



COVID cases continue to climb

By Stephen Neukam

FIVE more confirmed coronavirus cases were reported by Rider, as the university continues a late-semester uptick in cases just weeks before winter break, according to statistics released by the school on Nov. 10.

The cases are mirrored by a continued surge in students in quarantine on the campus, with 96 students entering quarantine housing in the past four weeks. In the first nine weeks of the semester, just 28 individuals had been in quarantine.

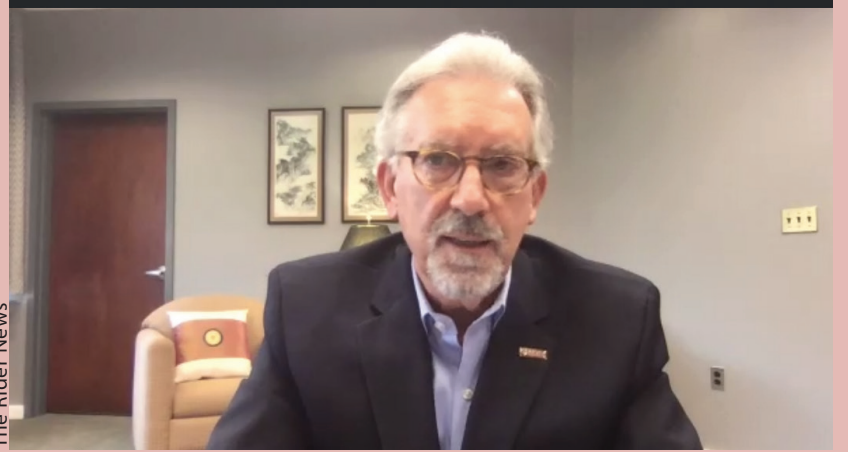
Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla said that none of the positive cases came from the university's surveillance testing program and just one came from testing through the Student Health Center. Student positives can also be reported to the university through outside care providers.

While Stasolla said the university is "always concerned" about positive cases, she was confident that Rider has dealt with

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Cost cutting runs deep as university faces daunting deficit



Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo revealed a deep-cutting cost saving plan at a town hall, focus primarily on reducing labor costs across the university.

By Sarah Siock

RIDER President Gregory Dell'Omo announced the elimination of 15 staff positions as a result of a savings initiative put in place to combat a daunting \$17.4 million deficit projection, a realization of the administration's plans for further cost-cutting in the depths of a pandemic, at a town hall meeting on Nov. 4.

In all, the cuts to labor costs are projected to save the university over \$15 million over the next two years as the administration maneuvers to get the deficit under control. In addition to the 15 eliminated positions, five

staff members were reduced from full-time to part-time.

The plan outlined at the meeting also projected savings generated from other areas of the university, including the elimination of 75 vacant positions, the closing of the College of Continuing Studies and administration salary reductions.

Associate Vice President of University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown said the eliminated positions were from various departments.

"The impacted positions came from several divisions

SEE LABOR PAGE 2

COVID - 19 Counter

Confirmed Cases
Last updated: Nov. 10, 2020

29
Cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed COVID - 19 cases at Rider University (Since March 2020)

COVID - 19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
November 2020	9	0
October 2020	4	1
September 2020	1	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

ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

WEEKS	HEALTH CENTER	SURVEILLANCE TESTING
Nov. 9-15	17	33
Nov. 2-8	15	79
Oct. 26-Nov. 1	10	62
Oct. 19-25	5	64
Oct. 12-18	0	45
Oct. 5-Oct. 11	6	0
SEPT. 28-Oct. 4	4	0
SEPT. 21-27	5	0
SEPT. 14-20	1	0

STUDENT QUARANTINE

WEEKS	ON CAMPUS	OFF CAMPUS
Nov. 9-15	29	19
Nov. 2-8	57	39
Oct. 26-Nov. 1	10	9
Oct. 19-25	14	13
Oct. 12-18	1	19
Oct. 5-Oct. 11	3	17
SEPT. 28-Oct. 4	4	13
SEPT. 21-27	3	3
SEPT. 14-20	2	1

Rider will extend free testing to students before they return back home for the winter break.

Leaving Rider: What a former professor's story reveals about a disputed Title IX system

By Stephen Neukam

IN 2017, Brea Heidelberg was on track for tenure at Rider. She was the first Black woman in her department in the School of Fine and Performing Arts. She was expecting a baby. She was getting closer to some of her professional and personal milestones.

But Heidelberg left Rider after allegations that she was likely the victim of discrimination.

Heidelberg, a former assistant professor of arts administration, walked away from the university in the aftermath of a public feud with other faculty in the school — a dispute that culminated in a Title IX investigation.

The investigation found it "more likely than not" that at least four faculty, two of whom still teach at the university, discriminated against Heidelberg on account of her race and/or gender, according to a conclusion memo by a third-party investigator.

The professor's story depicts a Title IX process that Heidelberg argued is deeply flawed and designed to protect the university from legal trouble rather than root out and punish misconduct. It also portrays a toxic structure in Rider's School of Fine and Performing Arts (SFPA) that is dominated by white men who are resistant to change and work to stomp out claims of harassment.

According to the investigator's report, in the fall of 2016, the department voted unanimously for Heidelberg's tenure. However, when she and a fellow faculty member voted against another professor's tenure, the report found that five faculty members most likely changed their vote for Heidelberg in retaliation.

The report found that at least four professors most likely acted in discriminatory ways, including stereotyping on account of gender and changing their vote with a racial motive. In one instance, the report points out how four professors referred to Heidelberg as "flippant" in a letter against her tenure. Due to the toxic environment, Heidelberg altered her teaching schedule and moved her office location. None of the four professors responded to a request from The Rider News for comment.

Eventually, after a prolonged process, Heidelberg received tenure after other faculty in the school stepped up to support her case.

Heidelberg said the stress of working at the university was causing complications

with her unborn baby's heartbeat. She decided to leave behind years of professional progress and depart from the school.

"I got tenure and decided to leave because the institution had become so toxic and so hostile that I could not imagine staying," said Heidelberg.

Heidelberg considered further legal action and after meeting with a lawyer was told that she did have a case but that it would be costly, lengthy and difficult, and at seven months pregnant, she had another job offer at a different school.

Former students of Heidelberg spoke highly of the professor. Nicole Dvorin '17 said that Heidelberg's curriculum was "tough but fair" and that "[she] gave me a leg up and allowed me to stand out against competition." Ariana Albarella '16 said that Heidelberg was "an integral part of who I am today when it comes to my career."

While Heidelberg found a position at Drexel University, where she was ultimately granted tenure, the memory of her experience and power structure that manifested it remained.

Faculty are bound to secrecy in Title IX cases — although the report found it more likely than not that there was discrimination, it is unclear whether any disciplinary actions were handed down at Rider. It's a dynamic that Associate Professor Justin Burton finds particularly troubling.

"This process is just a train heading down the tracks into a dark tunnel that it never comes out of," said Burton, speaking about the general Title IX procedures.

Heidelberg said Burton was initially the only ally in her case. Burton said he has been advised by the university's legal counsel not to speak about her investigation, and declined to do so to The Rider News.

Burton said that in general, the Title IX process is designed to exhaust accusers, putting them through burdensome processes, veiled in secrecy, that never reach the light of day — a dynamic that stifles conversation and transparency about the flawed culture of the school.

"Nobody wants to find out that they are the bad guy," said Burton. "The power imbalance, I think, encourages or incentivizes dismissal or denial. I think that both the union and the administration contribute to this ... this is all universities' problem."

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Men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Bagget casts doubt on upcoming season.

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ENVIRONMENT UNDER FIRE

College-aged voters are worried about climate change.

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RIDER'S GOT TALENT

Students showcase a wide array of talent at "Rider's Got Talent."

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

Turn It Down.

Bad neighbors. On Nov. 5 at 3:45 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Olson Hall for a report of a noise disturbance. When officers arrived, the complainants, who live on the first floor, said the disturbance was coming from the room above them. When the officers went to the second floor, it was silent and were unable to find any signs of disturbance.

Accident

Two car quarrel. On Nov. 6 at 3:56 p.m., Public Safety received a report of a motor vehicle accident at the south entrance of the university. The two-vehicle accident resulted in an injury to one of the drivers and police and firefighters were dispatched to the scene. The investigation of the accident has been turned over to the Lawrence Police Department.

Nowhere To Be Found

What's that smell? On Nov. 7 at 1:50 p.m., an officer was conducting a building check of Beckett Village when they detected the odor of suspected marijuana near the lobby. After a canvassing of the area, the officer was unable to locate the source of the smell.

— Information provided by Interim Capt. Matthew Babcock

Labor costs the target of deficit shaving

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across the university including student affairs, academic affairs, enrollment management, finance and facilities/university operations," said Brown.

The deficit projection is an increase from a hole of \$11.2 million last year. Dell'Omo said one of the contributing factors to the growing deficit is a decrease of students living in residence halls during the 2020 fall semester. According to Dell'Omo, the number of students living on campus was predicted to be at 1,000 but ended up being closer to 900.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of when our residence halls are not at full capacity or near full capacity the impact it has on our revenues," said Dell'Omo.

Dell'Omo spoke to the difficulty of eliminating positions and added that there are no current plans for additional layoffs.

"Losing individuals or colleagues, who have contributed toward Rider's success is always difficult and painful for them, their families and for the university community as a whole. These decisions are never taken lightly or are they made without significant forethought and they should always be a decision of last resort," said Dell'Omo.

"We wish them all the best in their futures. We offered them severance compensation, assistance with their benefits, as well as support to help them with their transition."

The lingering effects of the pandemic might be felt in student enrollment as well. Dell'Omo said Rider met its mark for fall enrollment of new students for this semester at 995 students. However, Dell'Omo said that there has been a delay in new student applications for the 2021-2022 school year, threatening to plunge revenues even further next year.

"All schools are experiencing the same situation with a real lag on the inquiries and applications right now," said Dell'Omo.

The meeting concluded with Dell'Omo announcing that the upcoming spring semester will begin on Feb. 1 — one week later than planned in lieu of a spring break. This decision was made as a COVID-19 precaution to reduce the number of students and faculty traveling during this time then returning to campus.

"As I stay in touch with the governor's office and with the Secretary of Higher Education's office, we will constantly be monitoring this situation. There is a lot of concern on how we are going to proceed through these fall months," said Dell'Omo.

Ninety-six students entered quarantine within past four weeks

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possible outbreaks responsibly. In the last couple of weeks, four unrelated cases of the virus had been discovered in Hill Hall, the most populated residence hall on campus. After placing temporary restrictions on the residents, urging them to stay in their rooms as much as possible, 26 students in the dorm volunteered for testing. None of the tests returned positive and restrictions on the residents were lifted.

Stasolla said that the increase in quarantined students could be correlated to an increase in positive cases. The more confirmed cases of the virus, the more students will be determined as "close contacts" and will be placed in quarantine.

The university announced that it would extend free testing for students before they return home for the winter, beginning the week of Nov. 16. Stasolla said that the university wanted to help students construct responsible plans for a return back home.

"To give people peace of mind, and help them in their planning, we are offering this testing," said Stasolla.

However, Stasolla emphasized that getting tested will only provide students with a temporary idea of their health situation — every moment after getting tested, a student could have contracted the virus.

"That testing is done at a point in time," said Stasolla. "Students really need to be talking with their families, their health care provider, about when best to be tested. They can't let their guard down."

The announcement to students about the testing includes an advisory that warns "students should be reminded that the test only reflects one point in time, there can be false negative results, and, in some cases, the virus may be contracted during travel."

The university's initiative comes as public health officials and political leaders across the country warn about the dangers of college students returning home and going to family gatherings for the holidays. The students' return also comes as the virus continues to break records all around the nation.

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo announced that the university would expand its surveillance testing program in the spring semester, at a town hall on Nov. 5. Stasolla said that plans for the program are still being worked through and would be sorted out over the winter.

The current infrastructure for the surveillance program was just a temporary arrangement to get the university started for the last five weeks of the fall semester.

As university preps for possible Title IX inquiries, concerns raised about effectiveness of the process

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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs DonnaJean Fredeen did not respond to questions about Heidelberg's investigation or concerns regarding the Title IX process. Instead, she said, "the University investigates all reported allegations of violations of our Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy thoroughly and impartially, takes all such reports seriously and takes appropriate actions to address violations and prevent recurrence."

The structure of the investigations opens questions about possible inquiries into allegations of misconduct brought forward by students in Rider's School of Fine and Performing Arts in recent months. The claims prompted the university to hire an outside firm to sift through the allegations, which could serve as a precursor to investigations.

The students' allegations revealed claims of misconduct ranging from racial insensitivity and sexism to body shaming and inappropriate relationships. The claims were presented to the faculty and university in a 44-page document, comprising submissions from current and former students.

While the claims surfaced only recently, seeds of mistrust and abuse in the school can be found in a letter that Heidelberg wrote as a part of her tenure dossier in January 2017, in which she says she helped students navigate "having their skin tone mocked during a theater class;" "not having their issues with 'fitting in' understood even when they seek help from administrators;" and "being marginalized by faculty for mental health issues, physical ailments and relationship issues."

As both alumni and current students come forward with allegations, Dvorin and Abarella said they were aware of misconduct in their time at the university.

"I definitely can recall instances of inappropriate conduct both experienced personally and witnessing or hearing about it secondhand," said Dvorin.

According to two current students in the school, it is expected that several students and alumni will go forward with formal complaints against faculty.

While concerns stand about the ability of the university to properly address misconduct, Burton said that the students who have raised accusations and

organized resistance have the character to withstand the draining investigatory processes.

"They've fully blown me away," said Burton. "I don't have the words to describe how courageous it is. To stand up to the people that have mistreated you who have power over your grades and power, to an extent, over your career."



Courtesy of Brea Heidelberg

Brea Heidelberg's experience at Rider raises questions about the Title IX process, just as the university preps for possible investigations into claims of misconduct.

Rider decides to cancel spring break due to concerns about pandemic

By Logan VanDine

RIDER University has officially decided to cancel spring break completely this year, citing health and travel concerns as the coronavirus pandemic worsens across the country, President Gregory Dell’Omo announced at a town hall on Nov. 5. “After careful consideration and thorough discussion, we have made the decision to start the spring 2021 semester one week later than originally planned and eliminate spring break. This decision was guided primarily by current federal, state and local guidelines, consideration of travel restrictions and quarantine and what is best for the health and safety of our entire university community,” Dell’Omo said in a statement.

The decision to eliminate this year’s spring break will give students an extra week to prepare for the upcoming spring semester as it will begin on Feb. 1 and end as scheduled on April 30.

Dell’Omo said he understood that canceling spring break is very disappointing for students but the safety and health of the students, teachers and staff are the school’s number one priority.

“We know eliminating spring break may be disappointing, but doing so will reduce the chance of members of our community traveling during this time, then returning to campus, which could potentially increase the spread of the virus. Taking this step will help lessen the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak like we’ve seen occur in other areas of the state and country, and give us the best chance to achieve a successful completion of the spring semester,” Dell’Omo said.

Rider, with this decision, will hope to limit the spread of the coronavirus as cases have spiked across the country over the last several weeks. Rider students were upset, but not surprised by the decision Rider made.

“I’m not surprised it happened, especially with the three kids getting kicked off campus for partying at Ohio State, so I’m obviously not surprised, it’s upsetting because I really wanted a break from classes,” freshman criminal justice student Donald Haws said.

Freshman graphic design major Eric Buckwalter was disappointed that students will not get a break from classes in the spring.

“I understand it was only a short amount of time, but students naturally need a break to refresh their minds and be able to perform at their peak and hopefully professors will realize that and will adapt to the changing scenarios,” he said.

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Kelly Bidle, who chairs the coronavirus implementation team, also discussed the importance of canceling spring break and what ultimately led to the decision.

“Obviously we’re still in the midst of the pandemic and it’s really uncertain what’s going to be happening in terms with the spring semester, we’re getting ready



Stephanie Jessiman/The Rider News

Many other universities across the country are looking at alternatives to a traditional spring break, similar to what Rider is doing now.

to go into cold and flu season, we don’t have a vaccine yet and so out of abundance of caution and following federal and state and local guidelines, we decided that in the best interest in the community to follow health and safety standards that canceling spring break would probably give us the opportunity avoid any outbreaks on campus,” Bidle said.

Rider’s highest priority is to finish the spring semester on time and avoid any outbreaks on campus.

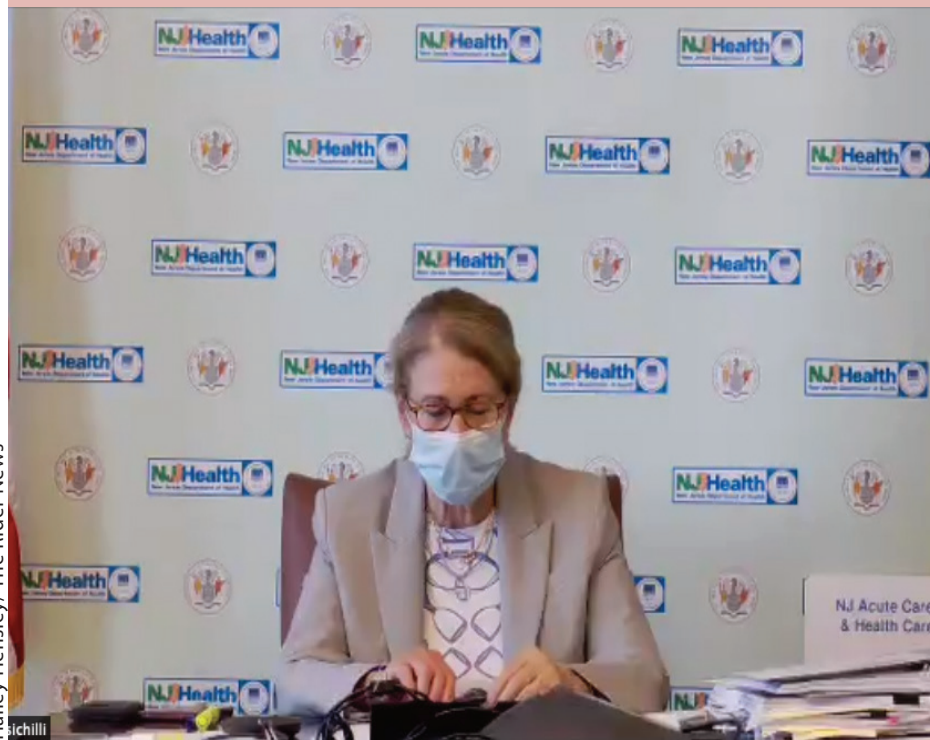
Bidle was also asked if she thinks there is a possibility that Rider may have to start the spring semester online.

“Again, it depends on the nature of the pandemic, unfortunately, you see that we’re in a third wave right now and the curve is not flattening, it’s going up and I just have to hope good judgment prevails in the country and so that way the curve can flatten and that there is a spring semester that we don’t have to be remote in but time will tell over the next couple of months,” Dr. Bidle said.

Even with cases spiking across the country, especially on college campuses, Bidle said that Rider is doing a great job following all protocols.

“The Rider population, in general, have been very, very good at adhering to all the guidelines that we’ve requested,” said Bidle.

NJ Health Commissioner talks pandemic recovery at Rebovich event



Hailey Hensley/The Rider News

New Jersey Health Commissioner **Judith Persichilli ‘80** has remained at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 in the United States due to New Jersey’s incredibly dense population and high rates of infections.

By Hailey Hensley

In the wake of a global pandemic that has shaken people all over the world, New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli ‘80 projected a timeline for the COVID-19 pandemic as well as provided some strategies everyone can use right now to slow the spread.

The Rebovich Institute of New Jersey Politics invited Persichilli to give a short speech and allow members of the Rider community to get their burning questions regarding the pandemic and a career in public service answered.

Persichilli received her master of arts in healthcare administration from Rider in 1980 after beginning her career as an intensive care nurse.

The event began with Micah Rasmussen, director of the Rebovich Institute, introducing Persichilli and providing a short biography, which was then followed by a talk from Persichilli where she outlined the ups and downs of her time as New Jersey Health Commissioner so far. She specified that her time in office began with the Newark water crisis, where lead was permeating the Newark water supply from the pipes.

The following months of her time in office have been filled with the ongoing pandemic, with New Jersey being one of the states hit the hardest early on after the pandemic began in the United States, which meant Persichilli had to be at the

forefront of the fight against COVID-19 since the very beginning.

Persichilli enumerated the importance of remaining vigilant in the fight against COVID-19, stating that social distancing and frequent handwashing still remain exceedingly important.

“After eight months, we understand we’re all suffering from endemic fatigue. But this virus isn’t suffering. This virus has been waiting for us to get lacks in our personal responsibilities so that it can come more roaring back and it has and in particular, we’re seeing many of the new cases linked to gatherings, small gatherings and private homes, where folks are more apt to let their guard down, especially in social distancing,” she said.

Persichilli reminded audience members of the COVID NJ app, which allows for BlueTooth contact tracing and is noninvasive to personal data. She encouraged viewers to download the app and participate in the program as a matter of public health.

“To complement traditional contact tracing efforts, the department recently launched our COVID alert NJ app for mobile devices. The app uses exposure notification system technology developed by Google and Apple. When the app senses a close contact who has tested positive, your phone will exchange a secure random code with the close contact’s phone,” said Persichilli.

The app can be found in both the Google Play store and the Apple app store and it is free for users to download and participate.

“The COVID alert app notifies users if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19,” she said. “COVID alert NJ is completely anonymous and does not track or collect any data or any location or personal data. It uses Bluetooth low energy technology to detect when another phone with the same app is within six feet. More than 314,000 residents have downloaded the app. But we need more. We need more to participate so that we can identify those that have been exposed and provide the safety that they need. I ask all of you to download the app and add your phone to the fight against COVID-19.”

Persichilli took time to elaborate on what a timeline for vaccination in New Jersey may look like and when life in the United States might be able to return to normal, with prospects looking bleak until late 2021.

“We have a big task ahead of us. We’re hopeful that the vaccines will provide the immunity that we need to protect our communities. But we won’t know that for a while, we won’t know that for a year, we will continue wearing masks, social distancing, washing our hands frequently, practicing good respiratory etiquette, staying home if you’re sick and getting tested if you need it,” she said. “This is going to be our way of life for at least another year, as we plan for large-scale vaccination program that we hope will kick off at the end of December and go to June or July. We encourage you all to consider getting vaccinated. It’s the only tool we have.”

C-SPAN3 features Rider course “The American Presidency”



Courtesy of TV Guide

A Rider professor's Zoom class discussion from Sept. 14 was aired on C-SPAN3 on Oct. 17 twice.

By Austin Ferguson

In the weeks leading up to the 2020 presidential election, a Rider University lecture on the American presidency and various communication styles was featured on C-SPAN3.

The hour-long lecture was a segment of C-SPAN3's "American History TV," a series that C-SPAN started in 2011 to spotlight events, testimonies and discussions about American history during the channel's weekend programming.

The lecture was a previously-recorded Zoom session of the COM-390 course "The American Presidency," a special topics course in political science taught by Professor of communications Myra Gutin.

Indicated by the class title, the featured class from Sept. 14 discussed American presidents, specifically talking about their different styles and tactics in communicating with the general public and aired twice on C-SPAN3 on Oct. 17.

Gutin started off the class with a quick but effective comment on the state of the 2020 election, referring to the presentation's visual title of "The Making of The President 2020" as "The political circus of the century."

Gutin's talk included the "effectiveness of presidential communications based on... vision, charisma, pragmatism, consensus-building, credibility, luck and speaking ability," according to C-SPAN's synopsis on the lecture.

Starting with Theodore Roosevelt, the class session, titled by C-SPAN as "Presidents and Campaign Communications Since 1900," discussed communication techniques both during presidential campaigns and their time in office. The class went on to focus on modern presidential campaigns and speaking patterns in relevance to their effectiveness as communicators, even touching on the recent President-elect of the United States Joe Biden's imperfect speech patterns giving him a sense of relatability to the voting public, likening him to former President George W. Bush.

Gutin finished the session with her take on what she felt was an advantage that the now president-elect Biden had over incumbent President Donald Trump, comparing Trump's public speaking abilities to 2016 Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

"Hillary Clinton is a good speaker, she is very articulate, Trump not as much... it's been said if Joe Biden has one thing going for him, it is that he is likeable," Gutin said.

The lecture was the fifth time Gutin has been featured in C-SPAN programming, having made four previous appearances talking about the First Ladies of the United States, with a focus on Barbara Bush. The class was the first time a Rider University class or event was featured on C-SPAN, according to its video library.

The entire hour-long lecture is available to view on C-SPAN's video library at CSPAN.org.

Beloved Rider professor of biology passes from lung cancer on Oct. 29

By Tatyanna Carman

PROFESSOR of biology and the Faculty Director of the Health Studies Institute Jonathan Yavelow, 68, passed away on Oct. 29 from lung cancer, according to a release from the university and his colleagues.

Yavelow worked at Rider for 38 years and taught classes such as "From the Big Bang to the Origin of Life," "Life Sciences: Cell and Genetic Emphasis" and "Cell and Molecular Biology and Lab," according to the Rider University website.

The university announced his passing to faculty on Oct. 30. A virtual memorial service will be held for Yavelow on Sunday, Nov. 15 at 1 p.m., according to a university-wide email sent out on Nov. 9.

Yavelow was also a member of the New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research, according to Associate Professor Phillip Lowrey.

"He worked to develop a science advisory board at Rider University for many years," Lowrey said. "He was assistant dean of science when that position still existed at Rider University. So he contributed in that way."

Professor in the Department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Sciences James Riggs said that Yavelow hired him in 1991. Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Kelly Bidle said that Yavelow also hired her when Yavelow was the chair of the Department of Biology.

"Jonathan was the kind of person who no matter who you were, no matter how well he knew you, he always made you feel special, like he was paying attention to you, and that whatever was going on with you was just so important to him," Bidle said. "You know, personally, I can't tell you, he was an incredible mentor. I mean, honestly, I could never have asked for a better professional mentor in my life."

Riggs referred to Yavelow as a mentor as well.

"Even before I got here, he was preparing me for being a college professor. When I arrived on campus, he was a very strong and supportive mentor, always an advocate for students," Riggs said. "If I had any kind of issues or things we would discuss things about students and [he was] just compassionate about students being successful, and not just the top of the line best students."

After she found out that his lung cancer had returned in March, Bidle mobilized to put together an endowed scholarship called The Jonathan Yavelow Scholarship to honor him. Bidle said that Yavelow's greatest legacy is that he built the sciences at Rider.

"He basically hired, at least in the Department of Biology, he hired almost all the faculty there up to a certain point and all the faculty he hired were prolific grant writers, they did research with students," Bidle said. "He created a culture in the sciences that really rivaled that of some of the best liberal arts universities, just in terms of our productivity, our work with students and our research, he made that culture possible."

Riggs said that Yavelow was the "personification of being student-centered."

Lowrey added to this sentiment and said he was a beloved professor and said that Yavelow was not only a professor, but a true friend to his students. Lowrey described Yavelow as "very dynamic, outgoing, gregarious" and "just welcoming with open arms."

Rider alumni Robert Major '99 said that Yavelow was his academic advisor and described him as "larger than life." He also said that he owes his career to Yavelow



Courtesy of Rider University

Professor of Biology and the Faculty Director of the Health Studies Institute Jonathan Yavelow was described as "very dynamic, outgoing, gregarious" by Associate Professor Phillip Lowrey.

because of his "mentorship and kindness."

"He gave me opportunities to write fellowship applications with him and I traveled with him to scientific conferences to present the results of our research," Major said. "My summer internship in New York City was the result of Dr. Yavelow establishing that connection for me and he drove up to visit me twice that summer to see how I was doing. He guided me in so many ways."

Riggs said that Yavelow got a chance to see faculty from the department while he was in hospice at home in August and September.

"COVID made this all very challenging, because you know, you couldn't get the hug," Riggs shared. "You couldn't come up close to him but he still wanted to see people, so he would sit on his porch and we would sit out in the yard and socially distance and interact. It's hard for our department, we're mourning his loss. And we can't really get together and you know, share a beer and shed a tear and tell stories."

Riggs also shared that Yavelow's death was a "huge loss," but the department is "getting through it."

"So, I guess our grief reflects our love. The more you grieve, the more you love someone. So there's a lot of sadness in the department right now," Riggs said.

The exciting life of Rider's own Dr. Pamela Pruitt

By Emma-Camille Lomax

SEVEN years ago, Rider University added a new addition to the family. She was very established, having held several leadership positions across the Mercer County area and corporate America. She is a Sept. 11 survivor. She is a Grammy award-winning songwriter. She worked with young adults to help lead them to success. She is the director of Multicultural Affairs at Rider. She is Pamela Pruitt. Raised in South Side, Chicago, Illinois, Pruitt had to overcome many obstacles very early in her life.

"I was given every chance to fail in my upbringing," she said.

Pruitt explained how she was not wanted by her mother before she was even born.

"She did everything she could to work me out of her but I came anyway, so I'm meant to be here," Pruitt said. She was successful academically as she was offered three full-ride scholarships to any state college. However, she had to turn them down to work with her single mother because "welfare wasn't an option."

Pruitt managed to get her bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State College in 2010. Then, she earned her master's from Rutgers in 2012. She received her doctoral degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 2016. In 2011, she even studied abroad at Wroxton College of Fairleigh Dickinson in Oxfordshire, England.

Before she went to college, Pruitt first stepped into the business world. She and her mother both worked for Wallace Brown, the first of many bosses who would help Pruitt reach her potential.

Brown showed Pruitt the ropes of business, which she said included "how to maneuver, how to be savvy, how to dress, and how to be around people and have conversations with them," all of which she still uses today.

His guidance helped her move up in his business — she started as a receptionist and eventually moved up to become an executive assistant.

As a product of corporate America, Pruitt has worked for many big-name corporations including Motown Records, CBS Television, Delta Air Lines and Warner Bros. Records, just to name a few.

Because of her work in business, she has traveled all over the world. Among all the places she has traveled to, she said New Jersey is her favorite.

"I love its proximity to New York and Philadelphia," Pruitt said. She came to New Jersey 22 years ago to marry her husband.

Pruitt referred to this time of her life as her "bonus round."

She took on this perspective of life after the events that took place on 9/11. Pruitt was in New York that day. She recalled escaping with bloody, bruised feet, "but at least I had feet."

Pruitt is currently in the process of writing a book that will go further

in-depth on her experiences that day. A friend called her the day after 9/11 and told her, "Kid, you're in the bonus round. So make the best of it."

Since then, she has done just that. With her extensive background and communication skills, Pruitt was able to "make the best of it" specifically with her work with young people.

At WIMG/Morris Broadcasting, she found herself getting more involved with students. As she worked with the Trenton Education Public Foundation as chairperson, she often saw herself and her struggles in those students.

"I found kids that were me. Many of the students I encountered were given every chance to fail," Pruitt explained.

She drew the parallel between students who grew up in urban cities and her work. All the guidance her bosses in corporate America gave her was bestowed upon her and used to guide students to success.

She continued to use that gift of guidance when she arrived at Rider University seven years ago.

As the current Executive Director of the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), Pruitt gave Rider students, specifically minorities, countless opportunities to express themselves and be heard.

Some of the programs provided to students under the CDI include Multicultural Student Leadership Institution (MSLI), SPECTRUM mentoring, and its newest program Peer-2-Peer mentoring. These programs put students in leadership positions and provide them advice that will lead them to success whether it was in the form of workshops, training or casual conversations.

Through her work at the CDI, it is evident that all of what Brown taught Pruitt is still instilled in her today, including how she dresses in a business fashion-forward.

Though she dresses professionally, her looks are still very fun as she incorporates bold colors or patterns like the zebra print worn in this interview. With her statement accessories, such as a large beaded necklace or a two-toned teardrop-shaped pair of earrings, Pruitt's outfits are never an eyesore when she is seen across campus.

Pruitt even used her background in music to help promote diversity throughout Rider.

Pruitt dabbled in songwriting for a bit as she wrote songs for big names like Smokey Robinson and the Supremes under the name Pamela Moffett. This skill led her to participate in a Grammy award-winning album, Ne-Yo's "Because of You." With that being said, Pruitt used her connections to her Motown family to put together an event for homecoming weekend, "Motown comes to Rider."

When asked which of her achievements she was the proudest of she answered passionately, "The Center of Diversity and Inclusion." Those who work with Pruitt noted the impactful change they have seen her make.

"Dr. Pruitt has pushed for diversity on campus and always looks to promote diversity and inclusion — not just for students of color, but faculty members as well, by educating the Rider community about the importance of diversity on a college campus," said peer leader for MSLI and sophomore political science major Karla Lopez.

Pruitt emphasized that students have a support system at home and that they need the same support on campus, which she provides through the center.

"I see Rider as a tapestry," Pruitt explained. "In a tapestry, it is a picture, it is blended. There are no definitions of colored threads. My goal for Rider is to see the beautiful tapestry that we are and not see the threads that comprise it."

Pruitt continued to sew those threads she saw seven years ago into a beautiful image of diversity and representation of all students, which will continue to be seen for years to come.

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Courtesy of Pamela Pruitt

Pruitt brings a lot of experience to Rider, including a background in corporate America and songwriting.

Powerful performers take the "Rider's Got Talent" stage

By Sarah Siock

SEVERAL show-stopping performances took the stage at Rider's first-ever virtual student talent show.

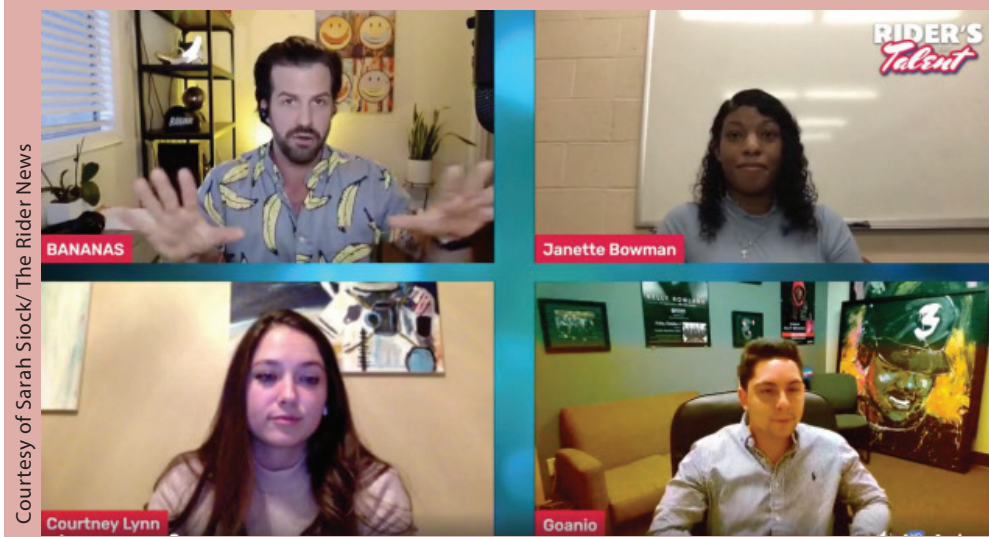
The competition, titled "Rider's Got Talent," took place on Nov. 6 with eight hopefuls vying to be crowned the winner. Since 2016, "Rider's Got Talent" was hosted during the university's welcome week events for the freshman class. This year, the Student Entertainment Council (SEC) opened the competition to the entire campus.

"We decided to bring 'Rider's Got Talent' back because we thought it would be a great way to bring the Rider community together and give students the chance to showcase their talent," said sophomore arts and entertainment industries management major Madeleine Caccavale, who organized the event as SEC's live music chair.

The competition kicked off at 7:30 p.m. with celebrity host John "Johnny Bananas" Devenanzio, who is known for his many appearances on the MTV reality competition show "The Challenge." Devenanzio was joined by three SEC members who served as the student judges of the talent show. Audience members watched the show through a Facebook live-stream where they could interact with the performers using a chat box.

Each competitor was given a chance to impress the judges and then receive feedback on their performance. After the performances were complete, the judges picked three contestants to move into the finals where students voted for the winner. The contestants consisted of popular music singers, slam poets and improv performers.

"I am most looking forward to seeing all the talent that the contestants will bring to the virtual stage. We have really talented students at Rider. This event is a great way to have a fun night despite the restrictions COVID-19 has produced for us this year," said Caccavale before the competition began.



MTV star John "Johnny Bananas" Devenanzio (upper left) hosts "Rider's Got Talent" alongside SEC members.

New Rider website is launched after an 18 month process

By Aaliyah Patel

AFTER a long and creative process, Rider University's Marketing and Communications team launched the university's brand new website for all students and faculty members, on Oct. 27.

In collaboration with 160over90, a full-service creative agency and KWALL, a creative web agency for higher education, this 18 month long process was implemented to rebuild and redesign features that would enhance the overall experience.

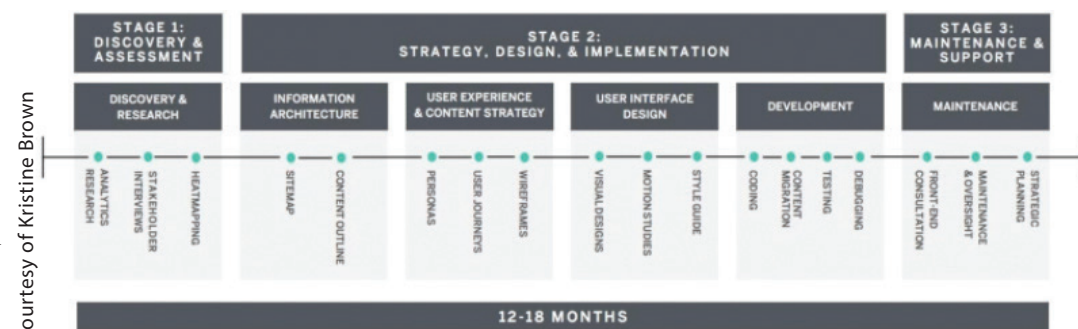
Alongside the process, a team of four undergraduate students and one graduate student were also instrumental in working to build the website.

Kristine Brown, associate vice president of university marketing and communications described the creative process behind building the new site from ground up.

"Everyone is always excited to see what a new web site is going to look like, and certainly the creative process was important to select colors, styles, photos and fonts but the architecture of the site, or the way it actually functions is just as important as the way it looks," Brown said.

Rider's previous website was outdated, which prevented transformations, which initiated the need to move to the modern web content management tool, Drupal 8.

"The web site is a marketing tool, and we view it as the 'front door' to the university for prospective students, families, alumni, donors and prospective employees, just to name a few. It is also an important resource for current students and employees. We



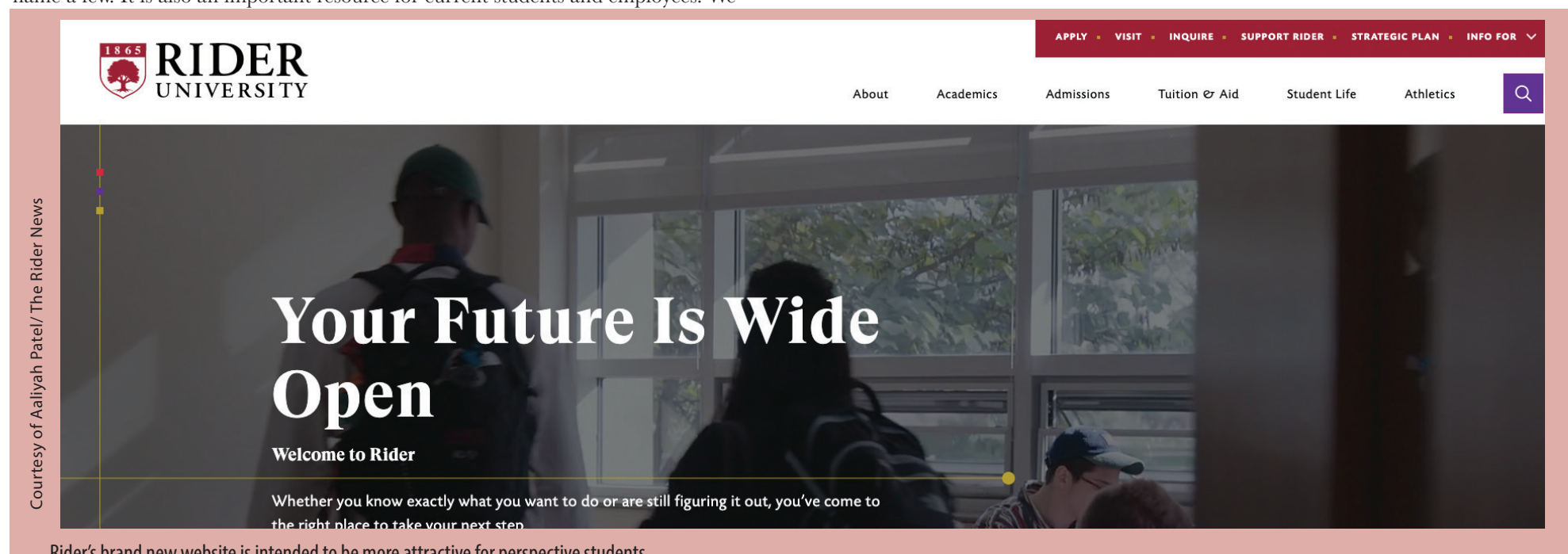
A timeline of the process followed to create the new Rider website.

needed to build a site that appealed to all of these audiences, while raising Rider's profile and offering an exemplary user experience no matter who comes to rider.edu," Brown said.

Aesha Shah, a junior computer science major, appreciated the ease of the new changes.

"I think it's really cool, honestly I like it a lot. It's easier to navigate now," Shah said.

Key features on the new website include search functionality powered by Google, translating the content into different languages and tools such as Academic Program Finder, a method that students can use to find programs they would like to major in.



Rider's brand new website is intended to be more attractive for perspective students.

A standout performer of the evening was junior sports media major James Green, who performed a poetry piece titled "My Rider Sweetheart."

His poem revolved around developing a crush and not knowing how to properly display his feelings.

"I am very open about my work. I hope that when people see my performance they feel more confident to show their talents. I am performing simply to have fun and entertain people," said Green.

All of the judges responded positively to Green's performance and appreciated the humorous aspects of the poem brought.

"There were so many great lines. I laughed at the lines that I could feel coming and then your delivery put it all together," said "Rider's Got Talent" judge and senior business management major Goanio Chavarria.

After a short deliberation period, the judges chose the acts that advanced to fight for the audience's votes. The contestants that moved onto the final round were: Green, freshman business administration major Ragan Yates and sophomore musical theater major Shamecia Thompson.

Audience members were given a link to vote for one of three contestants who they felt deserved to be crowned the "Rider's Got Talent" champion.

Ultimately, Thompson took home the win with her performance of "I Got Love" from the Broadway musical "Purlie." Thompson took a unique approach to her performance by reciting a monologue before she sang to give the audience context for the song. Her monologue followed a young woman becoming deeply invested in a relationship after just three days.

"Singing is something that I always do but I wanted to freshen it up with improvisation before the song," said Thompson. "I saw that majority of the people were singing and I wanted to do something that would stand out."

As the winner, Thompson will receive a smart TV, which she said will be put to good use.

"This was a very tough competition. Everyone really brought it with each performance being better than the next," said Devenanzio to wrap up the show.



Sophomore musical theater major Shamecia Thompson reacts to being named the winner of "Rider's Got Talent."

Students virtually discuss and learn about the recent election

By Kristian McCarville

The 2020 Presidential election was certainly one that people will be talking about for many years to come. While many are used to receiving election results in the later hours of Election Day, this year Americans were kept on the edge of their seats for days with uncertainty.

Social media was bustling with election news, discussion, uncertainty and the occasional joke made at the expense of Nevada. Throughout the past week, the election was a very hot topic for discussion, as many had predicted.

A string of virtual discussion-based events were planned, providing Rider students with the opportunities to express their feelings and gain insight about the recent election. These discussion spaces were open to any Rider student that had felt inclined to participate.

Beginning Nov. 4 from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. was the All-Day Drop-In: Post-Election Chat hosted by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Student Navigation Office. This virtual discussion space took place directly after Election Day, while several states were continuing to count votes.

Student Navigation Coach Christopher Micali was present for several discussions that took place during the event. He explained his experience throughout the event.

"My role during the event was to serve, firstly, as an empathic listener," said Micali. "The students who came to the room had very legitimate and personal concerns about what the outcome of this election means to them and their immediate family members. This was not a time for problem-solving or 'fixing.' Rather, students came to this room in order to find a compassionate ear to listen to these concerns."

Micali also explained that a common concern amongst students was how the election would impact themselves and their families. Specifically, students were worried about how the election would affect their families insurance, immigration policies and the handling of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

As students joined the discussion throughout the day, Micali believed that the event relieved many of their fears and anxieties regarding the election.

"The sense I got was that students just wanted to know that they were not alone in their worries and concerns," said Micali. "They wanted to feel like they could share their feelings in a safe space, free from judgment or pressure. I do feel that the students served left with a little less to try to process."

Following this event, the Department of Political Science held a post-election teach-in. This event was focused on explaining the events that had transpired since Election Day.

Chair of the Political Science Department Olivia Newman explained why it is important to discuss the election and educate others about the process.

"It is really important to talk about the electoral process so that citizens can have confidence in the integrity of our elections," said Newman. "Voter fraud is extremely rare and there is no reason to believe that this year's election has been compromised in



Courtesy of Rider University

Throughout the semester, the Rider Votes team strongly encouraged students to register to vote and use their voice as American citizens.

any way. Counting all of the votes takes time, and even more so this year because of the large number of mail-in and absentee ballots."

Newman went on to explain the issues that were discussed within the teach-in.

"The teach-in gave students and members of the community the opportunity to discuss a range of issues," said Newman. "This included why polls overestimated the 'blue wave' we would see in 2020, how support for Trump affected down-ballot legislative candidates, how results in New Jersey compare to the rest of the country and how political polarization is affecting politics and government. The questions from the audience were really great, too, and led to a fantastic conversation about the future of our democracy."

While it is so important for Americans to exercise their right to vote, it is also essential for people to be educated on the process of the election. With many accusations and disputes being made regarding the election, it is more important than ever for the American people to understand the electoral procedures that decide the future of their country.

Rider Dance Ensemble pivots to online performances

By Tori Pender

RIDER Dance Ensemble (RDE) has become creative, adapting to the pandemic while keeping the warm environment for its club members and reminiscing on the past.

Victoria Williams described that behind the red curtain of The Yvonne Theater, members of RDE encircle and in the middle stands the president of RDE with a hat on.

Next, the president performs a freestyle dance to a randomly selected song. Once the president's freestyle is done, the hat is passed to another member for them to continue the freestyle. The traveling hat goes around to everyone in the circle.

"We call it, 'Pass the Hat.' It's a really great time and helps everyone lift their spirits and energy before the show," said Williams, a junior dance major.

Williams has been a part of RDE since the spring semester of her freshman year and will continue to until she graduates.

Williams' fellow RDE members described the closeness of the club. Alayna Rubach, RDE treasurer and sophomore dance science major, has been a part of RDE since fall 2019.

"My favorite part about RDE is the family that the club has created for me," said Rubach. "I feel so welcome with everyone in the club, and I feel as though this club has given me friends that I will have for the rest of my life."

Since the transition to dancing via Zoom, RDE has been posting dance pieces from previous years for 'Flashback Friday' and hosted a paint and sip movie night.

"RDE has been doing online workshops every other Friday night, as well as having meetings every other Monday night in order to stay in touch with members of the club," said Rubach.

The transition from in-person dance to online dance has been difficult for some. "I miss the connection and feeling others' energy in the room when dancing. Being at home and isolated inside with dance feels so limited when dance is truly limitless," said Williams.

"The most challenging part about going online has been dealing with the fact that we can't physically dance together," said Rubach. "One of the biggest things that I know I am missing is physically dancing with others and being able to feed off of the energy of those around me."

Ryan Alger, a junior technical theater major and president of RDE, further explained, "The hardest part of transitioning to being online was thinking of ways to keep our members involved while not being able to physically dance together."

However, Alger and her team are staying on their toes. "My executive board and I are constantly thinking of new ideas to try to keep things fun and exciting. Stay tuned for a lot of fun surprises next semester," she said.

With the team motivated by their passion of dance, many remain hopeful to bring back some normalcy to the club.

"Hopefully we will be able to do some kind of online performance next semester," Rubach said.



Courtesy of @riderdanceensemble on Instagram

Rider Dance Ensemble gathers for a photo after their fall 2019 show "Raising the Barre."

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QUESTIONS FOR QUR'AN

DEAR Qur'an,
It is midterms week, any advice on how to effectively study?

From,
Midterm Mayhem

MIDTERM Mayhem,
Ironically, my simplest questions are some of the hardest to answer because I feel more inclined to think beyond the surface. With this question in particular, as students, all our lives we have been taught a plethora of ways to efficiently study. Yet, here we all are in college still wondering whether the study guide is going to look exactly like the test.

I believe that studying is indeed all about memorization, but that is not entirely a bad thing. Memorization is just the process of committing something to memory or learning something by heart. It is all about making sure you are allowing yourself enough time to memorize without it seeming as though you are just force-feeding the information. I am infamous for believing that if I study the night before or morning of an exam, the information will somehow be fresh in my memory. This risky method may work for some but for me, it never seemed to be successful because my anxiety from not studying clouds whatever part of my brain my short-term memories reside in.

Take it a day at a time because breaking up your time is essential. It is easier and less overwhelming when you can work on something in intervals. Plan which days you will do what and stick to it. There is always a sense of guilt with

living in the moment because we feel like we could be doing more with our time. Do not feel guilty for taking breaks or doing absolutely nothing with that time. I think being present in the now is realizing that, although life consists of due dates and deadlines, you are in full control of how you occupy your precious time.

When you finally find the time or when time finds you, utilize it with things that stimulate you, or give you energy. The hardest part is preparation — planning so that there is less pressure on the future. But, don't get ahead of yourself. Find a comfortable pace, listen to your body if you are feeling overworked or overwhelmed.

Most importantly, find study habits that work best for you. Every individual may like executing a task in a specific way that is unique to them, so try new things. My go-to study habits are writing out my notes and study beats. I realized I like listening to music when I work but the lyrics can be distracting, so I compromised. Work with the methods that are the most effective for you, so you are comfortable when studying instead of stressed.

P.S. Do not forget to nurture your body with brain food and enough hours of sleep.

P.S.S. Always assume the study guide will be NOTHING like the test.

Best of luck on your midterm,

Qur'an

THE Rider News

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GREEN CORNER

Environmental protections under fire ... literally

On Oct. 26, Rider was named one of the best colleges in the nation for student voting by Washington Monthly, due to the impressive efforts of the Rider Votes team.

One issue that seems to stand out to Rider and other university-aged voters was climate change.

Sophomore arts and entertainment industries management major Natalie Leclair said, "I feel like one of the biggest issues that young voters are passionate about is the environment. No matter what your political background is, I think we're all at least aware that climate change will affect all of us."

Leclair's notion is reinforced by a 2019 survey by Pew Research Center, which found that among 1,000 voters aged 18 to 29, four out of five believe "global warming is a major threat to human life on earth as we know it."

As young voters flocked to the polls on Nov. 3, or voted by mail in advance of election day, environmental regulation and protection was an issue in the minds of many.

Likely, young people feel especially compelled to protect environmental protections and regulations due to the current actions of the President Donald Trump administration. This includes the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Accord — which became official on Nov. 4 this year — as well as over 100 limitations and rollbacks which are currently in process under the current administration. The demographic most angry about these actions is young people.

Rider senior pop music studies major Dean Klebonas said, "We have taken so many steps in the wrong direction for the environment under this administration and that is obvious with a simple Google search. I'm not sure when we decided to stop listening to scientists and professionals, but we absolutely need to take their lead. It's their job."

Currently, the Trump administration has already rolled back 72 environmental rules and regulations which concern, but are not limited to: air pollution and emissions, drilling and extraction, infrastructure and planning, animals, water pollution and toxic substances and safety.

Twenty-seven other protections are currently under review by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), weakening regulations established under the President Barack Obama administration which regulated carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to climate change. In addition to the EPA, the Department of the Interior is also responsible for reducing regulations of land that are leased for the environmentally harmful production of oil and gas by removing certain wildlife protections.

According to the Bureau of Land Management — a subset of the Department of the Interior — "Oil and gas resources on public lands are developed in a manner that considers other values and uses of the land and in an environmentally sound manner."

However, many of the rollbacks being made by the Department of the Interior as well as the EPA are already facing legal challenges from states and environmental groups.

According to Hillary Aidun, who tracks deregulation at Columbia University's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, "many of the Trump-era rules have not been adequately justified, leaving them vulnerable to litigation in court."

One notable rollback occurred on Oct. 29 when the Trump administration accelerated its efforts and rolled back the 'roadless rule,' opening up over 9.3 million acres of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska to roadbuilding and logging efforts.

As the election drew near, this was a significant move on behalf of the administration as the Tongass National Forest is one of the most intricate temperate rainforests in North America and one of the largest intact temperate forests in the world.

The potential destruction of portions of the Tongass National Forest has been deemed a 'severe climate risk' by the Seattle Times. This is because old-growth rainforests can be a significant detriment to climate change causing emissions.

According to Dominick DellaSala, a scientist for Oregon-based Geos Institute, "Acreage that can now be logged would place about 4 million tons of carbon emissions into the atmosphere annually."

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, a Democrat from Washington, has repeatedly sponsored bills to strengthen the Roadless Rule.

Cantwell said this week that Trump's decision appears to have been made too hastily to meet process requirements and she plans to take action in court against these regulation changes.

This court case will join well over 80 other cases currently filed against the rollbacks of environmental rules and regulations.

No matter who won the 2020 election, elected officials should be held accountable for protecting our environment to protect our future.

Muriel Baki
Rider University Eco-rep

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Baggett 'doesn't see how we can have season'

By Dylan Manfre

WITH college basketball rapidly approaching, men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett raised concerns about the upcoming season as his team is spending critical preparation time in quarantine after a positive coronavirus test.

"If this is what's going to happen every time one person tests positive, honestly I don't see how we're going to have a season," Baggett said on a conference call with reporters on Nov. 9. "We're not ready."

The NCAA mandates any team with a positive test quarantine for 14 days. By the time the Broncs will be released, they will have one week until the start of the season.

Teams need to compete in a minimum of 13 games, per NCAA regulations, to be eligible for the NCAA tournament, slated to be held in March.

When asked if he was optimistic about potentially playing on Nov. 25, the opening day for college basketball, the ninth-year head coach expressed doubt about the possibility.

"I'm not confident at all, because to think you're going to come out of quarantine, our guys are having to stay in their rooms for 14-days at this point," Baggett said. "When you get back you have five days to prepare and you're not in basketball shape, which we were getting into. ... I think I would put our guys in danger if I decided for us to play on the 25th."

On the call, first-year Iona Head Coach Rick Pitino said "if we can all get through to March, it will be a successful year."

MAAC Schedule

The league came out with a new schedule model, again.

This alteration comes amid rising numbers of coronavirus cases surpassing 100,000 nationwide for multiple days and is an effort to mitigate travel and long road trips.

Instead of the full 20-game schedule model that was announced on Sept. 17, which sent teams traveling across New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, the 11 schools will play five home series and five away series. The two-game series will take place on Friday and Saturday, according to a news release from the league office.

WRESTLING

Hard work and dedication aid Alec Bobchin

By Olivia Nicoletti

In the third grade, Alec Bobchin brought home a flyer about recreational clubs. His father, a former wrestler at Howell High School, was very excited to hear that his son was interested in the sport.

"My dad was always my biggest supporter. He's been there from the start until now. He's been to every single match and every practice; he's never missed a second," the sophomore business major, who is on Rider's wrestling team, said. "He drove me all over the state and the country to wrestle and visit new clubs or wrestle in tournaments."

Along with his father, Bobchin described his middle school coach, Jeff Moretti, as a huge inspiration. They traveled to many tournaments together and he taught Bobchin how to get tougher in his wrestling.

"Alec improved in wrestling by being open minded in his learning from a number of coaches and accepting critiques and learning from them. As a person he has been receptive and respectful and has taken time to help others," Moretti said. "I am most proud of not the matches and accolades he has accomplished, even though it's impressive. What makes me proud is even though, when he was young and there had been a decent amount of people better than him, he continued to work hard, catch those better than him, and then continued to work harder to pass those other athletes."

Bobchin chose to attend Rider because it has felt like a home to him since he was in sixth grade. He has been training with the Rider's assistant coach, Nic Bedelyon, for many years. Bobchin needed a small classroom environment and for teachers to know who he was so they could help him academically.

"It's a small community with lots of friendly faces and it's pretty easy to get to know everybody here," Bobchin said.

As for wrestling, he believes his experience so far has been able to strengthen his mental toughness and drive to work harder. When being introduced to a team as a freshman, the atmosphere is much different than in high school. Head Coach John Hangey said newcomers have to learn respect for upperclassmen who have wrestled for longer and get used to not being the best on the team. Bobchin was able to adapt quickly to his new role.

"The jump from high school to college was definitely big. I had to learn how to hand fight a little bit better and how to move my feet," Bobchin said. "I had to improve on a lot of new positions that I wasn't used to wrestling in. Honestly, you come into the practice room in college and everyone's just a hard-nosed kid in your face trying to beat you up. It's a big adjustment to get used to."

The transition was made easier because Bobchin already had experience with Hangey from when he was a part of the Bronc Wrestling Club in middle school. They practiced in the Rider gymnasium and he became familiar with the coaches.

"When he became a part of the team in college he experienced a learning curve, much like everyone else does. The first month is always challenging, learning to adapt to the new standards," Hangey said. "Alec took it very well and he will still be continuing to adapt as he ranges higher. Alec's personality is what makes him stand out. He is always joking around but I love that he can also be serious when need be."

For example, if Rider's men's basketball faces Monmouth on a Friday and Saturday at Alumni Gym, Rider's women will play Monmouth on the same days, but in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

MAAC Commissioner Rich Ensor said the Council of Presidents, along with input from Athletic Directors, voted 6-5 on the new model.

On the preseason conference call, Saint Peter's second-year Head Coach and reigning MAAC Coach of the Year Shaheem Halloway expressed dismay toward the ratified model.

"I wasn't a big fan of that to tell you the truth, playing back to back. I just think we didn't need to do it in this league, because geographically everything is so close, except Buffalo. But they made the decision so just got to roll with it. It's going to be tough," said Halloway.

Schools need to make a minimum of eight scholarship players available for competition, and cannot forfeit a game because a top player is out. The league will also use the same officiating crew for both games.

COVID-19 testing for officials is going to cost "a six-figure number," according to Ensor.

Though the new model was adopted, a few aspects of the original format remain. The MAAC is keeping the blackout week for the second to last week in February which will be used to make up any cancellations.

"We're putting these kinds of benchmarks in again, because it's important that we get those 13 games, so we'll see how it goes," Ensor said. "It's going to be an interesting year to say the least."

Ensor added the presidents and athletic directors are working toward providing him with "emergency powers" when it comes to scheduling outside of the blackout week. A possibility could include a midweek game which does not count for the overall standings but helps a team get closer to the 13 required regular season games.

Ensor said the new model had been in the works during previous president meetings.



Photo courtesy of Alex Bobchin

Alec Bobchin continues a passion for wrestling that started in third grade.

Bobchin credited Hangey for being in his corner since arriving in Lawrenceville. "Coach Hangey is definitely someone that is there for me when I'm in bad spots. If I need somebody to pick me up, he will be the one to push me to be the best that I can be," Bobchin said. "He definitely goes out of his way to make sure that everybody in the practice room is doing what they're supposed to do and working hard."

Wrestling alongside Bobchin, sophomore Evan Vazquez describes Bobchin to be trustworthy and loyal. He is always the one to pick up the slack where it is needed. If Vazquez ever needed someone in his corner, he said Bobchin would be the first to support him.

"As a wrestler, he was always there for everyone, even though he struggled himself his freshman year," Vazquez said. "He would always, always be there on the mat when someone else lost or someone else got a tough match. He would be there helping them gain confidence back for their next match or future tournament."

Though the team has an individual goal to be a national champion, it continues to push each other to be the best.

Bobchin was getting represented for his accomplishments as a wrestler before Rider. His biggest accolade so far was finishing fourth in the state his senior year. He was also nominated in the Mount Rushmore project, a competition to determine the best athletes in Princeton High School's history, led by NJ.com.

"It felt pretty good being nominated as one of the best and it's definitely something I can look back on and feel pretty accomplished about," said Bobchin.

"I have big goals I am trying to reach as a wrestler and a student at Rider," Bobchin said. "I know my coaches, family and teammates will continue to help me reach those goals."

CLUB ICE HOCKEY

Rider ice hockey inspired by Zach Steward's cancer fight



Photos Courtesy of Sam Steward

Zach Steward has the support of the Rider ice hockey team in his cancer bout, including his sister Sam Steward who is a team manager.

By Carolo Pascale

RIDER ice hockey does everything it can to help give back to one of its biggest fans and inspirations.

Zach Steward, brother of one of the team's managers, Sam Steward, was diagnosed with Central Nervous System Leukemia in August 2019.

Zach Steward, already a cancer survivor, had been cancer-free for 10 years up until it returned in 2019.

Sam Steward talked about how tough her brother's diagnosis was on her family.

"I was absolutely crushed; our entire family was. He had been cancer-free for 10 years since his first battle with cancer, and relapsing seemed like something that would never happen to us. When it did, it was devastating," said Sam Steward.

Zach Steward, having already beaten cancer before, said how overwhelming it can be and how it felt when he relapsed.

"It can be very overwhelming at times with the treatments, because you feel you have finally reached the end of something, and then it's basically like it restarts right over again," said Zach Steward. "The best thing to do is just focus on whatever it is in the moment and how far you have already come."

Described by both Zach and Sam Steward, hockey was one of their ways to cope with the feelings and hard times the family was going through.

"Hockey was definitely a way for me to escape whatever feelings or emotions I was feeling in the particular time. Even if it was stickhandling in my garage, watching a game, or anything. It's always something to get my mind off of the current situation and can help a lot," said Zach Steward.

Since Sam Steward was one of the managers on the team, the team had already known about Zach being a cancer survivor before his relapse, right before the 2019-2020 season.

As soon as Zach Steward was diagnosed, Sam Steward reached out to Rider Ice Hockey and the players on the team.

"When I reached out to them all in a giant group chat about his relapse, they were all very kind and offered anything they could do for our family. A few of them were more affected than others, and you could really tell that Zach became a little brother to them," Sam Steward said.

Zach Steward talked about how the players reached out to him and his family.

"Many players reached out and were very nice and selfless when they heard about the situation that I was in. I didn't see their initial reactions, but you could tell that a lot of them were touched and wanted to do all they could to make my life easier in any way, shape or form. Many players still keep in contact with me and

always ask how I am doing," Zach Steward said.

Goaltender Eric Linemen, with help from the team, expresses support for Zach Steward.

"[Forward Nick Ruggero and I] talk to Zach a lot. We keep in touch and check in on the family a lot. We gave the Pink in the Rink money to them and that helped a lot. We all wear the wristbands and the shirts that were made for him," Lineman said.

Sam Steward appreciates all that the team has done for her family.

"About half of the team came out to support Zach [Steward] in September at our Bellmawr Bears Street Hockey Tournament and played in it, as well as donated their time and money."

Sam Steward also mentioned the Pink in the Rink night that Rider Ice Hockey holds every year.

"Rider Ice was kind enough to make their annual Pink in the Rink game last season dedicated to Zach [Steward] and our family with an "Orange Is the New Pink" theme, since orange is the color of Leukemia Awareness. They made and sold shirts with Zach's hockey number on it and the hashtag #RiderIceFightsWithZach on it. All of the money from raffles, shirts and donations they made from that game were graciously donated to my family and Zach," Sam Steward said.

Pink In The Rink Night is Rider's very own take on Hockey Fights Cancer Night, which the NHL does every November. Last year, the event was dedicated to Zach Steward and his family.

"Going back several years we have done a Pink in the Rink Night. It evolved last year when we decided to do that game for Zach [Steward] and the family. We started raising money as best we could and the guys on the team really gravitated toward Zach [Steward]," Levin said.

The team also went to watch and play at Zach Steward's street hockey tournament in Bellmawr, New Jersey.

Alumni player Nick Leelum recounted the time he had down at the street hockey tournament.

"It was basically just us all having fun and I hold that memory pretty close," Leelum said.

Overall, the team has done a lot for Zach, Sam and the Steward family.

Ruggero talked about Zach Steward being a part of "the brotherhood" that Rider Ice Hockey has built up over the years.

"He is part of the brotherhood, him and the whole Steward family. He even has some Rider memorabilia like a game puck, a mini stick with all of our signatures on it and his Rider Ice Hockey shrine," Ruggero said.

Zach Steward himself also touched on how the

team made him part of "the brotherhood" that Rider Ice Hockey has.

"The team made me feel part of the brotherhood right away and treated me just like I was part of the team and was one of the players. From including me in the pre-game hype, tapping their sticks at me and coming up to me at the glass during warm-ups, to going in the locker room with the boys, everything made me feel like I was a part of the 'brotherhood' and was one with the team," Zach Steward said.

Zach Steward's battle continues to inspire the team and alumni player Jared Roy mentioned how inspiring it is to him.

"His whole story is inspiring. His perseverance, his attitude, his smile, it's just infectious and it's inspiring. He was one of my favorite teammates on the team," Roy said.

Ruggero finds Zach Steward as someone that can inspire anyone.

"When people hear his story, it's not that he's had it once, he has it for the second time. They feel proud that he's happy and he always has a smile on his face. He stays positive no matter what and it pushes his positivity on to other people," Ruggero said.

Sam Steward sees her brother as a role model and an inspiration and she will never forget the support that the whole family has received.

"Zach [Steward] is truly a role model and an inspiration to anyone he meets. He is a fifteen-year-old who has been through two battles with cancer, and is going to win again. He goes to radiation and chemotherapy treatments and still makes time to get all of his schoolwork done, workout and keep himself busy and happy. His strength, positivity, and resiliency is truly unmatched," Sam Steward said. "He is an inspiration to all and anyone that has been touched by him is truly lucky, and I hope that that is what he leaves behind. As for the support we received, it has been truly amazing. We never thought hockey would become this important to our lives, but it has brought us some of our greatest friendships thus far. We are so beyond thankful for all of the support whether it was a text, a meal, or a dollar we received and will never ever forget it."

Steward's battle with cancer is still ongoing and if you want to stay updated on his progress, follow @bigtuffguyupdates on Instagram, where Sam Steward posts about Zach Steward's journey and story.

Sports

INSIDE

STEWARD'S FIGHT

Zach Steward has been embraced by the Rider Ice Hockey team after cancer diagnosis.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

How Rider's first true legend came to Lawrenceville

By Shaun Chornobroff

DARRICK Suber was Rider basketball's first-ever 2,000 point scorer, a former Northeast Conference (NEC) Player of the Year, Rider Athletics Hall of Fame inductee and the only basketball player to have his number retired by the school until former NBA first-round pick Jason Thompson earned the same honor in 2009.

He was so talented that an article from The Rider News in 1993 dubbed Suber as "The god of Rider basketball."

Suber led the team to two conference championship games and sent the men's basketball team to the NCAA tournament in 1993 by scoring 33 of Rider's 65 points in the NEC Championship game, which culminated in Suber scoring a historic buzzer-beater, which is now known as "The Shot."

Suber's impact on Rider basketball is almost immeasurable, but it almost never happened.

In late August 1989, Suber's life took a U-turn. The 6-foot-2 shooting guard had long been signed to play Division I basketball at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, New York, but once his mother saw the living situation the school was housing basketball players, Suber and his mother both had a "gut feeling not to do this."

He withdrew from the school.

The same night, Suber, the reigning Pittsburgh City League Player of the Year, was stuck in a Manhattan hotel room with his future unclear. He does not remember the name of the hotel, but it is where his life changed forever.

"I remember the rooms being kind of separated, in that I had a section. We weren't in separate rooms, it was two rooms with a conjoining door," Suber said. "At some point later that night my mother and stepfather had retired for the evening ... We had traveled earlier that morning, Pittsburgh to New York City, it probably took us around seven hours. So it was a long day. Now it's emotional as hell."

Suber proceeded to call one of his good friends William Kinsel, or "Doodles," as Suber affectionately refers to him. Kinsel, who Suber had met playing basketball in Pittsburgh, happened to be an incoming freshman on the Rider basketball team.

"I'm racking my brain at this point," Suber said. "So I made a list of schools that I was interested in, and in doing so remembered that in a trip to Pittsburgh in the summertime coach [Kevin] Bannon and coach [Don] Harnum were at either Five-Star Basketball Camp or Metro Index Basketball Camp, which are both Pittsburgh area exposure camps."

Kinsel had already been signed to Bannon and Harnum's team, both of whom were entering their first season in Lawrenceville.

"I remembered 'Doodles' saying that they really liked me as a player. So, at this point I'm fishing for anything," Suber said as he reminisced.

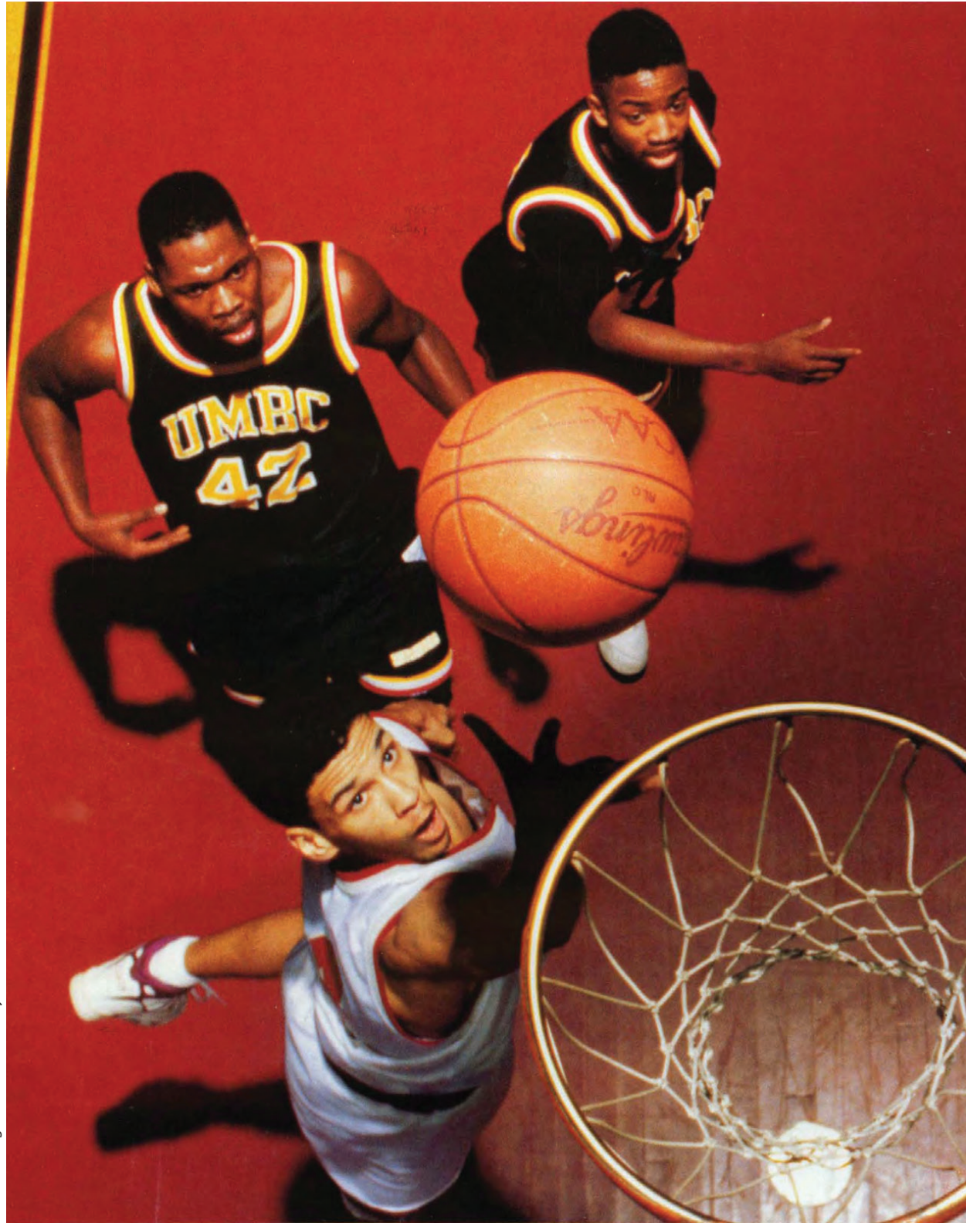
Suber, with his back against the wall, wide awake and stressed in the "City that never sleeps," he asked his lifelong friend for Bannon's phone number, in need of a lifeline.

"At 18, sitting in the heart of Manhattan, I made what was my first cold call ever," Suber explained. "I just call coach Bannon. It's probably eight or nine o'clock at night. I had never spoken to him and had never met him. I introduced myself, explained how I got his number and explained the situation. And the phone is just eerily silent and I'm starting to hang my head a little bit," Suber said, getting "choked up," about a transformational moment in his life.

"[Bannon] was very receptive to what was going on and wanted to meet me and try and figure this out," Suber said graciously.

Sitting in his hotel room, Suber seemed to be on his way to fixing his predicament but needed to tell his mother of the phone call with Bannon.

"The next day I explained this to my mom and she's looking at me like I'm crazy," Suber said. "She had never heard of Rider, and she damn sure never



Darrick Suber (bottom) became a program legend after a last-second enrollment.

Peter G. Borge/Rider University

heard of Lawrenceville, New Jersey."

Suber has gained a new appreciation for this conversation now that he's a father saying, "I can't imagine how crazy I sounded."

Suber and his family left Manhattan the next day. He admits to falling asleep almost immediately after leaving the hotel, but in a twist of fate, the family stopped at a rest stop on the New Jersey Turnpike.

"I'm walking to the bathroom of the rest stop, and this is 1989, there's half a wall of payphones. I walk by and I just happen to see a 609 area code," Suber said. "So I dropped a quarter in and called coach Bannon. Turns out he and Coach Harnum had been waiting by the phone to hear if we were coming. He told me to stay there, and about a half an hour later he shows up at the rest stop."

Suber stayed one more night in New Jersey and by the time Kinsel showed up the next day to move in, Suber was enrolled at Rider because of a school policy that allowed students to apply to be accepted at any time up until the first day of class.

The story of Suber getting to Rider is great, but the reason they had a scholarship left for him makes his story even better.

Bannon and Harnum had accepted a difficult rebuilding process. The two had previously been coaches at The College of New Jersey and had consistently beaten a Rider team who was coming off

of a 5-23 season and in desperate need of talent.

"We had limited scholarships because we inherited a team that was fairly young, so we didn't have a lot of room to maneuver right away," Harnum said. "We had a combo player. Kid's name was Mel Edwards, who was the starting point guard the year before, but also played on the baseball team, but was on a basketball scholarship... In August right before we were going to bring kids to campus, Edwards decided that he was no longer going to play basketball and he was going to concentrate on baseball."

This turned out to be a mutually beneficial situation for Edwards and Rider basketball. Edwards was drafted in the 42nd round of the 1991 MLB Draft by the San Diego Padres and had a short stint in the minor leagues and it allowed Rider to land a "stone cold killer" who transformed the program.

"We were going to get better. There was no doubt about that," Harnum said. "But in order to actually win a championship and get towards the top of the league, you need a special player too. And when your program's reputation isn't that good, it's hard to get those kinds of guys."

In unusual and lucky circumstances, Bannon and Harnum were able to get that guy that helps build a program and set a tone for success that continues until this day.