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R Factor finalists light up the stage

Photos by Destiny Pagan/The Rider News, Graphic by Jay Roberson/The Rider News



SEE 'RIDERS' PAGE 4

From left to right: Freshman musical theater major **Finn Alexander**, junior musical theater major **Emily Taylor Kaufman** and senior musical theater major **Aidan Kelly** performing as the three finalists in R Factor.

'No senioritis': Dell'Omo's retirement and beyond

By **Jake Tiger**

WITH his contract set to expire in July 2025, Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo said his decision to retire was not the climactic sitdown with colleagues and family that some may have envisioned.

Instead, it was a growing feeling he spent months mulling over as he entered his 10th year as president.

"Obviously, I've been thinking about it on and off for the past couple months, and it wasn't really until probably the middle of July [that] I started really giving it more serious thought," Dell'Omo said in an interview with The Rider News on Sept. 16. "I felt that we made enough progress in certain areas of [the] university, some of the key initiatives we were working on, that this was probably a good time to make the announcement. ... Plus, I also wanted to give the Board plenty of time to do the search process they needed to do to look for the next president."

Dell'Omo announced his decision in a universitywide email on Sept. 10, leaving him with approximately 10 months as president before his contract ends on July 31, 2025. Despite the short window, Dell'Omo said with a chuckle that there would be "no senioritis" ahead of his departure, as he continues to implement changes across campus.

"My goal ... is to leave Rider stronger than it was when I first took over in 2015," said Dell'Omo. "We have been really forward-looking and -thinking [while] trying to be as transparent as possible [as we] really address the challenges that we're facing in our industry. ... While doing so, [we're] really focusing on building that strong, student-centered commitment."

Dell'Omo said he planned to work toward the goal he set forth at Rider's convocation of creating a "leaner, more nimble institution" while also noting that this shift will not be as dramatic as he may have made it seem initially.

"We can't ignore the fact that there are going to be fewer students going to college in the future. ...

Secondly, there's the increasing challenge and question about the value of a college degree, and so you're getting hit on both sides: numbers-wise, as well as the sort of philosophical side," Dell'Omo said. "With that realization, we say, 'OK, let's be realistic as to what the optimal size of Rider should be ... and let's begin to build that institution around that size.'"

Dell'Omo said he hoped that Rider's next president will operate with a similar mindset, noting that the administrative team he has built will remain and help with this transition.

Whilst cutting back on Rider's size, he also wanted to maintain a highly diverse and inclusive student body, which he said was something he was proud to have focused on during his time.

Additionally, the president is hoping Rider's current fundraising campaign can hit its goal of \$100 million before he leaves. In his Sept. 16 interview, he said that the campaign was sitting at around \$93 million.

According to Joan Mazzotti, the chair of the Board of Trustees, discussions with Dell'Omo surrounding his retirement have been ongoing since the Board "enticed" him to stay at Rider with his last two contract extensions.

"This discussion is going on, but the decision really only crystallized in the few weeks immediately preceding the announcement," Mazzotti said.

Mazzotti said the search for Rider's next president will be a "community-wide process," but she added she will be focusing on finding a candidate with integrity, which she believed to be the most important quality. She also mentioned that Dell'Omo's successor should possess a similar financial acumen, commitment to diversity and inclusion and student-centered mindset that Rider will need going forward.

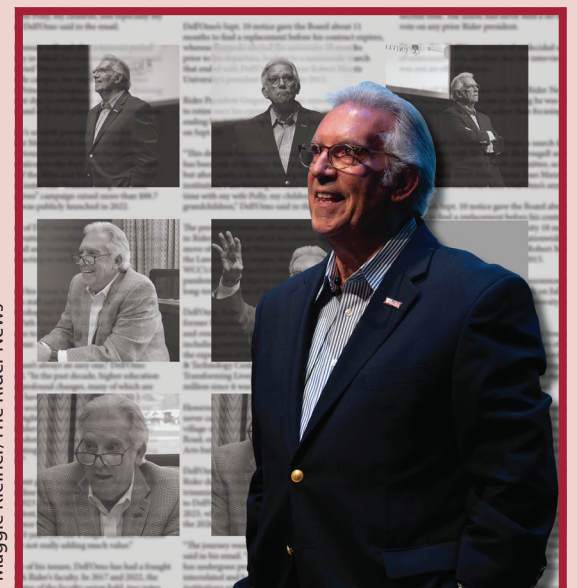
"From the first moment President Dell'Omo stepped on the campus, he has faced considerable headwinds, and I believe he was clearly the leader that Rider needed during this period," Mazzotti said. "A

university president does not work in a vacuum. The Board has supported President Dell'Omo's decisions as they were being made by the university. Decision-making is collaborative, and when the president and the Board leverage their respective roles and expertise, we make the best informed strategic choices."

Although Mazzotti said the Board supported Dell'Omo's decisions, during his tenure, the faculty union twice voted "no-confidence" in his leadership in the wake of a controversial attempt to sell Westminster Choir College, administer academic program cuts, layoffs and ongoing annual deficits. Never before had a Rider president faced such a vote.

The first communication from the chair of the search committee, Trustee Joe McDougall, will be sent out this week, according to Mazzotti.

She said she was unable to share much more information regarding the search. However, she noted the Board did not have a plan for an interim president and does not currently anticipate needing one.



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Rider President **Gregory Dell'Omo** plans to retire in 10 months.

INSIDE

BRONCS IN A GROOVE

Rider men's soccer continued a hot start to its season.



PAGE 8

SERVICE DOG AWARENESS MONTH

A Rider student highlights the importance of service dogs.



PAGE 6

NEW BHP DIRECTOR

Rider's honors program introduced Laurel Harris as its new director.



PAGE 5

SECURITY BRIEFS

BY RAVEN SYED

Mystery Marijuana

Sniffing sheriffs. On Sept. 9 at 9:44 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Gee Residence Hall for the report of the odor of marijuana. The Residence Life staff reported the incident after detecting an odor while performing their rounds. Public Safety arrived on location and detected the odor at the first-floor entryway. They proceeded to check the entirety of the building, but they could not locate the source of the smell.

Crazy Conover

Noisy neighbors. On Sept. 12 at 11:27 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Conover Residence Hall for a report of students being loud. Public Safety arrived on location and met with the student that made the complaint, who reported a group of students being loud outside. Public Safety approached the students, who complied with requests to quiet down and move to a different location.

Stocked Up

Caught on a high. On Sept. 14 at 8:14 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to University House, for the report of the odor of marijuana. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with Residence Life staff who reported the odor of marijuana coming from the first floor. Public Safety was able to locate the source of the odor and was given permission to search the room. Public Safety conducted the search, finding suspected marijuana, paraphernalia and alcohol. The incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

- Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

Faculty, admin differ on cut-program input

By Jake Tiger

TWO Rider programs were cut over the summer following what the provost called “a conversation and an agreement” between the faculty and administrators.

However, two professors affected by the cuts said they were never involved in any discussions; instead, they found out in an email from their dean.

“I had no idea,” said Md Ali, a cybersecurity and computer science professor. “I just received an email saying it was archived. When the discussion was, I have no idea... I don’t think that any of [the full-time faculty] were involved in this process.”

Ongoing cuts

In a Sept. 9 interview with The Rider News, Provost DonnaJean Fredeen said that both the Master of Science in cybersecurity and a branch of the nursing program were archived, adding to a growing list of axed programs amid the university’s financial struggles.

In June 2022, 25 programs were archived or eliminated as a result of “academic prioritization,” a universitywide email announced. The university has previously stated that programs designated as “archived” were removed from academic offerings, and students would cease being recruited into these disciplines, but the programs could be reinstated in the future.

With the cybersecurity program in particular, Kelly Bidle, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said there were discussions over the summer between her, Fredeen and John Bochanski, chair of the department of computer science and physics.

Bidle said Bochanski was the faculty representation in the discussions. However, Bochanski is classified as an administrator and is not allowed to attend faculty union meetings, unlike regular, full-time faculty members.

Bochanski declined to speak to The Rider News.

Bidle said, “The ideal is ... the administration and the faculty coming to the same conclusions together. ... In this case, before Dr. [Elizabeth] Hawthorne left and this summer with Dr. Bochanski, we had those discussions and basically figured it’s best to put [the cybersecurity program] on pause.”

The department received the email from Bidle on Aug. 22 after a failed search during the summer for a new director of the master’s program.

The Rider News received Bidle’s email, which reads, “Without having a faculty champion, combined with the low enrollments and greater external competition, we have to come to this difficult conclusion... I am hopeful that with the growth of the undergraduate cybersecurity program we can revisit this graduate program and consider its restoration in the future.”

A few hours after Bidle’s email, there was a separate message from Bochanski to the four full-time faculty in the department. The email, provided to The Rider News, reads, “FYI. The decision was made completely by the Dean’s office.”

Bidle said she was unaware of the email, adding

that she had discussions with Bochanski about the program throughout the summer: “I’m disappointed to hear that that was the communication from the chair to the faculty, and I’m disappointed the faculty didn’t come and talk to me if they had a concern.”

‘Everyone is overloaded’

Bidle said they decided to archive the program with hopes of one day reviving it, but for the time being, she noted the enrollment was too low to justify keeping it. The program usually hovered around or below 10 students, and they wanted to continue to build up the undergraduate program before reconsidering the four-plus-one master’s degree.

“The master’s degree was launched simultaneously with the undergrad, and that is not a recipe for success,” Bidle said. “You have to build the base ... before that graduate program can really thrive.”

According to Rider’s course roster, eight graduate-level cybersecurity classes were offered for the Fall 2024 semester. Each class can have up to 16 students enrolled, but the roster showed that 93 of 128 total spots were still open on Sept. 16.

For the handful of enrolled students, a teach-out plan will be implemented so they can complete the remaining requirements for their degrees, Bidle said.

While the program’s enrollment was low, the cybersecurity faculty believed this was partially due to being understaffed and not having the resources to attract a qualified director for the program after the resignation of the previous one last spring.

According to Ali, after the program’s director, Hawthorne, resigned from her position at Rider, the department struggled to pick up her duties afterward.

Northeastern University’s website showed that Hawthorne is working as a professor and cybersecurity graduate program director for the institution.

Will Pitera, a graduate student in Rider’s cybersecurity program, said he was “somewhat surprised, somewhat not” when he found out the degree was dropped.

“It was very frustrating because I only have one semester left,” Pitera said, who summed up his experience this semester with the phrase “disappointing and frustrating.” “I was hoping to get that last semester in with [Hawthorne] and get recommendation letters, but unfortunately there wasn’t enough time to get any of those.”

While Hawthorne was at Rider, Pitera said she had lectures one or twice a week that lasted up to two hours, and she was overall very accessible to her students. Now with the teach-out plan, the classes are being outsourced and are all completely asynchronous, with Pitera saying it felt like the new, unfamiliar instructors had no knowledge of the program.

“[Her classes were] always interesting and you always learned something, but now with these classes, things are very different,” Pitera said. “You have to do everything on your own, you’re not being taught anything. It’s a lot more frustrating and I kind of enjoyed those lectures.”

The graduate cybersecurity students are paying the same tuition rate despite the classes being outsourced, Pitera said.

Pitera said students were alerted of Hawthorne’s resignation on June 24 and felt “left in the dark” due to the lack of context.

With worsening staffing issues, Jay Luo, another cybersecurity and computer science professor, said the faculty members were put in a difficult situation: they needed time to develop the program’s curriculum, as cybersecurity is a fairly new industry. But due to the lack of staffing, people like Luo had to pick up extra classes to keep the program running, leaving them little-to-no time for research.

The cybersecurity and computer science department has four full-time faculty, all of whom teach four classes per semester, according to Luo, who said he had prepped and taught seven new courses in his three years at Rider, and he will be running two more in the coming spring.

Luo felt that this predicament may have led to the sputtering of the cybersecurity master’s program.

“This kind of problem is also happening for our undergraduate program at this moment,” said Luo. “Everyone is overloaded. We don’t have time for research, but cybersecurity is a new major. We don’t really have a textbook to go off of, and we basically have to design everything from scratch.”

Luo and Ali said they and Bochanski were involved in searching for and interviewing candidates for the job, but once the hiring process stalled and archival talks began, they were no longer included.

Luo said finding a candidate for the job, which included overseeing the program and lecturing, was difficult because the requirements and commitment were high while compensation was low. He said there were plenty of underqualified applicants, but few who actually met the requirements of the role as most other jobs that require a Ph.D. in cybersecurity offer more pay, research opportunities and the chance to become tenured.

Ali said, “We selected three [candidates] for the interview, and we actually liked one of the prospective candidates. The problem is he’s doing another job, and he wants this one as a second job. Rider doesn’t allow that.”

The final interview with the candidate only included Bochanski and it did not result in a hire, according to Ali.



Jake Tiger/The Rider News

Professor Md Ali at his desk in the Mike and Patti Hennessy Science and Technology Center.

CDI welcomes new director

By Grace Bertrand

As the Center for Diversity and Inclusion faced a change in leadership toward the end of the previous school year, Jasmine Johnson stepped into the position of CDI director about three months ago after a year-long search.

The CDI is part of the university's efforts to promote an appreciation for different cultures and ways of life through programming, policies and student training.

In June 2023, the CDI lost its former director, Pamela Pruitt, leaving the position vacant until Johnson's arrival on June 10. The center also lost its assistant director, Shaun Williams, in January, and he is yet to be replaced.

Johnson meets Rider

Entering the small-town-college atmosphere and community, Johnson was immediately drawn to Rider, her bubbly personality and welcoming spirit finding a place at the CDI.

"I feel like you get a chance to know people on a personal level and not just a professional level," Johnson said.

Johnson brought knowledge from her involvement in higher education, coming straight from Seton Hall University as an assistant director for the Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program as part of the Educational Opportunity Fund. During her time at Seton Hall, Johnson wore a number of hats as co-administrator and co-organizer of the university's Inclusion Alliance, a peer-to-peer program aimed at creating college diversity lessons.

Johnson also helped create the Queens Unapologetically Educated, Empowered and Noble (QUEEN) program, a living-learning community for students that identify as being female and of Black descent.

Having experience with low-income communities and student-inclusion programs, Johnson found the transition to CDI director to be a lot less challenging.

"I think Seton Hall definitely gave me experience in developing lessons for the student body," Johnson said. "I got the chance to craft some really good workshops and training for students and get that connection with students through collaboration."

Johnson started her term in June and spent the first

two months preparing for her first school year while experiencing the buzz of the students on campus in real-time.

"There's noise, there's people flowing in and out of the center, students in here for homework ... Seeing students in the space has been fantastic," Johnson said.

Johnson is excited for the changes she can bring to the center while promoting inclusion as much as she can. She looks forward to being a representative for black female students, who will see someone that looks like them in a position of power.

Searching for a new leader

Chief Diversity Officer Heeyoung Kim served as one of the only forms of leadership for the CDI in the five-month period between directors. Kim described this time as low-pressure due to help from a team of student workers, graduate assistants, Student Government Association representatives, faculty and staff members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Group.

When putting together a search committee for a new director, Kim explained she was adamant about making the search as inclusive and unbiased as possible. She presented the top candidates to campus partners, CDI student workers and the student body to make the final decision.

"Everybody has biases and preferences, but when you have a search committee, you can check imbalances on my personal blindspots," Kim said.

The search committee included three faculty members of the university, along with Kim herself. Kim and the rest of the committee planned to select the top three candidates prior to the end of the school years so students could meet them and provide feedback.

In the second-to-last week of classes, the top three candidates met with the student body, faculty members, student workers and the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, DonnaJean Fredeen. They participated in a number of workshops and training to test their approaches and interactions with the students in a more conversational manner.

After receiving feedback from the various groups, the committee was able to make a final decision on Johnson for the extensive position.

Photo courtesy of Jasmine Johnson



Jasmine Johnson was named the new director of the CDI.

After starting her position as the new CDI Director in early June, Johnson has already brought many changes to the university and its programs for diversity and inclusion.

The All Broncs Build Emerging Leaders, Opportunities, Networks and Growth-Mindsets (BELONG) Alliance, a revamped program sponsored by the CDI that Johnson has helped build, aims to empower incoming students into university life, cultivate a sense of belonging and equip them with the necessary skills and networks for personal and professional success through various programs and training.

Johnson and Kim described the program as successful, with over 10% of the incoming first-year students showing interest in the program, which is double the number of applicants the program has received in the past.

"All the students were happy meeting Mrs. Johnson and working with her. She's very personable and pleasant to work with," Kim said.

As the school year continues, Johnson intends for the CDI to continue to host their traditional events such as Unity Day and Celebration of Lights, with small changes added in to coincide with the new leadership they now offer.

"I think students can look forward to dynamic programming from the center and having an inclusive and collaborative environment for students to have conversations [and celebrate differences]," Johnson said.

Navigation Office cut; faculty advising becomes focus

By Hannah Newman

As the university balances an ongoing budget deficit, Rider administrators decided to cut the Student Navigation Office over the summer, along with multiple other staff positions.

"It was certainly having a positive impact in terms of what we ended up with for retention last year, but at the same time, it's ... your wants versus your needs," said Provost DonnaJean Fredeen in an interview on Sept. 9 with The Rider News. "What we need is very strong faculty advising. What we wanted was another group of people who were helping supplement that academic advising. It was a difficult decision, but I feel confident in the work."

The short-lived Student Navigation Office was created in 2020 for holistic advising beyond what the faculty provided, according to Fredeen. The office stood as a mentorship resource for new students and zeroed in on keeping students on track to meet their Engaged Learning requirements.

"At the end of the day, it comes down to the need for us to align our expenses with our revenue," said Fredeen in an interview on Sept. 13 with The Rider News.

The office consisted of a director and three navigation coaches assigned to meet with students throughout their first year. Coaches aimed to ensure new students knew where to find resources so they could focus on campus engagement. The office consisted of two coaches at the time it closed, according to Fredeen.

The coaches were hired specifically for the positions and did not have prior roles at the university. However, the two coaches were given the opportunity to move into the financial aid department, but only

one took the offer, according to Fredeen.

The Engaged Learning Program still remains a graduation requirement so that students continue to immerse themselves in campus life and prioritize diverse involvement throughout their Rider experience.

"I do think that the Navigation Office was a good motivator for Engaged Learning points, but I don't think it's going to hurt students in their ability to complete their Engaged Learning [requirements]," said Fredeen. "With the advisee task force that Dean [Eugene] Kutcher led all of last year and the resource we are creating for them, Engaged Learning is highlighted in there, and we are really trying to make certain that advisers are not just thinking about courses but Engaged Learning."

The responsibility of Engaged Learning resides in Career Development, Engaged Learning and Leadership according to Fredeen. They run reports every semester to quantify how many Engaged Learning points students have earned and how many categories they hit in the process.

Beginning in the second semester of a student's junior year, deans offices call students who are in danger of not meeting their requirements, according to Fredeen.

"I want to bring the focus back to faculty advising, because that is the most important relationship our students have here on campus in terms of their success," said Fredeen. "Which is why I asked Dean Kutcher to spend all of last year really looking at what additional support we can be providing to the faculty as they are working with their student advisees."

According to Quinn Cunningham, president

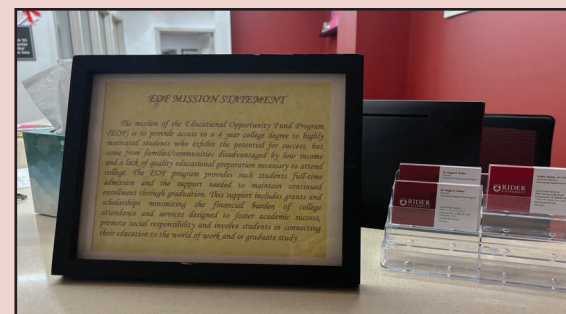
of Rider's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, faculty do not receive updates when staff members are cut or moved, making the action of guiding student's a bit more difficult.

"The nice thing about the Navigation Office was that students could ask some of the questions about what they wanted to try and were financially related [questions]," said Cunningham. "They sort of have that information ready to go, versus [how] we're more focused on the curriculum."

The former Student Navigation Office in the Bart Luedke Center is now the Educational Opportunity Program's space on campus. According to Fredeen, this provides the same level of mentorship to students who qualify for the program all four years. EOP is a state-sponsored program that helps low-income New Jersey residents attend college.

Although the Navigation Office is now closed, first-year students are automatically enrolled in a Canvas module called "Navigating Rider," an online program that aims to orient students to the institution's resources. "Navigating Rider" is still a requirement run by the Academic Success Center.

Destiny Pagan/The Rider News



The Student Navigation Office's space was taken over by the Educational Opportunity Program.



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News



Junior musical theater major **Emily Taylor Kaufman** wins R Factor after three show-stopping performances.

R Factor 2024 gets a standing ovation

By **Madison Lewis**

SUSPENSEFUL music sounded while strobe lights illuminated the three remaining contestants on the Yvonne Theatre stage. Enamored attendees braced themselves for the announcement that would declare the winner of this season's R Factor.

The annual competition organized by the Office of Campus Life was split in two segments: the first round of eliminations on Sept. 7, and the second and third rounds on Sept. 13. In between the two dates was an opportunity for the eight remaining competitors from the first segment to meet up with their mentors and strategize.

Senior music education major Julia Wilder and senior marketing major Sherrie Manalo hosted the show and introduced each contestant and performance.

In the initial elimination round, the judges, Nick Barbati, the assistant vice president of student affairs, and Dani Knights, a previous "X Factor" contestant, chose performers that would join their teams, which would be the competitors that they mentor for the finals. Brad Fischetti, of the band LFO, was the third judge on the second night of R Factor, but he did not have a team of his own.

On the first day, there were limited spots for contestants to go from the qualifying round into the pre-final. There were four seats lining the stage, fitting



Malory Hoelzl/The Rider News

two people each, and the judges were left with the decision of who should earn a spot.

It was evident, however, that the crowd did not always agree with the calls from the judge panel. Booing echoed throughout the theater occasionally to disagree with the judges when they exchanged one student's seat for another.

"I love [the booing]," said Barbati. "The way the audience reacts is truly with such love of their fellow students."

At the finals, after all eight competitors provided a heartfelt performance, three were selected for the final round. The audience voted on their favorite contestants via text message, which narrowed down the participants.

The final three, junior musical theater major Emily Taylor Kaufman, senior musical theater major Aidan Kelly and freshman musical theater major Finn Alexander, all executed renditions of their favorite songs. These performances received unanimous praise from the Bronc-filled crowd, each earning standing ovations.

Of "Team Dani," Kelly conveyed a heartbreaking and melancholy ballad to the crowd: "Sign of the Times" by Harry Styles.

Alexander, from "Team Nick," blew the crowd away with his bellowing voice that was only elevated by his choice of attire, an all-white suit. He chose "Feeling Good" by Michael Bublé.

Last to entertain was Kaufman, also from "Team Nick." She silenced the entire room with "I Have Nothing" by Whitney Houston. When the song concluded, the room erupted in applause and unanimous cheers of "put her through."

Throughout the finals, Kaufman was a fan favorite. The audience feedback was fierce when she interacted with the crowd, urging them to sing along with her first song on the second night, "Since U Been Gone" by Kelly Clarkson.

Preceding Kaufman's final performance, Barbati unabashedly told the crowd, "I believe you should

win the R Factor."

At one point, the host asked the crowd to "scream for who you want to win." The response was overwhelmingly in support of Kaufman, as chants of her name ensued.

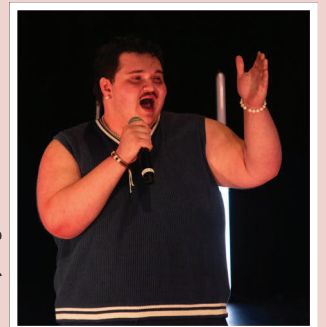
Kaufman earned the trophy as well as a barrage of confetti.

"This has been the most enjoyable performance for me," said Kaufman after the win.

She has performed in different arenas, from nursing homes to sporting events. However, she said that the R Factor was a different beast entirely.

To her, the audience's positive feedback and the crowd's unshakable energy made this R factor one to remember.

News Editor Jay Roberson and Video Editor Josiah Thomas participated in the R Factor auditions. They had no part in the writing or editing of this story.



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Senior musical theater major **Aidan Kelly** sings "Sign of the Times" by Harry Styles.

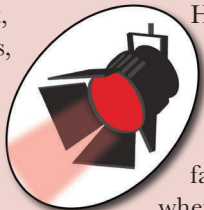


Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Freshman musical theater major **Finn Alexander** sings passionately.



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News



Leslie Uriostegui/The Rider News

Check out The Rider News' R Factor photo gallery!

Tune in to our new show on 107.7 The Bronc and Spotify for a 'Roundup' of the week's news!



THE RIDER NEWS ROUNDUP

BHP introduces Harris as new director

By Caroline Haviland

LAUREL Harris was announced as the new director of the Baccalaureate Honors Program, a role she did not imagine for herself when she left her hometown in Montana years ago for a new beginning on the East Coast.

Harris, an associate professor of English at Rider, began her teaching career in search of a different job, but what she found was a passion she did not know she had.

After interviewing for an adjunct professor position at Kingsborough Community College in New York, Harris was asked to start the following day. She arrived without any experience or training.

“I absolutely fell in love with teaching,” said Harris. “I just love being in a room with students, creating knowledge together and talking about big questions and seeing how they encounter texts and where they come from.”

That job inspired Harris to work at numerous community colleges in the City University of New York system, which gave her an extensive background in teaching, before coming to Rider in 2014. Her time spent there influenced her research interests as she decided to focus on early 20th century women’s writing, communication technologies and late-to-post colonial connections.

Harris provides her research in classes such as Modern British Literature, Women in Film and Introduction to Women’s Studies. She has designed



Caroline Haviland/The Rider News

Harris poses in front of the English board posted in front of her office.

and taught two BHP courses alongside professors in the sociology and education department: “Under the Influence: Drugs, Deviance and Culture” and “Inclusive Education and Disabilities.”

“I learn a lot from the other instructors, and I learn a lot about my own discipline because I’m looking at it from a different lens,” Harris said. “Things that are obvious to me aren’t obvious to the other instructors, so then I have to go back and think, ‘Oh, what does that mean?’”

In her new role as director of BHP, Harris works with faculty in developing new curricula to ensure the range of classes allows BHP students to fulfill their general education requirements. Harris also advises students to help navigate their way through the overwhelming-but-flexible BHP curriculum.

“As my adviser, she has always done everything she could to make sure I would graduate on time. She has truly guided my experience at Rider,” said Emily Porter Siegel, a senior English literature major. “She is the professor that will answer my late-night emails and I’ve really felt so supported when working with her.”

Siegel, who uses they/them pronouns, chose to collaborate with Harris to complete their BHP capstone after working with her in the classroom.

“She is just such an amazing educator. My experience with her in class was incredible,” said Siegel. “She was willing to hear even my craziest responses and encouraged creative approaches to the text,” said Siegel. “I was so excited when I saw they made her BHP director because I know the program is in such good hands.”

Features and Entertainment Editors Madison Lewis and Grace Bertrand, Photo Editor Destiny Pagan, Opinion Editor Libby D’Orvilliers, and Copy Editors Raven Syed and Colleton are part of the Baccalaureate Honors Program and had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY

25

Lynch Adler Hall 129
6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

**NEDA-Times
Game Night**

*Presented by the National
Eating Disorder Association
(NEDA) Campus Warriors*



THURSDAY

26

BLC NJM Room
7:00 PM to 11:30 PM

**Dil Dosti Freshers
Bollywood Party
Night**

*Presented by the Indian
Cultural Association
and Global
Outlooks*



SATURDAY

28

BLC Theater
7:00 PM

Rider Drag Race

*Presented by the Office of
Campus Life*



MONDAY

30

BLC Cavalla Room
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

**Rhythms & Roots:
A Vibrant Celebration of
Salsa, Merengue and
Bachata**

*Presented by the
Center for Diversity
and Inclusion (CDI)*



Student speaks on Service Dog Awareness Month

SEPTEMBER is National Service Dog Awareness Month, so I would like to shed light on the kinds of service dogs.

In the informational flyers from the nonprofit organization Canine Companions, where I got my dog, they make a clear distinction between service dogs, medical alert dogs and emotional support animals (ESAs). They often state that the distinction is important because service dogs have stricter and more expansive licensing and training, establishing a hierarchy between different dogs. So, let's dive in.

A service dog is a dog trained to do specific tasks for someone with a disability or some kind of physical limitation. They are provided more access in public places, which makes their licensing stricter.

Medical alert dogs are specially trained to alert others or their owner to an upcoming medical crisis. For example, a person with diabetes may get alerted to a sudden drop in blood sugar or someone with epilepsy may be warned of a seizure before it starts.

ESAs are more expansive and can technically be any animal that's trained to provide some kind of emotional support. For instance, someone with anxiety may need to pet a cat when they're having a panic attack to calm themselves down.

In the disabled community ESAs can cause problems because anyone can register any animal as an ESA, sometimes without any formal training. There are people who take advantage of this system and claim their animal is an ESA to get their pets into public places. This poses an issue when people begin to associate poorly behaved and inadequately trained animals with all service animals, making restrictions against them all more rigid, which can have a serious impact on the disabled community as a whole.

The other problem for ESAs is that there are not as many organizations who specifically train animals to perform certain tasks. For example, my dog, Sheriff, was bred and then trained for the first two years of his life to perform highly specialized and complex tasks. He can pick things up for me, take off my coat, push accessible door buttons, and pull open drawers and doors, all of which required extensive training. Meanwhile, there aren't nearly as many of these same programs for ESAs.

On the other hand, people with mental illnesses or mental health concerns have some form of limitation in their lives, just like people with other disabilities. Their mental illness may make things like going to and performing in school or work challenging, much like it is for me, a wheelchair user, without my service dog. ESAs do provide their owners with important services and care for their owners that is essential to their daily functioning.

Besides licensing restrictions, these stereotypes and misconceptions seem to be a continuation of the negative biases against people with mental illnesses. Often, all kinds of disabilities are overlooked when they're not outwardly visible, causing people to not believe or be as compassionate towards people with invisible disabilities. There is less leeway given, which extends to ESAs.

Trying to take advantage of the system by registering any animal, regardless of temperament or training, as an ESA is not the solution to this licensing gap. This causes ESAs and the people who need them to be overlooked and not taken seriously, which can be extremely dangerous and impactful on someone's life. There needs to be a middle ground to create a balance between these two extremes — a better system designed so everyone, with any kind of disability, can get the kind of support that they need.

*Bridget Gum-Egan
senior English major*



Angelina Fierro/The Rider News

Service dogs are specifically trained and registered to support a variety of individuals with specific needs.



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DIGITAL ONLY: Beyond campus: My journey as a student journalist



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THE Rider News

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FIELD HOCKEY

Broncs bounce back, take one of two games

By Kadie DiGiuseppe

FOLLOWING two close losses last week, Rider field hockey dropped another tough game against Monmouth on Sept. 13, but regained its ground at Georgetown, walking away with the 3-2 victory on Sept. 15 and bringing their record to 3-3.

On the road again

The Broncs traveled to West Long Branch, New Jersey, for a match up against the Hawks on Sept. 13, but they were shut out for the first time this season.

Junior forward Valeria Perales created a chance early for the Broncs, giving them the first corner of the game within the opening three minutes.

Soon after, the Hawks were aggressive and traveled down the field to put their first goal in the net.

Freshman goalkeeper Jade Regnart was able to save three shots from the Hawks in the first quarter and the Broncs were looking to tie the game up going into the second.

The Broncs' offense was able to get three corners and three shots on goal before halftime, but none got by the Monmouth goalkeeper while the Hawks scored their second goal to go up 2-0.

Monmouth scored two more goals in the beginning of the third quarter, but Rider still initiated five more corners before the end of the third in an attempt to catch up.

With 10 minutes left in the game, the Hawks scored their last goal, which brought the score to 5-0.

The Broncs finished the game with 12 shots and 12 corners while Regnart finished with eight saves.

Back in the groove

The Broncs hit the road again on Sept. 15 to play Georgetown in Towson, Maryland, and they walked away with their first win since Sept. 1.

Rider started the game with a chip on its shoulder and proved it wanted to bounce back after six shots and one corner in the first five minutes.

Freshman forward and Northeast Conference rookie of the week Olivia Machiavelli contributed half of those shots.



Alban Theunissen/The Rider News

The Broncs gather at midfield during a stoppage of play.

Senior midfielder Lyric Scott was the first one to reach the back of the net for the Broncs, claiming her second goal of the season.

Georgetown returned the favor with a goal less than 30 seconds later, tying the game at one a piece.

The Bulldogs controlled possession for most of the second quarter but could not break through the Broncs' defense.

To start the second half, Machiavelli scored her fourth goal of the season giving the Broncs the lead once again.

Junior forward Semra Said joined the party to score her first goal of the season later in the third, giving

Rider a 3-1 lead.

The Broncs continued to dominate on offense with six more shots in the beginning of the fourth. The Bulldog offense managed to score its second goal during the last minute of play, but Georgetown was unable to catch up before the final whistle.

Rider got 21 shots off in the affair while Regnart and sophomore goalkeeper Moria Geiger totaled for four saves.

The Broncs will be headed to Lock Haven on Sept. 22 at 12 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Rider shows promise in draw with Niagara

By Kadie DiGiuseppe and Sophia Matthews

COMING off its first Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference game, a 5-1 loss against Fairfield, Rider women's soccer ended its 0-0 game against Niagara on a high note.

The Broncs and the Niagara Purple Eagles faced off at Ben Cohen Field for Rider's Alumni Game in a tightly-paced affair, but the Rider offense closed the game on Sept. 14 with an encouraging level of energy and chemistry.

'You can feel the passion'

Rider began the game with an intense offensive attack, earning four early corners and three shots on goal, one of which occurred in the first minute.

Niagara began to pick up its offensive intensity 25 minutes into the half, but it was no match for graduate student goalkeeper Ellie Sciancalepore, who saved two consecutive shots.

Sciancalepore was a vital part of the Rider defense in the matchup, serving as a brick wall in the box.

When asked about corner kicks and her mentality toward blocking shots, Sciancalepore said, "There's a lot of girls in the box, so what I have to do is just kind of forget they're there, tunnel vision on the ball, and I remind myself that I can always be more athletic than the girl next to me and get to that ball."

The Broncs continued their aggression throughout the rest of the first half, but they were unable to find the back of the net.

Niagara started the second half revitalized and looked to break through Rider's defense.

While the Broncs thrived on offense in the first

half, they were forced to switch gears, they placed their focus on defense in the second half after Niagara came out with two shots on goal and a corner in the first 15 minutes of the half.

In the 64th minute, Rider was able to bounce back with junior midfielder Margret Fridriksson taking two shots in a quick succession.

'Kept the energy really high'

As the clock began winding down, players became frustrated and hungry for the first goal of the game, evident through the yellow cards being awarded to both teams with under 15 minutes to go.

The Broncs took advantage of this energy by taking three shots within the last 10 minutes, including an amazing attempt by freshman forward Valgerður Sigurjónsdóttir.

Sophomore midfielder Ava Ferrie and Fridriksson both put forth their own shot attempts in the last three minutes.

After the game, Head Coach Drayson Hounscome reported overall optimism, noting Rider's success in maintaining a shutout and creating chances with their high percentage of ball control.

"They got some good players, so to stop them scoring, it's good," Hounscome said, specifically noting Niagara's superstar left forward who had her five-game scoring streak ended by Rider.

After the draw, Rider sits at 1-4-2 and will have two weeks off before its next MAAC game at Canisius on Sept. 28.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Sophomore midfielder Ava Ferrie makes a move on the ball.

Sports

ONLINE

RIDER GOES 0-3 IN D.C. TOURNAMENT

Read the latest Rider women's volleyball and how it did last weekend at the George Washington Tournament!

FIND THE STORY ON [THERIDERNEWS.COM](https://www.ridernews.com)



MEN'S SOCCER

Broncs win five in a row with victory over Lehigh

By Rich Saile

COMING off its three-game win streak, including two shutouts, Rider men's soccer defeated the New Jersey Institute of Technology 2-1 at Ben Cohen Field on Sept. 14, before adding another victory against Lehigh, winning 3-1 on Sept. 17.

Getting off on the right foot

In the first 36 seconds of the game, the Broncs missed three shots while trying to get the first goal. However, the first goal of the game came in the eighth minute when the Highlanders scored from the left corner of the 18-yard box.

The ball shot off the right post to give NJIT an early 1-0 lead. The Broncs' equalizing goal came from freshman midfielder Ezra Punselie. An assist from senior midfielder Bryan Akongo on a give-and-go near the top of the 18-yard box led to the shot.

Seconds before halftime, junior midfielder Theo Da Silva took a shot that the Highlanders' goalkeeper narrowly saved.

"I think the way we started helped a lot, or because we were dominating the game," Akongo said, summarizing the team's thoughts at halftime. "We [had] a lot of possession on the ball, and we knew another goal was coming, so going into the halftime talk we were just very confident."

The Broncs defense continued to stifle the Highlander offense, and junior goalkeeper Adam Salama had three saves.

In the 73rd minute, junior midfielder Momo Diop scored after the Broncs offense attacked the midfield and found an opening in the Highlanders' defense.

Taking the lead

Graduate student midfielder Adel Al Masude passed the ball to Akongo, who passed to Diop and scored with a right foot finish low inside the left post, giving the Broncs the 2-1 lead.

"Momo [Diop] is a special player. He is one of the best in this league and one of the best players in the country. He can change the game in a moment and I think with the ball at his feet he can really make things happen and push our attack," Rider Head Coach Chad Duernberger said. "When you have a guy who just senses the game in certain moments ... it [can] really push your team forward. It really changes the whole season."

The Broncs held off two corner kicks from the Highlanders late in the game to win their fourth straight.

Akongo extends a streak where he has totaled two points in each of the Broncs four wins, while Diop scored his fourth goal of the year and his second game-winner, leading the team in goals.

Downing the Mountain Hawks

On Sept. 17, Rider hit the road to take on Lehigh and was able to walk away with a strong 3-1 victory.

The scoring got started by Diop with his team-leading fifth goal of the season at 33:21, and then roughly seven minutes later, the Mountain Hawks were able to tie it back up a 1-1.

The game itself was played aggressively by both teams, as Rider finished with 16 fouls and Lehigh had 14, with 10 alone in the first half.



Kaitlyn D'Alessio/The Rider News

Junior midfielder **Momo Diop** travels with the ball.

Coming out of the break, the Broncs came out firing under the lights as they tailed off two unanswered goals to put them up 3-1 and to give them their fifth straight win.

Rider returns home to play Mercyhurst University on Sept. 21 at 1 p.m. The game will be streamed on Broncvision.

WRESTLING

Rider alum donates \$500,000 for new wrestling center

By Benjamin Shinault

RIDER wrestling has been one of the most dominant teams at Rider in recent years, producing two All-Americans and an Olympian in the past two seasons while also taking on big, nationally-ranked wrestling programs such as Rutgers, Penn State and the University of Michigan.

Rider has been training for all these matches in the Gary Taylor Wrestling Center, located in the Canastra Health and Sports Center. Built in 1988, the space has been the home for countless Rider wrestling legends.

This year the storied room will receive an update, including a larger practice area, a strength and cardio section, an enhanced locker room and upgraded offices for the coaching staff.

'They deserve the best facility'

A fresh practice facility does a lot more off the mat than some may believe, according to Head Coach John Hangey. A big motivator to getting the renovations done was to enhance Rider's chances in both the

transfer portal and recruitment.

"We just needed something as good as we can afford and provide to help us get better, because we have proven that if we can get the kids, we can develop them into real quality wrestlers and All-Americans on the national level," Hangey said. "A facility of this nature really helps us get better kids down the line."

Rider finished another strong season last year, going 8-7 with senior Quinn Kinner '24 and junior David Szuba both winning the Mid-Atlantic Conference, and sophomore Steyn De Lange becoming the first-ever Bronc to qualify for the Olympics. Therefore, having a state-of-the-art facility only strengthens Rider's chances for success moving forward.

"We are one of the best teams in the MAC, and it's important that we have one of the best wrestling rooms," Hangey said.

Hangey explained he wanted to make the renovations happen for a long time. With his son, JP Hangey, wrestling for the Broncs this season, the update to the center could not have come at a better time.

"My son is a freshman on the wrestling team this year, so it's cool and really interesting that he gets to see the first year that it is built," Hangey said.

The honorable gift

On Oct. 6, 2022, Rider announced in a press release that Rider wrestling has received a \$500,000 leadership gift from Tim Morrison, who graduated from Rider in 1983 and was an All-American for the program. Morrison was coached by Gary Taylor, the center's namesake, as well as his two sons, Tim Taylor and Robert Taylor.

Gary Taylor, who coached at Rider for 39 years starting in 1978, has led his teams to 442 dual victories, which ranked third all time in Division I at the time of his retirement. He also mentored 17 All-American wrestlers and won 14 conference championships.

Morrison said in the press release, "During the time we spent with Gary, we got to see his devotion to Rider wrestling and, most importantly, his devotion to the individuals that he coached. It is our honor to make our gift in tribute to Gary and all he has done for my family and for Rider."

Hangey, who has been coaching at Rider full time since 2000, was eager to get things going when he heard the news that the renovations were beginning.

"When I got the call, they asked me at the end of July, beginning of August, and they said, 'We are going to start Monday, so can you have your stuff out [of the office] by Friday?' and I said, 'I can have it out by Thursday,'" Hangey said.

Hangey hopes that the new wrestling center will be complete by homecoming weekend so he and the rest of the wrestling program can properly honor Morrison for his gift.

Rider's homecoming weekend is from Oct. 25-27, and the 2024 wrestling season will begin on Nov. 3 with matches at Princeton.

"We are hoping by homecoming, we can do an unveiling and try to bring Tim Morrison and his family to recognize them and honor them," said Hangey.



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Tim Morrison (left) stands with his family, all repping Rider wrestling.