

## Annual Rider Veterans Week honors those who have served



Courtesy of Rider University

SEE VETERANS PAGE 6

A yearly tradition of flag planting decorated the campus mall as the Rider community came together to celebrate veterans and currently enlisted military members.

## Rider's road to recovery: Cost cutting and strategic investments



Stephen Neukam/ The Rider News

Rider President **Gregory Dell'Omo** justified recent labor cuts and explained the complexities of the university's financial outlook.

By **Stephen Neukam and Sarah Siock**

**T**HROUGH the narrow lens that can see the horizon, the future for higher education looks uncertain. Massive budgetary problems, predating the devastation done by the coronavirus pandemic, have come to roost, threatening an outlook that promises to be more and more austere.

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo does not shy away from the reality of these daunting challenges. The administration, strapped with few options, has continued its quest for ways to cut costs. Dell'Omo outlined the university's delicate balancing

act of slashing expenses while simultaneously investing and improving the quality of the institution, in an interview with The Rider News on Nov. 12.

The search for cost-cutting at Rider has led the administration, like many across the country, to find savings in its labor force. In the past few months, Rider has eliminated a total of 20 staff positions, 75 vacant positions and moved to close its College of Continuing Studies (an action under dispute from the faculty union) — moves that are projected to save the university \$15 million over the next two years.

Dell'Omo said that letting go of employees is a "last resort" option, one that the university considered after addressing other avenues of cutting expenses. As the administration is set for negotiations with the faculty union this summer, Dell'Omo said that layoffs for faculty are "not part of our plan right now."

"I can't take anything off the table given the very unstable environment in which we are operating," said Dell'Omo. "I don't envision any of that happening, but I never say never because the environment is changing so rapidly."

The interview took place one week after Dell'Omo announced at a town hall that the university was projecting a \$17.4 million deficit for next year. Dell'Omo outlined the university's plans to generate revenue and the challenges it presents.

"There is only so much you can do in terms of cutting your expenses before it begins to inflict on the mission of the University. We are looking at new partnerships and we have increased fundraising significantly. However, that still does not pay your bills tomorrow. It is focusing on how you generate revenue in a very challenging COVID environment," said Dell'Omo.

Rider's Chapter of the American Association of University Professors President Arthur Taylor acknowledged that the university is searching for a way to cut costs but emphasized that faculty have already made sacrifices that have lowered labor expenses by forgoing raises since 2015.

"Faculty have made significant sacrifices for six years — the entire duration of President Dell'Omo at Rider University," said Taylor. "Those sacrifices have reduced labor costs significantly."

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### INSIDE MAAC-TION

Sports editors *Shaun Chornobroff* and *Dylan Manfre* preview the men's and women's MAAC basketball season.

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### FROM THE EDITOR

*Rider students express how the pass/fail option is ideal.*

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### VETERANS DAY

*Rider honors veterans with the annual flag planting ceremony.*

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## SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

### Masks, Please

Stay in quarantine. On Nov. 11 at 10:26 p.m., a Public Safety officer was conducting a building check of quarantine housing when they observed two students outside of the residence hall that were unmasked. The students attempted to walk away from the officer, but were found and identified as students that were supposed to be in quarantine and were reminded of the coronavirus policies. The incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

### Wrong Restroom

Read the sign. On Nov. 12 at 11:05 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Gee Hall for a report of suspicious activity. A female student reported that an unidentified male entered the female restroom while she was in it. He entered the restroom and used a stall next to the female but did not acknowledge her presence. The female student left the restroom without incident and did not see the male when she exited.

### Wind and Fire

Tent troubles. On Nov. 15 at 8:30 p.m., Public Safety was alerted to a fire in the tent across from Daly Dining Hall. When officers arrived, they observed a chair that was on fire inside the tent as well as a smoldering patio heater. Officers determined that the fire was caused by the heater being blown over by strong winds and landing on the chair.

— Information provided by Interim Capt. Matthew Babcock

# Faculty layoffs not in the administrator's cost-saving plans

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As good news emerges about the potential of a vaccine for the virus, the exact timeline for a society that can ease back to “normal” remains unclear. The health risks for students kept many of them away from campus this semester, with Rider setting a limit on the students it could accommodate in its housing — a major blow to its revenues. Dell’Omo was hopeful that by fall 2021, the university can be “on the road back to somewhat normalcy.”

“That’s the best case scenario,” said Dell’Omo. “And then we can begin to hopefully get some revenue back on board and continue along our strategy of trying to continue raising the profile of the university.”

Dell’Omo said that while the university met its mark for fall enrollment this semester, it was experiencing a lag in new student applications for next year. Colleges and universities across the country are facing similar enrollment challenges due to the pandemic.

The dramatic shift in environment has not shaken Dell’Omo from his vision on how to move the university forward and make it more attractive in a hyper-competitive arena — a philosophical difference that has caused tension between the president and factions within the university community for years.

Dell’Omo explained that the university’s financial decisions were not as simple as cutting costs in certain areas — instead, it is a balance of investing and rerouting resources strategically to push the university forward. While the administration may be taking steps that seem contradictory — cutting labor costs and simultaneously investing in campus infrastructure — Dell’Omo argued that it is all part of a holistic approach.

“When students look at universities, they look at the academic rotation, they look at the campus, they look at the residence halls, they look at the safety. So many things all play into their assessment. I would argue that Rider was greatly underfunded for a long time in its infrastructure on this campus, both academically and Student Life wise. That is something we’ve been trying to correct,” said Dell’Omo.

Taylor argued that the administration’s approach to improvement has not been as encompassing, decrying the fact that the president “has not committed to an investment in faculty, period.”

As universities scramble to find ways to grow revenues, experts have suggested



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Dell’Omo said that while layoffs were not in the university’s plans, he could not rule out any course of action.

that they focus on demographic groups beyond traditional college students — an area of growth that Dell’Omo said the university is focused on.

However, in recent months the university decided to close its College of Continuing Studies. The college served nontraditional students who were working to complete unfinished college degrees and its closure will save the university \$500,000 annually. Dell’Omo said the decision to eliminate the college was made in part due to the outdated structure of CCS. He added that the university is still focusing on an adult student demographic for new enrollment and that the programs from the college were integrated into existing academic programs.

## Thomas ‘70 and Tina Mulhare donate \$600,000 to Rider



Tatyanna Carman/The Rider News

Thomas ‘70 and Tina Mulhare speak on the patio that was named after the couple after they donated \$600,000 to the university on Nov. 12.

By Tatyanna Carman and Sean Cavanaugh

A VIRTUAL dedication was live-streamed on YouTube for the Thomas and Tina Mulhare Patio, outside of Sweigart Hall, on Nov. 12 at 11:30 a.m.


Along with naming the patio, Thomas Mulhare ‘70 became an annual giver to the university and created the Thomas and Tina Mulhare endowed scholarship, which will “support students with financial needs studying any major,” according to Rider President

Gregory Dell’Omo.

Thomas and Tina Mulhare gave a \$600,000 contribution to the university. According to a university press release, of the \$600,000 donation, \$185,000 will “offset costs associated with the construction of the patio,” \$100,000 will go to the endowed scholarship and \$215,000 will go to the annual fund.

Dell’Omo said that the Mulhares’ donation came in handy during

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## COVID – 19 Counter

**Confirmed Cases**  
Last updated: Nov. 17, 2020

# 36

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	16	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. 16-22	1	232
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

**STUDENT QUARANTINE**

WEEKS	ON CAMPUS	OFF CAMPUS
Nov. 16-22	16	34
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

Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

## Rider holds virtual dedication for Thomas '70 and Tina Mulhare patio

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COVID-19. He said that the annual fund “helps underwrite our COVID safety equipment, as well as university-funded scholarships for students.” The couple gave their gift last year and the university planned to celebrate this past spring, however, could not as a result of the pandemic.

Junior marketing major Lily Blair spoke on the importance of the endowed scholarship for students and her gratitude toward their generosity. She explained that she would not be at Rider if it were not for her receiving scholarships.

“The same goes for most of the students that you see on campus,” Blair said. “Of course, money doesn’t grow on trees. So these scholarships have to come from somewhere, and many of them are a result of the generosity of people like the Mulhares. I am extremely confident that the new scholarship the Mulhares have created will positively change the lives of several students for years to come.”

Blair also said that in a time where people cannot gather indoors, having amenities like the patio is “more important than ever before.” Tina Mulhare shared that an important part of the college experience is engaging with people and that they hope the patio “fosters that experience, whether people come together to work on a project, problem, solve, brainstorm, or just even have a conversation about situations that are happening in their lives.”

Thomas Mulhare said that the thank you notes both he and his wife received from the scholarship recipients changed them forever.

“This recipient told us of their struggle to get to Rider, to stay at Rider and how our gift allowed them to complete their education at Rider,” he said. “That’s when we realized how impactful and rewarding a gift could be. So when the Capital Campaign came up, we really wanted to make sure we did something that was impactful.”

When asked about the details of the Capital Campaign, Denise Pinney, associate vice president of campaign operations and director of corporate and foundation relations, said that Rider is beginning the fourth year of “the quiet phase” of a multi-year comprehensive campaign called Transforming Students-Transforming Lives, which has a goal of \$80 million.

“The quiet phase precedes the public phase and provides an opportunity to seek some 60-80% of the Campaign goal from among its most generous donors before inviting everyone to participate by making contributions,” Pinney said. “Campaign priorities include building our endowment, primarily through endowed scholarships; investing in our facilities; supporting the Annual Fund; and investing in Rider’s future through planned gifts.”

Thomas Mulhare is also a member of the Rider board of trustees. Former board of trustee member and chairman Michael Kennedy '72, '75 said that he got to know him best when they served together on the board for several years.

“For me, Tommy epitomizes the successful Rider alumnus. He’s not only smart



Sean Cavanaugh/The Rider News

Lily Blair, a junior marketing major, unveiled the plaque with the new name of the patio.

in a professional success, he’s a well-rounded individual, with a lovely family, many interests, and a great sense of humor. Even more so, he’s one of those people who has the respect of everyone around him,” Kennedy said. “I noticed from the beginning when I first met him that people listen to Tom. They seek his counsel because he’s articulate, level-headed, and thoughtful.”

The dedication began and ended with two songs featuring vocalist James Harris, a current senior and pianist Tyler Weakland '16. They sang “On the Street Where You Live” from “My Fair Lady.” Dell’Omo indicated in his remarks that they chose to include a performance in the dedication ceremony because the Mulhares’ supported the Westminster College of the Arts.

## Working in a pandemic, community assistants face a slate of new challenges

By Tatyanna Carman

**T**HE pandemic has impacted the lives and jobs of many employed persons worldwide and Rider University is no exception.

Being a community assistant (CA) on campus has changed as a result of the pandemic and that change came with some new troubles, according to senior communication studies major Giavanna Troilo, a CA in Ziegler-Moore Hall.

“There are a lot of new policies we have to enforce in the halls. The biggest issue we have been having is specific residents who consistently do not wear their masks,” Troilo said. “My staff always has to tell some of our residents to wear masks or wear them correctly.”

Troilo said that enforcing the coronavirus policies is “difficult at times,” especially around differing opinions when it comes to the coronavirus guidelines.

“I have residents who feel strongly about all of their floormates adhering strictly to the guidelines, while elsewhere in the building, there are residents who I often see without their masks,” she explained. “I never know how people are going to respond when I tell them to wear their masks, but regardless of opinions, these policies are in the housing contract they signed.”

However, Associate Dean of Residence Life Roberta Butler said that to her knowledge, “staff have not had difficulty enforcing the policies.”

“Students who are not opting to follow the policies are addressed by staff for compliance. Residence Life continues to remind students about the policies through various means,” Butler said.

Senior musical theater major Tessa Douglas is a former CA who resigned her position on Aug. 12. She made this decision because she did not feel 100% safe returning to campus.

“While I know there are policies in place and Residence Life would have done the very best to ensure my safety, there still was a chance that I would be put in an unsafe situation,” Douglas said. “Rider is making their best effort to ensure all students are committed to their Ready and Resolved plan, however, there is always a slight uncertainty that all students are in fact following the guidelines and working to protect others. Ultimately, I felt that it was in my best interest to put



Courtesy of Rider University

Senior communication major and CA in Ziegler-Moore Hall Giavanna Troilo advised other CAs to leave time for themselves during this unprecedented period.

my health and well-being first.”

She also said that another factor that led to her decision was “the number of people deciding to return to the position.”

“Throughout my years as a community assistant, I have made lifelong friends, and to hear how they were not returning most certainly made me question my original decision,” Douglas said. “To tie it in a little bow, a few days before I sent the letter, my grandpa was suddenly diagnosed with leukemia. While I would have loved to be on campus to support my Rider family and my Residence Life family through this unprecedented time, I needed to be at home supporting and caring for my family.”

Butler said that the residence halls are fully staffed with CAs this semester, based on the smaller residential housing capacity.

“Some CAs chose not to return to campus this fall because their classes were fully remote,” Butler said.

In contrast, Troilo said that Residence Life has “definitely lost staff,” but for no other reason than “uncertainty about the semester as a whole.”

Douglas explained when she was a CA in Lake House, it was heartbreaking to “watch as friends said goodbye to each other and leave campus,” when asked about her experience during the start of the pandemic

and if she was under more pressure.

“I just moved into Lake House after Omega House was closed in December, so it was a lot. Also, because I was the first line of communication with residents, even after I was ‘released’ from my position did I receive texts and calls from residents such as coordinating move-out times and dates,” she said. “I always responded and coordinated with the Community Director of Lake House. Additionally, I had control of the Lake House Instagram so I was fielding questions from incoming residents as well as keeping up the social media presence.”

Troilo shared that she was concerned about her freshman residents and their residential experience living alone.

“As a freshman, I felt alone often even with a roommate, and so I’ve been worried about the loneliness factor for them with socially-distanced room placement,” she said. “But many of my residents seem to be having a positive and connected experience.”

Troilo also said that CAs had some staffing issues as a result of a new housing form, which resulted in some CAs getting “moved around.”

“Ziegler-Moore usually has six CAs, we were supposed to have five this semester, but one of us got moved and now there’s four of us,” Troilo said. “As a result, some staff have more residents than usual, but with reduced capacity, a lot of us also have fewer residents than usual.”

Both Douglas and Troilo gave advice to other CAs. Douglas complimented the creativity of the programs that CAs are putting together and said to “take care of yourself.”

Troilo said, “Set boundaries with your residents and leave time for yourself when you need to. I know that I’ve had to work on this plenty, because our CA hat never comes off. When we see residents on campus, we’re never just fellow tired students, we’re always CAs. But it’s absolutely necessary to set boundaries and communicate them. I don’t know that we’re encouraged to do that enough. We’re students first and foremost.”

# CLAS students will not receive a pass/fail grading option

By Hailey Hensley

**C**OLLEGE this semester is vastly different from previous semesters for students everywhere, and at many universities across the country, that is being accommodated in the form of pass/fail or pass/no credit grading. However, for many students at Rider that will not be the case.

Kelly Bidle, dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences, has stated that students in her college will not receive pass/no credit grading. Bidle emphasized that she felt faculty and staff were well-prepared for this online semester.

“It was strongly felt by the academic deans and Provost that a return to normal grading for courses was appropriate,” she said. “I recognize that some students still struggle with remote instruction, but encourage them to take advantage of all of the academic support that has been provided by the Academic Success Center, as well as meeting with faculty during office hours.”

In an interview with The Rider News, Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo stated that he wanted to allow for nuance between the colleges with the pass/no credit grading system.

“I think we felt that there was enough flexibility within each of the colleges to deal with it on a case by case basis, as opposed to just doing so as we did in spring with a mass type of a policy because there are there’s a fair degree of flexibility within our college pass/fail system,” Dell’Omo said.

Students across campus have expressed concerns about the differing course modality this semester, with worries about grades and grade point average being at the forefront of students’ minds.

Senior organizational psychology major Ally Ward highlighted the difficulties she has encountered with online learning such as technical difficulties, problems focusing and issues with faculty who are not used to teaching online.

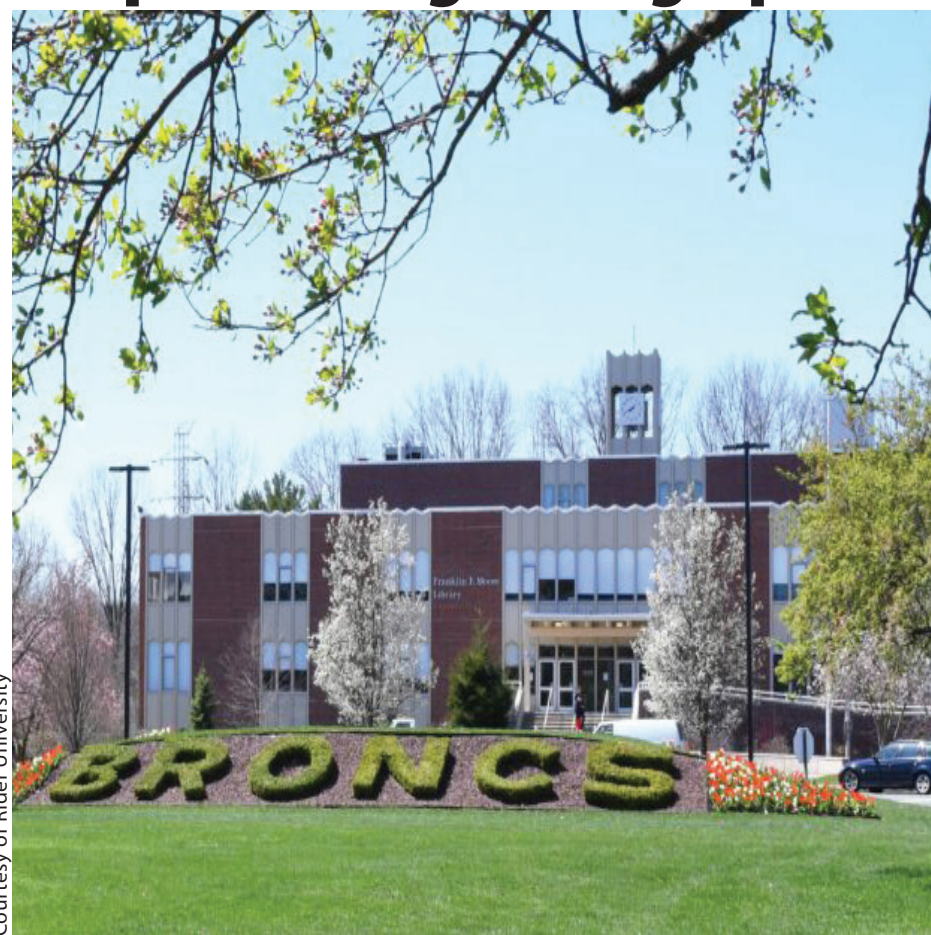
“This semester has been more challenging and stressful than spring was. There is no reason for the same accommodations to not be offered for this semester and the next one. Just because it has been eight months since the pandemic started it does not make things easier,” Ward said.

At many universities, the pass/fail option remains a possibility for students. One school that has kept it as an option is Drexel University in Philadelphia.

Junior entertainment and arts management major at Drexel University Jamie Hafner underscored her appreciation for her school being understanding of students in these tumultuous times.

“I feel that my university is listening to students and acknowledging how difficult it is to be attending school remotely during a pandemic and this political climate. Drexel implemented pass/fail before the start of spring quarter 2020 and will continue pass/fail until classes resume in person,” Hafner said. “Drexel also maintained or extended our breaks, including Winter and Spring Break this year. It helps to know that our university is listening to our students and staff.”

COVID-19 case numbers have been surging all across the country, with various outbreaks across the country and in New Jersey in particular. When the academic policy committee granted a university-wide pass/fail option in the spring, cases were significantly lower than they are now and the state is currently seeing a large daily



Courtesy of Rider University

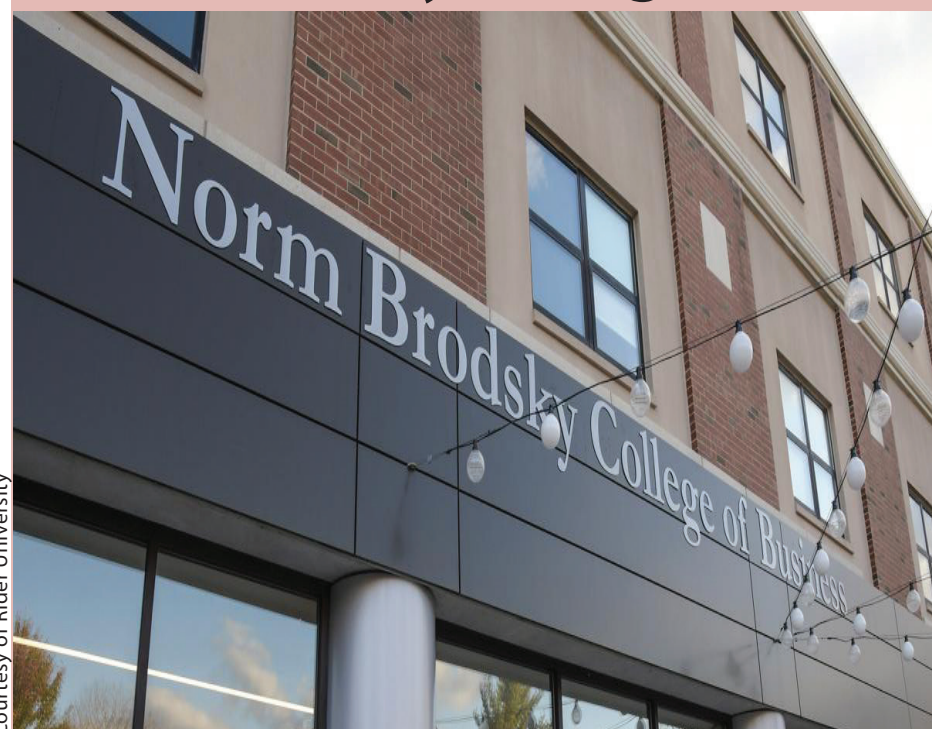
Students are encountering various issues with online learning that may impact their grades.

increase in cases.

Senior musical theatre major Tessa Douglas enumerated the importance of the pass/fail option for student mental health.

“I feel that by Rider not implementing Pass/Fail, they are causing unnecessary stress on their students especially given everything that has happened this semester. While I did not choose to utilize that Pass/Fail option last semester, just knowing that it was an option helped me to focus more on the quality of work that I submitted to my professors. It also made me feel that the administration had my back as a student and wanted me to succeed,” Douglas said.

## Norm Brodsky College of Business wins 2020 Corazón award



Courtesy of Rider University

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs **Ron Cook** said the university will continue to connect “Hispanic students with Hispanic mentors to foster a sense of opportunity for them.”

By Austin Ferguson

**T**HE Norm Brodsky College of Business won the 2020 Hispanics Inspiring Students’ Performance and Achievement (HISPA) Corazón award, according to an announcement from Rider University on Nov. 6.

HISPA is a non-profit organization active in New Jersey, New York City, Miami and San Antonio that, according to the HISPA website, “was formed to engage the volunteerism of Hispanic professionals and eradicate one key reason why Hispanic students do not pursue higher education: a lack of role models.”

According to HISPA, the Corazón award recognizes an institution of higher learning that helps Hispanic-identifying students with academic attainment and helps to promote career success, while also putting on events and programs to help promote diversity and inclusion within and around the school community.

The university’s working partnership with HISPA played a great role in setting up a program of success for Hispanic students, said Eugene Kutcher, dean of the college.

“Two priorities we value in the college are our external relationships and equity and inclusion. We’re grateful to have the partnership with HISPA, and look forward to how we can continue to work and grow together in the name of inclusive excellence,” Kutcher said.

HISPA President and CEO Ivonne Díaz-Claissé seconded that Rider’s collaboration with HISPA over the last two years cemented the university’s award-winning program. Díaz-Claissé said the result of the collaboration “has clearly demonstrated how closely aligned HISPA and Rider University are in their missions of fostering inclusive excellence and supporting Hispanic student success.”

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs Ron Cook said the two events that best encapsulated Rider’s efforts to be an inclusive environment for Hispanic students were a 2019 panel discussion with the executive board of Prospanica NJ, an association of Hispanic MBAs and business professionals, and a February panel discussion titled, “Diversity in Analytics: Advice for NextGen Tech.”

Cook said, “We embrace HISPA’s mission: To inspire [Hispanic] students to discover their potential and ignite their desire to embrace education and achieve success.”

When looking to the future of Rider’s working relationship with HISPA, Cook was optimistic about what it holds.

“We look forward to future collaborations and continue to try to make Rider University and the Norm Brodsky College of Business the school of choice in New Jersey for Hispanic students,” Cook said. “We will continue our efforts to connect Hispanic students with Hispanic mentors to foster a sense of opportunity for them.”

According to the university, the Corazón award will be presented virtually at HISPA’s annual Three Kings Banquet on Jan. 14, 2021. The event will be the first time it is presented in a virtual format.

# Virtual discussion celebrates Native American heritage

By Aaliyah Patel

To celebrate Native American Heritage Month, the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) held a virtual event titled, “Whose Land Are We On?” for all students and faculty on Nov. 16 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Since the event was part of the “Conversation Cafe” series that CDI runs, the audience had the opportunity for dialogue throughout the evening.

The topics examined the impact systemic racism has had on the cultural erasure of Indigenous people of the Americas.

Ashley Archer, the assistant director of the CDI, explained the care and intention that was put into the creation of the presentation.

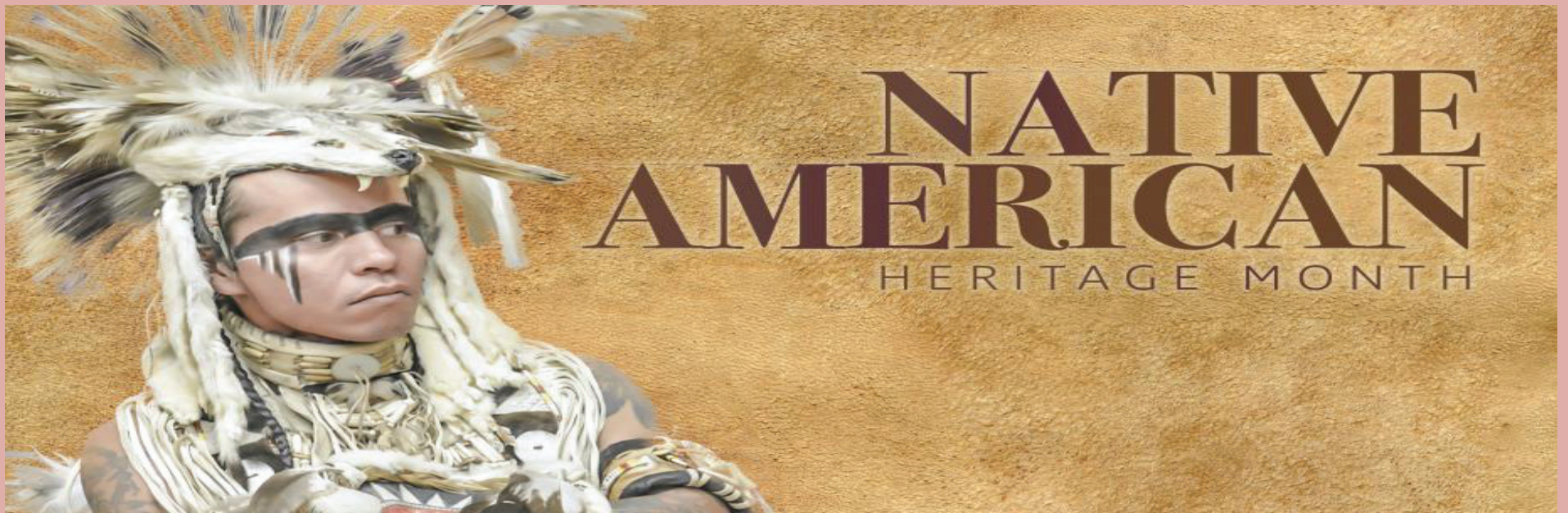
“Our hope is that folks are engaged and leave with understanding just how much of an impact indigenous people have had on this country. We hope people feel empowered to be advocates and allies for change,” Archer said.

Pamela Pruitt, the executive director of the CDI, expressed the importance of tributing the ancestry and cultural traditions of Native Americans.

“I hope students learned from the history and depictions shown in the film clips and through the discussion, how the indigenous people lived and ultimately lost their land,” Pruitt said. “Subsequently, those who survived were forced into the background of the fabric of America while continuing to uphold their rights and promote their legacy.”

Even though Native American tribes consist of different customs and practices, they have all continued to keep their culture alive.

“As we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, we must remember the sacrifice and many contributions made by the indigenous people to the growth of this country,” Pruitt said.



Erasure and mistreatment of Indigenous people has had many negatives impacts on Native American communities. The event focused on the importance of celebrating Native American culture.

# Young educators learn to teach in a new type of classroom

By Christian McCarville

REMOTE learning has impacted each program at Rider in unique ways. In turn, professors, administrators and students have adapted to get the most out of their education, regardless of the current circumstances. This is very clearly seen within the College of Education and Human Services.

For many students majoring in education, field experiences and student teaching are a vital part of their professional development as pre-service educators. Getting these young educators into a classroom and teaching students is something that the education department prides itself on.

The current state of education and remote learning differs from school to school, focusing on the overall safety and health of all students and their families. This has provided challenges for many education majors in their higher level classes that have been expecting field experiences and the opportunity to student teach.

Working closely with several schools throughout the state, the College of Education and Human Services stepped up to this challenge. Student teaching, along with field experience, has been able to continue in both hybrid and remote formats, providing Rider students excellent opportunities to learn and grow as educators.

Senior elementary education major Elaina Stark is set to student-teach in the spring semester. While it is not currently determined if she will be able to teach in-person or remotely, Stark is still thankful for the opportunity.

“Learning during the pandemic is difficult. Teaching during the pandemic is almost unimaginable,” said Stark. “However, over this time period I have become closer with my mentor teachers. I have learned more from students and I have learned more about myself and therefore I am forever grateful.”

Stark also commented on the expansion of technology being used in classrooms.

“With the use of Zoom, Google platforms and video calls, students are the new tech gurus,” said Stark. “The use of technology has expanded and it has been so much fun to be a part of the remote environment.”

Acknowledging the struggles of being a student during the pandemic, Stark provided some insight as to how she continues to keep herself motivated.

“During this time, I have been able to celebrate the little victories,” said Stark. “This really helps me move forward with finishing my degree. I have found that this changes our perspectives and our motivation to push forward to a brighter tomorrow.”

This is advice many students could benefit from, especially given this semester’s unpredictability. Stark intends to student teach this spring, likely in a hybrid capacity.

Junior elementary education major Hannah Wade is in the process of completing her required Elementary Education (ELD) courses. This would typically require her to observe and teach within an elementary-level classroom. This semester, her classroom experiences are taking place remotely.

“We’ve been paired with a cooperating teacher and once a week discuss different teaching methods and techniques,” said Wade.

She also gets to observe her cooperating teacher’s online classes.

“Being able to observe these online lessons, I’m really seeing teachers at their peak performance,” said Wade. “This type of teaching cannot be done passively. You truly have to be engaged at all times. I learned skills that I normally wouldn’t see in a physical classroom.”

Senior elementary education major Ryan Mealey is participating in remote field work at a different elementary school. His experiences differ from Wade’s, subjecting him to the more negative implications of remote learning.

“Schools have reduced their schedules significantly,” said Mealey. “Mine is four half days a week and remote. That’s not enough time for decent instruction.”

Mealey has also seen his own cooperating teacher greatly struggle to keep up with remote instruction.

“My cooperating teacher has been an interim principal, methods professor and elementary teacher throughout her 40-year career and it’s hard to watch her and so many others struggle to figure out what they’re doing,” said Mealey. “I can’t even imagine going into the job market right now with such high expectations for us teachers.”

The disparity of experiences among these young educators is certainly in part due to each school’s varying approach to instruction during the pandemic. A school’s population, staff, location and access to online materials all play huge factors in the overall teaching experience.

This is ultimately a very difficult time for all full time teachers. However, getting Rider’s education majors these real-world opportunities will provide for an unforgettable experience, whether it is a positive or negative one. Being able to educate in the most undesirable of circumstances will enable them to overcome and adapt to any challenges that they may encounter in their future careers.



Despite the implications of remote instruction, the College of Education and Human Services continues to provide education majors with developmental field experiences.

# Veterans Day events and ceremony honor those who served

By Sarah Siock and Christian McCarville

To celebrate this year's Veterans Day in a safe and socially-distant fashion, over 10,000 American flags were planted on the campus mall to honor those who have served the country.

The entire Rider community was welcome to plant a flag from Nov. 7 through Nov. 10 to honor a family member or friend who served or is currently serving in the military. This event was fittingly titled "Plant a Flag" and is a recurring tradition at Rider during the observance of Veterans Day. The flags were designated to be planted in the shape of the signature Rider logo.

The Veterans and Military Affairs Office had a goal of planting 10,000 flags and they received help from various organizations across the university to do so, such as the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity and the Rider ice hockey team.

To further commemorate Veterans Day a small ceremony was held on Nov. 11 on the campus mall. The ceremony is a Rider tradition and typically draws a large crowd. This year, the ceremony was kept small and attended by invitation only to follow the coronavirus safety precautions. The Veterans Affairs Office also live-streamed the ceremony on Facebook for those not in attendance.

"We wanted to focus on the flags this year because we had to leave out some of the other events we normally have such as guest speakers. The veterans really wanted an in-person ceremony. So we felt it was important to deliver that in some capacity," said Coordinator of Veterans Affairs Thomas Reddington.

According to Reddington, there are 43 student veterans at Rider. Additionally, there are 121 military-connected students who have a parent or spouse serving in the military.

"Some of what these people have experienced is unbelievable. They walk our hallways and most students do not realize the heroes they have sitting next to them in the classroom," said Reddington.

While the Veterans Day event had to adapt to a smaller scale, many of the ceremony's notable traditions

were still present. Each year a student reads the St. Crispin's Day speech from William Shakespeare's "Henry V." Reddington said the speech encapsulates the bond formed from sharing a traumatic experience with others.

This year, the speech was read by senior environmental science major Paul Malatesta who served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 10 years.

"I had big shoes to fill. I wanted to participate in the ceremony to show the veteran community and anyone on campus that if you are hurting, struggling, shy, or if you ever need help, you can get a little bit of inspiration from me, and just know you can ask for help," said Malatesta.

Student veterans appreciate the support provided by the Veterans Affairs Office as well as the steps taken by the Rider community to honor veterans. Eugene Marsh '14, a Vietnam War veteran who is currently pursuing a doctorate at Rider, explained the connections the Veterans Affairs Office provided him during his undergraduate studies.

"I can remember serving in Vietnam and [being] unaware of veteran services, opportunities and communities. None of that existed when I came back from Vietnam so it was a very isolating experience. Upon arriving at Rider in 2010 the Veterans Affairs Office brought meaning and purpose to a veterans community and I became engaged immediately," said Marsh.

The Veterans Affairs Office also had an impact on senior accounting major Scott Ruskan. He said Reddington and the team at Veterans Affairs helped him decide to join the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Tom helped me get the ball rolling with the Coast Guard. He was one of the first people I reached out to when I started on this journey," said Ruskan.

Ruskan decided to hold his enlistment ceremony for the Coast Guard on Nov. 10 on the campus mall in front of the many flags planted for Veterans Day.

"I have taken part in the flag planting every year since I have been a student at Rider. Even before I was affiliated with the Coast Guard I took a lot of pride

in planting the flags," said Ruskan. "I have family and friends who served or who are currently serving and I always felt like it was the least I could do.

In the week following Veterans Day, The Veterans and Military Affairs Office hosts the event "Pull a Flag," in which volunteers will remove the many planted flags from the Campus Mall. The flags were carefully extracted and packed away for next year's observance.

"Pull a Flag" will conclude this year's series of events celebrating Veterans Day and honoring those who have served. However, the Veterans and Military Affairs Office ensures respect and appreciation for Rider veterans at all times.

The Veterans Day ceremony continues to serve as a way for the Rider community to recognize the many veterans on campus.

"A thank you to a veteran goes a long way. It is a nice feeling to have people acknowledge you for your service," said Reddington.



Courtesy of Ethan Manton

Junior accounting major **Cory Mayo** takes part in the Plant a Flag event. This event relies on the help of volunteers to place over 10,000 American flags in the campus mall.

# US flags fill campus mall to celebrate Veterans Day



Courtesy of the Veterans and Military Affairs Office

**Rose Rodriguez** is a Marine veteran and a Rider alumna. She stands with her mother in front of the many flags planted this year in celebration of Veterans Day.



Courtesy of the Veterans and Military Affairs Office

This year's Veterans Day observance was invitation-only in an effort to keep all attendees safe and socially distanced.



Courtesy of the Veterans and Military Affairs Office

**Scott Ruskan**, a graduate from the class of 2020, enlisted in the United States Coast Guard on the Campus Mall.

# Students vie to be crowned the new Rider Top Chef

By Sarah Siock

RIDER'S three finest chefs will be virtually serving up their favorite appetizers on Nov. 20 in hopes of being named the winner of 107.7 The Bronc's Top Chef competition.

Instead of the chefs battling it out in-person at Daly Dining Hall this year, the competition will be virtually coming to the kitchens of Rider students, faculty and staff. From Oct. 26 through Nov. 13, nearly 20 participants submitted a recipe that fell under this year's theme of family appetizers. Next, a panel of judges, selected by Rider's food and dining services company, decided the three recipes that would advance to the Top Chef finale.

The Top Chef finalists are senior marketing major David Brooks, with a smoked butternut queso dish, sophomore communications major Francesca Davie's submission of fried Brussels sprouts stuffed with maple bacon and Toniann Seals, a second-year graduate student studying homeland security, who submitted buffalo chicken empanadas.

"There is a sense of tradition behind Top Chef. This event is a way to bring back some normalcy by still engaging with students and putting on an event as best as we can," said Production Producer for The Bronc and junior dance performance major Tiffani Britton.

Britton added that the typical format used for the Top Chef competition had to be altered due to the online format this year.

"Normally there would be a taste testing event in the dining hall. However, in the past a lot of times people could not make the event. In some ways the online format is better because more people are going to be able to be involved," said Britton.

From Nov. 16 to Nov. 20 students will vote for their favorite recipe through The Bronc's website. Then to finally close out the competition on Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. each finalist will prepare their recipe live via Zoom. The recipe with the most votes at the end of the night will be crowned the student Top Chef.

"I chose to compete because this year has been full of ups and downs, and it is important to do things that may be out of your comfort zone, especially as we have been cooped up all year, it's an exciting change of pace," said Davie.

Davie said her passion for cooking and the new recipes she is always creating motivated her to join the competition. She added that the appetizer she submitted to Top Chef gives a yummy twist to the not so popular vegetable Brussels sprouts.

"Everyone's issue with Brussels sprouts is that they are bitter, but the maple bacon jam cuts the bitterness just enough so you have all these different flavors at once," said Davie.

While there will only be one Top Chef winner, all three finalists will go home with a prize. The first-place prize is a Starbucks cruiser bicycle and a \$250 Starbucks gift card, while second-place will receive a Rockstar Energy Yeti backpack cooler and a year's supply of Pepsi and third-place will receive a Mountain Dew Aluminum Corn Hole

game and a George Foreman grill.

"We have tons of prizes thanks to our fantastic sponsors," said Britton.

While this year's Top Chef competition may look different, the student chefs' love for cooking remains the same.

"Good food brings so much joy, and to have the satisfaction of people loving your food when it's your own concept and recipe, there's just no better feeling," said Davie.



Courtesy of Francesca Davie

The fried Brussels sprout dish prepared by sophomore communications major **Francesca Davie** for the Top Chef competition.

# UPCOMING EVENT CALENDAR

WED, NOV. 18

**Celebration of Lights: Home for the Holidays**

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

THU, NOV. 19

**SEC Presents: Art Attack**

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

FRI, NOV. 20

**Top Chef: Virtually Apps**

7:00 p.m.

SAT, NOV. 21

**Westminster Choir College: Marie Begins**

7:00 p.m.

# College during COVID: Pass/fail

**O**UR first full semester under COVID-19 is coming to an end and I honestly feel like I am in the same spot. All this pandemic has taught me is how to adjust to abnormal circumstances, not assess them and change the outcome. In my closing editorial last semester, I urged our community to stay home and recognized our yearning for the outside. An outside with no masks, an outside where we socialize and travel, convinced those days were coming soon. But those days turned into months with the assumption that “inside” meant small gatherings, beach days and church services. And indeed it did. We are currently on month eight of the coronavirus global pandemic with no end in sight if we continue on the path we are right now.

“Across the country, the U.S. reported over 143,231 new cases on Wednesday, setting a new record one-day spike, according to CNBC’s analysis of Hopkins data. That brings the seven-day average to more than 127,400, up nearly 35% compared with a week ago. Over the past five days, the U.S. has reported a fresh record in daily new cases on three days,” Hopkins data shows.

It was not until last week that a peer informed me that the university was not offering the pass/fail option for the fall semester. My heart dropped. I did not view the pass/fail option as my scapegoat or an easy way out. It was my safety net, something to ease my mind while my semester has been turned upside down.

College students have been expressing their dismay with remote learning, Zoom classes and meticulous assignments. Back in March, an online petition on Change.org urged Rider to adopt the pass/no credit provision. The petition was signed by over 1,600 people. A common theme, one I can personally relate to, is the lack of motivation to successfully finish this semester. I have been a student all my life and my performance as a student was based heavily on that classroom environment, being able to see and interact with my professors and my peers.

Freshman English major Kate McCormick spoke about her transition enrolling in her first year of college during COVID-19.

“My experience starting school during COVID has been way different than I expected. I work really well in an in-class setting, so taking my classes online for my health and the health of my family has been a huge adjustment. I’m doing well so far, but I can see how the stress of the pandemic can have a huge impact on students’ mental health and in turn their grades.”

“My workload so far has been manageable, but taking my courses from home has made it a lot harder to set boundaries for myself in terms of academic work and doing stuff for fun,” she continued.

As a senior on their way out, the uncertainty of the pass/fail

implementation adds another layer anxiety.

Senior biology major Saifu Alharazim said, “I did not think [COVID] would be this bad, it all went south. I did have to use pass or fail for my biology class, if my grade is bad I am going to use it.”

“Last semester I was getting a lot of work, now the workload is OK, but Zoom makes it hard to pay attention. I would rather be in-person, I do not like online because in-person class forces you to do the work. Everyday it is the same thing, wake up and go on my laptop. Pass/fail should be an option especially under these circumstances. I do not think it is fair for students, I feel like some professors go out of their way to make the classes harder. We’ll take a quiz and have 18 minutes [to answer] 22 questions and [my professor] would say it is because ‘we don’t want people to cheat’ that is not fair to us, I cannot even go back and check my answers,” said Alharazim. “[Professors] are worried about the wrong thing.”

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Kelly Bidle recognizes that some students still struggle with remote instruction, but encourages them to take advantage of all of the academic support that has been provided by the Academic Success Center, as well as meeting with faculty during office hours.

“The [Pass/No Credit] option for the spring semester was essential for students, as the pandemic forced us into crisis teaching and learning. Both faculty and students had to quickly pivot to remote instruction and the number of issues associated with this unplanned for mode of instruction made this the right choice,” said Bidle. “Over the summer, there was a significant amount of work by the faculty, the Teaching and Learning Center staff, and our Office of Information Technology to properly plan for remote instruction in the fall. Given these facts, it was strongly felt by the academic deans and Provost that a return to normal grading for courses was appropriate.”

The March petition outlined the issues faced by both professors and students, including that some instructors are not comfortable with online courses, some students live in different time zones that make it difficult to keep up with their coursework. Some students may not have the access to essential technology used for remote instruction.

The scary part about attending school during this time is the unknown about how the virus will react to the fall and winter months. Will the virus mutate? Will there be a vaccine in the spring?

We see individuals jump at the opportunity to return back to normalcy when in reality we will not see “normal” in the near future without any actual change. I understand the desire to perform a functioning semester like usual but

we are not in usual circumstances.

We are still amidst a global pandemic that seems to be getting worse as we strive to conduct business as usual, but we need to acknowledge that we are still living in strange times that have greatly impacted our university life.

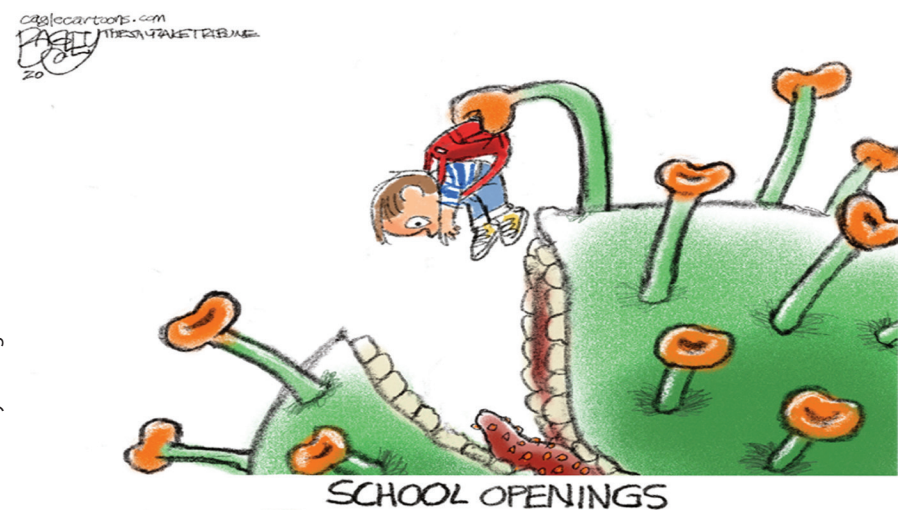
*This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board. This week’s editorial was written by Opinion Editor Qur’an Hansford.*

*Qur’an H*

Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



## THE Rider News

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Content © The Rider News 2020 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

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## Pop culture in politics: How should celebrities utilize their platform?

**M**ANY people use social media frequently, specifically young adults and teens. Some follow celebrities on these platforms, especially superfans. While most celebrities post about beautiful views, their pets, families and what they are currently doing, many are becoming more vocal about their political opinions, in light of the recent election.

Now that voting is officially over, more and more people are opening up about who they voted for and their political beliefs, celebrities in particular. Just like normal people, these figures are entitled to their own political beliefs and to share them with whomever they would like. However, given that they have a louder and more influential voice, a debate has surfaced on whether or not they should be looked up to for guidance on how to vote or what political opinions to have. What authority or education do they have? How informed are Chris Pratt or Lil Wayne? What would happen if Kanye West became president?

As UFC Today says, celebrities' involvement in politics has both pros and cons, both in their influence and expressing their opinions.

After Taylor Swift expressed her political opinions in 2018 on Instagram, "166,000 new voter registrations between the time she posted on Oct. 7 and noon on Oct. 9," according to Vote.org. "About 42 percent of those registrants were between the ages of 18 and 24."

Many celebrities use their immense following to influence people about social justice issues and human rights. After the coronavirus pandemic, Jennifer Garner used her Instagram about her using her following to raise both money and awareness for hunger in America for FeedAmerica.org.

Other public figures have used their following to raise money, as in the case of Chris Pratt and Chris Evans, who made a public bet about the outcome of Super Bowl XLIX. The loser had to donate money to Seattle Children's hospital.

Since many celebrities have used their social media to help numerous organizations and people, society tends to follow and idolize them in every light, not just because they are good-looking and talented.

But where is the line?

A majority of these celebrities did not attend college and some did not even graduate high school, and if they do have a degree, it's usually an honorary one for both them and the college to get press and attention.

According to the Fordham Observer, "Most actors, musicians, directors, models and public figures are popular because their job is to entertain the masses and make money. Most didn't go to university, and if they did, they usually majored in one of the fine arts."

Kaedon Knight, a sophomore musical theater and arts major, feels that it's perfectly fine and even endorses celebrities voicing their opinions, especially if it's about social justice or human rights issues and they are using their platform to help make a difference.

"I feel like celebrities shouldn't act on issues as if they know more than other people when they don't." Knight said, "I feel like that's probably out of their realm of knowledge, or at least where any celebrity should be able to speak."

Many people are easily swayed and influenced by celebrities and it could influence their voting patterns if someone speaks out about a certain political figure.

Since socialites are not always the most educated, informed or authority figures on political science, they could severely sway an election they know little about and that may not be in the best interest of the city, district or country.

Some celebrities even take it as far as to run for office, some even win office.

Knight expressed that if a celebrity would like to run for local office for the pure intent of helping their local community and being knowledgeable about their local issues, that's perfectly fine. However, when they leap into a larger public office without much knowledge or the proper qualifications, Knight feels it is too far.

Knight explained, "celebrities should be mindful of their influence on people and should be mindful of what they say because I definitely respect celebrities who are aware of their power."

Bridget Gum  
freshman psychology major



### FRESHMEN FINDINGS

## Goodbye DeVos: The president-elect has other plans

**W**ITH Joe Biden named the President-elect, a lot of changes are expected for the American school system, including the foreseen replacement of Betsy DeVos, the current Secretary of Education. During her term under President Trump's administration, DeVos has come under fire from educators across the country.

One of the most prominent criticisms against DeVos is her lack of support for public education funding. According to the National Education Association (NEA), DeVos supported Trump's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal which featured a 13.5% cut to the Department of Education, which would lead to \$9 billion in cuts to over 20 education programs. These programs include TRIO, an outreach and student services programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Service) which existed within this reauthorization of The Higher Education Act in the United States designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similar plans that make higher education more accessible including Title II, which aids states in properly training and hiring teachers, as well as Impact Aid, which provides funding for schools not generating enough tax revenue due to being located near federally protected lands. These cuts came simultaneously with the plan to privatize public education, transferring funds and responsibility to for-profit entities in the private sector. DeVos also argued in 2019 for larger class sizes and more cuts to education, including the reduction of grants for special education by 26%.

DeVos has also been criticized for her lack of experience in the public school system, seeing as neither she nor her children have attended public schools. The Biden family, however, has strong ties to public education and NEA support through the president-elect's wife Jill Biden, who has experience teaching in both public high schools and community colleges, as well as being a union member. Joe Biden stated in his victory speech to the American people on November 7, "For America's educators, this is a great day. You're going to have one of your own in the White House."

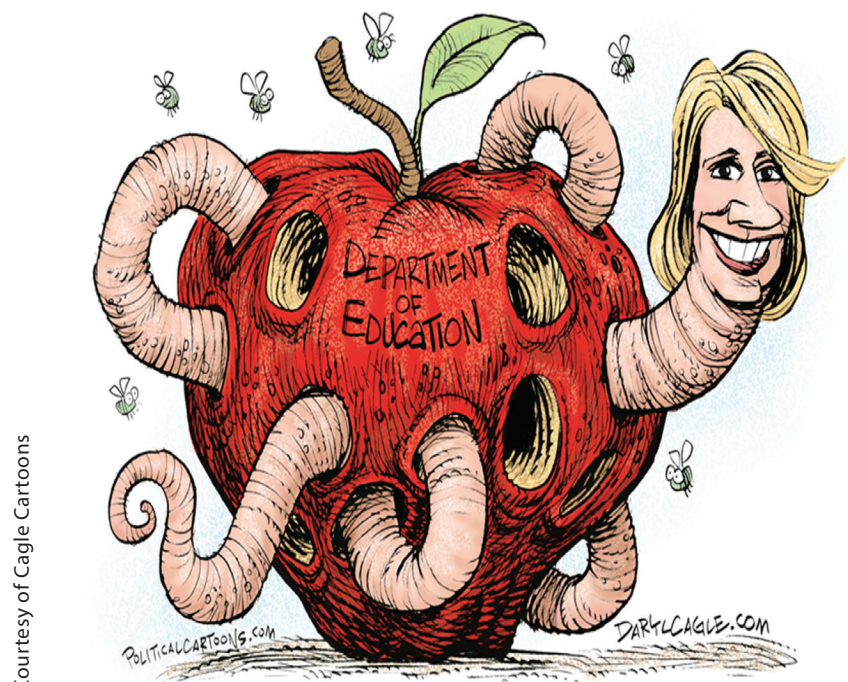
Joe Biden's plan for education is to make multiple changes that will benefit educators and students alike. Some of these plans include tripling Title I funding, which pertains to schools with a high demographic of low-income students, instructing districts to prioritize this funding to create competitive salaries for educators and making other critical investments, as well as revamping the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to support teachers.

Joe Biden also plans to bring mental health in schools to the forefront by investing in school mental health professionals to take the burden off of teachers and to better support students. With the improvement of schooling for different

demographics of students, the Biden administration plan includes investing to eliminate the funding gap between both rich and poor districts and white and non-white districts, as well as moving to support teacher diversity in schools. Regarding students with disabilities, Joe Biden plans to fully fund The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act within ten years. If implemented properly, these policies could make a world of difference in America's school system.

While Joe Biden may not be a perfect president, professionals in education are hopeful that his administration will promote positive developments in the realm of public education. These proposals put the best interest of teachers and students at the forefront, to take the steps in making public education a meaningful and equal resource regardless of income or demographic. The most important step the president-elect can take is to hire a Secretary of Education well-versed in the public-school system, whose good intentions will have an even greater practical impact on American education.

Kate McCormick  
freshman English major





# 2020-2021 MAAC men's basketball preview



By Shaun Chornobroff

COLLEGE basketball season is scheduled to start on Nov. 25. Exactly when each team in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) will experience their first tip-off, remains a mystery. A surge in COVID-19 cases in the northeast has crept its way into the MAAC causing several programs to pause practicing and potentially eliminate or reschedule games. Non-conference basketball seems less likely by the day. However, MAAC basketball is a much more certain proposition and the 2020-21 season, which is set to start on Dec. 11, is set to be a fun one, to say the least.

**1. Siena Saints:** Jalen Pickett has accomplished pretty much all you can in the MAAC. As a freshman, Pickett was the conference's Rookie of the Year and as a sophomore became the Conference Player of the Year, leading the Saints to the regular-season title. Unfortunately, the pandemic shut down the MAAC tournament and the Saints chances at reaching the NCAA tournament. However, Pickett and fellow first-team All-MAAC selection, Manny Camper, are returning to Carmen Macciarello's team that should repeat as champions.

**2. Saint Peter's Peacocks:** Losing conference Rookie of the Year Aaron Estrada would be insurmountable for a lot of teams. But Shaheen Holloway's team had 13 players on the court for at least eight minutes per game. KC Ndefo, who led the Peacocks in both points and rebounds was named preseason First Team All-MAAC and should be the centerpiece of Saint Peter's team. The Peacocks return a lot of their talent and in a year with a shortened off-season, and likely filled with COVID-19 related stoppages, having a deep roster, filled with experience should be crucial.

**3. Monmouth Hawks:** The Hawks, like Saint Peter's, have a First-Team All-MAAC in Deion Hammond preseason selection and return a large amount of their roster. The losses of Ray Salnave, the team's second-leading scorer and rebounder, who transferred to DePaul, and their leading rebounder

Musta Traore, may hurt. Even so, I am a fan of a lot of the Hawks' young talent. Hammond who can seemingly score at will is my dark horse Player of the Year pick and Samuel Chaput is the guard I'm expecting to take the next step and become an even more crucial part of King Rice's team.

**4. Iona Gaels:** Not too often does a coach of Rick Pitino's caliber find his way to the MAAC. And when they do, expectations are high. The pre-season coaches poll had the Gaels at second in the conference, but during the pre-season conference call with reporters Pitino said some of his players were having trouble picking up the new system. Now, the team is paused for two weeks after a positive COVID-19 test. It wouldn't shock me if Pitino and company end up with an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, but I'm expecting them to drop some games.

**5. Niagara Purple Eagles:** Marcus Hammond is one of the MAAC's best playmakers. He arrived at Niagara as a self-described "pass first point guard," but his time as a Purple Eagle has seen him develop into one of the conference's leading scorers. Greg Paulus is one of the MAAC's best young coaches and may be making the next step as a coach, as his team ascends into one of the best in the conference.

**6. Manhattan Jaspers:** This may be the biggest wildcard in the MAAC. The Jaspers return most of their roster that went 13-18 and went 8-12 in MAAC play last season. The team does have a Preseason second-team All-MAAC selection in Warren Williams. Having your best talent be a forward, who often finds himself in foul trouble isn't something that makes me ecstatic. Steve Masiello's team does have depth after adding three transfers with a lot of potential, and if that depth matures and takes a step forward this can be a team that's top-three in the conference. As of right now, I'm not confident that in a conference as hard-nosed and competitive as the MAAC is, the Jaspers have someone who can take over a game and push them to the next level.

**7. Quinnipiac Bobcats:** Losing one of the best shooters in the conference and the nation's leading rebounder would bury most teams at the bottom of the conference, but this Quinnipiac team has talent, not to mention, one of the most underrated coaches in the MAAC in Baker Dunleavy. Tyrese Williams and Jacob Rigoni were named to Preseason All-Conference teams and are expected to take prominent roles in the offense. The Bobcats bring back four more players who averaged at least 10 minutes per game. Of those players, sophomore guard Matt Balanc is the guy I have set for a breakout.

**8. Canisius Griffins:** Majesty Brandon doesn't only have one of the conference's best names but is

one of its most creative scorers. Brandon can create off the dribble and operate as a catch and shoot player very effectively. A bump in efficiency from the MAAC's 10th leading scorer would be huge for Reggie Witherspoon's team. The Griffin's are going to need the cast around Brandon to improve as well. Unlucky for Witherspoon, the team has already had to be paused twice due to COVID-19 tests, including a positive test in late October from Witherspoon. With multiple interruptions to their preseason, this isn't the start Canisius was looking for in their season. Don't be surprised if the lack of practice creeps into the team's play at the beginning of the season.

**9. Rider Broncs:** Out with the old and in with the new. The Broncs lost nine players from last year's team and brought in 12 new players for this season. That's a lot of players to figure out how to put in a rotation, but also a lot of talent to display in several positions. Head Coach Kevin Baggett is high on his incoming talent and is now armed with a chip on his shoulder after being picked last in the preseason coaches poll. A step forward from Christian Ings and Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson will be crucial for Rider this season. Since becoming head coach, Baggett has never finished lower than seventh in the MAAC. I predict that will come to an end, but this team will not finish dead last as the preseason poll suggests.

**10. Fairfield Stags:** The Stags will be reliant on two transfers, Caleb Green, a transfer from Holy Cross, and Tsheifu Ngalakulondi who arrived from St. Bonaventure. Both players will be crucial for the Stags to outperform my preseason projection. Neither player has played a live game since early 2019. Call it an overreaction, but relying on two players, in a condensed off-season that have not seen the court since February and March of 2019 scares me. Jay Young's team ran the least productive offense in the MAAC last season, scoring less than 60 points per game. This was counteracted by the team only giving up 62.9 points per game. The offense will need to take a step up this season if Young's team wants to take the next step.

**11. Marist Red Foxes:** The loss of Tyler Sagl will hurt the Red Foxes this season. Sagl, who returned home to Canada this year, led the MAAC freshman in points per game, averaging 8.5. Sagl was also one of the MAAC's ascending deadeye's from beyond the arc, shooting 36.5 percent from three-point range. Sagl was a player I had pegged for a breakout campaign. The Red Foxes had no players average double-figures last season, but return guards Michael Cubbage and Matthew Herasme. If these two take a step up and help dominate the backcourt the Red Foxes may be in store for a couple of upsets with the hard-nosed style of basketball Head Coach John Dunne deploys.

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**THE SPORTS SECTION**  
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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

# 2020-2021 MAAC women's basketball preview



By Dylan Manfre

**O**NE week from today college basketball will begin — amidst a chaotic and unique environment threatening the life of the season. Teams need a minimum of 13 games to make the NCAA tournament, but with the coronavirus striking at least six of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference's (MAAC) 11 teams during the preseason period, it will be one interesting season.

**1. Fairfield Stag:** Perhaps the top returning player in the entire conference and 2020-2021 Preseason Player of the Year Lou Lopez-Senechal is poised to dominate the MAAC yet again with her ability to run the floor, post-up opponents and shoot from deep — and she's only a junior. Paired up graduate student and Preseason All-MAAC First Team section Katie Armstrong, Fairfield is my top team in the league.

The Stags were picked under Manhattan in the preseason coaches' poll, but that will not hold. The Stags are going to finish first. Armstrong is a career 39% shooter from the field and 31% from 3-point range. These two players are certainly enough to put the MAAC on notice and beat preseason favorite Manhattan.

**2. Marist Red Foxes:** The big three of Alana Gilmer, Grace Vander Weide and Rebekah Hand are no more as the trio graduated last spring. However, Preseason All-MAAC Third Team selection Willow Duffell is returning along with senior Allie Best. I liked their chemistry last season and expect them to carry that over in 2020. Best had the second highest assist-to-turnover ratio at 2.18 last season and was an anchor to head coach Brian Giorgis' plans. At the end of the season, I have Marist in second.

**3. Quinnipiac Bobcats:** I was personally surprised to see the Bobcats tied for second with Fairfield in the preseason poll. Point guard Shaq Edwards is not going to be enough for the Bobcats coming off an injury-riddled season. But the Bobcats have a lot of depth on their roster. 6-foot-5 Cat

Almedia will be the typical low-post, hands-up, get the block type of player and, defensively, that might be what Quinnipiac will need to win some games.

They allowed 67.4 points per game last year, eighth-most in the league. All things considered, the legendary Tricia Fabri will craft the group into a winner as she usually does. Even last year, when it lost its historic winning streak in MAAC games, they still ended up third. Expect the same.

**4. Manhattan Jaspers:** I was surprised to see Manhattan named first in the preseason poll. I love that Emily LaPointe and Courtney Warley are two key returners for the Jaspers this season who bring back a majority of its roster. The two players they lost, Tuuli Menna and Pamela Miceus, each averaged 2.7 points per game over their careers so they certainly are not losing much.

Now that Rider's and Marist's stars from last year are out of the league this year, we may see Warley and LaPointe shine as the premier players in the league statistically. Warley was a 48% field goal shooter (sixth in the MAAC) and LaPointe was the 13th best scorer in the MAAC at 12.4 points per game.

**5. Siena Saints:** Guard Sabrina Piper was the leader of the Saints last season. Now it's up to All-MAAC Third Team selections Amari Anthony and Rayshel Brown. Anthony started 27 games for the Saints last season and was an 84% free throw shooter. Brown shot 42% from the field. Without Piper on the roster, the Saints are not marching anywhere above seventh. If it were up to me, I would switch Rider and Siena in the preseason standings.

**6. Rider Broncs:** Head Coach Lynn Milligan has her biggest task on her desk, aside from coaching a team that lost two weeks of practice time from a positive coronavirus test. That challenge is filling the enormous hole left by graduating six seniors, including Stella Johnson, who now plays for the WNBA's Washington Mystics. The Broncs only return one starter from their 2020 MAAC championship season in junior point guard Amanda Mobley.

Taking last year's stats, Mobley is now the leading scorer on the team averaging 9.2 points per game. Defensively, Rider's challenge is replacing Defensive Player of the Year Amari Johnson.

Milligan has four players who are 6-feet or over, but look for Victoria Toomey (6-foot-2) and freshman Sofie Bruintjes (6-foot-4) to anchor the frontcourt. Bruintjes reminds me a bit of Marist's Lovisa Henningsdotir, a 6-foot-2 forward who ranked fifth in the league in blocks during the 2018-2019 season, with her ability to get to the basket and create an open shot from long range. If she can play a stretch-four and run the floor, Rider will be in good shape. They won't be atop the conference by any means, but not below seventh.

**7. Iona Gaels:** Iona finished 10th in scoring and field goal percentage. The roster only has one true senior in Olivia Vezaldenos and the Gaels brought in five freshmen. The preseason poll has them fifth and I believe it is largely because of their youth. I cannot place the Gaels at five without senior Morgan Rachu on the roster; she was a real asset to the program and a 39% field goal shooter and the team's scoring leader at 12.3 points per game. The Gaels still have Juana Camilion which is one of the few reasons I think the MAAC coaches placed them so high up.

**8. Monmouth Hawks:** There is a youth movement in West Long Branch, New Jersey. Monmouth brought in six freshmen. The hope is one of them can be the second coming of Sierra Green who averaged 11.1 points per game. She played a big role in the wins Monmouth got last season, but losing her to graduation will be a lot to make up for.

**9. Niagara Purple Eagles:** Maggie McIntyre, gone. Jai Moore, gone. Those two star guards have graduated, leaving Head Coach Jada Peterson left to answer some questions about who will run the offense and be the main scorer. McIntyre torched Rider in the semifinal game in last season's MAAC tournament, exploding for seven 3-pointers. I bet Milligan is happy she does not have to worry about her anymore. Knowing Peterson, she will compile a solid team. She has a youthful team without a single senior on the roster — this includes three freshmen.

**10. Saint Peter's Peacocks:** Honestly, this team got lucky last season getting six conference wins, it's as many wins during MAAC play as it has had in the last five seasons combined. Beating Rider in its first meeting and holding them to two points in the third quarter will never happen again. Not as long as Milligan is in town.

Saint Peter's had its fair share of problems in 2019 and a team that is historically a bottom-feeder of the MAAC gives me little hope to think it will be any higher than eighth in the league. The biggest loss for them was senior Zoe Pero and her 1.54 blocks game, second best in the league last season. She was also the second highest scorer on the team at 12.6 points per game. Look for redshirt senior guard Kendrea Williams to be their top scoring option. She played all 30 games and led the team in field goal percentage shooting 45%. The preseason poll has Saint Peter's ninth, I'll lower them to 10th.

**11. Canisius Golden Griffins:** The main reason Canisius was placed last in the MAAC was because D'Jhai Patterson-Ricks graduated. She was a premier point guard in the league and scored 14.4 points per game, had 54 steals, shot 35% from the field and was an all-around floor general. Losing her means Canisius will have to work for every win and find its identity in the backcourt.



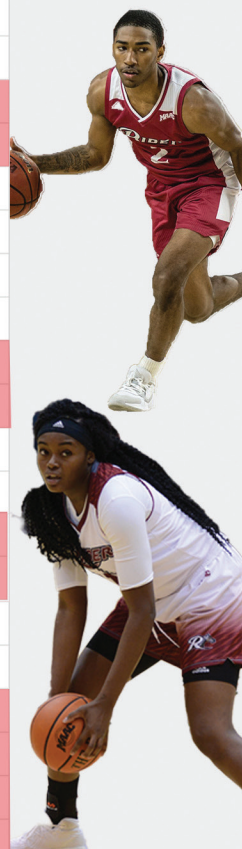
## Rider Men's & Women's Basketball Schedules



Home:   
Away:

\*MAAC Tournament on March 9-13 in Atlantic City, N.J.\*

Dates	Men's	Women's
December 11th	Manhattan	Manhattan
December 12th	Manhattan	Manhattan
December 18th	Iona	Iona
December 19th	Iona	Iona
January 1st	Fairfield	Fairfield
January 2nd	Fairfield	Fairfield
January 8th	Niagara	Niagara
January 9th	Niagara	Niagara
January 15th	Siena	Siena
January 16th	Siena	Siena
January 22nd	Quinnipiac	Quinnipiac
January 23rd	Quinnipiac	Quinnipiac
January 29th	Marist	Marist
January 30th	Marist	Marist
February 5th	Saint Peter's	Saint Peter's
February 6th	Saint Peter's	Saint Peter's
February 12th	Canisius	Canisius
February 13th	Canisius	Canisius
March 5th	Monmouth	Monmouth
March 6th	Monmouth	Monmouth



# Sports

INSIDE

## MAAC BASKETBALL PREVIEWS

Sports editors *Dylan Manfre and Shaun Chornobroff* preview the MAAC basketball season.

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TRACK AND FIELD

# Scott Ruskan races into the U.S. Coast Guard



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Senior track and field and cross-country runner **Scott Ruskan** was surrounded by friends, family and teammates as he was sworn into the U.S. Coast Guard at Rider.

By **Olivia Nicoletti**

**S**ENIOR track and field and cross-country runner Scott Ruskan took a step toward life after Rider when he was sworn into the U.S. Coast Guard on Veteran's Day.

His dream in high school was to attend college and run for their track team, but in the back of his mind, he always had an appreciation for people who served the country. After interning last spring at EisnerAmper, an accounting firm in Pennington, New Jersey, he visualized his future. As he was approaching graduation, serving was still a prominent goal for him.

"Enlisting in the Coast Guard is something that you don't have to do out of college, you can do it right out of high school. However, I am so thankful I went to Rider first," Ruskan said. "Without the opportunities and without the experiences I had here I don't know if I'd be where I am today."

Within the past week, Ruskan took the initial oath of enlistment to serve in the U.S. Coast Guard. He commended Master Chief Mike Rosati for his mentorship and his own time served as Command Master Chief in the U.S. Coast Guard. Rosati put Ruskan in touch with the right people and opened the door of opportunities for him.

"Scott is very well-rounded and he has done well academically. That being said, he is well suited for the job because he is teamwork-oriented and he has a clear idea of what he wants to do professionally in the service," Rosati said. "Scott is considerate and thoughtful and the U.S. Coast Guard matches his core values well."

Ruskan was overwhelmed with the amount of support he got when he was sworn in, he was surrounded by family, friends, professors and classmates. Fellow teammates and juniors James Green and Brian Spolarich were two of many who came to witness the big day.

"At the ceremony, it was very heartwarming because if you know Scott you know he is a very selfless person and he is going to do whatever it takes to make sure he puts everybody else before he puts himself," Green said. "It made my heart feel good and I felt it was a really good choice for him. Scott is one of those people who would do well with anything, I knew whatever he chose to do in his future he was

going to excel in it."

Spolarich said, "We grew up together and we've been friends for a while so I'm proud of him. This is something that he's very passionate about so I'm happy because he's happy. I'm excited to see how well he does, Scott's a hard-working kid so if he puts his mind to something he can do it. I wouldn't be surprised if he ends up serving more than he has to just out of pure joy."

Although the track team is settling with the loss of a great leader after his last year running, his future is undeniably bright. Bob Hamer, the head track and cross country coach, recognizes that Ruskan has overcome some adversity and obstacles regarding injury, however, he has made himself into something great.

"It fills me with a sense of pride that Scott is willing to go out there and serve the country. He's willing to sacrifice for the rest of us so that we can continue to do what we love every day. I hope I've been a little bit of assistance and been a help to him along the way," Hamer said. "Scott has really given us more than we've given him and I think that's probably what led him down this path to serve in the U.S. Coast Guard."

Beginning his track and cross country career in eighth grade, Ruskan has a major passion for running. He has been an athlete on both teams for all four years at Rider. Ruskan's cousins ran at Bridgewater High School and into their college years, which was a major influence for him to get involved with the sport.

"When I began running in middle school I instantly enjoyed it and that led me to do it throughout high school. I was lucky enough to have really good teammates and a solid coaching staff that got me to where I am today," Ruskan said. "One of my favorite things about track is the team atmosphere but my overall favorite part is competing, just being able to compete against other people and being able to better myself every day."

At the last indoor season of the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America (IC4A), Ruskan and his teammates set a school record.

"This one was so special to me because I was able to do it with my teammates in a relay situation," Ruskan said. "My coach was able to set up a really solid relay for us and he got the ball rolling. We all put

out our best efforts and did our parts that day."

Hamer is one of the main reasons that Ruskan chose Rider. Hamer's love for the sport and his care for his athletes is what sold Ruskan to run for him.

"As for myself, I wasn't a star level recruit coming in, I was above average but I wasn't anything that special. Coach Hamer took a chance on me and gave me the opportunities to run," Ruskan said. "The best thing about coach Hamer is that he really develops athletes not just on the track but, personally, he developed me into the person I am today."

Hamer emphasized, that Ruskan stood out to him at recruitment due to his desire to be part of the team.

"Scott had a lot of the qualities and characteristics that we look for in an athlete; he was dedicated and committed," Hamer said. "What has impressed me the most about him is his ability to be a team player. He really loves Rider, he really loves his teammates and he's willing to do anything he can to help the team succeed. He would sacrifice his own individual successes so that he can have success as a team."

Ruskan believes the most essential lesson he learned from Rider is his ability to work with others.

When he was a freshman, he helped create the investments club and now has earned the position of president. Even as the head leader of the club, he still is a firm believer in the process of teamwork.

"The key thing is that no matter what you do in life you're always a part of a team, no one ever does anything alone," Ruskan said. "As much as people like to say they do, someone always helps you get there. Being able to work together with others is an essential part of life."

Spolarich sees these qualities and how they effect Ruskan's relationships.

"People gravitate towards Scott because of the energy he has and the way he conducts himself," Spolarich said. "He's a good leader and he's always cheering people on with words of encouragement."

Ruskan's time at Rider has set him up for success in the future. With the opportunities presented to him through athletics, he has had the chance to be a leader and a teammate. He can start his career in the U.S. Coast Guard knowing he put in a lot of hard work at Rider and made great memories while doing so.