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NJ gubernatorial primary debates held on Rider campus



SCAN TO READ THE STORY



Photos by Destiny Pagan Graphic by Jay Roberson

Department chair on unpaid leave for offensive salute

By Hannah Newman

PERFORMING arts department chair Todd Dellinger has been placed on unpaid administrative leave for the remainder of the Spring 2025 semester after emulating a raised-arm gesture that resembled the Nazi salute at a recent department meeting, according to a universitywide email from President Gregory Dell’Omo and Provost DonnaJean Fredeen on Feb. 1.

Performing arts students, staff and faculty attended a department meeting on Jan. 27 where Dellinger closed out the assembly by stating, “...and second semester seniors, I salute you,” and held two fingers to his eyebrow making a saluting gesture, according to a student attendee that directly witnessed the gesture and wished to remain anonymous.

After his traditional salute, he finished his sentence by stating “or should I say...” and imitated Elon Musk’s salute at Trump’s inauguration that has been seen as the Nazi salute to many, according to the student.

Following initial reactions to the salute, about two hours later Dellinger sent an apology email in which he called the gesture “sardonic,” and stated, “I tend to use sarcasm as a means of calling attention to the utter absurdity of a moment or a moment in time - in some way thinking perhaps that to make fun of it is to give it less power.... And I humbly and with all humility and admittance of utter and absurd stupidity offer my sincere apology.”

According to Rider’s Title IX Director and Equal Opportunity Compliance Ryan McKinney, a report of the incident was made but he could not disclose any further details.

Dellinger declined an interview but wrote in an email to The Rider News on Jan. 29, “The disconnect between the mocking of the absurdity of Musk, the gesture he made and the absurd and troubling story that it tells of this moment in time, and the inherent undercurrent challenges and fears that most of us fully believe inspire it, is clearly something which demanded more careful forethought. I am at the entire opposite of the spectrum on everything he and those which enable & support & believe in him and, who sadly have the power to shape this moment in time, stand for and believe.”

The subsequent email from Dell’Omo and Fredeen stated, “This gesture is reprehensible and has no place at Rider University.”

President of Hillel and senior education major Ethan Handelman said he emailed Dell’Omo about

the incident and received a thoughtful response.

Handelman added that Chief Diversity Officer and Director of the Teaching and Learning Center Heeyoung Kim reached out to him and offered resources to Hillel following the event.

“One of the best ways to foster an understanding of the issue at hand would be to educate. I would totally be willing to meet with Professor Dellinger and just have a genuine conversation, just to get more understanding of multiple different issues at hand,” said Handelman. “I really appreciate [support from the university] ... I grew up being the only Jewish person for the most part in my town [in the U.S.] and then at school there’s a Jewish community, but it’s relatively small, but it’s still nice to know that people in administration have our back.”

Dellinger has been placed on unpaid administrative leave for the remainder of the spring 2025 semester, pending further investigation. He will not be teaching classes, serving as department chairperson or participating in any university activities during this time, according to the email.

Dellinger was teaching three classes this semester. On Feb. 1, students in those classes received an email from Kelly Bidle, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, that those classes were canceled that week and the university is currently seeking instructional coverage, according to the email.

Junior arts and entertainment industries major Emma Zatkowski, who was looking into internships, was nervous about Dellinger’s absence as his guidance as an adviser is pivotal.

“I was actually supposed to meet with him this week to discuss my internship opportunities. He told me, even if a company didn’t have any internship posted, just to include on a list for him to go over with me, and that he might know somebody at these companies, and could reach out directly to them for me,” said Zatkowski. “I’m not able to have that guidance for my internships.”

A student in Dellinger’s 400-level class who wishes to remain anonymous said, “Dell’Omo finished his message by claiming his commitment to making all students feel respected. However, I feel incredibly disrespected as a student because finding a solution for the problem caused for students by dismissing was the president’s last priority, and now I’m left scrambling and worried about fulfilling my education goals and requirements. For this class in particular [New York Arts Networking], Todd is irreplaceable.”

Contract Administrator and Chief Negotiating



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Students of **Todd Dellinger** are concerned about his departure, with one student calling him “irreplaceable.”

Officer for Rider’s American Association of University Professors chapter Jeffrey Halpern explained that chairpersons are not members of the AAUP. However, Dellinger has resigned his chairmanship, and the AAUP is now providing him representation as a member of the bargaining unit, according to Halpern.

“I’ve begun the process of collecting information, putting the university on notice that we will be representing Professor Dellinger and coordinating with him and with our attorneys about next steps,” said Halpern. “There was no due process. There was no process that was at least apparent. It’s not clear what information was relied upon, nor was Professor Dellinger provided any opportunity to appeal the decision. We’re also looking into, you know, the question of whether or not Professor Dellinger’s academic freedom rights were given due weight in the decision.”

Halpern mentioned that in his career of over 30 years, he has never seen such a “public shaming” of somebody. “These [faculty discipline matters] are kept confidential on a need to know basis, the details not stood out there,” said Halpern.

“So again, it raises questions of why, in this case, a public shaming

SEE ‘PARENTS’ PAGE 3

INSIDE

‘IT WAS TIME’

After 20 years, Barry Davis resigned as head coach of Rider baseball.

PAGE 8



STRENGTH IN TRANS COMMUNITY

Recent anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation prompts a need for support in the trans community.

PAGE 6



FEBRUARY HOROSCOPES

See what the stars have in store for you this month!

PAGE 5



SECURITY BRIEFS

BY CAROLINE HAVILAND

Suspected smoke

Marijuana reported. On Jan. 25, at 10:52 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Moore Residence Hall for the report of the odor of suspected marijuana. Public Safety arrived on location and met with Residence Life staff, who reported detecting the odor in the building. The building was searched to find the source, but the source could not be found inside the building.



Noisy neighbors

Caught underage. On Jan. 25, at 11:41 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Phi Sigma Sigma for the report of an alcohol violation. Upon arrival, Public Safety met Residence Life staff who responded to a room for a noise complaint. When the community assistant arrived at the room, they discovered underage students in the presence of alcohol. Public Safety assisted Residence Life with identifying everyone in the room and documented the incident. The incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.



Stolen signs

Banner burglar. On Feb. 1, at 3:25 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Alumni Gym for the report of a theft. Upon their arrival, Public Safety met with athletic staff who reported the theft of a banner. Through an investigation, a student was identified removing the banner. This incident has been referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Public Safety director resigns

By Jake Tiger

AFTER six years at the university, Rider Public Safety Director James Waldon resigned effective Jan. 31, taking a new position elsewhere, a universitywide email announced Jan. 27, the first day of the spring semester.

Waldon could not be reached for comment following his resignation.

Mike Reca, who oversees Public Safety as Rider's vice president of university operations, said, "I was [surprised] a little bit, but at this point in my career, nothing really surprises me anymore. I understand. Everyone has to look out for their own family and their own situation, so I get it."

Reca was unable to share when Waldon submitted his resignation and where his new position is.

"I appreciate the time he put into managing all of [Public Safety's] processes and situations," said Reca, who began overseeing Public Safety in 2023.

With Waldon's departure, Public Safety Capt. Matthew Babcock assumed the role of interim director of Public Safety on Feb. 3, the email said.

Babcock referred interview requests made by The Rider News to Reca.

"He worked his way up the ranks and he's a Rider guy, so he was the logical choice," Reca said.

Babcock first came to Rider in September 2012 as a sergeant before being promoted to captain in 2020. He also earned a bachelor's degree in law and justice from Rider in 2020, according to the email.

Reca did not offer a timeline on the search for a new, permanent replacement for Waldon.

"I don't want to rush it. We all feel very comfortable with Matt, and I think the campus does as well because a lot of people know him," Reca said. "We're going to take our time. Let's give Matt a chance and see what happens."

Rider will update the community when a long-term plan for the position is finalized, according to the email.



Jake Tiger/The Rider News

W

Rider cuts deficit by \$7 million, latest audit shows

By Jake Tiger

AFTER sweeping cuts and a slight uptick in revenue, Rider reduced spending by about \$7 million in fiscal 2024, according to the university's most recent audited financial statements, as Rider continues to navigate an increasingly wobbly higher-education landscape with dwindling enrollment.

Rider has made significant reductions in recent years in its pursuit of a positive operating budget: program cuts, position eliminations and virtually stagnant faculty wages as the cost of living climbs.

Student-body shrinkage

In the 2024 fiscal year, spanning from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, the difference of Rider's operating revenue and expenses shrank from a \$28.2 million deficit to \$21.3 million in the red, the audit shows, with most of the change coming from \$5.7 million in cuts.

The trimming led to Rider's operating expenses falling from \$146 million in fiscal 2023 to \$141 million in fiscal 2024; there were shavings of at least \$1 million in each of: instruction and academic support, auxiliary and student services, and institutional support, according to the audit.

"The plan is, ultimately, to get to the point where [the deficit] is a surplus," said Rider Chief Financial Officer James Hartman. "The challenge here is that, included in [the \$21.3 million deficit] and included in your expenses is depreciation. We have about \$12 million or so of depreciation."

Without the depreciation, which is the decrease in value of facilities and other assets over time, and other minor factors, Rider still had a cash deficit of about \$7 million at the end of fiscal 2024, the elimination of which is Rider's current financial focus, Hartman said.

"Healthy institutions cover depreciation," Hartman said, "although, there aren't a lot of healthy institutions out there right now."

At \$119 million, Rider's operating revenue ticked up slightly in fiscal 2024, rising from \$118 million in fiscal 2023.

Despite the increase, Rider's tuition revenue fell by around \$2.2 million, as Rider, a tuition-dependent institution, continues to feel the effects of a nationwide, post-COVID dip in college enrollment. Rider's enrollment revenue, once at \$76.3 million in

fiscal 2022, came in at \$68.9 million in fiscal 2024.

Hartman said the university was working on a plan to combat decreasing enrollment and to get Rider to a positive operating budget. He did not share specifics, but said, "We have to continue to find efficiencies where we can. ... For us to be able to get rid of this in the long term, we have to grow revenue. I'm sure you've heard the phrase, 'You can't cut your way to prosperity.'"

Evelyn McDowell, an associate professor and chair of the university's accounting department, said, "The biggest problem for Rider is tuition revenue. We are cutting costs, but we're at the bone right now. ... The situation is not going to change until we figure out how to increase tuition revenue."

She said faculty have not received a "proper" wage increase in almost 10 years, and professors' supplemental pay for teaching extra courses was cut by 20%.

Increasing liquidity

In fiscal 2024, Rider saw an \$11 million jump in its quasi-endowment, which are unrestricted funds, for a total of \$16.7 million.

Hartman said the sudden increase resulted from "understanding" donors and trustees unrestricting money that was originally meant for a particular scholarship or program.

"They unrestricted those dollars just to improve Rider's financial position and to sort of give us a fall back if we ever need to go there, but we're still awarding the scholarships, we're still funding programs, so none of that has changed," Hartman said, calling the extra, unrestricted funds a "fail-safe."

The statement showed Rider, seeking more liquidity, took out a short-term loan of \$4.9 million, which is payable in full June 2025. Hartman said Rider will either pay back the loan by then or extend it another year.

The statement also notes a line of credit Rider entered into in 2017, with the agreement ending Sept. 20, 2024. At the end of fiscal 2024, Rider had \$8.8 million outstanding on the line of credit.

"Liquidity is always a concern, and yes, we've taken out a little bit more debt just to make sure we have that liquidity," Hartman said. "You need to have that flexibility and those cash reserves as you get into your lower-cash months ... which is mainly the summer."



Photo Courtesy of Rider University

James Waldon resigned as Rider's Public Safety Director.

Students concerned with Public Safety ticketing

By Jay Roberson

ALITTLE over a year after implementing a new parking fee for all Rider students, there have been numerous improvements among parking lots and campus safety, however, students have seen an increase in ticketing.

Though there have been improvements sparked by student concerns, like new light fixtures, security cameras and curb cuts, some students still feel Rider's parking situation isn't fair to all students.

Senior English major Maura Corman has been a commuter student for four years while attending Rider.

"The forcing of commuters to pay [a parking fee] is very frustrating, because as a commuter, you make that option so you can save money, right? Theoretically, we're still saving money, but we have to pay \$250 plus tax for the full year. It's just annoying because on top of that, we also have to pay for gas, deal with the stress of getting ourselves to campus every day and fight for a parking spot," said Corman.

A big issue for Corman was the overspill of residents into the commuter lot which leaves many commuters scrambling for a parking spot.

In a more recent interview, Reca explained that he and the Interim Director of Public Safety, Matthew Babcock, are attempting to address this specific issue.

"One of the things that [Babcock] is taking on is better signage. I actually just got an email from him today about how he wants to improve all the signage so it's very delineated and very clear."

Corman explained that because of lack of parking for commuters, she received a ticket for parking in a nonexistent spot. Her request to appeal the ticket was denied.

"I appealed it, and [public safety] said it would take two weeks before I had to pay it. I didn't get a response from my appeal until the afternoon that I had to pay the ticket ... I just went and I paid it, and

then I got an email that afternoon saying that it was denied so I feel like the appeals process isn't as efficient as it should be," said Corman.

Ava Graves, a sophomore business administration major, had a similar experience waiting for public safety after applying for a hardship pass, which excuses students from paying a parking fee if they qualify.

"I filled [a hardship pass] out at the very beginning of last semester... they never got back to me, and the semester started getting crazy, so I kind of forgot about it. I kept getting parking tickets over and over again. My mom and I were going through loans in mid January for this semester ... and we see that I have \$955 in tickets," said Graves.

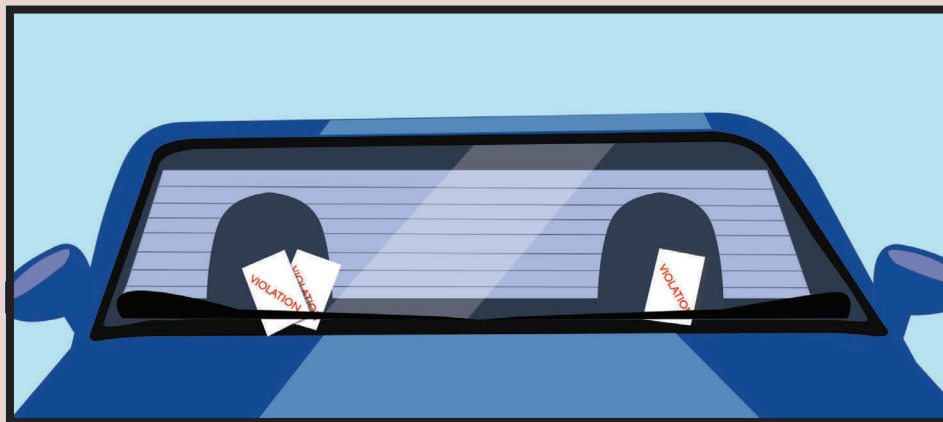
Students noted that they've seen an increase in ticketing, but this was not Public Safety's intent, according to Reca.

He said, "The reason I think there's a perception of more ticketing is because of these decals. A lot of people are trying to duck the fee, so with that, when we don't see a decal, we have to ticket because that means you didn't pay your fee, and you know, you're parking illegally."

Graves explained she received her hardship pass for the spring semester, but Public Safety only waived some of her tickets, leaving her about \$500 to pay.

Both Graves and senior political science major Sophia Berrio park in the sorority parking lot and felt targeted by Public Safety.

Berrio said, "Last semester, I got hit with three



Jay Roberson/The Rider News

Students have faced problems with their parking passes and feel they are receiving more tickets.

tickets ... so I had to pay \$700 and I didn't even know where I was gonna get that \$700. Public Safety kept coming into the lot, and they would keep ticketing me and the rest of my sisters and everyone else in the sorority lot, which I thought was really unfair."

Graves expressed the importance of clear and timely communication between students and public safety to avoid receiving multiple tickets.

"I wish that Rider, in general, was more proactive about stuff like this. First generation students like myself and students who are navigating college by themselves don't even know about the hardship pass. I didn't even know until one of my friends told me, so I wish they had a program or a resource page to know about it."

According to Reca, on Jan. 31 he met with the Student Government Association to discuss and plan potential improvements to Rider parking with more updates to come.

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SCAN HERE TO FOLLOW

Parents protest Dellinger's unpaid leave

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

so that one faces not only the direct consequences of discipline, but the loss of reputation in both the wider community and inevitably in the broader public."

On Feb. 3, an email signed by 110 concerned parents of students and alumni from the department of performing arts was sent to Dell'Omo, Fredeen, Bidle, Board of Trustees and Halpern addressing issues the group has with Dellinger's release and why his absence will harm the program.

The email addresses four issues, each with a paragraph below it titled, "Action Requested," for which the community details what they see as a resolution.

The email stated that Dell'Omo and Fredeen's email "failed to give a balanced view of the incident which harmed not only Mr. Dellinger's stellar reputation but also caused severe and additional

damage to the affected programs, its students and us as parents... The action taken was premature, without due process that would require input from those directly impacted by these circumstances."

The actions requested in the email were to prioritize the investigation into this matter, "reinstate Dellinger in capacity that minimizes harm to the senior showcase to ensure students receive the expected value of the program," share Dellinger's apology to the same distribution list as the email that was sent announcing his discipline, provide sensitive training to Dellinger in lieu of the purely punitive actions that removed him from his classroom, and a meeting with those making decisions regarding this matter, according to the email sent by the performing arts community.

Presidential search committee narrows down candidates

By Caroline Haviland

WHILE students left Lawrenceville for winter break, members of the presidential search committee hustled to continue the process of choosing Rider's next president.

In a universitywide email sent on Jan. 17, Trustee Joe McDougall, chair of the committee, updated the campus community about the 53 applications received for the position from a wide range of candidates, as well as the evaluation of recommended individuals by the Rider community.

"In addition to these applicants, our search partner, Storbeck Search, is actively evaluating a prospect pool of 200 potential candidates," McDougall's email said. "This list includes approximately 40 individuals recommended directly by members of the Rider community, underscoring the important role you continue to play in this process."

Christina Natoli, the search committee's student representative, said she feels comfortable moving forward in this process knowing all considered candidates have gone through an evaluation to review the important points brought up by herself and her fellow committee members.

"I was grateful to be able to advocate for the student experience and by now, my points as well as others have been communicated to all the candidates," said Natoli, president of the Student Government Association.

The process will become more specific going forward, according to Natoli, as the committee plans to hone in on the ideal candidate for Rider's next president.

Josiah Thomas/The Rider News



Shining Light on Black Excellence: Itunu Adebayo

By Madison Lewis

ITUNU Adebayo uses her role as a community assistant to ensure a safe and community-driven environment for her residents, and to be a familiar face and pillar of support on campus.

Adebayo, a junior criminal justice major, is a first-year CA in Gee Hall. She is the secretary of Rider's Muslim Student Association and an active member of club volleyball.

Adebayo sets herself up for success by being proactive amid chaos.

"[Being a CA] has impacted my time at Rider by more so preparing me to deal with situations right away," she said. "When you are a CA and you are on duty ... you are on call all of a sudden and if something happens you do have to be the first person to respond."

Adebayo is the line of communication that connects her residents to the Rider community and each other, creating a support system.

Junior sociology major She'ron Mason played on the women's club volleyball with Adebayo and were friends since their freshman year. Mason said Adebayo was so successful at Rider because she is kind, intelligent, intuitive and treats people with respect.

Adebayo's favorite aspect of being a CA is interacting with her peers and developing relationships with both residents and other CAs.

Adebayo recalled a time when she was on duty at one a.m. when she got a call pertaining to a mouse in one of the dorms, and she had to gauge what to do — she called Public Safety.

She detailed that she would have been too scared, maybe even slipped and fell, if she had to catch the mouse herself.

Adebayo concluded with, "Long story short, there was no mouse. I do not know what [the student] heard."

Adebayo related Residence Life to the current diversity, equity and inclusion debate in politics. She mentioned that some members of Residence Life were never CAs or students at Rider and did not always advocate for the CAs or listen to their feedback.

When asked if she noticed a change in the social landscape on Rider's campus, Adebayo observed how the higher-ups could put more effort into making the



Photo courtesy Itunu Adebayo

Junior criminal justice major **Itunu Adebayo** (left) and junior sociology major **Wendy Dayanna** (right) are both CAs at Rider.

school more diverse and equitable. She mentioned that the school could improve in promoting and supporting more events that showcase diversity.

Adebayo noted that the Muslim Student Association does not often receive a universitywide email that would encourage the student body to attend meetings or events.

"There is more diversity and we are getting higher rates of people of color, especially Black people, which is great to see," she said. "I still feel like there is still the same amount of ignorance and I do not think that has necessarily changed with an influx of diversity at Rider."

Mason said that diversity on campus provides a "general safe space" for people of color with Rider being a predominantly white institution.

She commended Rider on its immediate response to recent events relating to conversations surrounding diversity, like an email about how students should react when seeing Immigration and Customs Enforcement on campus.

Adebayo appreciates the importance of commemorative months like Black History Month

because it gives people the opportunity to educate themselves on issues that may not directly affect them.

"[Black History Month] is a conversation starter. ... It helps to slowly destigmatize whatever previous thoughts people could have had," she said.

Mason believes that highlighting minority groups and their accomplishments paves the way for reminding people that Black people contributed to American and global culture.

"When I think ... in terms of civil rights in general, I almost always think Black people," said Mason.

"When it comes to feminist movements or queer movements. I feel like ... specifically Black women are almost always at the forefront of these movements."

Both Adebayo and Mason believe that there can be improvements to Rider's DEI initiatives, but the university ultimately values diversity.

Adebayo said, "You can only understand so much from an outside perspective and it's when you actually come in and are actually willing to understand."



Photo courtesy Itunu Adebayo

Junior criminal justice major **Itunu Adebayo** plays on Rider's women's club volleyball.

Toro reconnects with Puerto Rican heritage through writing

By Grace Bertrand

COMING from a New Jersey upbringing, Rider English professor Vincent Toro often felt a disconnect to his Puerto Rican heritage. As he grew up, he found himself as an outsider of his own culture. When he became a writer, Toro decided to channel his artistic talents as a bridge between himself and his distant community.

"I believe art is the way in which we artists build a relationship to the world," said Toro. "I was using my art to bring me toward 'mi gente' [my people]."

In November, Toro was awarded the Letras Boricuas Fellowship that honors and celebrates distinguished Puerto Rican writers from Puerto Rico and the mainland United States. The \$25,000 fellowship was created by the Flamboyant Foundation and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation to encourage a sense of community among Puerto Rican writers.

With the recognition, Toro said he felt more connected to his Juncas and Cabo Rojo roots more than he ever has. The honor, along with the funds, gave him confirmation as a writer, and as a Puerto Rican.

"It sounds silly, but I got off the phone call thinking, 'Now no one can say that I'm not Puerto Rican,'" said Toro as he recalled the emotional weight of the moment.

He plans to use the fellowship money to give back to his Puerto Rican community and grow closer to his heritage. With the funds, Toro hopes to embark on research trips to Puerto Rico and a personal retreat abroad with his partner, a fellow writer.

Before Toro started his career as a university professor, he found his first love in writing. He started off writing for a number of literary journals and anthologies such as "Puerto Rico En Mi Corazón." He received recognition for his storytelling throughout the three collections of poetry he has published. His 2016 debut of

"Stereo.Island.Mosaic." earned him the Poetry Society of America's Norma Farber First Book Award.

Further navigating through Latinx art spaces, Toro began running the performing arts and literary program at Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, the largest national Latinx arts center in San Antonio.

"First and foremost, I want to be an advocate for the arts," said Toro. "It's important now more than ever to share with and remind the world that there are so many brilliant and beautiful artists of the Latinx diasporas that are contributing to communities everywhere."

As Toro found his way to teaching English, he strove to continue being a strong upholder of literature written by the Latinx community. Even in his classrooms today at Rider, colleague Cynthia Martinez, coproffessor of Latinx studies with Toro, explained how much of a champion he is for his Puerto Rican heritage.

"He has this ability to simplify pretty complex ideas and bring them to the context of the world that we're living in," said Martinez.

Similar to his writing, Toro bridges together his teaching and his experiences to make topics taught in the classroom relevant to students' everyday lives.

"To have a person at Rider who brings so much visibility to that [Puerto Rican culture] in such an engaging way that can capture students' attention and get students going on a lot of discussions is wonderful and really important," said Martinez.

Rider interviewed Toro when he was awarded the fellowship in November. In an article published on the university website, Toro said he "hopes to be able to nurture all the fruits that it [the fellowship] bears."

Nearly three months later, Toro said his hopes remain the same and with more time, he expects to reap the benefits of the fellowship.

In the months since, Toro has gotten to network with the fellow winners of the award who are primarily



Kaitlyn McCormick/The Rider News

English professor **Vincent Toro** found his way to education after dealing with financial instability with a career in the arts.

based in Puerto Rico. He hopes to connect with and further develop relationships with his creative peers the next time he visits the island.

"The seeds are showing themselves, but the fruit is going to take a while and that's okay," said Toro.

For Toro, the acceptance of this award also came the acceptance of so much more.

Whether it's reciting a Puerto Rican poem or dancing salsa with his partner, Toro found that he feels his most authentic self when his truth is told through art.

"When I walk into a space, I'm always an artist and I'm always Puerto Rican," said Toro. "They're not really separate from me anymore."

February

HOROSCOPES

PRESENTED BY KAITLYN SEAWOOD ♥ DESIGNED BY MAGGIE KLEINER

Dear Aquarius,

(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

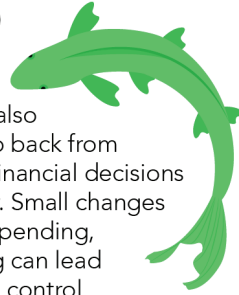
This month offers a chance to step outside your routine and form new connections, Aquarius. New opportunities may arise from conversations. Be mindful of where you invest your energy. Focus on what truly excites and inspires you, and do not feel obligated to say yes to every invitation.



Dear Pisces,

(Feb. 19 - March 20)

You will need to put in extra effort this month, Pisces, while also learning when to step back from pressures. Focus on financial decisions and personal stability. Small changes in your approach to spending, saving or goal-setting can lead to big results, so take control and trust the process.



Dear Aries,

(March 21 - April 19)

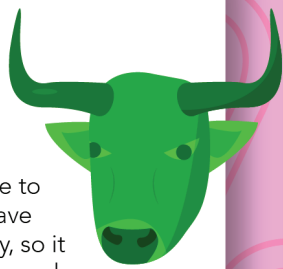
February is a time to focus on your personal growth and happiness, Aries. Confidence and motivation are on your side, but remember that success is about consistency, not speed. Take your time and make intentional moves, knowing that progress will follow.



Dear Taurus,

(April 20 - May 20)

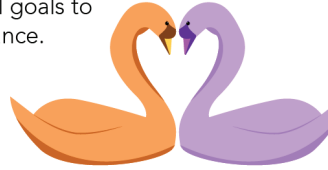
This month calls for hard work, but it is equally important to recognize when it is time to recharge, Taurus. You have been carrying a lot lately, so it is time to set boundaries and prioritize your wellbeing. Reflect on what drains your energy and allow yourself time to rest and reset.



Dear Gemini,

(May 21 - June 20)

Relationships and networking are key this month, Gemini. Whether reconnecting with friends or meeting new people, meaningful conversations will spark fresh ideas. Be open to new opportunities, but stay focused on your personal goals to maintain balance.



Dear Cancer,

(June 21 - July 22)

Your efforts are paying off, Cancer, and recognition is on the horizon. However, it is important to know when to take a step back from the stresses around you. Balance ambition with self-care — sustained success comes from working smart, not just hard.



Dear Leo,

(July 23 - Aug. 22)

February offers the perfect opportunity to embrace change and step outside your comfort zone, Leo. Whether through learning, travel or shifting your perspective, this is your time to take risks. Growth happens in small steps, so do not rush the process.



Dear Virgo,

(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

Success is about knowing when to work hard and when to let go, Virgo. If something is weighing on you, now is the time to address it instead of pushing it aside. Releasing what no longer serves you will create space for something better to come in.



Dear Libra,

(Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)

This month offers a powerful chance to strengthen important relationships, Libra. Some may require tough conversations, while others will grow naturally. Be honest about your needs and do not hesitate to walk away from relationships that no longer serve you.



Dear Scorpio,

(Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)

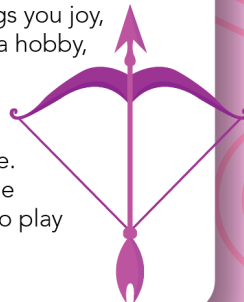
Your key to success this month is balancing hard work with moments of pause, Scorpio. Pay attention to your daily habits and routines — small adjustments can have a big impact on your wellbeing. Take time to reset and align your energy where it is most needed.



Dear Sagittarius,

(Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

February is an opportunity to reconnect with what brings you joy, Sagittarius. Whether it is a hobby, creative project or time spent with people who uplift you, let yourself enjoy life without pressure. The best ideas often come when you allow yourself to play and create.



Dear Capricorn,

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

Achieving your goals this month requires hard work, but it is also important to find balance, Capricorn. Focus on home and family matters, either by creating a sense of stability at home or nurturing relationships. Remember to take care of your own needs too.



Trump cannot stop trans joy

FOR transgender youths, since Jan. 20, opening up the news every morning feels like reopening an old wound. This was a feeling I never thought I would have to worry about, as I witnessed federal government websites remove the TQIA+ from LGBTQIA+ a week into a new administration.

Only about 20 minutes into his new presidency, Donald Trump declared a war on transgender individuals.

Trump stated, "Today it will be henceforth the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders, male and female."

Since then, he has made sure to suspend passport applicants using the gender mark "X" to ensure that "M," biological male, and "F," biological female, are the only markers.

The government has even gone as far as mailing transgender individuals a new passport with a gender marker that "matched their records," according to trans social media influencer Zaya Perysian. While all of Perysian's legal documents state she is a female, her new passport mailed to her identifies her sex as male.

Since his inauguration, Trump has signed executive orders that claim, "...my Administration will defend women's rights and protect freedom of conscience by using clear and accurate language and policies that recognize women are biologically female, and men are biologically male."

I fall somewhere between what people would call man and woman. I am the gender that threatens the man in power.

Trump has even gone as far as claiming that sex is assigned at conception, but at conception, embryos have both female X and male Y chromosomes. In this case, we would all be intersex because at conception embryos do not have an assigned gender.

Feeling so afraid of the idea of a third gender, or even more, caused Trump to make a claim that contradicts exactly what he has been trying to get rid of. This is not because he truly cares about gender and "defending" women, but because he is afraid of the unknown.

The unknown beauty in dressing masculine for the first time and experimenting with gender. The unknown joy of putting on makeup, looking at yourself in the mirror and finally seeing yourself reflecting back. The unknown community you gain in the never ending journey of self expression.

Trans youths are here, but they are fighting extra hard to stay. According to a 2024 survey done by The Trevor Project, "39% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered committing suicide in the past year – including 46% of transgender and non-binary people." Another survey by The Trevor Project claimed that 90% of LGBTQ+ young people's mental health was affected by recent politics.

The truth is, as scared as the LGBTQIA+ community is right now, we have to remain strong and stay visible. No matter how hard the new administration tries to hide and erase us, they do not have the power to take away queer and trans joy.

To remain a true ally to the trans community, it's important to remain committed to staying informed and protecting us. Say our names, use our pronouns and use your power as a cisgender person to remind others the trans community is not going away just because our government says so.

Have uncomfortable conversations. Correct someone who is misgendering a friend. Avoid the companies that do not prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion. Read a book written by a trans person. Check in on your trans friends because we truly need it in a time like this.

Most importantly, for my trans friends, use this time to build and connect with your community. We are invisible to the government, but we all see one another. As long as we exist, they can not take away our voices and experiences if we do not give them the power.

The Trevor Project provides counseling services to queer youth. Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678.

Rider's Counseling Center is located in Zoerner House near the south entrance of campus and is available for free mental health support.

*Jay Roberson
senior English and secondary education major*



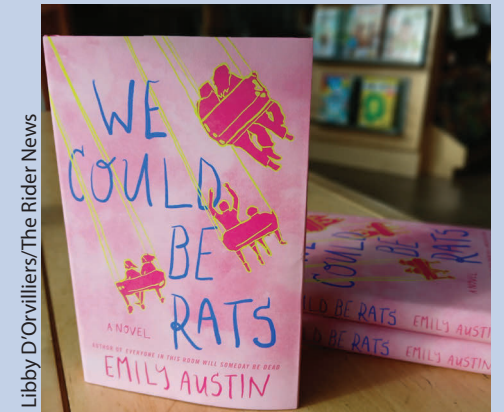
Recent anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation attempts to directly attack and oppress the trans community.



Scan to read other student opinions from this week!

DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE: BOOK REVIEW: 'We Could Be Rats' gnaws at heartstrings

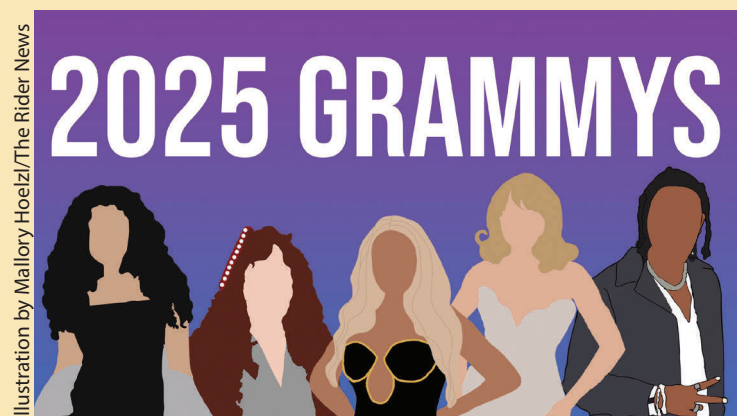
By Libby D'Orvilliers



DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE:

The Grammys ignore game-changing artists

By Kaitlyn Seawood



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WOMENS BASKETBALL

Rider's weekend road trip ends losing streak

By Kadie DiGiuseppe

AMID its four-game losing streak, Rider women's basketball took down a fan-favorite rival, the Saint Peter's Peacocks, 57-52 on Jan. 30 weekend, before finishing its weekend with a nail-biting, 65-63 win over the Merrimack Warriors on Feb. 1. The Broncs improved to 5-15 on the season.

"We are starting to see some of the things we have been working on as well as the growth we have been talking about. We are starting to see that carry over for long spurts on gameday," said Head Coach Lynn Milligan.

Peacock pressure

Senior guard Gabby Turco and freshman guard Camryn Collins started the game with back-to-back 3-pointers.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Senior guard **Gabby Turco** drives in the lane.

The Peacocks tied things up but senior guard Mariona Cos-Morales replied with three points after.

Cos-Morales' scoring fueled a 6-0 run in the Peacocks before junior forward Emilee Tahata obtained her first points.

Freshman forward Winner Bartholomew finished off the quarter for the Broncs offense with her three points, but Rider trailed 19-16 at the end of the quarter.

Sophomore guard Aliya McIver and freshman guard Emmy Roach added four points combined but the Broncs trailed by five at the end of the first half.

Trailing by seven, Rider put together an 8-0 run until the next four minutes were quiet on both sides of the court.

Collins extended the Broncs lead with her six points in the following quarter.

After that, Collins finished things off for the Broncs at the free throw line, allowing Rider to work the score up to 57-52.

Turco led the Broncs with 16 points including four 3-pointers while Collins had 13 of her own along with seven points from Tahata.

"Everybody comes into our games thinking that they are just going to beat us," said Tahata. "Coach said that this is our 'revenge tour' and that it doesn't matter what anyone else says. We just played our game."

The Broncs turned the ball over 21 times while the Peacocks went 3-22 from beyond the arc.

Closing the gap

Rider traveled to North Andover, Massachusetts to take on one of the newest Metro Atlantic Conference opponents, Merrimack.

Rider trailed by six to start the game until Cos-Morales and Tahata went on their own 6-0 run to tie the score up early.

Down by three, Turco hit her first 3-pointer of the game and after a timeout was called, Collins drained a layup to take the lead.

However, the Broncs saw that lead slip away further

into the quarter as the Warriors put together a 7-0 run.

Both teams went back and forth the rest of the quarter, finishing things off in Merrimack's favor, 19-18.

Senior guard Sanaa Redmond opened the second quarter with a layup which started Rider's 10-1 run.

The Warriors made two layups in a row after the timeout and cut the Broncs lead down to four. Turco, Redmond and Collins worked the lead back up to seven.

Tahata finished off the first half with a layup, bringing the score to 37-28.

Merrimack started the second half with a 4-0 run only to be stopped by a 3-pointer by McIver. Cos-Morales' layup after that put Rider in front by 10.

The Broncs ended the third up by 10 with scoring contributions from Tahata, Collins, Roach and McIver.

Collins started the last 10 minutes with a 3-pointer but was answered by a 9-0 Warriors run.

With less than two minutes left, the Warriors tied things at 61 all until they retook the lead with 45 seconds left.

Cos-Morales' jumper caused Merrimack to call a timeout. After the break, the Broncs forced a clutch turnover where Tahata laid in the game winning bucket with three seconds left.

Collins led the team in scoring with 15 points while Tahata and Turco combined for 25. The Broncs won the turnover battle 22-18.

"As February is just starting and we are getting toward the end of our schedule, we've been looking to make sure we don't have any more slip ups," said Turco. "We've also been looking to string two or even one wins here to just get back on track."

With the two wins, the Broncs sit at one game below the 10th seed in the MAAC.

Rider will return to Alumni Gym on Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. to take on Sacred Heart before hitting the road again to play Siena on Feb. 8 at 2 p.m. Both games will be streamed on ESPN+.

WRESTLING

Broncs grab first MAC win in weekend victories

By Benjamin Shinault and Dave Green

COMING off the heels of a 21-12 loss to Drexel on Jan. 25, Rider wrestling was in dire need of a win to keep up with the pace of the Mid-American Conference wrestling.

The Broncs got that and more with a commanding conference win over George Mason on Feb. 1 and a surge of dominance in a comeback against Campbell on Feb. 2.

George Mason

On Feb. 1, Rider wrestling welcomed in the George Mason Patriots, a team they have dominated in 16 straight victories and that dominance held firm during the entire course of the match, winning 24-12 and picked up their first conference win.

The action started off with freshman Noah Micheals. Micheals and his opponent did not have too much action as both wrestlers fought for positioning. Points were not rewarded until Micheals scored a three-point takedown.

That takedown resulted in the points Rider would need as they won it by decision by the third period, 3-0. The win by decision was Michaels' first of his Rider career.

The Broncs won the first two bouts of the match thanks to Micheals and senior Will Betancourt, both being called by decision. George Mason, down 6-0, picked up its first victory of the afternoon after Branden Palcko finished just short 9-7.

After the Palcko loss, Rider would tail off three straight victories thanks to graduate student Sammy Alvarez, senior Colton Washleski and junior Enrique Munguia. All wins were not won by decision as Alvarez won by a fall, Washleski by sudden victory and Munguia won after his opponent left with an injury.

Then following up the three straight wins, came two straight losses. Isaac Dean, ranked 15th in his



Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

Graduate student **Tyler Klinsky** works on his opponent from behind.

weight class, came up short in his match, losing 5-4. Dean tied it up entering the third period coming off an escape and penalty point but Dean could not complete the comeback effort.

In the last two matches, George Mason and Rider split it, giving the Broncs the victory.

"Our guys did what we asked them to do; wrestle hard for seven minutes and score points," Head Coach John Hangey said, "It was a good showing for us in the MAC and important for seeding at the end of the year."

Campbell

There are comebacks, then there is what the Broncs pulled off - a thunderous, four-match onslaught that turned a 17-3 deficit into a barnstorming 22-17 victory

over Campbell at Alumni Gym.

Campbell collected the first three bouts, putting its opponents on the ropes early. Rider finally stopped the pain at 133 pounds, with Betancourt. In a tight match, Betancourt's lone takedown in the final period was the difference, securing a gritty 4-2 win.

Campbell quickly reasserted themselves, stretching its lead by taking 141 pounds and 149 pounds. Enter Washleski at 157 pounds, looking like a man on a mission. He landed early points to take a 4-1 lead in the first period. By the second, he was shifting gears, throwing in a takedown and a reversal to push ahead 9-2. Washleski then pounced on bonus points, wrapping up a 13-5 major decision and kickstarting a comeback.

At 165 pounds, Munguia turned up the heat, locking his sights on a tech fall before nailing a pin in the dying moments to cut the gap to 17-13. Suddenly, Campbell was not looking so comfortable.

Next up, graduate student Michael Wilson, 174 pounds, put the clamps on Campbell's hopes. Trailing early, he came storming back with seven unanswered points in the second period, then finished in style with two more takedowns to claim a dominant 14-6 major decision. Just like that, it was 17 apiece.

Finally, senior Isaac Dean - a man who does not do close finishes. With the match in the balance, Dean demolished his opponent with a jaw-dropping 19-4 first-period tech fall to seal a 22-17 win for Rider.

After the match, Hangey praised the fighting spirit of his squad, giving special mention to sophomore Brandon Palcko and senior Matt Hoelke for their fearless efforts against superior opponents.

"We wrestled with a lot more energy today than against Drexel," Hangey said. "Now we're off on a bit of a Pennsylvania swing, hitting all the Pennsylvania Athletic Conference State schools the next few days."

The Broncs will kick off the Pennsylvania swing with matches against Lock Haven on Feb. 6 and Bloomsburg on Feb. 8.

Sports

ONLINE

TALK ABOUT SOME NAIL BITERS!

Check out men's basketball coverage of a tight win over Saint Peter's and narrow loss against Merrimack.

FIND THE STORY ON THERIDERNEWS.COM



BASEBALL

'It was time': Baseball coach resigns after 20 years, 4 titles



Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg/Rider University

Former Rider Head Coach **Barry Davis** is surrounded by his team after winning the 2023 MAAC tournament.

By **Benjamin Shinault**

STANDING guard at the entrance of the dugout of Sonny Pittaro Field for the last 20 years has been a head coach driven by leadership and accountability. That same coach has brought an illustrious amount of success to Rider baseball and anywhere he coached.

On Jan. 17, Barry Davis announced that he will be resigning as head coach of Rider baseball after 20 seasons.

Whether it's winning four Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference championships, two regular-season championships and even a win in the NCAA tournament against a nationally-ranked opponent, Davis is a proven winner, accumulating 1,026 wins over his coaching career and has helped a number of Broncs make their way to professional baseball.

The early years

Hired in July of 2004, Davis already carried success with him after winning four national championships in an 11-year span at Gloucester County College, now Rowan College of South Jersey, and had an overall record of 434-109.

Following his legendary stint in South Jersey, Davis got an opportunity to coach at Georgia Southwestern State, where he stayed for four years until he got hired at Rider by former Athletic Director, Curt Blake.

"He thought enough of me to hire me, to follow what is a legend in Sonny Pittaro ... he believed in me," Barry Davis said.

Pittaro, who coached Rider baseball for 34 years before retiring in 2004, and also a member of the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, left massive shoes for Davis to fill.

In his first season in 2005, Davis finished with an overall record of 21-29. Three seasons later, Davis won his first-ever MAAC Championship, wasting no time in adding to the trophy case.

"The first championship is always the one you remember and I remember that group of guys, that was my first real big recruiting class," Davis said.

Two years later, Rider won another championship. The 2010 season reaped success as the Broncs had the MAAC Pitcher of the Year in Mike Thomas,

who would go on to be drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers and won their second championship in three years.

A stretch of dominance

"There were a couple teams along the way, especially in 2011, 2013 and 2015, that were probably better than some of the teams that won with the exception of probably the 2023 team which I would make the argument was the most accomplished team that I have had," Davis said.

The 2023 team finished with a record of 36-21 and won regular season matchups against Duke and Oklahoma.

In that same season, Rider won its first NCAA tournament game since 1987 thanks to a late-inning surge of offense and a game-saving diving catch by now senior outfielder Richie Sica.

Sica, having been with the Broncs since the 2022 season, opened up about seeing Davis exit the diamond.

"It was bittersweet because it was sad to see him leave after what he's done with the program," Sica said, "but, it was also a little bit of excitement for what the next chapter could bring."

After Sica laid out for the grab against Coastal Carolina in the Conway Regional of the 2023 NCAA Tournament, Davis acted accordingly.

"He came up to me and gave me a big hug," Sica said.

With the season starting Feb. 21 against Campbell, Davis felt like it was time to move on to other endeavors.

"There's a lot of things that go into it, for me, the timing is definitely not ideal with the season coming up but for various reasons, it just works out for me," Davis explained.

Davis has had the thoughts of resignation on his mind for months and he wanted to act on it before the season was fully in gear.

"I've had the full fall, the winter, to really think about it and make sure it's the right decision for me," Davis said.

When Davis finally came to the decision to resign, he had to face the hardest challenge: telling his players.

"They took it as well as you can take it," Davis said. "I tried to be as honest as I could with them ... I'm willing to help them with anything they need. It's a great opportunity for them to take what they've learned and take what we have and take it to the next level.

The new era

With Davis' departure, Athletic Director Don Harnum announced in a Jan. 23 press release that Lee Lipinski '16, assistant coach and hitting coach for eight years, will be the interim head coach for the Broncs while they search for a formal replacement.

Lipinski said, "I want to thank Coach Barry Davis for teaching me so much and setting an incredible example, as well as Athletic Director Don Harnum for his unwavering support and confidence in giving me the opportunity to lead this team."

Davis, who coached Lipinski for five years, has nothing but praise for the newest executive of the dugout.

"There's very few people that have stayed this long and do lessons in the middle of the night just to coach," Davis said of Lipinski. "He's certainly paid his dues in terms of the time spent and it's up to him to take advantage of the opportunity."

Sica, who has been coached by Lipinski for four years now, loves the potential that Lipinski brings to the plate.

"I love him, our team loves him, I think he's bringing this energy that we haven't seen out of him," Sica said, "I think he's doing a really good job of just keeping everything moving and not really getting too hung up on Davis resigning."

As the years accumulated for Davis, the landscape of Rider baseball would evolve and he is proud of where the program stands as he takes an exit.

"I feel great about what I accomplished here, I'm so proud of all the players that I have had the chance to work with," Davis said, "I'm looking forward to whatever happens next."

Davis said he will be releasing a fiction novel titled, "Old Dogs New Tricks: The Power of Leading with Emotional Intelligence." The novel releases in the spring.