me to my face because I am wearing a mask outside even when no one is in my immediate vicinity.

However, the pros of living on campus, personally, outweighed the cons. After experiencing online classes both on campus and at home, I knew I would achieve

the most success when fully immersed in the learning environment where the school was not constantly overshadowed by everyday distractions mixed with a lack of motivation. For the sake of my academic success and mental well-being, living on campus was the best decision for me; hopefully, this continues to hold.

Luckily, my roommate and good friend, Delaney Putt, a sophomore, had a similar thought process that led to her opting to live on campus this semester. Putt described how overwhelming, "living in a house full of the family all working from home," would become. Therefore she is, "grateful to have the opportunity to live on campus this semester." Having a friend to go through this new and unusual experience only makes the situation easier and all the more worth it. We have each other to lean on in times of stress, a motivator in times of procrastination and a source of comic relief when it all gets too serious.

Before you even start college, everyone who has already gone assures you it will be the best four years of your life. You begin to imagine how much fun it will be — all the friends you will make, clubs you will join and classes you will take. Never once would you imagine a global pandemic leading to remote learning, wearing masks and not hanging out with more than two people at a time. While this is not the experience I could have ever predicted, any experience is better than no experience. If living on campus this year means I have to spend more days crocheting in my room instead of going out to see all of my friends at once, so be it.

*sophomore  
Jillian LaFeir*



## FIELD HOCKEY

## Hussongs reflect on 20 years of success



Photo Courtesy of Rider Athletics

Head Coach **Lori Hussong** and Assistant Coach **Dan Hussong** are entering their 21st year at the helm of the field hockey program.

By **Dylan Manfre**

**R**IDER field hockey has had a total of five head coaches in its 41-year history, and only one has lasted more than seven seasons.

Head Coach Lori Hussong and her husband Dan, who is her lead assistant, have transformed a program that was synonymous with losing throughout the late 1990s — with a record of 28-62 from 1995-1999 — to a dominant force over the last 20 years in the Northeast Conference (NEC) and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). No current Rider coaches have been here longer than the 20 years the Hussongs have.

Before Rider, the Hussongs had successful coaching and teaching careers at West Windsor-Plainsboro schools, 10 miles away from Rider. Ironically enough, Lori Hussong was Dan Hussong's assistant coach when he led the boys basketball team. To no surprise, Lori Hussong was a successful field hockey coach with a high school career record of 197-52-11.

When they took the job at Rider in 2000 the Rider field hockey team was 10-28 in its last two seasons. Lori Hussong said they inherited a group of “unorganized little fireballs.” The turn of the century and control of the program also marked a new era of success for years to come.

“That year, we did finish below .500, but we actually snuck into the conference championship and the playoffs and ended up upsetting the No. 1 seed and the No. 2 seed and winning the NEC championship,” Lori Hussong said over a Zoom call. “The look on their faces at the end of the season; they just totally believed in what we were doing. We said ‘This is what we’re doing,’ they didn’t ever question us. They would run through a wall for us and to see their faces at the end of the last game, that was the best feeling in the world to see that.”

Dan Hussong said the Rider teams in the few years before they took over did “all the things that losing teams do.”

The championship was the first of 20 consecutive postseason appearances, both in the MAAC and NEC, and three NEC titles. After getting her first win of the 2019 season, Lori Hussong became the 15th active Division I Head Coach with at least 250 wins.

She now has 262 wins and counting.

In 2000, they took a group of “unorganized players” and developed a winning culture. Something they have continued to do ever since. It is important to them that every player knows they are a piece of a bigger picture.

“That’s a key to coaching success,” Dan Hussong

said, “is to take star athletes — and Lori would often say this to the team — everyone here was the best on their high school team, that’s why you’re here. Now you have to reinvent yourself and find your role in how you’re going to make this new team, now Division I college team, better than all the other teams that we’re going to play. You want them to feel like a star, but, cooperate with the other stars [on the team]. Then you’ve got the magic.”

The magic is not created in a day or a week. It takes time for players to buy into what the Hussongs are preaching. When they are out recruiting players, they market themselves as parents who will take care of them. Sophomore midfielder Kiki van Ommeren, who hails from the Netherlands, said they made Rider feel like home.

The Hussongs host the team for a dinner at their house before the start of every semester and have the players over for a holiday party, where they played bingo and make gingerbread houses before the fall semester ends in December.

The fact that they are married and have five children of their own creates a family dynamic within the team. One of their daughters, Colby Hussong, was a player at Hofstra and an opponent of Rider on multiple occasions.

Senior defender Brittany Romanczuk said some members of the team even call Lori Hussong “Mom.”

Field hockey is always on their minds even at home, to the point where Lori Hussong said her kids ask them to “not talk about Rider field hockey at dinner.”

Telling recruits’ parents they will care for their daughter as if she is one of their own is a pitch the Hussongs make on the recruiting trail. It’s especially difficult when recruiting international players because they’re starting a whole new life in America. When former midfielder Marion Waterkeyn ‘19 arrived in America as a freshman, the Hussongs were waiting for her at the gate like a parent picking up their child after a trip.

“When I landed in Newark [International Airport] I was totally on my own, in a new country with another language, a different culture and so on,” said Waterkeyn, who is from Belgium. “Then I suddenly saw two faces I recognized from my Skype conversations waiting for me at the exit, Dan and Lori. They picked me up from the airport and were extremely welcoming and great at putting me at ease. The next morning they helped me find my dorm and introduced me to the rest of the team. ... As soon as I arrived, I already felt part of the Rider field hockey team and now I really miss it.”

Playing for the Hussongs is what made Romanczuk choose Rider when she was picking schools three years ago.

“It was very family-oriented,” Romanczuk said. “I was watching one of their games and if someone made a mistake or something they didn’t scream at them or something like that. They just let them play and then they talked to them after. The reason why I came to Rider was because of the coaches.”

“Our motto has always been ‘Give your best effort in all that you do,’ so our jobs as college coaches are not just to build the best team possible,” Lori Hussong said. “It’s to build the best person possible to when they leave the university and our team, they’re better people and we know they’re going to be successful with whatever job they pursue or whatever path they pursue.”

Romanczuk and van Ommeren both described the Hussongs as the most intense coaches they have ever had — and for good reason. It brings out the best in them.

After a 1-0 loss to Georgetown last season, the team walked off the field emotionless. They gathered their bottles and jackets, laid down their sticks wrapped in black grip tape and walked back to the goal cage.

A typical Division I field hockey game lasts 60 minutes.

Lori Hussong’s postgame speech lasted around 45 minutes.

“It shows how competitive they are and how committed they are to get the team as far as possible since they’re there for 20 years, so they really like what they’re doing, and I think also it makes the team better in a way,” van Ommeren said. “If they’re so competitive and so committed, the team will also be more committed and competitive.”

van Ommeren said she has never had a coach as competitive as Lori and Dan Hussong.

Rider doesn’t do a college yearbook anymore and there are no college superlatives, as some people remember from high school. But if there were a superlative to be offered for college coaches, Romanczuk said the Hussongs would win “Most intense,” and “Most likely to never retire” adding she could see them coaching for another five to 10 years.

Dan Hussong said if Lori Hussong were to leave, he would go. If it were the other way around, Lori Hussong would stay put.

“We’re happy,” Dan Hussong laughed.

“As long as we’re happy doing it,” Lori Hussong said, “we’re going to keep doing it.”



## MEN'S SOCCER

# Inverso looking to expand soccer charity



Photo Courtesy of Rider Athletics

Rider Men's Soccer Head Coach **Charlie Inverso** has kept his dear friend's legacy alive through charity Mooch Soccer.

By **Shaun Chornobroff**

In April 2007, Rider men's soccer coach Charlie Inverso found a way to honor his dear friend Glenn "Moose" Myernick.

Myernick, a former United States National Soccer Team player and assistant coach, who demonstrated an exceptional passion for the game of soccer, unexpectedly passed away from a heart attack in October 2006. But, Inverso, along with Mike Van Wagener, who used to run the recreation soccer department in Trenton, started "Mooch Soccer," an initiative to bring soccer to the underserved youth in the city of Trenton in Myernick's honor.

Over the past 13 years, Inverso has had success with the program, creating four travel teams at minimal cost in the city of Trenton, sending them to play in a legitimate travel league and to tournaments in the past.

Inverso's program has helped many young kids get started in the game. The program still only has a single branch in Trenton, but he has a big vision for its expansion.

"I ran it past a couple of people at the national level, a couple of coaches ... they really like the idea," he said. "Because they think it's also a matter of providing opportunities for Black youth."

Inverso has spoken with a decent number of coaches and it has made him optimistic about the idea moving forward.

"I've talked to 25 [coaches], and about 20 of them have given really positive responses," Inverso said.

He has reached out to mostly larger colleges, such as the University of Maryland, Princeton University, Pennsylvania State University, Dartmouth College, Rutgers University and Northwestern University. Inverso said he has had Zoom conferences with coaches from Maryland, Penn State and Northwestern about expanding "Mooch Soccer."

While COVID-19 has shut down the program over the past few months, Inverso acknowledged that it's giving him the perfect opportunity to expand his initiative.

"When you're a busy coach, an initiative like this always gets pushed to the bottom of the to-do list. That's why this fall is the perfect time to get this started," Inverso explained. "The fall, right now, this is the first time ever no one's had a fall season, so it's the perfect time for coaches to get this started."

Inverso's program solves one of the biggest issues plaguing the American youth soccer system today: interest from urban areas. This fault comes as a result of the exorbitant fees that come with playing youth soccer. Between uniform, travel, league and training costs, it's hard for kids from under-served areas to play the sport.

"Youth soccer is a multi-billion dollar business and unfortunately if you can't make money somewhere, not many people are interested in creating a soccer program in those areas," Inverso said.

Inverso's initiative, however, can reverse that and has proven to get underprivileged youth involved.

"I think it provides the opportunities to do this after they graduate because we have a whole population of kids that get the opportunity to play soccer and that's the underserved kids, and that doesn't necessarily mean urban kids, it's all kids in underserved areas," he said.

Inverso has helped a number of young players take advantage of this opportunity, sending seven athletes to play college soccer, and with two kids having earned youth national team camp invites. Matthew Olosunde may be the most heralded name to come from the program. Olosunde, who played for English powerhouse Manchester United up until 2019 and has made an appearance for the U.S. National Team, played for a "Mooch Soccer" team for a good portion

of his childhood.

Inverso used to have Rider soccer players involved with the program, but this has become more difficult due to circumstances in the past few years. Inverso admitted that, "this generation" of players hasn't been involved with the program, but that will be changing as soon as possible.

"My ideal situation would be when we are allowed to re-open and start getting the kids to play that we would have the players involved," Inverso explained. "I think it's important that some of the players have contact with some of the players in the program to be good mentors and role models."

Inverso added, "That's ideally what our vision is at the national level for teams to do this."

The Rider men's soccer head coach has been applauded for this effort, even being awarded one of the five inaugural Advocacy Awards of Excellence by the United Soccer Coaches in 2019.

While the recognition is great, Inverso takes pride in the opportunity and potential within the sport for a population that gets misrepresented in the soccer world.

Inverso's current strategy is expanding the initiative through Division I programs but he hopes it goes further than that and allows coaches to use their influence.

"Maybe in women's Division I, maybe in Division III, maybe in high school but the time is long overdue," Inverso said. "I think we as coaches can actually apply something that we're good at to provide opportunity."

## Baggett wants 'movement' not 'moment'

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"This is a big step when people hire chief diversity officers on campus. That person is going to be in charge of a lot in terms of retention, making sure that there's the right amount of representation for all ethnic groups, making sure that there's promotional opportunities for minorities," Baggett said.

Baggett said the chief diversity officer will also serve in the president's cabinet.

Baggett wants this to be a catalyst for change and equality, and openly fears that this may just be a moment, which he is trying to use his platform

to prevent. He is hoping that this country becomes something he briefly knew, a country unified in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"You guys were probably young when 9/11 happened," Baggett said. "I remember there was a time when they would play that song, 'It's Great to be an American' [God Bless the USA by Lee Greenwood] and we were all proud because that was a time where we all had to come together because there was another country going against us. Our country was united for a little while then, but it's just like anything else as time goes on we started to separate again. At that time, it was a great feeling because

people knew we needed to come together. Well here we are now, can we do that not only for now, but going forward, so this doesn't become just a moment, but a movement."

Baggett reiterated that the biggest thing that can be done is to educate and keep an open dialogue.

"Educate white people, educate Black people that are young people and don't understand. The more we can communicate and talk and the more that we can listen and not just talk at people, but that we listen," Baggett said. "We still won't agree on everything, but to understand that there's common ground for us both and that to me is always going to be equality."



# Sports

ONLINE

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

*Men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett talks Black Lives Matter in video interview.*

FIND THE VIDEO ON THE RIDER NEWS' YOUTUBE CHANNEL

BLACK LIVES MATTER

# Kevin Baggett opens up about social justice



Gerard Blandina/The Rider News

Rider Men's Basketball Head Coach **Kevin Baggett** flanked by former players **Tyere Marshall**, **Kimar Williams**, **Willy Nuñez Jr.** and **Stevie Jordan**

By **Shaun Chornobroff** and **Dylan Manfre**

It was not long ago that Kevin Baggett was driving home from Alumni Gym around 10 p.m. after a routine day at work.

He wasn't speeding. He wasn't swerving. It was just a typical 25-minute drive to his home in Burlington, New Jersey.

Then, he experienced something that incites fear into the hearts of Black people in America.

Getting pulled over.

"I was uncomfortable, and I knew the officer was kind of picking at me a little bit, so I just said 'Would you mind if I record this?'" Baggett recalled.

Frequently, events have shown, getting pulled over is anything but safe for Black people.

He has lived most of his 54 years in fear simply because he is a Black man in America. After Trayvon Martin was shot and killed wearing a hooded sweatshirt in 2012, Baggett is now "a little fearful to be running with a hood on because somebody might perceive it a little different."

Even now in 2020, with the coronavirus gripping the nation and forcing people to wear masks, he rhetorically asked "now with COVID[-19] everybody has masks on, can you imagine just a year ago if somebody had a mask on and walked into a bank? I mean everybody would be up in arms, especially if a black person would have something on."

Baggett, who is Rider's first Black men's basketball coach, is more than just the coach. He's a son, husband and most importantly a father. And in these difficult times, Baggett openly fears for his kids and their future.

Not too long after George Floyd's death in May, Baggett listened to Marvin Gaye's song "What's Going On" from 1971 and recalled the lyrics "Mother, mother, there's too many of you crying."

The next two lines read "Brother, brother, brother, there's too many of you dying."

"That was written back in [1971] and if you listen to that song ... it's the same things that were going on back in the 60s as it is now," Baggett said. "The police brutality, the water hosing, the dogs, the dog attacks, being beaten by blackjacks — whatever they called them back in the day — those things. That's my biggest fear. And then my fears for my family. My fears for my kids. Will they see a different world? That we've gotten better? That we've taken steps? Will they see a drastic change? Because they're going to have kids, and I'm going to have grandkids."

Baggett has a son and a daughter who are 22 and 30, respectively. Despite their age, he still has open conversations with them about how to behave in front

of the police.

"We talk about when you get pulled over, make sure you keep both hands on the steering wheel until the officer comes up to the window, and when they do ask for your license and your registration that if it's in your bag or your pocketbook or your glove compartment that, before you move your hands you ask if you can reach into your glove compartment or go into your pocketbook or your bag in order for you to provide them with whatever it is that they need," Baggett said.

"We also talk about the inequality of being Black because we have to work harder. I talk to my kids about when they apply for jobs, the last name of 'Baggett.' There's racial bias in reading resumes. If it sounds like a Black person compared to a white person's resume, there's a chance that more often than not, our resumes won't be reviewed. We won't have opportunities to get those jobs."

When the world first saw the video of the moments leading up to Floyd's death, universal protests erupted at a magnitude never before seen.

"I call it 'the perfect storm,'" Baggett said. "We were in a COVID [-19] situation where people were really stricken to their homes and for this to come out at that time — I always believe in a higher being and in God, and I believe that God puts things out there for us all to pay attention to — I think all of this was the perfect time with the COVID [-19] going on, with this video being taken and it just gave America a chance to see really what's going on."

Baggett has hope that equality can be achieved, and is taking a public stance despite his perpetual daily fears. In the aftermath of Floyd's death, Baggett released a statement on Twitter and Instagram on June 3.

"As many people know, I am not a frequent user of social media, however, these past few weeks have been extremely difficult to process — not only as a coach, but as a Black man, husband, father, son and friend," Baggett's statement read. "I have used this time to stand in solidarity with my players, staff, and community, and give them a safe place to process their feelings. I will continue to do the work needed to make sure they feel heard. To my broader community, action provokes change, and we need your help to make that change."

Baggett and his coaching staff banded together with women's basketball Assistant Coach Marritta Gillcrease and had Zoom calls with each of Rider's coaching staffs from the other sports to express how they are feeling about the civil unrest in the country.

Due to scheduling conflicts, they were unable to

meet with the coaches of the baseball team, however they still plan for the meeting to take place in the future. Baggett said these productive conversations brought them together as an athletic department.

"We shared some videos of different things with the different sports teams and I thought it was great," Baggett said. "I thought our athletes had a lot of great things to say, white, Black, Hispanic, whatever nationality, it impacted everybody, these are uncomfortable conversations that people wouldn't have had or are scared to have that I was willing to take that lead not only here at Rider but in the athletic department."

The Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) announced its United for Justice campaign on Aug. 20, which laid out various initiatives that the league will be taking to promote the Black Lives Matter movement. This includes patches that the coaches and players will wear, as well as hardwood details for the basketball court. The MAAC will also provide "digital board content," according to a news release by the league. MAAC teams "will be encouraged to participate in Martin Luther King Jr. Day programming to celebrate his legacy and commitment to social change." Baggett, who took a lead on the initiative, said he is hoping to play a game on the holiday.

Baggett has been a part of conversations about race on campus, and has been pleased with university President Gregory Dell'omo's actions.

Baggett commended Dell'omo and his wife for attending Zoom meetings that Executive Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Pamela Pruitt and her staff put together to allow students to speak out about their experiences with race at Rider.

"I thought President Dell'omo did an unbelievable job of really stepping up and getting out in front of it and admitting the fact that we have a long way to go, but he was able to take this on and not take it [lightly] and take it seriously."

The university's decision to create the position of a chief diversity officer is something Baggett is especially proud of. Baggett, who is Rider's first black men's basketball coach, is representing athletics as a part of the diverse committee in charge of presenting Dell'omo with formulating responsibilities for the chief diversity officer.