



Senator Booker addresses Newark water crisis in the wake of upcoming legislation

By Hailey Hensley and Shaun Chornobroff

U.S. Sen. Cory Booker touched on a number of local and nationwide talking points in an occasionally comedic, yet serious discussion with students, faculty and alumni when he spoke to a virtual audience of more than 150 people at a March 30 Rebovich Institute event.

Booker opened the event with a number of jokes, followed by a passionate message about the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation's resiliency.

"A lot of people not only have lost loved ones but also have lost their livelihoods. Our economy is still hurting. There are still many people in our state across this nation, who are deeply food insecure. And it's times like this in the darkness of the challenges that I've always seen the best of New Jersey," Booker said.

Booker, a Democrat and the first-ever Black senator to represent New Jersey, opened up on the attacks on the Capitol on Jan. 6 and the emotions that flowed through him on the historic day.

"I think this is one of the more shameful moments in American history that I was alive to watch...it was deeply hurtful to me. I still remember escaping off the Senate floor with some of my colleagues and seeing the indignity of watching the world's most deliberative body, the American seat of power, forced to flee," he said.

Booker came to prevalence within the political landscape in 2006 when he was elected as the mayor of Newark and gave a passionate answer when questioned about lead polluting the city's water.

"This is something that this country could decide to do something about, but we haven't shown that the moral will to make them invest the money in America, to make sure no town, no school, no home has lead service pipes, that you can remove them all for a very finite number," he said.

The first question the senator was asked was about a controversial bill passed in Georgia that has been criticized for limiting citizen



Courtesy of The Rebovich Institute of New Jersey

Booker went over issues relevant to New Jersey residents, such as the Newark water crisis and voting rights.

COVID - 19 Counter

Confirmed Cases
Last updated: Mar. 30, 2021

113

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

ON CAMPUS STUDENT TESTING

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
Week 13	6	116
Week 12	19	230
Week 11	16	208
Week 10	15	143
Week 9	13	329
Week 8	20	271
Total	112	3300

COVID - 19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
March 2021	63	4
February 2021	27	1

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

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:

Eight students quarantining on campus
25 students quarantining off campus

Princeton campus remains unsold a year after two lawsuit dismissals

By Sarah Siock

OVER a year after the New Jersey Superior Court granted Rider's motion to dismiss two lawsuits that challenged the university's decision to move Westminster Choir College (WCC) to the Lawrenceville campus, WCC's Princeton campus remains unsold while students and alumni work to appeal the court's ruling.

The lawsuits, one comprised of faculty, alumni and donors to the college and the other filed by current students, sought to block the relocation of WCC. Both suits were dismissed in March 2020 and an attorney from the Westminster Foundation, which is a group made up of alumni and faculty working to stop the sale or movement of the school, filed the appeals on behalf of the alumni and student plaintiffs in October 2020.

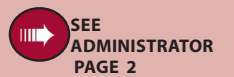
"My only comment on the court's decision is that we do not agree with it. The lawsuits will remain in place and we will continue to rigorously pursue all legal options available to us," said Constance Fee, president of the Westminster Foundation.

Fee said the foundation delivered all requested documents to the appeals court and is now awaiting a court date for oral arguments to be heard.

Rider's Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel Mark Solomon said the university believes the court made the "correct decision" to dismiss the lawsuits. However, Rider still faces a pending lawsuit that was filed by the Princeton Theological Seminary, stating it has beneficiary rights to the Princeton campus.

Solomon disputed this claim and said, "We believe the Seminary's claims, made 27 years after it signed a contract which it now seeks to violate, are without merit. Having declined in 1991 to become responsible for WCC when WCC was on the verge of closure, the Seminary transferred its interest in the property to allow WCC to merge with Rider, with Rider assuming the costs of operating WCC. Rider has fulfilled all its obligations as part of the transaction, the Seminary has not."

While the lawsuits continue in court, the Princeton campus remains empty without a buyer, according to Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo.



Rider hesitant to mandate vaccine after Rutgers faces legal pushback

By Austin Ferguson and Stephen Neukam

RIDER does not plan to mandate that students, staff and faculty receive the COVID-19 vaccine to be on campus next fall, said school administrators, a week after Rutgers University announced its plan to require shots for its community.

The Rutgers decision was met with criticism from various angles, the consequence of being one of the first universities to decide on vaccine enforcement. The move has faced political scrutiny so far, with a state GOP lawmaker planning to introduce a bill to prevent

Rutgers' plan. Gov. Phil Murphy signaled support for the school's initiative.

Rider Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla said that it was unlikely that the university would change course in the future but said she was watching the Rutgers case closely.

"It's unlikely that we would mandate the vaccine," said Stasolla. "I'll be curious to see what happens with the Rutgers case because I think there are some questions about



INSIDE STARTING FAST

Softball has best MAAC start in program history.

PAGE 11



NOT THIS AGAIN

Only four months into 2021 and over 100 mass shootings have occurred.

PAGE 9

SHOWCASE SATURDAY

Students show off their talents in a unique hybrid event presented by the Student Entertainment Council.

PAGE 6



SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SARAH SIOCK

Suspicious smell

What's that smell? On March 24 at 8 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the basement of Kroner Hall for the suspected odor of marijuana. The source of the smell seemed to be coming from the basement restroom. The restroom was checked and some ashes were observed around the sink while some moist ashes were discovered in the trash can. There are no known suspects at this time.

Up in Flames

Car troubles. On Saturday, March 27 at 1:24 p.m., Public Safety responded to the report of a vehicle fire in the Fine Arts parking lot. Upon their arrival, they observed an SUV with smoke coming out of the engine. Public Safety attempted to extinguish the fire by using two fire extinguishers, but was unsuccessful. The fire department arrived and was then able to extinguish the fire.

Smoke Signals

Power line down. On March 28 at 9:37 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to reports of a brush fire behind Beckett Village. Upon their arrival, they observed smoke coming from the area beyond the stone pathway, under the high-tension wires. The officer observed a power line wire on the ground, sparking. The fire department, PSE&G and Lawrence police arrived on location to address the issue.

— Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

CORRECTION

A page 1 photo in the March 24 edition of The Rider News depicting Rider wrestler Jesse Dellavecchia was incorrectly attributed. Photographer Larry Slater took the photograph and it was provided to the newspaper courtesy of Rider Athletics.

Administrator agrees with court's decision to dismiss lawsuits

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Dell'Omo said, "As a result of a substantial investment of time and money, and with the intention to revitalize WCC and to create new synergies within the Westminster College of the Arts, and Rider as a whole, the University relocated much of WCC to the Lawrenceville campus over summer 2020."

Dell'Omo added that Rider has not been actively marketing the Princeton property, but the university has had potential buyers make inquiries into the land. Once Rider begins to market the property, it plans to retain a small portion of the campus, primarily for the retention of the WCC Conservatory.

"This plan, however, may be adjusted based on the needs of a potential buyer. The amount of property being sold and the marketplace will ultimately determine any sale price," said Dell'Omo.

As the university battles financial troubles because of underlying issues that were exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, the proceeds from a sale of the land could prove useful. In the past, Dell'Omo has said that he hopes the money from any potential sale could help offset the cost of consolidating WCC students to Lawrenceville.

As WCC students continue to adjust to life at the Lawrenceville campus, Dell'Omo said the university is continuing to build "on that first step of success."

"Our plan throughout this process has been for Rider to continue building a world-class Westminster College of the Arts, with a thriving WCC as an integral part of this initiative," said Dell'Omo.



Stephanie Jessiman/The Rider News

Rider's Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel Mark Solomon said the university believed the "Seminary's claims, made 27 years after it signed a contract which it now seeks to violate, are without merit."

Senator Booker vows to protect DACA recipients at Rider event

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voting rights.

"There have been about 36 documented cases of in-person voter fraud, out of over a billion votes cast, you're more likely to be hit by lightning twice than to encounter the kind of fraud that they're [conservative lawmakers] alleging that they need to protect folks somehow from," said Booker, who was first elected to the Senate in 2013.

Booker's most passionate moment of the night came after a brief exchange in Spanish with junior accounting major Sleyker Tarifa, who asked Booker in English about how he would protect students like him who benefit from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policies.

"I find it stunning that my nation that professes these values would ever allow a person like you, an American like you, to be deported from this country," Booker said. "You want to talk about shameful. That would be a self-inflicted wound because 'Dreamers' bring hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity every year. They are first responders. They serve in our military, they educate our children."

The Rider News Executive Editor Stephen Neukam introduced Booker during the event and did not take part in the writing and editing of this story.



Courtesy of Cory Booker's Senate website

Booker is the first Black senator to represent New Jersey, and has been a staunch Democrat his entire political career.

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UNBOUGHT & UNBOSSSED: THE FIGHT FOR BLACK WOMXN'S RIGHTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 1 | 7 P.M.

Register in advance: rider.edu/unbought-unbossed

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) is pleased to welcome **Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall**, who will lead us in remembering Shirley Chisholm's autobiography, *UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED*.

This talk will highlight the courageous lives of Black womxn activists and their struggles for a new world. Despite their accomplishments, they remain invisible or footnotes in the nation's history. Revisiting their "good trouble" is inspirational and necessary!

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



Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, renowned scholar, author, and founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center (1981) and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

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2019 Fire Safety and Security Report released after delay

By Hailey Hensley

EVERY year, the university releases a report detailing the fire safety and security incidents from the year prior and emails it out to the student body. This year, the report was much later than usual, so the 2019 fire safety and security report was released on Dec. 23, 2020, a mere eight days before 2021.

Generally, the report is distributed to the student body in September, however, according to Director of Public Safety James Waldon, the report was distributed late this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“With the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Department of Education extended the deadline for institutions to distribute their Annual Security Report (ASR) and Annual Fire Safety Report (AFSR) to Dec. 31, 2020, from the usual Oct. 1 deadline,” he said.

In the realm of fire safety, there were very few fires, — with only two occurring for the entire year. However, both of the fires were in Ziegler Hall, and both were ruled as “intentional,” with one occurring on Feb. 1, 2019, at 1:29 a.m. and the other on March 6, 2019, at 1:00 p.m.

Waldon was not able to provide any insight on the resolution of these incidents, stating that it was an ongoing investigation and was pending further updates.

As far as crime is concerned, the Lawrenceville campus had no arrests related to liquor or alcohol violations and 58 disciplinary referrals. There were also 14 drug arrests, all of which occurred in residential facilities on campus. There were no weapon law violations on the Lawrenceville campus. On the Princeton campus, there were zero alcohol, drug or weapons violations of any kind.

As is typical, there were no murders or manslaughters on either campus. There were two rapes on the Lawrenceville campus and none on the Princeton campus.

Tessa Douglas, senior musical theater major, emphasized her general feelings of safety on campus.

“In a typical year, I feel relatively safe walking around campus. I find comfort in the blue lights however I always wished I saw more public safety personnel towards the center of campus. Rarely did I feel unsafe walking across campus at night,” she said.

Most incident rates on both campuses stayed the same or were lower than in previous years. Waldon attributed this decrease to the community partnership on



Stephanie Jessiman/The Rider News

There were only two fires on campus, both of which were intentional and under investigation in 2019.

campus.

“Campus safety is a community partnership so when incidents decrease it is usually the work of the students, faculty and staff assisting public safety with keeping the Rider community safe,” he said.

Admin will wait and see before making any changes to vaccine policy



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Rider Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning and Secretary to the Board Debbie Stasolla said that the school’s stance might change and that the administration would “like to wait and see.”

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whether or not you can mandate it when it is still under emergency authorization use.”

However, Stasolla admitted that the school’s stance might change and that the administration would “like to wait and see.”

As vaccine availability continues to open to more groups in the state of New Jersey, Rider’s COVID-19 positive cases, quarantine and isolation numbers all declined in the week from March 22 to 28 after multiple weeks of new semester-highs in those categories, the university’s online dashboard reported on March 30.

Before March 28, the university reported a new semester-high in single-week positive cases in three of the four previous weeks, reporting 17, 19 and 21 new cases in weeks from Feb. 22 to March 21. As of March 30, Rider reported 17 positive COVID-19 cases from March 22 to 28 and one positive case between March 29 and 30.

The university reported a new semester-high in quarantined students, with 41 students in quarantine

on March 28. Of the 41 students quarantined, 29 were doing so off campus, according to the university’s dashboard.

The new high in quarantine numbers was an increase from 29 quarantined students the prior week, though numbers decreased to 33 as of March 30.

Stasolla said the decline in positive COVID-19 cases coupled with increases in quarantine numbers pointed toward “continuing to identify close contacts of positive cases.”

According to Rider’s dashboard, isolation numbers decreased from 16 students to 12 students as of March 30. The semester’s highest isolation numbers occurred when 23 students were in isolation on March 19.

Between March 29 and March 30, no employees have tested positive for COVID-19 or are in quarantine, while two employees are in isolation as of March 30, the university’s dashboard reported.

Rider libraries hosts virtual film screening for “The State Against Mandela and the Others”

Courtesy of The Center for Diversity and Inclusion

The documentary showed how Mandela, along with his group of diverse fighters, were accused of sabotage and potentially faced the death penalty.

By Tori Pender

THE inspirational tale of “The State Against Mandela and the Others” was a part of the Tournées Film Festival, a five-part series hosted by the Rider University Libraries, the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, the Department of Film and Television, the Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and the Mercer County Library.

“The State Against Mandela and the Others” was hosted by associate professor and librarian Melissa Hofmann and assistant professor and librarian Sharon Whitfield on March 25, at 6:30 p.m.

The series began on Feb. 18 and will continue through April 29. The selected films were all created by French directors and range from documentary to narrative films, all covering a wide array of topics from politics to art.

The film festival showed “Portrait Of A Lady On Fire,” “The Mystery Of Picasso” and “The Freshmen.” The upcoming films, “Just Don’t Think I’ll Scream” will be shown on Thursday, April 8, at 6:30 p.m. and “Varda By Agnes” on Thursday, April 29, at 6:30 p.m.

This French documentary covered

what happened in October 1963, when Nelson Mandela and nine other leaders of the banned African National Congress appeared before the Pretoria High Court in the apartheid state of South Africa.

Mandela, along with his group of diverse fighters, were accused of sabotage and potentially faced the death penalty.

The documentary highlighted how Mandela and his companions created a watershed movement against the racial segregation that is still prevalent today in South Africa.

Karla Lopez-Rosa, a sophomore political science major, attended the screening and was engrossed in the film.

“It was an amazing film, and the visual representation and actual testimonies of people that were there during that time were extremely moving. The concept that was explored was definitely interesting and informational. Definitely looking forward to the discussion about this film coming up,” Lopez-Rosa said.

Hofmann explained how there are moments in the film with an intentional black screen.

“There are no visual images of the trial, but there are 256 hours of audio recording. While watching the documentary, there will be times when all you hear is audio,” Hoffman said.

The film displayed black and white charcoal drawings, for imagery paired with somber and intense music integrated with documentary-style interview clips.

A follow-up discussion titled “Freedom on Trial: Confronting Civil Disobedience from Apartheid to George Floyd” will take place on April 12, at 7 p.m. and will be hosted by Nicholas McLeod and presented by CDI and the Department of History and Philosophy.

Tips and tricks to virtual teaching from an assistant professor

By Sarah Siock

JUST three months into her second semester as an assistant professor at Rider, Joanna Kubik found herself teaching 100 college students virtually, while simultaneously caring for two toddlers whose day care was closed indefinitely. The coronavirus was the reason for her canceled child care and sudden shift into working from home. Kubik's daily routine was uprooted as she and her husband, who is also an educator, made their two-bedroom house into a classroom and an at-home office.

Attempting to balance work and tend to her children, who were 1 and 3 years old when the pandemic began, was no easy task. With two kids stuck inside all day, Kubik and her husband, Brandon Marcinkiewicz, suddenly felt overcrowded in their own home.

Finding a routine

"All four of us were at home at the same time, all the time. Our office is our dining room table, which is in our living room, which is also our kitchen. Overall, working at home with the two kids was virtually impossible," said Kubik, an assistant professor in Rider's Department of Sociology and Criminology.

As a high school social studies teacher, Marcinkiewicz had to maintain a strict virtual login schedule when his school shifted online while Kubik was able to move her classes to an asynchronous format. Due to their conflicting schedules, the couple needed to find extra space to efficiently complete their workdays. Thankfully, Kubik's mother-in-law lives minutes from their Clifton, New Jersey, home and allowed them to use her spare bedroom for work.

Once again, Kubik and Marcinkiewicz found themselves with another new daily routine. In an attempt to minimize the number of people in their home, Kubik said they split their time at her mother-in-law's house. Marcinkiewicz would work at his mother's house in the morning hours, while Kubik remained home with the children. Around 1 p.m. Marcinkiewicz returned home, and Kubik would leave to spend the rest of the workday at her mother-in-law's.

While Kubik said having the extra location was helpful, she admitted that finding the time to complete all work tasks was difficult since her children required full-time care. As a result, after the kids went to sleep, the couple still spent time in the evening answering emails and grading papers.

"It really was just awful. We had my mom's physical house but without that, I do not know how we would be able to work. There was no option of going to a café or a library," said Kubik.

With two children under the age of 3 spending the entirety of their day at home, Kubik was forced to be creative in finding fun activities to keep them occupied. Kubik said her backyard transformed into a "fun zone" complete with a bounce house and trampoline. Hiking at state parks also became a frequent outing for the family.

Despite the difficult situation, Kubik said the increased family time brought her children closer together.

"They had each other. They got so used to being together all the time. I think it would have been much tougher if I only had one kid, but it was really great for them to have each other," said Kubik.



Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Joanna Kubik, assistant professor of sociology and criminology, poses for a photo over Zoom while working from her mother-in-law's home

Adjusting to virtual teaching

While all teachers struggled to make the unexpected shift to online learning, Kubik's situation was particularly challenging in that she had worked at Rider for less than a year when the change occurred. Kubik came to the university in September 2019 and just as she began to feel fully adjusted to the new environment, the pandemic closed the university.

"I have been at Rider longer virtually than I have in person. I want to meet with my students, I want to see them more often because I found that there's such a divide when you're not seeing them," said Kubik.

Fortunately, Kubik did not have to face her teaching obstacles alone. Sarah Trocchio, a fellow assistant professor in the sociology and criminology department, came to Rider the same month as Kubik. Both professors were put in a unique situation of teaching online at a new job.

As the only women in their department, with Kubik being 36 years old and Trocchio being 35 years old, the professors quickly found out they had much in common. The two became fast friends by bonding over previously completing doctoral programs at Rutgers University and having children of similar ages.

Trocchio said, "We have a lot of overlap in life beyond being parents, but both being moms is a foundation of our friendship."

Before the pandemic, Trocchio and Kubik would eat lunch together each day to share tips and tricks of adjusting to the new job. Trocchio said she and Kubik were finally starting to "get the lay of the land" and have a familiarity with students and faculty before the pandemic hit.

"It was really hard not to see 'Dr. K' regularly once we shifted to online classes. We entered this experience together. Part of what is so meaningful about being a mother that works outside of the home is having this dedicated time to foster and develop additional aspects of your identity without at the same moment having to navigate being a mom," said Trocchio. "Even though my relationship with 'Dr. K' is partially based around motherhood, it's nice to be able to talk to her about motherhood, while also not mothering."

While Kubik and Trocchio now have opposite schedules due to their child care situations, every few weeks the professors check in with each other over video chat.

Kubik said, "Having that collegiality with 'Dr. T' really helped me get through this professionally. Without her, I would have felt alone as a new person at Rider."

The new normal

Now, a year later, Kubik's life is beginning to move into a sense of normality. Her children have returned to day care and Marcinkiewicz is back to teaching in-person. However, Kubik said the pandemic continues to have effects on her life. She said her marriage has been impacted most significantly by lockdowns and the work-from-home lifestyle.

"Brandon and I are in a much better place now, but COVID is still affecting everyone. We were both working professionals whose routines were flipped upside down. We had marital struggles, we had more fights, we had more stress and more frustrations, but at the same time, we were also trying to cook dinner and raise kids," said Kubik.

Kubik said her relationship struggles were unexpected, but the pandemic ultimately showed the strength of their five-year marriage.

"I remind us all that we have to figure out how to live together. This is hard, but we are a family. We are learning together to get through this, and if we can get through this, we can get through anything," said Kubik.



Courtesy of Joanna Kubik

Joanna Kubik, her husband **Brandon Marcinkiewicz** and their children smile for a picture on one of their many hikes that were taken throughout the pandemic.

Students showcase their talents in livestreamed hybrid event

By Aaliyah Patel

THE Student Entertainment Council (SEC) presented the Rider community with Showcase Saturday, an outdoor event that promoted student singers, rappers and poets on a socially-distanced stage on March 27.

The event encouraged all students to register through a Google Form and perform solo acts for up to 15 minutes. The performances were live-streamed through the university so spectators could enjoy them safely from their homes.

COVID-19 safety precautions were placed into effect such as cleaning the outdoor stage after each performance, sanitizing the microphone and limiting in-person interaction by only allowing the production team and performers on campus.

Janette Bowman, a senior public relations major and SEC vice president of special events, discussed the importance of social-distancing during the early planning stages of this hybrid event.

“Most likely, there will only be one person on stage at a time which is either the student performer, host or another SEC member. But, if there is more than one person on stage for any reason, then those people will be spaced out and must wear a mask,” Bowman assured.

Performers were welcomed to accompany their acts with props such as



Junior musical theater major **Shamiea Thompson** gave the audience a passionate vocal performance.

musical instruments and written poetic pieces.

Junior film, TV and radio major Rob Brown spoke about his experience at the showcase.

“I was very happy that we were able to be a part of a showcase like this because I haven’t been on a stage in a very long time,” said Brown. “During my time when quarantine just started I would write poetry to pass my time and it is so great to see that I was able to perform it.”

From renditions of popular songs such as Rihanna’s “Diamonds” to original poetry, the showcase featured a wide array of talent.

Nicholas Barbatì, the associate dean of campus life, mentioned the importance of retaining normalcy for students as they go through a non-traditional college experience.

“I think the event is going to be an important one to allow students to either return to performing on campus or give them their first opportunity ever to do so. In particular, it is my hope that seniors, who might have sadness about not having a last chance to sing on stage or share a poem on campus, will take advantage of this opportunity for a video performance of them doing what they love on their own college campus,” Barbatì said.

This hybrid event is intended to demonstrate student talent through a variety of performances. The university plans to shift more events to in-person such as this, as long as safety precautions are met effectively.



While the participants performed on stage in-person, the event was live-streamed to a larger audience via livestream.

Mentor and protégé pair put the power in empowerment

By Christian McCarville

PROVIDING someone with a sense of empowerment can encourage them to reach incredible heights and unlock their full potential. Empowerment was the central theme of the latest Leadership Live! event, “The Power of EmPOWERing Relationships.”

Taking place on March 24 at 7 p.m., the event was hosted by the Center for the Development of Leadership Skills (CDLS), the Office of Student Involvement, the Gail Bierenbaum Women’s Leadership Council (GBWLC) and the Student Government Association (SGA).

Kicking off the event, Laura Seplaki, associate director for CDLS, gave an introduction to the event’s guest speakers, alumna Vanessa Nazario and junior health science major Cynthia Ozurumba.

Seplaki explained how both leadership and empowerment are related. “Empowering others is a key element of effective and servant-minded leadership,” said Seplaki. “Since leadership is a relational process and relies upon leaders and their constituents working together, it is critical that leaders empower others to fully engage in the process, maximize their strengths and talents and work collectively toward the positive changes they wish to make.”

Nazario and Ozurumba are an exemplary mentors/protégé pair working together within GBWLC. This organization is a community of powerful and successful women who seek to build women leaders through mentorship, workshops, events and scholarships. Members of GBWLC also provide networking opportunities and raise funds for philanthropic causes relating to women’s education at Rider.

Nazario began the presentation by speaking about what effective empowerment looks like in action. She explained the importance of validating women’s self-expression and offering support to all women.

Ozurumba continued by explaining how past generations of women can have a profound impact on today’s generation. This is a core ideal of the GBWLC, offering advice and support to ambitious women seeking guidance. Those who are experienced in their fields can offer women towards the same level of success and leadership.

Nazario and Ozurumba then touched on their relationship. Nazario consistently provides Ozurumba with guidance and support. However, she encouraged Ozurumba to make her own decisions and made sure not to get in the way of her thought process.

“Through their presentation and by sharing their experience as a mentor/protégé pair through the GBWLC, [Nazario] and [Ozurumba] were able to express the importance and value of women supporting each other in their learning, growth and achievement,” said Seplaki. “It highlights how critical a mentoring relationship can be to helping young women build confidence, self-efficacy and the relationships needed to advance as leaders. I think this connects to the spirit of Women’s History Month and I

am glad we could illustrate the power and benefits of women supporting each other.”

The pair also discussed how diversity and inclusion can support empowerment. Nazario expressed that it is essential for people of color to empower other people of color, encouraging their voices to be heard. She emphasized the idea of ‘passing the mic,’ and making sure everyone gets the opportunity to express their perspectives, especially those who are often overlooked.

“Think to yourself, ‘How can I empower someone today?’” said Nazario.

Participants were then put into breakout rooms and tasked with answering a question relating to empowerment. Once the groups had discussed, a presenter from each group summarized their answers.

From there, final thoughts were shared and the event concluded. Nazario and Ozurumba challenged participants to practice empowering one another as it can truly have a significant impact, especially on those that do not often have an empowering voice in their head.

What does Empowerment look like in Action?

- Providing a space and encouraging a woman to speak or participate.
- Validate women's self-expression.
- Check your assumptions at work.
- Offer support to all women, including the "strong" ones.
- Pass the mic.
- Disagree without dismissing.
- Encourage each other to accept sincere compliments.

Vanessa Nazario explained what empowerment looks in action. In her mentor/protégé relationship with junior health science major **Cynthia Ozurumba**, both women seek to empower one another.

Student Entertainment Council sets the stage for unique event



Senior voice performance major **James Harris** gave audiences a taste of his talents as a vocalist.



Junior business administration major **Aakash Kannan** took to the stage to showcase his talent.



Junior film, TV and radio major **Rob Brown** delivered spoken word poetry to the audience.

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— UNIFIED WE ARE: COMBATING HATE & FEAR —

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*Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated in May.
At Rider, it is celebrated in April.*

April 2
HISTORY OF THE TERM "ASIAN AMERICAN"
6 p.m., rider.edu/asian-american-history
Teaching the history of the term "Asian American" and the history of different groups of Asian Americans: east, south, middle east asian. There will be a presentation given to share the histories of Asian immigrants and the struggles many experienced in order to survive.
Sponsored by Asian Students at Rider

April 8
CONVERSATION CAFE: BREAKING BARRIERS BETWEEN ASIAN AMERICANS AND BLACK AMERICANS
8 p.m., rider.edu/conversation-cafe
ASAR in collaboration with BSU and BMU will be hosting a panel discussion surrounding Black Americans and Asian Americans. This will be a safe space created to make uncomfortable conversations feel more comfortable. We hope everyone leaves this meeting hoping to further engage in these conversations.
Sponsored by Asian Students at Rider, Black Student Union, and Black Men United

April 16
THE ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
8 p.m., rider.edu/asian-american-experience
Join ASAR in a fishbowl discussion of being Asian American: culture shock. During this discussion we are inviting individuals of different ethnic backgrounds to share their experience as being an Asian American and the culture shock they have experienced growing up.
Sponsored by Asian Students at Rider, Gender and Sexuality Studies of the College of Liberal Arts, Center for Diversity and Inclusion

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1**UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED: THE FIGHT FOR BLACK WOMEN'S RIGHTS**7 p.m., rider.edu/unbought-unbossed**Speaker: Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall** renowned scholar, author, and founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center (1981) and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and Gender and Sexuality Studies of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, are pleased to welcome Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, renowned scholar, author, and founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center (1981) and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, who will lead us in remembering Shirley Chisholm's autobiography, UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED. This talk will highlight the courageous lives of Black womxn activists and their struggles for a new world. Despite their accomplishments, they remain invisible or footnotes in the nation's history. Revisiting their "good trouble" is inspirational and necessary!

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Gender and Sexuality Studies of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

April 5**THE MAKINGS OF A TWO-FRONT WAR**7 to 8:30 p.m., rider.edu/two-front-war**Speaker: Danielle Jackson**

A night that gives audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the making of A Two-Front War, a series that follows the fight for civil rights by African American World War Veterans upon their return home. Members of the film crew will be present to describe the hardships African American veterans faced during their service, as well as the difficulties in telling their stories through film. Join us for a night devoted to giving honor to the legacy of those who fought for our rights, despite theirs being denied.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

April 7**BEYOND THE GENDER BINARY**3 to 4 p.m., rider.edu/gender-binary**Speaker: Alok Vaid-Menon**

The 39th Annual GSS Colloquium Keynote Address - ALOK (they/them) is an internationally-acclaimed non-binary writer, performance artist, and public speaker whose work grapples with themes of trauma, belonging, and the human condition. ALOK's performance-lecture, "Beyond the Gender Binary," is a 21st century approach to gender rights, one that calls for an end to the gender binary. "This false choice of boy or girl, man or woman, male or female is not natural," they argue. "It is political."

Sponsored by Gender and Sexuality Studies of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

April 8**HIDING AND FREEDOM: ONE FAMILY'S STORY HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY**7 to 8:30 p.m., rider.edu/hiding-and-freedom**Speaker: 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.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

April 12**FREEDOM ON TRIAL: CONFRONTING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE FROM APARTHEID TO GEORGE FLOYD (AN OPEN DISCUSSION)**7 p.m., rider.edu/freedom-on-trial**Speaker: Dr. Nicholas McLeod**

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 7:00 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 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.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Department of History and Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



CENTER FOR
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
Unity + Diversity = University

These events are partially funded by the mandatory student activity fee.
Approved by Campus Life – 5/1

#Sustainability: Tik-Tok spreads the word

PICTURE this: The weather is getting warmer and you're sitting in the hammocks scrolling through Tik Tok to pass the time. You see people doing dance challenges, posting about things that "just make sense," maybe you even see the Rider Tour Guides pop up on your For You Page (FYP), but how is Tik Tok content contributing to larger conversations?

With hashtags like #sustainability or #ecotok and over 200 million views, the short videos produced on Tik Tok are getting millennials and Generation Z more involved in sustainability than ever before.

The short clips provide content creators with a platform to spread personable and digestible content that other social media sites just can't compete with. Many sustainability creators on Tik Tok reference the "perfection" of sustainability on Instagram — it highlights a lifestyle that is not realistic for most people by promoting 100% zero-waste lifestyles with expensive products and services.

Tik Tok, on the other hand, allows creators to get more real with their audiences. It is important to take steps towards becoming more sustainable, not being 100% perfect all at once.

Content creator Megan McSherry, @acteevism on Tik Tok, said to Refinery29 that when faced with the Instagram aesthetic of sustainability, "You just end up spending all your time asking yourself: Are you even making a difference? Are you really good enough? But right now, we need everyone to do every little thing they can — pressuring governments and corporations who can make the big changes. We don't need everybody to have a perfectly zero-waste kitchen."

The biggest push in the sustainability community is toward conscious consumerism, or the idea that consumers should understand the environmental impact that their purchases have and where the products come from. This often comes

in the form of promoting small and sustainable businesses.

The younger generations of activists recognize that corporations must be held accountable for their environmental impacts in business practices and the best way to do that is to redirect purchases to businesses that practice eco-friendly production.

Additionally, creators can share their strategies for reducing waste. From thrifting hauls to upcycling tutorials, Tik Tok promotes the discovery of videos that can go viral almost instantly and reach an audience bigger than ever before. Because of this, conversations about sustainability must continue on the platform.

Senior musical theater major Daniel Booda said about his Tik Tok feed, "I originally didn't interact with a lot of the videos about climate change or the environment on my feed, but the more I saw the more I understood how easy it can be to make sustainable choices. Now I try to thrift as much as possible and find that I often like the clothes I thrift more than the ones that I bought from fast fashion stores."

Platforms like Tik Tok allow conversations about sustainability to become much more accessible to younger generations, on whom the most significant effects of climate change will fall.

Junior musical theatre major and Eco-Rep Ashlyn Whiteside said, "Tik Tok has created a platform for spreading awareness in a lighthearted and informative way that has truly shaped our generation's culture. If one knowledgeable person leads by example, others will follow."

And truly, others will follow.

Be sure to check out @bronsogreen on Tik Tok and follow along for more sustainable content.

*Emma Harris,
Rider Eco-Rep*

THE Rider News

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FRESHMEN FINDINGS

Gun violence: A second disease that is plaguing America

WE are only four months into 2021 and there have already been over 100 mass shootings in America, according to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA). How appropriate is it for America that we are not only worrying about contracting COVID-19 throughout our daily lives, but we cannot even go to a grocery store, or any public place really, without running the risk of falling victim to yet another shooting?

The definitions of language surrounding gun violence are often debated, but what is this an abbreviation for? One identifies a "mass shooting" as an event that causes the death or injury of four or more people, excluding the shooter. The FBI defines "active shooter incidents" as "one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area."

Most recently, news broke covering the March 22 Boulder, Colorado, grocery store shooting that killed ten people, including an on-duty police officer. According to a senior law enforcement source for CNN, the alleged shooter, Ahmed Al Aliwi Alissa, 21, passed a background check and purchased a Ruger AR-556 just days before the killing.

Families are mourning the loss of Denny Stong, 20; Neven Stanisic, 23; Rikki Olds, 25; Tralona "Lonna" Bartkowiak, 49; Teri Leiker, 51; Eric Talley, 51; Suzanne Fountain, 59; Kevin Mahoney, 61; Lynn Murray, 62 and Jody Waters, 65.

Not even a week earlier, on March 16, a white gunman shot and killed eight people, including six Asian women, across three separate spas in Atlanta, Georgia.

These victims include Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33; Daoyou Feng, 44; Xiaojie Tan, 49; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; Paul Andre Michels, 54; Yong Ae Yue, 63; Suncha Kim, 69 and Soon Chung Park, 74.

Community members and some Georgia lawmakers are urging the charges against the suspected gunman, Robert Aaron Long, to be labeled as hate crimes, and outrage sparked after case spokesman, Capt. Jay Baker stated that the

gunman was just having a "really bad day."

Plenty of people manage to have a really bad day and not commit mass acts of violence, and this rhetoric not only trivializes such an important issue that is the prevalence of gun violence in America, but feeds into the all-too-familiar habit of diminishing the level of accountability these gunmen, especially white gunmen, need to be held to.

Another serious problem in the conversation surrounding gun violence in America is the blame placed on mental illness. Many people living with mental illness every day do not commit mass acts of violence and conditions that are already stigmatized shouldn't be used as a cop-out for deeper motives or intentions, like, for instance, a racially motivated attack.

Gun violence in America has been prevalent for years, and yet it is not going away. The alleged Colorado shooter, for instance, passed a background check, and still went on to commit a massacre — that should not be allowed to happen. To make a change we need to have uncomfortable conversations. It seems that time and time again, acts of violence break all over the news, followed by pledges to pass legislation and 'do better,' only for more lives to be lost senselessly and in close succession.

According to data from CDC WISQARS and Mother Jones Mass Shooting Database, presented by UC Davis Health, firearms caused 39,740 deaths in 2018 and 61% of firearm deaths are suicides.

The culture that America has created surrounding gun violence touches every facet of living, and any truly responsible gun owner should argue that there needs to be a change in how accessible firearms are in this country. The underlying anxiety experienced by so many Americans while simply going shopping or to school or the movies should not and cannot continue to be normalized.

*Kate McCormick
freshman English major*

VOLLEYBALL

Rider gears up for MAAC volleyball tournament

By Dylan Manfre

FALL sports teams at Rider watched what a pandemic season looked like with basketball. From myriad schedule changes to fluctuating routines, the volleyball team got its first taste last week.

Saint Peter's was slated to travel down Interstate 95 and play the Broncos in Alumni Gym, however, the Peacocks canceled the remainder of their regular season because of COVID-19 related issues on March 23.

"Leading up to the game we were kind of wondering what they were going to end up doing just because we knew they had a few cases," senior outside hitter Ali Ward said. "And when they decided that they were just opting out of the season completely, it wasn't something that we were expecting."

Head Coach Jeff Rotondo, who led the Broncos to a 4-4 record in his second year at the helm, reached out to Quinnipiac, Niagara, Siena and Iona to see if either team had an interest in scheduling a game, but none of the situations transpired. Rotondo cited timing as an issue with scheduling if Rider wanted to hold the game on its original date of March 26.

"Nobody could make it work. Niagara [played on March 24], they played Siena as a make-up. Iona was considering it, but adding a bus trip and [COVID-19] testing was going to kill their budget a little bit," Rotondo said. "Same thing with Siena. [Head Coach Vilis Ozols,] he was like, 'I just can't get down there and make it work.'"

Replacing the Saint Peter's matchup was a Cranberry and White scrimmage, which also functioned as the team's senior day when Ward, along with libero Danielle Blanco, were honored for their contributions to the program which was streamed for parents who could not attend the impromptu match.

Team Cranberry won the contest 2-1 and Rotondo served as the official.



Dylan Manfre/The Rider News

The Broncos finished 4-4 under second-year Head Coach **Jeff Rotondo** and will play Manhattan in the first round of the MAAC tournament.

MAAC tournament update

Although players on the team would have liked an actual opponent over a scrimmage, the Broncos have their sights on the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) tournament in Albany, New York.

The common numeral seems to be four, since the Broncos ended the regular season at 4-4 and are locked up as the No. 4 seed in the tournament. Rider will battle Manhattan, who it beat 3-0 and 3-1 in a March 21 doubleheader in Draddy Gymnasium in the first round of the MAAC tournament on April 1.

Ward cited that committing errors is one of the key things the Broncos need to mitigate.

"I think we're going to work a lot on our serve receives, serving and staying aggressive and definitely just working on our errors," Ward said. "I think if there is one thing we need to work on it's definitely our errors throughout the past games. We've just been a little bit high-error."

The winner of Rider's game against the Jaspers will play whoever emerges victorious in the match between No. 1 Fairfield and No. 8 Siena.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Rider basketball has bright future

By Shaun Chornobroff

RECORD wise, the 2020-21 season was the worst season of Kevin Baggett's nearly decade-long stint as head coach at Rider. Yet when March came along, a Rider team that lost 87.5% of its scoring the season before shocked the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) with an upset victory over Canisius in the first round of the conference tournament.

The last-seeded Broncos may have been ousted by a veteran-laden Saint Peter's team in the quarterfinals on March 11, but by getting there in the first place, Rider showed everyone what the team had known for months the Broncos can compete with any given team on any given night.

"We've seen it when we play St. John's, Manhattan, even in the Monmouth games that we can play with anybody," guard Dwight Murray Jr. said after the team's opening round victory on March 8. "I knew that we were a great team, we just needed to learn how to play together."

Rider felt the side-effects of having a young team all year long. It was a recurring theme that the Broncos were trying to erase massive deficits, but did not have enough time to complete the comeback.

The same thing happened in close games with Rider losing control of multiple games down the stretch that seemed winnable. But that may just be what happens when a team loses four 1,000 point scorers in a season plagued by a global pandemic.

The Broncos, who only returned four players, only one of which, sophomore guard Christian Ings, started a game for the 2019-20 team, struggled in late-game situations without any chemistry and a limited offseason.

Rider went 3-8 in games decided by 10 points or less, consistently showing an ability to compete with the MAAC's elite, but not quite ready to walk away victorious in those tight situations.

However, there is a lot of talent that has showcased itself at multiple points and if the victory over



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Junior center **Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson** will be one of the most experienced players on the 2021-2022 men's basketball team.

Canisius shows anything, the wait for Rider to go back to its winning ways may not be a long one.

Ajiri Ogemuno-Johnson was one of the quartet of players on the Rider roster to have returned from the previous season. The junior center knows what a winning team looks like and forecasts a lot of positive results for this team in the future.

"Everybody has to realize that we had a different type of year than we're normally used to," Ogemuno-Johnson said after the team's quarterfinal loss to Saint Peter's. "I trust my coach, he knows he's not doing this again, that we're not doing it again as teammates... As far as talent goes, we do have the talent to come back next year and actually make some noise."

Murray, a transfer from Incarnate Word, was a revelation for the Broncos. The junior guard led the team in points, assists, rebounds, steals and free-throw percentage, en route to an All-MAAC second-team selection.

But it wasn't just Murray — talent emerged around him as well.

Allen Powell has always been highly thought of among the Rider coaches, even before getting a chance to fully show why, but the sophomore guard

had a breakout season alongside Murray, inserting himself into the starting lineup and proving to be one of the conference's most lethal three-point shooters.

In the MAAC Tournament, with Murray and fellow sophomore guard Christian Ings in foul trouble, Powell showed he was able to steady a shaking ship, controlling the offense and scoring 17 much-needed points.

Powell and Murray are aided by a strong supporting cast. Junior forward Dontrell McQuarter may not stuff a stat sheet, but his defensive intensity and willingness to be a physical presence is noted by every coach and player on the roster. When McQuarter missed four games with a family emergency, the team felt his absence, going 1-3, dropping both games of a weekend sweep to Quinnipiac, a team they are perceived to be better than on paper.

Once again, it does not stop there.

Corey McKeithan was supposed to be an immediate contributor when he stepped foot in Alumni Gym, but a knee injury in August caused the young guard to lose his freshman season. Baggett has said in the past that McKeithan can be the next great guard to come through his program.

"I watched him last summer, he got hit in the head, bloody nose, bloody lip and I thought he had a concussion, but he went right back out there and continued to play," Baggett said in September 2020. "That's when I knew he was tough and he has something pretty special about him."

When Rider had its senior day this season, only one player was honored. Ings and freshman forward Lawrence Foreman are the only players from the roster who entered the transfer portal.

It was an unusually poor season for a historically successful Rider team, but if things go right, the 2021-2022 season will be a strong rebound for the team.

SOFTBALL

Softball off to best MAAC start in program history

By Carolo Pascale

THE best start in Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) play in the softball team's history belongs to the 2021 Rider Broncs.

Rider is sporting a 6-2 record, with senior pitcher Debra Jones throwing 16 strikeouts throughout back-to-back doubleheaders vs. Niagara University on March 26 and March 27.

Game 1

In game one of the series, Rider got started in the first inning when junior outfielder Lani Moreno drove in the first run of the game after hitting a single, giving the Broncs a 1-0 lead.

Moreno went 2-for-4 hitting in the game and had four RBIs.

"Lani is one of our most consistent hitters. She has been since she stepped on campus a couple years ago," Head Coach Davon Ortega said. "I think last weekend, she was a little bit off. She adjusted and it was more of a mental approach plus she was more aggressive."

The Broncs continued to drive in runs in the second, scoring five runs and extending their lead to 6-0.

Scoring was limited from there, with Rider securing a 7-1 victory.

Niagara scored a single run in this game due in large part due to Jones, who threw eight strikeouts through six innings.

"This season feels just a little bit different because of the loss of last season and the fact that this is my senior year," said Jones looking back on her performance. "It all just serves as a reminder to give it everything you've got when you step on the field for both games and practice, in order to make this season really count."

Game 2

As for game two, it didn't start as well as the first one for the Broncs, as the teams were tied 1-1 after two innings.

Niagara was very aggressive at the plate in the third, scoring three runs to take a 4-1 lead.

Rider, trying to mount a comeback, scored two runs in the fourth inning to make the score 4-3.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, junior catcher Grace Stansfield hit an RBI double, tying the game at four runs.

In the final inning, Stansfield came up to the plate with runners on first and third and a chance to win the game.

Stansfield proceeded to slap her second walk-off single of the season to win the game for the Broncs,



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Senior pitcher **Debra Jones** threw 16 total strikeouts in the softball team's weekend series.

5-4.

"Grace has been training for this. She's confident right now and she knows her role. She knows what her job is," said Ortega. "She's just been seeing the ball really well and she's grown into that position where it's almost like she enjoys the pressure of it."

Game 3

Game three of the series was a rather uneventful one in the scoring department.

There was no score until the fourth inning when graduate student outfielder Kelsey Marigliano brought home junior catcher Kaitlin Vazquez with a single to put the Broncs up 1-0.

Rider scored again in the bottom of the fourth when sophomore catcher Chaela Crowder hit a single to drive Marigliano home to put the Broncs up 2-0.

That was it for all of the scoring in the game, as the Broncs won with a final of 2-0.

Jones starred again, pitching a complete game with six strikeouts and only allowing five hits.

With the win, the Broncs had set the record for the best start in MAAC play in program history with a record of 6-1.

After once again holding down the mount for the Broncs, Jones talked about how the team has been

successful throughout the team's games so far.

"Fundamentally those things include a focus on the little things, as well as good execution and communication on the field," said Jones. "But the thing that really stands out about this year's team is the heart and passion we have for the game, because we know we have what it takes to prove a lot of people wrong this season."

Game 4

The final game of the series didn't go the way the Broncs intended.

After tying the game in the first inning, Rider trailed 3-1 at the end of the third inning.

Rider couldn't seem to figure it out on the mound, having to remove two struggling pitchers before trotting Jones back out in the fourth to calm the game down.

Jones, who had pitched a complete game in game three, pitched another three innings in this final game.

The Purple Eagles scored three runs in the game, leaving Lawrenceville with a 6-1 victory.

With a 6-2 record, Rider will face the 1-3 Siena Saints of Siena College in another back-to-back doubleheader series on Friday, April 2 and Saturday, April 3.

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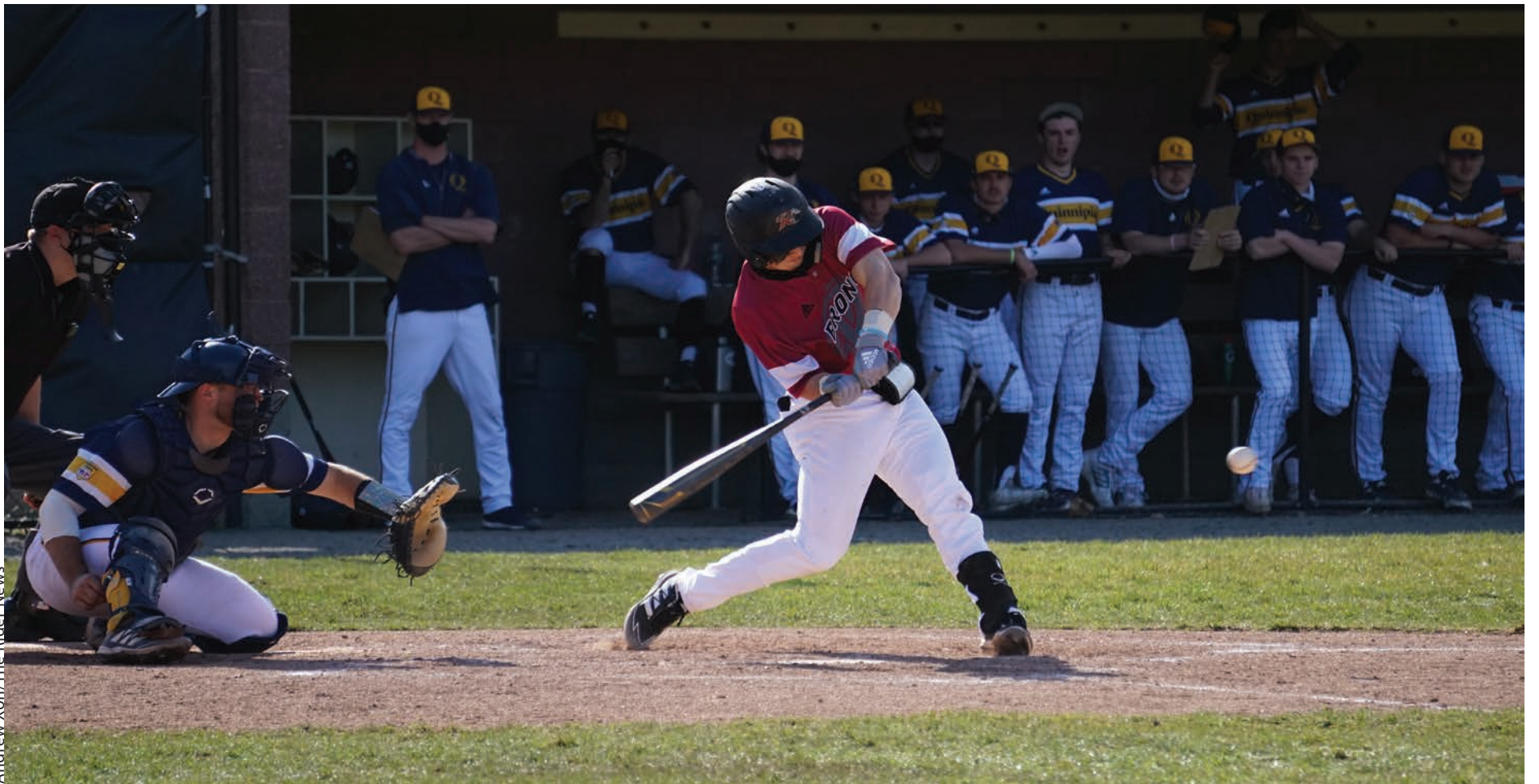
VOLLEYBALL

Sports Editor Dylan Manfre provides an update on the volleyball team's season.

FIND THE STORY ON PAGE 10

BASEBALL

Rider continues strong start



Andrew Xon/The Rider News

Redshirt junior infielder **Jake Barbieri** had five hits and three RBIs in a productive series against Quinnipiac.

By **Shaun Chornobroff**

AFTER a competitive series against Quinnipiac, Rider has established itself as one of the better baseball teams in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), taking three of four games from the Bobcats – the preseason favorite in the conference – on March 26 and 27.

Another strong series gives Rider a 6-2 start to its season — the best start to a campaign since 2013, when the Broncos won the conference regular-season championship.

March 26 doubleheader

For six innings, Pete Soporowski was untouchable. The senior, who opened up his season with an eight-inning shutout the week before, continued his dominant form, but in the seventh and final inning, he finally found himself in trouble.

With a 2-1 lead, runners on second and third base and two outs, Head Coach Barry Davis faced a tough decision of sticking with his star pitcher or going to the bullpen.

“You got to trust him, he’s been here for five years and I don’t think we were putting him in jeopardy in terms of number of pitches,” Barry Davis explained. “We just felt that he was the guy... We just felt like he would get the job done.”

Soporowski emphatically struck out the game’s final batter, escaping with a dramatic victory.

“Honestly in that situation, I just stuck with what I was going to all game and that was trusting my defense behind me and executing pitches,” Soporowski said of his game-ending strikeout.

The series theatrics did not end there for Rider, with the second game having its own set of dramatics in what ended up being an emphatic 8-5 victory for the Broncos.

Quinnipiac got to Rider early in the game and after two innings, Rider’s starter had been knocked out of the game and the team was trailing 5-0.

Rider’s hitters were held mute for most of the game, but in the sixth inning the Broncos finally lit a spark in their offense, scoring eight runs in the inning.

“We were struggling as a team to get our offense going, but knew we were capable of putting together good at-bats to help us get back into the game,” said Kyle Johnson, who scored a run and had an RBI in the inning. “In the moment was a great feeling, seeing us not give up as a team and fight back is a good sign for us as a team in the future.”

Rider’s bullpen was crucial in the victory, with a trio of pitchers throwing eight shutout innings and only allowing three hits.

March 27 doubleheader

In the bottom of the first inning, in the first at-bat of their second doubleheader against Quinnipiac, Johnson continued his momentum from the day before, hitting a scorching home run off the scoreboard at Sonny Pittaro field to set the tone for the Broncos.

The home run was one of four RBIs for the senior left fielder, as he paced the Rider offense in a 12-6 victory.

In the early part of the game, Rider’s offense was hot, but each time it scored, Quinnipiac matched it the next inning, never taking a lead, but tying the game three times in the first four innings.

The trend lasted until the fifth inning when Rider scored three runs to gain a 9-6 lead, then shut out the Bobcats in the top of the sixth inning. Sensing an opening, the Broncos piled on three more runs in the bottom half of the inning, with Johnson driving home Rider’s final two runs of the game on his third hit of the opening match.

“I hate these games because we score two, we give

up two. We score three, we give up three, we score one, we give up one,” said Davis. “That went on for a while and then finally we scored and they didn’t score... When we score 12 runs we should win the game no matter who’s pitching.”

A sweep for the Broncos was not meant to be against the Bobcats. For the second consecutive week, Rider won its first three games of the series only to lose the fourth, something Davis said he hopes “doesn’t become a trend.”

The 8-5 loss was another hotly contested affair, but in the end, the Bobcats came away victorious because of missed opportunities.

Rider had an opportunity to blow the game wide open in the fourth inning when it had two men on base with no outs and a 5-3 lead. With some of its best hitters coming up to the plate Rider failed to convert, striking out twice and grounding out to the pitcher in the next three at-bats.

“That’s big,” Davis said bluntly. “We have a chance to go up 6 or 7-3, now that doesn’t mean we’re going to hold that lead, but it certainly helps to extend the lead... That hurt.”

Quinnipiac took the lead with a four-run sixth inning, but if it wasn’t for a fielding mistake, the damage could have been limited.

“We did a number of things, we misplayed a pop-up to the catcher, it would have been the third out,” Davis said. “That would have been the third out, they wouldn’t have scored the last two runs.”

After the mistake, the Bobcats scored two more runs, giving themselves a 7-5 lead before scoring one more run in the ninth.

The Broncos will take the road for the first time this season when they travel to Riverdale, New York, to play four games against the Manhattan Jaspers on April 2 and 3.

ONLINE

PHOTO GALLERY

Check out Carolo Pascale’s photo gallery online from Rider baseball’s and softball’s recent games.

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