



## Commencement the latest Westminster tradition to be sacrificed



Courtesy of 107.7 The Bronc

The class of 2022 will be the final class experiencing a traditional Westminster commencement in Princeton, like the pictured, class of 2015.

By Shaun Chornobroff

**E**VERY year at the Westminster Choir College (WCC) commencement the “Anthem of Dedication” is performed as a sending off to those graduating.

The underclassmen of the college sing the words, “whom shall we send and who will go for us.”

The graduating class responds “here I am Lord, send me.”

Historically, the dedication and the commencement is a monumental event that packs the Princeton University Chapel with current students and their families, alumni and faculty past and present.

However, the WCC commencement is the latest Westminster tradition headed toward extinction since the school moved from its Princeton campus to Rider’s

Lawrenceville campus. The class of 2022 will be the final class experiencing a traditional Westminster commencement in Princeton, Rider’s Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown told The Rider News.

“When we first transitioned Westminster Choir College from Princeton to Lawrenceville, the intent was to have a WCC-only commencement at the Princeton University Chapel through 2023, and after that, WCC students would then participate in the Rider University commencement ceremonies. However, it recently has been determined that this year’s WCC commencement will be the last separate commencement,” Brown said in an email.

Brown said there are many factors contributing to



## Administrators address university reorganization at SGA town hall

By Sarah Siock

**S**TUDENT concerns over how the merger of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and Westminster College of the Arts (WCA) will affect their course of study were a major focus at a Student Government Association town hall meeting on April 14.

During the one-hour Q&A style event, questions were raised over if the creation of the new College of Arts and Sciences will result in curriculum changes. However, Kelly Bidle, the recently appointed dean of the merged colleges, said the transition will not cause major changes to students’ courses.

“[The merger] is part of this larger university plan of looking at restructures and efficiency. ... I know one thing that you guys are all very anxious about is what does it mean for you as students. ... For your actual programs, whether you’re a biology major, a music education major or a game and interactive design media major, none of that changes. As far as the core that you follow, your general education curriculum right now, whatever you are following now is what you will continue to follow in the future. If there are ever any changes, that will go through governance and that right now is not on our radar,” Bidle said reassuringly to students at the town hall.

Students also heard from Brooke Hunter, who will be an associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences once the merger becomes official in July. Hunter added that if changes were to be made to general education requirements in the future, it will only impact incoming students and not current students.

Since the announcement of the merger last month, students and faculty have questioned if the majors currently in WCA and CLAS will reorganize properly under the College of Arts and Sciences.

When asked if student needs will be met in a college with a diverse bundle of majors Bidle said, “There shouldn’t be any dramatic changes to anything that you’re currently doing. But as always, we have an open door. If there is something you’re experiencing that is of concern to you, all you need to do is come visit with us.”

While the portion of the town hall that focused on the merger consisted of the most questions, the event also centered around the voluntary separation program and commencement with administrators, including President Gregory Dell’Omo, directly

answering students.

The segment of the town hall that centered on the voluntary separation program revolved around questions on how communication about departures from the university will be handled. Specifically, students asked if they will be notified when a person who holds a student-centered position leaves the college due to the separation program.

At the town hall, Vice President of Human Resources Rob Stoto said, “When they’re student-facing positions, we will be really thoughtful about making sure that we communicate, not just who’s leaving, but what the plan is for their replacements. The fact is that these [departures] are happening over about a six-month period. As they are coming to date, we will be communicating with you all what the plan is to transition those services.”

During the discussion of the voluntary separation program, Dell’Omo spoke about the future of the university. He said that once the academic and administrative prioritization, which were launched in the fall, conclude there will be further restructuring within the university. Dell’Omo cited Rider’s dwindling enrollment as one of the reasons for changes.

“It’s making sure we are a type of university given our size, programmatically, student wise and so forth that we have the right structure to make sure that we’re providing the best educational experience for our students. It’s all designed around making sure students can have a wonderful time going through their education here,” said Dell’Omo.

Dell’Omo added that any further reorganization would most likely not be on the same large scale as the WCA and CLAS merger. To conclude the town hall, Dell’Omo told students that he and his senior team are “always available to answer any questions.”

“A lot of these decisions over the next month or so we will be communicating a lot of these changes as we go forward. But it’s all focusing on how do we make sure we enhance the students’ experience,” said Dell’Omo.

INSIDE

### THE WINNER IS...

Our sports editors are giving you the opportunity to select a Men’s and Women’s Player of the Year.

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### TIME FOR A CHANGE

Meal swipe and meal exchange value discrepancies leave students frustrated.

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### EGG HUNT FUN

Check out the photos from the Eggcellent Egg Hunt hosted by 107.7 The Bronc.

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# SECURITY BRIEFS

BY SHAUN CHORNOBROFF

## Party shutdown

Party poopers. On April 9, at 11:56 p.m., Ewing Township Police responded to a house in Ewing Township for the report of a loud party. The residents became disturbed at the loud noises coming from the house and called the local police. When the police arrived, they spoke to the residents of the house and identified them as Rider students. The police advised the students to keep the noise down and referred the incident to Rider's Public Safety. The matter has been sent to the Office of Community Standards for review.

## Broken window

Shattered glass. On April 11 at 10:51 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Conover Hall for the report of a broken window. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with Facilities Management employees who reported a broken window in the C-wing lounge. One of the large windows had been shattered, but it was unclear when the incident occurred or how. The incident remains under investigation.

## Car problems

Stuck up. On April 15 at 5:31 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Gated Administration Lot, near the front of the Bart Luedeke Center, for the report of a motor vehicle accident. Upon their arrival, the Public Safety officer observed a vehicle had become stuck on a concrete parking block. The person operating the car was unaware that there was a parking block in front of them and when they tried to drive forward, their car became stuck. A tow truck was called to remove the vehicle.

- Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

# Westminster experience will feel incomplete without commencement, student says

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the decision not to have a WCC commencement in 2023, including cost. She also explained that discussions on how to incorporate Westminster traditions into Rider have already begun. She said the administration wants to "not only honor the many WCC traditions but find ways in which all Rider students can learn and appreciate those traditions."

Joel Phillips, a professor at Westminster for more than 30 years said the decision to end WCC's commencement is "another attempt by this administration to eradicate something valuable and irreplaceable."

Andrew Bernstein, the Student Government Association (SGA) president for the 2022-23 school year said he will continue to fight for the Westminster students and wants to ensure they are represented.

"We have had conversations with President [Gregory] Dell'Omo, Provost [DonnaJean] Fredeen and Dean [Marshall] Onofrio about the future of Westminster commencement. I can assure you SGA will continue to advocate for unique Westminster commencement traditions ... to continue," Bernstein said in an email to The Rider News. "During conversations with the administration, one of the important acknowledgments has been the need to

adjust commencement to account for Westminster traditions."

Jason Vodicka '03 was named the assistant dean of Rider's new College of Arts and Sciences which is planned to launch in July and include WCC. Vodicka said he would support an event similar to a separate event for Westminster students.

"What I would say is that, as a current faculty member, as an alumnus and as a future associate dean, that I would advocate for being able to continue the tradition of the Westminster commencement within the guidelines that are provided by the university," Vodicka said. "For me, I think the most important things are ... having a chance for our community to gather together with alumni, with current students, with graduates, with the families of the graduates to meet. That's the most important part of the event."

Despite being a senior, music theory and composition major Charles Ibsen has only been able to participate in one traditional WCC commencement. COVID-19 sent the nation into a whirlwind in 2020 and canceled graduations across the country.

The following year, WCC graduated the 2021 class on Rider's Lawrenceville campus. Due to COVID-19 still being increasingly prevalent, students had to wear masks, and instead of singing

the "Anthem of Dedication," someone read the text on stage, and instead of singing, the students of the choir college were forced to speak the piece they had been waiting four years to sing.

"You can imagine just how much that takes the soul out of a piece, to just kind of read it like poetry. I mean, it's a choir college for crying out loud," Ibsen said. "It has felt like something is definitely missing and I think that it kind of hurts too, especially if they're not hoping to continue having commencements in Princeton that my class and maybe even the class below me are the last folk that remember what that is supposed to be like. Remember what is missing."

Ibsen said the commencement is "the release of four years of anticipation and growth and community." Without the event, the Westminster experience doesn't conclude the way it's meant to in Ibsen's eyes.

"Westminster students and alums and stuff, we kind of almost obsess over, where is the point in which Westminster as a school kind of dies," Ibsen said sadly. "... If enough of commencement changes that it's not a Westminster event anymore, but a Rider event, then Westminster is dead ... It's not a Westminster education through and through if you don't get to send yourself off into the world with that experience."

## THE Rider News COVID-19 COUNTER

**Confirmed Cases:**  
Last updated: April 15, 2022

**102**

Cumulative total of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Rider University (Since January 2022)

**COVID-19 cases reported to Rider University by week:**

Month/Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
April 9-15	12	2
April 2-8	10	2

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

**On Campus Student Testing:**

Weeks	Health Center	Surveillance Testing
April 9-15	15	6
April 2-8	16	4
March 25-April 1	10	81
March 12-25	12	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1091</b>

Information courtesy of rider.edu

**Student Quarantine and Isolation:**

Students in quarantine have been identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, are completing their travel advisory required quarantine or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are awaiting test results. Students in isolation have tested positive for COVID-19.

This week there are:

- 3** student(s) quarantining on campus
- 1** student(s) quarantining off campus
- 8** student(s) isolating on campus
- 0** student(s) isolating off campus

## Find out more about THE Rider News

Check out our website

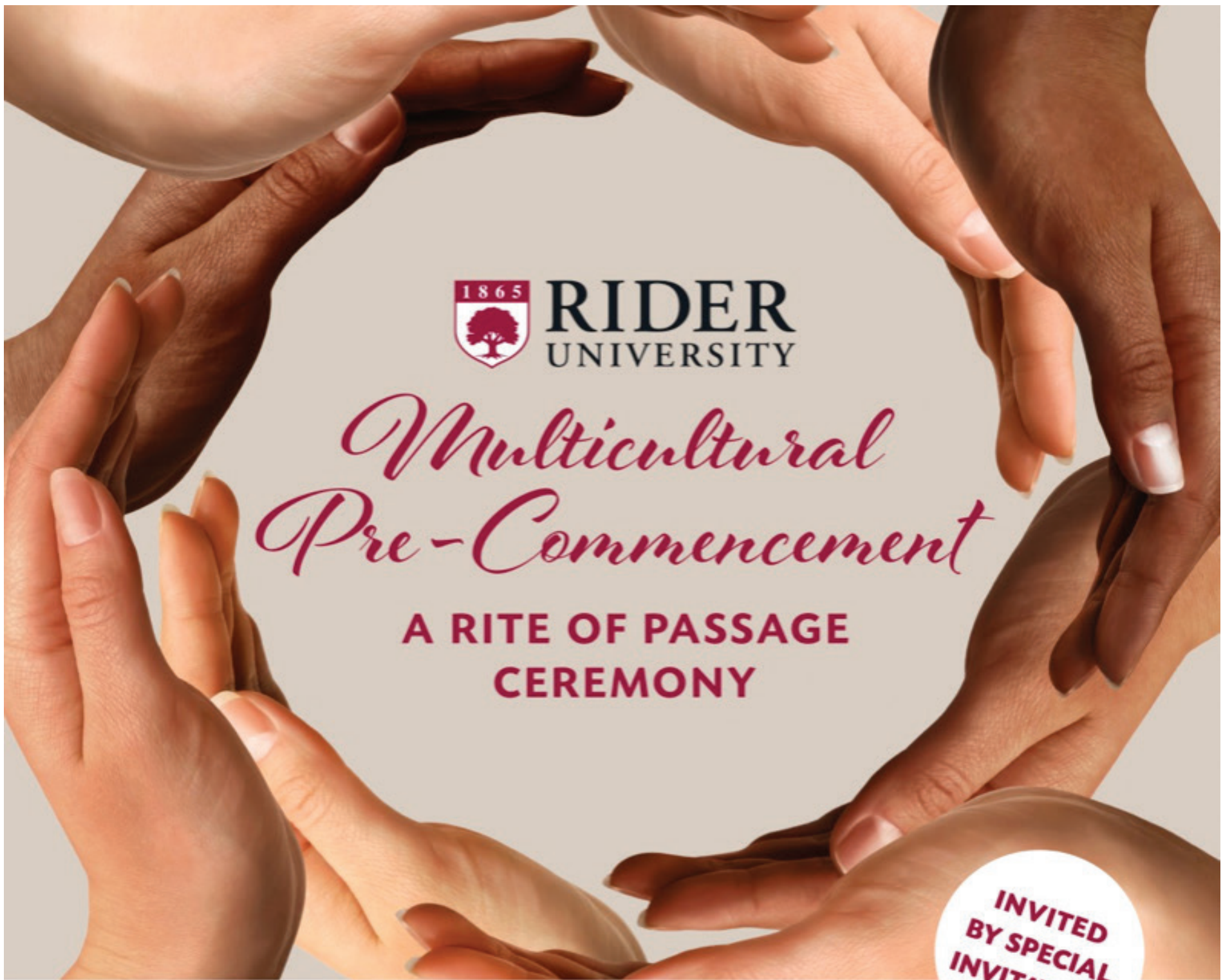


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## Monday, April 25

**5:30 p.m. | Practice Gym**  
PRE-GATHERING FOR GRADUATES

**6:30 p.m. | Alumni Gym**  
DOORS OPEN

**7 to 8:30 p.m. | Alumni Gym**  
CEREMONY

**8:30 p.m. | Alumni Gym**  
DESSERT RECEPTION

The mission of this pre-commencement ceremony is to celebrate the accomplishments of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students of color at Rider University including: Black/African Americans, Chicanx/Hispanic/Latinx, Asian/Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and Multi-Ethnic, who have successfully completed an undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate degree. This event recognizes their achievement through resolute persistence, hard work, and dedication to the advancement of an enriched educational experience at Rider University. Each graduate will receive the CDI Medallion to wear around their necks on their graduation regalia, commemorating this special occasion.

Graduating students, RSVP here:  
[rider.edu/student-ceremony-form](https://rider.edu/student-ceremony-form)

CENTER FOR  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
Unity + Diversity = University

Faculty, staff and alumni, RSVP here:  
[rider.edu/ceremony-form](https://rider.edu/ceremony-form)

## Appellate division court date set for Westminster Choir College lawsuits

By Sarah Siock

**N**EARLY two years after students and alumni filed appeals challenging the dismissal of lawsuits that sought to block Rider's relocation of Westminster Choir College (WCC) from its Princeton campus to Lawrenceville, the State Appellate Division of Superior Court has set a date of May 16 for oral arguments.

According to Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown, the lawsuits — one comprised of faculty, alumni and donors to the college and the other filed by current students — were dismissed in March 2020 by Judge Robert Lougy, of the Superior Court Chancery Division, in favor of Rider.

However, an attorney from the Westminster Foundation, 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.

"Among several arguments, Rider argued that the 1991 agreements explicitly stated that third parties were not beneficiaries of the agreements and therefore they do not have legal standing to bring their claims. In addition, nothing in the original deed for the property prevented Rider from moving Westminster to Lawrenceville," said Brown.

President of the Westminster Foundation Constance Fee previously told The Rider News that the COVID-19 pandemic led to delays and backlogs



Olivia Nicoletti/The Rider News

The Princeton campus is unsold and off the market as the lawsuits continue.

in the court system which prolonged setting a date for oral arguments.

In the summer of 2020, Rider moved WCC students to the Lawrenceville campus. Since the move, many WCC members have expressed unhappiness with the campus. For instance, in December, students, alumni and faculty signed a petition that outlined several disappointments with the campus. The petition, which was emailed to administrators, contained a plethora of grievances including limited practice space and substandard acoustics in the choir's practice space at Gill Chapel.

Westminster Foundation attorney Bruce Afran said, in a statement supplied by Fee, "We will be

arguing that the trial judge was incorrect when he held that the students, alumni and teachers did not have the right to ask for a court order blocking Rider's attempt to move and, ultimately, close Westminster Choir College and to destroy its specialized campus and facilities. All of this, our briefs argue, is a breach of Rider University's charitable duties that it assumed in 1992 when it took over management of Westminster Choir College. We are arguing that because Rider has breached its charitable duties, Westminster Choir College should be returned to an independent board going forward. We will be arguing to the court that Rider University's acquisition of Westminster was intended to benefit the students and teachers who have the right to object in court to the destruction of the college by Rider University."

In an interview with The Rider News on April 19, Fee said the news of a court date was "very encouraging."

"We are in this for the long haul ... The only goal of the Westminster foundation is to move Westminster Choir College back to its home on the Princeton campus... We are standing our ground and we are not changing our position," said Fee.

While WCC students remain in Lawrenceville the Princeton campus is unsold and off the market as the lawsuits continue. However, Brown said there are parties interested in buying the property.

## Rider librarians find new way to improve the student learning experience



Olivia Nicoletti/The Rider News

**Melissa Hofmann**, associate professor and librarian, demonstrating how to use the VR equipment.

By Olivia Nicoletti and Tori Pender

**A**T the start of April, Rider's librarians introduced a new virtual reality (VR) experience to the community after receiving a grant from the American Library Association.

The first event that launched successfully was the Anne Frank experience which runs from April 4 to April 22. According to Sharon Whitfield, an associate professor and librarian, four more virtual experiences are planned to be released by the fall.

The idea was to allow students to use hands-on equipment and immerse themselves in the environment to better understand the story at hand.

Associate professor and librarian Melissa Hofmann said, "We anticipate that participants will develop skills in perspective-taking and/or empathy for others, particularly those in marginalized groups, that will lead to changes in behavior. They will explore what it means to be human outside of their own experiences and revise their preconceived notions, or attitudes and views based on stereotypes,

getting a new appreciation for the reality in humanity of others. And based on the effective agent of experience of the VR, we will offer debriefing discussions, film screenings and books to provide integration of an effect with history and context."

The grant allowed for the purchase of five Oculus VR headsets. The purchase of books to go alongside the experience was another advantage to help students fully understand the story being displayed.

Due to the pandemic, the library is equipped with a sterilizer in which the staff can place the headset between each use to lessen the spread of germs.

The headset has a silicone lining that comes into direct contact with the skin of whoever is using it. For students with a silicone allergy, Hofmann said that a disposable face shield is available for use.

When a student is actively using the VR system, a staff member will assist them at all times to make sure it is executed safely.

Currently, due to the lack of space and staff, only two or three students can use the system at a time.

The dean's old office and the conference room are two spaces within the library being used to host students, but the librarians hope that in the future more space can be dedicated to these programs.

Hofmann said there were plans of introducing virtual reality in classrooms to further utilize equipment and bring hands-on experiences to students.

### Stepping into VR

Once putting the VR headset on and going into story mode, the participant is transported into a black room that gives a brief historical overview of the events leading up to Frank and her family hiding within the upper floors of Opekta, her father, Otto Frank's business in the Netherlands.

From a first-person perspective, going into the attic and maneuvering through the rooms showed how loud their surroundings were. With constant airplanes, presumably warplanes flying overhead, it emphasized how quiet the eight occupants had to be.

Within the tour, every small detail was included. Participants had to pick up Frank's original diary when in her and her sister's room. Inside the main living room space, a board game that looked similar to monopoly called, "Het Beursspel" was displayed

on the table. Each depiction was historically accurate and showed the significance of items within each room.

The last room on the tour was the uppermost room of the attic, the storage room. The room contained many stored food from food preserve jars to a giant pile of brown sacks.

According to Hofmann, a desired outcome of the VR experience would be participants recognizing how "systematic policies affect individual circumstances and biases, to understand how historical and cultural events continue to impact society, to improve their cultural literacy and work toward a more just and civil society where people are free to express their full humanity."



Tori Pender/The Rider News

**Tori Pender**, news editor at The Rider News, using the Oculus head set and controllers to guide herself through the Anne Frank experience.

# An eggcellent time: Egg hunt photo gallery



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Baby bunnies bring Easter spirit to campus.



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Students open their prize-filled eggs after the egg hunt.



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Students pet baby farm animals on the campus green.



Amethyst Martinez/The Rider News

Sheep interact with students at the petting zoo.

Check out more photos from the Eggcellent Egg Hunt on our website!



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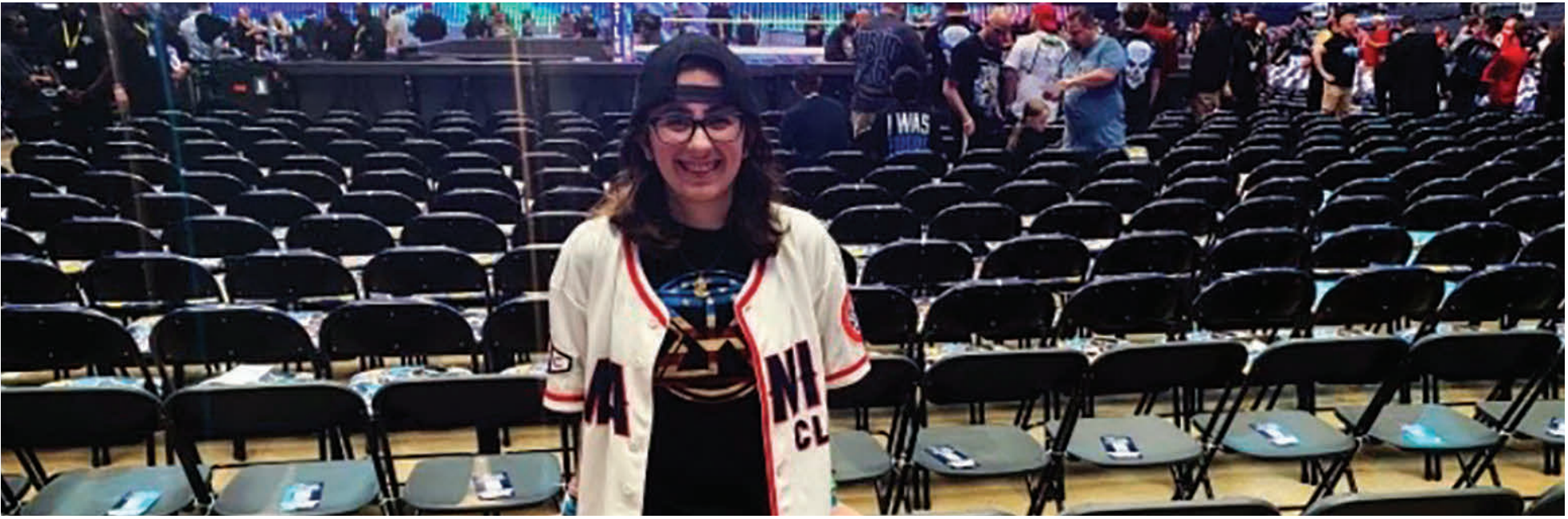
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- PLANT PROPAGATION
- CLOTHING SWAP SHOP
- ECOTRIVIA
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**BRONCS GO GREEN**

Photo courtesy of Kimmy Sokol



**Kimmy Sokol**, a junior sports media major, works for Warriors for Wrestling, an independent wrestling promoter.

## In the ring: student covers professional wrestling

By **Adrianna Jaccoma**

**M**AGINE this: You're walking into the biggest stadium in the country. Surrounding you are thousands of wrestling fans gathered for the biggest wrestling event of the year. You flew across the country to be here, and there are people from all over the world. You're about to witness the Super Bowl of wrestling.

That's what junior sports media major Kimmy Sokol experienced when she attended WrestleMania in Dallas, Texas, at the beginning of April.

Sokol first became interested in wrestling when she was 9 years old and received a flyer in the mail about a wrestling event happening in her area.

"I fell in love with it. I've loved everything from the storylines, the costumes ... I don't think I've ever smiled as much from the moment the bell rang to start the opening match, to the moment the bell rang to end the main event," Sokol said.

Since the first event she went to, Sokol wanted to work somewhere in the wrestling industry.

"When I was in pre-K, they say 'Oh what do you wanna be when you grow up'... so I said 'Oh I just wanna be me, I just wanna be Kimmy,' and it wasn't because I didn't understand that you had to have a job to make money and be successful; it was because I wanted to find something that fit me ... but when I got into wrestling, I was like 'Oh here's the thing, I get to be me by doing this,'" Sokol said.

Sokol works for Warriors of Wrestling, an independent wrestling promoter, where she does public

relations. Sokol also critiques the women's wrestlers' matches and is asked to watch matches and discuss them with her manager.

"I got into working conventions because I went to them so often. A promoter I had grown close to asked me about possibly working with him in the future, and I jumped at the opportunity. I worked with him for 3 ½ years until I got other opportunities from other vendors. I became popular in the promotion industry from the virtual signings we did during COVID. They were broadcasted on Facebook Live and shown to hundreds of people," said Sokol. "More people saw I was a good worker and wanted to work with me. This gave me the opportunity to start traveling and realizing my dream."

Kevin Nasta, Sokol's supervisor, described what it's like to work around Sokol.

"You need a lot of energy to work around and keep up with Kimmy, that's for sure. I admire that energy and drive [she has] to learn about the industry. Like any student, she will learn with repetition and experience," Nasta said.

Over the pandemic, Sokol started a podcast called "Kimmy Talks Wrestling." She also is a regular on podcaster Rob Williams' show "The Bob Culture Podcast."

"We had a lot of virtual stuff over Zoom. One of the signings I was at, this guy Rob [Williams], he was watching one of the virtual signings, and [he] knew I had a podcast. He DMed [direct messaged] me on Facebook and was like, 'Hey I'm running a podcast, I

would love to have you on as a guest one day,' and I've been a regular on that podcast ever since," Sokol said.

"It was larger than life. I think wrestling is the greatest form of art because every match tells a story. There's always a good guy and a bad guy; the good guy always wants to win the crowds over, the crowd always hates the bad guy... It's the classic story of superheroes," Sokol said. "Sports is the greatest drama out there because you never know what's gonna happen, and although it's scripted, there are shockers that happen every single day."

Sokol's editor and friend, Bill Bodkin, spoke about her determination and drive to work in the wrestling field.

"Kimmy has an undeniable charisma that you just can't help but admire and it's no surprise why you see some of the biggest names in pro wrestling requesting to work with her," said Bodkin.

Sokol looks back at the 9-year-old girl that fell in love with the sport and marvels at her personal growth.

"To that 9-year-old kid who's always dreamed of this job. To that 10-year-old kid that would just look to see how much tickets were to travel to wrestle mania. To that 13-year-old kid that dreamed of working with wrestlers, I am so freaking proud of you, because you did that," Sokol recently said in an Instagram caption.

"No dream is ever too big. If the Staten Island kid can make it, you can too," Sokol added.

Photo courtesy of Kimmy Rollins



**Kimmy Sokol**, a junior sports media major with professional wrestler **Maria Kanellis**.

Photo courtesy of Kimmy Rollins



From left to right **Sokol's dad, Rob Van Dam** and 9-year-old **Sokol**. This was her first show back in 2010.

Photo courtesy of Kimmy Rollins



Junior sports media major **Kimmy Sokol** with **Rob Williams**. **Williams** gave **Sokol** her start in the world of wrestling.

# Business and communications course brings students abroad

By Tristan Leach

**S**TUDYING abroad is a popular choice for many college students. There is never a shortage of places to go thanks to Rider's Office of International Education and the professors who wish to take their students on trips. Now students have a new course to choose from: Tourism Business and Communication.

In this course, students will learn how communication and business make up a majority of the tourism industry. The class is a cross-examination of how tourism functions and varies from country to country. In this course, students will travel to Italy and Slovenia, a perfect comparison according to the professors teaching the class.

The class was brought to life by three professors in the communication and business departments, Allison Weidhaas, Cynthia Newman and Drew Procaccion. Each professor wanted to lead a study abroad program for their students and found that combining two existing classes at Rider would make for a new and exciting study abroad experience.

Newman, a professor of marketing, said, "I've been doing student study tours for a very long time; this is my 20th year leading student study tours, and I've been friends and colleagues with Drew for more than that. Drew was always saying to me 'How do I get in on that' and finally we were having dinner one night ... and I was like 'Drew, do you wanna do a study tour?' and Drew said 'Yes.' And I said, 'Great, let's do one together.'"

Not only will this be Procaccion's first study abroad but also Weidhaas's. Both smiled with excitement when talking about the new program they worked on. The two had thought about leading a tour for a while, but felt nervous going alone while supervising 20 or more students.

One of the most exciting aspects of this course is that students can take the class regardless of their major. The class is based on the trip and students will be able to meet with their fellow travelers beforehand. Most assignments will be based on what students see when abroad so they can get a sense as to why these places are so popular amongst tourists.

Weidhaas, an associate professor in the Department of Communication, Journalism and Media said, "This class came from a couple of different directions. I wanted to offer a travel course in communication for some time, and I explored it several times. I guess I've always been a little nervous about taking students abroad for the first time."

Weidhaas had been planning on visiting Italy and was



Photo courtesy of Rider University

From left to right: **Drew Procaccion, Cynthia Newman and Allison Weidhaas.** The three will lead the course in Italy and Slovenia.

happy to find out that Newman and Procaccion had the same thought. Students have the advantage of learning about tourism from both a communications and business perspective. They can also earn credits in communication, business or both.

Procaccion, an associate professor of information systems said, "I'm the spreadsheet guy. I'll be crunching any numbers and doing any of the administrative stuff." The goal is to gather data about tourism and how a pre-COVID-19 world compares to a current COVID-19 world in regards to the global impact on the business.

Several activities have been planned for the course. These include a walking tour of Venice, seeing castles in Slovenia, climbing mountains, taking a boat ride to see a church built in the middle of a lake and exploring caves. "There's something for everybody," Procaccion said with a smile.

While many students are excited by the idea of the trip, there is one thing that holds them back — the cost. Luckily, the Office of International Education offers scholarships and allows students to apply their financial aid to the trip.

"I know that's what students look at when I announce this in class. They look at that price and they go 'well it looks like fun, but I don't have that money,'" Procaccion said.

As the school year comes to an end it is time to look toward the next one. Students look to the next fun-filled opportunity and some may add studying abroad to their checklist of experiences.

## Italy & Slovenia

### Tourism Business & Communication



Photo courtesy of Cynthia Newman

#### Program Overview:

Students will have the opportunity to study tourism business and communication while exploring beautiful and historic countries of Slovenia and Italy.

#### Program Dates:

March 11-19, 2023

#### Program Highlights:

- Walking tour of Venice, Italy
- Tour of Trieste and visit to Miramare Castle
- Visit Casa di Giulietta (Juliet's House and Balcony) in Verona
- Attend a workshop with Turismo Venezia to discuss tourism in Venice
- Walking tour of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana
- Visit an 11th century castle in Bled in the Julian Alps and Predjama Castle
- Boat ride to the Church of the Assumption of Maria
- Attend a presentation on tourism in Slovenia by the Slovenia Tourist Board
- Tour of the Postojna Cave

The itinerary for the business and communication course next Spring break.

# Sanitation worker thanked by residents

By Asia McGill

**F**LOORS were swept. Showers had been scrubbed. Hallways were vacuumed. This had become the weekly routine for the past 15 years for Rider's sanitation worker, Sandy Marte.

Marte has maintained the cleanliness of the girl's dormitory, Wright Hall, and worked five days a week. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Marte constantly scoured and sanitized the third floor of the building.

Though Marte has dealt with big messes throughout her career, she never complains or makes a fuss about cleaning.

"I enjoy working here," Marte said.

With headphones full of upbeat music and a gray broom in hand, she can often be found sanitizing the toilets, sinks and showers, mopping floors, emptying trash and vacuuming.

None of Marte's work went unnoticed by students of Wright Hall. Though it is difficult to verbalize their appreciation to her due to the language barrier, students of Wright expressed how they wished she knew how much they appreciated her.

"When living somewhere so far from home, coming back to a clean and tidy environment brings me a level of comfort I didn't know I needed," said junior acting major Emma Brennan, a resident of Wright Hall.

Brennan was not the only student who felt this way, some even wished they could do more than just say "thank you."

"Sometimes I wish I could give her

and the other workers a water bottle or just a few dollars; they do so much all day," said sophomore graphic design major Bralen Jones, a resident in Gee Hall.

Marte had not always worked as a sanitation worker, as she originally came from her home country of the Dominican Republic to the United States with her then-fiance.

Marte came to America and married her husband 28 years ago in search of a better life and job opportunities. Her home of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic was an island of paradise for her and her newlywed but was "too expensive to stay," Marte said.

The couple knew when they left their homeland, it also meant leaving loved ones behind. Marte had wished to start a family but decided it was best to raise her future family in America.

The two packed their things and said their goodbyes, as they headed for a new life.

Marte and her husband had three children. Since her children spoke English, she had picked up on some vocabulary here and there, but not enough to carry a full conversation. Her children were there to help translate in public settings, but once she got to work she was virtually on her own.

English was hard for Marte, yet she managed to communicate in the small ways she could over the years. Though Marte's job does not require too much

interaction with others, at times she experienced bumps in the road when she tried to explain things to the native English speakers around her.

"Anytime I need help, I have to call someone to translate for me," Marte said.

Though her language barrier created much difficulty within her work life, Marte always loved her job in the dormitories.

Though rare, there are times when the job becomes strenuous, such as when she has to load heavy garbage into the chute. Marte's small frame is not always able to handle the weight of the waste and usually works on her floor alone.

Marte never minded sanitation work as a career but had bigger aspirations outside of the dormitory doors.

"I love my job, but I am tired," Marte said. She had always dreamed of being a baker and wanted to specialize in baked goods for parties or events.

Her passion for baking began before she was a sanitation worker, but the opportunity did not seem fit for her expanding family at the time. Her dream to run a bakery grew stronger as the years went by, ready for a new path in her career.

Marte misses the island where her family was and hopes she can work enough to plan a trip back. "It's so beautiful there," Marte said. Her return to Santo Domingo would be something special, being she hasn't been back home since she and her husband married.

Marte has thoughts of retirement but does not plan to leave Rider just yet.



Photo courtesy of Asia McGill

**Sandy Marte**, a sanitation worker, has been working at Rider for 15 years.

# Dining on campus: the value of a meal swipe

**T**HERE is no doubt that college dining plans come with a price ticket, but while Rider students are lucky to have meal exchange options at various venues on campus, are they getting their money's worth? When considering the value of a meal swipe at Daly's Dining Hall compared to other campus eateries like Saxbys or The Pub, the full value of one meal exchange is questionable.

Though he declined an interview, Rider's Assistant Vice President of Auxiliary Affairs Andrew Pignataro communicated the flat-rate prices of meal swipes to The Rider News via email. Pignataro explained that the door rates for each dining period at Daly's are \$7.95 for breakfast, \$10.95 for lunch and \$11.95 for dinner.

Pignataro wrote, "The meal exchange consists of a full meal option that includes an entrée, side snack/dessert and a beverage."

While some meals at retail dining venues on campus seem to fit reasonably into this price margin, offering meals that include a full entrée with a drink and side like chips or an apple, other options feel like a little bit of a rip-off.

For example, one meal exchange at The Pub can get an order of cheese fries off the appetizer menu, which comes with either bottled water or fountain soda, without the option of a snack or dessert and the inability to stack the exchange with another smaller meal item. On the credit and BroncBucks menu, however, cheese fries are listed as a side and cost \$4.95 and a fountain drink \$1.55. While Pignataro explained that meal exchanges are "determined by the cost of food, labor and royalties for brands," using a full meal swipe for a \$6.50 total compared to the lunch and dinner period door rates at Daly's seems steep, especially when the option isn't equivalent to a full meal. Even Saxbys, the only meal exchange service that operates within the breakfast window, offers smoothies as a meal exchange, which range from \$4.95 to \$5.75, compared to a \$7.95 door price at Daly's for the meal period.

The Carte Blanche plan currently costs \$2,795 per semester with \$175 in BroncBucks and unlimited swipes, and the Carte Blanche Plus plan costs \$2,875 per semester with \$275 in BroncBucks and unlimited swipes, however, Rider's dining website notes this disclaimer: "If you use a Meal Exchange at a participating retail location during the same meal period, you will not be able to use the unlimited swipes into Daly's Dining Hall during the same meal period. You must wait until the next meal period before entering Daly's or using another meal exchange."

Unfortunately, there appears to be limits on the unlimited plans that many students opt for.

Sophomore biochemistry major Emma Zinser expressed her disappointment in some of the meal options available, specifically her experience as a student on an unlimited meal plan.

"I am a vegetarian, so it's really difficult for me to eat anything on campus, let alone on meal exchange ... I also pay for the unlimited meal plan, but if you use a meal swipe you can continue to go back versus when you use a meal exchange, you can only use one during that meal period, so if I meal exchange all three of my meals that day, I'm only getting three full meals on my unlimited meal plan," Zinser said.

Sophomore music major Bella Nakum expressed a similar grievance with the dining prices at Rider.

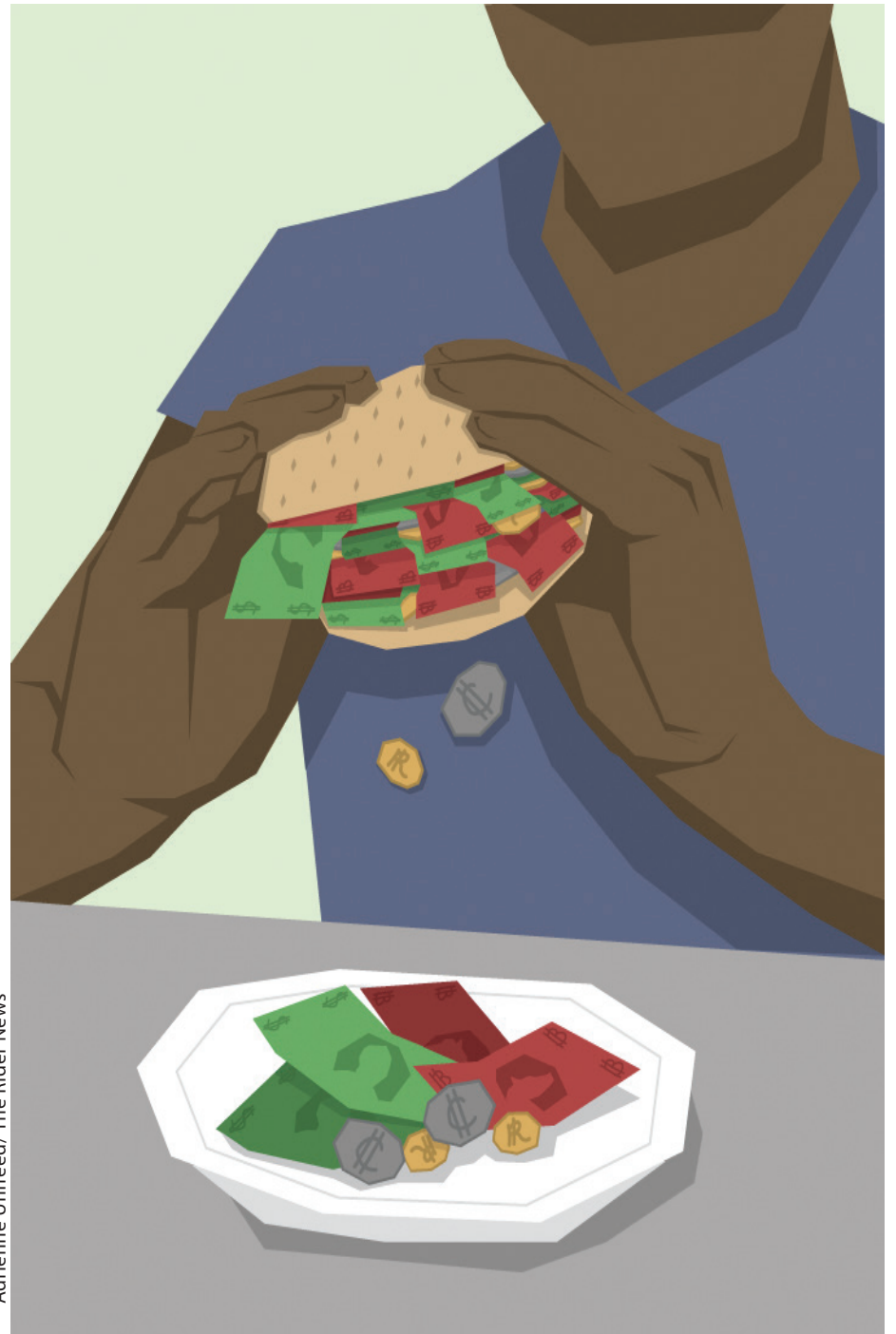
"The idea is there and the concept [of the meal exchange] makes complete sense, but, in practice ... realizing how little I'm getting for my value is making me not want to use the meal exchange," Nakum said.

Of course, students can continue to go to Daly's and use their initial meal swipe, but often students running tight schedules find convenience in ordering ahead from the venues in Cranberry's, which is closer to the academic quad. This adds to the frustration of students feeling like they may not be seeing the full value of their meal plan when utilizing certain exchange options.

While dining services at Rider do provide a wide range of options for students at Daly's and Cranberry's, better consistency and matches in value would be appreciated.

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

*Kaitlyn McCormick*



Adrienne Unfreed/The Rider News

## **THE** Rider News

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SOPHOMORE SIGHTINGS

# The social confines surrounding dating and disability

**O**UR society has come up with some rather impressive and subtle ways to exclude individuals with disabilities from the general population. Due to this fact, I have often had to educate myself on disabled culture and what life is like for others like me. One thing that was challenging to learn about was what relationships are like. It is rare to find any information about relationships between people with disabilities. It is even more rare to find a relationship between an individual with a disability and an abled person. To properly educate myself, I decided to base my sophomore health class research project on the relationship habits of individuals with disabilities, or, usually, lack thereof.

A brief Google search led me down a depressing and disgusting rabbit hole, revealing my three possible futures.

Option one, the most common option, is meeting someone who is immediately horrified or not willing to date someone with a disability. According to some truly awful blogs and opinion pieces I read by abled people, people with disabilities look weird or remind them of sick and dying people. Plus, no one really wants to deal with what that person can or can't do or accessibility problems, because that's too much of a headache for the abled person.

I immediately got a flashback to middle school when I had asked a friend of mine to go to the dance with me and he responded, "Ew, no. Can you even dance? Plus, pictures would be weird because you can't stand." Unfortunately, this was not the last time that happened to me. I then read story after story about people who didn't include in their dating profile that they had a disability, and their date was either visibly disappointed or disgusted upon meeting them. One woman's date left as soon as she sat down because she looked better in her profile picture, where you couldn't see her wheelchair.

Option two, a creepy subculture, was being fetishized. Sometimes, when people disclose their disability on dating apps, they receive messages. Sounds great, right? Until they realized that there is a fetish for people with disabilities and watching them struggle to do things. My body cringed when I read this and still does to this day. I am not some object for people to stare at as I try to do things, nor is anyone else with a disability.

Option three, the hope, is meeting someone completely comfortable and happy being with a person who has a disability. These people have normal relationships and seem genuinely happy and accepting, a rarity in most of the lives of individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, the more I read, the more I saw that a majority of people in these healthy relationships had less severe or invisible disabilities, meaning they looked more "normal" and, by society's standards, dateable.

These stigmas are even reflected in the media. When you see an individual

with a disability in a movie or television show, which is rare in and of itself, they are usually not in a relationship. As an individual who has been integrated into abled society my whole life, I'm constantly educating people and dealing with stereotypes and stigmas. People automatically assume that if I'm hanging out with a guy, it is platonic and will frequently interrupt or ask me condescendingly "Ooo, you're with a boy?" as if I'm a child. Honestly, I'm not even surprised given how people with disabilities have been represented in the media and the lack of interaction. The lack of representation also makes people with disabilities believe that their future won't consist of a healthy, happy relationship and they will be alone forever.

Why does having a disability have to be synonymous with being weird or gross? Why can't my wheelchair be seen as beautiful? Why is it strange for me to be seen alone with a guy? Everyone with a disability deserves to enjoy all aspects of life, including the possibility of a positive relationship.

*Bridget Gum-Egan  
sophomore English major*

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



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# WHO ARE YOUR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PLAYERS OF THE YEAR?

2021

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Our Sports Editors have picked five men and five women athletes across all of Rider's 20 athletic programs. Now it's up to you to decide who earns the titles of Men's Player of the Year and Women's Player of the Year!

*Voting will be open from April 20 - April 24.*

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 **The Rider News**



## SOFTBALL

# Broncs lose 3-of-4 over Easter weekend

By Jake Tiger

**A**ROLLING Rider softball squad hit a sudden speed bump, as it began a stretch of 20 consecutive road games and took losses in three of its four games over the weekend.

The Broncs had their five-game winning streak snapped when they split a doubleheader with Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) rival Quinnipiac on April 16 and dropped both matches against Lehigh on April 17.

## Scheduling strangeness

Rider softball's bustling home, Herb & Joan Young Field, will feel more like a ghost town in the coming weeks, as the team embarked on a grueling series of away games that does not see them playing a home game until May 6.

"Obviously everyone loves to be on their home field and I'm no different, but we had our fun at home. Now it's time to take it to some teams on their own field," sophomore pitcher Jessie Niegocki said.

The beginning of the trip did not go as planned, with the Broncs taking an uncharacteristic grouping of losses, one of them being an 11-3 defeat at the hands of Lehigh and the other two being frustrating one-run decisions.

"Right now we are struggling to close the door [on teams] but I have no doubt we'll figure it out," said Niegocki. "We just have to get back to the way we started the season, be aggressive, hit the ball hard, and the wins will follow."

As of now, it's unclear just how much the road trip contributed to the losses, but as the Broncs gradually accumulate hundreds of miles of wear in the coming weeks, it will be something worth considering.

"I don't know if it's necessarily the travel that factored into our play this weekend, but it's always a challenge getting up early, getting off the bus and being ready to play," said Niegocki. "At the end of the day, we just didn't come out ready to play and Quinnipiac did. It's just the way it works out sometimes and we have to figure out how to adjust."

The same thing can happen whether you're home or away."

## Hot hand, cold bat

Rider softball's Easter weekend vacation also saw Niegocki put together a collection of perplexing performances, as her pitching and batting told completely different stories.

Niegocki remained supreme from the circle, helping the Broncs secure their only victory of the weekend with excellent pitching. In the win, she pitched seven innings and allowed just three hits and one run.

"My game is all about spin, and as long as I stick to that I think I'll continue to be effective," said Niegocki. "I try not to compare myself to other pitchers because we're all so different. My goal is to just take it one pitch at a time, one batter at a time, and make every outing better than the last."

While Niegocki feasted on opposing batters, she was simultaneously amid a brutal offensive famine. The Broncs' leadoff hitter had just one hit in 13 at-bats across the four games, adding a frigid stain to an otherwise phenomenal season.

"Not to discredit their pitchers but I'd say it's just one of those slumps, hopefully short-lived," said Niegocki. "Sometimes you just can't find a gap, but my plan is to just keep hitting the ball hard and it will fall eventually."

Before the cold streak, Niegocki had never gone hitless in consecutive games. The sudden disappearance of Niegocki's stability was a major reason for Rider's unusual offensive shortcomings, only scoring four runs as a team in its crucial interconference doubleheader with Quinnipiac.

Though, even with the losses, the Broncs and their 7-3 conference record remain atop the MAAC despite a four-way tie for first, thanks to their league-best 23-15 overall record.

Rider softball will continue to slowly chip away at its 20-game road stretch with a doubleheader against Morgan State University on April 20.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore pitcher/second basemen **Jessie Niegocki** leads the Broncs in on-base percentage (OPS) with .431.

## BASEBALL

# Rider struggles on the road against Niagara



Andy Mead/Rider Athletics

Senior pitcher **Frank Doelling** recorded six strikeouts through eight innings in game one of the doubleheader against Niagara on April 16.

By Andrew Smolar and Dylan Manfre

**R**IDER baseball entered its series at Niagara confident after winning its first two Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) series of the year. The Broncs exited with mixed results claiming victory in the first game on April 14 but dropping the latter two games in a doubleheader on April 16.

## Papeo and O'Donnell stay hot

Niagara has struggled through the entire 2022 season, but kept pace with Rider in the early innings of the 7-1 Broncs win on the road.

Graduate student pitcher Joe Papeo got the win in six innings of service, allowing four hits and fanning three batters. Senior hurler Danny Kirwin backed him up in the relief effort striking out five of his 12 batters faced.

The Purple Eagles had an opportunity to put runners on the board with men on the corners with two outs in the bottom of the third. Rider's defense worked to its advantage when catcher Matt Ward hit a dribbler to Papeo who tossed the ball to first.

That defense was supplemented by the hot bat of junior outfielder Brendan O'Donnell who smashed a no-doubt home run to left field. It was O'Donnell's team-leading ninth of the year as he eyes the single-season record of 17.

"It's something that's not on my mind but it'd definitely be a great honor to be considered to possibly do that," O'Donnell said of the record. "Personally for me, it'd be more important to win a championship and if the record comes along with that, that's awesome."

The extent of Niagara's offense through the first four frames was a ground-rule double from first baseman Josh Marchese who was left stranded after his teammates couldn't drive him in.

## Late game troubles

In the first game of the day, the Broncs trailed the Purple Eagles 1-0 for most of the game. Rider finally found the run they needed in the bottom of the seventh courtesy of three singles, the last coming from junior Jack Winsett to drive in O'Donnell.

Unfortunately, the Broncs couldn't get the needed second run across home plate. The Purple Eagles earned a walk-off 2-1 victory.

Despite not resulting in a victory, it was another dominant outing for starting pitcher Frank Doelling. After pitching six shutouts innings with only one hit allowed against Fairfield, Doelling gave the Broncs eight innings of one-run ball.

"Frank was very good again today, when he is on his game staying focused, we stand a good chance at winning," said Head Coach Barry Davis. "It's a shame we could only muster one run. You will not win that way."

The second game was again tightly contested for most of the afternoon. The Broncs had built up a 2-0 lead after five and a half innings on the strength of O'Donnell's home run, and a bases-loaded walk.

Despite allowing Niagara to storm back and take the lead, the Broncs found it in them to score the tying run in the top of the eighth to make it 3-3.

Unfortunately for Rider, Niagara exploded in the bottom of the eighth with most of the damage coming after two outs were recorded. The Purple Eagles had five consecutive hits with two outs to completely blow the game open. The Broncs ended up losing 11-3.

Despite the rough inning, Davis pointed to missed opportunities offensively as an area he wanted to see improvement.

"The game was close until the bottom of the eighth," said Davis. "We missed two golden opportunities with the bases loaded where we only scored one run, we have plenty to work on."

Rider will get another shot at MAAC play when they welcome Manhattan to campus for a three-game weekend series starting on April 22.

# Sports

INSIDE

**BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL'S EASTER WEEKEND**  
*Rider's baseball and softball teams had a difficult Easter weekend, with each team only securing one win.*

FIND THE STORY ON PAGE 11

BASEBALL

## The Broncs' bomber

### O'Donnell takes it 'pitch by pitch'

By Jake Tiger

**A** MIDST a stable of capable hitters, the high-horsepower bat of Rider baseball's Brendan O'Donnell has managed to stand out from the herd. His fondness for sending baseballs over fences and trotting around bases has awarded him with an invaluable spot on the Broncs' stacked lineup.

O'Donnell is unlike any other player on Rider's roster or any player that has come through the school in years.

About three-fourths of the way through the 2022 season, the junior outfielder has already hit 10 home runs. That is more than any player from last year's Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship team, a team to which O'Donnell was not yet able to contribute.

"I think last year I was ready, but in a sense, when I got to the game I wasn't ready," said O'Donnell. "In practice, I was up-to-speed, but then as soon as I got in the game, everything was just super fast. I needed to really just take a step back and slow it all down and I feel like I've done a much better job of that this year... taking it pitch by pitch instead of trying to do too much."

Now, the matured, easy-going O'Donnell has become a home run machine in his first season as a starter, only needing 18 games to reach seven home runs. This included a four-game stretch against Virginia University and the Virginia Military Institute where he homered in four consecutive contests.

"When you're hot, you're hot and when you're cold, you're cold. You go through those streaks all year," said O'Donnell. "There's definitely times where you're seeing the ball a lot better than you are on other days."

The Malvern, Pennsylvania, native has typically remained on the hotter side this season. Of all Rider hitters with at least 40 at-bats, he leads in slugging percentage by far with .546 in 119 at-bats, the next closest batter having a slugging percentage of .444.

"I can handle the hard [pitches,] so I feel like pitchers know that they need to bring their best stuff if they're gonna beat me," said O'Donnell confidently. "If they get behind and get into a fastball count, that's something they don't wanna do."

The heavy hands of O'Donnell have rocketed him up the MAAC's home run leaderboard, as he currently sits at second in total homers, just one shy of first.

O'Donnell has earned a fearsome reputation amongst opposing pitchers, similar to that of a volatile, bubbling volcano liable to erupt at any moment.

"[O'Donnell] definitely gets pitched to differently than other guys on our team," said Assistant Coach Lee Lipinski. "He's a guy where they've gotta underline his name on scouting reports and say, 'We're not gonna let this guy beat us.'"

At 10 home runs with 17 games remaining, O'Donnell has a shot at reaching Rider's single-season home run record of 17.

The idea of setting records intrigued O'Donnell but was not even on his radar.

"Personally, I didn't even know [about the record,]" said O'Donnell. "Obviously, you wanna have the personal success. It's really cool to have a chance to do that, but for me, I just wanna win... but it'd be awesome if I could do that."

While O'Donnell stressed the importance of rings over records, there's no doubt his hitting this season has struck a balance between the two.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Junior outfielder **Brendan O'Donnell** has hit 10 home runs in 34 games this season and is in the hunt for the program's home run record of 17.

The Broncs boast an impressive 8-2 record when O'Donnell homers.

In addition to home runs, O'Donnell leads the Broncs in RBIs, games with multiple hits, and funnily enough, strikeouts.

O'Donnell's hefty, hyperactive bat has netted him a total of 44 strikeouts in 119 at-bats, 10 more than any other Bronc, but Rider's coaches are more than happy letting the aggressive O'Donnell loose.

"We're OK with [O'Donnell] striking out," said Lipinski. "We want him to be swinging the bat. The more times he puts the barrel on the ball, the more times it's gonna go over the fence."

There's no denying that O'Donnell can crush a baseball, but his coaches made it clear that the slugger works even harder than he hits.

"[O'Donnell's] still got a long way to go, but as far as work ethic and character, he's about as good as I've had in 33 years," said Head Coach Barry Davis. "He gives you 100%."

A clear-cut leader for the Broncs, O'Donnell commands the respect of his teammates by setting the standards with his incessant infatuation with the grind.

"[O'Donnell] really dedicates himself," said Lipinski. "He works out a ton and he's a kid that hits probably more than he should. He should probably stop hitting sometimes because he needs to give himself a break."

Already with a sizable foundation to build upon, O'Donnell and all of his hard work appear destined

for legendary reverence, as he continues launching baseballs into the heavens and dotting the perimeters of baseball fields with tiny craters.

"In the next couple of years, he's gonna be a scary guy to face," said Lipinski. "He's gonna continue to be at the top of the MAAC."

However, as O'Donnell continues to grow, so does the pressure upon him. He will certainly have a lot of weight on his shoulders in the coming seasons, but he will still stand tall with just as much weight behind his bat.



Andy Mead/Rider Athletics

O'Donnell leads the Broncs in home runs with 10 and RBIs with 30.