

Broncs bounced; Baggett still winless in quarterfinals



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

SEE MURRAY PAGE 12

The men's basketball team lost in the quarterfinals of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference tournament on March 11, extending Head Coach Kevin Baggett's quarterfinals record to 0-8.

Students and admin sound off on SFPA investigations, cultural changes

By Sarah Siock and Stephen Neukam

STUDENTS in Rider's School of Fine and Performing Arts (SFPA) have cited a lack of transparency and action in the university's handling of investigations that are taking place within the department — a result of mass allegations of sexual harassment, racism, inappropriate relationships and body-shaming done by faculty at the university.

The process stemmed from over 120 complaints of misconduct against faculty in SFPA from students and alumni of the program, compiled during the fall semester in a document by students leading the push for action. The document details students' claims of a toxic and unhealthy learning environment.

Rider responded in October by hiring TNG Consulting, a third-party investigator, to field formal complaints. This spring, administrators confirmed that the process was part of formal Title IX investigations, but they refused to disclose how many investigations were undertaken.

Student concerns

While the university responded to the allegations, senior musical theater major Dean Klebonas said he is frustrated with the pace of the investigations, and the absence of updates from the administration. Klebonas submitted complaints that included what he called "inappropriate reactions" by faculty members when they became aware of students' concerns with the department.

"This started in October, and it's now March, and we don't really know what's happening in terms of accountability. When everything was at its height last semester, we felt pretty good about our power and our say. But now I am getting a lot of people asking, 'What's been going on?' We are kind of losing that transparency," said Klebonas.

Although Klebonas submitted complaints to the investigator, his case was not considered for further action. Klebonas received an email in January directly from TNG Consulting that stated an assessment determined his complaints "did not meet the definitions of any policy violation within the Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy."

SEE INVESTIGATIONS PAGE 2



Austin Ferguson/The Rider News

Administration provided updated information on the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) search during the meeting.

SGA town hall focuses on commencement, COVID and diversity

By Austin Ferguson

RIDER University's Student Government Association (SGA) held its spring town hall on March 11 with multiple Rider administrators discussing topics highlighted by the university's plan to return to in-person instruction in the fall and continued plans to hold in-person commencement ceremonies in May.

The Q&A session fielded student questions about fall operations, commencement, COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, cybersecurity and the search to fill the university's new chief diversity officer (CDO) position.

Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo

kicked off the session reflecting on the March 16 anniversary, widely recognized as the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the optimistic outlook to the near future on returning to normalcy in a college setting.

"In that year [from March 16, 2020,] it has been obviously a very interesting, challenging time for everybody for the institution, obviously, for individuals, and God bless those who actually suffered even to the extreme of losing their lives," Dell'Omo opened. "So hopefully, we're moving out of this situation, although there's still ways to go."

Dell'Omo also said that Rider

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INSIDE MARCH SADNESS

Rider women's basketball season ends with a heartbreaking loss against Saint Peter's.

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AN EVICTION AVALANCHE

Newark is on the brink of a housing emergency amidst COVID-19.

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COMICS TALK WITH AMY CHU
Marvel and DC Comics writer Amy Chu virtually visited Rider to give tips on navigating the competitive industry.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

Never Too Cautious

Oh, deer. On March 9 at 8:49 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Beckett Village to meet with a student who reported that, at 3 a.m., she saw a male walking around outside of her window and at 3:30 a.m., she saw an unusual male in the lobby. Officers reviewed camera footage and saw a group of eight to 10 deer walking around outside the area of her room and a Public Safety officer conducting a walk-through of the building at 3:30 a.m.

Conspiracy Theorists

Watch the walls. On March 13 at 10:40 a.m., Public Safety was called to Lincoln Hall for a report of graffiti on the laundry room wall. It was found that spray-painted on the wall was "QANON DUB," a nod to the fringe right-wing conspiracy group. Facilities cleaned the mess and the matter is under investigation by the Lawrence Township Police Department.

Quarantine Breakers

Follow the rules. On March 13 at 9:37 p.m., an anonymous caller reported to Public Safety that two students were planning to violate their quarantine and isolation order by meeting up, but did not specify when and where. Officers were stationed outside the buildings and no one left the entire night.

— Information provided by Public Safety Cpt. Matthew Babcock

Investigations moving forward while admin moves to make change

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Vice President for Human Resources and Affirmative Action and Title IX Coordinator Robert Stoto said several factors determine the length of investigations including the complexity of allegations and the availability of witnesses.

"It is not possible to say with any degree of certainty how long any investigation will take since each one is different. However, it is always our goal to move forward as expeditiously as possible, without sacrificing thoroughness," said Stoto.

The third-party investigator has moved forward with specific student complaints and conducted individual interviews. Senior musical theater major Jerome Manning is one student who sat down with investigators earlier this month.

Manning submitted a complaint that detailed interaction from faculty members after students brought to their attention that fellow fine arts students were using racist language. He submitted a second complaint where he alleged that the department did not provide adequate resources or advertising to the "Upon Your Shoulders" show, which is a yearly cabaret that celebrates African American culture.

Manning said the investigator was "impartial" and "wanted to hear the facts." However, Manning expressed disappointment due to the lack of immediate changes that have taken place within SFPA after the allegations were brought to faculty.

"There are things that could be happening right now to change the culture. It feels like they are wasting time and hoping that the ruckus will die down," said Manning.

Manning also said that students are often left in the dark when it comes to the status of the investigation. He said that he and other students often have to wait a month at a time to receive an update about the process.

School reforms

Outside of the investigative process, students have pushed for reforms at the school. The results have been frustrating, according to students.

Junior musical theater major Shamiea Thompson, a leading voice in the student effort, said that an October meeting with school administrators proved unproductive. The meeting included Stoto and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Donna Jean Fredeen. According to Thompson, President Gregory Dell'Omo declined to attend.

"We took a meeting with them on October 16 — I haven't heard from anyone since," said Thompson. "Change doesn't happen overnight. A lot of our demands deal with finances and structural change ... but there are things that we can do now."

Fredeen said she was surprised to hear that the meeting was characterized as unproductive and detailed initiatives the university has undertaken to deal with cultural issues in the school, including a faculty search in the Theater and Dance Department for someone with experience in Black theater, workshops for faculty and students and a task force that identified areas of concern.

"I actually thought it a very productive meeting as we had the opportunity to discuss a set of action steps the students had presented to the University," said Fredeen. "We then discussed actions that the University was taking to address the issues raised by the students."

While the original plan was to continue the meetings with the group of students, Fredeen said that they were discontinued "to assure the integrity of the process."

Manning said he would like to see the hiring of more Black faculty members and a greater enrollment of Black students in SFPA through targeted scholarships.

"We really have no Black faculty members that we see on a daily basis. One of the biggest reasons why I feel people of color might not be able to go to university is because of the price," said Manning. "If they really want to change the system and make it more culturally diverse, then you have to also look at the financial needs of the students that you're wanting to have."

To Thompson, the main issue in affecting change is that the administrators that hold power don't empathize with students of color and other marginalized groups.

"You are a bunch of old white people making decisions for things that do not and will not affect you," said Thompson. "Why haven't I heard from you? ... Silence is a response."

Administrative responses

Administrators have been tight-lipped about the investigation.

Stoto and Fredeen said the privacy of the investigations is due to the fact that they are ongoing and involved parties are kept confidential. Stoto and Fredeen would not comment on the specifics of any investigation.

In October, Rider's Chapter of the American Association of University

Professor's (AAUP) President Arthur Taylor, a professor in the Information Systems, Analytics and Supply Chain Management Department, told The Rider News that the union was prepared to represent faculty if an investigation materializes.

Jeff Halpern, AAUP contract administrator and chief grievance officer, said standing by faculty is the continued stance of the union and that the AAUP has an attorney who provides legal advice to faculty. He declined to reveal how many faculty members were being represented.

"The role of the Union is to assure due process for any of its members who are accused of professional misconduct," said Halpern.

"Keep applying pressure"

Despite the long process, students are remaining optimistic that the investigations will bring accountability and change to the school.

"Performing arts specifically, is suffering across the country, in colleges and universities, and we just want more than anything for people that come after us to have a positive and encouraging experience, like many of us felt like we didn't have. I just want everyone to keep that fight no matter how long it takes," said Klebonas.

Manning echoed Klebonas' words when he spoke about the importance of students continuing to speak up. He said without faculty changes the improvement students wish to see cannot happen.

"I know a lot of people get discouraged when things don't happen right away, but things take time. I think it's important for us to keep applying pressure, no matter how tiresome it sounds because that is what creates change," said Manning. "The first and most important thing is that if there are adults in positions of power, who are still resisting this change that needs to happen, then we cannot expect positive change, with them dragging us down."



Courtesy of Jerome Manning, Dean Klebonas and Shamiea Thompson

Senior musical theater major Jerome Manning, (top) senior musical theater major Dean Klebonas (left) and junior musical theater major Shamiea Thompson (right) express concerns over SFPA investigation.

Administration predicts more normal fall at SGA town hall

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has been working closely with the New Jersey Governor's office to "get as much advance notice as possible," about updates to changes in higher education due to COVID-19 in order to keep the university informed and prepared to accommodate state mandates.

"It obviously takes a lot of lead time for your students to move into residence halls, decide which courses to take and how we're going to offer modalities," Dell'Omo said. "So that message has been heard loud and clear."

After Dell'Omo's opening statements, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Kelly Bidle elaborated on Dell'Omo and Rider's March 8 announcement outlining intentions to return to "extensive in-person teaching, residential housing and on-campus activities" in the fall of 2021.

"This decision was not made lightly," Bidle said. "We took a lot of considerations into our deliberations. Part of those considerations is thinking about the mental health of our students and faculty and working and living in this environment for the past year."

Bidle also cited vaccine rollout as a major factor in a return to in-person operations, saying that "we're looking very, very closely at the trends of the pandemic vaccination rollout... and really hoping that by the fall, we have herd immunity and have almost 70% to 75% of our population vaccinated," which would provide grounds to relax social distancing guidelines in classrooms.

Even with trends toward more vaccinated people, the university is still prepared to mandate mask-wearing and surveillance testing, according to Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla.

"These are all precautionary measures as we try to also keep tabs on the prevalence or not of the virus on our campus next academic year," said Stasolla.

Stasolla also mentioned that the university plans to house more students on campus in the next academic year, while still reserving space for quarantine and isolation housing.

The town hall had a section dedicated to commencement ceremonies, which, according to Rider, are still planned to be held in-person. According to Manager for Special Events and Projects Nadège Toth, the ceremonies, planned to take place between May 15 and 16, will be split up into seven smaller ceremonies each day, with students divided by class, degree, school and major.

"The expectation is that over the course of the day those seven ceremonies will take place and that sometimes will be inclusive of one major or multiple depending on how the RSVPs come back in," Toth said. "And that's why the class of 2021 is now spread over two days because we're anticipating obviously, the majority would like to participate."

According to Stasolla, guests of students coming from different regional areas will be admitted through "the honor system."

"You have to keep track of what the travel guidelines are at the time of commencement, and we will indicate on our website that we all need to abide by those," Stasolla said, "...and we're not going to be checking in people and asking where you're from. So it is an honor system, but where we will be asking all participants to abide by the regulations at that time."

Answering a student question, Stasolla said it was "very unlikely" that the university would be able to raise the two-guest limit for students graduating.



Austin Ferguson/The Rider News

Commencement has been a hot-button topic for seniors this year and some concerns were addressed during the town hall.

Rider Vice President for Student Affairs Leanna Fenneberg had a section of the town hall dedicated to an update on filling Rider's new CDO position. Fenneberg confirmed that the CDO office will hold a vice president position at the university, which will mean it will be a part of the senior leadership team and the individual will report to President Dell'Omo.

As for the search, Fenneberg said the university has started to look for a person to fill the position, partnering with search firm AGB Search and reaching out to a dozen national publications in higher education to comb through "thousands of contacts" to find appropriate candidates for the CDO office. Fenneberg also said that Rider has a committee of 16 staff, students and faculty to assist in the search.

"We're really excited about this position because it offers us expertise and a strategic leadership in a dedicated position to continue to advance our diversity, equity and inclusion commitments," Fenneberg said. "So this is going to be a really vital position to move us forward."

Fenneberg noted that the application deadline for candidates is preferred by April 23, with interviews for the finalist pool of candidates planned for the last week of May.

Throughout each discussion, administrators stressed that the objective of the university was to return the campus community to as much normalcy as safely allowed.

"Our ultimate goal, as you've been hearing from us, is to get back to as normal operations as we possibly can for everyone's sake," Stasolla said.

Rider positive coronavirus cases increase to a record high

By Austin Ferguson

RIDER university has confirmed 25 positive cases of COVID-19 in a nine-day period, 20 of which came from students on campus, the university's online dashboard reported on March 16.

Rider's COVID-19 dashboard reported that 18 positive cases were returned between March 8 and March 14, the highest number of confirmed cases in a single week in the spring 2021 semester. All 18 cases came from students, 15 of which were on campus.

The university returned another seven positive cases between March 15 and 16 alone, all of which came from on-campus students.

Rider Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla said that the positive cases have come from both the general student population and student-athletes.

"We had only a few [positive cases] via surveillance testing," Stasolla said. "We have identified some student-athletes as well because of the interactions student-athletes have had with close contact, often living together, both on and off campus."

Coupled with the semester-high in positive cases was a semester-high in isolated students, with 22 students isolated due to positive COVID-19 tests on March 16, almost doubling the previous record of 12. Of those students isolating, 15 are doing so on campus, more than doubling the previous on-campus high of six isolated students, according to Rider's dashboard.

Up to 33 students were in quarantine as of March 12, however that number was lowered to 20 on March 16, with 16 students quarantining off-campus, the online dashboard reported.

While looking further into the positive cases and close contacts, Stasolla said that athletics practices have not been identified as a concern for spread of COVID-19, with interactions outside of practice as a focal point in identifying positive cases and close contacts.

Stasolla also said that Rider was making adjustments with students in order to monitor positive cases and exposures. According to Stasolla, the university has begun to use rapid antigen testing on symptomatic students in order to expedite the process of identifying likely positive cases.

Rider has also started to include a few student-athletes in the surveillance testing process outside of the tests they already take through NCAA protocols and has been monitoring and limiting interactions with student-athletes, according to Stasolla.

THE Rider News COVID - 19 Counter

Confirmed Cases
Last updated: Mar. 16, 2021

79
Cumulative total of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Rider University (Since January 2021)

COVID - 19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
March 2021	33	1
February 2021	27	1

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

ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Week 11	10	183
Week 10	4	128
Week 9	13	329
Week 8	20	271
Week 7	3	294
Week 6	16	269
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:

Four students quarantining on campus
16 students quarantining off campus

On-campus students currently have the most cases in the Rider community, with a vast majority of the cases attributed to residents in the past week.

Arianna Marino/The Rider News

Study abroad program continues amidst setbacks caused by the pandemic

By Tatyanna Carman

RIDER'S study abroad program is preparing students to venture out of the country in the coming summer and fall semesters amidst the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Graduate assistant for the Center of International Education (CIE) Meghan Korb said there are five students slated to study abroad this summer and 15 students in the fall.

"We did recently extend our deadline for the fall semester to April 1 for specific programs, which are our exchange partners," she said. "So we're hopeful that more students will get interested. We're still in that weird holding phase where people are still a little hesitant to make future plans, which is absolutely understandable."

Korb said that 14 students were abroad when the pandemic hit in spring 2020.

"Then they had to, you know, come home. That was a hard transition, I can imagine on the students' behalf," Korb said. "But what we did was, we worked diligently to get them into classes that would fulfill their needs that they would have done abroad. We wanted to make sure that they felt that they weren't going to be behind because of this. That was really important for us."

She said that around the time that the pandemic hit was when they would be sending out the students on short-term programs for spring break.

"So that was a big number of students that unfortunately, due to the circumstances, were not even able to leave the U.S.," she said. "And then you know, from there, our main programs were canceled. And it was difficult because we had a lot of students that wanted to go abroad."

Korb explained how the program has been altered since the start of the pandemic. She said that program providers from other schools and study abroad programs, such as International Studies Abroad (ISA), usually came for the study abroad fair, which had to be virtual.

"We did a virtual study abroad fair. It was just a



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Graduate Assistant for the Center of International Education (CIE) Meghan Korb said that one of the major challenges the program has faced was student interest.

simple Prezi presentation where you could go at your leisure and look through all of our program offerings that we have, as well as doing our info sessions via Zoom," she said. "And then we also do our study abroad advising so the student is excited to go abroad and is ready to take that next step. They can meet with us virtually, of course, to discuss those matters. In regards to travel, of course, there hasn't been any travel to out of the country. I mean, so that is the summer is going to really be a test to see how it goes."

Sophomore healthcare policy major Anjali Chennapragada said that the pandemic has made it hard for her to gauge whether certain study abroad programs will run.

"I've tried to study abroad three times this year," she said. "The first program was going to be a service-learning trip. That got canceled pretty early on. The second one was going to be a multi-country trip and then it got moved to one country and then got canceled. And then now I'm hoping to study abroad in the summer, but it's been really difficult because of the border control. And we don't know whether certain countries will let students in so that's been kind of the main questionability of it."

Chennapragada is planning to study abroad this summer in Denmark. When asked what made her

want to study abroad despite her three attempts, she said that she's always wanted to study abroad, even before she got to college.

Korb said that one of the major challenges the program has faced was student interest, which she attributed to the uncertainty of when the pandemic will be over.

"I feel like we each get to a point that we say, 'it'll be done by then and then we're like, 'just kidding.' We've got to wait longer," she said. "We don't have a crystal ball, unfortunately, and I feel like a lot of people say that we just don't know when things are going to be normal again. So I think that's just been a really hard thing for students to overcome and think about and you know, it feels like a risk may be at times, and I absolutely understand students' parents you know, feeling a little uncomfortable with it right now."

Chennapragada predicted that there will be more students wanting to study abroad in 2021 or even 2022.

"I think for the fall because I think people have an expectation that, potentially, things will lighten up and that restrictions will ease up a little bit, and especially since it'll be like semester-long programs for the fall," she said. "I think that there will be definitely increased interest in studying abroad in the coming semesters."

Korb also advised students who want to study abroad or are currently planning to study abroad to "have an open mind and just be adaptable."

"So to think like, well, I wanted to be in school, but now I'm in an online school, and I never wanted to actually be online, to make that adaptability I think is a good skill to take with you abroad," she said. "Because things can happen when you're abroad, like, you have to learn a new transportation system, you have to learn about the culture, but it makes you a well-rounded individual. And it makes you stand out amongst a crowd for getting a job for sure because they can see that you have had those real-life experiences."

Accomplished Rider alumna talks about personal branding at virtual event

By Tatyanna Carman

REAL estate entrepreneur and Rider alumna Diane Turton '69 spoke to the Rider community about her experience starting her business, her core beliefs and the importance of personal branding at the virtual event, "Building your Personal Brand and Navigating the Signs to Success," on March 10 at 6 p.m.

Senior global supply chain management major Lillian DeMarco moderated the event and 50 people attended. Each participant received a signed copy of Turton's book, "Always Connecting: How I Built My Business and Navigated the Signs to Success," after attending the event. Questions from the audience were entered in the chat and answered throughout the event.

DeMarco said, "The goal was part of celebrating Women's History Month, and it was hosted by the Women's Leadership Council at Rider. So part of that goal is also showing accomplished women faculty and alumni. So Diane is definitely an experienced and successful alumna."

Turton talked about why personal branding is important in today's world. Turton explained that after she majored in real estate and she went to night school to get a teaching degree so she could "substitute and ask the children whose parents were going to be selling their houses."

"It was just constant, constant branding on all different levels. I just wanted to be like Coca-Cola, soda, Turton, real estate and how do you do that," she said. "You've got to really think outside the box, because everybody's got a different brand. And if you treat somebody well, and I feel like hey, if I sell a house, and they really liked me, they'll give my name to somebody else. And the brand will keep growing."

Turton also shared how in the early part of her career, before she became an entrepreneur, she would gain customers through garage sales. She said she became a part of a listing team because she "never wanted to be in an office."

"I would put a for sale sign in the garage and people would come and say 'Is your house for sale,' and I go, 'No, is yours?' They asked me how much an item was, I would never charge," Turton said. "I would say,



Tatyanna Carman/The Rider News

Real estate entrepreneur Diane Turton '69 explained that getting people to trust her is one of the core beliefs.

"OK, I'll give you that bike if you hand out 100 of my business cards." And people, I guess they just felt like they owed me something, so they would start giving me buyers and sellers."

Turton said that she was doing so well that her buyers and sellers were asking her why she hadn't opened her own company. She decided to leave the company she was working for and started her own real estate business. To keep her from leaving, her old broker invited her to dinner at Denny's.

"I'm thinking, 'You're kidding right?' You think I was gonna leave the company and this is how you reward me, you're taking me to Denny's," she said. "Thank God for Denny's because the next day I said adiós and I opened my own company and it's all because of Denny's. It just opened and then all of a sudden, I had this influx of all of these people."

Turton expressed the importance of negotiation, which was a skill her grandfather taught her and shared her most successful marketing strategies, including an accidental marketing incident where a man from France found her sign on a beach.

"That's what created the book and somebody from New York called in and said, 'Diane, I really think we should write a book on the metaphor and the journey of your life.' That was actually in the ocean in France, and the guy picked it up. It still got all the sand on it. But he knew the number so he took it 13 hours back to Brussels, Googled me and texted me at 3 a.m. and said, 'I found your sign.' I'm telling you I almost deleted

it, but I sent it to Harry and he said take a picture of it. We must have done TMZ, I didn't even know what TMZ was, TMZ, ABC, CBS, Fox, every station possible, People magazine, it was like a million dollars worth of free advertising," explained Turton.

Turton said that getting people to trust her is one of the core beliefs that she credits for getting her where she is today. She also accredited her interest in real estate to her professors at Rider.

"I like the size of the school. You can talk to the teachers. You got a lot of one on one. It's a great business university. And that's how I got in real estate really because I was going to be a math major and I just said, 'I am never taking a language again.' I just totally flopped when I was a freshman. And that's what got me in real estate," said Turton.

The event concluded with a raffle, in which three students won a personal one-on-one professional development session with Turton, a \$25 Amazon gift card and a \$25 Uber Eats gift card.

DeMarco said that she thought the event went well and has gotten great feedback on her moderating.

"I'm just really excited to see people get her book because a lot of the stuff she did talk about is in her book," she said. "And I skimmed all of it and ended up reading more than half of it in like one night. So it's definitely an easy read, but it's just so great, because she expands upon, like, all the stories she talked about."

DeMarco also encouraged Rider students to attend more events on campus.

"So I feel like for somebody who's not into marketing, or was interested enough to come to this event, even for those that are not interested, I'd say you should definitely branch out," she said. "And please try to get more engaged in, for anybody who's scared to just go to an event, just start off with asking a question in the chat or something for virtual events, or just forcing yourself to ask something, if it's like an in-person event, because then you'll get noticed more and you'll have more opportunities for like connections."

Marvel and DC Comics writer gives career advice at virtual event

By Sarah Siock

FROM Wonder Woman and Poison Ivy to Deadpool and Ant-Man, Amy Chu has written multiple series for some of DC Comics and Marvel’s most iconic characters. Chu virtually visited Rider on March 11 to speak with students about breaking into the comics business and the skills needed to navigate the competitive industry.

The event, hosted by Rider’s Department of Communication and Journalism, allowed students to learn about the business side of comic books. Chu spoke about her journey into the world of comics, which began in 2010 when she and a friend launched a company called “Alpha Girl Comics.”

With a bachelor’s degree in East Asian studies and architectural design, the comic book industry was not always Chu’s plan. However, after discussing the lack of female voices working in American mainstream comics, Chu decided to step into the business to change the narrative.

“At the time there [were] not many women in the business. I just felt like I needed to prove that as a woman I can do this,” said Chu.

At first, Chu planned to stay strictly on the business side of the comics industry, but after taking a comic book writing class in 2011, she decided to create her own stories. Her first series titled, “Girls Night Out” was published from 2012-2014 and helped jumpstart Chu’s career into mainstream comics.

Chu admitted that when she began taking writing classes she was not familiar with well-known comic book characters. However, she quickly dedicated herself to the craft and became an expert on the characters. She also shared with students that it is more important to be able to write a script than be an expert on every character.

“My writing class consisted of only men and it was very intimidating as a woman who did not know anything about comics. They were kind of like, ‘what are you doing here?’ They said things like, ‘wouldn’t it be funny if she wrote for Deadpool?’ All of which got me fired up,” said Chu.

Chu’s classmate’s comments about a woman writing a character that had a predominantly male audience motivated her to set a goal of actually writing



Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Comic book writer Amy Chu joined the virtual event to speak about the industry.

Deadpool one day. Chu managed to achieve her goal and write for the character in 2015.

“I was like ‘why would that be funny if I wrote Deadpool?’ I thought ‘I am going to write Deadpool,’ and it became my five-year plan,” said Chu.

Sophomore psychology major Ishika Maheshwari said learning about Chu’s long journey in the industry and hearing about her perseverance was an impactful part of the event.

“I was surprised to hear that it took her 10 years to get to where she is now. The most valuable piece of advice that resonated with me by Ms. Chu was — do not be afraid of yourself, and just do it,” said Maheshwari.

While Chu has written for almost every major comic book publisher, she told audience members that it is best to stick to self-publishing when starting in the industry. She spoke about the accessibility technology has provided to up-and-coming comic book writers.

“You literally can make your own comics, because technology has enabled us, has reduced the barriers to entry where, if you have a story inside yourself, you can just put it up on Instagram and you are published, you have actually made your ideas a reality,” said Chu.

Chu also explained the importance of having published work to further your career. Most recently Chu said her work helped her land a writing job on a new Netflix show “Dragon’s Blood.”

“The showrunner essentially offered me a job because he liked my writing. He knew what types of stories I could write. So I got the job, not because I was looking for it, but because of my previous experience,” said Chu.

Sheena Howard, associate professor of communications and journalism, served as the event’s host. Howard is also a published comic book author and she left the audience with a piece of advice that echoed the determination in Chu’s career path.

“Amy [Chu] was there when I co-wrote my first comic book and she said, ‘Anyone can do it. You can do it.’ If you just keep at it and keep writing you will get better,” said Howard.



Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Amy Chu holds up a copy of her first comic book “Girls Night Out.” This series helped launch her career into mainstream comics.

SGA partners with Bright for virtual well-being program

By Aaliyah Patel

Thanks to the Student Government Association (SGA) Rider students, faculty and staff can enjoy hundreds of free, live virtual well-being classes that support mental and physical health weekly through the development of the app Bright.

The app offers classes through the comprehensive program, the Bright Pass. Within the program, users can book classes such as mindfulness, nutrition, yoga and even sign up for keynote speaker sessions, all ranging from 15 minutes to an hour. Upon booking, users can add their classes and sessions to their calendar and set reminder notifications.

SGA partnered with the company Bright to support the Rider community whether they are on campus or at home.

Elizabeth O’Hara, a junior computer science major and SGA vice president for university affairs, shared the importance of creating a platform that enables student well-being.

“The Health and Safety Committee in SGA has made it a goal of theirs this year to focus on the mental health and well-being of the entire Rider community. We wanted everyone, no matter if they were studying or working on-campus or remotely, to be



Courtesy of SGA

The Student Government Association partnered with Bright to provide mental health support to students.

supported in feeling their best. We hope that by offering this app for free to students, faculty and staff, that those interested will prioritize their mental and physical health and partake in self-care practices,” O’Hara said.

The Bright pass program is interactive, allowing users to invite other members of the program to join their sessions.

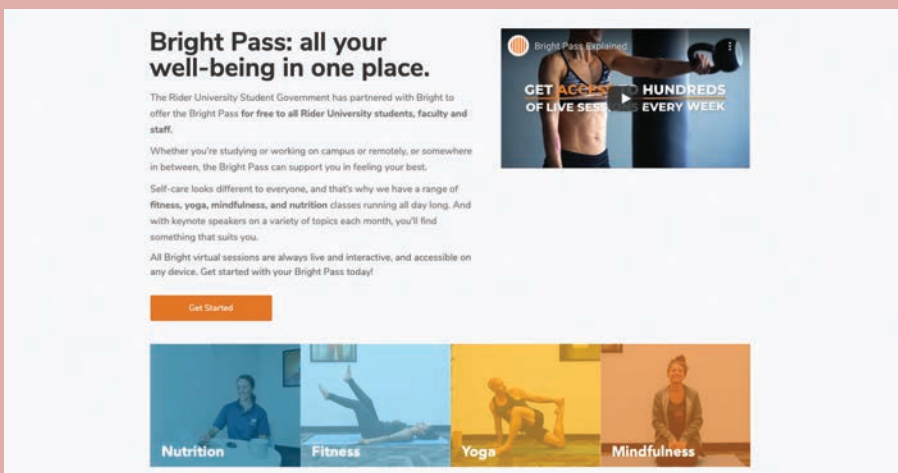
“The Bright Pass is a virtual well-being solution that helps students reduce stress, improve their physical and mental well-being, and feel more engaged and connected to each other while studying remotely. It provides students with access to a full daily schedule of live, online well-being classes each month (yoga, nutrition, and mindfulness), as well as a lineup of keynotes on a variety of well-being topics. This helps students focus on their physical and mental health, especially when on-campus resources may not be as accessible for all students,” O’Hara said.

With the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of the app intends to make all users feel their best.

Dylan Erdelyi, a senior musical theater major and president of SGA, explained the process of finding ways to virtually keep students engaged and connected.

“We have been searching for an app that would address some of the issues that we have been seeing around mental well-being in our community. I am so excited that we decided to start a partnership with Bright. This app offers so much to all of us at Rider. I personally have been taking advantage of some of the sessions to give myself a breath or rejuvenation during long days. I encourage everyone to give it a try,” Erdelyi shared.

The Bright app is compatible with any device and can be downloaded on the app store.



Courtesy of SGA

A screenshot of the Bright app website, which leads to the app download.

Rider Unified hosts the Inclusion Monologues to spread the importance of inclusivity

By Christian McCarville

PRACTICING inclusiveness is something that has become a necessity. As a community, Rider students and faculty have established an inclusive and friendly environment for all students. Unified Sports aims to further spread the importance of inclusiveness and provide meaningful opportunities for those with disabilities.

Hosted by Rider Unified Sports, the Inclusion Monologues is an event designed to showcase the life stories and experiences of guest speakers to express the importance of inclusion and acceptance. The event was held on March 14 over Zoom.

The Inclusion Monologues began with an introduction from each member of the Unified Sports executive board. Following this, junior computer science major Liz O'Hara introduced the first speaker, Loretta Claiborne.

Having competed in the Special Olympics since 1970 and participated in over 300 local and state competitions, Claiborne has a lot of experience in advocating for her inclusion. She has also served as a board of directors member and chief inspiration officer for Special Olympics Inc.

"When we talk about inclusion, we talk about bringing others into the game," said Claiborne.

She shared her personal story and her fight for inclusion. Born with a disability, Claiborne could not see or walk until the age of four. As she grew up, she noticed that a problematic lack of inclusion in the world around her.

Claiborne frequently felt excluded due to her disability. She was barred from participating on her school's track team, even after playing a significant role in the fundraising for the team.

"Everyone deserves to be heard, everyone deserves to be included," said Claiborne. "Is it tough to include somebody? No. It's tough to be the person who wants to be included."

Walt Disney Productions filmed a movie about Claiborne's life titled "The Loretta Claiborne Story." Claiborne explained that even after this movie, she faced exclusion.

She would be invited to gatherings where she would speak about the film. However, when she was done speaking, the members of the gathering would exclude her from corn hole and other lawn games.

Claiborne was extremely passionate about the need for inclusion, as she fought for it her entire life. She stated how proud she was of Unified Sports for modeling this inclusion, encouraging others to follow this model.

Following Claiborne's monologue, senior health and exercise science John Berardi gave an introduction about himself and his time at unified. Berardi is an athlete from The College of New Jersey's Unified program who has joined the club and now sits on the executive board.



Elementary majors Sammi Lamster and Jessica Lamster spoke next, detailing their experiences with their brother Josh Lamster. Jessica Lamster and Josh Lamster were twins, yet went to different schools due to Josh Lamster's special needs.

The Lamster sisters explained the struggles they faced with their younger brother. They learned to take care of him when their parents became sick, supporting his needs and advocating for him.

At the end of Jessica Lamster and Josh Lamster's middle school education, Jessica Lamster's school invited Josh Lamster to graduate with his sister. This was very impactful for the family, after so many years of the twins attending separate schools.

"Getting to graduate beside my brother was something I'll never forget," said Jessica Lamster.

Kevin Colacello and his mother, Susan Colacello, were the next to tell their story. Kevin Colacello is a Special Olympics athlete that has worked with Rider Unified for five years.

"Kevin has grown so much due to the support of this program at Rider," said Susan Colacello. "You can do things different in a different timeline in your own way but that doesn't provide a limitation on your dreams and what you can do in life."

Kevin Colacello is a big fan of sports and has aspirations to work with the Trenton Thunder. Unified Sports opened many opportunities for him, allowing him to do what he loves in an inclusive environment.

The event closed with two more speakers, economics professor Hope Corman and alumnus Lauryn Goldstein Walsh.

Corman began the Lawrence Lightning bowling team in 2001 with the help of Mercer County Special Olympics. This team allows Rider partners, alumni, parents, siblings and friends the opportunity to participate alongside the athletes. The Lawrence Lightning has also competed in unified competitions each year since 2002.

Walsh is also very involved with the Unified community, participating in the Special Olympics Unified Bowling League. She first began participating in 2007 as a freshman at Rider.

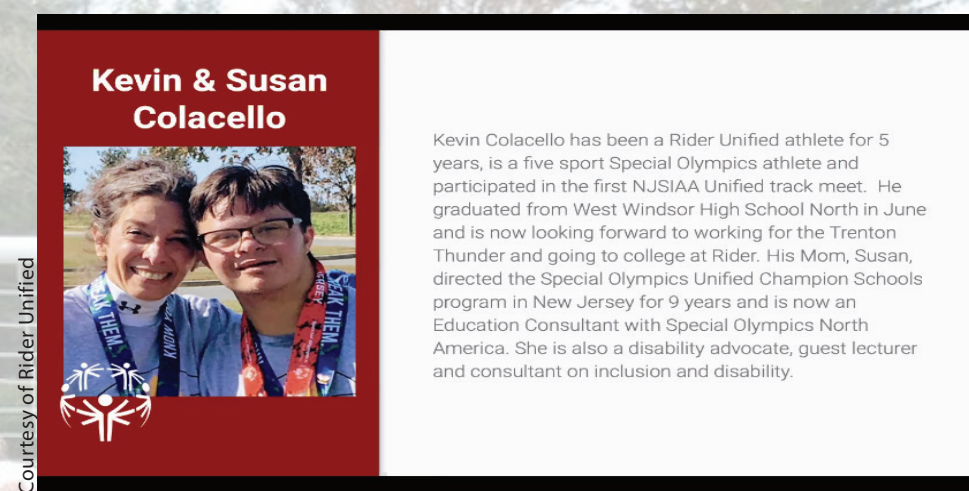
Concluding the monologues, O'Hara shared a link to a Jamboard with the audience. This link allowed audience members to sign an inclusion pledge, promising to practice inclusivity and respect to all.

Overall, this event allowed viewers to hear the powerful impact that inclusion can have on the lives of those living with various disabilities. It put things into perspective for those who do not know someone with a disability and reaffirmed the beliefs of those who do.

The Inclusion Monologues advocate for acceptance and respect



Rider Unified is dedicating to providing inclusive opportunities to each and every one of its athletes.



Kevin Colacello is a prime example of the positive impacts of inclusion. Through Unified Sports, Kevin can do what loves with people that care about him.

Kevin Colacello has been a Rider Unified athlete for 5 years, is a five sport Special Olympics athlete and participated in the first NJSIAA Unified track meet. He graduated from West Windsor High School North in June and is now looking forward to working for the Trenton Thunder and going to college at Rider. His Mom, Susan, directed the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program in New Jersey for 9 years and is now an Education Consultant with Special Olympics North America. She is also a disability advocate, guest lecturer and consultant on inclusion and disability.



Inclusion means a lot to each of the athletes and partners participating with unified. This club gives those with special needs the ability to form meaningful connections with Rider students.

UPCOMING EVENT CALENDAR

THU, MARCH 18

2021 Virtual Tournées French Film Festival Screening: The Freshman
6:00 p.m.

FRI, MARCH 19

Dessert Wars: Flower Power
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

SUN, MARCH 21

Westminster Conservatory Faculty Recital: Alone Together
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

TUE, MARCH 23

Women Are Built for Tech Leadership with Chaya Pamula
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Artist Jeff Mandell creates caricatures for Rider students

By Elena Lobo

FROM digital drawing to animation to caricature, the world of art is an open door that anyone can explore and experience. One form of art experienced at Rider University was a caricature event that took place on March 13.

The event was set up and facilitated by Rider business graduate student and Graduate Assistant of Campus Life Gabrielle Orszulak. Filled with lots of fun and entertainment, multiple caricatures were drawn by artist Jeff Mandell.

Mandell has been creating art in caricature form for 45 years. Although he is now set in Winter Park, Florida, Mandell started his career in the beautiful and sunny beach town of Ocean City, Maryland. Spending his time on the boardwalk, Mandell spent hours each day creating wonderful works of art in the form of the "quick-sketch" art style and meeting unique personalities along the way.

With decades of experience under his belt, Mandell utilizes his talent to make multitudes of people smile with his creations.

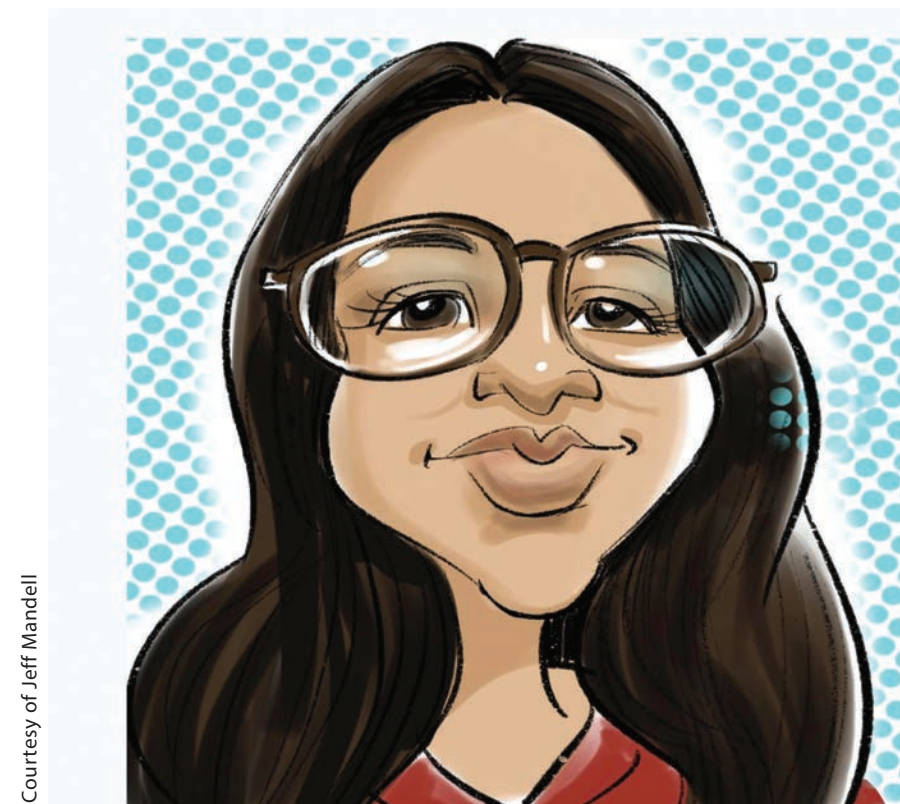
"I feel like I haven't worked a day in my life," said Mandell.

During the event, 23 students were drawn in total by Mandell. Along with hosting the event, Orszulak also sat down for a caricature drawing.

"It was a great experience. Being the person who got to set up the event and help facilitate the event, I got to interact with both Jeff and the students. Jeff was very nice and personable, and the students all seemed very happy with their finished pictures," said Orszulak.



(Left) Gabrielle Orszulak and (Right) Anthony Gambardella were one of many participants to be drawn by Jeff Mandell.



Criminal justice major Elena Lobo participated in the caricature event. These drawings only took Jeff Mandell about 3 to 5 minutes to complete.

When asked if she has had a caricature drawn of herself prior to the event, Orszulak answered, "I have gotten a caricature done at the Yankee Candle Factory in Massachusetts and Legoland in California, both when I was young."

Caricature art is meant to exaggerate the model's features in a fun way, not distort them. Mandell's drawings featured caricatures with large eyes and long faces. Despite the detailed drawings, caricature art typically only takes 3 to 5 minutes to create. To ensure top quality, each participant sat still while Mandell drew.

The caricature style has been around since the 16th and 17th centuries and is still popular to this day. Even famous artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Monet and Daumier drew in caricature form at one point in time.

As Mandell drew, the participants enjoyed the lively company and talk, all of which added to the experience.

An eviction avalanche hits Newark

IMAGINE watching life pass you by, thousands of legs in every direction, faces that soon become faded memories – and no one even acknowledges your presence.

Over half a million people in the U.S. are homeless.

Today, Newark, New Jersey, is on the brink of a housing emergency.

Thousands of families are forced from their homes. Homelessness is at historic levels. A city, already devastated by COVID-19, facing yet another crisis.

More than 14,000 eviction cases are pending in Essex County court, most of them thought to involve Newark tenants. Cases are delayed because evictions have been suspended during the pandemic under Gov. Phil Murphy's emergency order, according to nj.com.

Murphy's order included a moratorium on lockouts, meaning landlords cannot shut people out of their homes, even if they are behind on rent or have eviction proceedings against them. The state Supreme Court has also put eviction cases on pause, hence the huge back up of cases.

During the height of the pandemic, I urged our college campus to remember the forgotten and bring a voice to the silenced. The individuals in abusive households with parents or spouses, essential workers, those dealing with mental health that relied on outside distractions.

The homeless indeed fall into this category.

Communities across the country respond to homelessness with a variety of housing and services programs, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.

During the past decade, a shift has occurred in homelessness assistance, placing a greater emphasis on permanent housing solutions. Solutions such as permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing are used over the transitional housing programs. Permanent housing interventions account for about half of the beds in the U.S. overall, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

But for cities in New Jersey, individuals could plunge into an eviction crisis they are not prepared to face as more people get vaccinated and the state climbs out of the devastation shaped by the pandemic.

The problem is not confined to Newark.

A shocking number of New Jersey residents could be thrown out of their housing unless substantial funding is reserved for rental assistance for tenants who have fallen behind on rent and evictions are further delayed.

"Around 60,000 evictions are pending across the state, data from the state judiciary shows. Matt Shapiro, president of the New Jersey Tenants Association, said those

likely represent only a fraction of evictions that will be filed once the moratorium ends," according to Nj.com.

"If we don't do something, you're going to see 200,000, 300,000 pending evictions," said Shapiro to nj.com.

Eviction filings declined drastically in 2020 after the moratorium went into effect, calling for a rent freeze, according to judiciary data via nj.com. From April through the end of the year, 46,245 evictions were filed across the state, down nearly 60% from the 112,888 filed during the same period in 2019. But, if evictions had not been on hold, it is likely the number of 2020 evictions would have been much higher than in previous years. One estimate said almost one-third of renters failed to pay their rent fully and on-time in July.

But even as evictions were on hold since the pandemic began, some renters in New Jersey have still been forced from their homes, both legally and illegally. Dozens of people in Newark and across New Jersey have reported being locked out of their homes without a warrant allowing it.

Although this crisis will occur all over New Jersey, Newark will likely be the epicenter.

"In every city, renters will face an enormous crisis when eviction moratoriums expire," Newark Mayor Ras Baraka said in a statement. "This is acute in Newark where 78% of our residents are tenants. Unless the federal government treats emergency rental assistance as an urgent priority, Newark will face a tsunami of evictions."

Newark is particularly vulnerable because of the shortage of affordable housing.

The median rent in Newark is about \$1,100 a month. That is far more than the \$763 mark that would satisfy the 30% affordability threshold, based on the city's average household income of \$30,000. This disparity leaves the city short about 16,000 affordable units, according to Nj.com.

With unemployment hovering above 7.5% in New Jersey, many of those facing eviction will have few options beyond home hopping or being on the streets.

Thousands of New Jersey residents have fallen behind on their rent, having lost their jobs or faced reduced hours or diminished business. This ultimately means that thousands of landlords have gone without some or all of their income as well, especially smaller landlords, said Derek Reed to Nj.com, a past president of the New Jersey Property Owners Association. Even if tenants are unable to pay rent, landlords are still required to pay property taxes, maintenance and mortgage notes.

You too.

There has been a lot of discourse about what people decide to do with their \$1,400 from the federal government. Shaming others on

what they decide is the best use of their money seems to be a reasonable criticism. I saw a tweet (excuse me while I paraphrase) that alluded that \$1,400 to poor people is a lot of money, but not enough money. A lot of people, mostly those who have not had to be on the brink of homelessness or wonder where their next meal is coming from, believe poor people can "budget" or "save" their way out of poverty. Wrong.

Something to think about — many of us are closer to being homeless than we are to being a part of the one percent.

Protect the homeless.

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



THE Rider News

Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

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

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FRESHMEN FINDINGS

Changing the conversation: Sarah Everard's story and violence against women

NEW outlets everywhere reported the disappearance of 33-year-old South Londoner Sarah Everard, who went missing on March 3, 2021, as well as the subsequent confirmation of her body's identification just nine days later. London Metropolitan Police Officer Wayne Couzens has been charged with kidnap and murder concerning this case.

Everard's story serves as a reminder to women that they are always at risk. The public attention this story has received has reopened the discussion about women's safety in public and private spaces.

According to UK news outlet The Sun, following Everard's disappearance, police warned women to stay inside, be careful when going out alone and be cautious if living by themselves — as if these ideas haven't already been permanently fixated into the minds of women everywhere.

The kidnapping and murder of Everard may have taken place across the pond, but the confirmation that women are not safe is felt universally. On the surface, this advice to not go out alone at night, or be extra vigilant if you must, may seem like genuine caring or concern, but, even if that's the case, this rhetoric reestablishes that women are to blame for what happens to them.

Everard did all of the things she was 'supposed' to — she wore bright clothing and comfortable shoes. She took a route home that was equipped with good lighting. She called her boyfriend.

Everard was still murdered — and by a police officer, nonetheless.

The responsibility should not fall on women to stay safe. The responsibility should fall on men to not attack women and society to recenter the way it speaks passively about women and female-presenting experiences.

I, as I'm sure many of the women reading this, know what it is like to feel unsafe for simply existing, not even mentioning the heightened risk of danger for women of color and trans women. I remember what it felt like to be catcalled and harassed walking home as a sophomore in high school, and I remember hearing similar accounts from friends who have also felt unsafe simply moving throughout their everyday lives, and for what? The space they take up in the world?

'Don't go anywhere alone. Carry mace or put your keys between your fingers in case you need to protect yourself. Don't get too drunk. You better not put those earbuds in while you're walking alone — what if you can't hear someone coming up behind you? Lock your car door as soon as you get in, but not before you've checked the backseat. Are you sure you want to take that taxi, or wear that short skirt, or go to that party, or on that date?'

All of these parameters, pieces of advice and judgements fall on women, and, due largely in part to this rhetoric and the casual misogyny that pervades our society, women are often blamed for what happens to them.

All of this is not to say that men are immune to assault or danger, but there is a discrepancy in the way we as a collective society converse about and discuss

treatment and solution for the assault of women versus men.

A March 2021 survey of 1,000 UK women conducted by YouGov revealed that 97% of women ranging between ages 18-24 have experienced sexual harassment, and of this percentage, 80% occurred publicly. In the U.S., a January 2018 survey commissioned by Stop Street Harassment (SSH) found that 81% of women and 43% of men across the nation have experienced some degree of sexual harassment or assault.

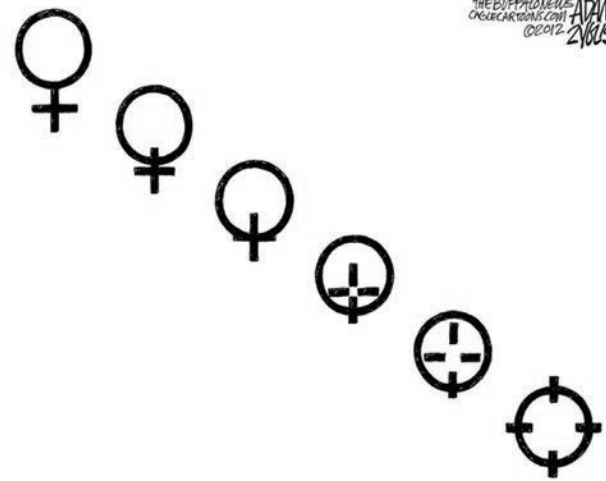
As the details solidify, the disparity between the experiences of men and women become more apparent; 34% of men have experienced verbal sexual harassment, compared to an alarming 77% of women, and while 17% of men confirm being groped or touched unwelcomedly, that number increases three times over with 51% of women.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, men experience higher rates of victimization for violent crimes excluding sexual assault and rape, so why aren't men asked to stay home or exhibit hypervigilance out of safety concerns? The issue of violence is just as much a men's issue as a women's issue, and there needs to be a change in the rhetoric used when discussing these instances of violence to reflect that.

Everard's story is another reminder, on top of the many before her, that no matter what a woman does, she alone cannot ensure her own safety — there needs to be a drastic change in the way we hold men accountable and take the blame off of victims in an environment that does nothing to protect them and everything to accuse them.

Kate McCormick
freshman English major

Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



GREEN CORNER

The real pest: Insects or pesticides in our food supply?

FOOD is the one thing we all need to continue living and growing. Whether it be a Rider student studying for a test or an athlete getting ready for their next game, everyone needs fuel. Without it, humanity would eventually become extinct.

Humans have put so much effort into increasing food availability not only across the country, but the whole world. Through impressive technological advancements, we have been able to increase food production tremendously — with one of those crucial advancements being pesticides.

Many pesticides, such as DDT and Chlordane, while helpful in increasing the supply of food across the world — due to their ability to deter insects from consuming plants — have found themselves surrounded by controversy. There have been numerous studies that link pesticides with increased rates of cancer. The people most at risk of developing cancer from the use of pesticides are those that do the actual work — the farmers.

According to a study from the U.S. National Library of Medicine, eight of 15 studies in North America found that there was a modestly increased risk among farmers compared to non-farmers, with effect estimates 1.1 to 4.3 times greater than the average cancer rate of non-farmers.

To make matters worse, manufacturers that produce these pesticides, such as Dupont and Monsanto, have essentially monopolized the market with their products, as there are not many other manufacturers that could realistically compete. Dupont and Monsanto have also been able to genetically engineer many common seeds that include pesticides within the seed, meaning reapplication of pesticides remains minimal.

In fact, because of these methods that are available today, Monsanto alone controls 80% of the U.S. corn market and a whopping 93% of the U.S. soy market.

These seeds also tend to drift into other farmers' plots of land, causing legal implications that require them to use those seeds, or else they have to suffer a heavy fine for using and selling their seeds without their authorization.

Pricing is a barrier to people's access to organic foods. Sophomore economics major Joseph Navarro said, "The prices for organic foods are higher than their non-organic counterparts, which makes it harder for people to access it."

For Navarro and other college students, the desire to buy organic does not always align with the ability to do so. Since pesticides and pesticide-ready seeds are continuously finding their way into organic plots, the supply of organic foods is decreasing while demand is arguably increasing.

While prices for organic foods can be higher than non-organic foods, some

people find that the benefits greatly outweigh the monetary cost.

Samantha Mejia, sophomore graphic design major, is one of these very people. She said, "I have bought organic before. While the goal was to lose weight, the pandemic definitely gave me more time to dive into new interests, causing me to go into health and fitness more."

Thankfully, people are becoming more attuned to the effects of pesticides and are increasingly switching over to organic foods. You can even grow your very own organic produce at home.

Many resources are available online to get you started. If you don't have a yard, then you can use pots. Did you know that there is an organic garden on campus?

Current faculty, staff and students can reserve a plot in the Green Acres community garden on a first-come, first-served basis through the Office of Sustainability.

With opportunities such as this to grow your own organic food, we all have the capability of switching to a healthier lifestyle, saving some money and making organic foods mainstream again as they always should have been.

Dean Riddle
Eco-Rep

Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



MEN'S SOCCER

Early goal pushes Rider to win in opener

By Logan VanDine

THREE days after some of the men's soccer team's key players returned from quarantine, the men's soccer team won a very competitive season opener against the Siena Saints, 1-0, at Ben Cohen Field on March 11.

The Broncs first and only goal came just minutes in when sophomore midfielder and forward Matt Araujo, who was named Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Week on March 16, scored off an assist from senior midfielder Francisco Olano as the Broncs held on from there, winning 1-0 on their home turf.

According to Head Coach Charlie Inverso, two key players returned from a 10-day quarantine on Monday, March 8.

Inverso was asked how it felt for Rider to finally play its first game of the season as the COVID-19 pandemic has gone on for a year now.

"It was interesting and a little unusual," Inverso said. "We haven't even had a practice as a team and to be totally honest, I had no idea what to expect."

Inverso also described his reaction, seeing the team's first goal going into the net this season since it's been nearly a year since the team played a game.

"Jubilant pretty much," Inverso explained. "It was a great run by Araujo and something that we have been working on, just running behind the defense and it was a great ball."

Inverso was pleased with the way his defense was able to pitch a shutout throughout the entire game when Siena came close to getting on the board multiple times.

"I thought our positioning was really



Sara Maiz/Rider Athletics

Sophomore midfielder **Matt Araujo** was named MAAC Offensive Player of the Week on March 16.

good, to me, one of the biggest factors to me we didn't let them turn with the ball to midfield and we had a couple guys playing out of position today and they did a good job and I think by not letting them turn with the ball, it took a lot of pressure off our defense," Inverso said.

Araujo, who was responsible for the game's only goal, also talked about what it meant for him and his team to finally be out playing.

"We are very fortunate enough to be out on the field this season," he said. "This past preseason has been very tough but to be able to get out there

after not being able to play for over a year, it just feels amazing."

Araujo continued, "We have all been very hungry to finally go out there and finally play against people other than each other which is great."

Araujo also described his feeling when we saw his shot go into the net.

"It was a great feeling, especially missing the guys that we were missing because of quarantine. I really had to step up and make plays because the guys on the field really had to step up and get the game going and get the flow going after not playing for a year and [it] felt good personally, but

as a team just winning the game and scoring the winning goal was a great feeling," Araujo said.

The game ended with Siena drawing both a yellow card and a red card after an altercation with some of the players, resulting in one of the Siena players being tossed from the game just as the clock hit zero.

The Broncs will now have time to prepare for another home game at Ben Cohen Field as they take on Iona College on March 18.

VOLLEYBALL

Broncs split home series against Marist

By Luke Lombardi

RIDER split a doubleheader where every set but one came down to the wire with Marist on March 14, the volleyball team's first game at Alumni Gym in over a year.

The Broncs won the first match 3-2, where they took the fourth set by a score of 25-12 which was the widest set victory margin of either match.

"Mostly, it was just kind of reminding them of the game plan and reminding them of the tendencies of Marist. I would say we were a little bit out of sorts in the first three sets even though we won that first one, we were a bit jittery," Head Coach Jeff Rotundo said. "To a certain extent, we were playing not to lose and that comes back to bite you so we asked them to play a little bit more free."

Freshman outside hitter Tori Schrader, who had 11 kills in the first match, also thought that the fourth set was critical to the win.

"I think we carried the motivation from that set," Schrader said. "Even the bench and everyone on the court, we knew we could beat them by a substantial amount of points, so I think we just kept that confidence into the fifth set."

In the first match, sophomore opposite hitter Morgan Romano led the team with 20 kills. Junior setter Anilee Sher had an impressive 52 assists during the victory. Rider finished with 64 assists as a team, compared to Marist's 45.

Rotundo explained that those numbers are not too crazy for Sher, as she was the top setter in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) last year.

"She's just that good," Rotundo said of his star setter. "She's going to put up a really good ball and, you know, it's also a credit, in order for her to get the assists, her hitters have to put the ball away. It's our hitters doing a good job, but it's also her putting them in a good position to score. It's what she's really good at."

Rotundo also had praise for Romano, who won MAAC Rookie of the Year in 2019.

"The thing is, she's really good, especially when we're not passing well," Rotundo said. "When [Sher] is on the run, that's a ball if we're not passing well and [Sher] has to go get the ball on the run, that's a ball that [Romano] handles really well."

Marist ended up winning the second match 3-1 with every set's victory margin

being within six points. Rider won the assist battle in the second game as well by a margin of 58-49. When it came to the points battle, Marist had 71 while Rider had 70.

After an intense second set, Rider went out and won the third set 25-22.

When talking about how Rider was able to win the third set after such a competitive previous set, Schrader said, "I think it just shows what we are capable of and what each individual person's capable of, so we can carry that over into the next set. We know we can beat them and we know individually that we can hit hard and get kills and digs, so I just think we carried that over."

Romano led the team in kills in the game with 21. Sher had 49 assists in the second game, taking her over 100 total for the night.

"I think both teams were fatigued," Rotundo said of the latter match. "We even noticed it, me and my associate were talking about that in the third or fourth set in that second match that we could notice fatigue on both sides of the net."

Rotundo also believes it came down to Marist playing better fundamental volleyball. He explained, "It just came down to Marist executed better down the stretch. They got out to some leads, we cut it back. There were just some phases we weren't clean in, especially to start that [second] match in sets one and two. We were just not really good in serves and on defense."

While the Broncs are happy they picked up their first win, they feel like they could have won both.

"You know, obviously going 1-1 is great," Rotundo explained. "I think we definitely know that as a team, we left one out there today that we're not too pleased about."

Schrader also thought getting the first win was big for the team. She said, "We definitely have jitters because we all haven't played in so long. It's been almost over a year, so I think getting that first win under our belt, it just takes the pressure off a little bit. We know we can win. We know we're a good team. I think it definitely takes something off our shoulders. The jitters just kind of went away."

After the doubleheader, Rider moves to 1-3 both in the conference and overall. The Broncs will host Canisius in a doubleheader on March 19.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Rider goes toe-to-toe with Saint Peter's in MAAC semifinals

By Dylan Manfre

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — In a slugfest between Rider and Saint Peter's that game came down to the final seconds, and the ball was in the hands of Rider's lone senior, forward Daija Moses.

Saint Peter's forward Kendrea Williams was called for a travel with eight seconds left on the clock. Then it was Rider's turn to possibly punch the Broncs' ticket to its first championship game appearance since 2017.

Moses hoisted a 3-pointer with 0.8 seconds left on the clock. The ball clanked off the outside of the rim, time expired and the quest for a championship was over after a heartbreaking 72-67 loss in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) semifinals to Saint Peter's on March. 12.

Rider Head Coach Lynn Milligan said before the season the only negative coming out of playing in Atlantic City was that one game would be the last in a cranberry uniform for Moses. It seemed fitting for her to attempt the last shot.

"She's certainly made some big shots for us throughout the year. We tried some different options on that play and Daija was there," Milligan said. "[She] took it strong, took it confidence, it was right on the rim. It was a good look ... nobody wanted to make that shot more than Daija. ... She's given her heart and soul to this program and like I say all the time, I don't ask for anything more than everybody's heart and soul."

A distraught freshman guard Makayla Firebaugh agreed it would be inappropriate for the ball to be in the hands of anyone else with the game winding down.

"Daija is our senior and she takes the big shots," said Firebaugh, who finished with 16 points on 50% shooting. "If anyone has the right to take that shot it's Daija because she's earned it."

The Broncs threw plenty of 2-3 zone defenses at the Peacocks throughout — it was a good attempt at limiting their star guard Taiah Thornton who ended up with 16 points.

"Rider did a fantastic job of mixing up their defenses," Saint Peter's Head Coach Marc Mitchell said. "I don't think my kids recognized that and how to attack it so [I] give a lot of credit to Rider."

Sophomore guard Maya Hyacienth did an exceptional job guarding the Saint Peter's guard, especially since she did not get the opportunity to do so in their regular-season meeting because of injury. She is typically guarding a team's fastest and best player.

"They definitely shot the ball very well today," said Thornton who had eight of her 16 points come from the free throw line. "We had some trouble with their defense. ... [the game] came down to the last 10 seconds."

Rider kept the game incredibly close, not allowing



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

The women's basketball team started the season 1-12 and finished 7-6 over its last 13 games including its three in the conference tournament.

the Peacocks to get ahead by more than nine points. Any time Saint Peter's jumped with some momentum, the Broncs answered.

Hyacienth was part of a run where the two teams traded 3-point shots during the final 2:00 of the third quarter. Junior guard Amanda Mobley and freshman co-Rookie of the Year guard Makayla Firebaugh each hit 3-pointers. The trio pulled Rider to within one heading into the final quarter of play.

"Honestly, someone said in the locker room, we just didn't have enough time. I think we could have won this game," Firebaugh said. "I just think we needed to be more of ourselves and [know your personnel]. But you're right, I don't like losing."

Although this ends the team's season, Milligan does not want this blemish to be viewed as anything other than a "Cinderella run". Rider started the year scrapping for wins and developing chemistry in a pandemic-riddled season that featured over 100 total scheduling changes across the league.

Milligan is not even worried about the direction the team is heading in because she knew all season long the Broncs would make a run in the tournament.

"The narrative is wrong, to be really honest. The direction of our program is that we're a top team in this league and we've been in the semifinals five years in a row," Milligan said. "And the expectations of this program are to win championships whether

we have six newcomers and a bunch of freshmen or sophomores or we have Stella Johnson. That's the expectation we have for our program. We didn't start the way we wanted to but there's nobody in that locker room that is surprised at where we are."

Rider started the season 1-12 and grinding for wins; getting to the semifinals is a testament to the program. Even Mitchell and his players cited the Broncs' maturity since their regular-season meeting.

"Rider didn't lose the game," Mitchell said. "We had to actually beat them today."

Thornton agreed their record does not reflect the type of program they faced in the game.

"Looking at their record, you can't really look past them," Thornton said. "It's really deceiving. It was pretty back and forth."

Sophomore center Victoria Toomey, who had a sensational ending to the season with 17 points on 8-10 shooting, was proud of the growth the team has made.

"If you look back at our first game versus Villanova versus now we're a completely different team and we've grown together through it all through the ups and downs," Toomey said. "I think it's exciting how far we've come and we'll be back next year."



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Head Coach Lynn Milligan and Assistant Coach Steve Harney speak with Amanda Mobley and Maya Hyacienth during a timeout in the MAAC semifinals.



Freshman guard Makayla Firebaugh was named MAAC Co-Rookie of the Year with Marist's Caitlin Weimar.

Sports

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

Same story different year; Broncs lose in quarterfinals



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Saint Peter's forward **KC Ndefo** goes up for a layup around four Rider players to eliminate the Broncs in the quarterfinals.

By **Shaun Chornobroff**

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — It's like the same movie, but on a different day for the Rider men's basketball team. The first time the Broncs saw this screening was on Feb. 26, when they lost to the Saint Peter's Peacocks.

The team played a similar script on March 11, dropping a game to the Peacocks they once had control of 75-60 knocking them out of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament in the quarterfinals and bringing their season to an unceremonious end.

"I thought our guys did a good job in the first half, I thought the second half they got physical with us and we didn't match that offensively and defensively and then we couldn't get stops when we needed to get stops," Head Coach Kevin Baggett said. "We missed a ton of layups and free throws and when you get down you have to make those."

The loss maintained Baggett's winless record in the quarterfinals of the MAAC Tournament and revived an annual question from the media.

"I don't care about that, that's what y'all care about," The two-time MAAC Coach of the Year said in his postgame press conference when asked about his 0-8 record in quarterfinal games. "We just needed to get stops... You guys can keep bringing that up forever or all you want, but at the end of the day we have to get better, we have to get stronger, we have to get tougher... It ain't have anything to do with the MAAC Tournament, this is something that has hurt us all year long... It's not the MAAC Tournament, it's consistency across the board."

Rider was clicking early on, forcing a plethora of turnovers in the opening minutes and the offense was scoring with ease, helping the Broncs open up a 30-20 lead with 7:16 remaining in the first half. But Rider failed to extend its double-digit lead and was lucky to go into the halftime break with a 36-33 lead.

Much like the late February matchup, the Peacocks continued their momentum into the second half starting the half on a 19-6 run, drowning the Broncs with turnovers on one end and efficient offense on the other.

The Broncs were unable to buy a break of any kind in the last 20 minutes of play and Baggett saw his team's first-half double-digit lead morph into a 52-42 deficit with 11:42 remaining in the game.

"We didn't play very smart in the second half when we got down, we lost our composure," the veteran coach explained. "We just started doing things that have showed up all year long, that didn't show up [March 8] for the most part."

The team had no response to Saint Peter's defense and interior presence and the Rider deficit peaked at 20 points.

The Broncs were held to 19 second half points, shooting a paltry 36.8% from the field and committing seven turnovers.

Dwight Murray Jr. continued to impress in the first half of the game, leading the Broncs with nine points and five assists, but the junior guard only registered six points and failed to record a single assist in the second half.

It was an unfortunate end to Murray's season. The guard was considered by many to be a snub from an All-MAAC first team selection, instead forcing him to settle for a second team honor. The junior had a dazzling performance in the opening round victory against Canisius, but the Murray magic ran out in the last 20 minutes of the Broncs season.

"We didn't go as hard as Saint Peter's did," the second team All-MAAC selection said. "We didn't bring out the effort... we were lacking motivation, it's just the little things."

Rider was dominated by a familiar foe in this game: All-MAAC first-team selection KC Ndefo. The junior showed his prowess on the inside, scoring 18 points on 70% shooting. Ndefo has often been touted as a unique athlete and showed it in the game, grabbing seven rebounds and dishing four assists in the victory.

"He wanted it more tonight," Baggett bluntly said of the forward's performance.

The loss ended a season filled with defeat and disappointment, but the adversity did help forge a team that started the season with a dozen foreign faces into a unified group of brothers who bonded over being doubted by those outside the team.

"I loved it, I love my teammates, it's a great group of guys," Murray said of his first season in Lawrenceville. "It was our first time playing together and we just started learning how to play with each other and we just started learning how to play with each other, so it's going to be scary next year... Coach [Baggett] brought me here and said 'if I do things for him he'll do things for me' and he kept his word on that. I just love it here, I just love it here, I'm staying for sure."

Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson, a junior center who was one of the few returning members from the previous season agrees that the Broncs can become a force to be reckoned with.

"Come next year I trust my coach, he's not doing this again," Ogemuno-Johnson said. "We're not doing it again as teammates, we talked about it at the end of the game that we're coming back next year and we're not putting ourselves in the same predicament as we did this year. As far as talent goes, we do have the talent to come back next year and actually make some noise."

With the worst statistical season in his tenure behind him, Baggett and the rest of the Rider Broncs will look to come into the 2021-22 season with a chip on their shoulder and return to the top half of the MAAC.