

## Petition pushes university on accessibility in sorority

By Stephen Neukam

**P**UBLIC pressure is mounting on Rider to make a sorority building on its campus accessible for a partially-paralyzed student whose peers have started a popular social media and internet campaign to push the university to action.

Students of the sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma, put together TikTok videos and started an online petition to garner support for freshman elementary education major Bridget Gum, who is tetraplegic, and her hope to get the sorority house fitted to meet her needs.

To date, the university has not given Gum a timeline for whether or not it will pursue the renovations or how long they might take. Instead, it has offered for Gum to stay in a different building on campus, Hill Hall, which is more suitable for her needs next year.

The petition, which urges the university to make the house wheelchair accessible, has over 7,200 signatures on Change.org as of April 6. Gum was taken aback by the support from her sorority sisters and the Rider community.

“I am used to people saying, ‘That sucks,’ and then kind of moving on,” said Gum. “I’m not used to this. And it was very overwhelming but in a great way to see people getting behind me.”

When Gum was an infant, she developed a rare autoimmune disorder that attacked her spinal cord and left her paralyzed below the upper chest with partial control over four limbs. It’s a condition that Gum has learned to work around, proud of the way she compensates for the physical difficulties.

“I compensate a lot so I look more normal,” said Gum. “People would not be able to guess my function externally from the things that I do sometimes.”

In response to the petition, the university released a statement that publicly criticized the sorority campaign because it “reinforced a false perception that Rider was unwilling to make facilities renovations that would accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair in the building.”



Courtesy of Bridget Gum

Students of the sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma, started an online petition to garner support for freshman elementary education major **Bridget Gum** to get the sorority house fitted to meet her needs.

## Rider coronavirus cases decline as vaccines become accessible

By Austin Ferguson

**A**s widespread accessibility to vaccines for COVID-19 is on the horizon, new cases of the coronavirus at Rider dropped off significantly, the university’s online dashboard reported on April 6.

According to Rider’s online COVID-19 dashboard, six new cases of COVID-19 were reported between March 29 and April 4, the first time the dashboard reported a single-digit weekly number of positives since the first week of March. In between those two weeks, the university reported three of its worst weeks of positive cases in the Spring 2021 semester with 19, 21 and 19 cases consecutively before the drop-off to six positives this past week.

A decrease in both student quarantine and isolation numbers coupled the sharp decline in COVID-19 cases, with the dashboard reporting 15 students in quarantine and seven students in isolation as of April 6. On-campus student numbers in both categories were especially notable, highlighted by the report of no students in isolation on campus as of April 6.

Though Rider Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla was grateful for the decline in case numbers at the university, she stressed the importance of continuing to follow guidelines in keeping COVID-19 spread low on campus.

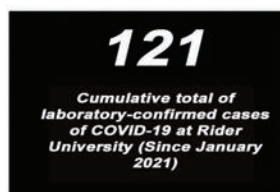
“It’s getting nicer out and it’s tempting to not to abide by our guidelines,” Stasolla said. “But I just can’t stress that enough that we need to all monitor our symptoms.”

In terms of following guidelines, violations in Rider’s Student Code of Social Conduct related to COVID-19 tailed off in the month of March, with university Director of Community Standards Keith Kemo reporting 10 violations of Rider’s code of conduct relating to COVID-19 guidelines that month, compared to 23 violations of the same codes in February. Kemo noted, however, that March’s number was subject to change as hearing officers bring in more students for conduct hearings.

The decreases in all tracked categories on Rider’s dashboard come on the heels of more access to vaccinations in the state of New Jersey, with the state reporting as many as 1.8 million people, or just under 20% of the state’s total population, being fully vaccinated as of April 6.

Access to vaccines, particularly for college students, is poised to only increase as April continues, as President Joe Biden announced on April 6 that all adults will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine by April 19. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy

### Confirmed Cases Last updated: April 6, 2021



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

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
April 2021	7	0
March 2021	63	4

Rider University reports its testing numbers and other coronavirus statistics each Tuesday and Friday at [rider.edu/dashboard](http://rider.edu/dashboard)

### ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Week 14	1	131
Week 13	7	203
Week 12	19	230
Week 11	16	208
Week 10	15	143
Week 9	13	329
Total	112	3300

### 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:

**Three students quarantining on campus**  
**12 students quarantining off campus**

Arianna Marino/The Rider News

According to Rider’s online COVID-19 dashboard, six new cases of COVID-19 were reported between March 29 and April 4.

announced the same level of access for the state of New Jersey the day prior to the president’s announcement.

Stasolla said that though the university had built contingency plans to the contrary, Rider administration “had assumed that our students would be eligible for the vaccine in plenty of time to get it between now and the fall semester” and that Biden’s announcement “hasn’t necessarily changed our whole planning [for the fall semester] so far.”

With vaccination numbers and outdoor temperatures quickly rising and university COVID-19 numbers falling, Stasolla emphasized that now is not the time for the Rider community to relax in its practicing of pandemic-related guidelines.

“It’s great that we’ve seen improved [case and quarantine] numbers, we always like that,” Stasolla said. “But we can’t get lax, we have to not let our guard down so we can get through the rest of the semester with a relatively low number of [COVID-19] cases.”

**INSIDE**  
**SOP OPERA**  
Star pitcher Pete Soporowski has dominated opponents this season.  
PAGE 11



**CHRISTIANITY, CONSERVATISM, CENSORSHIP**  
Controversy following Lil Nas X’s latest video.  
PAGE 9

**SETH GREENBERG**  
ESPN anchor and former college basketball coach Seth Greenberg speaks with students via a virtual event.  
PAGE 6



## SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SARAH SIOCK

### Rule Breaker

Second strike. On April 4 at 4:20 p.m., Public Safety received a call from the SRC that a student, who was not permitted to be using the gym facility due to previous community standards violations, was using the equipment. The student said that they were not aware that they were not allowed in the gym. Public Safety referred the student to the Office of Community Standards for charges.

### Flower Crasher

Watch your tracks. On April 2 at 8 a.m., Public Safety was notified by Facilities Management that there was damage to a flower bed that is located near the south entrance. Public Safety checked the flower bed and found tire marks on the bed. Public Safety proceeded to check their security camera but could not find the vehicle that drove through the flowers on camera.

### Suspicious Woman

Who was that? On April 1 at 9:55 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Olson Hall after a student reported a suspicious female near the building. The student said a woman ran up to her and asked for permission into Olson Hall to get her daughter. The student said the woman was older and not wearing a mask. Public Safety proceeded to check the building but could not find anyone inside that matched the description of the woman. The student said the woman was driving an SUV that was parked outside of Olson Hall, but Public Safety could not locate a vehicle that matched the student's description.

— Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

## Administration publicly rebukes sorority petition for accessibility

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

“We are committed to working with all students to understand their unique needs and make accommodations where necessary for them to fully access the Rider student experience,” the statement continued.

The original petition written by a sorority sister, which has since been modified, said that the university refused to do the renovations, a claim that Gum admitted was false. Instead, Gum said she was told that the renovations would take a long time to complete.

Gum was disappointed that the university focused on the inaccuracy of the petition rather than the inaccessibility of the Greek house.

“The fact that is the part that they chose to focus on in itself is extremely discouraging and very frustrating for me,” said Gum. “The second I saw [the petition] I knew that’s what [the university] was going to do. I am just kind of upset that I was right.”

Sophomore journalism major Gabrielle Waid, who created the petition, said that her goal was to put public pressure on the university and that she hopes the school would “do the right thing.” She said she wanted to drum up support for Gum after trying to put herself in her shoes.

The university declined to answer specific questions from The Rider News regarding the timeline of possible renovations, the cost and the number of wheelchair-accessible dorms currently available on campus. Instead, a Rider spokesman said that “the University has not received a formal request for housing accommodations from the student.”

“For those advocating to make Phi Sigma Sigma wheelchair accessible, please know that Rider has not denied any request to do so,” said the spokesman. “Our confidence remains high that, if allowed to unfold, the process will ultimately achieve a satisfactory result that addresses individual needs and complies with applicable law, as it is designed to do.”



The Phi Sigma Sigma house has no entrances with ramps, making it inaccessible for Gum.

## Students discuss importance of receiving coronavirus relief funds



When comparing CRRSAA to the previous CARES Act, the CARES Act aid was only for expenses relating to the cost of college.

By **Tori Pender**

**E**LIGIBLE students across the university received financial relief after Rider started distributing funds from the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA).

CRRSAA and the previous CARES Act were granted under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. However, when comparing CRRSAA to the CARES Act, the CARES Act aid was only for expenses relating to the cost of college, while CRRSAA funds do not have strict limitations.

According to Rider's CRRSAA Act funding disclosure, “As of March 23, 2021, Rider University had approximately 3,358 spring enrolled students with a completed FAFSA eligible for assistance and we awarded 2,812 grants totaling \$1,766,900.”

This second round of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund rolled out the week of March 23.

In a previous interview with The Rider News, Vice President of Enrollment Management Drew Aromando said it was unclear whether Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), undocumented or international students would receive funds.

Sleyker Tarifa, a junior business major, is a DACA recipient who received funds from the CRRSAA.

Tarifa explained, “It was really confusing, I didn’t even know [the check] was from the CRRSAA fund.”

Senior communication studies major Regina Askew-Jones also received aid from the CRRSAA.

Askew-Jones explained, “I used it to finish credit card payments that paid for graduating fees and other educational expenses.”

“It is helping me ensure graduating expenses are affordable,” said Askew-Jones.

Askew-Jones explained that she found the fund very beneficial, especially for students who have been ineligible for the stimulus packages.

College students who were claimed as a dependent on their parent’s 2019 tax return were ineligible to receive the first and second stimulus check.

Demara Barnes, a senior film and TV major, received \$800 from the CRRSAA.

“I was super grateful to receive something because with all my money going toward tuition, I am just trying to save up as much as I can so that bills will never be an issue for me after graduation,” said Barnes.

She explained that this will allow her to take a break before job hunting and jumping into the workforce.

“My opinion on [CRRSAA] is I think it’s great, especially for those who are still jobless or are struggling. This money does help out immensely,” said Barnes. “For someone like me, who has bills, this money helps cover that so I don’t have to worry about not getting enough money from work to cover my bills.”

Barnes continued, “Like I said the money that I have I’m saving because I want to be able to take care of my mom first and make sure that if there is anything she needs, I am right there to help her out.”

Barnes shared that her mom has done so much for her in her life and during her time at Rider, Barnes said she wants to pay it forward whenever her mom needs it.

“So to end it, I am truly blessed and grateful to have received the funds,” said Barnes.

## ADVERTISEMENT



JOIN US!

# HIDING AND FREEDOM: ONE FAMILY'S STORY

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 8 | 7 TO 8:30 P.M.

Zoom - Register in Advance: [rider.edu/hiding-and-freedom](https://rider.edu/hiding-and-freedom)

## FEATURING GAIL RESSLER

DESCENDANT OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHO LIVED THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST

Gail Ressler's family story is one of heroism, survival, triumph and love. Her grandmother Gitel Ressler was killed by the Nazis in the forest at Niewodna, Poland, at the beginning of the Holocaust. Her grandfather Chaim Ressler knew the rest of the family needed to escape or they would meet the same fate. Although Gitel and Chaim's oldest son, Hershel, would also be killed, six remaining members of the family sheltered with a family named Sweiton, including Gail's father, Moishe. Until the end of the war, the families lived together, ate together and risked their lives together. Eleven members of the family finally emigrated to the United States in 1947.

# Administrators explain plans for May commencement ceremonies

By Tatyanna Carman

**R**IDER anticipates hosting as many as 14 in-person commencement ceremonies for the classes of 2020 and 2021 from May 14 to May 16, according to a statement from Manager of Special Events and Projects Nadège Toth and Director of the Living and Learning Community Beverly Braddock.

According to their statement, the exact number of ceremonies will be determined by “how many class of 2020 graduates [and] class of 2021 candidates indicate they will attend.” Toth and Braddock said that graduates and students were asked to RSVP by April 2 with their intention to participate in commencement.

“The in-person ceremony length is approximately one hour and will include a student processional, national anthem, remarks from the President, conferral of degrees and the presentation of graduates,” said Toth and Braddock in their statement. “The focus is on recognizing and celebrating our graduates; names will be read aloud and students will cross the stage, collect a diploma cover and have professional photos taken.”

According to Toth and Braddock, the Westminster Choir College class of 2021 ceremony will be held in-person on the Lawrenceville campus in the afternoon of May 14, while the class of 2020 ceremony will be held on Dec. 11, 2021, at the Princeton University Chapel as part of the annual Readings and Carols weekend. The class of 2021 undergraduate degree ceremony will be held on May 15 and the class of 2021 graduate degree ceremony will be held on the morning of May 16. The class of 2020 graduate and undergraduate degree ceremony will be held on the afternoon of May 16.

“As of March 25, more than 320 graduates have indicated they will attend the Class of 2020 ceremonies and over 500 students have indicated that they will attend Class of 2021 ceremonies,” the statement said. “We do expect these numbers to rise as the April 2 deadline approaches.”

Toth and Braddock said the ceremonies will take place under two large tents located on the campus green and in the field behind Daly Dining Hall. Each tent will be able to accommodate up to 150 students



Courtesy of Rider University  
According to a statement from Manager of Special Events and Projects Nadège Toth and Director of the Living and Learning Community Beverly Braddock, the decision to have in-person ceremonies included input from student leaders. (This photo was taken prior to the coronavirus pandemic.)

and 300 guests, according to Toth and Braddock. The ceremonies will alternate between the two tents.

“Rider is committed to hosting a memorable and safe commencement experience for graduates and their guests,” Toth and Braddock said. “All graduates and guests attending commencement will need to follow event guidelines as determined by the CDC, State of New Jersey and Rider University. Social distancing guidelines will be followed and masks will be required to be worn at all times, using two tents for consecutive ceremonies allows time to thoroughly clean and sanitize each area between ceremonies. We will ask people to arrive no earlier than 30 minutes prior to their assigned ceremony start time. It is also important to note that our ability to host these outdoor ceremonies is contingent upon state gathering guidelines.”

Senior communication studies major Regina Askew-Jones said that she thinks commencement is an important event to commemorate and she has been waiting a long time to walk across that stage and receive her diploma.

“Along with wanting to celebrate my achievement, this is a monumental moment for my family as well,” she said. “Out of 17 of my grandmother’s grandchildren, I am the first to complete a four-year degree. This is not just for me, but for my entire family.”

Askew-Jones also said that she believes Rider is doing a great job at abiding by guidelines while also trying to satisfy students.

“Whatever it takes to walk across the stage, I do not mind,” said Askew-Jones. “I appreciate Rider’s effort, instead of simply blowing it off. More specifically their efforts at including the class of 2020 as well.”

Senior film major Victoria Grisanzio said she will be attending the May commencement ceremony because she feels that it will be safe since it is outside and spaced out. She also shared her thoughts on Rider having in-person ceremonies.

“I think if handled accordingly, it is a good decision. The last four years have been filled with long days and hard work, and the last year has been hard enough on everyone,” Grisanzio said. “If we can host graduation in person safely, then I think it is a good idea. I think it should be as controlled as possible, and if vaccine numbers weren’t rising I think my opinions would be very different.”

Toth and Braddock said that the decision to have in-person ceremonies included input from student leaders who made it clear that students wanted an in-person ceremony.

Askew-Jones said, “Although it is limited to two guests, having my parents there to see me in-person as well as my fellow peers is quite different than watching it virtually. The energy is not the same. I haven’t had a virtual graduation before, but I know what high school graduation was like with the presence of all of my family, friends and fellow peers. Although we can’t recreate that moment entirely, this is the hand we have been dealt. We have to accept it and readjust the areas necessary.”

Toth and Braddock added that the in-person commencement ceremonies are planned with the assumption that large in-person outside gatherings will be allowed by May and “should pandemic restrictions continue further into the spring, we will need to re-evaluate our plans.”

“We understand how important it is for students to be recognized for their achievements and celebrate with their families. We all miss being on campus and look forward to this opportunity to celebrate together,” said Toth and Braddock.

# Rider team wins third place in national business competition

By Tatyanna Carman

**A**RIDER team from the Norm Brodsky College of Business tied for third place with Lehigh University at the Johnson and Johnson National Business Case Competition on March 22.

Before continuing onto the national competition, the six-person team competed against three other Rider teams in order to move forward in the national competition. The Rider competition was judged by Johnson and Johnson representatives. The teams were assigned through the course, “Case Analysis & Presentation.”

Associate Professor of marketing and team adviser Larry Newman said, “Every school has the same project, then it’s a disguised, real product. They changed the name, but it was a skin cream and it was a merger and acquisition of a company from, I believe Japan. Johnson and Johnson were deciding whether to buy that company or not and that was what the product was. That was the case that they were doing.”

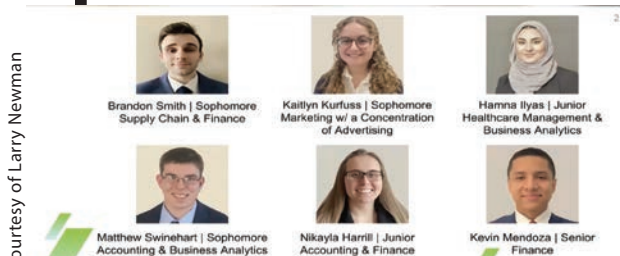
Rider competed against other universities such as Cornell University, Ohio State University, Rutgers University and The College of New Jersey.

The team had a month to create their project. According to Newman, Johnson and Johnson presented the case to the four groups of students on February 10 and then judged the on-campus competition on March 10.

The Rider team that won first place in the Rider competition won \$2,000, which they split between each of the members. They then had the opportunity to compete in the national competition.

Junior accounting major Nikayla Harrill said that she applied for the class and competed in the competition last spring, and her adviser recommended she apply for the class again last semester.

“When it came to course selection this fall, I had room for a couple more credits to my schedule and they were looking for some upperclassmen in [the] case because part of the requirements for the team



Courtesy of Larry Newman  
The Rider team that won first place in the Rider competition was awarded \$2,000, which it had to split between each of the members, and got to continue and compete in the national competition.

is to have a couple of juniors and seniors per team, and also a certain number of finance and accounting people,” said Harrill. “That way, we can understand the financial information that they present us with. So my advisor had recommended that I do it again, and take an independent study with that. So, they needed another upperclassman for this year. So I decided to go through it again because I loved the experience the first time.”

She said that the goal of the project was to make decisions based on different aspects of the dermal cosmetic skincare brand of a disguised company named Sonny and Sonny.

“The goal was for us to make decisions based on different aspects of the company. So for example, there was a research and development decision, marketing, financial information we were presented with,” said Harrill. “So our job was to basically evaluate all the information presented in this case about this dermal cosmetic brand, and how our company was going to move forward in kind of selling that and advertising that to consumers. And then once that was completed, we were tasked with kind of completing a presentation and then we presented both at the Rider competition and then this past Monday, we presented to a bunch of Johnson and Johnson employees for the national competition.”

Sophomore finance major Brandon Smith said that the team was shocked when they found out that they tied for third place.

“You know, there were a lot of big schools there, going up against you know, some schools like Cornell, Lehigh, Penn State, Rutgers,” Smith said. “It can be a little intimidating but we knew we had an extremely good team. We put a lot of time in and I think that definitely showed in the Rider competition and in the national competition, that was one of the really good pieces of feedback that we received.”

Smith said that the experience gave him a lot of confidence in his capabilities.

“From this opportunity though it challenged me to kind of take more chances,” said Smith. “I applied for a J and J co-op, a finance position, and I believe through that, I ended up getting the job. [I’m] still waiting for my official offer but I have received the verbal offer from J and J. So it really gave me the confidence in myself to continue to just challenge myself and obviously, it worked out for the better so this competition really set me up specifically with J and J for coming up in July and then hopefully once I graduate.”

Newman said that the members of the winning team would have the “immediate opportunity to get an internship with Johnson and Johnson,” but would still need to go through the interview process. Newman also explained the impact of their accomplishment on the Rider community.

“I think it’s just a validation of what we say, which is the quality of our program and that our program can compete with anyone,” Newman said. “And our students can compete with anyone in terms of jobs, careers and because these were business students from schools and their decision making was right at the top. So in terms of impact, I think it just shows our current students as well as potential students, the quality of our program, another measure of that.”

# Caroline Palavicino-Maggio: The queen of the flies

By Xavier Byrd

**F**ROM her laboratory bench in the neurobiology department at Harvard Medical School, Caroline Palavicino-Maggio peered through the lens of a confocal microscope to view female fruit flies in action. Their paper-thin wings buzzed about while they challenged each other to the death during sword-like duels. These combats were an important element to Palavicino-Maggio's research: the study of aggression as it related to psychiatric disorders.

## Her academic journey

A graduate of Rider University's class of 2002, Palavicino-Maggio began her academic career as a biology and psychology major. She recalled her favorite professor was Todd Weber, who taught behavior neuropsychology. She liked Weber because she said he made behavior neuropsychology, a complex subject, interesting to his students.

Her favorite subject was neurobiology and abnormal psychology because "they were very cool. They talked about schizophrenia and other neurological disorders and it was a cool class."

Weber, a professor of biology and behavioral neuroscience just completed his 20th year at Rider and said that even though he "only got to work with Caroline in her final semester," he recalled that Palavicino-Maggio "was instrumental in helping set up my lab to study circadian biology (daily rhythms) in mice, which I'm still doing to this day."

As a first-generation Latina student, Palavicino-Maggio credits Rider as an essential pipeline to get to Harvard University.

"I look at Rider like the training wheels that I had to get to where I am now. It provided me with the proper study skills, habits [and] interpersonal relationships with my professors that developed there because it's a much smaller school," said Palavicino-Maggio.

She added, "Rider, because it's smaller, you get more one-to-one with your teachers and I was able to develop that early on."

Palavicino-Maggio also joined Delta Phi Epsilon, an on-campus sorority, and played on the tennis team during her freshman year but had to quit because, "I couldn't be a science major and do tennis," due to the simultaneous demands of practice and studying.

She said, "Student Support Services really helped me with my writing and with my time management, those study skills habits," which she always fell back on while writing her detailed lab reports and publishing

scholarship on her research findings.

## Studying the brain

After graduating from Rider, Palavicino-Maggio attended Rutgers Medical School for graduate school and majored in neuroscience. She explained that majoring in neuroscience at Rutgers was challenging, but it was similar to her studies at Rider. However, she explained that neuroscience was more centered on biology compared to psychology.

"Psychology is the theory, the concepts of what's happening but the biology, you can actually see the biology behind it and from a pharmacology view, how to treat diseases," said Palavicino-Maggio.

Weber elaborated, "Caroline has done some outstanding work with many of the top scientists in neuroscience."

Looking back at the time Weber has spent mentoring students like Palavicino-Maggio, he said, "I'm always very touched when students who have gone on to find meaningful, fulfilling careers realize the value of that prior endeavor and attribute some of their success to their experiences in my lab. That reinforcement from former students is what keeps me going when I'm feeling exhausted or when my patience runs thin and am considering throwing in the towel."

Currently, Palavicino-Maggio works as a research scientist who studies the fly brain, specifically fruit flies, known scientifically as *Drosophila*.

She said she looks at the fly brain because it's a much simpler model to use to research diseases, "The human brain is very complicated and you can't study humans, so we study a system like the fly brain because you're dealing with less amount of cells in an intact system. This allows you to ask huge questions in a small, controlled model system."

Palavicino-Maggio explained the reason why researching aggression in female fruit flies was important.

## Understanding aggression

"Aggression is ever-present across species," said Palavicino-Maggio. "You have aggression in fruit flies, as well as you have aggression in humans. Aggression is present in evolution because you need it to look for mates, you need aggression to look for shelter, you need aggression for protection and for finding food."

However, Palavicino-Maggio further explained that people who were diagnosed with psychiatric disorders like Intermittent Explosive Disorder, "they don't know when to turn aggression off or on." Furthermore,

Palavicino-Maggio stressed that aggression presented itself as, "explosive or violent," which were "pathological forms of aggression."

For these reasons, Palavicino-Maggio was interested in researching aggression, an emotion that's extremely present across all species; however, in humans, she was focused on understanding how it manifests and can turn into psychosis at inappropriate times.

Palavicino-Maggio said that scientifically, the appropriate times for aggression were trying to find food, shelter and mates, but with individuals who had psychological disorders, the line gets drawn between disease and normal aggression.

"People can't even hold relationships with those people because they're so aggressive or violent," said Palavicino-Maggio.

So essentially, how does behavior that's so normal in the animal world tend to become abnormal in humans? That is the question researchers like Palavicino-Maggio vigorously try to figure out.

As Palavicino-Maggio diligently worked to uncover these neurobiological disorders, she continued to be an inspiration to other minority students and researchers who have opted to pursue careers in academic research. In June 2021, Palavicino-Maggio will deliver the commencement speech at Ponce Health Sciences University in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Weber said, "She is keenly aware of the challenges of being a first-generation Latina woman in neuroscience. While science (and biology in particular) has begun to close the gaps in gender and for underrepresented groups in the laboratory, there is much progress yet to be made. I would like her to know that...she should be proud to be the role model she has become for Latinas in science."



Courtesy of Xavier Byrd

Palavicino-Maggio took a break from her fruit flies to explain the phenomenon that drove her research.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Earn your M.S. in Athletic Training at Seton Hall University

Learn cutting-edge techniques to prevent and treat injuries related to physical activities and sports.



- New Jersey's first CAATE accredited entry-level master's athletic training program
- 30+ clinical affiliates
- State-of-the-art learning facility

## Our comprehensive curriculum

includes ground-breaking research opportunities, hands-on clinical training experiences, high-fidelity simulation and standardized patient activities.



SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES  
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Still accepting applications for Summer 2021 semester. **To learn more, visit [www.shu.edu/AT](http://www.shu.edu/AT)**

## Westminster Choir College students face many struggles caused by COVID-19

By Ruhan Ye

**T**HE pandemic has dealt an overwhelming blow to the academics of Westminster Choir College (WCC) students. Unlike other subjects, music students needed to rely on the piano room and rehearsal hall for training and practicing. Although all courses have been transferred online, it was still far from the effect of in-person education, according to first-year piano pedagogy graduate student Jinyan Lin.

For those students who rely on pianos and other musical instruments, having complete equipment and venues was essential. At the same time, music was a subject that needed to be filled with emotion, which required a close connection between professors and students. Online education could merely achieve basic theoretical knowledge, which led WCC students to struggle in their academics.

Lin, who studies and performs at WCC, thought Zoom learning lost the practice and chorus parts of learning. Each student needed to take a chorus class and there were 98 people in Lin's chorus class. If Wi-Fi connection was poor, it would be extremely inconvenient for the online chorus. Lin said, "In the previous chorus through Zoom, the chorus assistant controlled the audio. Students with good timbre would be amplified, while students with poor timbre due to poor Wi-Fi conditions would be muted." This undoubtedly brought about unequal chorus training for students, she said.

Beyond that, the professors were also challenged. Those students who were muted during the chorus were still watched by the professor. At that moment, Lin pointed out, "The professor would focus on the mouth shape of each student on Zoom and imagine their voice at that time."

To have an equal opportunity for each student, the chorus was uploaded by recording as a video. The professor listened to each student's video and gave a score. This was a relatively complete way for each student to be trained, Lin explained.

Another drawback, however, was the lack of an audience. Lin stated, "It was incomplete for the chorus without audiences. We adjusted our emotions based on the reaction of the audience."

Cassandra Sutter, a sophomore piano major, commented that music was kind of touching, people need to be in music. The pandemic seemed to impair the resources and conditions of many music students, Sutter said.

As for the practice, it was another opportunity to build a connection with the professor. "In the piano performance, the professor would guide the piano performance skills and correct the problems of playing for each student. However, in-person classes might not achieve [that] now," Lin said.

Similarly, Sutter said, "The professor and we could not be in the classroom, so we were individuals learning. It was like a process of self-discovery and navigating."

Since last fall, when WCC moved to the Rider campus, which also brought a series of problems for academic resources to students. Lin said, "Compared with the Princeton campus, the Rider campus provides us with limited academic equipment and resources." The Rider campus was a brand-new environment that

the choir students needed to adapt to.

Lin described the confusion she experienced with academic resources and equipment at the Rider campus, saying, "There are very few piano rooms for us to use and the timbre of some pianos is inaccurate, which affects our performance score."

Lin also added, "Most piano rooms with good timbre would be locked on Fridays and weekends, which gave me a headache. When you could play very well but could not get the desired result due to external factors, it was a huge psychological contrast."

Limited resources greatly hindered students' academic achievements. Simultaneously, Lin claimed that, at times, "professors were also troubled, the professor did not want to affect the student's score, the only thing he could do is adjust it from the pitch."

Additionally, other resources were scarce at Rider's campus. Jinyan Lin is pictured practicing her such as the rehearsal hall. Lin said, "There was not a rehearsal music in the piano room. room large enough for 98 people. If we could have in-person classes in the spring, we still would not be able to find a suitable place. Perhaps we might have lessons on the lawn, but the lack of a fine sound control environment would affect our chorus."

Compared with the Princeton campus, the Lawrenceville campus has a larger area and more buildings, but still could not provide Westminster Choir College students with good equipment and venues.

Sutter said, "Rider campus had many resources but we don't know much about the Rider campus, especially during the pandemic, we lost communication with this new campus."

However, Lin said there were benefits to WCC moving to the Lawrenceville campus.

"Many students lived on campus and we could find partners," Lin said. "The partners could give suggestions to each other for their piano performance." This has brought benefits to their academics.

For classes during the pandemic, Lin and Sutter hoped to get support from academic resources.

"Open the piano room as much as possible, because, for those piano majors, practice was the most first significant task. I also hoped that our choir could get the audience to render the atmosphere for us, even if it was not possible in the short term," Lin said.

Sutter said, "The in-person class was not a great idea, but I hope to keep communicating with the professor."

The pandemic is still ongoing, but WCC students have gradually adapted after struggling with getting used to their new campus.



Courtesy of Jinyan Lin

## Renowned scholar and author highlights Black women in history

By Aaliyah Patel

**B**EVERLY Guy-Sheftall, a renowned scholar, author and founder of the Women's Research and Resource Center (WRRRC), alongside women studies professor Anna Julia Cooper from Spelman College, presented a virtual talk through an event titled "Unbought and Unbossed: The Fight for Black Women's Rights" on April 1 at 7 p.m.

Hosted by the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), the event served to highlight the significance of Black women activists and discuss how their successes



Courtesy of Pamela Pruitt

Beverly Guy-Sheftall educated the Rider community on the contributions made by Black women in history at an event on April 1.

have been undermined within the nation's history.

The talk through focused on Shirley Chisholm's autobiography "Unbought and Unbossed." Chisholm is remembered for her many firsts as an African American woman, such as being elected into Congress and seeking a presidential nomination from two major political parties in which she used to run for the presidency in 1972. Her legacy was used to divert into the extensive conversations held throughout the evening.

Guy-Sheftall described how seeking equal representation is a lifelong journey, something that inspires her to continue to do this line of work.

"We have struggled for political representation, universal healthcare, nuclear disarmament, reproductive justice, welfare reform and the eradication of poverty," Guy-Sheftall said. "Our resistance to a wide ray of injustices occurs within very different organizational contexts."

The conversation also alluded to topics such as the women's rights movement, the civil rights movement and the roles Black women have had throughout history.

Dana Walcott, a senior sociology and criminal justice major and president of the Black Student Union (BSU), expressed gratitude during her role in the facilitation of the event.

"I wanted to say thank you a million times for everything you have shared with us tonight. I know I learned a lot, so I know that everyone here can say that they learned so much and we're about to learn even more with the resources you have given us," Walcott stated.

There were resources given to students that promote effective forms of activism and allyship within communities.

Guy-Sheftall encourages young people to take responsibility in learning Black history as it helps develop a collective community.

"Most of what I know about Black women activist or Black feminist politics, I learned on my own by reading. So one of the things that I would say to young people in the audience is developing good reading habits is one of the best things you can do for your intellectual and political growth," Guy-Sheftall said.

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month event addresses rise in hate crimes

By Sarah Siock

**T**o kick off Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, students gave a virtual presentation on April 2 that brought awareness to the recent rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, while describing the history and struggles of Asian immigrants in the United States.

This year's Asian Pacific American Heritage Month will feature five events that fall under the theme, "United We Are: Combating Hate and Fear." The first event of the month was an informational presentation given by Asian Students at Rider (ASAR) titled, "History of the term Asian American." The presentation covered a wide range of topics from the history of different groups of Asian Americans to steps individuals can take to combat anti-Asian violence.

The presenters drew attention to the long history of hate crimes against Asians in the United States by sharing stories of Asian Americans who lost their lives to violence. The presentation focused on the murder of a Chinese-American man named Vincent Chin, who was beaten to death by two white autoworkers in Detroit, Michigan, in 1982.

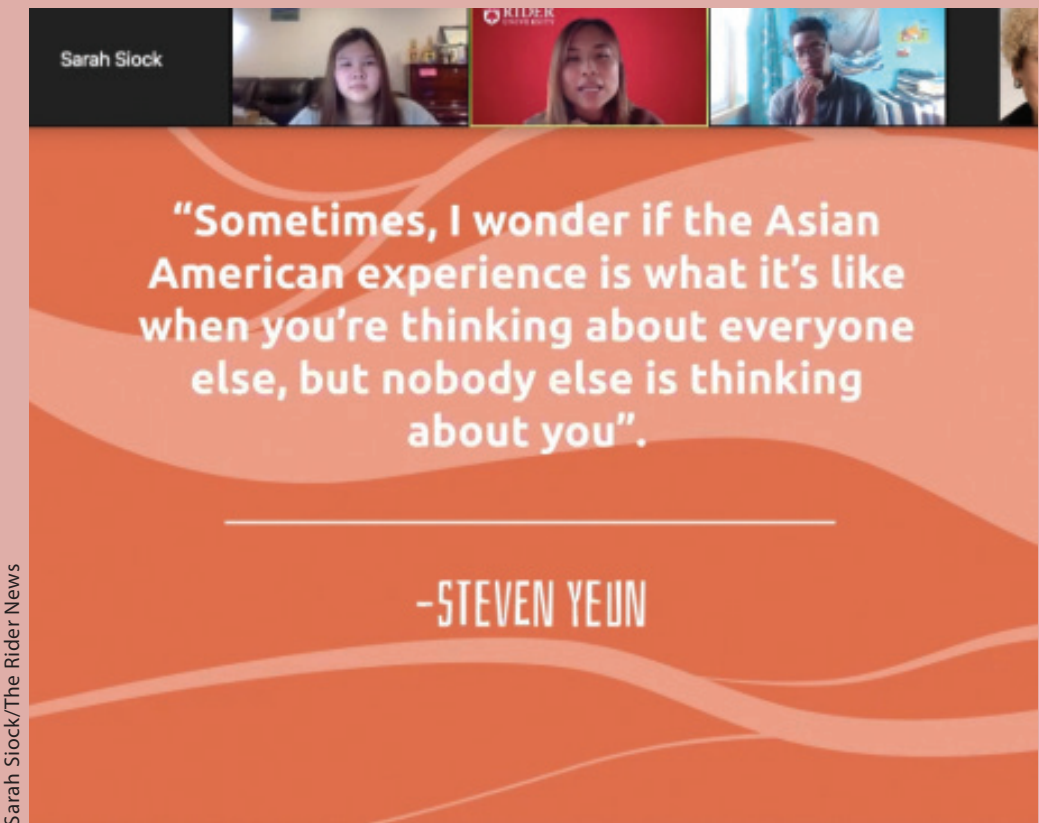
"Chin's death brought Asian Americans together across ethnic lines to form multi-ethnic and multiracial alliances to organize for civil rights, and to advocate for change. The nature of the killing compelled people to see what there was in common, so whether people want to feel like there was anything in common or not, they cannot deny that if they looked that way they can be killed, whether they were Japanese, ethnically or not," said sophomore early education major Melanic Tsai, who served as a presenter at the event and is ASAR's president.

The presenters stressed the importance of this year's Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, as hate crimes that target Asian Americans rose nearly 150% in 2020.

"Change can only happen through understanding — understanding where the anger and sadness from the Asian community right now derive from. By attending these events and learning about the Asian American and Asian struggles often hidden from the light, Rider students can learn how to become better allies," said Nicole Chen, sophomore biology major, and ASAR's public relations representative.

The long history of Asian Americans in the United States has come with many misconceptions. The presenters debunked some of these stereotypes by describing the model minority myth. This myth states that Asian Americans are more successful than other ethnic minorities because of hard work, education and inherently law-abiding natures. However, during the presentation, Chen said that in reality, Asian Americans experience the largest income inequality gap as an ethnic and racial group in the United States. She added that Asian immigrants have the highest poverty rates in New York City.

"It is important for all Rider students to attend these events during Asian Pacific



Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Asian Students at Rider (ASAR) ends their presentation with a quote from Asian American actor Steven Yeun.

Heritage Month as it breaks down barriers and misconceptions that someone may carry. The more versed someone becomes when attending events such as these, the better someone can support the Asian American community," said Dion Moore, junior cybersecurity major and ASAR secretary.

The ASAR members concluded the presentation with ways to fight Asian hate, which included self-education, reporting hate crimes if you see one occur and spreading awareness.

Chen said, "I know a lot of people at first did not even know that Asians are a racially targeted group, but with people sharing on their Instagram stories about all the hate crimes, it looks like people are starting to take notice."

## Former coach and current ESPN anchor Seth Greenberg makes virtual appearance

By Luke Lombardi

**B**ASKETBALL is a hot topic during March and Rider students got a chance to speak with a significant figure within the sport. Former college basketball coach and current ESPN anchor Seth Greenberg virtually spoke on March 31 about his coaching career, the broadcasting industry and his thoughts on this year's NCAA Tournament.

The event was presented by the Student Entertainment Council and was held as the tournament came to a close — Greenberg covered the tournament for ESPN.

Greenberg began the event by talking about how he started his career in basketball coaching and later described his transition into broadcasting.

"It's a crazy thing, I had an agent, never had a coaching agent, I had a media agent that just babbled and did some stuff during the tournament for CSTV, which now turned into CBS College Sports," Greenberg said. "All of a sudden, that year I got let go, someone from ESPN reached out and said 'Would Seth be interested in coming up and spending six or seven days at the start of the tournament and do our early tournament coverage?' He came to me and said 'Do you want to go to Bristol for a week and just talk ball.'"

One person in attendance was Rider women's basketball Head Coach Lynn Milligan.

"Obviously, you see him on ESPN all the time and I'm a fan of his, but I was a fan of his before ESPN," Milligan said of attending the event. "I just thought he was a great coach. For me, anytime I get a chance to listen to a great coach, I'm all in."

Milligan spoke about the connection she felt to Greenberg as a fellow coach. "I think a lot of it is an affirmation, like, 'OK, we do that,'" Milligan said. "I like to listen to coaches and say 'What are they doing or what did they do, and am I — or is my staff — and my program — doing some of the things that some of the greats talk about?'"

Milligan also related Greenberg's talking points about this year's UCLA men's basketball team to the semifinal run her own team made in this year's Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference tournament.

"When he was talking about the other teams, you get the insight to UCLA who had a part of their season where they really struggled and were able to turn it around and do really well and here they are in the Final Four. Correlating that to us, we struggled early. Our team stuck together and stuck with us and we ended up having a better run late," said Milligan.

One piece of advice Greenberg stressed was being cautious when using social media. He said that while social media can do many good things, today is a time when one bad decision could destroy a career due to everything being etched on the internet forever.

When talking about commentary versus working in the studio, Greenberg sided with

working in the studio.

"First of all, no one sees you, they just hear you during games. There are 8,000 games. You opine on everything that happens in the sport when you're in the studio," said Greenberg. "You become the voice of the sport when you are in the studio. You become the voice of the game when you're doing that game. The studio is actually much more powerful in terms of your messaging and your voice."

For the rest of the event, Greenberg went over the events of the March Madness tournament from this year. He touched on UCLA going from the First Four to the Final Four, Gonzaga possibly being the first undefeated team in a season since the 1970s, Oral Roberts upsetting Ohio State and Baylor having a shot at winning the title.



Courtesy of the Student Entertainment Center

ESPN anchor Seth Greenberg shared his journey in the broadcasting industry with Rider students.

# Team Vaccine? My updated opinion

**//** "THAT was it?"

That is what I asked the nurse who was administering the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine into my left arm. I don't know why I chose that arm to use, maybe because I am right-handed. I'm not scared of needles, but I did recall the soreness after receiving previous shots, unlike my younger sister who goes limp at the thought of a needle. My sister was kind enough to take the ride with me to the high school where the vaccination site was located. She knew I was anxious. My appointment was at 3:15 p.m., but because my sister's was at 4:00 p.m. she had to stay in the car.

It was a Wednesday and it was raining, a scene set perfectly for a sci-fi thriller about a DNA-mutating vaccine that tracks my every move, confusing my weekly headaches and seasonal allergies with side effects. My outrageous paranoia ironically calmed my nerves from the actual possible effects that can come from the shot.

About a month ago, I wrote an article about my apprehension about receiving the vaccination when everything was still unknown with COVID-19 itself. In all honesty, during the height of quarantine, I was plugged into so many news outlets and social media applications that I did not know if what I was ingesting was factual or not. Although I am a huge advocate for social media journalism for its raw and uncut citizen reporting, I am not naive to the element of falsehoods that comes from journalism without any morals or rules. I had my doubts about receiving the vaccine, then I thought about it.

After I handed my sister the keys to my car to wait for me to finish, I hopped in line. Even with an appointment, I had to wait and wait some more. The staff was friendly. I figured because most of the people there were senior citizens, perhaps that explained the wait. There was a line to sign in where I showed them my survey number and photo identification. Then I waited some more. If you came with more than one person, you all got your shot at the same time. As I waited to get called, I looked around and noticed I was one of the youngest people there as the sound of walkers and canes scraped the gym floor.

It seemed like half of the city of Plainfield was in there, people greeting one another, some probably going all of 2020 without a single 'hello.' The auditorium smelled like every public school gym I have been in — I missed it. It made me think about my childhood growing up in the same city and the number of shots I got just to attend school and play sports. Was that trust in medicine or just the trust in my parents that they were making the best choice for me? It seemed I was back in that same spot. My mother was adamant about us receiving the vaccine because of our elderly relatives and my cousin is trying to have a baby, and my mom wants all of us to be present for that. After I thought about it, I wanted to be

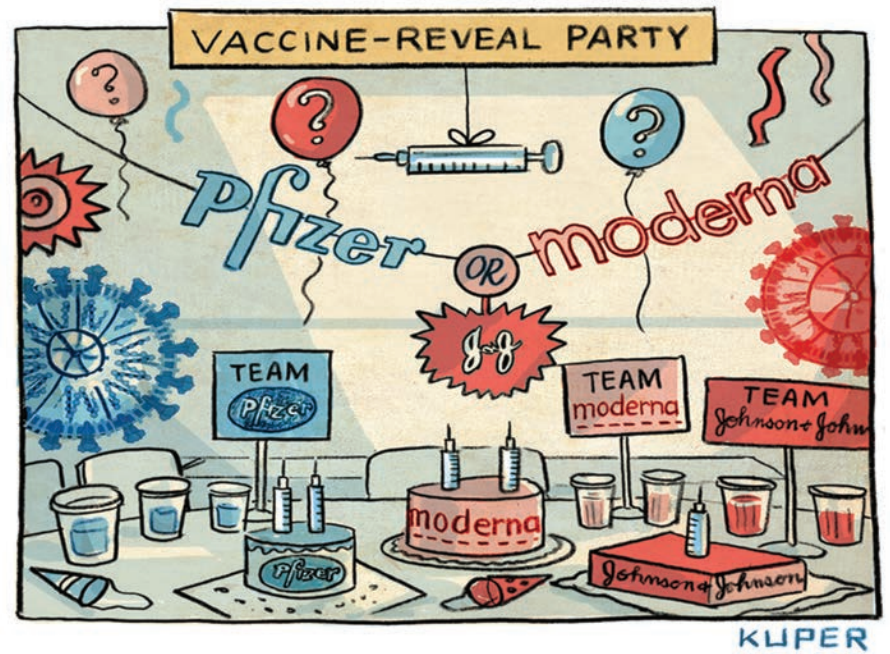
present too — not only in other people's lives, but my own. This year has the potential to be one of my (and others I'm sure) most memorable years yet, and well-deserved given the circumstances.

I want to address the tug-of-war discourse that is taking place on social media and in news stations about the efficiency of the vaccine. My only comment to this debate is that not everyone will be happy. There will be those who will feel obligated to take it, like the senior citizens, health care workers, teachers, parents and those that are around the at-risk population. Then there are the WebMD doctors and those who simply do not believe in the healing properties coming from an injection. I respect opinions, that is my job. But, I do not respect willful ignorance and the spreading of misinformation knowingly.

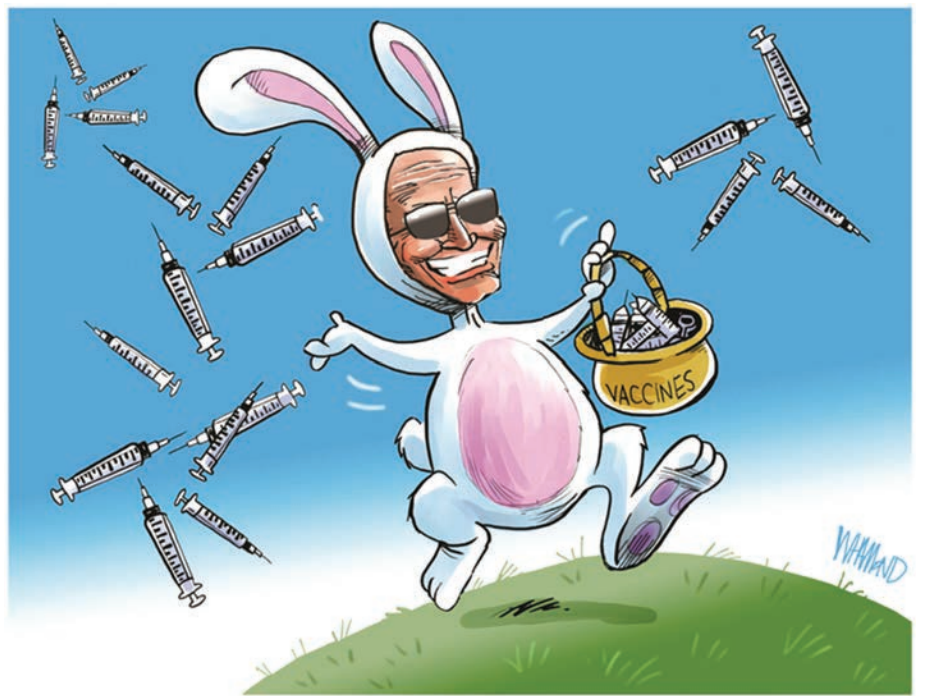
I do not respect "anti-maskers" who feel like their rights are being violated and do not take precautions to protect themselves or others. We were to stay in the house to slow the spread and we couldn't even do that. And here we are, approximately 19% of the nation's population vaccinated, according to Becker's Hospital Review.

Remain optimistic and wear your mask(s).

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

Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons

## THE Rider News

Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

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

**Executive Editor**

Stephen Neukam

**Managing Editor**

Austin Boland-Ferguson

**News Editors**

Tatyanna Carman

Hailey Hensley

**Features and Arts & Entertainment Editors**

Christian McCarville

Sarah Siock

**Opinion Editor**

Qur'an Hansford

**Sports Editors**

Dylan Manfre

Shaun Chornobroff

**Photography Editor**

Carolo Pascale

**Design Manager**

Arianna Marino

**Video Editor**

Tiffany Hartman

Gerard Blandina

Ben Ross

**Copy Editors**

Jenna Dean

Emily Kim

Cristalia Turck

Nicoletta Feldman

Tori Pender

**Business/Advertising Manager**

Danielle Jackson

**Circulation Managers**

Karagh Tait

Jordan Wilson

**Social Media Editors**

Gerard Blandina

Juliette Eddings

Brenna Edwards

**Faculty Adviser**

Dr. Jackie Incollingo

The Rider News serves as a public forum for student expression and welcomes letters to the editor from all members of the university community. Letters must include the writer's telephone number and email address for verification. Letters that constitute personal attacks on individuals or groups are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters to the editor for length, clarity, accuracy, grammar and libel. Letters must be appropriate in terms of taste and civility. Brevity is encouraged. All decisions are at the sole discretion of the editorial board, which may reject any letter. Send to The Rider News via email at [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu). Letters must be received by midnight on the Monday preceding publication. Any tips or suggestions can be sent to [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu).

 @theridernews

 [www.theridernews.com](http://www.theridernews.com)

 @theridernews

 [facebook.com/theridernews](https://facebook.com/theridernews)

 [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu)

# Christian conservatism vs. self-expression: What is true censorship?

**R**ECENT conversations surrounding pop culture and media have made it increasingly clear that many people don't actually understand what censorship is. Unless you've been living under a rock, I'm sure you've seen the amount of backlash artists like Lil Nas X and Cardi B are getting for sexually explicit songs and videos like "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" and "WAP" respectively. The conservatives blaming the plight of society on artists' freedom of expression ironically often reside in the same camp of people who think basic human decency and accountability is censorship, but we will circle back to this point later.

Now before I begin, I would like to preface this pointed interpretation of Christian criticism by saying that the following issue lies not in Christianity in its entirety, rather the specific intersections of people that rely on conservative hypocrisy in their arguments to enforce certain Christian standards in scopes that lie outside the church.

Lil Nas X's new music video for "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" received as much backlash as you would expect from highly conservative, Christian crowds. The song and music video feature queer eroticism around every corner, and it is no surprise that Lil Nas X received criticism based in homophobia.

Many conservative Christians have called for the video to be canceled or accused Lil Nas X of corrupting children or disrespecting Christianity, but at what point will we stop operating on the notion that every facet of self-expression or media has to follow Christian or conservative ideals? There is a stark difference between actual religious disrespect and artistry — especially when that artistry is relying heavily on the personal expression of religious trauma and embracing the ways in which churches have villainized queer people for ages.

Lil Nas X wrote in a tweet responding to the heat his video has received, "I spent my entire teenage years hating myself because of the s--- y'all preached would happen to me because I was gay. So I hope you are mad, stay mad, feel the same anger you teach us to have towards ourselves."

Not everyone agrees with Christianity, and if we are going to have a conversation surrounding how the video for "Montero," in which Lil Nas X is seen giving a lap dance to Satan, could be perceived as offensive or going against Christian ideals, then we need also to discuss the centuries of oppression and abuse faced by the black and queer communities by some denominations of Christianity.

Many people have accused artists like Lil Nas X and Cardi B, who received similar backlash for embracing her sexuality in "WAP," of corrupting today's youths or setting a bad example to children, to which Lil Nas X tweeted, "I am an adult. I am not gonna spend my entire career trying to cater to your children.

that is your job." Celebrities are not responsible for raising your children.

Ironically, the majority of people chastising the music industry for this type of artistry are the same keyboard warriors who took over Facebook in March to contest the pulling of six Dr. Seuss titles over racist and insensitive imagery and content, calling the conscious choice made by Seuss's trust and publishers 'censorship.'

The cognitive dissonance it takes to look at a publishing company consciously choosing to listen to consumers and hold themselves accountable for past publications that feature racial caricatures and harmful stereotypes and call it censorship, just to then turn around and demand that a song or video be taken off of the internet, not because it harms a marginalized group of people but just because someone personally doesn't like it, absolutely baffles me. Accountability is not censorship.

Biblical distortion and satanic imagery are prevalent throughout our society's popular culture, and celebrities utilizing this type of imagery in their expression have been at the receiving end of backlash for years, take for example Madonna's 1989 "Like a Prayer" music video which was condemned by the Vatican and labeled blasphemous for it featuring religious imagery and burning crosses.

In the case of "WAP," songs about sex aren't anything new — seriously, have you heard music from the '60s and '70s? I would dare to say, however, that in the cases of artists like Cardi B and Lil Nas X, criticism increases tenfold when songs about sex are being sung with agency by a woman, and a woman of color especially, or songs rightfully criticizing the harm inflicted by Christianity are sung by a Black, gay man.

Allow me to be clear in my message — everyone is warranted to dislike certain media or artists, but when that dislike is rooted partially in homophobia, misogyny, racism, etc. and then paired with the idea that everyone else should feel the same way, the validity of that argument is threatened. I reiterate: There is a stark difference between holding people and companies accountable for actively harming marginalized groups of people and boycotting the internet because you don't like a song or music video.

*Kate McCormick  
freshman English major*

ADVERTISEMENT

**Summer Sessions**

**EXPLORE. GET AHEAD. CATCH UP.**

**RIDER UNIVERSITY**

**RIDER.EDU/SUMMER**



ADVERTISEMENT



RIDER UNIVERSITY  
College of Liberal Arts  
and Sciences

CENTER FOR  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  

---

Unity + Diversity = University

THE CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY PRESENT:

# FREEDOM ON TRIAL:



## CONFRONTING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE FROM APARTHEID TO GEORGE FLOYD

As the trial for George Floyd’s murder begins this month, please join The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and the Department of History and Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, on Monday, April 12 at 7 p.m., for a conversation on the place of civil disobedience in the ongoing effort for freedom, justice, and equality.

In reviewing the film, *The State Against Mandela and the Others*, which will be shown on Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m., we will unpack the strategies and uses of civil disobedience to create change in unjust societies. It is strongly recommended that you watch the documentary, which will be complimentary on the given date or accessible at cost through streaming services, prior to the open discussion.



Dr. Nicholas McLeod is an assistant professor of History in the Department of History and Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He teaches courses on Modern African History, Black Atlantic Political Thought, and African American History. His research focuses on Black intellectuals, Pan-Africanism, and the international nature of twentieth century Black liberation movements.

**The State Against Mandela & the Others**  
(FREE viewing of the documentary that precedes  
the open discussion on April 12)

**THURSDAY, MARCH 25 | 6:30 P.M.**

Register in advance: [rider.edu/mandela](http://rider.edu/mandela)

Free and available only on this date at this time. (Join us for the fourth film of the virtual 2021 Tournees Film Festival at Rider University. Thanks to the support of the Tournees, Rider University Libraries, Rider University’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Rider’s Languages, Literatures & Cultures, Rider’s Department of Film & Television, Rider’s Gender & Sexuality Studies, & the Mercer County Library.)

**FREEDOM ON TRIAL: Confronting Civil  
Disobedience from Apartheid to George Floyd**  
(an open discussion)

**MONDAY, APRIL 12 | 7 P.M.**

Register in advance: [rider.edu/freedom-on-trial](http://rider.edu/freedom-on-trial)

## BASEBALL

# Rider takes three of four in first road series

By Shaun Chornobroff

FOR two straight days, the baseball team made the nearly two-hour trip from Lawrenceville, New Jersey, to Riverdale, New York. It was a successful trip as the Broncos won three of four games against the Manhattan Jaspers and improved to 9-3 on the season.

## April 2 doubleheader

Victory seems to be automatic for the Broncos in 2021 as long as Pete Soporowski is on the mound. The left-hander stayed undefeated in his senior season, pitching a seven-inning complete-game in a 10-2 victory for Rider to open up the series.

One of the two runs Soporowski allowed was earned, giving him a jaw-droppingly dominant 0.82 ERA, which is good for seventh in the nation and third in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) as of April 6.

“His first two innings he wasn’t as sharp ... It took him a while to get adjusted on the mound,” Head Coach Barry Davis said. “Third, fourth inning he kind of got into a groove and started throwing the ball with some velocity and hitting the spots a little better.”

Junior infielder David Bermudez had a career game for the Broncos, going 4-for-5 from the plate and contributing four RBIs, and hit one of Rider’s two home runs in the game.

Bermudez was one of the catalysts of an offensive outburst in the sixth inning that ballooned Rider’s lead from 4-1, to 10-1.

The Broncos followed up an amazing game one, with a disappointing 8-1 loss that Davis probably wished was a late April Fools’ Day prank.

When Davis was asked about what went wrong, he let out a slight chuckle and said, “you name it.”

Rider deployed four pitchers in the game and only one did not give up a run, with two of the four giving up three or more runs and another giving up a run before being removed in less than an inning.

Even in their worst performance of the 2021 season, the Broncos had chances to claw back into the game, but to their agony, they didn’t take advantage.

“It just was a day, we just didn’t play well at all, we made a baserunning mistake down four runs, that cannot happen,” Davis said bluntly. “We had bases loaded three innings in a row and we didn’t get a run... as bad as we played, we still had opportunities to score runs.”

## April 3 doubleheader

On their second day in New York, everything



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Graduate student outfielder **Sean McGeehan** hit two home runs over the weekend.

clicked for the Broncos with them taking both contests.

The Broncos opened up their Saturday with a resounding 6-1 victory, led with a strong start by junior pitcher Frank Doelling.

The junior was his usual, dominant self, pitching seven strong innings and striking out six batters, rebounding nicely from a poor start the week before, only allowing one run and striking out six batters in seven innings of work.

“Every pitcher is going to have outings that they don’t have their best stuff and struggle, it’s a part of pitching,” Doelling explained. “I just needed to learn from it and have a short memory and trust myself to bounce back for the team and for myself and I felt like I did that.”

Rider was held scoreless through three innings, but sophomore infielder Justin Winsett sparked a four-run fourth inning with a two-run single before the Broncos scored two more runs in the next inning.

After two innings of their final game of the series, the Broncos found themselves trailing 3-1, but Rider found its groove, going on an offensive outburst and boarding a bus back to Lawrenceville with a 9-3 victory.

Rider scored three runs in the third inning to gain the lead before a home run from sophomore first

baseman Luke Lesch knocked a two-run home run to give the Broncos a 6-3 lead.

Rider scored another run in the fourth inning to give itself a 7-3 lead before Sean McGeehan wrapped up an uber-productive weekend with a two-run home run in the seventh inning.

The graduate student center fielder, who is in his first season at Rider, thrashed the Jaspers all four games, hitting two home runs, five RBIs and crossing home plate four times himself in the series.

The lopsided scoreline comes not only from strong hitting, but a strong performance from the bullpen. Senior Sebastian Williamson led a trio of pitchers, who threw seven shutout innings of relief in the win.

“Sebastian’s performance was outstanding... Colin Eisner was able to enter and get the lefty pinch hitter out in a clutch situation in the seventh and Cal Stalzer... entering with bases loaded and two out in the eighth to get a big strikeout,” Davis said proudly. “Zero runs for the better part of the game is a tremendous effort.”

Rider faces arguably its toughest challenge of the season on April 7 when it face the 11-1 Monmouth Hawks in a doubleheader on the road.

## FIELD HOCKEY

# Broncs win revenge game against Fairfield

By Carolo Pascale

IN one of the most anticipated games of the regular season, the field hockey team posted its third shutout in a row with a 1-0 victory over Fairfield University on April 1.

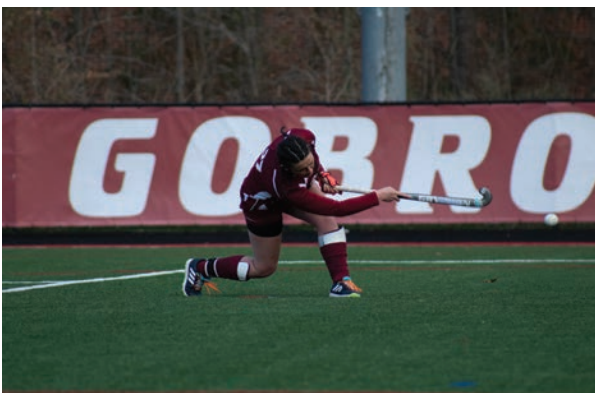
The game was circled on Rider’s calendar because it was the first game Rider had against the Stags, since losing to them in overtime in the 2019 Northeast Conference (NEC) final.

This time, things went differently for the Broncos as they finished as the victors, winning after a penalty corner goal scored by senior midfielder Kaitlyn Flemming in the third period.

“Scoring any goal in a conference game is exciting because they mean so much. It’s a little nerve-racking every thought going through your mind,” said Flemming. “But it was really just centering myself in taking a deep breath and executing what I’ve practiced.”

This was Flemming’s first goal of the season. She scored five goals in 2019 and has 14 in her career.

“We huddled up, we were excited, but it was right to the point of don’t let down, don’t do anything that could cost the game, stay with each other, stay true to each other and keep communicating. And it was more thinking about how we can score another one to secure it and not really worrying about what just



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

**Kaitlyn Flemming** scored Rider’s game-winning goal against Fairfield in the second period.

happened,” Flemming said.

Besides the goal, Rider put five more shots on net with a lot of possession time in Fairfield’s half.

The Broncos only allowed two shots to get through to sophomore goalkeeper Kaitlyn Tomas — she stopped both and has yet to give up a goal this season.

“My defense has been so strong, and I honestly don’t think I’ve played with the team with defenders so strong,” said sophomore goalkeeper Kaitlyn Tomas about what’s been leading to her and the team’s success. “They come up with these big plays that honestly save us from potentially getting a goal scored on us and we are just really confident.”

Tomas also faced seven corners in this game, along with five in a 1-0 win against Long Island University on March 18.

“I think our defense did a great job at defending the corners. We’re pretty confident in our skills. Every time we get in the corner we always remind each other, you got this, just the simple things,” Tomas said.

The game was a defensive battle, as each team’s shot totals stayed under 10, Rider with nine total and Fairfield with four total.

Head Coach Lori Hussong echoed how good the defense has been for Rider this year, as the team hasn’t given up any goals this season.

“They’ve just been so tough. Our backline, it’s a very veteran backline, and our goalkeepers are playing really well,” a complimentary Hussong said.

Rider has now played the three games needed to qualify for the NEC Championship game, which was set for this season only due to COVID-19.

“Thank goodness, everyone has been doing their job of staying safe and doing everything they can,” said Tomas. “So even though it’s a relief, we’re still not done yet. I think we all have that mentality.”

With a 3-0 record, Rider will face the 2-2 Wagner Seahawks in another highly-anticipated game for the Broncos on April 8.

# Sports

ONLINE

**MEN'S SOCCER**  
Sports Editor Shaun Chornobroff recapped the men's soccer team's 2OT draw vs. Fairfield.

FIND THE STORY AT THERIDERNEWS.COM

VOLLEYBALL

## Rider wins first MAAC title



Carlisle Stockton/Stockton Photo

Rider volleyball qualified for the NCAA Tournament after defeating Canisius in the final of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Tournament on April 13.

By Dylan Manfre

It came, it saw and it conquered.

If there was one word to describe the match, Head Coach Jeff Rotondo said the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) championship game was “exhilarating.”

After four incredibly intense sets, two of which went deeper than 25 points, the volleyball team made history winning its first MAAC title in program history, defeating Canisius 3-1 on April 3.

The win came under the strangest set of circumstances, given how the coronavirus pandemic altered the season.

With the teams heading into a tie at 24, Canisius' Ella Loussia served the ball straight into the net, sending the match point to Rider. The championship was then decided on a challenge of all things as if the season was not unimaginable enough.

Junior outside hitter Jillian Chan had one of her two aces of the day, but Canisius saw something else.

Canisius had two options to challenge. One; whether or not Chan's foot crossed the service line before she hit the ball or two; if senior outside Ali Ward committed a net violation, neither of which second-year head coach Jeff Rotondo said there was credible evidence for a case.

“It wouldn't have mattered because Ali didn't touch the ball anyway,” Rotondo said. “We just had to wait for the challenge before we could celebrate but I think [Chan] was safe by an inch or two, it was close, but she was definitely not over the line.”

The official pointed in Rider's direction and the Broncs became champions after a valiant four-set effort.

Sophomore opposite hitter Morgan Romano showed the rest of the league why she is one of the MAAC's most dangerous hitters in the match. The reigning

Rookie of the Year finished with 24 kills and Canisius simply could not answer to a spike of such voracity. Rotondo even said that during a match against Siena, one of Romano's spikes struck a Siena player in her shoulder and she had to get checked out by the trainer.

“It's extremely hard [to defend] because it gets you so fast,” Rotondo said. “It almost hits you like a medicine ball, but it's really hard to control.”

Something that Rotondo, the meticulous preparer, could not anticipate for in his scouting was running out of substitutions. He was forced to put some of his shortest players in, including defensive specialists sophomore Pamela Loh (5-foot-3) and sophomore Alicia Iafrate (5-foot-7), on the front line, an unconventional move that he could not have foreseen

“It was really about focusing on ‘Hey, let's get the ball to this kid on the serve,’” Rotondo said. “And hopefully they're in a bad position. The weird thing is, we see that in practice, both Pam and Alicia can actually hit the ball, they're just not going to give you much on the block.”

Junior setter Anilee Sher, who will play on the Israeli senior national team this summer, was named MAAC Championship MVP for her efforts. She had a whopping 58 assists, 15 digs and six service aces.

“It was awesome,” Sher said. “I would give that award to my team because I can't do what I do or put up the numbers that I do without them.”

### How did Rider get here?

It started on March 31 when 11-time MAAC champion, Fairfield, withdrew from the tournament because of a positive COVID-19 test within its program, thus allowing no. 8 Siena to advance to the semifinals and meet Rider.

The Broncs swept Manhattan and looked like a team poised for a deep tournament run winning the

sets 25-22, 25-21 and 25-14. Then came Siena which put some real pressure on Rider, especially in the second set.

For being the only team the Broncs did not face in the regular season, extensive preparation needed to be done. Rotondo said he stayed up until 12:30 a.m. meticulously scouting the Saints for their weaknesses.

Rider ran its offense through sophomore middle hitter Morgan Koch, who had her best match of the tournament, finishing with 11 kills on 19 attempts. She agreed that the second set in the match gave the Broncs the most trouble.

“We were just making more errors,” Koch said. “If you look at the numbers, they were just hitting cleaner. The shots we were going for — we were going for more things, so missing wide or missing by a few inches — so just the fact we were still aggressive but ... we weren't getting those balls in like we had been in the first set.”

### NCAA Tournament

Opportunities like these are why Rotondo coaches. “Knowing what they've gone through the last eight months to try that to be in this position and have that opportunity. It was just a lot of joy and euphoria,” Rotondo said on the win.

“I guess, you know, stuff like that. It was just a lot of fun to watch to watch them celebrate.”

Rider will face UCLA in the first round of the NCAA tournament on April 14 at 10:30 p.m. UCLA finished its season 14-6 in the PAC-12. The Bruins are no. 17 ranked team in the country and do not have a first-round bye. They are also one of five Pac-12 teams in the postseason.

### PHOTO GALLERY

Check out a field hockey photo gallery online from its game against Fairfield.

FIND THE GALLERIES ON THERIDERNEWS.COM

### TRN SPORTS SOCIAL

Follow our reporters on Twitter for sports specific content and updates throughout the season.

FOLLOW US @SPORTS\_TRN

### PLAYOFF BOUND

The women's soccer team is gearing up for a postseason run after its recent games against Manhattan and Saint Peter's.

FIND THE STORY AT THERIDERNEWS.COM