



# ‘A seat at the table’: Asian voices shine for AAPI month

By Grace Bertrand

**H**EEYOUNG Kim, Rider’s chief diversity officer, can recall the exact moment she realized her hard work had paid off and she finally had “a seat at the table.” For her, that moment came at the 2024 commencement when she literally earned a seat near President Gregory Dell’Omo and Provost DonnaJean Fredeen on the first floor, front and center.

Kim, teary-eyed, immediately texted her longtime mentor and former program director at Pennsylvania State University’s Teaching and Learning Center, who hired Kim for her first job in higher education and thanked her for believing in her all those years ago.

To Kim, that one moment signified 14 years’ worth of dedication at Rider and the ability to earn “a seat at the table” as an Asian American woman.

“I was in their first shot angle and I was thinking, ‘Wow, everybody sees me in the first shot and I can actually see everyone on the first floor,’” Kim recalled, never being able to see the full audience before. “That was a moment where I was like, ‘Wow, my life has changed so much.’”

Despite being nationally recognized in May, Rider celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in April to offer the AAPI community at Rider a chance to highlight their heritage. During the month, students and faculty annually come together to lionize Asian American culture, and in doing so, acknowledge the importance of having representation of Asian Americans at Rider.

## ‘I have to speak up’

Coming to America from Korea in 1999, Kim left her country to earn a doctorate at Penn State and quickly found work in higher education before making her way to Rider in 2010.

Since then, Kim has held many titles at Rider: coordinator of distance learning, director of the Teaching and Learning Center, chief diversity officer and, most recently, dean of the university library and learning commons.

With these titles came a lot of responsibilities that Kim learned to look at as a privilege.

Kim said, “Other people don’t have the power [I do] or will never be invited at the table to be able to speak, even if they want to speak, so I’ve been very diligent [in knowing] I have to speak up and I’ve been doing it so far.”

Kim is currently the only Asian in the 16-member cabinet under university leadership. She expressed that it was not until she became a director of the Teaching and Learning Center that she realized being the only Asian in the room was not uncommon.

Over time, Kim developed the habit of entering a room and immediately looking around to see if there were any other Asian faculty that she could talk to.

It was important for Kim to have other people in the Asian American community to turn to. Despite not always finding them, Kim found what she calls her “people” in colleagues outside of the community who uplifted her, even though they did not understand her personal struggles.

Fredeen, who Kim described as her mentor, was among the few people who believed in her very early on during her time at Rider. However, she was not the only one. While Kim is the only Asian American among her higher-level colleagues, she has made close connections with Asian American faculty.

Librarian Sharon Yang, who works under Kim, also feels a sense of pride in her Asian culture she hopes remains as she continues to live in America. Similar to Kim, Yang traveled to America from China for graduate school at Columbia University and quickly made her way to Rider in 1996.

“All of [the Asian American faculty] came here as graduate students and we went to school, and during our stay in America, we began to love this country,”



Grace Bertrand/The Rider News

Librarian **Sharon Yang** stands next to two different walls in her office displaying her professional achievements (left) and one displaying family photos.

Yang said. “Now I’ve been here longer than I was in China, so really America is my home.”

Yang fell in love with the social systems and freedom America offered her, drastically different from what she grew up with in China. In China, Yang explained a student’s major is typically chosen by the parents and there was no option to change career fields once chosen.

“I think I combined the good parts and bad parts of Chinese values,” Yang said. “In China, they are still discriminating against the women being raped or sexually harrassed and these women can’t speak out because [if they do] they will never get married. [China] is still 100 years behind.”

However, for Yang it was not all bad, as she expressed her desire to keep some Chinese traditions, like music and art, and her inability to get rid of others, like placing work before family.

Entering Yang’s office, she

SEE ‘REPRESENTATION’ PAGE 3

# New housing process leaves students scrambling

By Caroline Haviland

**T**HE housing selection process for the 2025-26 school year opened at the beginning of February, but with the newly appointed Residence Life Director Sean Killion, the usual operation students had known in previous years took a turn, resulting in confusion among returning residential students.

Killion said the main concern students voiced regarding this year’s process was the allotted time slots that determine the order in which rooms are chosen. Students received a time to select their dorms based upon their class standing and how early they made their \$200 housing deposit due on March 1, making it a “first come, first served process,” according to Killion.

In past years, students’ time slots were based solely on class standing, with upperclassmen having first priority, but the order within each grade was randomized. However, Killion said this new organization is fair and is standard practice at most universities.

Phase one of the housing selection began April 8 and concluded April 14. The process

included 39 fifth-year seniors, 233 juniors, 184 sophomores and 202 freshmen. The process for incoming freshmen to choose their dorms will commence once returning students complete their selections.

Another change came for students interested in gender-inclusive housing, which involved submitting an additional housing application. The groups were then placed in a space chosen by Residence Life for gender-inclusive housing, a new development this year, according to Killion.

“There’s generally a conversation that happens [between Residence Life and a student] so that students are aware of what it means to be a part of [gender-inclusive housing] and that as long as they’re OK with that, then we would go ahead and place them in these accommodations,” said Killion.

According to Killion, the interest in double-single rooms, a standard double inhabited by one person, has grown substantially in previous years. The increased demand caused Residence Life to consider this type of living situation in specific residence halls.

With the reopening of Conover Hall, Killion and his team decided to designate the building as well as Poyda Hall to double singles, but students are



Photo Courtesy of Sean Killion

Residence Life Director **Sean Killion** made changes to the housing selection process for the 2025-26 school year.

permitted to request a double single in another residence hall if those buildings fill up. As of April 14, Poyda and Conover are almost at full capacity, according to Killion.

Residence Life was initially going to split the housing selection into a three-part operation for certain types of dorms to be available on different days, such as apartments and suites, singles and then doubles. The final decision, however, was to allow students to select any kind of their choice during their time slot.

“We felt like because of the way

SEE ‘KILLION’ PAGE 2



Jake Tiger

## ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

*Junior jumper Michael Palmer and senior sprinter Mariah Stephens are TRN athletes of the year.*

PAGE 8



## AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH: MORE THAN AWARENESS

*Honoring autistic individuals and their diverse experiences.*

PAGE 6



## PUMP UP THE BEAT WITH ‘HEARTBEAT OF THE EAST’

*A collection of student dancers and other performers celebrated AAPI month.*

PAGE 4





SECURITY BRIEFS

BY CAITLYN SUTTON

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babcock

Broken arm

Truck collision. On April 9 at 11:09 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the gated administration lot for the report of a broken gate arm. Upon arrival, officers discovered the gate arm at the lot's entrance had been broken off. They spoke with a C&W Services employee who stated that they were driving a large truck through the gate, when the arm came down midway on the truck, breaking the it off. Facilities Management was contacted to have the gate arm repaired.



Sparks fly

Fallen trees. On April 12 at 10:52 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to College Drive, behind Olson Hall, for the report of a fallen tree. Upon arrival, Public Safety found a large tree that had fallen onto university property. The tree had knocked down power utility wires that were actively sparking. The Fire Department was contacted and arrived on location. Upon arrival, PSE&G was called to address the fallen power lines. The power lines were repaired and the tree was cut to open the roadway.

CORRECTION

In an April 9 article regarding former Provost DonnaJean Fredeen, The Rider News incorrectly spelled Fredeen's last name in a headline in the print edition of the paper.

The Rider News regrets this error.

SGA presidency uncontested for second year in a row

By Caitlyn Sutton and Zyheim Bell

WITH multiple uncontested positions in the Student Government Association's 2025 election, this year's Meet the Candidates Forum served as an opportunity for students to learn more about their future SGA representation. Candidates were questioned about their plans to better the student experience at Rider, during a time of significant change on campus, as Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo and Provost DonnaJean Fredeen retire.

On April 10 at 11:30 a.m., Rue Auditorium became an open forum for a panel discussion with candidates for president, vice president, as well as chair positions in SGA.

Moira Geiger, a junior computer science major, is running uncontested for SGA president. The unopposed run for president is the second in two years.

Geiger plans to make SGA more accessible to the general student body. She wants to create a lasting impact on campus as a whole, making for a more open community.

In addition, Geiger disclosed plans for new legislation regarding mental health, including making training for mental health causes mandatory for student leaders and people in executive positions around campus.

Geiger said the idea of a new university president coming at the same time as her becoming the president of SGA is not intimidating, as she thinks two new presidents can be a catalyst for change.

"It brings a lot of opportunity to rewrite what student government looks like and rewrite what student participation looks like," Geiger said.

Olivia Bucs, a junior marketing major, is running for SGA's executive vice president. At the panel, she stated her campaign is formed around helping students involved in SGA become better professionals.

Bucs wants to implement professional development and ways for Rider students to prepare for jobs based on important things she has learned from communities she is a part of, such as DAARSTOC, an executive skill-building organization on campus.

As executive vice president, Bucs wants the student body to feel heard. She shared that those who hold executive positions cannot make change if they do not have open communication with the student body on their concerns. Bucs wants to forge a path for connection between students and people who hold positions of power in SGA.

"I want to actually talk to you guys," Bucs said. "I want to know more, I want you to be honest with us."

Andrew Antigua, a junior accounting major, is running against Elijah Banks, a junior criminal justice major, for vice president of administration and finances. Antigua serves as a member of the SGA finance board. Antigua told the audience that he feels the experience has equipped him with the skills necessary to handle the position and closed his speech with a "thank you" to his supporters.

Banks was not present at the forum.

After the panel, current SGA president Christina Natoli, a senior political science major, said she feels happy with the incoming governing body. With the introduction of a new screening process, Natoli believes the candidates demonstrated a great understanding of their roles.

"I think that the team that's already in the process



Photo courtesy of Rider University

Junior computer science major **Moira Geiger** is set to be SGA president.

of being built is very strong," Natoli said. With many uncontested runs, involvement in student government appears to be changing. When asked about involvement, Natoli stressed for students to understand the importance of their feedback.

"Recognizing that SGA does have power and any feedback that we receive, we're able to bring to administration," Natoli said.

The voting period for SGA's 2025-26 executive board and cabinet positions closes on April 16 at 11:59 p.m. Any full-time undergraduate student may vote. Information about how to vote can be found in SGA's election emails.

*Journey New is a copy editor for The Rider News and is the student organizations committee chair for SGA. They had no part in the writing or editing of this story.*

Killion looks to improve housing process in the future

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

this process was going to unfold that it was going to be easier for students that if they found out they weren't going to get apartments and suites, that they were going to want to be able to select that second option right away instead of waiting another week before they were able to make that selection," said Killion.

Rihanna Clayton, a sophomore health sciences major, and Ashleigh Allen, a sophomore psychology

major, were in a four-person group going into the housing process, hoping to obtain an apartment in Moore Hall. Clayton was given a time slot at 12:30 p.m. on April 8, the first day to select housing, which she considered to be a "good spot."

However, due to the option for students to select any housing at their designated time, all of the apartments available had scattered people within them, meaning an apartment meant for four people had at least one person in it. This was not a problem students faced before because only housing groups had access to apartments and suites.

"It's different than what we were told in housing last year and the standard we come to expect because we were always told that when group formation happens, you can only select a room based off of how many people you have in that group," said Clayton.

In email communications from Residence Life regarding the housing process, contradictory information was given: an email on March 24 detailed different dates to select varying types of dorms, but in another email on March 25, the option of choosing any room type during a student's selected time was mentioned. This furthered the miscommunication around the new housing selection process.

"Certainly I think we could always go back and look

at how we could improve on communication," Killion said. "The other thing I would say is that my hope and advice to the students in the future is that they would take advantage of reaching out to us ahead of time, participating in things like the information fair. ... Choosing your housing and going into this process with a plan is so critically important."

Assistant Director of Housing Operations Keenan Bailey emphasized the importance for change in the housing process since it allows for the opportunity of reevaluation and bringing processes up to date. Bailey came into his position in October 2024 as one of the many new staff members at Residence Life, following former Residence Life Director Roberta Butler's departure in July 2024.

"We continue to overhaul the system and take feedback from students that we're hearing and meeting with folks," said Bailey. "We just make sure we address individual needs. My office door says come on in and I mean that. So if there's anything that folks need, even now, come on in and see me. If I can't do it I'll get you connected to the person who can."

*Zyheim Bell is an incoming news editor for The Rider News and is a community assistant in Ziegler Hall. He had no part in the writing or editing in this story.*



Hannah Newman



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

After renovations, Conover Residence Hall will be reopening in the 2025-26 academic year for single rooms.



# Students reflect on general education courses

By Hannah Newman

THE journey toward a college degree comes with some mandatory pit stops for students, even if they do not necessarily believe they will help reach their final destination.

General education courses, required for Rider students to graduate, aim to prepare scholars for a wide variety of fields and professions, particularly if they do not go into jobs connected to their major.

As Rider’s Middle States accreditation approaches in 2027, the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as other branches of the university, are looking to revise its general education curriculum to enhance the student experience in the classroom, according to Kelly Bidle, who President Gregory Dell’Omo appointed as the new provost on April 8. “The impetus for starting this task force [revising general education requirements] ... we’re getting ready to undergo our Middle States accreditation. ... As far as meeting all the standards that are needed to be met for a college or university, one of the things they do address is the general education curriculum,” said Bidle, who began serving as the CAS dean in 2019.

Oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and technological competency, at a minimum, are all classes that must be provided to students, according to Bidle. Other classes, such as technological competence, information literacy, cultural and global awareness and ethics are also suggested.

In a March survey from The Rider News, taken by 133 Rider undergraduate students within all three colleges; the Norm Brodsky College of Business, the CAS and the College of Education and Human Services; 78.2% of students voted that being required to take so many different classes outside of their major was overwhelming and affected their academic performance, and 71.4% of students said starting college taking similar classes to that of high school decreased their engagement in the classroom.

## Defining ‘holistic’ education

All three colleges at Rider have different general education requirements, but students generally felt similarly about these classes, regardless of their college. The survey stated that 71.4% of students did not feel that those requirements contributed to their degree.

General education requirements could consist of an assortment of English, history, science, math with electives in humanities and social sciences depending on the student’s college.

Sophomore business administration major Eddie Tokmajian said, “I have to take a humanities elective and I really don’t want to because a lot of those humanities electives serve me no purpose in my business administration degree.”

However, the lack of choice they have in what types of classes to take can lessen the gravity of their engagement.

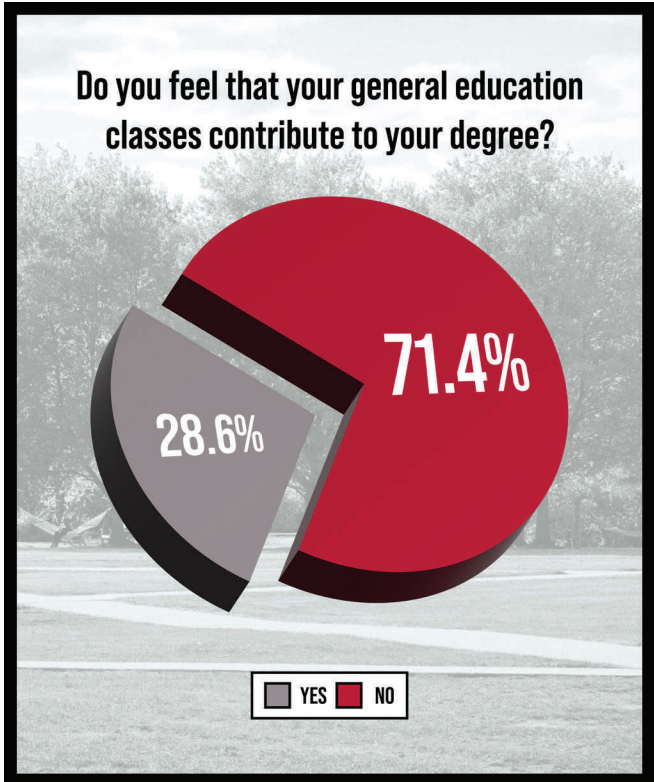
“If a student is not interested in what they have to fulfill for a requirement or whatever it may be, they will be less engaged and less determined to do well in courses, which will only further inhibit further learning outcomes,” said Adam Duggan, a sophomore secondary education major.

Although Duggan, who uses they/them pronouns, agrees that a well-rounded education is rational, having more variety in the classroom would immensely benefit student engagement and success, they said.

“I understand the theory behind holistic education, and I am typically a proponent of that,” said Duggan. “However, I feel like a lot of what’s required of students ends up not being used. There’s a difference between holistic education and time wasting.”

Duggan explained that there are classes that are applicable to their major and serve the purpose of well-rounded education, but those courses are not listed as an option to fulfill general education requirements.

“I, ironically, think that sort of a marketing class would be beneficial in a way, if you’re able to sell the idea of education and why students should be invested in your specific class that’ll help you keep students engaged,” said Duggan. “A lot of fine arts electives could be beneficial as a majority of students



71.4% of Rider students who responded believe their general education courses are not helpful.

in secondary education, so middle and high school, ... are involved in some sort of artistic secondary activity, and I think by understanding more of those student’s interests, [it] can lend educators to understand their students better, tailor lessons and just make an overall better experience.”

Sophomore chemistry major Jordan Dechert felt that the general education curriculum for the CAS is appropriate, but the amount each class needed to fulfill requirements became a downfall.

“My biggest issue is the amount,” Dechert said. “I don’t have a problem taking history, I don’t have a problem taking a language, but it’s two of each class, and if you have to take two of every gen-ed, it happens so quickly, and the next thing I know, it’s half of my degree requirements.”

## Navigating narrow options

A Rider News survey question asked what students would like to see added to their general education curriculum, the options including a class in some form of art and design, mental health education, a sports class, technological skills and competences and media literacy.

Mental health education was voted the highest at 49.6% followed by art and design at 45.9%

“[Mental health education is] a good idea considering how many professions have negative effects on mental health,” said Dechert. “It’s also something that is important for people to be informed on.”

Another change that was suggested by Dechert was offering more of the same class, as spots can fill up fast, giving students the opportunity to fill a requirement on a deadline, but also taking away a learning experience.

Certain subjects have less variety and Dechert believed more should be offered to give students something that suits their interests so professors will have more students that want to be in their class.

“I went to look for a social perspective class and I wanted to take psychology but they just didn’t offer any psychology classes under that category so I have to take a sociology class,” said Dechert. “I don’t mind sociology but I would rather take a psychology class.”

Duggan added that having more variety in different areas of studies and colleges beyond a student’s major would enhance their classroom experience and serve general education’s purpose better than having a concrete curriculum that is parallel to classes students have taken before college.

“I can really appreciate what they’re trying to do ... but I feel like requiring specific types of classes is not the correct way to go about that,” said Duggan. “[Students] should be given a credit amount that they have to meet in certain colleges ... where you have to fill X amount of requirements and leaving specific courses up to the student to choose.”



# Representation needed in staff

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

has split into two segments: her family life and her work life. Hanging off one wall of her office are pictures of her family, from her parents to her children, depicting the Chinese bloodline that connects them all.

On the opposite side of the cramped space that has shared nearly 30 years of Yang’s life with her, are Yang’s academic and professional achievements, ranging from her degrees at Columbia to the certificates of appreciation she received from Rider’s Educational Opportunity Program.

While Yang acknowledged Rider has ways to go before there is full representation for the Asian American community, similarly to Kim, she was thankful for the community she now has in both other Asian Americans and her fellow librarians.

## Spearheading change

For Yang, librarians and professors are the pioneers of the younger generations, giving them the tools and opportunities they need to succeed.

Consequently, representation at the base level matters for people like her and Seiwoong Oh, an English literature professor.

Coming to America from Korea to study English in graduate school at the University of Texas, Oh then took a job as an English professor at Rider in 1993. Oh quickly fell in love with teaching literature to students and helping them form connections with the world around them.

“I want students to have as broad a perspective as possible, where they see things from multiple perspectives and so the presence of diverse faculty is really important in that way,” Oh said. “Not to say that racially diverse faculty members actually represent the different racial groups, but that it could actually move us beyond the narrow kind of point of view.”

Oh explained that representation has to start in the classroom, which means having diversity in the curricula and educators. Oh recalled a time he realized an Asian student had been taking every one of his classes and when he asked the student why, he explained that he felt comfortable in Oh’s presence.

“He was adopted from Korea and I could sense that he really wanted to hear things from me and just the voice of someone from that part of the world,” Oh said. “I felt a connection and I felt sorry that I couldn’t be a better mentor for him.”

That student was not the only one Oh could recall who felt a connection with him because of where they came from and the comfort they found in being taught by someone who looked like them.

To Oh’s point, greater diversity in the student body at Rider starts with better representation in the faculty and staff leading them.

“The country itself is sort of divided between white and Black and Asian Americans rarely get the recognition they deserve,” Oh said. “I think having more students from Asian American backgrounds would be good, but it has to be countered by a better presence of Asian American faculty, as well.”

For the people who may see themselves in people like Kim, Yang and Oh, inviting different groups of people to have “a seat at the table” is as inspiring to them, not having been invited yet, as it is empowering to the ones getting a “seat.”

“You can’t just sit at any table. It’s always you have to be invited to sit,” Kim said. “Then when you are invited, where are you sitting?”



Caroline Haviland

## DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE:

Villalobos-Buehner set to be next AAUP president

By Jake Tiger





# Pump up the beat with ‘Heartbeat of the East’



Yanuel Santos/TheRiderNews

Student dancers and professionals show off their performances in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

By Grace Bertrand

**F**ROM serene and authentic cultural performances, to upbeat and sharp dancing, the keen audience of students and families were dazzled by the wardrobe, movements and storytelling of Asian culture.

On April 10 in the Spitz Theatre, Rider’s Asian American Alliance showcased a constellation of student performances for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, called “Heartbeat of the East.”

Although AAPI Heritage Month is celebrated nationally in May, Rider celebrates it in April before commencement.

“Everybody at Rider should feel a sense of belonging here, so that’s why we’re trying to create this diversity feeling,” said Ruowen Liu, president of the Asian American Alliance. “Sometimes people don’t realize that we should appreciate this colorful world with different cultures. If you only live in your small world, then you don’t see how beautiful the outside is.”

“Heartbeat of the East” is the latest in a series of annual AAPI Month celebrations that goes by a different title every year, previously named Pulse of Asia in 2024. Formerly taking place in the Cavalla Room, this year’s production was elevated with a new theater space and acts.

Liu explained the organization’s goal for this year was to include more student groups in an effort to gain more student traction for the event.

The night featured three group performances from “Pulse,” Rider’s Korean Pop Culture Club, made

up of students from different ethnicities, to depict different parts of Asian dance culture: “Untouchable” by Itzy, “Strategy” by TWICE and “90’s Love” by NCT U.

Each student performance tied together the theme of the event — celebrating Asian culture through the power of music and dance.

Sanjana Butala ’23, who performed an Indian classical dance, championed the idea of music bringing people together in a way nothing else could.

“I think dancing music is a really important medium for tying people together, not just within the same culture, but also people from different cultures,” Butala said. “Music is something that any human heart can relate to and connect with.”

Butala’s performance, called Kathak, is a classical dance form originated from Northern India, according to the event’s program. The choreography represents the multiplicity of emotions of the divine bond between Lord Krishna and Radha, two main deities from traditional Indian folklore.

As a Rider alum, this year was Butala’s third time performing for the event. She expressed music being an outlet to honor her heritage and do something she loves simultaneously.

The night also featured solo performances from dancers at Qing Yang Dance Studio. Dressed head to toe in traditional Chinese dance dresses, Yancy Hu and Lauren Guo respectively performed Chinese classical dances called “Sprouts Growing Under Moonlight,” and “Blooming Memories of Autumn.”

Dances were not the only musical standouts of the night. Timothy Urban, who teaches at Westminster

Conservatory of Music, performed musical renditions of four traditional Chinese songs using Chinese instruments: Hulusi, Bawu and Xun.

“I’ve been playing folk instruments from around the world for many, many years,” Urban said. “I’ve always liked the sound of Chinese folk music and folk instruments.”

Urban said that in 2013 he went to China and purchased instruments that he has been playing since.

“[Music] speaks to all of us in different ways,” he said. “This music speaks to me, so I’m drawn to it, so I wanted to be able to perform it and understand it more, and then share it with other people.”

Urban sang for his final piece, adding to the other vocal performances of the night. Xiaoyan Huang, from the Qing Yang Dance Studio, performed renditions of traditional folk and opera songs called “Peach Blossoms Are Red, Apricot Blossoms Are White” and “Ode to the Pear Blossom.” The Rider University Chorale also performed two traditional Chinese folk songs: “A Ditty of Yimeng Mountains” and “Penpen de Sarapen.”

The playful and rhythmic lyrics narrate the different influences and traditions of Asian cultures like Chinese and Filipino, telling their stories through song.

“I know that different languages might be the barrier for our communication across cultures, but music, dance and different musical instruments are all languageless,” Liu said. “You can totally enjoy [the performances] even if you don’t understand the lyrics. It’s universal.”



Scan to check out The Rider News’ ‘Heartbeat of the East’ photo gallery!



Yanuel Santos/TheRiderNews

Maggie Kleiner/TheRiderNews

Yanuel Santos/TheRiderNews



Madison Lewis



Jasmine White



Grace Bertrand



Destiny Pagan and Maggie Kleiner

(Left to right) Laurina Guo, Xiaoyan Huang and Yancy Hu



# Senior Spotlight: Ethan Elkin-Handelman

**By Jasmine White**  
ETHAN Elkin-Handelman was once a timid freshman, hesitant to take on leadership roles. Closing the chapter to his college career, Elkin-Handelman, a senior elementary education major, made his mark on the Rider community. He has been the scholarship chair in his fraternity, Theta Chi, and is currently the president of both his graduating class and a Jewish group on campus called Hillel.

Elkin-Handelman, as early as age 10, discovered that he wanted to be a teacher for young children, focusing on special education groups. He has worked with children for the last seven years.

Elkin-Handelman recalled the experience that solidified his desire to work with children dealing with disabilities during a summer camp job he took on at 15 years old.

“I had a 2-year-old that was diagnosed with autism and was nonverbal,” Elkin-Handelman said. “He connected with me more. ... He didn’t trust a lot of the other counselors, but he gravitated toward me [and] that really got me passionate about special ed.”

This interaction left an outstanding impression on Elkin-Handelman’s heart. In taking on other teaching roles for younger students during his sophomore year at Eldridge Elementary School in Lawrence, New Jersey, his ability to form connections with children became second nature to him.

Elkin-Handelman said, “Granted, special education may not be my first placement when I get my first job right outside of college, but I’ve definitely learned a lot of strategies to use to help every single student.”

Katherine Vroman, a faculty member in the Department of Education, met Elkin-Handelman during his sophomore year. Vroman teaches all students going into education and students who are going to be special education teachers.

Vroman expressed how strong Elkin-Handelman’s drive is to be better in the education field and learn new things.

“Students like Ethan student teach during their

last semester,” said Vroman. “Ethan is naturally one of those people with a growth mindset.”

Vroman highlighted the many times Elkin-Handelman would stay after her class, seeking to improve his craft in teaching students in this field. Elkin-Handelman wanted to stay on top of all the best strategies to support and guide students.

“Ethan always had this authentic ability to forge trusting relationships with younger students, and he is one of the best at it for sure,” Vroman said.

Outside of academics, Elkin-Handelman served briefly as the scholarship chair in Theta Chi, becoming an opportunity for Elkin-Handelman to help support his brothers in their academic success.

Gionni Pizzigoni, a junior graphic design major and member of Theta Chi, said, “I couldn’t ask for more when it came to Ethan. When he served as scholarship chair in Theta Chi, he was always a huge help and I am very grateful that [he] is my brother.”

Elkin-Handelman’s little brother in Theta Chi, Nicholas Harrison, a sophomore secondary education major, added, “He has been a great friend to me and has always been there for me when I need him the most. ... Ethan is the person in my life that encourages me to do my best.”

Elkin-Handelman remains active on campus, stepping into the role of president of Hillel, after rebuilding the organization upon the past members graduating. The Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel was an event that caused Elkin-Handelman to push to reestablish the group.

“I’ve always been really passionate about being Jewish, and I was really the only Jewish person growing up,” Elkin-Handelman said. “I wanted to bring back Hillel due to the circumstances [and] I wanted Jewish people on campus to feel safe.”

In 2024, there were only about 14 members in Hillel. With Elkin-Handelman’s guidance, Hillel won organization of the year, and heightened its numbers to 39 members as of spring 2025.

Elkin-Handelman said that he wanted there to always be a safe place on campus for individuals practicing Judaism. In light of recent events of a

student carving swastikas on a Jewish student’s door in Poyda Hall, Elkin-Handelman wants students to still feel comfortable in practicing their faith openly, though this may cause some to shy away.

“I put out a statement with Hillel’s email to [its] members. ... [It said], ‘One community. Stick together,’” Elkin-Handelman said.

The Star of David and the combination of the Hebrew letters Chet and Yud, pronounced chai, have their own place on a chain that hangs around Elkin-Handelman’s neck. The necklace is a daily reminder of Elkin-Handelman’s faith and his passions for helping others.

Elkin-Handelman said, “Everyone goes through their trials and tribulations, so just be grateful for life.”

As Elkin-Handelman’s time at Rider comes to a close, his legacy of building up others, reconstructing the Jewish community on campus and overall being a leader among his peers is something that will not be forgotten by those he left his impression on.

“I just implore everyone to not be afraid and be ambitious for themselves,” Elkin-Handelman said.

*Benjamin Shinault is a sports editor and is Ethan Elkin-Handelman’s little in Theta Chi. He had no part in the writing or editing of this story.*



Senior elementary education major **Ethan Elkin-Handelman** took on leadership positions and rebuilt a religious community at Rider.

# Book worms drawn to new reading and writing club

**By Gabriela Tobar and Madison Lewis**

A new student-led book club at Rider is turning heads and pages this semester, offering students a way to discuss literature, socialize and take a break from end-of-semester tension.

Prose and Con: Rider Readers and Writers, a book club started by students sophomore sociology major Brianna Nixon and sophomore English major Aiya Rabah, held the first meeting on April 3, a week after gaining approval from the Student Government Association.

Nixon explained the history of the book club’s name.

“It’s like a play on words and since this was a readers and writing club, it just made sense because it had a literary element without being too specific to one or the other,” Nixon said.

Nixon attended the Library Ambassadors book club this past fall that Alexis Kaelin, one of the library ambassadors, was in charge of.

Nixon’s idea of starting a book club sparked after the Library Ambassador’s book club concluded.

“We had a good group of students and so the idea kind of sparked from there,” Nixon said. “I reached out to her early February and that’s when we got the process going.”



The members of Prose and Con meet after reestablishing the book club at Rider.

When Nixon started her first semester at Rider in fall 2024, she was on the lookout for a book club.

Nixon was excited for the Library Ambassadors book club until she discovered that it only met once a semester, serving as inspiration for starting her own book club.

“I came into the spring semester with the idea in mind,” Nixon said.

The process of getting the book club approved by the SGA took more than a month, and gaining student interest was very fundamental to kickstart the club.

“We had known that there was an interest for it for a couple of different reasons. The first being the success of the book club that met in the fall. But, the librarians could only do so much and that was only a one time thing,” Nixon said.

According to Nixon, the initial interest form the club sent out received 23 responses, and students from different majors across campus wanted to join the new book club.

Freshman English major Jenna Wilson, secretary of Prose and Con, said, “I hope the people that don’t have many things to do on campus can feel comfortable coming to this club.”

Nixon also shared details about a project that she did last semester at the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, located in the Bart Luedeke Center.

“A project that I had done last semester was putting a free little library outside of the CDI and that ended up being really successful,” Nixon said.

Nixon says the book club is not looking to replace the Library Ambassadors book club, but rather work together to figure out how to co-exist.

Nixon’s passion for books and her enjoyment of reading, pushed her to want to share it with others and with the new book club, she felt as though she could.

“Reading builds empathy and I think that’s something that everyone could benefit from. Whether

you believe that or not, it would just make Rider a better space,” she said. “Reading has impacted my life in so many ways and just being able to share that in a really simple way like just being able to sit and talk about books is beneficial.”

At the student-led book club, the members vote to choose through popular titles and then hold a discussion to decide which book to read.

“Going forward, once our club is more developed what we want to start doing is having other people’s interests come through,” Nixon said.

Prose and Con meets every Thursday to talk about the books that members are currently reading. The club also holds writing workshops and hosts activities related to literature.

Prose and Con will have a book picked once a semester. Their first pick for April is “The House in the Cerulean Sea” by TJ Klune.

However, Nixon plans to pick two books apart from the Library Ambassadors book club.

Looking into the future of Prose and Con, Nixon hopes to collaborate with other clubs on campus.

“I think there’s so many opportunities to do so. There’s so many different clubs on campus,” Nixon said.

Nixon looks to collaborate with Culture n’ Trends, a new club at Rider.

“Talking about fictional characters in the way that we imagine them in the styling of them and all different things like that. I think it would be really cool to partner with them,” she said.

Nixon hopes that the new book club goes off campus to meet some authors and support local libraries.

Her biggest aspiration is to hold different events on campus to get people interested in reading.

“Being able to help them find their niche and what they’re interested in and accept them into our little bookish community, that’s a huge goal of mine,” Nixon added.



# Autism Acceptance Month: More than just awareness

**A**PRIL is Autism Acceptance Month, marking a very special time for people who are on the spectrum. The month is meant to shed light on individuals who have said disability. Initially started by the Autism Society of America, Autism Awareness Month has been around since April 1970 and has been a yearly tradition ever since. However, its importance still does not have the strongest impact on most people.

Before 2021, Autism Acceptance Month was widely referred to as Autism Awareness Month. The name change occurred to better highlight the goal of being more inclusive to the autistic community. Despite this, I and other people feel that the month tends to still be overlooked. As someone who is on the autism spectrum, Autism Acceptance Month does not do enough to shine light on individuals.

The word “acceptance” is a more diverse word than the word “awareness,” but some autistic people find themselves struggling with lack of validation, which is a part of being accepted. A lot of autistic people feel lonely these days, especially with social media and online communication platforms. These social media channels can isolate autistic people from being social and can create social anxiety problems. The isolation can also lead to low self-esteem in life and an increase in stress levels.

Another point I would like to bring up is that not everyone has the same version of autism. Some people have more “severe” autism while others are on the outskirts of the spectrum, like myself. Autistic people can have different stands on their disability as well. Some autistic people use their disability to their advantage and publicly speak up on it, while others cannot speak on it depending on their abilities. Despite the diverse range of autism, autistic people can easily get misjudged and cluttered together into one category, also causing negative perceptions and generalizations of them being socially awkward.

In relation to the negative views of autism, the belief that autism is a bad thing is outdated. There have been many successful autistic people in the world since that belief has come to be. Albert Einstein paved the way for many autistic people; he is one of the world’s smartest people and has been posthumously speculated to have had autism. There are also many other well-known individuals who have been diagnosed with autism, like actor Anthony Hopkins. This goes to show that being autistic can lead to a great path of glory.

I feel that Autism Acceptance Month tends to be overshadowed by other things in the month of April. Like I said before, I am a person who has autism, and it saddens me that there are still people out there who do not accept someone on the autism spectrum, and people who tend to ignore that April is Autism Acceptance Month. There are many resources for autistic people to utilize and get the support they need, like accommodations for students and support groups like Autism Speaks for those individuals not in school anymore. A lot of these resources should be pushed a bit more as some autistic people are not even aware of their existence. Autism Acceptance Month should really be a time of celebrating autistic individuals and embracing their disability. It also needs to shine light on resources for autistic people. Autism Acceptance Month should mean to be proud of being autistic.

**DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE:**  
Antisemitism is not  
a problem of the  
past on campuses



By Jay Roberson



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

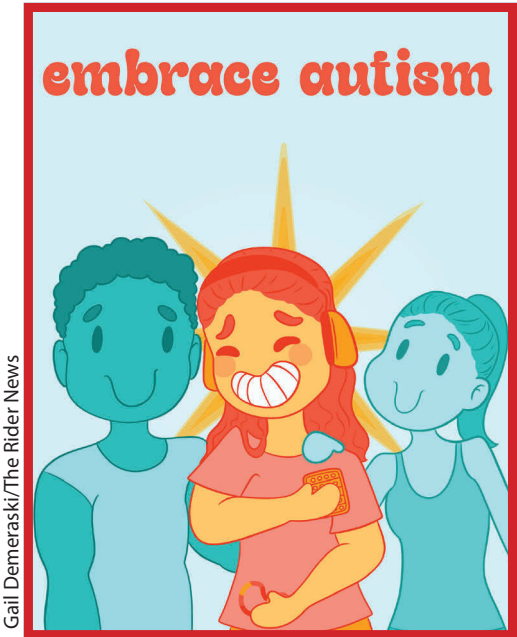
**DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE:**  
How to celebrate  
Earth Day in college



By Skyler O’Kelley  
and Juliette Maners



Jasmine Greene/The Rider News



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

Michael Bolcato  
sophomore communications major



Brianna Velazquez



Libby D’Orvilliers



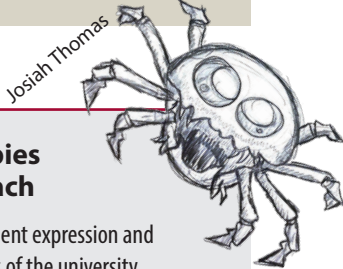
Kaitlyn Seawood

<b>Executive Editor</b> Jake Tiger	<b>Opinion Editor</b> Libby D’Orvilliers	<b>Copy Editors</b> Journey New Caitlyn Sutton Brianna Velazquez Jasmine White
<b>Managing Editor</b> Hannah Newman	<b>Sports Editors</b> Kadie DiGiuseppe Benjamin Shinault	<b>Social Media Editor</b> Kaitlyn Seawood
<b>News Editors</b> Caroline Haviland Jay Roberson	<b>Photography Editor</b> Destiny Pagan	<b>Circulation Manager</b> Matthew Cirola
<b>Features and Entertainment Editors</b> Grace Bertrand Madison Lewis	<b>Video Editor</b> Josiah Thomas	<b>Faculty Adviser</b> Dr. Jackie Incollongo
	<b>Design Manager</b> Maggie Kleiner	

-  [www.theridernews.com](http://www.theridernews.com)
-  [@theridernews](https://www.instagram.com/theridernews)
-  [facebook.com/theridernews](https://www.facebook.com/theridernews)
-  [@theridernews](https://www.tiktok.com/@theridernews)
-  [@theridernews](https://twitter.com/theridernews)
-  [@ridernews.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/theridernews.bsky.social)
-  [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu)

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

The Rider News serves as a public forum for student expression and welcomes letters to the editor from all members of the university community. Letters must include the writer’s telephone number and email address for verification. Letters that constitute personal attacks on individuals or groups are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters to the editor for length, clarity, accuracy, grammar and libel. Letters must be appropriate in terms of taste and civility. Brevity is encouraged. All decisions are at the sole discretion of the editorial board, which may reject any letter. Send to The Rider News via email at [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu). Letters must be received by midnight on the Monday preceding publication. Any tips or suggestions can be sent to [ridernews@rider.edu](mailto:ridernews@rider.edu).



Josiah Thomas



ROCK CLIMBING

# Rider’s rock climbing club reaches new heights

By Kaitlyn Seawood

**W**HETHER looking to push their physical limits or just wanting to make a few new friends, the rock climbing club is ready to welcome new members with encouragement, open arms and a harness.

Led by senior marketing major Robert Weidlich, the club has flourished under his leadership. Before joining, Weidlich experienced injuries in other sports, but climbing gave him a new kind of challenge and motivation. Despite those early setbacks and climbing still taking a toll on his body, he has remained committed, not only continuing to climb but also leading the club as its current president.

“Rock climbing definitely started to injure me more, but I just kept going with it,” Weidlich said.



Photo courtesy of Brandon Renner

Brandon Renner (left) and Robert Weidlich preparing to reach new heights at Rider’s rock climbing club.

The sentiment was echoed by Brandon Renner, a junior cybersecurity major and the club’s incoming president, who found his way into the group through Rider’s Broncapalooza. Like many others, Renner did not come for the competition — he came for the people.

“Get into clubs because it’s good to meet people. That was my idea going into it,” Renner said.

While some members join regional competitions, the club is not only about medals or rankings; it is also about community, challenges and well-being.

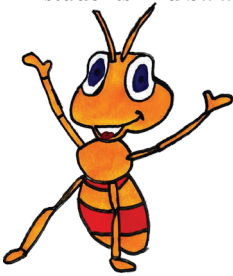
Weidlich said, “It was really good for my mental health when I first started climbing. I don’t like working out at all, but since there’s a puzzle kind of aspect of figuring out how to get up the stupid wall, it kept me engaged.”

A key part of the club’s strength is coach Jake Morton, a 2021 graduate of Rider’s clinical mental health counseling program. Morton, who was a climber since age 14, met the club’s original founders by chance while living on campus and quickly stepped into a mentor role after graduating.

“With counseling as my background, helping and supporting people is a role that I really enjoy playing,” Morton said. “I naturally fell into it.”

Now, a primary therapist in Princeton, New Jersey, he still makes time to coach when he can. He helps students find balance between coursework and club activities and sees the club’s potential beyond just physical fitness.

“Climbing is one of those things where you compete with yourself,” Morton said. “It’s intimidating at first, but there’s a quick learning curve, and the environment here is so supportive.”



Benjamin Shinault

Although Weidlich is set to graduate soon, the club is expecting a smooth transition in leadership. Weidlich will begin serving as co-coach next semester, gradually taking over responsibilities to ensure the club’s continuity.

The rock climbing club meets regularly at Rockville Climbing Center, just about 15 minutes from campus in Hamilton. Both Weidlich and Morton praised Rockville’s tight-knit community and the generosity of its owner, Mike, who has worked with the club since 2019. While other gyms may offer newer equipment, Weidlich said they often lack the welcoming vibe that makes Rockville special.

The club meets for regular practices on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and as the weather warms up, members also explore outdoor bouldering spots. They rotate between climbing styles including top rope, lead climbing and bouldering — providing a diverse and engaging experience for climbers at any level.

Participation and funding have both grown recently, thanks to support from Rider’s Club Sports Council. To lower the barrier for beginners, the club received a donation of climbing shoes, making it easier for curious newcomers to get started.

Renner noted that this kind of support could help reshape how students perceive the club.

“It definitely is hard because it’s sort of seen as a sport, so some people might not be interested because of that,” he said, adding that the donated gear could make the “barrier to entry less than what it is now.”

Looking ahead, Renner hopes to increase awareness about the club by hosting information sessions and making it even easier for students to join.

Though not widely known on campus, Rider’s rock climbing club is stepping into the limelight stronger, tighter and climbing higher than ever.

BASEBALL

# Broncs win four straight, sweep Manhattan

By Benjamin Shinault

**R**IDER baseball cannot seem to slow down, as it has now won eight of its last 10 games. With a win over the New Jersey Institute of Technology on April 9 and a sweep of the Manhattan Jaspers in a weather-shortened series, Rider climbed to third in the Metro Athletic Conference standings and are top six in pitching, fielding and hitting.

## A Jersey rival

On April 9, the Broncs took the hour-long bus ride to Yogi Berra Stadium at Montclair State University to take on NJIT.

The Highlanders struck the Broncs hard and early, totaling three runs in the first inning with a double to left-center field and followed with a shot up the middle that scored two additional runs. In the second inning, NJIT brought another run in with a single up the middle, making it 4-0.

The starter on the mound was junior pitcher Chris Montone. His final line for the day was three innings pitched, four hits, two earned runs, three walks and two strikeouts.

Down 4-0 entering the third, Rider found three runs off a bases-loaded walk and an RBI double by freshman first base Charley Magoulick to bring the Broncs within one run.

In the next at-bat, Rider tied it with a sacrifice fly. Now with the score 4-4, the Broncs’ bullpen held firm. In six innings of relief work, Rider only allowed three hits, three walks and struck out four.

In the fourth inning, Rider got its first lead off a solo home run from sophomore infielder Joe Tirolly.

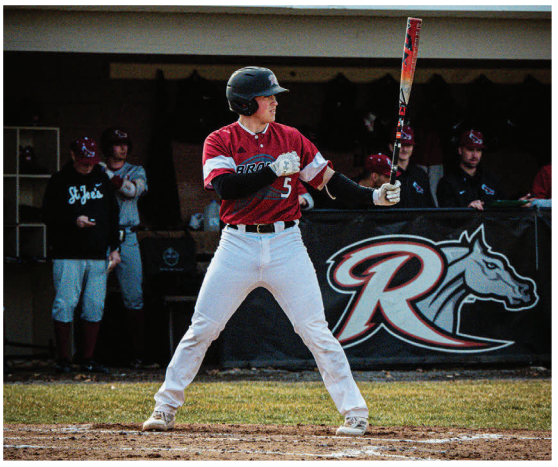
The Broncs added to their lead in the ninth inning thanks to junior infielder Will Gallagher’s single up the middle which scored two runs, making the score 7-4.

The Highlanders could not scrounge up any runs in the bottom of the ninth, giving Rider the win.

## ‘He just hits balls far’

With hard rain rolling in, the Broncs and Jaspers elected to play a doubleheader on April 13 rather than the planned three-game series.

Senior pitcher Brian Young put on another clinic. Young tossed seven scoreless innings, with just three hits, walking four and striking out four.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Sophomore second basemen Joe Tirolly gets ready for the pitch.

Young has pitched six innings or more six times this season. Young is third in the MAAC in ERA, fourth in innings pitched, sixth in strikeouts and first in wins.

“Brian’s been great,” interim Head Coach Lee Lipinski said. “Every time he goes out there, we’re about to get six or seven innings and he’s one of the best pitchers in the conference.”

With Young cruising on the mound, Rider’s offense flourished, totaling seven hits and five runs.

Rider scored its first run in the first inning from a fielder’s choice and then added to it with a single to right field off the bat of Magoulick.

The score remained 3-0 until the sixth inning when the Broncs added on with a throwing error attempting to snag sophomore infielder Matt Leahy stealing third. Now 4-0, Tirolly put the final stamp on the score with a single to left field to make it 5-0.

The finale of the Manhattan series was all Tirolly. Tirolly placed Rider on the board with a sacrifice fly which scored junior outfielder Anthony Paskell.

In the next inning, Manhattan put one over the wall to give them a 3-1 lead.

On the mound for the Broncs in the series finale was junior pitcher Clayton Poliey, who had a tough time navigating the Jaspers lineup as he allowed four earned runs, four hits and walked three.

But for the Broncs, they have junior pitcher Gavin Hawkes in the bullpen. Hawkes relieved Poliey and took Manhattan completely out of the closely contested game.

Hawkes, in his six innings of relief, allowed zero hits, struck out six, a new career high, and walked three of the 20 batters he faced.

Hawkes’ 1.30 ERA is second in the country. For his continued dominance, Hawkes was named MAAC pitcher of the week on April 15.

“In the offseason, I just lifted a bunch and just made sure my body is ready to go for the regular season,” Hawkes said.

With the Jaspers up 3-1 to start the third inning, Tirolly stepped up to the plate with two men on, and as many of his teammates likely expected, Tirolly sent it sailing over the wall and gave Rider a 4-3 lead.

In their half of the third, the Jaspers tied it 4-4 with a home run of their own.

Now 4-4 in the top of the seventh, heading out to the batter’s box was Tirolly, with two men on again, sending a sense of deja vu throughout the stadium.

The pitch came and so did Tirolly’s powerful swing with the ball leaving the ballpark, giving Rider a 7-4 lead and resulting in Tirolly’s seven RBIs that day.

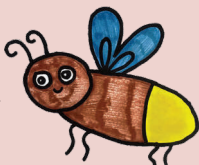
As of April 14, Tirolly is third in batting average in the MAAC, first in slugging percentage, second in on-base percentage, and first in RBIs and home runs. Tirolly’s 14 home runs are tied for fourth in the nation and his slugging percentage of .881 is fourth in the nation. Tirolly also hit a home run in six straight games. Tirolly was awarded MAAC player of the week, for the second time this season, for the week of April 15.

“He is wired to be a great baseball player,” Hawkes said to his former high school teammate Tirolly. “I don’t want to say it was expected because he’s having a crazy year but it kind of was, I’m not shocked that he is doing so well ... he just hits balls far.”

The Jaspers could not add on, making Tirolly’s two three-run home runs enough to give the Broncs their second series sweep of the year and their sixth series win of the season.

“We’re playing good baseball, we’re pitching, we’re really pitching and that’s the key,” Lipinski said, “it starts on the mound.”

Rider will look ahead to its next opponent, the Princeton Tigers. First pitch will be at 3 p.m. on April 16. The game will be broadcast on ESPN+.



Kadie DiGiuseppe



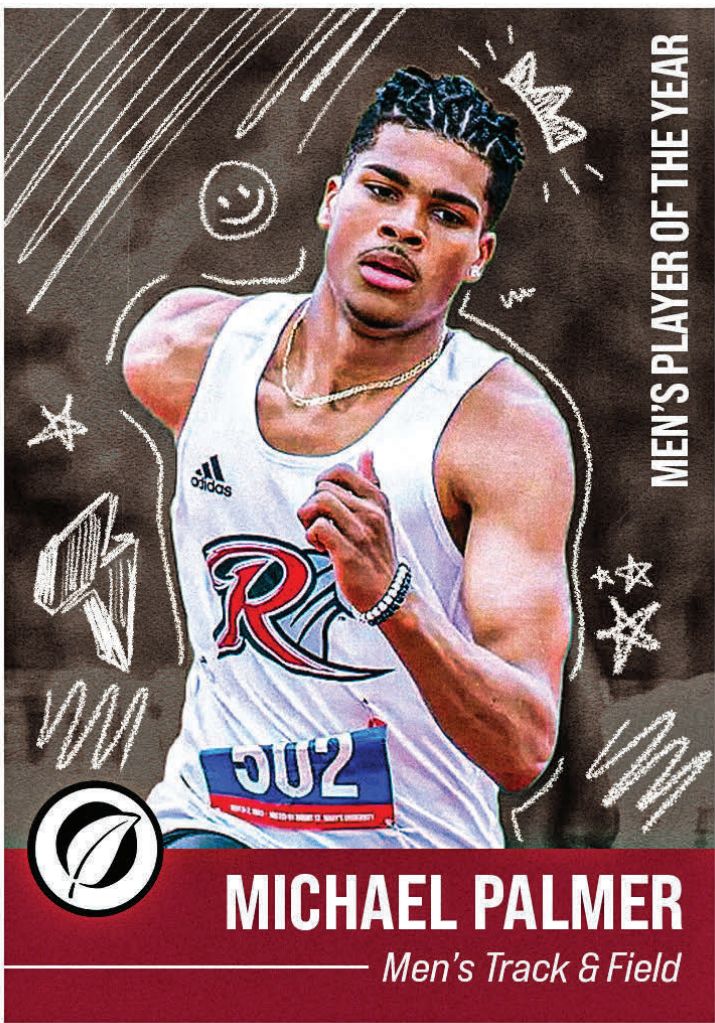


Scan to see our digital lacrosse and softball recaps



# The Rider News 2024-25 men’s and women’s players of the year

Graphic by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News, Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg/Rider Athletics



**By Benjamin Shinault**  
**J**UNIOR jumper Michael Palmer’s collegiate record is getting better and better by the day as the field star will add another honor to his record as he has been named The Rider News’ 2024-25 men’s player of the year after a poll published in the April 2 edition of The Rider News.  
Palmer racked up awards left and right ever since he stepped on the track at Rider. Most recently, Palmer was named field performer of the week by the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference for the second time this season for his performance at the Duke Invitational for the week of April 15.  
The 2.10-meter mark placed Palmer third all-time in Rider’s history, was the best in the MAAC and could qualify Palmer for the NCAA Championships.  
Palmer also had a great deal of success at the Rider 4 Way meet on March 29 as he picked up a win in the high jump and set a personal record in the long jump with a winning leap of 6.67 meters.  
Palmer is the first member of Rider’s track team to win a Rider News player of the year award since Teagan Schein-Becker in 2023.  
“It’s a pretty surreal moment,” Palmer said of receiving the award. “At Rider, basketball and wrestling are like the big sports when you think of Rider, so I

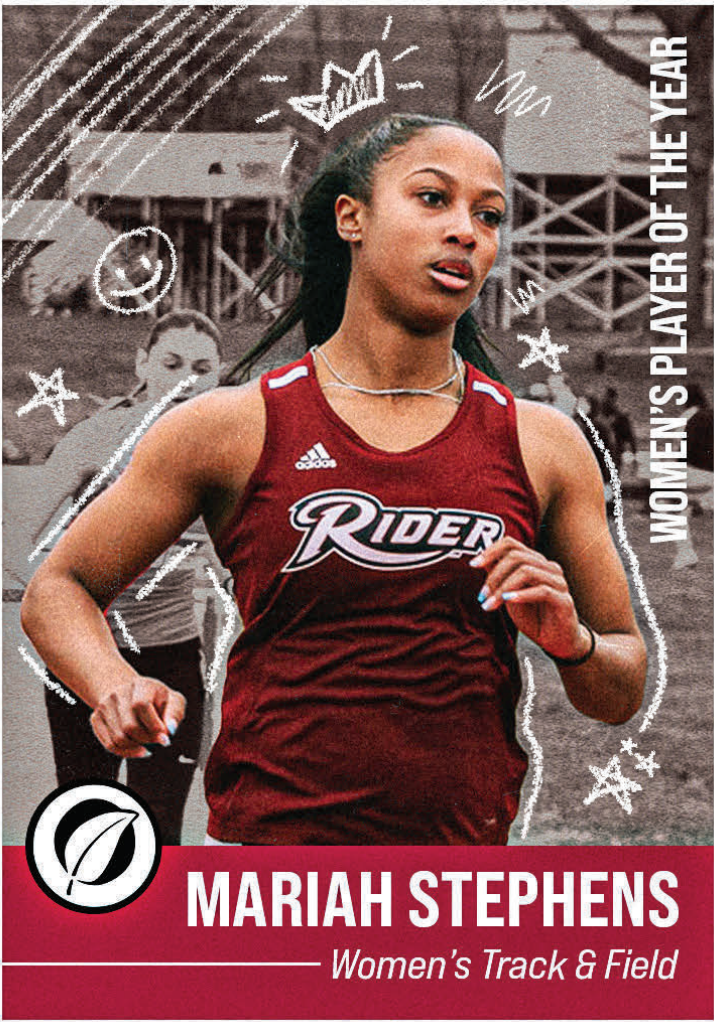
think being able to be granted this award is something that’s big for the track program.”  
At the Indoor MAAC Championships in February, Palmer took home the field most outstanding performer award as he captured the MAAC title in high jump. The success was not new for the Hawthorne, New Jersey, native as a few months after, Palmer also took home the Outdoor MAAC Championship field most outstanding performer honor after winning the triple jump as well as finishing second in long jump.  
With that, Palmer took home All-East honors, awarded by the Eastern College Athletic Conference.  
“I’d say I’m a man of faith, so when it comes down to it, I want to give all the glory to the man above, Jesus Christ, because without him, I know I wouldn’t be in the place I’m at now,” Palmer said.  
With one more year of eligibility, Palmer looks to keep snapping records and racking up points for the Broncos in the future.  
The Rider News will publish a feature story on Palmer in its April 23 issue.

Junior jumper **Michael Palmer** has won MAAC field performer of the week on April 15 for his performance at the Duke Invitational.

**By Samantha Clark**  
**A**T the close of her fourth and final year as a Bronc, senior jumper, sprinter and hurdler, Mariah Stephens was voted The Rider News’ 2024-25 women’s player of the year after a poll published in the April 2 edition of The Rider News.  
Going into the 2024-25 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Indoor Championships in New York, Stephens’ final time competing in one of the most important meets of the season, there was a heightened level of competition with two teams added to the MAAC.  
On day one of the two-day competition, Stephens faced a grade two quad strain, prohibiting her from fully competing in finals the next day. Although she could not run, Stephens walked the 60-meter hurdle event, stepping over each obstacle, to score two valuable points for the Broncos.  
Rider Associate Head Coach Brett Harvey said, “She went out there with her leg all wrapped up and walked those finals to get a point for the team, which not a lot of kids would do... I thought that showed a lot of character to be able to do that.”  
Stephens said she competed with the mindset that although track is an individual sport, it is the combination of everyone’s points that gets the team to the top. With that in mind, she did everything she could to earn points for the Broncos.

With her efforts, along with those of her teammates, Rider track and field placed first in the meet, becoming MAAC champions for the third year in a row.  
“That was one of the best feelings that I’ve had,” Stephens said. “We’ve won three years but this one felt the most special as it being senior year.”  
Stephens first laced up her spikes in the spring of her freshman year at Egg Harbor Township High School.  
Formerly a competitive gymnast, Stephens wanted to find something new to do with her friends as she entered the ninth grade, and she found her home on the track.  
“I had some very talented teammates in high school. That’s kind of what motivated me and inspired me to continue track and field... Then one day my coach said, ‘You’re actually kind of good at this,’” said Stephens.  
Stephens currently holds the university’s long jump and triple jump records for the indoor season. She is also a three-time Rider athlete of the month and a five-time MAAC performer of the week.  
Stephens has yet to compete in the 2024-25 outdoor season due to her injury, but will return to the track at the Rider Invite on April 19 after a full recovery.  
The Rider News will publish a feature story on Stephens in its April 23 issue.

Graphic by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News, Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg/Rider Athletics



Senior sprinter **Mariah Stephens** has won MAAC field performer of the week five times in her Rider career.