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THE Rider News

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE RIDER COMMUNITY SINCE 1930

Vol. 94, No. 9

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

theridernews.com

Rider basketball takes over Tuesday night



Trustee McDougall highlights diversity in presidential search

By Caroline Haviland

AS the hunt for Rider's next president slowly pushes forward, so do the newly announced members of the presidential search committee, who began advocating for factors they deem important to consider in the hiring process.

Joe McDougall, chair of the Presidential Search Committee, said the university's next president should have four key characteristics: a strategic vision for Rider, a strong background in academic leadership, firm financial stewardship and strengths in communication and engagement.

"There was great alignment in what we heard from folks in what they wanted to see," said McDougall. "These four things were the big pieces that came out when we talked to all the constituents, which was great for us to see that kind of alignment."

'Done the right way'

Before the search committee could form, the Board chose a search firm to spearhead the presidential pursuit. In the end, the Board members chose Storbeck Search for its immense success from a diversity standpoint, according to McDougall.

"In 2023, 53% of the candidates they placed were female and 43% were people of color. That's almost doubled compared to the numbers that are the norm in the industry, which is one-third female and less than 20% are people of color," said McDougall.

The search firm plans to train the Presidential Search Committee members in diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure the hiring process is "done the right way," McDougall said.

Transparency with the Rider community also stands as a main priority for the committee, as communications will continue to be sent via universitywide emails and through the new presidential search website due to launch in a few weeks, according to McDougall.

The website, accessible through rider.edu, will serve as a repository, housing the presidential position

profile, frequently asked questions and any information related to the search.

Building the committee

When composing the team, the Board looked at presidential search committees from numerous higher education institutions, a majority of which primarily consisted of Board members.

McDougall said that sort of make up did not feel right for Rider.

Instead, the Board decided to create a balanced mix of committee members, consisting of Trustees, faculty, staff, administrators and a student.

Trustees McDougall, Joan Mazzotti, James Bush, Michele Powers, Christopher Carothers, Thomas Mulhare and Wright Seneres will work alongside Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Nicholas Barbat, Norm Brodsky College of Business Dean Gene Kutcher, faculty union President Quinn Cunningham, associate professor Alison Thomas Cottingham and Administrative Specialist for Graduate Education Anne Rees. Christina Natoli, president of the Student Government Association, was chosen as the student representative.

Natoli, a senior political science major, has begun asking her classmates what they hope to see in the next university president through her student body presidential role. She plans to allow students a space to voice their opinions in the upcoming SGA Town Hall meeting on Nov. 14.

"The campus experience is tailored towards the students, and our campus partners should be trying to support students in their initiatives. Especially a big one like determining who will be overseeing the operations of the university," said Natoli. "I think it's essential to be able to know what students want. That's why I'll be taking my time to hear from as many students as I can in as many areas."

The Board ultimately has the responsibility of choosing the next president; however, the diversity ensures that all areas of the university are



Caroline Haviland/The Rider News

Presidential Search Committee Chair **Joe McDougall** will prioritize diversity and experience in the search for a new president.

represented so the selected individual reflects the broader campus community needs.

"Those types of folks that represent a bunch of constituencies was really what we tried to do. Another constituency we thought was important, given the large population they represent on the campus, was the faculty union, the AAUP [American Association of University Professors]," said McDougall. "We're delighted that Quinn Cunningham is going to be part of the committee. She'll do a great job representing the AAUP and the business school."

Cunningham, an associate professor, reflected the faculty union's hopes for a fair and transparent process from beginning to end.

"I'm hoping for consideration for the folks that are here for the long-haul. The president and some of the administrative folks will be here for five to ten years, but a lot of the faculty and librarians and athletic staff will be here for twenty or thirty years," said Cunningham. "So we're just looking to have our input sincerely considered and applied to the decision that gets made for who's going to come in and take over for Dell'Omo."

INSIDE

CAUTION: RIDER'S HOT

Rider volleyball has won seven straight after taking down Manhattan and Iona.

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ELECTION REACTIONS

Students on both sides share their thoughts on Trump's win.

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FALL DANCE CONCERT

The Rider dance department premiered a new fall concert showcasing students' work.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY KLAUDINE BESSASPARIS

Information provided by Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock

Secret Stash

Party Favors. On Nov. 6 at 10:31 a.m., Public Safety responded to Zeta Tau Alpha on reports of a student in possession of narcotics. Public Safety arrived at the ZTA building and met with the student, who consented to their room being searched. During the search, narcotics, paraphernalia and alcohol were found. The Lawrence Township Police were contacted and responded due to the narcotics found in the room. The incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.



Star-doom

Tumbler Taker. On Nov. 7 at 11:43 a.m., Public Safety responded to the Student Recreation Center Starbucks for the report of a theft. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with the Starbucks staff who reported that several tumblers were taken from the display in front of the store. The Starbucks staff do not know who may have taken the items. Public Safety was reviewing camera footage and investigating.

CORRECTION

In the Nov. 6 print and original digital edition of *The Rider News*, an article misspelled the name of freshman film and television major Jamyla Harris.

The Rider News regrets the error.

Managing Editor Hannah Newman is a sister of ZTA. Newman had no part in the writing or editing of this security brief.

Rider reports 0% for American Indian students

By Grace Bertrand

WITH a total of 65 countries represented in Rider's student body, the university is widely acknowledged for its diversity.

However, Rider's fall 2023 diversity report showed 0% representation for the American Indian demographic in Rider's student body.

"We're not targeting students of a specific ethnicity or race group," said Heeyoung Kim, chief diversity officer of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. "We just generally welcome everybody."

In June 2023, the Supreme Court passed a ban on race-based affirmative action, meaning colleges can no longer consider race and ethnicity when admitting students.

As a result, Rider saw demographic changes in students of color, similar to many universities across the country.

"From an admissions perspective, we are essentially evaluating students based on their academic ability to be enrolled at the institution," said Drew Aromando, vice president of enrollment engagement.

Aromando said, because of the United States Supreme Court decisions, Rider no longer has restrictions or classified approaches to building a class based on race, gender or ethnic background, calling it "a good thing."

"It allows us to really be as diverse as possible within our populations," said Aromando. "The flip side of that is we also aren't able to control any particular race or gender from really being high volume or low volume."

Less than 1%

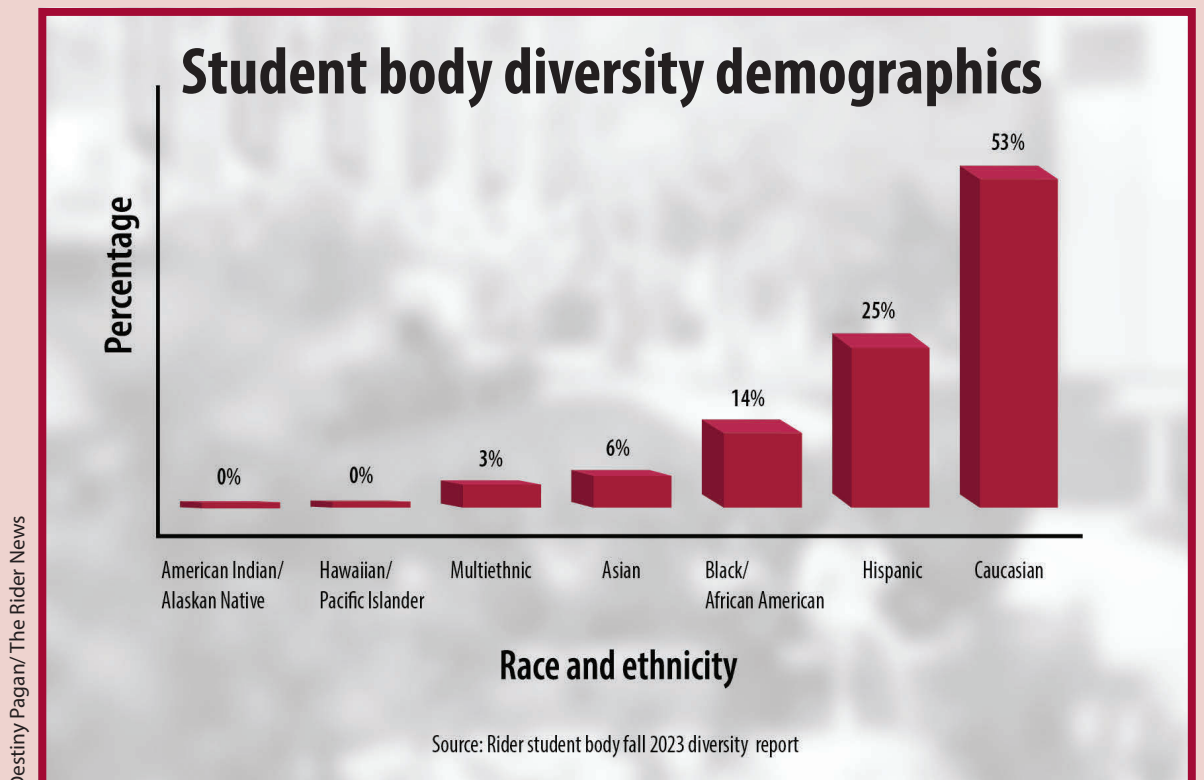
Kim believes the low population of American Indians at Rider is due to fewer people choosing to identify as a part of the ethnic group because they share mixed ethnicities. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, only 0.7% of the population identifies as Native American in New Jersey.

"We are seeing less and less of one ethnicity or race group," said Kim. "We might have a student who is actually of that ethnicity, but they don't feel out as Native American."

Kim explained that, unless the students feel comfortable telling people themselves, asking about who their ancestors are is extremely inappropriate, calling it "the biggest microaggression."

Rider alum Tristan Leach '24, who identifies as a partially Alaskan Native, said the low population of American Indians and Alaskan Natives in New Jersey is "not surprising."

"Alaska is a very hard state to get out of," said Leach. "Because of how America was colonized, a lot of Native American peoples have been forced out of their homes and they now live in a place that they were told by the government was home."



Rider reported 0% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students in its fall 2023 diversity report.

Graduating in May 2024, Leach was part of the 0% demographic on campus at the time of the fall 2023 report and was likely sharing that percentage with less than five other people. When applying to Rider, Leach, who goes by they/she pronouns, said they had identified as White, Alaskan Native and Filipino.

"I put those down on my application because I feel like it's validating to be honest about yourself, and I know it affects how Rider looks," said Leach. "It's really nice when a college or university has a very diverse population because, for centuries, college was meant for white men."

With an increasing number of people identifying as more than one ethnicity or race, Leach explained how important it is for universities to be engaging with as many ethnic groups as possible to foster a more inclusionary educational system.

"It's super important for all higher education institutions and organizations to acknowledge where we're falling behind in representation," said Leach. "It's to show that there's still so much further that we can go and that we should all be branching out and allowing higher education to be made to everyone who not only wants it, but needs it."

'As inclusive as can be'

While finding representation on campus is not as difficult as it once was, minority groups still find themselves struggling to build a community on a college campus.

Leach explained that during their time here at Rider, they still found it hard to find and connect with people who also identified as Native American as strongly as they did.

"Even if something had been set up for native people when I was there, who's to say it would still be there if there was no representation to keep it grounded," said Leach.

Despite a lack of American Indian and Alaskan Native demographic on campus, the CDI will be hosting an event for National Native American Heritage Month on Nov. 20 called "Dance, Drum and Dialogue."

November is Native American Heritage Month, and to recognizes American Indians across the country while embracing their cultural experiences.

Aromando emphasized the importance of building a community where students are learning from more than just classroom experiences at Rider.

"I think it is one of the greatest things to have a strongly diverse enrollment population, and it helps people learn about each other's backgrounds and interests," said Aromando.

Looking ahead to where Rider will be in terms of diversity in the future, Aromando said he is in favor of the "full, holistic community approach" Rider is taking and feels that it's been working for them.

"We're already as inclusive as you can possibly be," said Aromando.



Jay Roberson / The Rider News

The PRIDE Center was added as a vendor at this year's Community Care Fair.

Care Fair alleviates stress, unites community

By Jay Roberson

AMID the stress of internships, jobs and school, Rider held its third semi-annual Community Care Fair on Nov. 7 to alleviate students' troubles and create connections.

Students, staff and faculty members wore shirts with "Be kind to your mind" on the front and "No Bronc walks alone" on the back.

Mike Reca, vice president of university operations and a leader of Rider's Community Wellbeing Committee, hoped to enhance the Care Fair by attracting more people from outside of Rider.

"We went from about 20 participant vendors up to 31. This year, we've added the PRIDE Center and a tarot card reader ... we got more participation from external groups that wanted to be a part of this and speak with our students," said Reca.

Some external organizations included the Lawrence Health Department, who handed out COVID-19 tests, and Ice Cream Emergency, a truck where students made their own sundaes. Students also relaxed with do-it-yourself essential oils and free massages.

Senior elementary education major Sophia Caparas expressed her gratitude for events like the Community Care Fair as a way to destress between

classwork and internships.

"It's a reminder of community and taking a mental health break in between classes. A lot of these organizations are here to help students, hand out freebies and are just coming together to have a good time to remind the students of what resources are available," said Caparas.

Other on-campus resources, such as the Rider Resource Pantry, provided information for students. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion offered stickers and pins, Public Safety gave out narcan and the Rider Counseling Center supplied fidget toys.

The student-run business Rider Resilience, created for a Business in Action program, attended the event as well, promoting their sweatshirts that stated "Rider Resilience" while providing information about their mission.

Ethan Lopez, freshman finance major and cofounder of Rider Resilience, said, "Our main goal was to bridge the gap between survivors of mental health struggles and potential allies who may not know how common and frequent mental health problems occur."

Rider Resilience also hopes with their merchandise they are able to remind students of the community supporting them at Rider.

Kripi Jain, who is a graduate assistant at the Rider Resource Pantry, emphasized that the Community Care Fair is a valuable resource for students on Rider's campus.

"Especially for international students and students who are new to the country, for them, I feel like these fairs are very helpful. ... It's a nice time to engage and be aware about what they have in school and connect with people if they want to do some volunteer work," said Jain.

Jain further explained we should be taking care of our mental health everyday, and the Community Care Fair is a great opportunity to do so.

"I'm also a counseling student, so I'm doing my masters in clinical mental health counseling with a concentration in movement therapy. So this is very fitting to what I'm doing, and I feel that's something that we need to remind ourselves and people that we're helping on a day to day basis," said Jain.

Not only did the Community Care Fair provide fun activities and free resources, but it brought together and celebrated the Rider community.

"This is important for students because it's a whole fair that's free. It is just about spreading awareness and positivity and getting the message across that it's one large family at Rider," said Lopez.

Plant-A-Flag returns to Campus Mall for Veterans Day

By Hannah Newman

In honor of Veteran's Day, American flags lined the Campus Mall in the shape of an "R" embodying the Rider community's gratitude for veterans on Nov. 9 and 10.

The Plant-A-Flag ceremony has been a tradition for the Rider community since November 2013, according to Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs Nick Barbati.

The idea was developed by staff members who felt the campus should do something unique to honor Veterans Day, according to Barbati.

This year, roughly 10,000 flags were ordered for the ceremony.

"When people drive on campus every year, they're reminded of the beauty of it, and the symbolism and power of the flags making up the community symbol that we all share and representing how many people have fought for us," said Barbati.

On Veterans Day weekend, facilities draws out the "R" in the grass, allowing students and staff to create the university symbol with American flags.

Students from different clubs and organizations gather to assist in planting the flags, cultivating a community to pay respect to retired and active military members.

Rider University Greek Council President and senior health care management major Duygu Erzurum said, "It's a small yet powerful gesture that reminds us all of the freedoms we enjoy, thanks to the service of these men and women."

Without having any direct relation to a veteran or active duty member, some students shared their personal motivation for honoring this day, according to sophomore actuarial science major Adonis Hernandez-Solano.

"Coming from an immigrant family, my parents chose to come here from Mexico to advance in their lives because of all the opportunities the U.S. has provided," said Hernandez-Solano. "These opportunities wouldn't have been provided if it weren't for all the people who fought for our country and for that I am very grateful."

Rider has a strong military presence on campus with 65 active duty members according to Assistant Dean of Students Keith Kemo.

"We [Rider] have a nice population of veterans and military families and I think they really appreciate it [flag planting ceremony] so if people want to really try to help give back and show that we care about our Rider veterans, come out and support them by helping plant the flags and come to those kinds of events," said Kemo.

Although inclement weather on Sunday night caused some flags to fall down on Veterans Day, Barbati and Dean of Students Christine Melhorn replanted the flags the minute they arrived on campus that morning, keeping Rider's promise to honor Veterans a priority, according to Barbati.

"This is probably the first year where we had to redo the flags because of the rain [Sunday]night," said Barbati. "So Dean Melhorn and I were up this [Monday] morning as soon as we got to work, trying to lift a quarter of the flags."

Although Veterans Day is one way to bring the community together for an honorable cause, the flag planting ceremony goes beyond honoring military services according to Erzurum.

"It [the flag planting ceremony] also reinforces the value of respect, service and solidarity that are essential in building a strong, compassionate community," said Erzurum.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

On the Campus Mall, 10,000 American flags were planted for Veterans Day.



Photo courtesy of Duygu Erzurum

Students took part in the Plant-A-Flag event for Veterans Day.

FALL DANCE CONCERT

- First Comes Love... — Keiaira Rainey
- Train wreck — Destiny Gardner
- Cursed Charm — Jamie Peña
- Waves — Toby Trish
- Gender Dysphoria — Sharp
- There is only now — Kayla Faynor
- HIM — Jamai Brown
- Blue Wildflower — Itai Serra
- West African — Saquan Roberson
- Deviance — Kaylie Smith
- jokes on u — Keke Browne
- Purpose — Rihanna Perez & Yanna Brown
- Soulmate — Ian Kent
- I Wanna be Ready — Mekhia Gwynn
- All That Fosse — Alli Fama



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

The yearly fall dance concert highlighted students' original choreography and performances.

Students showcase dancing and directing talents

By Sofia Santiago and Maggie Kleiner

As the blue stage lights rose and the first pluck of a violin sounded, a portal into the world of student choreography at Rider opened. Students crafted a diverse collection of dance pieces, with genres ranging from contemporary and lyrical to jazz and hip-hop.

The Rider dance department premiered its Fall Dance Concert on Nov. 8 and 9 in the Bart Luedeke Center Theater. The production showcased 15 consecutive pieces from 16 student choreographers' creative visions.

As dancers twirled, strutted and leapt across the stage, their pieces demonstrated themes of love, friendship and identity. Each piece contributed to the unity of the performance, separated only by the dramatic lighting changes reflecting each song's tone.

"I tried to create an evening that had a little bit of ebb and flow, so that all of the dark pieces weren't next to each other, or all of the softer or lighter pieces," said Megan Mazarick, assistant professor and full-time dance faculty member at Rider.

Students auditioned for the concert with their own choreography, most of which eventually made its way into the show. Consequently, Mazarick said she felt like she served as the event's producer rather than the director.

Dancers performed in solo, duet and ensemble pieces, set to songs such as "Azaman" by Rema, "Train Wreck" by James Arthur and "Kill For Your



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Sophomore dance performance major **Ian Kent** (left) and dancers leapt across the stage in Kent's "Soulmate."

Love" by Labrinth. Some pieces even blended music with sound bites of pensive monologues.

Ian Kent, a sophomore dance performance major, choreographed a seven-minute introspective piece titled "Soulmate" set to both music and spoken word. Kent and nine other dancers blended contemporary, modern and ballet styles to complement the tenderness of his piece.

"I wanted to dedicate it to my parents from the start because I always love how much love they have for one another, and I wanted to express that on the stage with my artistry," said Kent. "I just wanted to spread the message that love wins always."

First-time choreographer and sophomore dance performance major Itai Serra reflected on the intention behind "Blue Wildflower," her piece set to the Billie Eilish songs "WILDFLOWER" and "BLUE."

"I kind of wanted the audience to feel that everyone has struggles," Serra said. "Not everything has a good ending."

Serra recalled telling her dancers to "feel the music" and allow it to help them heal from their own struggles. As Serra and her dancers contorted their arms and legs to personify Billie Eilish's somber lyrics, the audience could not help but feel the sorrow that Serra intended.

Not every piece evoked sadness, however. Senior dance performance major Alli Fama's piece "All That Fosse" made the audience erupt in laughter as she and Kent tipped their matching straw hats and mimicked the honking in "Who's Got the Pain?" from the musical "Damn Yankees." Sophomore dance performance major Jamai Brown's piece "HIM" summoned cheers and applause as he confidently strutted the stage under the bright red lighting.

When hosting auditions, Mazarick explained that there was minimal advertisement because she wanted to give musical theater and dance majors the

opportunity to showcase their talents.

"There is a lot of diversity in styles and different lenses to which people view and access dance," said Mazarick. "I wanted audiences to come in and to see that we have a very large group of active dancers and, within the dance program, there's a lot of talent, a lot of drive and a sense of community."

In hopes of involving more people in the future, Mazarick shared plans to cast a wider net in auditions and collaborate with the Rider Dance Ensemble in upcoming events.

For aspiring choreographers that are interested in auditioning in the future, Serra shared advice she wished she heard going into the auditions:

"Trust yourself and what you're doing in the moment, because you can always get better, but there's never going to be the same time as now."

After dancers triumphantly took their final bow, Fama stepped to the front and encouraged the audience to make donations to send selected students to an upcoming dance conference. Although they were nearly out of breath, the dancers' pride was unmistakable and the night's success was unforgettable.



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Senior dance science major **Sophia Frosoni** (left) and sophomore dance performance majors **Ian Kent** (center) and **Itai Serra** (right) perform Serra's choreographed piece "Blue Wildflower."



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Senior dance performance major **Kayla Faynor** performed her choreographed solo titled "There is only now."



Scan to check out *The Rider News'* photo gallery of the dance department's fall dance concert!

Veterans find second chances, support at Rider

By **Gabriela Tobar and Madison Lewis**

RIDER guides service members that want to pursue education post-service and provides them with support to ease their transition. Senior psychology major Terrence Bolton, reflected on how serving in the Navy changed his life prior to joining the Rider 4+1 Program.

Bolton joined the Navy at 23 years old.

"I was making poor decisions, and I was given a second chance," Bolton said about his reasoning for joining the Navy. "I end up standing before a judge, and, basically, I had an option of going to jail or choosing a path that can better my life."

Bolton served as a third-class petty officer, exceeding the job requirements as a leader and technical expert within his field.

As a surgical technologist, Bolton focused on sterilizing instruments and assisting physicians with surgical procedures. Bolton did not have any prior experience in the medical field.

"When I first joined the Navy, I came in as a corpsman, and then I had to go to technical school," Bolton said.

Bolton earned his position as surgical technologist after six months of schooling.

"My service experience was very adventurous. I was able to connect with many diverse individuals that inspired me to grow and want to achieve greatness," Bolton said after 12 years in the Navy. "I enjoyed the camaraderie and the brother and sisterhood that the military did provide."

Bolton then decided to continue his education in Rider's psychology program. Rider is a community-driven university that holds events for both prospective and enrolled students. The university strives to make veterans feel welcome, ranked as the 12th best college for veterans, according to Rider's website.

"When I first got here, Matt Sampson was the director of Veteran and Military Affairs. He welcomed me with open arms. He became a mentor of mine," Bolton said.

Omar Harrison, a junior majoring in video game design, is also a veteran who greatly appreciated

how welcoming Sampson was towards him.

"[Sampson] was the first one I got in contact with as far as the veterans. He made sure all my paperwork was right and that I had necessary resources to get through," Harrison said.

Harrison said having a veteran's lounge is great for having an area away from busy campus life.

Bolton mentioned how Rider's open houses



Photo courtesy of Terrence Bolton

Senior psychology major **Terrence Bolton** and his son reunite after about seven months apart.

were inclusive for veterans, especially with the Plant-A-Flag event. "There were multiple events and organizations which supported veterans that I actually was able to connect with. The support system was actually very adequate," Bolton said.

Overall, Bolton says he had no negative

experiences at the university; however, transitioning from active service to schooling was still very overwhelming.

"I was unsure of myself, being a continual education individual, being older. [I] haven't been to school for some years. So ... I was scared," Bolton said.

Ultimately, the transition was smoother than he anticipated, as the military prepared him to work effectively.

Bolton mentioned that he could attend college and earn certificates while serving in the Navy, which was really beneficial for him.

After graduating from Rider, Bolton plans on finishing his education working in coachable counseling.

"I want to work with youth with substance abuse," Bolton said.

Veterans Day is celebrated annually on Nov. 11, a very important time for Bolton and his peers.

"We think about the sacrifices that those who have come before us [offer] to provide the safety and security of our nation, along with those opportunities for our nation to grow," Bolton said. "Many individuals have sacrificed their own lives along with their family members in order to protect our nation."

The heartfelt commitment shapes the lives of both those who serve and their families.

"Without their sacrifices, a lot of the things this nation has, we would not be able to do or achieve if individuals were unwillingly available to put their lives on the line," Bolton said.

Bolton contributes to the student body at Rider as a mentor for the Platoons Leaders Class while interning at the Veterans Affairs Office.

"I contribute to Rider by providing support to veterans and their dependents," said Bolton. "I connect them with either the Registrar's Office or One Stop with support of their acceptance here at Rider."

As America honors their service, the stories of these men continue to unfold, revealing the sacrifices they made and the resilience that defines them.

CDI opens doors to stressed-out students

By **Katherine Sukunda**

ON Friday, Nov. 8, members of Rider's Center for Diversity and Inclusion hosted its fourth "Open Door Conversation" of the fall semester in the Bart Luedeke Center.

The intention behind organizing open-door events is to allow students an opportunity to network with each other and discuss issues that are important to them, according to Jasmine Johnson, director of the CDI.

However, the topic of this week's discussion pivoted to the recent presidential election results, providing students with a safe space to debrief and reflect on the race.

"We have some students that are happy and excited, and then we have some other students that may not feel that way," said Johnson.

Johnson stressed the importance of having a resource like the CDI available to students during a time when the country is facing considerable division.

"As a community, we really have to come together, because, nationally, there has been a divide, and we don't want that to infiltrate home, and Rider is home for many of us," said Johnson.

Johnson explained that, while the center is a safe space, it is also a place for difficult conversations.

Student Assistant Nicholas Depass, a sophomore psychology major, who has worked with the CDI for two semesters, takes great pride in the many opportunities and events that the center has to offer students and faculty.

Depass emphasized that the ability to build a community through these open-door conversations is one of the CDI's best attributes.

Regarding the CDI's new focus on the election, Depass hopes to achieve peace for students amidst the division.

"I'm hoping to achieve clarity for students and peace of mind knowing that it's okay to agree to disagree while still keeping the bonds that we have for our fellow students," said Depass.

Graduate assistant Kyylah Harley, who has worked with the center for about one year, weighed in on the importance of having a sense of belonging and community while attending a university like Rider.

Harley explained that, when she first started looking at schools [for her undergraduate and graduate degree,] Rider's CDI influenced her decision. She felt the CDI helped her feel comforted and welcomed during her time at Rider.

"Finding this space and finding other people like me who felt the same way as me was a plus for this university," said Harley.

Despite the current divide students may be facing on campus as a result of the election, Harley stressed how we are still a community, above anything.

"There will be moments where we will disagree or we will agree to disagree on things, but we're still a community overall," said Harley. "I think everyone just needs to have a space where they can feel loved, heard and seen."



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

The CDI hosts "Open Door Conversations" regularly to offer students a space to have peaceful and honest conversations.

Students react to Trump's landslide victory

Harris, Democrats show no 'fight' in defeat

THE results of what was assumed to be a close 2024 presidential election left many shocked, as former President Donald Trump won a decisive second term, securing all seven swing states and the popular vote. It seems like some Americans have forgotten how chaotic and messy his first term was. There were many factors to his victory, but I believe these to be the main reasons for why, not necessarily Trump won, but how his opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, and Democrats as a whole, completely missed the mark.

"It's the economy, stupid!" is a phrase coined by James Carville, Bill Clinton's chief strategist during the 1992 election. Sure, social issues like LGBTQIA+ and abortion rights are important, and everyone loves it when we get a big win at war, but worries like whether or not folks can get a job, feed their families and put gas in their car are everything. In 1991, at the end of the Persian Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush had a nearly 90% approval rating, but he lost to Clinton in 1992 because of a slipping economy. While economists say that Trump's plans of tax cuts for the rich, mass deportations and high tariffs would sink the economy, many have nostalgia for the low prices and good job market of 2017-19, which could be more rightfully attributed to President Barack Obama's recovery efforts following the 2008 recession. In fact, the economy was already slowly dipping before COVID, with job and manufacturing numbers dropping due to Trump's trade war with China. The Biden administration brought the United States back from the 2020 recession with record unemployment, high stocks, investments in infrastructure and increased manufacturing in the U.S. Yet, prices are still high, wages are still low, and people still cannot afford homes.

Democrats also cannot message for their lives. If things were going so well under Biden, how come Democrats did not run hard on his Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS Act or the Inflation Reduction Act, all of which could help bring back jobs, invest in our roads, bridges and railroads and begin anti-climate change initiatives?

Once speaking with my Rider friends that support Trump, I realized that social issues do not completely matter. As long as they are "left to the states," it is fine. My counter is that, the last time we left something to the states, the result was 100 years of Jim Crow, but I digress. Either way, Republicans managed to successfully hammer Democrats on the economy and the border, as well as portray the party as the "elite," as if a billionaire did not just buy his way into the White House. Meanwhile, Democrats continued to produce memes. There is a serious disconnect between Democrats and the common man. Democrats need to figure this out quickly, because the "I'm not Trump" card will not work in 2028 when there is someone new on the ticket who is not an accused rapist, convicted felon and racist individual who wants to sleep with his daughter.

Republicans' narrative control also influenced their victory. As a member of the wrestling team, I often learn about how important it is to "have fight," how it is important to get mean and be a real jerk when the time requires; it's all mental. Democrats seemingly do not have that. From networks like Fox News, famous podcasters like Ben Shapiro and Candace Owens and Elon Musk's ownership of Twitter, conservatives have a wide ranging media apparatus to say whatever they want about liberalism. Republican candidates themselves have made various charges towards Democrats since the 1980s, and Democrats have been stuck playing defense. Instead of trying to always play the moral high ground when it comes to rhetoric, Democrats must get in the mud with Republicans to win back their base. While I do not like negative attack ads, it seems to be the only way to win in this day and age, especially with the Republicans' fear-mongering.

Lastly, President Joe Biden's presence hurt this past campaign. If Democrats were really serious about winning this election, they should have had Biden announce he was not running much earlier in 2023 so more candidates had a chance for selection. Instead, Biden waited until the 11th hour, after a terrible debate performance, leaving Harris scrambling to do in 120 days what many people take two years to achieve. No wonder people were questioning who she is or what she stood for. There was just not enough time to mount a serious campaign.

Was the U.S. ready for a woman of color as president? We could not even elect a white woman. It sure is a shame that you could spend more than 20 years in elected office and folks will still chop up your record to "DEI" and dating some mayor in the 1990s. But maybe that's the country we live in. Obama's two big wins seem more and more like an anomaly every day as Trump enables these divisive voices. I guess there's hope for next time.

*Jonathan Mason
freshman political science major*

Trump's strong policies outweigh flaws

THIS year's presidential election was the first time I ever voted. I, along with 74.7 million other Americans, chose to vote for former President Donald Trump.

I chose to vote for Trump not because I'm racist, sexist or homophobic, as some have referred to me as being, but because Trump will help this country more than hurt it.

I voted for Trump for three main reasons: the cost of living, the state of the world and the fact that I did not believe in President Joe Biden or Vice President Kamala Harris.

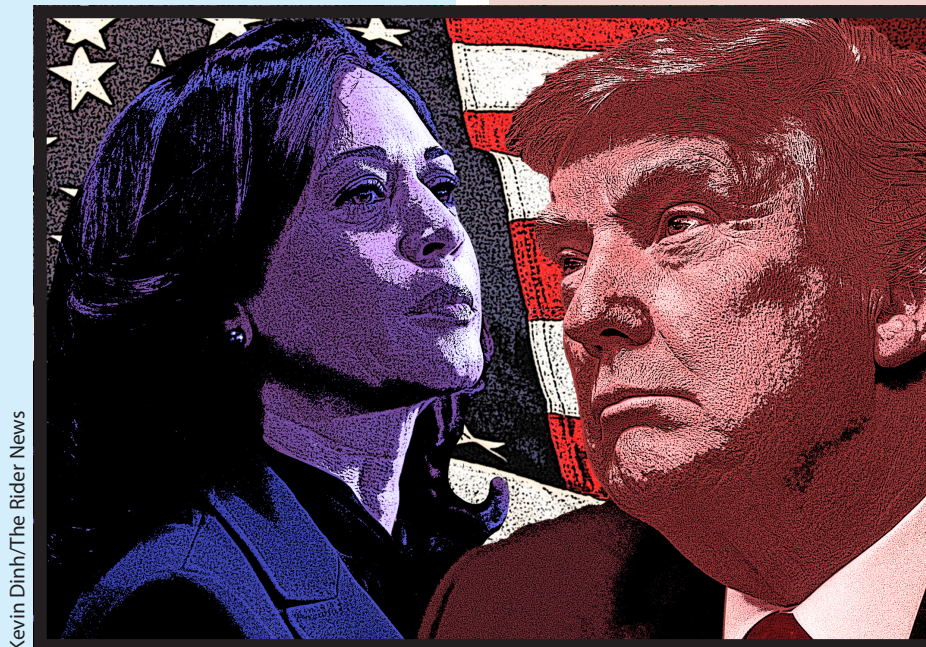
Over the past few years, the price of groceries, gas and just about anything we buy has gone up. When I started driving in 2022, gas was \$4.55 a gallon for 93 octane. The prices dropped a bit going into the winter, but paying \$3.91 a gallon still was not cheap. Grocery prices have increased an astonishing amount as well. The cost of milk, eggs, steak and everything in between has gone up. The average grocery price, according to Trump's speech at the 2024 Republican National Convention, has increased by 57% over the past four years; meanwhile, our wages remain stagnant. These prices affect the nation as a whole, but they are most detrimental to middle-class and lower-class Americans, as their wages do not reflect the cost of living.

Trump is also better equipped for rising global tensions. Over the past two and a half years, two foreign countries with whom America has close ties, Ukraine and Israel, were invaded. Additionally, under the Biden administration, tensions between America and other countries, specifically Russia and China, have skyrocketed. With foreign conflict on the rise, concerns about a possible war have crossed the minds of many, including my own, as young Americans might be called to serve in unnecessary conflict. I do not feel that going to war for either Ukraine or Israel is within this nation's best interests, and, under the current administration, it seemed as though that is where we were headed.

Finally, I voted for Trump because Biden seemed senile. Watching the first presidential debate of 2024 was hard, as it seemed like Biden could barely speak, let alone run the country. After Biden dropped out and endorsed Harris, I started to pay attention to her campaign. Harris called for changes around the nation, but I questioned why those moves were not made under her and Biden's administration. I also felt that Harris focused too much on social issues. She focused on abortions, gender-change operations and aid for illegal immigrants. Therefore, Harris was not helping Americans survive in such an expensive world where middle class families are constantly struggling to make ends meet.

I think Harris should have focused more on how she would jump-start the American economy, reinforce our border and lower prices across the country. At the end of the day, I voted for Trump because I want my family, friends and all citizens to prosper. I feel that, with Harris at the helm, this would be harder than with Trump. I'm glad the country spoke and agreed with me. I feel relieved that the current administration will be out as of Jan. 20, 2025.

*Patrick Crome
freshman undecided major*



Kevin Dimh/The Rider News

The Rider News

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Longstreet House, 2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
©2024 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

One copy per person, bulk copies available for purchase at \$1 each

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MEN'S SOCCER

Defense propels Rider to semifinals

By Rich Saile

ON Senior Day, Rider men's soccer hosted its final regular season game against the Mount St. Mary's Mountaineers, winning 3-0 on Nov. 6 to prepare them for the postseason, where a double-overtime outing against the Sacred Heart Pioneers led to a tough, 1-0 victory on Nov. 10.

Strong second half

The Broncos had multiple scoring opportunities in the first half against the Mountaineers, including a near-goal by senior midfielder Jack McGeechan, which was called back after an offside foul.

The Broncos attempted five shots in almost 20 minutes but could not get the ball by the keeper.

The Broncos offense put pressure on the Mountaineers defense. Rider outshot Mount St. Mary's 8-1 in the first half; however, both teams still went into the locker room with a scoreless tie.

Storming out of the locker room, the Broncos put the pressure on the Mountaineers.

The Broncos had another goal called back from senior midfielder Bryan Akongo off an offside foul from Mount St. Mary's.

In the 57th minute, the Broncos overwhelmed the Mountaineers defense with a goal from junior midfielder William Baker off an assist from Da Silva, taking a 1-0 lead.

Four and a half minutes later junior midfielder Momo Diop scored the Broncos' second goal of the match.

The Broncos added extra icing on the cake when senior midfielder Dylan Kotch curled his shot inside the left post, pushing the Broncos to a 3-0 lead in the 73rd minute.

The Broncos defense limited the Mountaineers offense, controlling the remaining 17 minutes for a 3-0 win.

The Broncos secured their second MAAC regular season championship victory, their only other being during their inaugural season in 1997.

Rider shares the win with Iona, who has the top seed following a 4-0 win against Saint Peters. The Broncos are second seed.

Sweating 'til the 101st minute

On Nov. 10, Rider began postseason play by hosting the Sacred Heart Pioneers. In the first half, the Pioneers offense overwhelmed the Broncos defense, pushing the ball to Rider's end of the field.

Junior goalie Adam Salama completed two saves in the 15th and 23rd minutes of the first half.

The Broncos performed three shot attempts while relying on their defense to keep the Pioneers away for the final 22 minutes of the first half. The score was tied at 0-0 as both teams went into their locker rooms.

After halftime, the Broncos offense started pushing the ball towards the Pioneers' side of the field.

Akongo attempted a shot after collecting the ball inside the 18-yard box and shooting it from eight yards out, but Sacred Heart goalkeeper saved the ball, preventing the Broncos from taking the lead.

Once the Pioneers retained possession, they moved the ball back into Broncos territory, where Salama made a critical save in the 75th minute by blocking the ball from near post off a header from the Pioneers.

When regulation play concluded, both teams were scoreless, so overtime determined the winner.

The Broncos tried to take the lead in the first overtime when Akongo took advantage of a turnover by Sacred Heart, but his strike was blocked.

In the 99th minute, Salama saved a header from the Pioneers, and the Broncos' graduate student back Cole Sotack saved the rebound shot off the right post.

The first overtime ended after ten scoreless minutes, forcing the game into double overtime.

Less than a minute into double overtime, the Broncos converted the go-ahead goal, as Sotack scored into the right side of the box off a pass from Da Silva, securing the Broncos' victory, 1-0.

"Sacred Heart's really good and we knew it. They started the season out really well. We knew it was going to be a tough test ... because they're really well-coached and very talented," Head Coach Chad Duernberger said.

"In the first overtime, we put a lot of pressure on them ... we had a couple half-chances, and, in that 10 minutes, you've just to take any chance you get," Sotack said after the game. "The ball popped up to Theo, I saw the space, he played it to me. I just thought, 'I've just got to get this on target,' and luckily it went in."

On Nov. 11, the MAAC revealed its regular season awards. Diop was named MAAC offensive player of the year and Salama was awarded MAAC goalkeeper of the year. Duernberger also won MAAC coach of the year.

Eight Broncos made an All-MAAC team: Salama, Akongo, Da Silva, McGeechan, Diop, senior back Martin Chladek, graduate student midfielder Andrew Erickson and graduate student midfielder Adel Al Masude.

The Broncos moved to 23-10-3 all-time in the MAAC championships, with the win. They reached the semifinals 13 times in the last 28 years.

Salama broke a tie with Keith Richardson and Pablo Gatinois for the most individual shutouts in program history, with eight clean sheets this season.

The Broncos return Nov. 14, hosting the Siena Saints in a rematch of last year's MAAC Championship semifinals on Ben Cohen Field at 7 p.m.



The Broncos huddle in celebration after a goal.

VOLLEYBALL

Unstoppable: Rider rallies for 7th straight win

By Lindsay Scarola

BACK in New York for the weekend, Rider volleyball played its last two road games of the regular season, conquering the Manhattan Jaspers, 3-0 on Nov. 9 and the Iona Gaels 3-2 on Nov. 10.

With a seven-game win streak, the Broncos sit at 13-3 in conference play, placing them at third in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

Domination against Manhattan

To start its weekend, Rider returned to New York to sweep the Manhattan Jaspers for the second time this season, gaining a sixth straight win.



Junior libero Keegan O'Conner bumps the ball.

The Broncos jumped out with an early lead in the first set, 12-6, but Manhattan then went on a 10-2 run to catch up and surpass Rider.

Tied 19-19, senior setter Ryley Frye served three straight points with an ace, setting the pace for the Broncos. They took the opening set 25-21.

Rider maintained its momentum into the second set, where it quickly built a 7-3 lead. The Broncos proceeded to extend their lead with a 5-0 run, with two kills and a block by sophomore opposite Anja Kelly.

Sophomore middle hitter Molly Rohde succeeded in three more blocks as the Broncos went on another 5-0 run. Rohde served the match point the way any volleyball player wishes, with an ace. The Jaspers fell to the Broncos 25-12.

The start of the third set mirrored the second, as Rider took control with a 4-3 lead. Sophomore outside hitter Paige Giebtrock had three kills during the Broncos' 9-0 run. The Broncos beat the Jaspers 25-12 to sweep Manhattan 3-0.

"The team has done a great job at learning how to win and close matches. Earlier in the year, we were not doing that, and they even recognized that in our post-game recap," said Head Coach Jeff Rotondo.

Five-set showdown

Looking to keep their winning streak alive, Rider found itself in a five-set battle with Iona.

Rider was leading by one during the opening set, yet Iona jumped ahead with a 7-0 run. The Broncos crawled their way back from a 21-13 deficit on a 10-3 run, but the Gaels closed out the set, 25-23.

Rider trailed in the second set before scoring four straight points, including an ace by senior setter Ryley Frye, leading to a score of 21-18. At match point, Iona evened the score to 24 a piece.

However, junior middle hitter Carley McAleavey and sophomore outside hitter Rylan Robinson had a combo block to reclaim Rider's serve. Junior outside hitter Kiannisha Santiago completed an ace to end it all. The Broncos won 26-24 to even the sets 1-1.

The energy carried into the third set, where Santiago had two kills and a block for a jump-start on Rider's six point lead. The momentum never died, and the Broncos won the set, 25-16.

Iona was down 2-1 in sets, so they went for a 5-0 run in the fourth, extending their lead to 18-11.

Rider outscored Iona, 13-5, bringing a 24-23 score to the Broncos' match point. The Gaels never gave up, tying the score 24-24, and then 25-25, ultimately forcing a fifth set with a 27-25 victory.

In set five, played only to 15 points rather than the usual 25, both teams fought quicker to come out on top. Iona started strong, building a 7-1 lead over Rider that eventually expanded to 11-7.

Iona was four points away from winning, which meant Rider was on the hunt. Rider scored eight straight points, including aces from junior libero Keegan O'Connor, for the 15-11 comeback win.

"Iona was definitely not our best game, but I do think we fought hard. There were not that many things clicking within the game on the court, but I think just our grit and willingness to never give up that helped us win," said Rohde.

The Broncos conquered the court with a 3-2 victory against Iona, gaining their seventh straight win and Frye hit 1,000 career assists.

Rider has its last two games of the regular season at home in the Alumni Gym on Nov. 16 against Fairfield at 1 p.m. and Nov. 17 against Sacred Heart for Senior Day at 1 p.m.

Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Sports

ONLINE

SPORTS, SPORTS AND MORE SPORTS!

Field hockey, and men's and women's basketball were also in action last week. Read up on all of them!

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



MEN'S BASKETBALL

Portals and pipelines: How Rider recruits post-NIL

By Jake Tiger

A flight from New Jersey to Kansas typically takes five or six hours, but because it was his first time flying, Kevin Baggett said it felt like an eternity.

A highly touted basketball prospect in the mid '80s, Baggett was heading west for a recruiting visit at prestigious Kansas University, far from his home in Burlington Township, New Jersey.

"I remember it vividly," he said. "We're still flying, and I'm sitting there saying to myself, 'Man, do I really want to come across the country to go to a school and not have my family there?'"

Kansas had it all: world-class facilities and coaches, perennial NCAA tournament contention and future NBA All-Star Danny Manning as his host. But when it came time to decide, Baggett, a self-proclaimed mama's boy, could not stomach living with a "host family" that would watch over him.

"[Kansas] introduced me to a host family, and they said this would be my family for the next four years. I'm thinking, 'That doesn't look like my mother,'" Baggett said. "I told them I can't do that. I need to see the people that raised me."

Baggett eventually chose to play college basketball at Saint Joseph's in Philadelphia because of personal connections there, and he wanted to be close to home, but not too close, he said.

Four decades later, as Rider men's basketball's head coach of 12 years, he has used that same logic to attract talent from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the rest of the Northeast.

However, the recruiting landscape has grown increasingly difficult to navigate for smaller, mid-major schools like Rider, since the NCAA-implemented name, image and likeness rights in 2021 allow college athletes to sign potentially lucrative brand deals.

For players, continuity and team chemistry have fallen to the side, as many of them transfer multiple times to maximize their NIL money. Baggett said wealthier schools rarely even need to recruit anymore; they just need to offer the most money.

Today, the elaborate sales pitch Baggett received in Kansas is no longer a necessity. The basketball world he grew up in is gone.

Pipelines to prospects

In Baggett's 12 years as head coach, much of Rider's recruiting success has come from the campus' location, as 39 of Baggett's 82 total players have come from New Jersey or Pennsylvania, where the Broncs have well-established pipelines.

One of Rider's main selling points to prospective students is its nestling between two of the largest job markets in the country: New York City and Philadelphia. In recruiting, though, Rider's sports teams cannot as easily leverage its proximity to the so-called "mecca of basketball."

Atop New York's skyscrapers, basketball prospects talent can spot universities like Iona, Saint Peter's and Manhattan, all of whom are Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference rivals of Rider much closer to home.

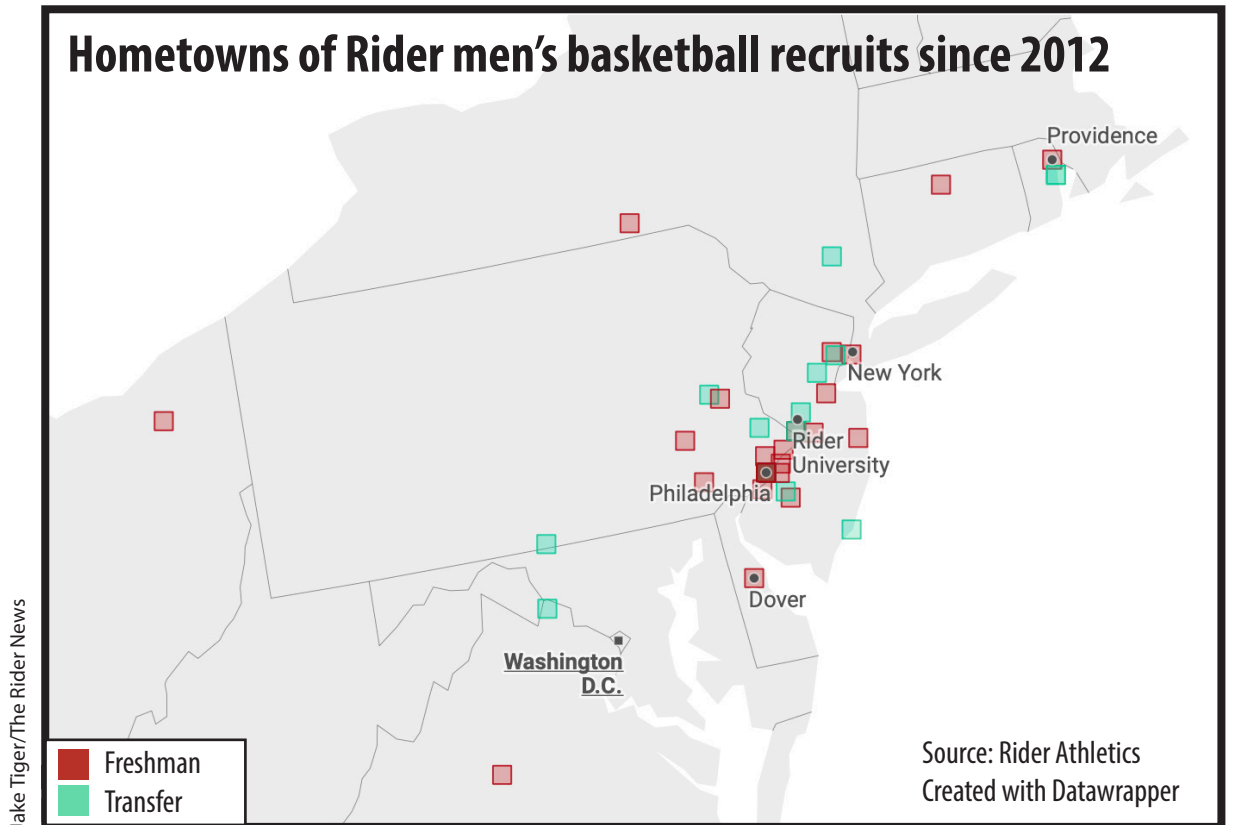
Rider has only had three players from all of New York in Baggett's tenure, and the Broncs could only yank one player out of talent-laden New York City: Dimencio Vaughn '22, a gritty, two-way wing at Rider for five years. When quizzed, Baggett immediately identified Vaughn as his only player from the city.

"Oh man, if I could have another Dimencio Vaughn, I'd take that in a heartbeat," Baggett imagined, leaning back in his chair and looking up at the ceiling.

According to Baggett, Vaughn only ended up in Lawrenceville because Rider had connections with his childhood coaches and built a relationship with him early on. With other New Yorkers, Rider has not been so lucky, and it has, instead, honed in on Philadelphia, which "just has tougher kids," according to Baggett.

The Broncs have deep ties within Philadelphia, and Rider is the only MAAC school within an hour of the city, making it the perfect pipeline.

In Baggett's term, Rider has recruited 16 players



Most of Rider men's basketball's talent calls the Northeast home. Philadelphia is the most prominent pipeline with 13 players in 12 years.

from Philadelphia alone, matching New Jersey's total.

While Baggett played at Saint Joseph's, much of his staff has a history in the city, including Associate Head Coach Dino Presley, who coached at Drexel and has worked with Baggett for 10 seasons.

"Rider has always recruited Philly, even before I got here," Presley said. "We don't really need to go anywhere else because that's our base. We can get a kid out of Philly every year."

Rider's local relationships have also been helpful in the NCAA transfer portal, which allows athletes to change schools between seasons.

Take junior guard Andre Young and senior forward Tank Byard: both players transferred to Rider for the 2024-25 season because of high school connections.

According to Baggett, Byard is from Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Rider scouted him years ago. Young was "hand-delivered" to Rider by the head coach of Georgia's Pebblebrook High School, from where Rider has pulled talent for years, including Dwight Murray Jr. '23, Mervin James '24 and Kami Young, who transferred out of Rider in 2023.

Baggett said a pipeline out of Rider has also developed in Norfolk State, who poached Rider's Christian Ings in 2021, and Allen Bertrand and Tyrel Bladen in 2023 via the transfer portal — a booming, volatile fixture of college athletics.

Portals to prosperity

According to NCAA data, 17,781 Division I athletes entered the transfer portal in 2021. In 2023, there were 23,021.

The transfer portal's rapid growth is partially due to the introduction of NIL rights in 2021, allowing many college athletes to make profit off of their celebrity. Overall, though, the culture surrounding the transfer portal has changed, as hopping to a new team nearly every season has become the norm for many players — just ask Baggett.

"I do believe that, more often than not, kids make these decisions for all the wrong reasons," Baggett said.

From 2012 to 2020, freshman recruits were the primary way Baggett built his teams: 37 freshmen compared to 17 transfers in that span.

After 2021, however, the trend flipped with Rider bringing in 12 freshmen and 16 transfers. In the last four years, Baggett has had nearly as many transfers as he did in his first nine seasons.

Baggett described a modern team-building landscape of "haves and have-nots" created by NIL, where schools like Rider struggle to compete with programs that can simply throw money at recruits.

"There is value to NIL, but some of the money these kids are getting paid is outlandish," Baggett said. "I don't know how coaches coach players that are making more than them. ... We've just really lost our way. The NCAA dropped the ball on this entire thing."

Rider used to punch above its weight when recruiting, going out early and forming bonds with high-level prospects — like Vaughn — but, since NIL's advent, it all comes down to dollar signs, Baggett said.

Baggett also noted that rampant transferring in pursuit of NIL money can have effects in the classroom, as student athletes bounce between schools, each time losing the continuity they had with professors and classmates.

"The more kids transfer, the less kids are going to get their education," he said. "Our sport ... there are a lot of Black athletes, and that's just that many more Black athletes that won't be getting their education."

At the same time, Baggett understood why modern student-athletes are so concerned with money; he admitted he "absolutely" would have committed to Kansas if NIL opportunities were a factor back in 1985, and understandably so.

According to an April report from 247Sports, Kansas men's basketball players collectively made \$4 million during the 2023-24 season, the most of any college basketball team. That's an average of almost \$250,000 for the team's 17 players.

Baggett said, at a MAAC basketball meeting, the conference told coaches the entirety of the MAAC should offer \$250,000 in NIL money combined.

Rider's student-athletes can make NIL money through MOGL, an NIL platform Rider partnered with in 2023 that helps schools connect with brands and allows student-athletes to become a sort of freelance influencer.

On MOGL, partners can select from dozens of Rider athletes, each with a starting rate of \$10. Most players have a photo, short biography and social-media-follower totals linked to their profiles to show how influential they are.

Student athletes can be sorted by gender, follower count, sport and other criteria.

Partners can ask for video shoutouts, appearances at events or special requests. They can also leave star ratings on athletes; some athletes boast a five-star rating but most do not have a rating at all.