

Murray's MAAC masterclass: Rider catches Canisius in first-round comeback



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

SEE MURRAY PAGE 12

Junior guard **Dwight Murray Jr.** willed Rider to its first tournament win in over three years with a come-from-behind victory over Canisius in the first round on March 8.

Ciattarelli brings campaign for governor to Rider and pushes Murphy on policy

By **Stephen Neukam**

REPUBLICAN candidate Jack Ciattarelli continued his campaign for the New Jersey governorship at Rider, painting the state as losing ground to regional foes and offering tax reform proposals as his prescription for the maladies, at a virtual event hosted by the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics on March 9.

Ciattarelli is running in a largely uncontested primary for the state's GOP nomination, leaving him with plenty of time and energy to focus on drawing a distinction between himself and New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, who is seeking reelection. The GOP primary is on June 8.

The candidate also took aim at Murphy's response to the coronavirus pandemic and highlighted his own ability to work with both sides of the aisle, positioning himself in what plans to be a nearly year-long campaign before the election in November.

At the event that was attended by 85 students and community members, Ciattarelli focused largely on issues that were of importance to younger voters. He said that the state needed to be more attractive for young people so they would not leave after college. To cure that, the candidate highlighted his plans to cut the state's tax rates and expand low-income housing to foster opportunity and affordability.

"I can [turn the economy around] with some very significant reforms to our tax code," said Ciattarelli. "Delaware has the most attractive bylaws for corporate governance ... I think New Jersey should adopt Delaware's bylaws ... I think we should cut our corporate tax rate, which is the highest in the nation, in half."

Like most Republicans, Ciattarelli's campaign is clouded by the sharp schism that has divided the party since the end of former President Donald Trump's time in office. Ciattarelli, who said he was not a "Trump Republican," has attempted to balance the need to appeal to the former firebrand president's supporters and distancing himself from the divisiveness of far-right rhetoric and policy.

Rebranding the party is not a challenge that Ciattarelli is running from. Aside from delivering a

SEE GOP PAGE 2



Stephen Neukam/The Rider News

Republican candidate **Jack Ciattarelli** said he was excited about his campaign for governor because it "provides an opportunity to reestablish the Republican brand."

INSIDE **SURVIVE AND ADVANCE**
The women's basketball team moves on in the MAAC Tournament.
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TEAM VACCINE?
As the vaccines are being administered, concerns arise over its effectiveness.
PAGE 8



AM REFLECTION
A recent Rider graduate made the most out of quarantine by forming a band consisting of current students and alumni.
PAGE 6

SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

Missing Person

Found him with weed. On March 5 at 5:30 p.m., Public Safety was contacted to check on the location of a male who does not go to Rider, but whose mother said was possibly on campus. It was determined that the male was staying with a student on campus and when Public Safety went to the room, there was an odor of suspected marijuana. The student consented to a search and the suspected marijuana and paraphernalia were found. The male was asked to leave the campus and the Rider student was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Maskless

Cover up your face. On March 3 at 9:03 a.m., Public Safety was called to the Fine Arts Center on a report that there were students not wearing their masks indoors. When an officer arrived, it was found that two students were in a classroom and not wearing their masks properly. The officer reminded the students of the mask policy and they were referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Gym Rat

Not your card. On March 7 at 11:40 a.m., Public Safety was called to the Student Recreation Center on a report of an individual who was in possession of a student ID card that was not his. It was found that the male, who was not a student at Rider, had used the card to gain access to the student gym and had taken the card from his friend who was a student at the school. The student was contacted and said that he did know the male had his card and allowed him to use it. The student's guest was asked to leave and the student was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

— Information provided by Public Safety Cpt. Matthew Babcock

Administrative pay cuts in limbo for next year's budget

By Stephen Neukam and Shaun Chornobroff

RIDER is mulling the possibility of again extending administrative pay cuts that are in effect until the end of June, a move that has already saved the university nearly half of a million dollars, according to a top university official.

The cuts, which have been in effect since May, were extended in October after being set to expire that month.

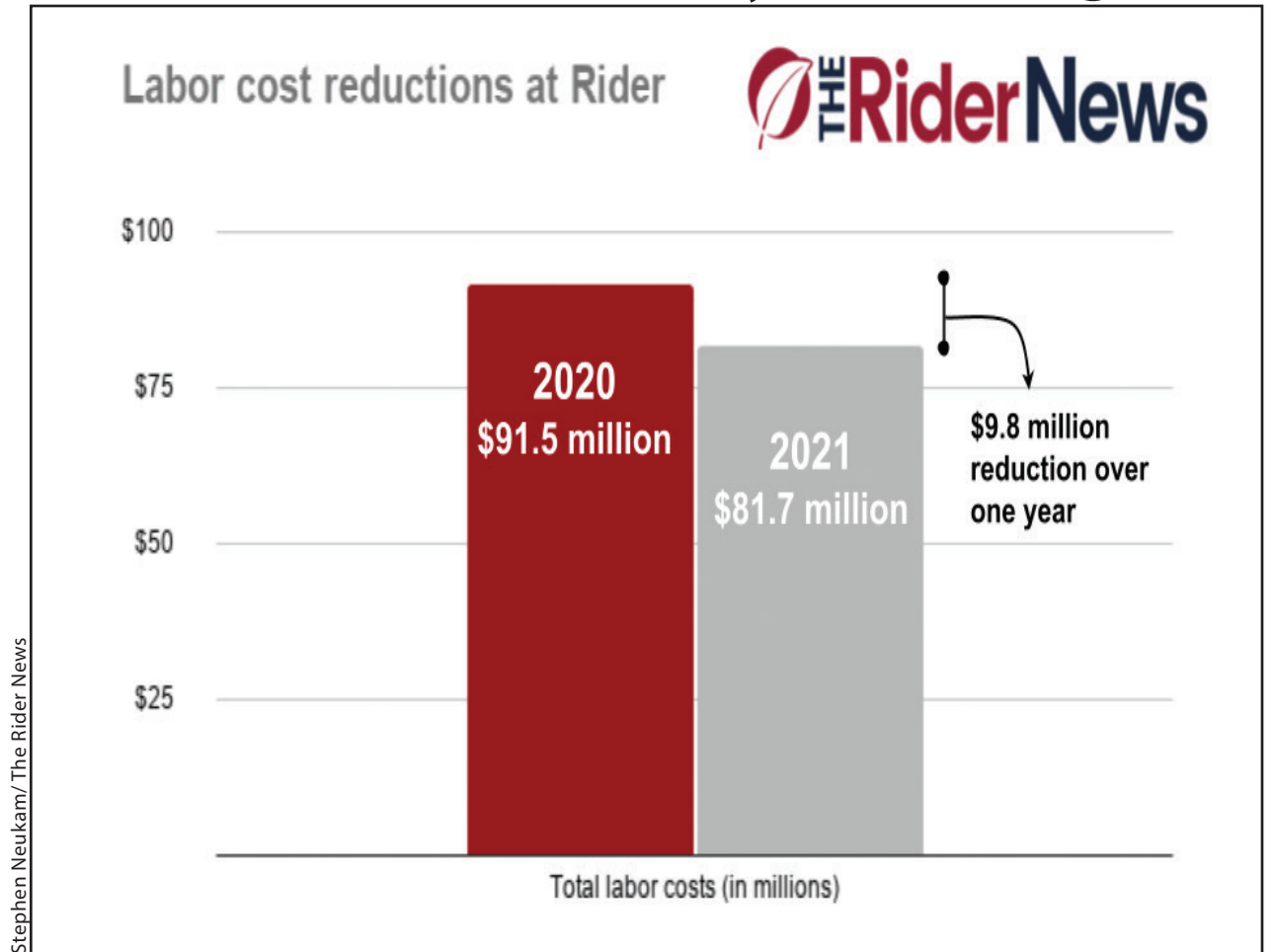
The reductions have saved the university around \$470,000, according to Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communication Kristine Brown. These savings are a slice of the costs that the university has been attempting to recoup in the past year to compensate for steep revenue declines due to the pandemic.

Labor costs have been at the forefront of the school's cost shaving — Rider has cut nearly \$10 million in labor expenses in the last two years.

According to Brown, the university has not made a final decision about future administrative cuts. The current cutbacks are set to expire on June 30, the end of the fiscal year.

The pay cuts extended to President Gregory Dell'Omo and his cabinet members, as well as the deans of the university's colleges.

The push to quell expenses comes as the university's budget deficits mount. Over the last three years, Rider has run a cumulative deficit of \$28.1 million. Revenues declined by \$15.5 million between this year and last.



Rider has cut nearly \$10 million in total labor costs within the last two years, a major slash in spending.

GOP candidate relishes the opportunity to rebrand Republicanism in state



Jack Ciattarelli/Twitter

Republican candidate Jack Ciattarelli made a campaign stop in Ocean County in January.

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

GOP win for the governorship and flipping the state legislature, he said one of his goals is to reassert the Republican party in New Jersey. The last time the state had a Republican governor was under Chris Christie in 2018, who was the first Republican to hold the office since 2002.

"I'm excited about the campaign because it provides an opportunity to reestablish the Republican brand," said Ciattarelli.

Besides the policy differences that separate the party in the state, with Ciattarelli saying he favors a "common sense conservative approach," he highlighted one issue that unites all Republicans in the state — the goal of making Murphy a one-term governor.

Senior political science major Matthew Schantin, a registered Democrat, said that Ciattarelli's common sense approach appealed to him but was not in favor of his tax proposals.

"I thought he was relatively straightforward and had some common sense ideas," said Schantin. "Unfortunately he seems focused on dismantling Murphy's progress and providing tax cuts across the board, including for major corporations."

Ciattarelli blasted Murphy's handling of the pandemic, particularly the vaccine rollout and the closing of public schools. However, in recent weeks, GOP governors across the country have started to drastically roll back virus restrictions, moves that Ciattarelli does not support.

"I think it's a little too soon to just start ignoring some of the protocols that are critical to stopping the spread of the disease," said Ciattarelli. "I think we should play it safe with regard to the masks."

While the candidate stressed continuing protocols for safety, he also said he wants to open up the economy, an approach that he said will "save lives and livelihoods."

The event showed a candidate in full campaign mode, attempting to draw distinctions between himself and his opponent before this year's election.

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BREAKING BEYOND THE BARRIERS

Rider University celebrates Womxn's History Month *

* The spelling womxn is used to respect the dynamic and fluid nature of gender identity and expression and to be inclusive of all people who identify as women.

March 16

Working Womxn in Academia
6 p.m., rider.edu/working-womxn

Join us as a panel of working womxn in higher education share their experiences, obstacles, and defy gender inequalities in the workplace.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

March 17

Real Hot Girl Ish: A Discussion about Womxn in Hip Hop Culture
5 p.m., rider.edu/hip-hop-culture

Hip Hop/Rap music is one of the most significant and most influential genres in America. In a male-dominated industry, womxn have faced gender bias and double standards for many years. In this event, we will discuss the influence womxn have on Hip Hop music and all the obstacles they have faced simply to get noticed in the Rap industry.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

March 22

Conversation Cafe: It's The Respectability Politics for Me
7 p.m., rider.edu/conversation-cafe

Respectability Politics is generally defined as what happens when minority or marginalized groups are told (or teach themselves) that to receive better treatment from the group in power, they must behave better. Join us for a discussion on how this has a significant impact on womxn in society.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

March 23

An Inclusive History of Womxn's Suffrage
6 p.m., email Dr. Ryan at eryan@rider.edu for zoom registration link

Dr. Erica Ryan, a Rider University history professor who researches intersections between ideas about gender, sexuality, and political culture in the modern United States, will give a public lecture to the both the Rider and wider community entitled "An Inclusive History of Womxn's Suffrage." This talk will cover the history of many American womxn pushing for political and voting rights from the early 1800s to the present. After a brief history of the run up to the twentieth century, the talk will focus on the days when the movement heated up when womxn's suffrage activism hit a fever pitch. In telling this story, the talk will highlight organized womxn's efforts across a diverse range of groups, paying particular attention to womxn's experiences from marginalized groups while also detailing several local NJ and PA suffragists' work.

Sponsored by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Franklin F. Moore Library, and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

March 23

Poetry Slam: Womxn Empowerment
7:30 p.m., rider.edu/poetry-slam

Join us in sharing your reflection of womxn empowerment through poetry. Students will have an opportunity to write a poem to reflect on their own experiences growing up to now. Then a broader discussion will be taking place (more student-driven than presenter driven).

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

March 29

Celebrating Womxn in Rider Athletics: A Virtual Reception in Their Honor
6 to 7:30 p.m., rider.edu/womxn-in-athletics

Speaker: MARRITTA GILLCREASE '15

Join Rider Athletics, Rider Women's Basketball team, Rider Recreation Programs, and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion for a virtual evening reception honoring our womxn student-athletes in the areas of leadership, community service, and academic excellence. A distinguished Rider alumna athlete will provide remarks about her time at the university and lessons she learned that have helped her excel in life and her career. You won't want to miss the opportunity to mix 'n' mingle with these impactful womxn role models! All are welcome to "dress to impress!"

Sponsored by Rider Athletics, Rider Women's Basketball, Rider Recreation Programs, and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

RIDER.EDU/WOMXNS-HISTORY-MONTH



CENTER FOR
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
Unity + Diversity = University

These events are partially funded by the mandatory student activity fee.
Approved by Campus Life - 4/1

Faculty and student talk about pandemic impact on science departments



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore marine science major McKaela Jones described her transition from in-person to remote learning as “not easy.”

By Tatyanna Carman

FACULTY from various Rider science departments explained some of the challenges their departments have faced stemming from changes resulting from the pandemic.

Professor and Chair of the Department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Sciences Paul Jivoff said that the biggest change stems from the social distancing rules because it impacts how faculty can interact with students.

“We interact and work closely with students who do research in our research labs. It is very challenging to help a student learn how to use a piece of equipment or how to perform a data collection protocol from six feet away,” Jivoff said. “In our lab courses, the labs provide students the opportunity to work in small groups and interact closely with other students and their instructors to plan and conduct experiments and to collect and analyze data.”

Professor in the Department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Sciences Julie Drawbridge said that there has been a “significant impact” on indoor labs as a result of the pandemic.

Jivoff said that normally a lab section has 16 students, but the social distancing capacity of lab rooms now only allows eight students in the room.

“With only half the students allowed to attend [the] lab at any one time, it takes us two weeks to get through a given lab activity,” he said. “This reduces the number of hands-on experiences we can offer the students over the semester.”

According to Jivoff, all of the science courses in his department that have a lab component are still using labs. Within the 11 lab courses offered this semester, “five are remote, three are hybrids and two are in person,” according to Jivoff.

“Our labs emphasize hands-on activities to collect data, often with specialized instruments or lab equipment,” said Jivoff. “These activities cannot be replicated using a remote teaching modality. Some instructors are setting up the experiments the students would have done, then filming the experiment so the students can collect data by watching the videos, but it is not the same as students doing all the hands-on activities, particularly practicing using the lab instruments and equipment.”

He said his colleagues are either finding available alternatives or developing alternatives on their own

to offer students the best experience possible in their science classes or their research laboratories.

Sophomore marine science major McKaela Jones explained the transition from in-person learning to remote learning in such a hands-on field “was not easy.”

“I [had] gotten so acclimated and used to working inside a lab where I was able to, you know, do water quality, and I was able to see different things and just collect data based off of a hands-on thing,” she said. “And changing virtually has really affected the way I learned things now. It takes a little bit more time for me to really grasp what is going on, especially when it comes to the simulations.”

Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Geological, Environmental and Marine Sciences (GEMS) Kathleen Browne said that the GEMS faculty have adapted to “provide quality instruction using techniques, some new, for remote instruction.”

“And some have been able to provide in-person learning experiences following all the proper protocols,” she said. “Several of the faculty have created in-person and asynchronous versions of the same activity to accommodate students with different needs and preferences.”

Browne said that one of the biggest challenges is creating different versions of the same exercise and “ensuring all students benefit from robust learning experiences.” She also said that another challenge is gauging student response to the learning experiences and that “interacting with students in Zoom is just different from face to face work.”

Jivoff also said that he has seen how the pandemic has affected the lives of students, especially because many of them work “either part-time or full-time, in order to support themselves.”

“As a result of the pandemic, some of our students are now working to help support their families as well,” Jivoff said. “Many of our students have family members who are in a higher-risk group for contracting COVID[-19] so the students are worried about increasing the chance of exposing those family members. I think the majority of the science students are in a science major because they like the hands-on activities that doing science offers. So, I am sure that most of our students would prefer to be taking all of their science courses in person. So I am sure that makes it frustrating when conditions created by the

pandemic force them to opt for courses that are offered remotely.”

Drawbridge said that many students have taken on additional work hours, which can be very stressful.

Jivoff also shared that many of the students in health sciences do internships at hospitals or with other health care providers for their senior capstone experience, therefore, as a result of the pandemic, those opportunities have been “severely reduced or temporarily eliminated.”

“We are offering alternatives for those students, but the value of working closely with a healthcare professional in a field you hope to pursue can not be underestimated,” Jivoff said.

Jones suggested that other students find something that they can be hands-on with, like an internship, or find a job that has to do with a students’ major. Jones works as an intern at New Logic Marine Science Camp and at Calvin Klein.

“Because if you stay in the practice, and if you keep rolling with the punches, I promise you getting acclimated with the lab, again, won’t feel as hectic as it will, probably next semester, the semester after this one,” said Jones.

Browne shared how impressed she is by her students during this time.

“Each semester I have been impressed with my students’ resilience, patience and good will as they adapt to the changes,” she said. “I work hard to work with them to create great learning experiences and they seem to be equally willing to collaborate to make things work and have a strong learning experience.”

Jones added to this sentiment and also advised students to not let certain obstacles deter them during this tough time. She shared that she failed a biology class during the pandemic.

“Let that be the fuel that allows the motor to keep running,” she said. “Do not give up. Let that be your motor, your fuel, your fire--the fire under your feet. I want all my science majors to stay strong during this time. And just to keep loving what you do, because basically the world is kind of in our hands right now, by the time we grow up, trust me, we’re gonna have a lot of work under our belt, you know, so please continue to love what you do, because that’s also the fuel for your motor.”

Rider coronavirus cases decrease

By Austin Ferguson

RIDER University cut its positive student COVID-19 cases in half after recording a semester-high 16 positive cases a week prior, according to the university’s online dashboard.

The university’s dashboard registered eight student cases of COVID-19, six on campus and two off campus, spanning from March 1 to March 7.

Despite the decline in positive cases, both quarantine and isolation numbers rose in the first week of March. As of March 5, a semester-high 33 students were in quarantine housing, 27 of which were quarantined off campus, according to the

university’s dashboard. As of March 5, 12 students were in isolation, or quarantined due to a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, matching the highest number of isolated students this semester.

Rider Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board, Debbie Stasolla, attributed the rise in quarantine numbers to effective contact tracing of students when positive cases are returned.

“The contact tracing will identify close contact and as soon as someone is identified, they have to quarantine,” Stasolla said.

RiderNews
COVID - 19 Counter

Confirmed Cases
Last updated: Mar. 9, 2021

54
 Cumulative total of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Rider University (Since January 2021)

ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Week 10	4	129
Week 9	13	329
Week 8	20	271
Week 7	3	294
Week 6	16	269
Week 5	3	157
Total	60	2731

STUDENT QUARANTINE

Rider University reports quarantine numbers on a rolling basis, so there is no accurate way to keep a cumulative total of quarantined students. This week, there are:

Five students quarantining on campus
16 students quarantining off campus

COVID - 19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
March 2021	8	1
February 2021	27	1

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

Arianna Marino/The Rider News

Michael Eric Dyson talks resiliency and activism at virtual event

By Sarah Siock

SOCIAL justice, race and police reform were just a few of the topics discussed by activist Michael Eric Dyson at a virtual event hosted by The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), on March 4.

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.

The event titled, "Race and Democracy: Building Resiliency as an Activist," attracted nearly 100 participants to hear the renowned scholar speak. Dyson has a long resume which includes professor, author, ordained minister and contributing opinion writer at The New York Times.

Dyson began his speech by describing the devastating effects the coronavirus pandemic has had on communities of people of color.

"We are facing two pandemics. On the one hand, we have the global pandemic of a virus and all Americans are hurt, but we know that African Americans, Black people and Latinx people are disproportionately impacted by this horrible disease," said Dyson. "The pandemic continues to remind them of the racial toll, and the racial cost on black and brown bodies trying to grapple with systemic racism, systemic inequity and systemic oppression."



Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Michael Eric Dyson gives advice to Rider students on how to make meaningful social change at Rider event.

RACE AND DEMOCRACY: BUILDING RESILIENCY AS AN ACTIVIST

THURSDAY, MARCH 4 | NOON TO 1 P.M.

Zoom - Register in Advance: rider.edu/resiliency

FEATURING DR. MICHAEL ERIC DYSON
ACADEMIC, AUTHOR, ORDAINED MINISTER AND RADIO HOST

America has always promised to be a Nation of opportunity, freedom and equality, but more than 60 years after the civil rights movement, the situation remains unresolved. How do we continue to address the issues of social justice, religion, race and police reform in a world that is damaged and at times hopeless. We remain hopeful. Bearing witness to the difficult truth in our country today, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson aims to rebuild resiliency and inspire America's young people to carry on.



Courtesy of Rider University



Michael Eric Dyson visited Rider to inspire students and answer questions about activism

Dyson went on to speak about police brutality and the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. He referred to these social injustices as, "the second pandemic" facing Black Americans.

"On the other hand, we have the racial pandemic. Before the world, in broad daylight, George Floyd lost his life. It ignited an international global resistance against white supremacy, systemic racism, structural oppression and institutional inequality," said Dyson.

Dyson tied several important messages of his speech to songs written by Black recording artists. Throughout the event, Dyson broke out into song to describe the meaning behind the lyrics of music from Motown singers such as Smokey Robinson,

Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson. Dyson grew up in Detroit, Michigan, where Motown Records was founded. He described the music that came from the city with a theme of "love, hope and optimism."

"Motown was a culture that encouraged us to be unapologetically Black. Growing up in that city was extremely important because it gave me a sense of who I was," said Dyson.

During the event, audience members had the opportunity to ask Dyson questions. Much of the Q&A revolved around Dyson's advice to students on activism and becoming involved in the political landscape. He encouraged young people to be the voice of change they want to see.

"Being on top of critical issues will warrant your recognition. As a worker speaking up joining forces, gaining access by means of climbing up that ladder, but also showing yourself worthy of the kind of participation by the good work you're willing to do," said Dyson. "In terms of politics, you have to go out and vote for the right people. You have to be willing to roll up your sleeves and vote against those policies, practices and legislation that are an attempt to restrict us to get our leaders to raise their voices."

Junior popular music studies major Trevor Sullivan, who served as the moderator of the event, said Dyson's advice resonated with him.

Sullivan said, "The most valuable piece of advice Dr. Dyson gave at the event was that we need to be in the room where big decisions are made. As a young man, a young individual, we want to be in the room where it happens."

To close out the event, Executive Director of the CDI Pamela Pruitt thanked Dyson in a speech where she became emotional. In an interview with The Rider News, Pruitt said she was thankful the event ran smoothly and that she became emotional due to a racist Zoom bombing incident that took place in February during a Black History Month event at Rider.

Pruitt said, "I want our campus to be a better place for our Black students. I tried to make the event yesterday as safe a space as possible. We have to think about the shoulders upon whom we stand and we have to keep moving. We cannot back down."

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARCH!

NUTRITION EVENTS...

- March 11th - Teaching Kitchen - Chips and Homemade Guacamole
- March 16th - Chat and Chew - Shamrock Shakes
- March 18th - Teaching Kitchen - Banana Pots of Gold
- March 23rd - Chat and Chew - Kale Chips
- March 25th - Teaching Kitchen - Matcha Overnight Oats
- March 30th - Chat and Chew - Avocado, Pineapple, Cucumber Salad

OTHER EVENTS...

- Thursday, March 11th - Spring Broke Bash - Lunch at Daly's
- Tuesday, March 16th - Retail Surprise Pop Up
- Wednesday, March 17th - St. Patrick's Day Celebration - Lunch at Daly's

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COOKBOOK

Daly Dining Hall
During Lunch
11am-2:30pm Recognize some of our women culinarians

- Monday, March 1st** - Lottie Manley "aka Mama" preparing Donna Green's Shrimp Soup
- Tuesday, March 9th** - Laverne Sherman preparing Sabeen Masih's Bread Pudding
- Thursday, March 11th** - Bonfila Reyes-Lucas preparing Nanci Menchu's Ceviche
- Tuesday, March 16th** - Felicia Kelly preparing Tatiana Redden's Baked Spinach and Artichoke Dip
- Thursday, March 25th** - Theresa Carmichael preparing Christina Hamme Peterson preparing Arugula, Blueberry and Corn Summer Salad
- Wednesday, March 31st** - Elizabeth Leffler preparing The Gail Bierenbaum Women's Leadership Council's Election Cake

Cranberry's

- March 1st-5th** - DonnaJean Fredeen's Dr. Pepper BBQ Ribs
- March 8th-12th** - Tatiana Redden's Baked Spinach and Artichoke Dip
- March 15th-19th** - Joan Mazzotti's Blueberry Muffins

National Nutrition Month

International Women's Month

Superfood of the Month: Avocado

RIDER DINING'S CORNER

CONTACT US
RIDER FOOD FORUM
Last Wednesday of every month
11:30am-12:30pm

Join us in an open forum to discuss dining service outlooks, upcoming events and dining trends. To participate in the Zoom meeting, email RiderDining@rider.edu and we will send you a link to join

Upcoming meetings are held on:
March 31st * April 28th

Share your feedback with us in person by speaking with a staff member while you're dining

Text us using **ChatBack** at the following numbers:
Dietitian and Daly's: 609-375-1358
Any location within Cranberry's or Delivery: 609-357-1343
Starbucks: 609-375-1747

Email us at riderdining@rider.edu

Social Media [Rider_Eats](#) [Rider_Eats](#) [RiderEats](#)

www.DineOnCampus.com/RiderDining

Rider's own AM Reflection plans virtual music festival showcasing local artists

By Christian McCarville

HAVING been approximately a year since COVID-19 changed the lives of many, live music seems like a distant memory from the past. Rider graduate Alex Murphy is working hard to bring back the spirit of live music in a safe setting.

Murphy graduated from Rider in spring 2020 with a degree in biology. He was very involved on campus — he cofounded the Rider Pep Band, conducted research alongside his biology professors and was a brother of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

In his last semester, Murphy had the urge to create and record music.

"During my last semester at home, I really wanted to sit down and record something," said Murphy. "I wanted to make something that I could put on streaming services."

Murphy began recording and releasing music under the name AM Reflection. He explained that this name represents how he writes in his music.

"I think about my past a lot in my writing, and I try to be better for the future," said Murphy.

This solo project soon became a collaborative effort as Murphy realized that he wanted to play his music live. He began to reach out to fellow musicians to make this dream into a reality.

"I picked a group of people that I met throughout Rider," said Murphy. "All of them still go to Rider or are graduates of Rider. I said 'Hey let's form a band, let's make AM Reflection a band.'"

AM Reflection gained five additional members: junior environmental science major Ben Woodward, junior popular music studies major Trevor Sullivan, sophomore computer science major Tyler Duell and graduate students Joe Lisowski and Ethan Lane.

"I had previously worked with Alex at the songwriter's cabaret last March and thought the band idea was a cool gig," said Woodward. "We started meeting once a week to practice on weekends or when we all had time. And after a month or two we were starting to build and shape our sound as a group."

Woodward plays tenor saxophone and is one of AM Reflection's three vocalists. He learned a lot from his time with the band and is grateful to have this opportunity.

"My biggest takeaway from AM Reflection was to be myself and make time for things that I am passionate about," said Woodward. "Alex got me out of my comfort zone and I appreciate him asking me to join when he did."

Murphy also explained that the band is very careful when it comes to COVID-19 precautions. Band members get tested often and rehearse once a week in an open space.

AM Reflection has recently announced that it will host a prerecorded virtual music festival for themselves and other local artists to perform in. The festival, titled Broken Mirror Festival, will be livestreamed on March 19 on the AM Reflection YouTube channel.

"It's called Broken Mirror because we're breaking through the limitations that we faced in the past and now we're trying to reach new heights," said Murphy.

The festival's name is also a reference to the band's first extended play titled "Mirror." The prerecorded show is designed to give exposure and recognition to talented local artists.

"We got together nine other performers from New Jersey," said Murphy. "We wanted to give ourselves a performance but we wanted to also give an opportunity to showcase the other local artists."

The performance was prerecorded at a venue in Princeton over two days. Each performance was given a time slot so that there were not a large number of individuals in the same location at once. Microphone caps were used and equipment was heavily sanitized to take precaution against COVID-19. Artists were also asked to get tested beforehand.

"Everyone involved, all of the 10 groups including us, basically no one sounds the same," said Murphy. "There are a lot of diverse genres involved in the show."

Audiences also can donate to any act that they particularly enjoy.



Courtesy of @AMReflectionMusic

The Broken Mirror Festival was developed by graduate student Alex Murphy with the intent of showcasing local talent and reviving the live music experience. This festival has been prerecorded and will be streamed on the AM Reflection YouTube channel.

"They have the option to Venmo the AM Reflection account and 100% of those donations will go to whatever artist that they want," said Murphy.

The Broken Mirror Festival is an excellent opportunity for both audiences and performers, bringing back the thrill of live music while contributing to the rise of local talent.

What first began as a solo project has now evolved into a multitalented band that is contributing to the resurgence of local live music. AM Reflection is certainly a band to keep an eye on, representing the diverse talent of the Rider community.

Musicians of Rider band together to form AM Reflection



Courtesy of @AMReflectionMusic

Originally beginning as a solo project, AM Reflection now consists of six musicians and vocalists.



Courtesy of @AMReflectionMusic

Alex Murphy met the members of AM Reflection throughout his time at Rider. Each member is either a graduate of Rider or a current student at the university.



Courtesy of @AMReflectionMusic

Alex Murphy (Left) sits on stage with the band's social media marketer Aly Galanti-Ruybalid (Right). This stage will be the location of the upcoming Broken Mirror Festival.

Broadway star Javier Muñoz engages with students in virtual talkback

By Aaliyah Patel

BROADWAY star Javier Muñoz held a virtual talkback with students on March 4, at 7 p.m. where he shared his performing experiences and offered advice to aspiring artists.

Muñoz is popularly recognized for his starring roles, such as playing the male lead, Usnavi de la Vega, in the 2008 Lin-Manuel Miranda Broadway musical, "In the Heights." From 2016 to 2018, Muñoz took over the role of Alexander Hamilton which was originated by Miranda in the Broadway musical, "Hamilton."

Currently, Muñoz has joined the cast of the Disney Junior production "Eureka," a new animated series where he will play the role of Ohm, Eureka's teacher.

During the live session, Muñoz spoke about his childhood and said he was born and raised in the Linden Projects of east Brooklyn, New York — an area in which he recalls required his family to guard their windows with bars.

Being the youngest of three boys, he did not want to let the stereotype of where he grew up define his future, so he enrolled into the New York University where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Through this university, he joined the Collaborative Arts Project 21, which enabled his professional development and Broadway journey.

The Student Entertainment Council (SEC) hosted this virtual event and allowed students to participate through the question submission feature before attendance.

Dean Klebonas, a senior popular music performance major and stage chair for the SEC, co-hosted the event, an experience he deemed special.

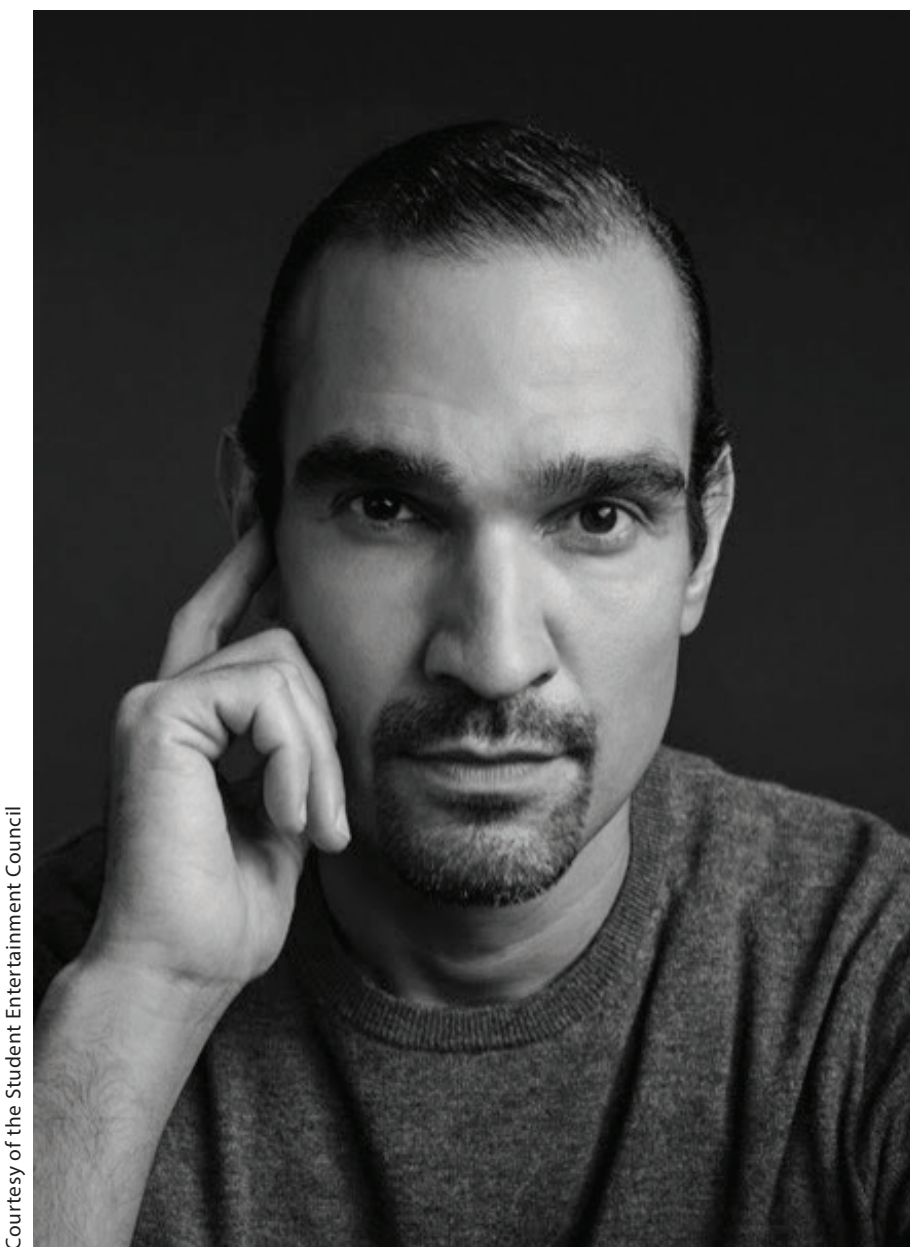
"This was a magical night. Javier is one of the nicest, most chill professionals I've ever had the pleasure of speaking with. He spoke about his experiences on Broadway in 'In the Heights' and 'Hamilton' as Lin Manuel Miranda's alternate/replacement in both and as Lin's right-hand man in life. He had amazing stories and incredible advice for young professionals," Klebonas shared.

Muñoz offered his audience a wide range of entertainment, sharing songs from the musicals he has worked for. One of those songs included the one he auditioned to for his role in "In the Heights." He even extended advice to those who hope to pursue a career in the arts.

"One thing that stuck with me is to rise above Broadway fatigue, you have to acknowledge that every performance is an occasion for someone. Every show is someone in the audience's birthday, anniversary, first Broadway show or something they have been saving up a long time for. It's your job to create that magic for everyone whether it's your first show or your 104th show," said Klebonas.

Nicholas Barbati, the associate dean of campus life, shared how the event provided exposure that will continue to inspire students.

"I thought the Javier Muñoz event was one of the very best events that we've hosted this entire year. Mr. Muñoz's was so engaging and open about his life experiences which made for a truly powerful talkback, and the finale of his performance of 'Story of Tonight' was absolutely breathtaking," Barbati said.



Courtesy of the Student Entertainment Council

Javier Muñoz is commonly known for his role in the widely popular Broadway musical "Hamilton." He has also starred as the lead male role in "In the Heights."

Daly's Dining Hall installs biodigester to reduce food waste

By Tori Pender and Elena Lobo

DALY Dining Hall has begun to utilize an innovative machine called the Seed Biodigester, created by BioHiTech America. This furthers the university's nationally-recognized commitment to sustainability.

Director of Sustainability Melissa Greenberg explained that the biodigester was installed at the end of January to replace the digester that was previously installed in 2014.

The current biodigester can process up to 500 pounds of food waste per day, according to BioHiTech's website.

Greenberg said, an average of 100 pounds of food waste each day is sent through the machine.

Food that goes through the digester is turned into greywater. Greywater is no longer drinkable but remains safe to dispose of without additional treatment even after it has been used for activities such as washing dishes or clothing. Greywater is also beneficial because it can be discarded into the municipal sewage system, unlike food waste that is typically moved to a landfill.

Once treated, greywater can be used in food-producing and non-food-producing plants.

According to the Broncs Go Green Instagram account, since Feb. 10, 2021, over 1,143 pounds of food waste have been turned into greywater and diverted from the landfill.



The Rider News/Carolo Pascale

Located in Daly Dining Hall, the Seed Biodigester processes approximately 100 pounds of food waste per day on average. This device furthers the university's commitment to sustainability.



Courtesy of @BroncsGoGreen

The Seed Biodigester is a machine designed to convert food waste into drainable greywater. This prevents food waste from being sent to landfills.

"The impact is mostly unseen by the Rider community. The savings come in the form of a decrease in solid waste from Daly's and therefore the campus as a whole. When food waste can be turned into water and goes down a drain rather than getting hauled to a landfill, there are both financial and carbon savings as a result," said Greenberg.

Sophomore biology major Nicole Tremble has been inspired by Rider's continued process of becoming more eco-friendly.

Tremble said, "Rider's dedication to being sustainable is not only amazing but also motivating. Their mission has helped me realize just how easy it is to cut back on using plastic and paper, and instead use reusable items."

Team vaccine? COVID in college

ALMOST two years ago, I wrote an editorial in regards to the rise of anti-vaccination propaganda. I expressed my dismay with the spread of misinformation and down right inconsideration of public health. Anti-vaccine supporters refused to offer up alternatives to remedy potential illnesses. They stir up criticism and controversy, instead of offering substitutes that they have found useful for their child. I believed that parents needed to take into consideration that they are not only putting their own children at risk, but other children their kids come in contact with. Those parents are allowed to do what they see fit for their child, but it is selfish to expose the public when they decide not to vaccinate their children.

Here I am two years later with the same criticism, but some concerns as well.

Critics of vaccinations have taken on various positions from political, scientific, sanitary and religious points of view. Opposition to smallpox vaccination in the 1800s in England and the U.S. became the frontrunner of anti-vaccination groups. English physician and scientist Edward Jenner was the pioneer for the smallpox vaccine, the world's first vaccine.

During the 19th century and the development of the American government and modern medicine, there became a wave of distrust and violated personal liberties as the government mandated vaccine policies. The Vaccination Act of 1853 ordered mandatory vaccinations for infants up to three months old and, in 1867, the age requirement was extended to the age of 14 with penalties for those who refused to get them. This caused immediate resistance and, in response, movements such as the Anti-Vaccination League and the Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League.

Fast forward a century later and we are dealing with a similar situation, even as modern medicine has evolved. Now, with the coronavirus, we are seeing this divide happening in real time.

Back in 2019, a year before the start of the global pandemic, Facebook announced "It'll seek out and limit the spread of anti-vaccine hoaxes on its network and also stop showing pages and groups featuring anti-vaccine content or suggesting users to join them."

Youtube also took the initiative by ceasing ads and channels promoting anti-vaccine propaganda.

Along with that, Amazon started removing anti-vaccine documentaries from its Amazon Prime Video streaming service, concerned that the platform was surfacing and recommending anti-vaccination books and movies.

Despite the naysayers and bills that are introduced but not enacted, vaccines still prevent three million disease-related deaths a year, according to The World Health.

During the 2020 pandemic we have seen public health become political. There have been protests

on whether masks are effective or about reopening the public during the lockdown with claims it is an attack on human rights and our first amendment right to protest the government.

"Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told Congress in June that he feels very strongly we need to do 'whatever we can to get the children back to school,'" according to the Washington Post. Former president Donald Trump tweeted in favor of opening schools for in-person learning and threatened to sever funding for districts that do otherwise, just one of the reasons why he is banned from Twitter.

As the virus continued to kill and sicken thousands of Americans with no signs of subsiding, the current death toll is now over 500,000 according to the Washington Post.

The American Academy of Pediatrics(AAP) clarified in July that, "schools in areas with high levels of COVID-19 community spread should not be compelled to reopen against the judgment of local experts. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate," according to the Washington Post.

With the competing messages of politicians vs. public-health professionals, education administrators are confused with what the "right" decision is to make.

I asked a series of questions in the start of the pandemic. First, will the virus mutate or not — multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic, according to CDC as of Feb. 21? Will there be a vaccine by the fall — a vaccine has been administered, but only 18.1% of the U.S.'s population has received it as of March 8 according to NPR?

The concern that arises is — how do you protect thousands of students who crave the traditional college experience, not one with masks, social distancing and Zoom events? How will professors who are older or with families of their own be protected from the spreading of the virus? These questions have been left unanswered for almost a year now.

This is the time for administrators in all sectors of education to be transparent about public health and candid about whether things will get worse before it gets better and how they choose to combat conflict and implement solutions. Students, parents and teachers have put their health on the line in order to educate or be educated and it is everyone's duty to do their part in ensuring a safe and healthy school year.

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Kelly Bidle, a mother and educator, is anxiously waiting for her shot at the vaccine.

"I am eagerly awaiting my turn to receive the vaccine. Some of my older family members have been fortunate to have gotten their first dose and I am very relieved for them," said Bidle. "We are currently

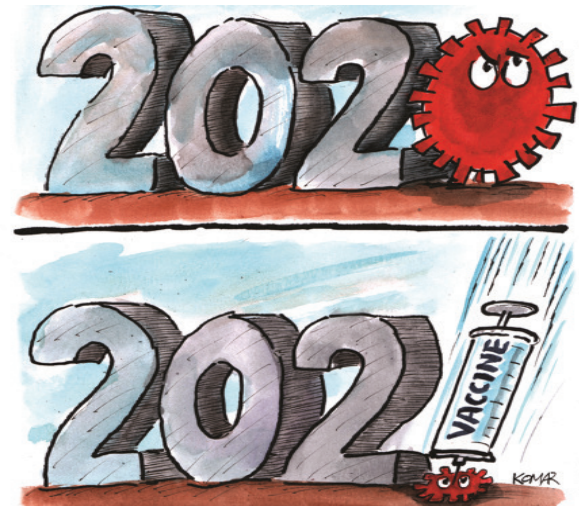
working on our fall planning and our conversations have included developing a policy regarding COVID vaccination. I hope to be able to share more on this soon."

Today, we are seeing mask mandates being lifted in states such as Texas, Mississippi, Iowa, Montana and North Dakota despite the looming threat of COVID-19 and highly transmissible variants, joining 11 other states that never required face coverings statewide. We are seeing society disregard the severity of COVID-19 more and more. With all transparency, I was skeptical of the vaccine at first, despite my past critiques of anti-vaxxers. I had my suspicions whether or not it was accurate or not and if the trials just needed bodies to test on. But, in all actuality, I am anxious either way. There is still so much to find out about COVID-19, so how can I receive an adequate vaccine? Then there is the yearning of having my life return to normal, although I do not think that is possible now.

Whether you choose to get vaccinated or not, please wear your mask and practice social distancing.

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

THE Rider News

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FRESHMEN FINDINGS

Lifting the mask mandate: We are taking 10 steps backward

TEXAS Governor Greg Abbott announced his plan last week to lift his state’s business restrictions and mask mandate — and a handful of states are following suit.

In his announcement, taking place at a Mexican restaurant in Lubbock, Texas, Abbott cited lowering statistics as the reasoning behind his decision. During his speech, he mentioned record-low hospitalizations and active case numbers, as well as stating that “today is the lowest positivity rate we’ve had in four months.”

In his next breath, however, the governor disclaimed, “But make no mistake. To be clear, COVID has not, like, suddenly disappeared.” So which is it?

While it’s great that Texas is experiencing some of its lowest statistics in the past year of dealing with the pandemic, those statistics are exactly why the mask mandate and other precautions shouldn’t be lifted yet.

Spokeswoman Renae Eze stated that “all Texans should follow medical advice and safe practices to continue containing COVID,” but wearing masks has been one of the baseline medical advisories for the past twelve months.

Other states like Mississippi, North Dakota, Iowa and Montana have also announced plans to lift mask mandates and become lenient in business restrictions. Pandemic fatigue is understandable, but, as Abbott said, COVID-19 has not disappeared. Rolling back a mask mandate all together will effectively diminish all of the progress Abbott cited for his decision in the first place.

Not to mention, making mask wearing an individual responsibility rather than a statewide mandate is undoubtedly going to cause more people to be less compliant with these common sense safety protocols. Citizens of Idaho, a state that strongly suggests but does not widely mandate masks, burnt their face coverings at the state capitol as part of an anti-mask rally.

As cases inevitably rise, the healthcare workers we applauded and supported will be faced, yet again, with an influx of cases, putting them right back in harm’s way.

Lifting the state mandates backing up protocols like mask wearing will also put retail and essential workers at higher risk. Even with mandates, there have been countless stories of belligerent customers refusing to wear masks, so imagine how

that issue will expand when there is no longer a mandate supporting the policy.

Spokesman for Retail Industry Leaders Association Jason Brewer released a statement saying, “Going backward on safety measures will unfairly put retail employees back in the role of enforcing guidelines still recommended by the CDC and other public health advocates.”

I, and many others, can fully understand both the desire for the pandemic to be over with and the economic need for businesses, small businesses especially, to be running at a higher capacity. I’m sure many people can see the appeal of an approach similar to Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont’s, who will keep his state’s mask mandate in place while allowing select businesses to open at full capacity.

There is no 100% perfect answer that is going to benefit or appeal to everyone, but the top priority needs to be public safety, and the CDC has made it clear that areas with mask mandates and other safety regulations in place have lower cases and death rates.

Dr. Anthony Fauci has mentioned that the United States shouldn’t begin to reverse restrictions until the rate of daily new cases falls below 10,000. According to CDC data, as recently as March 6, 2021, there were 57,586 new cases in the U.S.

Being in a pandemic is frustrating and anxiety-inducing and overwhelming — that goes without saying, but prematurely taking away the protocols designed to reduce cases is going to prolong and exacerbate the issue, putting even more lives at risk.

*Kate McCormick
freshman English major*

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VOLLEYBALL

Rider drops season-opening doubleheader

By Logan VanDine

THE volleyball team opened its season after a lengthy wait with a pair of losses to the Fairfield Stags on March 7.

Rider lost its first match 3-1, being outscored 93-83 in four sets, taking one set by a score of 25 to 18.

The Broncos took Fairfield to the brink in the second match, though they ultimately lost, 3-2. They were outscored 103-97 in a closer match than the one earlier that same afternoon.

Head Coach Jeff Rotondo was happy for his team to finally be back out playing for the first time in over a year, but did admit to having nerves about how the team would perform after such a long absence.

"I'm not going to lie, the players were a little nervous, I was a little nervous as well," Rotondo said. "It's been 471 days since we've done something like this and even though you've done it for a lot of years, when there's that much of a gap, I was a little nervous on my end but the girls were just thrilled. We had some first set jitters in that first match, but they did settle in well against a good team that you know was pretty battle-tested, so I was really proud of the resilience we showed today and some up and down sets for sure."

Rotondo was also asked if any certain players stood out to him in the matches.

"There were a few that came in and did some great things, Ali Ward played well all day, Anilee Sher, obviously, running the offense for nine sets today was phenomenal and Caprice Clarke who was coming in, and she really didn't play that much last year because she tore her ACL, so she really had a big impact on the match offensively and with her blocks as well," Rotondo said.

Rotondo was pleased that everyone was able to contribute in matches despite losing them both. He was happy with what he got out of his players, including the younger players.

Senior outside hitter Ali Ward had an impressive showing in both matches, leading the team in kills with 13 in the first match and 15 in the second, along with 50 total attacks in the second match, which also led the team.

Ward was asked how she felt to finally be back out there with her teammates.

"It was a great feeling to back on the court with



Courtesy of Rider Athletics

Senior libero **Danielle Blanco** led Rider with 26 digs in the second match against Fairfield on March 7.

the team I feel we put in so much training behind the scenes and it was really great to see it translate on the court today even though we didn't come out with the win I think we were able to see how well we can trust each other on the court and how we can progress on the court," said Ward.

Ward was also asked if there were any improvements that she and her team wanted to make after dropping both matches.

"At first I think the energy was low just because of the nerves," Ward said. "We haven't competed in so long and the second match, it was so much better and I think the communication and energy overall was just so much better."

Ward also said, "Technique wise, the serve and pass could have been a little bit better. We could tell when they were in the lead with the serve and pass and when we weren't and that really did dictate a lot of the game. When we were really doing well at that, we definitely had the lead, so, overall, this upcoming

week we are going to definitely focus on a lot of that and also on defense and making sure we're doing everything right on our side."

She also talked about how much of an impact that Rotondo has had on the team.

"He's been great, going into today the main priority was to just have fun and trust each other and just work together with any adversity we were going to face. And even throughout every single set, he was reminding us to have fun and not to be so nervous and remember all the training that we have done over the past year to prepare for this. I think, really, him putting his trust in us and us being able to trust each other definitely helps," said Ward.

The Broncos will now prepare for their next matchup on March 14 when they host Marist for another doubleheader starting at noon.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Broncs hold late lead to eliminate Monmouth

By Dylan Manfre

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - In a low-scoring, grinded-out game, the women's basketball team eked a 44-41 victory over Monmouth on March 9 to advance to the quarterfinals of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) tournament.

Head Coach Lynn Milligan described the close victory best: "You'd rather win ugly than lose pretty."

The Broncs saw their best effort of the season from sophomore forward Anna Ekerstedt. Off the bench, she contributed a career-high 10 points on 4-of-6 shooting, adding three blocks in 13 minutes of action. Three of her points came off a late and-one opportunity with 1:06 remaining in regulation.

Milligan agreed Ekerstedt was the unsung hero of the game.

"We haven't been built around one person this year so when your opportunity comes you have to be ready and it was Anna's time today and she stepped up," Milligan said. "Vic [Toomey] got into a little foul trouble and we do see Anna do that every day in practice there's no doubt about it. We call her 'the claw' and you saw today why. She got a couple of tips, blocks, steals, that's what she does."

Her teammates agreed this was her best game of the year.

"She stepped up exactly when we needed her to," junior guard Amanda Mobley said. "She hit all the shots she does in practice ... and it was the perfect time when we needed them and that's what helped turn the game around."

Ekerstedt had two of Rider's 32 rebounds, though the Broncs let up a staggering 52 boards in the close win over the Hawks.

"It was a big issue today. We gave them opportunity after opportunity. We had some really great defensive stops but then just couldn't secure that rebound," Milligan said. "It's not like it wasn't obvious to our players ... I felt like in the second half we were getting one opportunity and they were getting three."

The Broncs had Monmouth's number in the regular season, sweeping the Hawks, but it was clear the Hawks gave them trouble.

"I think our defense was really good this game, we had trouble on offense,"



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore forward **Anna Ekerstedt** scored a career-high 10 points and blocked three shots in Rider's 44-41 opening-round win over Monmouth.

Ekerstedt said.

The Broncs struggled to shoot the ball early in the game and hit 14% of their shots in the first quarter, which frustrated Rider. Freshman guard Makayla Firebaugh, who is the team's leading scorer and was named to the MAAC All-Rookie Team, finished the game scoreless on eight shots.

"When our offensive flow is not where we're capable of ... it is very frustrating trying to run through plays, getting shots," Mobley said. "Our defense was good but our offense wasn't flowing and that kind of hurt us a little bit today."

Despite the slow start, sophomore guard Maya Hyacienth led all Broncs in points, scoring 11 and adding 10 rebounds for a double-double. Her and senior Daija Moses combined to score 16 of the team's first 20 points of the game.

Rider will take on the No. 2 seed Quinnipiac Bobcats on March 10 at 2:30 p.m. In the regular season, the Broncs and the Bobcats split a pair of games, with Rider's victory coming in overtime on Jan. 23.

GALLERY

Snapshots from the 2021 MAAC Tournament



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore guard **Maya Hyacienth** begins to drive toward the paint in Rider's win against Monmouth.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

(From left to right) Junior forward **Jeremiah Pope**, junior guard **Dwight Murray Jr.**, sophomore guard **Allen Powell**, junior guard/forward **Dontrell McQuarter** and junior center **Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson**.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore guard **Allen Powell** sizes up a Canisius defender en route to the Broncs' comeback win over the Golden Griffins.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Senior forward **Daija Moses** looks for an open teammate from the top of the key.

Sports

ONLINE

MAAC MEMORIES

Former Rider basketball players and coaches reflect on what could have been in past playoff efforts.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

Murray leads 11-point comeback in upset win



Left: Junior guard **Dwight Murray Jr.** scored 15 of his 22 points in the second half, including a game-tying three near the final minute of the contest. Right: Junior guard/forward **Dontrell McQuarter** goes up for the game-winning layup in the final minute of Rider's 78-76 win over Canisius in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) tournament.

By **Shaun Chornobroff**

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - The weather finally warmed on March 8, there was an aura of upset in the air at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey, when the 11th seeded Rider men's basketball team faced Canisius in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament.

The Broncs encapsulated the aura and made it a reality, with the team scraping out a 78-76 upset victory over the sixth-seeded Golden Griffin's and earning the right to play Saint Peter's in the MAAC Tournament quarterfinals.

Sophomore guard Allen Powell, who has had a breakout campaign for the Broncs, encapsulated the ecstasy the team felt when proudly admitting there was "nothing better than this" in the postgame press conference.

Rider found themselves trailing 66-55 after a nightmare sequence with a hair less than 12:00 remaining in the second half. But the Broncs, who have been competitive in many of their 13 conference losses this year, once again refused to quit.

"My message to our guys was to stay together," Head Coach Kevin Baggett said after the statement victory. "We were going to go through some highs, some lows, a little bit of adversity in the game, [but] stay together. If you want to win in this tournament, you guys have to stay together, play together and continue to believe."

After going down 11 and on their way to let another game slip away, the Broncs outscored Canisius 23-10 and finished the game on a 7-0 run.

Of course, the game ended with a play from Murray, who made a statement to the conference in the game after being controversially left off the

All-MAAC first team, instead having to settle for a well-deserved place on the second team.

"I definitely felt like that," Murray said when asked if he felt like he had something to prove in the victory. "I'm happy that we're here right now because first team is something I really wanted, but my main goal is to make it to the NCAA Tournament with my team."

With each team's desperation at an all-time high and the game knotted at 76 and possibly inching towards overtime, Murray had the ball in his hands. The junior guard made a move inside but found his momentum stamped by a Canisius defender. With the possession trending toward being wasted, Murray pulled something special out of nowhere, finding Dontrell McQuarter with a piercing pass next to the rim.

"My teammates were yelling 'Trell's open, Trell's open,' then I turned around because I was looking for him and I saw [him] sitting there and I just threw it up to the point where he could catch it and he just went up with it," Murray explained.

The junior forward proceeded to fool a Canisius defender with a sleek pump-fake before bringing the Rider bench and limited fans to a roar with a layup to score the game's final points.

"I just go back to the Monmouth game two games ago where he really, really struggled," Baggett said in his postgame press conference. "He's had a tough year, he's had a family emergency. He's been away from the team and to be honest with you guys I wasn't sure if he was going to come back to the team dealing with his family, with the situation at home."

The win saw a plethora of players besides Murray come up huge. McQuarter had a double-double, Rider's center duo of junior Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson

and redshirt sophomore Tyrel Bladen combined for 17 points and 13 rebounds, while being successful on 11 of their 12 free throws, but Powell's contributions may have been the most important.

The sophomore guard hit multiple crucial shots in the second half and steadied the ship in the first half when Murray and fellow guard Christian Ings were dealing with foul trouble.

"It definitely feels good, going out there and getting the W[in] today with my teammates because we've been doubted, so it just feels good," Powell said. "We never had a doubt, people on the outside are always going to have their opinions, but we knew what it was. We went out there and played together as the coach said, and we got the W[in]."

The victory marks the third time in MAAC Tournament history that the 11th seed advanced into the quarterfinal and is the team's first postseason win since 2017.

Baggett, Murray and the rest of the Rider team will look to keep their season alive against Saint Peter's, who they split two games with on Feb. 27 and 28.

"It's going to be a battle, we got up pretty large against them in that second game," Baggett said. "I'm sure [Head Coach Shaheen Holloway] will have those guys ready and reminding them of the last time we played them... They're a good team and we're a good team and I'm glad that we had a chance to show folks that we belong here."

Rider will attempt to continue its fairytale postseason run when they once again try to slip on Cinderella's glass slipper at 5 p.m. on March 11, facing Saint Peter's in the MAAC Tournament quarterfinals.