



Graphic by Yanuel Santos and photos by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Rider News tips off new basketball season



Annual security report reflects potential errors in drug violations

By Cal Sutton

Rider officials said the university inaccurately reported campus drug violations in 2024, 18 days after publicly releasing the flawed numbers in a federally-required report showing a tremendous spike in infractions from zero in the previous two years.

In the Oct. 3 document, the university reported a notable surge in drug violations, with an uptick of 47 disciplinary actions and judicial referrals in 2024. The data strictly represents marijuana instances, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Community Standards Keith Kemo said, and should not have been reported under the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act as part of the university's 2024 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

In an email to The Rider News on Oct. 21, Vice President for Student Affairs Nick Barbati said, "I can confirm that there were errors in the posted report in the section regarding Referrals for Disciplinary Actions for Drugs. We are actively working with Public Safety to have the accurate numbers reposted and shared."

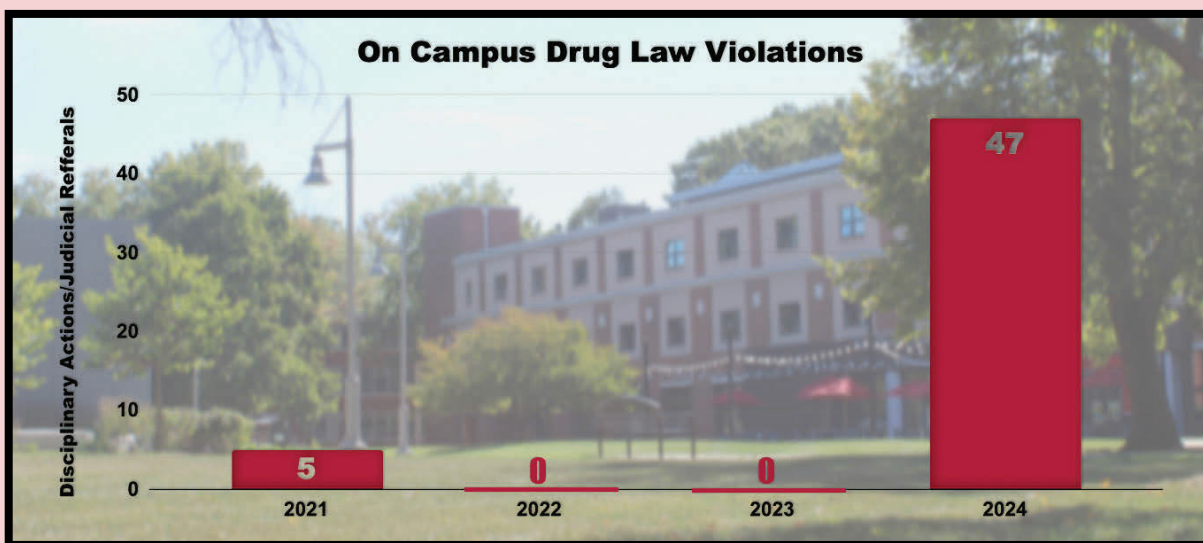
According to Dean of Students Christine Mehlhorn, the error was caused when the university submitted numbers which include marijuana-related violations. She said marijuana violations should not have been part of the annual report, because drug reports are based on state laws.

A critical error

Since marijuana's decriminalization in New Jersey in February 2021, Rider is no longer required to report marijuana as drug violations in its annual security reports under the Clery Act, according to Mehlhorn.

"Clery is federal, but when it comes to drug reporting, you use state and local guidelines," Mehlhorn said in an Oct. 21 interview with The Rider News.

According to Mehlhorn, the numbers reported were on-campus drug violations under the Student Code of Conduct and not the Clery Act. She said a correction will be sent out to the university with an updated number that should look more consistent once the numbers are assessed by a Clery consultant alongside university officials.



The university released 2024's Annual Security and Fire Safety Reports on Oct. 3, but drug violation statistics may have been published with errors, university officials said.

"The wrong chart was sent [to the Department of Education] and it was an issue that was identified," Mehlhorn said. "We're working with Clery to look at what we need to do to say we sent you the wrong chart."

Mehlhorn said she was unable to share the correct number of drug violations with The Rider News.

As of the evening of Oct. 21, the report containing the errors was still publicly available on Rider's official website.

Mehlhorn said, "So while we obviously track, you know, conduct violations, and we did see a slight increase of ... drug-related conduct violations on campus when it comes to Clery reportable violations, we're gonna see a number very consistent with the number of drug violations in years past."

According to the report released on Oct. 3 by Director of Public Safety Matthew Babcock, as part of the university's federally-mandated disclosure of crime statistics, a total of 47 on-campus drug violations were reported in 2024, 38 of which took place in residence halls. Along with the 47 violations resulting in on-campus disciplinary action, there was one drug-related arrest in 2024, according to the university's report.

These numbers show a huge leap from 2022 and 2023, years in which the university reported zero drug violations or arrests.

Initially, both Babcock and Vice President of University Operations Mike Reca declined to be interviewed about the spike in drug violations reported by Rider. When pressed for information, Babcock followed up with The Rider News in an Oct. 20 email, stating that the drug violation figures in the report may have been incorrect.

He wrote, "We are reevaluating the numbers and working on a Clery consultant for assistance. This appears to be an error that we are working to correct. Unfortunately, this will take some time, with an unknown time frame."

Reca, who oversees Public Safety, said in an Oct. 19 email to The Rider News, "At this time, I cannot provide any information."

Section five of Rider's Student Code of Social Conduct, which outlines rules about "Health/Drugs and Abuse," states that students may not sell, make, possess or misuse drugs or related paraphernalia.

Noted at the end of section 5.2 of the Student Code of Social Conduct, while marijuana is both recreationally and medically legal in New Jersey, federal law prohibits such use on campus.

Colleges and universities must adhere to federal standards, making marijuana use and possession on university grounds a violation of the code of social conduct.

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2025-26 Rider basketball previews

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'13' brings laughter and nostalgia

Read a review of Rider Student Theatre Company's latest musical production.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY MADISON LEWIS

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babock

Confiscated contraband

Activated alarm. On Oct. 14, at 8:21 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Ziegler Hall for an activated fire alarm coming from multiple rooms. Upon arrival, Public Safety entered the area and found the rooms filled with white smoke. Public Safety discovered a student had a fog machine plugged in, which caused the fog to be discharged throughout the area, setting off the alarms. The fog machine was confiscated and the incident was referred to the Office of Community Standards.



Designed defacement

Abstract art. On Oct. 15, at 3:16 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Conover Hall for the report of graffiti in a hallway. Public Safety arrived and met with a student who provided the location of the graffiti. The graffiti was an abstract, squiggle of lines written on the wall in black marker. Facilities Management was contacted to have the graffiti removed.



Bumping barricades

Stuck sedan. On Oct. 18, at 1:18 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the area of the Resident and Bart Luedeke Center Staff Lot for the report of a motor vehicle accident. Upon arrival, Public Safety observed that a small sedan had driven up and over the parking blocks that separate the two lots. The car had become stuck on the parking blocks. A tow truck was called to have the vehicle removed.

Sarah F. Griffin/The Rider News

Rider's administration withholds annual enrollment figures

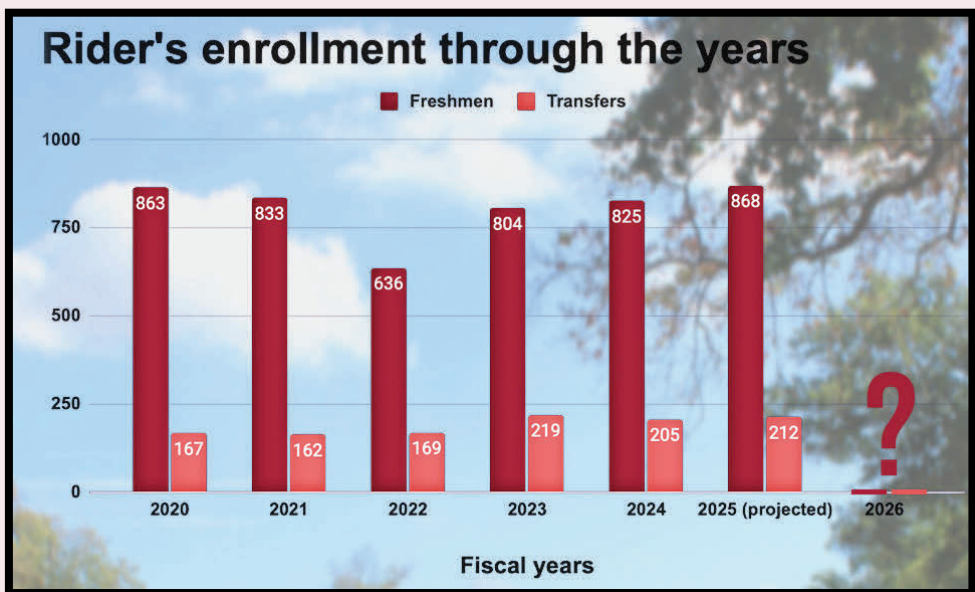
By Grace Bertrand

Amid the university's \$21.8 million deficit, Rider's administration has refused to release enrollment and budget statistics for the current academic year, despite promising a census ready for release by Oct. 1 — a sharp deviation from the past 10 years where enrollment data was announced at the start of the school year.

In an interview with The Rider News on Sept. 15, Rider President John Loyack said he planned to finalize the current fiscal year's budget once the amount of students enrolled in classes and living on campus is confirmed based on an annual census completed on Oct. 1.

Loyack said, "When I'm convinced that the numbers are of a quality that we can share them, we can start thinking about doing that, but we've got some work to do."

When the numbers will achieve this quality, however, is unknown.



Despite the Oct. 1 completion of the census, President John Loyack has not released the enrollment figures for the 2025 fiscal year.

Federal law requires universities like Rider to submit fall enrollment data by Oct. 15 to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

In an Oct. 16 email to The Rider News, Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown said, "Later this semester the University will be sharing with the campus community the official enrollment

numbers along with additional information related to the University's goals for a sustainable future."

One indication that this fall's enrollment statistics may be disappointing is that Rider's retention rate continues to decline — this fall just 75% of Rider freshman returned for sophomore year, down from 79% in 2024, according to an email Provost Kelly Bidle sent all deans and department chairs on Oct. 17. In 2023, retention was 80.5% according to university data shared with the community last year. Like enrollment numbers, retention rates are part of federal IPEDS data reporting requirements.

The annual census is typically shared with the university at the yearly presidential convocation that occurs at the end of August ahead of the academic year. In past years, numerous

key enrollment and budget figures were displayed during the convocation presentation by former Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo to inform the Rider community of where the university stands in certain areas before heading into a new school year.



2024 drug violations inaccurately reported by Rider officials

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kemo said, "Sometimes there's this misconception, '[In] New Jersey, [marijuana] was decriminalized ... I can do whatever I want,' but New Jersey colleges and universities are the same ... in terms of federal law."

A sophomore who received a disciplinary referral for a drug violation on campus related to marijuana, spoke to The Rider News about their experience with the referral process. They requested anonymity to protect their identity.

"[The fire marshall] found [rolled up joints, 50-milliliter bottles of alcohol and lighters] during my room check," they said, and showed The Rider News written records from their disciplinary referral for verification.

The student was found responsible violating four different sections of the Student Code of Social Conduct: "Reckless Endangerment," "Fire Safety Violations/Fire Hazard," "Unauthorized Possession/Use of Harmful/Illegal Substances" and "Possession of Paraphernalia Intended for Use w/ Illegal Drugs."

Since it was the student's first violation, they met with Assistant Director of Residence Life Julia Cardinal. The student could either agree to do community service, attend a drug education course and pay a \$100 fine or appeal the violation.

The student accepted the penalty, and said they chose not to appeal even though a successful appeal will take the disciplinary infraction off their record, because if the appeal was unsuccessful, they could have been at risk of expulsion from the university.

Marijuana incidents across universities

Illicit drug use has become increasingly common among college students and the general underaged population in the U.S.

According to a 2025 study conducted at the University of Michigan which surveyed over 84,000 students across the U.S., more than 20% of college students had used some type of illicit drug in the past 30 days at the time of response.

The most common drug, with 20% of participants disclosing past-month use, was marijuana.

While Rider officials reassess the statistics they issued in the 2024 annual report, weekly Public Safety reports indicate officers regularly investigate odors of marijuana from Rider residence halls.

Mehlhorn said, "I would imagine we're on trend with other colleges and universities in the area who are reporting zero or one drug violations on campus. That's not to say students aren't using marijuana or other, you know, drugs on campus."

Similarly, nearby The College of New Jersey reports frequent disciplinary referrals for illegal drugs, shown by the university's Annual Security and Fire Safety Report. According to TCNJ's Campus Police, only marijuana that exceeds 28 grams is reported in their annual security reports.

While TCNJ has 7,400 undergraduate students, according to the school's website, — more than double the amount of undergraduate students than Rider —

TCNJ reported 64 drug disciplinary actions in 2024 with zero arrests, whereas Rider had 47 disciplinary actions and one arrest, according to the current report administrators now say is inaccurate.

Mehlhorn explained that Rider's incorrect drug violation figures did not accurately reflect the university's drug enforcement. She said, "Everything was being enforced the same way. If this error hadn't been made, you'll see that the numbers would have remained consistent."

According to Kemo, Rider does mini awareness campaigns with flyers in residence halls and Greek housing which explain the policies around drugs and consequences of violations.

Every year, new Rider students are required to complete an online course about the risks of alcohol, cannabis and other issues that are prevalent on college campuses.

According to Mehlhorn, the Counseling Center and Health Center both table at larger-scale events around campus throughout the year with the goal to spread awareness about a variety of topics, including drug and alcohol education and awareness.

While the university works to report the correct number of drug violations, Mehlhorn said, "It's just an error. . . [The Rider News' inquiry on the drug violation figures] gave us a pause to take a look at what happened, so were we wrong in one year or the next? And it turns out that we were wrong."

Amazon Web Services outage impacts Rider

By Caroline Haviland

Amazon Web Services experienced a worldwide outage in the early morning of Oct. 20, impacting the apps, websites and online tools supported by the infrastructure. The disruption affected services like Canvas and Grubhub, leaving Rider students, faculty and staff scrambling to find last-minute solutions.

The problem began in one of AWS’s oldest data centers in Virginia, when an error occurred during an update of a cloud database service, according to The Associated Press. The cascading technological issues that stemmed from one event, Associate Professor Libby Newman said, was surprising.

“I don’t know if I’m qualified to know what the solution is. I know that there must be different ways to sort of manage this, but it was shocking that so many things across so many different sectors were affected,” Newman said.

The outage had an effect on a range of services, from apps and websites to banks and U.S. airlines, according to AP.

The setbacks were slightly impactful, Newman said, as she had to reschedule an exam and could not communicate with her students through the messaging platform on the Navigate360 app. Once the complications were resolved by the end of the day, however, Newman said there was no update from Rider’s Office of Information Technologies and wished there had been more communication from their end.

OIT sent a universitywide email at 10:36 a.m. on Oct. 20 to report Canvas was unavailable for the entire campus community, but they stated the situation was being actively monitored. An hour later, OIT sent a follow up universitywide email and said the



Gail Demerski/The Rider News

A global outage of Amazon Web Services impacted Rider community members.

outage affected other non-academic platforms used by Rider, particularly Grubhub. After that, no other communication was sent out.

Newly appointed Chief Information Officer Ben Adams was unavailable to comment on the major outage after multiple requests for an interview from The Rider News on Oct. 21. OIT staff declined to make a statement due to policy concerns.

With a lack of updates from OIT, many students had no choice but to take a break from homework while Canvas was down. Senior graphic design major Calvin Nue said he found the inability to look at

future assignments throughout the day frustrating. His professors, he said, simply pushed back due dates and used alternative platforms during class to abide by the outage.

Students working at Saxbys, however, were faced with the decision of keeping the student-run cafe open while Grubhub, the primary system that receives their orders, was defective.

Rider Saxbys Student Chief Executive Officer and junior marketing major Felipe Ramirez said the work day ended at 4 p.m. for his staff, three hours earlier than their usual closing time.

“We were on the fence between knowing if we should close earlier or if we should close on time because we didn’t know if staying open was worth it for a few guests to come in to order in person. ... I think [closing] was the smartest decision. ... At a certain point, the outage just made it so difficult to operate with a long line,” Ramirez said.

Another eatery on campus, Cranberry’s, also had complications due to their system accepting orders on Grubhub. Students waited in a long line to order their food at one of the two kiosk stations.

Resident District Manager of Rider’s Dining Services Peter Ehlin said in an email to The Rider News, “Since we rely on Grubhub for mobile order intake, the disruption required us to pivot quickly to accepting orders directly at the kiosks in the eateries on campus. While the adjustment was challenging, especially during peak hours – the team did a great job adapting and keeping things moving.”

According to AP, Amazon reported that its services supported by AWS were back online in the late afternoon on Oct. 20.

Rider’s AAUP chapter asks for financial transparency

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

This year, however, newly appointed Loyack hosted an invitational social event in place of the convocation in order to get a chance to introduce himself and meet employees.

During the Q&A portion of the event, Loyack was asked about enrollment numbers. He replied by explaining these statistics were still being solidified, according to an anonymous professor, adding that they would be released in the near future.

Jeffrey Halpern, chief grievance officer of Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors, said the union requested updated enrollment numbers in conversations with university leaders, but has received no figures this fall.

Since starting his term in July, Loyack said to The Rider News that he has seen five to six iterations of enrollment numbers, which he explained is frustrating for him when the numbers are changing.

Loyack said the decision to not release budget and enrollment numbers until October was one he also made at Alvernia, explaining that it worked well to wait for final numbers instead of creating a potential budget based on estimates. Those final numbers should have appeared in the annual Oct. 1 census.

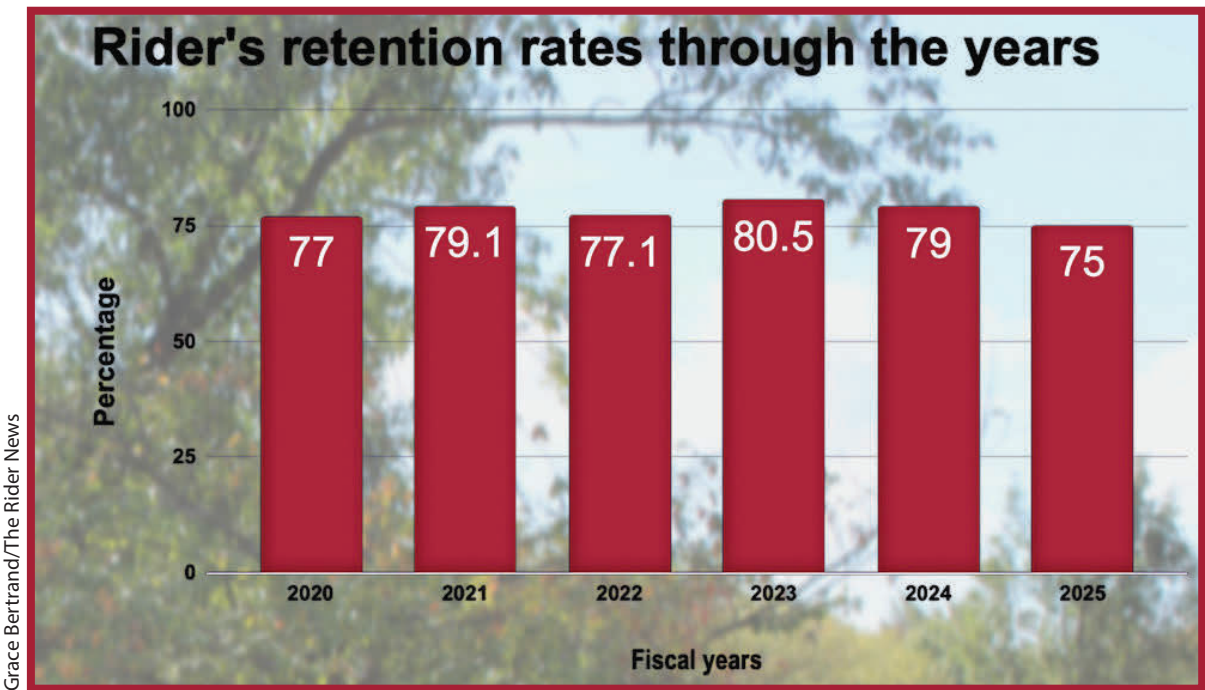
For fiscal year 2024, Dell’Omo shared the enrollment numbers and gave an additional depiction of the freshman to sophomore year retention at his presidential convocation.

In August 2023, Dell’Omo reported 825 freshmen and an 80% retention rate. His plan included projections for 868 freshmen in fall 2024 and 879 in fall 2025, hoping for a 81.5% retention rate this year.

A call for transparency

As of fiscal year 2024, Rider stands in a \$21.8 million deficit. According to the university’s most recent federal tax forms, the biggest source of revenue for Rider continued to be tuition and board, with an estimated \$173.5 million, making enrollment and retention a critical component of the university’s financial future.

In an email to The Rider News on Aug. 29, Brown explained that she could not further discuss Rider’s financial situation, writing “[The required IRS filing] is the format we are relying on for sharing financial



Grace Bertrand/The Rider News

Retention rates are falling, as 75% of Rider freshmen returned for sophomore year in 2025, differing from a 79% retention rate the year prior.

details such as budget and compensation, and we don’t have additional information to provide beyond what is in those documents at this time.”

In a Sept. 19 universitywide email, Loyack addressed Rider’s financial crisis, calling it “more severe than expected.”

In naming the necessary steps he believes the university has to take to rebuild a firm financial standing, Loyack called for a greater focus on enrollment: “At the same time, we are beginning a new enrollment cycle, one of the most critical factors in Rider’s future success. As a tuition-dependent institution, enrollment is our lifeblood. Only with a strong enrollment can we meet our financial challenges and begin building toward a stronger future.”

Rider’s AAUP chapter President Maria Villalobos-Buehner explained it is harder for faculty to help with Rider’s financial crisis when they do not know what the crisis is.

She said, “Without any kind of financial paperwork that would support those [proposed ideas] how can we help? What are the enrollment numbers? What is the audit or whatever thing that will help [faculty]

understand? It’s like they are keeping us all in the darkness of what is happening. So how can we engage?”

In an Oct. 21 facultywide email to Loyack, Rider’s AAUP chapter asked for “a true partnership” between him and the faculty as they work together to rebuild Rider’s financial standing. The email stated, “This partnership must be built on mutual respect and trust, and that can only be achieved by a commitment to a new and radical transparency — a transparency that was sorely lacking in the previous administration.”

Loyack stated in his Sept. 19 email, “Even in my short time at Rider, I have seen how deeply our students, faculty, staff, families and alumni care for this University and for one another. That commitment deserves honesty in return.”

Villalobos-Buehner agreed with this sentiment but said she feels like the Rider community is not receiving that honesty and transparency from the administration.

She said, “The faculty is deeply invested into Rider University. This is our place ... we are committed to helping the institution move forward. But, this silence is not at all productive and not helping whatsoever.”

Organizational changes made to university offices, programs

By Caroline Haviland

The university has begun prudent efforts to restructure its operations by consolidating numerous offices into bigger divisions, Rider President John Loyack said in an Oct. 17 universitywide email.

Effective immediately, the departments of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management and the Division of Community Engagement and Belonging will obtain services previously spread throughout campus, with a goal of strengthening the university in a financially trying time.

“These organizational changes are part of a broader effort to ensure Rider is structured to best support its mission and the needs of our students,” Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown said in an email to The Rider News.

The announcement comes weeks after Loyack informed the campus community of Rider’s worsening financial situation in a Sept. 19 universitywide email, concluding the university’s next steps must be toward rebuilding its foundation.

Moving university parts

After years of serving as individual university programs, the Educational Opportunity Program, Rider Resource Pantry and Meals on Wheels have moved under the Division of Community Engagement and Belonging, adding onto its current five centers and programs.

Academic Affairs acquired the Registrar’s Office, which maintains records and provides academic, registration and statistical information, according to the university website. Student Affairs now oversees Dining Services and Residence Life, and the Office of International Education moved under Enrollment Management.

Along with the new departmental additions, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management will be undergoing a “strategic reorganization” led by Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff for Student Experience Mary-Alice Ozechoski, to streamline services and strengthen the student experience, according to Loyack’s email.

“The goal is to create a more seamless, student-focused experience that supports engagement and success both inside and outside the classroom,” Brown’s email said. “This work is only just beginning, there are no additional details to share at the moment.”

Vice President of Student Affairs Nick Barbaty said in an email to The Rider News that he has no further details to share on what will come of this restructuring.

Aside from the reorganization of university offices and programs, the email said Vice President of University Operations Mike Reca had been appointed to lead the Department of Public Safety. College of Arts and Sciences Senior Associate Dean Jason Vodicka was appointed to lead the Westminster Conservatory, Rider’s community music school.

Initially founded on Westminster Choir College’s former Princeton campus in 1970, the conservatory offers music classes for people of all ages, adding a valuable touch to “the Westminster ecosystem,” Vodicka said.

Rider obtained the conservatory in its merger with WCC in 1991, and Vodicka said in 2007 the conservatory fell under the former Westminster College of the Arts, an integration of WCC and the School of Fine and Performing Arts. It has since been renamed to the School of Communication, Media and Performing Arts.

The conservatory has been under the leadership of



Rider President John Loyack sent out a universitywide email announcing new organizational changes.

Reca in the Office of Auxiliary Services and Programs for the past three years, Vodicka said, but Reca will continue to manage the conservatory’s facility going forward.

“Both Mike and I felt like having him handle the logistics and having me handle the programming just made the most sense and would make the best out of our strengths moving forward,” Vodicka said.

With his new appointment to lead the music school, Vodicka said he will work toward connecting the students at the conservatory with programs at WCC to make the transition “more apparent.”

“I’m really excited because we have an opportunity here to expand the reach of the conservatory and to continue to deepen our tie to the Princeton community,” Vodicka said.

Using virtual reality in the classroom to teach historic events

By Zyheim Bell

While in the freshman year of his undergraduate degree, Associate Political Science Professor Adam McMahon witnessed the frightening events of 9/11 alongside millions of American onlookers. McMahon said he can recall the memory like it was just yesterday.

In McMahon’s classrooms, however, he noticed students did not have the same connection to the event, and through the implementation of virtual reality, he sought to change that.

Utilizing VR, McMahon says he exposes his students to both a personal account of 9/11 paired with a traditional reading to stimulate student interest. While teaching, he observed that for most students, their first interactions with 9/11 were on an anniversary where the older people in their lives, like family members and teachers, would share their own experiences, leaving gaps for students about the event.

“One of the ways that I could bridge that gap ... where students didn’t know about what happened was using this video,” McMahon said.

Students were assigned to watch “Surviving 9/11: 27 Hours Under the Rubble,” a story detailing the events through the eyes of Genelle Guzman-McMillan, a victim recovered from the rubble of the Twin Towers.

“One of the things I really like is it shows the World Trade Center site before the terrorist attacks,” McMahon said, explaining why he chose the perspective of Guzman-McMillan. “And then it shows



Adam McMahon, associate political science professor, helps teach students about 9/11 using virtual reality.

the after, and so when you’re standing there in the virtual reality scenario, you can kind of look around and see how big it is.”

Dean of the Library Sharon Whitfield, who brought the use of VR to McMahon’s attention, said that she found it important that students were given the chance to experience 9/11 through a survivor, and presented the idea of implementing VR to McMahon.

“[McMahon] is someone who looks at technology like, how is this going to enhance my pedagogy,” Whitfield said.

Though he is all for implementing new technology into his classroom, McMahon is aware of the gimmick effect that VR poses.

“Right now the technology is kind of novel. We’re sort of playing around with it as scholars, as teachers, to see what works with it and what doesn’t,” he said.

To avoid making the VR a gimmick, McMahon breaks down the assignment into three purposes according to a sample assignment: create a baseline of knowledge for 9/11, provide stories of the terrorist attack lost to time and provide a way to assess student writing levels.

“I try to balance any kind of new technology or anything that is untried with something that is tried and true like a traditional reading,” McMahon said.

McMahon makes the point that an understanding of the 9/11 attack from all levels is a necessary step for students to be able to make the connection between the events and the “apparatus” or arms of government created during the Bush presidency – now being employed during President Donald Trump’s second term.

In McMahon’s article published Sept. 11, 2025, “Teaching Sept. 11 Using Virtual Reality” for Inside Higher Education, he wrote, “Those who remember the aftermath of the attacks can weigh the policy choices against the demands of the public, motivated as they were by uncertainty and a fear of additional attacks.”

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THE RIDER NEWS
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Yanuel Santos/The Rider News



107.7 The Bronc hosts its 10th annual Scream Screen with a showing of the movie "Sinners," accompanied by music, games and food, drawing in crowds of guests.

Scream Screen; a night of 'Sinners' and saints

By Morgan Dickens and Jenna Munswami

Fading sunlight signaling dusk was the perfect backdrop for 107.7 The Bronc's 10th annual Scream Screen on Oct. 17, as students and members of the community gathered in the Visitor's Lot for the Halloween festivities and a surprise viewing of "Sinners."

Every year students, faculty and Lawrenceville locals are welcome to come and enjoy the Halloween-themed activities and food, while wearing costumes to show off their holiday spirit and go trunk-or-treating — Rider's version of trick-or-treating that utilizes car trunks to give out candy.

Scream Screen X, presented by Advanced Auto Parts, brought 30 trunk-or-treat stations and eight food trucks and vendors: DeLorenzo's The Burg Pizza, Thai Cha Chak, Yooo Cuz, Bronc Bites, Lawrenceville Sandwich Company, Saxbys, B2 Bistro + Bar and Monster Energy drinks delivered by Coca-Cola.

Activities like pumpkin painting with the Tanning Zone and the Office of Admissions' transfer students made their return this year. Guests could test their skills with inflatable axe throwing, ring toss and an obstacle course, thanks to Party Perfect Rental.

Despite the brisk fall weather, a mass of guests arrived for the frightening festivities and were welcomed with a free Sky Zone Halloween bag to collect various treats. Adults and children alike dressed in their finest costumes as they weaved in and out of view to trunk-or-treat stations hosted by various organizations, including Rider clubs, Greek life and local organizations. Others waited in line to grab a bite while enjoying popular tunes provided by 107.7 The Bronc.

Costumes from across all genres could be admired. From "Howl's Moving Castle" to "Super Mario Bros.," guests made sure to make an impression that night with their creative and spooky attire. Fun conversations and enthusiastic compliments echoed throughout the parking lot as anticipation grew for the highly anticipated drive-in movie.

For many vendors, this was a recurring visit to Rider, while for some it was their first time. Krishna Patel, owner of Lawrenceville Sandwich Co., made their first appearance at Scream Screen. Patel served portions of chicken caesar wraps and grilled chicken avocado wraps to eager patrons. Being close to Rider, Patel saw tabling at Scream Screen as a great opportunity to make their sandwich shop known.

"We want to get all of our information out especially for Rider students," Patel said. "Us just being four minutes away, not many people know about that. It's nice to put ourselves out there and let you guys know we're there, we give discounts to students, and it's all year round!"

Lawrenceville Sandwich Co. was not the only first-timer, as Rider Esports Club also made an appearance. Dressed as Toad from the "Super Mario Bros." franchise, club president and junior English major Julian Geibel shared, "We thought it would be interesting because in a way we can support Rider and our fellow organization."

Each group and organization tabling for trunk-or-treat featured a display of candy and other freebies for those visiting the table.

While Scream Screen welcomed many newcomers, recurring organizations made sure to come out for the 10th annual drive-in. Junior psychology major Oliver Merino tabled for Lambda Theta Phi Fraternity, Inc. and shared that a big aspect for coming out to events was "the social aspect" and "giving back to the community." Merino said that it was his second time tabling for Scream Screen and he enjoyed "seeing different kinds of costumes" people showed off for Halloween.

Senior radio and podcasting major Alli Burton from 107.7 The Bronc was part of the group that made Scream Screen happen. She emphasized how fun it is to see so many people exploring the different stations instead of staying in their dorm on a Friday night. Burton said 107.7 The Bronc wants to extend the invitation to more than just Rider community members.

"So the goal for this is really to get the campus all together as a big community," Burton said. "Even the outside communities are more than welcome to join us here."

Children from the community could be seen playing in the inflatable obstacle course while the radio station hyped up the crowd of students at the front. Crowds were breaking out into dance as 107.7 The Bronc played songs like "HOT TO GO!" by Chappell Roan and "Mambo No. 5 (a Little Bit of...)" by Lou Bega.

"I don't want to be cliché and say 'everyone comes together' but it's true," Burton said. "It's really cool to see people you don't typically see around campus, you see a bunch of people and it's great!"

More people flooded in as the night went on and cars continued to drive through in anticipation for the promised horror movie. Everyone was left in suspense, eager to know if the movie would be "Sinners," "Five Nights at Freddie's," "IT," "The Substance," or "Final Destination: Bloodlines."

For Halloween fans of all ages, a viewing of the short film "Scared Shrekless" premiered first at 8 p.m.

Afterwards, it was time for the secret to be unveiled. Those who were not in cars made their way to the grass next to the screen to see which film was chosen for the evening. A few minutes later, the title card for "Sinners" lit up the lot, having won the most votes.

The man behind it all, John Mozes, general manager of 107.7 The Bronc, said that the planning for Scream Screen started right after last year's event. As soon as the following Monday hits, preparation begins and he said there were high hopes for this year's Scream Screen.

"As far as expectations go, this year's event exceeded all expectations," Mozes said. "Lawrence Township Police Department was here tonight. [They] told me well over 2,000 people in attendance, probably 2,400. That is by far our biggest event ever of any event we've ever done."

While Mozes was proud of the turnout, he was most proud of the students. He shared that an important part of this event was to teach his students valuable skills and lessons that they can take with them to the future. From learning marketing and branding to handling social media accounts, Mozes said planning a big event such as Scream Screen prepares students for their future jobs.

As the night began to wrap up, guests were settled into their vehicles to enjoy the drive-in movie. Successfully wrapping up the 10th annual Scream Screen, members of 107.7 the Bronc walked away from the event with their heads held high, proud of their hard work and creating a memorable night for students and locals alike.

"When we started this 10 years ago, we were hoping 50 people came up. Now it's become part of the fabric of Rider's community," Mozes said. "Students, faculty, staff ... the Lawrence Township Community, I think people come out from the community as a whole to enjoy the event."

Richard Seib/The Rider News



Senior communications major **Cassie Vaz** (left) and senior radio and podcasting major **Alli Burton** work for 107.7 The Bronc and helped host this year's Scream Screen.

Abby Ray/The Rider News



Trunk-or-treat began earlier in the evening with organizations offering candy and information to visitors, as anticipation set in for the start of the movies.

Business endeavors and speakers welcomed by AMA

By Sofia Santiago

Flyers and posters promoting Rider's first American Marketing Association Week were hung across campus, in the view of passersby interested in gaining career advice. Organized by Rider's AMA club and the Department of Marketing, the week focused on bridging the gap between students and the job industry.

Throughout the week, "Nearly 90% of [Rider's] marketing classes hosted guest speakers who shared personal career journeys, industry insights, and real-world case studies," according to Anubha Mishra, chair of the marketing department and advisor of Rider's AMA.

Beverly Braddock, assistant professor and director of the Business in Action program shared, "I love having guest speakers [in class] ... these are people who are coming in because they want to help, so take every opportunity to make those connections."

Additionally, seven guest executives agreed to mentor juniors and seniors to look over students' resumes and give feedback on their networking opener, internships or job pitches.

Finally, the week culminated with a panel discussion on Oct. 16 in the Rue Auditorium, giving the more than 100 students in attendance a chance to meet experienced professionals.

The Norm Brodsky College of Business students trickled in through the doors at 11 a.m. and signed in at tables near the entrance. Some students received extra credit for attending. Once inside, finding a seat was difficult because the auditorium was packed.

Mishra walked onstage and introduced the eight

panelists, many of whom were Rider alums. Six of the panelists sat in chairs, and two attended over Zoom. Each came from different backgrounds in the industry ranging from data analytics, information technology, sports, beauty and healthcare marketing.

After each panelist gave a brief introduction of themselves and their career journey, Mishra asked questions about what a typical day in their lives looks like and how to deal with growing artificial intelligence fears for entry level jobs.

The panelists offered advice for students based on their own experiences. Sarah Carbonaro '21, a digital marketing coordinator for The National Brain Tumor Society, said, "Working on your soft skills and getting to know yourself is super important. Technical and hard skills are important as well, but being able to walk into a room and talk to anyone is what can set you apart in an interview."

Emphasizing this, Carbonaro took time to chat with some students after the panel. Seniors Victoria Adolphe, accounting and digital marketing major, and Tracy Barrientos, healthcare management and management leadership major, expressed how helpful this event was and the hope it gave them as they enter an extremely competitive job market.

"I think getting to see so many Rider alums, and thinking 'that is going to be me in the future' is really eye opening," Adolphe said.

Carbonaro and the other panelists were contacted by marketing professors such as Sergei Kuharsky, who Mishra thanked.

"We heard from our students that when they hear



Sofia Santiago/The Rider News

Rider alums and business professionals came to Rider to educate students on their career journeys and how to promote themselves.

from people who have graduated from Rider, it's a different level of comfort they feel ... they feel the reassurance that they are talking to people who have been in their seats," Mishra said.

Another panelist, Ashley Mayer '18, director of go-to-market strategy at GoodRx and former AMA president at Rider, described how being a panelist is beneficial for the students and herself as well.

Mayer said, "When you're talking to someone who is looking for what to do next, it forces you to take stock of what you're currently doing and reflect on what has worked well and what hasn't ... That's why I like to come back to these things, hopefully my experiences help others but also recounting my own helps me excel too."

Mayer's advice to students focused on empathy and understanding how to be a team player.

Braddock reflected on why AMA week was such a success, "[Marketing professors] bring in guest speakers into class anyway, but it's nice when it's packaged and promoted as one full week of events."

Jack Sullivan's passion for writing and teaching 'inspire each other'

By Jasmine White

The famous quote by Mark Twain, "find a job you enjoy doing and you will never have to work a day in your life," is the epitome of Jack Sullivan, a professor and accomplished writer, who lives his life, sharing his love for journalism with students.

Former chair of the English department at Rider, Sullivan, who obtained his doctorate from Columbia University, wrote for a series of publications during his career and published a number of books.

A few notable publications include The New Republic, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

"My first book was my Columbia dissertation, and it was a book called 'Elegant Nightmares' on the English Ghost Story," Sullivan recalled. "Very few people were doing work in that field, and it's very popular now, but it was a breakthrough for me."

Originally from Clemson, South Carolina, Sullivan began his college career at Furman University of South Carolina, where he wrote for its publication, prompting his journalism career.

Sullivan identified as Catholic in his early years, and began writing reviews for a smaller Catholic publication.

"This was a very long time ago but there was [a publication] called Catholic World," Sullivan said. "I think it was kind of a progressive Catholic publication, and the editor asked me to start writing book reviews for them, and it was really great for me because I got to keep writing and I got a byline."

More recently, he took his literary talents and wrote program notes for Wexford Opera as well as Carnegie Hall in fall 2025, including the gala opening concert, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Galilee Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, The Knights and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.

Additionally, Sullivan wrote for The Metropolitan Opera and Play Bill Magazine, writing a wide range of play and music reviews, especially after his move to the Upper Westside in Manhattan, New York.

Right before the pandemic, Sullivan wrote what

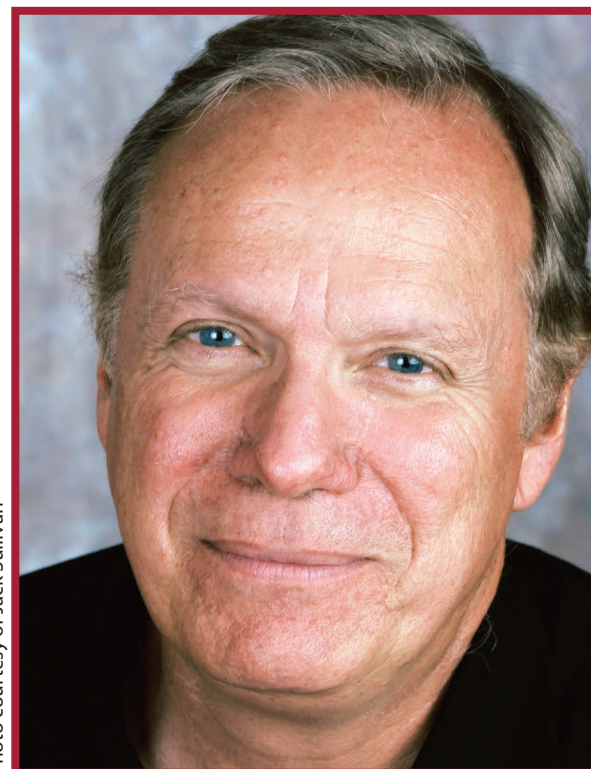


Photo courtesy of Jack Sullivan

English Professor **Jack Sullivan** teaches students through personal experiences and offers opportunities in his classes for students to see live Broadway shows in New York City.

he considered to be his favorite work because it was the piece that "saved his sanity," while bedridden in a hospital room.

"I did something for Carnegie Hall called 'Beethoven at 250' and it was on the 250th anniversary of Beethoven," Sullivan said, smiling at the memory. "There was a whole festival then and I'm really proud of [that piece]."

Outside of his freelance work, Sullivan teaches a number of English and journalism courses. At Rider, some select courses he teaches are writing and publishing, Broadway live and monsters in literature.

Though Sullivan's commute to Rider is a few hours by train, the impact on his students' education makes up for the distance.

"I really love teaching [and] I love being with the students," Sullivan said.

Rider alum Jake Tiger '25, was one of Sullivan's students in a few of his classes. According to Tiger, the most impactful class was monsters in literature, giving him and his peers a new, broader perspective on creative writing.

"I gained a lot of appreciation for monsters in literature and horror," Tiger said. "[I learned how to] analyze media as a whole, approaching writing from a more introspective and emotional standpoint."

This course taught Tiger how to take a look beyond the surface approach when analyzing the creatures depicted in different novels, such as Frankenstein's monster in "Frankenstein."

"One of my biggest takeaways is that horror oftentimes is very beautiful because creatures that [writers] create are embodiments of their fears and their doubts," Tiger said.

Jay Roberson '25 reflected on Sullivan and his teaching tactics, acknowledging how personable and warmhearted Sullivan is with his students in the classroom and beyond that setting.

Roberson's key memories of Sullivan stemmed from his Broadway show course, where he took students to see shows in New York.

"It was [about] six shows throughout the semester and it was just so personal because we would go out to dinner all together afterward, and we would just talk about the shows and spend time together in New York," Roberson said.

Sullivan has been a part of the Rider community since 1983 and he continues to share his passion for writing and music with all his students.

Sullivan's well-versed career allowed him to bring his stories of personal experience while working in the journalistic field, inspiring up-and-coming writers.

"My two passions are teaching and writing," Sullivan said. "They inspire each other."

RSTC's '13' brings laughter and nostalgia

Not too many people can say that they want to go back to middle school. Yet, when I heard that one of Rider Student Theatre Company's productions this semester would be "13" my ears perked up. I wondered how the group was going to pull off this quirky musical that follows soon to be 13-year-old Evan Goldman, played by freshman acting for film, television and theatre major Max Ryon. The musical follows Evan as he is faced with not only moving away from his hometown of New York City to "The Lamest Place in the World," as it is referred to in a song in the musical, otherwise known as Appleton, Indiana, but also grappling with making new friends and preparing for his Bar Mitzvah.

From the very second I stepped through the doors to the dimly lit Spitz Theater on Saturday night, I was abruptly met with honking horns and police sirens and I practically did a double take to ensure that I had not just stepped out into the middle of a busy New York City crosswalk. Once I selected my seat in the small theater and got comfortable, I took note of the posters adorning the walls and pillars of the stage telling me to vote Kendra for president and to try out for drama club. A shiver trickled down my spine as I immediately understood that I was being transported back into the terrifying setting of a middle school hallway. I knew I was in for a major nostalgia trip and a good laugh at the self-awareness of it all.

And laugh, I did. I am not normally one to laugh out loud at tongue-in-cheek jokes, but the entire cast's delivery was consistently excellent. The third song of the show, "Hey Kendra" was a particularly strong number that truly highlighted the cast's comedic timing. In this number, the characters of Bret, played by freshman musical theatre major Jake Ryan Flynn; and his henchmen Malcolm and Eddie, played by freshmen musical theatre majors Landon DeGroote and Sawyer Lilley respectively, sang and danced in an attempt to woo the school's "popular girl," Kendra, played by sophomore musical theatre major Chloe Kelly. The physicality of the actors was incredible as their characters could be seen physically tripping over each other in attempts to look smooth and cool. The audience was in stitches laughing so loud that some people, myself included, could be seen nearly doubling over in their seats.

The cast's energy was palpable throughout the entire production and the audience definitely caught that energy. For example, right from the preshow cast interaction with the audience, the actors were



Photo courtesy of Jaide Fisher

Freshman musical theatre major **Katia Carbajal**, as Charlotte, stuns the audience with her vocal talent.

so animated that a fellow audience member seated directly next to me was motivated by the characters to get "the perfect angle" of them in a photo and even stood up on her chair to please them. It is elements like these that truly remind me of the joy and fun of going to experience live theater.

I can go on and on praising the cast for their wonderful performances, but I must take a moment to commend sophomore musical theatre major Trevor McCutchen for the excellent choreography of this production. The musical numbers would not have been the same without the tightly synchronized and fun dance moves all complete with "High School Musical"-esque jumps.

Finally, I absolutely must commend the talented cast and director Jaide Fisher, a sophomore musical theatre major, for their ability to create a performance that can have silly moments and also have plotlines that will make you tear up a little bit, all while managing to not give you emotional whiplash, but rather showcase the dynamic and genuine existence of being human and 13 years old.

Freshman musical theatre major Jolie Lubar, who played Patrice, and freshman acting for film television

and theatre major Jonathan Voinski, who played Archie, were excellent together; their connection felt so close and real that it lent itself very well to the overall feel of truly watching middle schoolers trying to navigate life together. Between Lubar's absolutely stunning and powerful vocals and Voinski's genuine facial expressions and soft smiles, I was almost moved to tears by the end of the song "If That's What It Is" in which the characters managed to cheer up and reconnect with their friend Evan.

I definitely did not expect to feel such tender emotions from watching a musical that I thought was just about angsty middle schoolers. Overall, the musical was rather heartwarming and I was pleasantly surprised by how much I connected with the characters and story.

As my 23rd birthday approaches in less than a week, I certainly am grateful that I do not have to ever be 13 again, but I definitely wish I could watch RSTC's "13" all over again.

Libby D'Orvilliers
senior psychology major



Photo courtesy of Jaide Fisher

Freshmen acting for film, television and theatre majors **Jonathan Voinski** (left) and **Max Ryon** brought their characters of Archie and Evan to life.

Sleep and success go hand in hand

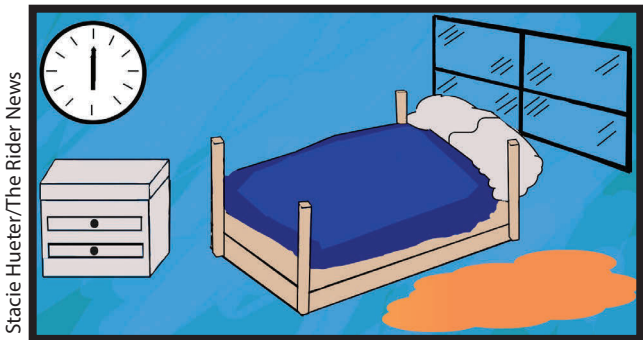
Everyone's bodies are different. I know I can only function with eight hours of sleep, but I know people who do just fine with half of that. However, there is more to sleeping than just feeling awake and getting out of bed; it is vital to our well-being.

Growing up, it was almost seen as "lame" to go to bed early. High school students would practically brag about how little sleep they got. While this phenomenon has died down in college, there is still a culture of staying up late to get things done. Everyone has occasionally pushed past that tired feeling to turn in an assignment close to the deadline, but this should not be the norm.

A 2023 article published by the Society of Behavioral Medicine claims that around 60% of undergraduate students have poor sleep quality and 25% of these students experience insomnia symptoms. While there are people who do have sleep disorders, most college students choose to sleep late.

I will always advocate for self-care; getting good sleep is a part of that. After a long day of classes, work or anything else that occupies your day, getting ready for bed might be the last thing you want to do. I get it. Catching up with friends and family or taking some time to chill and do something fun is also important. At the end of the day, though, your body requires rest. Even if you are not utterly exhausted, sleep is the best thing you can do to prepare for the following day.

Generally, seven to nine hours of sleep is what is recommended for everyone 18 years of age and older.



Stacie Hueter/The Rider News

Sleep is essential to college students' success and needs to be prioritized.

That number might not always be feasible, but it is something to strive for. If you have morning classes or a morning work shift this is even more important. Going through the day tired can leave you feeling unmotivated and unable to focus. No one wants to do work when the only thing the brain can think about is how much you miss your bed. At one point, I had to do an early exam after not getting enough sleep while sick — it was not fun.

Similarly, sleep is incredibly important when it comes to healing from an illness. While being in college, I have heard of diseases more serious than just the common cold going around. Making sure you are getting enough rest plays a part in both preventing illness and recovering from it.

For academic reasons, getting enough sleep plays a part in memorization. Learning something and sleeping on it will show more positive results than pushing yourself to stay awake, according to the

National Library of Medicine. Sleeping enough will also keep you awake and focused during those lectures that seem to drag on forever. This will keep you more productive during the day which will hopefully lead to less work to do at night.

There are numerous other lifestyle benefits that come from being well rested. As previously mentioned, your immune system will be supported by this. Sleeping can also reduce your risk of injury, reduce stress and improve your mood.

Nevertheless, I am still not a complete killjoy. We all have moments where we really need to take an extra shift, finish that last assignment or simply go out and enjoy ourselves. Nonetheless, trying at least once a week to prioritize sleep could improve your academic and personal life.

Jenna Munswami
junior communication studies major

Stop the hunt: Wolves are not monsters

With Halloween around the corner, discussions surrounding monsters and ghouls have become widespread once more. Among these monsters is the werewolf, a lycanthrope infamously known for having an insatiable thirst for blood. The origins of the myth are hard to identify, but references can be found throughout both Greek mythology and Nordic folklore.

Outside of myths, the title “werewolf” has been given to serial killers and pedophiles as early as The Middle Ages. These “werewolves” were often executed alongside those associated with witchcraft according to an article published on the History Channel’s website. It was believed that the only way to alleviate the curse was by burning at the stake.

Unfortunately, the scary reputation transcends the myths, and has warped the perception of real wolves.

Luckily, public opinion of wolves has shifted in recent years, with a study from 2020 showing tolerance in Montana has risen by 50% since 2017, according to Flathead Beacon, a Montana-based news organization. They claim that those directly affected, such as hunters, farmers or those who have had wolves reintroduced to their area tend to be the least tolerant of them. These negative biases cause deadly consequences for wolves.

In 2022, Montana passed hunting legislation that targeted wolves specifically, giving hunters the ability to trap and kill up to about 40% of the state’s population. Montana was not the only state to pass wolf hunting legislation. Idaho faced similar scrutiny in 2021 for allowing the legal hunting of around 90% of the state’s 1,500 wolves. The rules surrounding hunting methods such as shooting, strangulation traps and baiting from private areas have also been broadened following this legislation. The justification for this legislation is that gray wolves are no longer classified as an endangered species and it would not cause state populations to fall into critical levels.

However, many, including myself, believe the legislation relies on old statistics and misconceptions

about the relationships wolves have with both humans and the environment.

The reintroduction of wolves to the western United States in 1995 proved to restore balance to their respective ecosystems. One of the impacts is the population control of ungulates, or hoofed mammals such as deer, moose and elk. When the population is out of control, ungulates tend to overgraze, causing a loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and lower fertilization.

With reintroduction of wolves, ungulates now have to remain vigilant and keep on the move, which allows for regrowth in overgrazed lands.

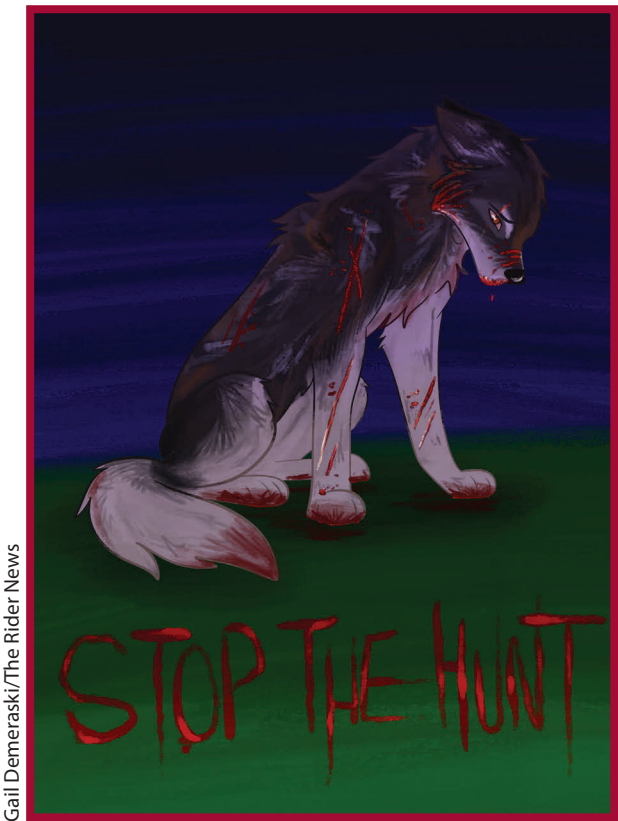
The hunting of ungulates by wolves has also allowed for other species to thrive. In Yellowstone and parts of Idaho, specifically, wolves have restored balance to the environment and food chain. They have directly caused beaver populations to thrive, as well as other wildflower, tree, insect, scavenger and trout populations, according to Living with Wolves, a nonprofit whose goal is to educate the public on wolves. With the regrowth of these populations, biodiversity has thrived and many different species, both animal and plant, are experiencing positive changes.

Another common misunderstanding is the threat that wolves pose to humans. Wolves are predators, but are uninterested in human affairs more often than not. According to the International Wolf Center, there have been 489 reported wolf attacks worldwide between 2002 and 2020. Of those 489 attacks, 26 were fatal and 380 were due to rabies. Of the total number of cases, only 13% were predatory attacks. When you observe these numbers in relation to the global population of humans, the number is so small it is nearly impossible to calculate. Even though public opinion has drastically shifted in favor of wolves in recent years, there is still legislation, and distaste associated with them, unlike other predators. I believe we should be focusing our efforts on educating and changing the rhetoric surrounding them by keeping

up to date with new studies and research surrounding wolves. Understanding the relationship wolves have with both humans and the environment is imperative, as they are more beneficial than harmful to their ecosystems and human well-being.

It is time for us to stop treating wolves like scary Halloween monsters and start advocating for their continued protection.

*Gail Demeraski
senior graphic design major*



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

Wolves are often mischaracterized as being vicious creatures.

Student stands behind AAUP’s petition

As a Rider alum, and now a returning student, I stand in solidarity with Rider’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors in their petition to reinstate former adjunct social work Professor Kate Ecke, after her unjustified firing earlier this semester. This firing was cowardly, and has only served to chill the speech of Rider’s professors and reward outside harassment. The Facebook post that Ecke wrote in the aftermath of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk’s assassination, while callous, is a clear and obvious call for nonviolence. She does not celebrate Kirk’s death. She does not lionize his shooter. Ecke merely makes a point about the politics of gun violence in America. I grant that many considered her post offensive, and in poor taste. However, the critical lesson of Kirk’s assassination is that political speech must be protected, no matter how offensive or heinous we may individually believe it to be. To fire Ecke is to bow to the same anti-speech forces which made Kirk’s death possible.

I find the Rider administration’s framing of the threats against Ecke to be particularly infuriating. In Rider President John Loyack’s email to campus, he writes “During our review of this matter, several individuals at Rider received a threat directed at our campus as a result of this individual’s actions.” This is a blatantly misleading use of the passive voice to turn threats made against Ecke into threats caused by Ecke. Such transparent victim blaming leaves me fearful for my own safety: If my speech angers the wrong person and I receive threats of violence, will I be the one punished because my speech “resulted in threats against the campus?”

The firing of Ecke comes as the Trump administration is gearing up for a full-frontal assault on the speech of his critics. The Trump administration, alongside powerful influencers in the Make America



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

Some of Rider faculty’s AAUP members hand delivered their petition to President **John Loyack** (second from the right) on Oct. 7.

Great Again movement, have used Kirk’s death to further inflame tensions in this country, and call for vengeance against liberals, even before we had a hint at the shooter’s motives. In response, the right began a cancellation campaign that has already taken the jobs of many average American workers. This campaign also extends to prominent celebrities such as Jimmy Kimmel, who was temporarily pulled from the air after accusing the right side of using Kirk’s death to score political points. Even more disturbing, there has been an explosion of violent rhetoric on conservative social media platforms, including calls to “hang the entire Democratic Party” and “end democracy.” In this context, it is hard to see Ecke’s firing as anything other than obeying in advance. The university does not want to become the target of the Trump administration’s revenge and so, rather than band together with other universities and institutions in order to resist its attacks on free speech, the university has done exactly what

Trump wants: target political speech which is not sufficiently obsequious to the MAGA movement.

The outrage against Ecke’s post is also a part of the MAGA movement’s long-running practice of targeting liberal professors for their beliefs through harassment campaigns. Since 2016, Turning Point USA has run a “Professor Watchlist” — a list of professors whose ideology they deem too far left. Professors on this list have faced harassment and even death threats. It is unacceptable that Rider’s administration is either unaware of the MAGA right’s modus operandi, or unwilling to protect its professors, from this wave of harassment.

By bowing to the harassment campaign against Ecke, Rider’s administration has validated the violent threats made against her and the campus. This will have the obvious effect of emboldening them. After all, their tactics worked. How am I supposed to feel like I am safe to exist on a campus whose leadership is so feckless as to bow to far-right threats, rather than stand strong against them? President Loyack, Rider’s professors have given you an offramp. I stand alongside them in calling for an official apology, and for Ecke’s reinstatement. In doing so, you will prove that you have the best interests of Rider’s students and faculty in mind.

*Preston Hicks
history and secondary education major*


CURSED CROSSWORD

DOWN


- A cemetery-dwelling phantom.
- Oct. 2 theme of open mic by the Rider Rock: Autumn ____.
- Seasonal Starbucks beverage: ____ Crunch Oatmilk Latte.
- What beloved Halloween-themed event got rained out this year?
- Painted or carved, these gourds are staples of this season.
- A decoration hanging from the ceiling in Cranberry's.
- Día de los ____.
- An October cultural holiday known as a "Festival of Lights."
- Count Chocula, Boo Berry, and ____ Berry.

ACROSS

- All ____s' Eve.
- New fall release at Saxbys: Pumpkin ____.
- Where Scream Screen attendees can get candy.
- A popular sport played in the fall and celebrated at MAACness.
- The movie played at Scream Screen 2025.



ANSWERS HERE!



COMIC:
The Twisted Ventures of Harvey J. Cedars

By N.D. Medal





Freshman guard **Aina Perez Mesquida** (left) and freshman center **Claudia Lazaro-Carrasco** pose. Photo courtesy of Gabby Turco.

By Benjamin Shinault

Spain is a European country enriched with vibrant culture, sun-soaked beaches and passionate sports fans. Despite being over 3,600 miles away, freshman guard Aina Perez Mesquida and freshman center Claudia Lazaro-Carrasco have made the seven-hour plane ride to Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and are suiting up for Rider women's basketball this season.

The two Spanish freshmen are looking to bring a fresh playstyle and new brand of basketball to the Broncs this season.

Small world

Lazaro-Carrasco, from Madrid, and Mesquida, from Manacor, Spain, lived 12 hours away from each other, but both happened to play against each other in the same tournament. Former Rider Assistant Coach and Director of International Scouting Sharay Hall watched them compete against each other back in Spain.

Hall proceeded to recruit Lazaro-Carrasco and Mesquida, resulting in both signing with the Rider Broncs. However, due to a coaching change during

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL FEATURE

Rider goes overseas for fresh talent

the offseason, Hall was let go and a whole new staff came in.

Mesquida, who arrived at Rider in July, was unsure if she was still wanted as Bronc, but Head Coach Jackie Hartzell welcomed her with open arms.

"I was pretty scared because we already signed to come here, so I was thinking, 'maybe the new coach doesn't want us here,' ... but then I got to my first meeting with Coach Jackie and she was super nice," Mesquida said.

Lazaro-Carrasco and Mesquida made a visit to Rider in December 2024 to scope out their home for the upcoming school year, and officially arrived to Rider six weeks apart in summer 2025.

Dabbling in American culture

For Mesquida, she has only been to the United States one time before committing to Rider, and that was to play in an amateur basketball tournament in Florida. Before her December visit, Lazaro-Carrasco had never been to America.

As she was settling into her new home in Lawrenceville, Mesquida wanted to try one thing when she unpacked her bags.

"The first day I got here I told Jackie that I never tried Chick-fil-A before so she drove me there," Mesquida said with a laugh.

During summer sessions, the two freshmen would tag along with the rest of the team on trips into Princeton and New York City.

Personal expectations

Mesquida and Lazaro-Carrasco have two differing playstyles. Mesquida described herself as a team-first player who likes to create for her teammates, but is a weapon off the ball as well.

"I like to pretty much do everything," Mesquida

said, "I like to play without the ball and try to do what coaches want, when it comes to plays and trying to look for my teammates all the time."

Lazaro-Carrasco is still getting her feet wet when it comes to adjusting to the American playstyle, as well as playing in Division I basketball, but she knows what she wants out of herself this season.

"I'm pretty versatile and I like playing down in the post," Lazaro-Carrasco said, "I just want to improve everyday."

Coach's vision

Despite not being the driving force behind getting the Spanish duo to Rider, Hartzell is very excited to see what they can do on the court.

When Hartzell accepted the job at Rider, she reached out to both players to ensure they are still on board with playing for the Broncs, making Hartzell happy upon hearing the two decided to put their trust into the first-year coach.

In Hartzell's eyes, Mesquida is going to be a crucial player for the Broncs this season and Lazaro-Carrasco will be a critical role player as she continues to settle into American play.

"Aina is going to be a major piece of our team this year and with Claudia, she is kind of catching up," Hartzell said.

The new coach also stated that Broncs fans can expect Mesquida to crack the starting lineup. The last time the Broncs had a freshman guard to begin the year as a starter came in 2016 with Stella Johnson, Rider's all-time leading scorer.

After only accumulating 17 wins over the past 60 games, the Broncs are hungry to steer the ship and bring back the strong women's basketball presence to Rider. Mesquida and Lazaro-Carrasco both hope to be the poster children of the new era.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

A clean state for Rider women's basketball

By Benjamin Shinault

It has been five seasons since Rider women's basketball has finished with a record over .500 both in and out of conference.

In those same five seasons, the Broncs had a total winning percentage of .299 and in the 2025-26 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference preseason polls, the Broncs were ranked last.

As a result, Rider Athletics turned the keys over to Head Coach Jackie Hartzell, a former head coach at Division III Arcadia University.

The slate has been wiped clean and a new era of women's basketball is set to hit the wooden floors of Alumni Gym.

A roster turnover

Despite the change in leadership, this season's Broncs roster will feature some familiar faces. Returning to Rider will be junior guard Aliya McIver, sophomore guard Amany Lopez, sophomore guard Emmy Roach, junior forward Sam

Richardson, sophomore guard Jocelyn Chavez and junior center Kaylan Deveney.

Chavez, who played in 27 games for the Broncs last season, will miss the entire season due to an ACL tear.

The Broncs have six new arrivals coming in. One newcomer includes freshman two-way guard Daniya Brown from Fairfax, Virginia.

Brown, in Hartzell's eyes, has shown steady improvement ever since summer training camp kicked off.

"She's really shooting the ball well and she's stepped up and has shown very good improvements since the summer," Hartzell said.

The Broncs also reeled in speedy freshman guard Alena Cofield from Langhorne, Pennsylvania. Cofield was originally planning to play Division III basketball for Hartzell at Arcadia, but when Hartzell received the job at Rider, she brought Cofield with her.

"[Cofield] has been showing that she belongs and has gotten better and has improved as much as any player I have seen in a short amount of time," Hartzell said.

Rider also dabbled in their overseas scouting hand. Sporting cranberry and white this season will be freshman guard Aina Perez Mesquida and freshman center Claudia Lazaro-Carrasco.

Mesquida, from Manacor, Spain, spent time with the Spanish National team and can play multiple roles on the floor.

According to Hartzell, Mesquida is projected to crack the starting lineup as a freshman and make an immediate impact.

"She's going to be a major piece to our team this year," Hartzell said. "With her versatility, she can do

a little bit of everything and she is very smart ... She is a coach's dream."

Lazaro-Carrasco, from Madrid, stands in at 6 foot 2 inches and is a very versatile post player.

"She's got very good length and she is athletic and she has shown that she is a good defender and she can make shots," Hartzell said.

Veteran voices

Outside of the freshmen and the returners, the Broncs are bringing in two players via the transfer portal.

The first is redshirt junior guard Deb Okechukwu, a transfer from Harcum College, a Division II program in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

Coming into Okechukwu's college career, she was an all-state player for her home state of Washington, D.C.

The second of the transfers is graduate student forward Kristina Ekofo, who started her college career at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M.

Hartzell views Ekofo as not just a point scorer, but also a veteran voice on and off the court.

"She is a very vocal leader so she is a perfect fit for the way that we play," Hartzell said.

The road ahead

Rider's season kicks off on Nov. 6 when it welcomes Lafayette College at 6 p.m. Last season, for the first time in program history, the Broncs found themselves staying at home and watching the MAAC Championships.

However, a new voice is here and a new team is rolling in with the Broncs eager to return to the sandy Atlantic City boardwalk.



Junior guard **Aliya McIver** is the longest-tenured Bronc on the 2025-26 roster. Photo by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News.

MEN'S BASKETBALL FEATURE

Chasing the dream: Mohamad Diallo's road to Rider

By Samantha Clark

When Rider men's basketball's 2025-26 season tips off, one of the ten fresh faces will also be one of the most experienced. From junior college to southern schools, senior forward Mohamad Diallo has played collegiate basketball across three divisions before stepping foot in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. His constant movement and continued adaptability brings a new level of leadership and experience to the Broncos.

A nomadic player

After graduating from Southwest DeKalb High School in Decatur, Georgia in 2020, most of Diallo's original collegiate offers had fallen through due to the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, so he took his talents to Labette Community College in Parsons, Kansas.

As a result of the pandemic, Diallo's collegiate career in basketball did not fully begin until the 2021-22 season. With not many players left on the team, he stepped into a bigger role on the court, starting in all 19 games, averaging 10.3 points a game and leading the team in rebounds, making waves as a fresh name on the roster.

Then, Diallo transferred to play for Morehouse College, a Division II school in Atlanta, where he started in 20 out of 26 games, achieving two double-digit scoring matchups.

Born and raised in the city, Diallo enjoyed being close to home. Diallo acknowledged how his family "did not come from a lot," which motivated him after moving around so much. He realized that this game could change his and his family's lives. However, Morehouse was not his forever school.

"It wasn't really what I was looking for coming straight out of a junior college," Diallo said. "At the

time, I was young, I didn't really understand how the whole transferring stuff worked."

His search for something better took him just 20 minutes away, to Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia, another Division II school. In the 2023-24 season, the team won six games, only three in the Peach Belt Conference, pushing Diallo to move schools for the fourth time in four years.

Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens, Florida was Diallo's final stop before becoming a Bronc. As a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, FMU was the last step of the ladder for him to play at the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I level.

"I learned a lot from the coaches there. The connection, it was just better over there. We really bonded like family," Diallo said.

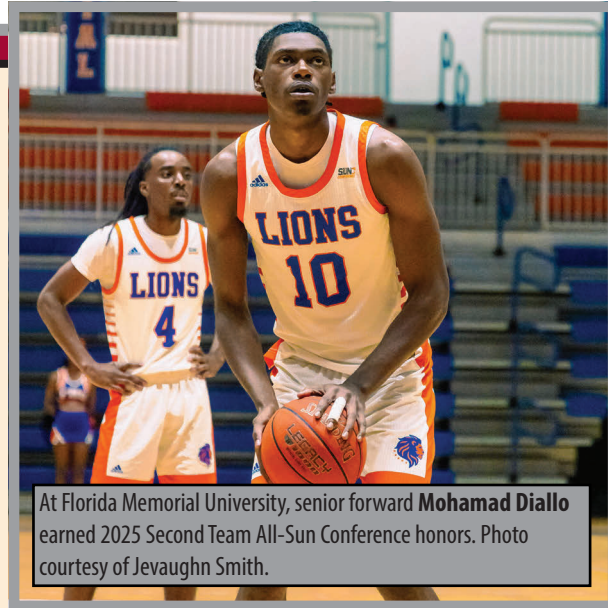
After adjusting to four different schools, Diallo struggled with the decision of continuing to play college basketball. However, the sport he played since sixth grade sparked a dream to play in the NCAA one day, so he took his talents to Lawrenceville.

Adapting and adjusting

Associate Head Coach Dino Presley and Assistant Coach Kim Waiters went to Atlanta to watch Diallo play in summer 2025 where they looked to fulfill his hopes of playing Division I basketball.

"I thought he was a humbled young man looking for an opportunity," Head Coach Kevin Baggett said. "He wanted the experience of trying to play at the Division I level, and after talking to him about what he was looking for, it was just about coming somewhere where he could get better."

Competing at four schools prior to Rider, Diallo



At Florida Memorial University, senior forward **Mohamad Diallo** earned 2025 Second Team All-Sun Conference honors. Photo courtesy of Jevaughn Smith.

brings a heightened level of experience that the program was looking for this season. With only four out of the fifteen players on the roster being returning Broncos, Baggett aimed to add veteran players to the team ahead of the 2025-26 season, a trait he found in Diallo.

Despite the challenges of adapting to different coaches, teammates and school cultures, Diallo's experience with change has allowed him to be comfortable in the discomfort, adjusting and transforming with each new chapter.

Bringing equal amounts of leadership, experience and humor, Diallo brings a sense of childhood nostalgia to the collegiate court. According to Baggett, "he's like a little kid playing around with his teammates," with the "kid-in-him" coming out during preseason practices.

Even with his child-like humor and carefree personality, Diallo has a sponge-like work ethic, always working to better himself through listening, learning and development. Earning his spot as the team's projected starting center through his drive and effort on the court, Baggett sees Diallo as becoming a stand-out player in and out of the Alumni Gym.

Baggett said, "I just think that he's gonna be somebody that people are gonna want to come and see, and they're gonna enjoy watching his development throughout the year... I think people are gonna be presently surprised by his talent."

MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

New faces, same fight: Previewing the Broncos' fresh look

By Samantha Clark

For the 2025-26 men's basketball program, new players bring fresh levels of toughness, unity and talents from all corners of the basketball map. While faces may change, the fight remains the same as a new era dawns in the Alumni Gym.

Joining the herd

Ahead of the season, Rider picked up 11 new players, with seven transfers and four freshmen added to the roster.

Sophomore forward Davis Bynum from O'Fallon, Illinois has traveled coast to coast, transferring to Rider from California State University Fullerton. In his freshman season, Bynum had three-straight double figure games against top ranked schools.

Junior guard Antwan Wilson from Salisbury, Maryland is bringing his talents to the Alumni Gym from Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas, where he earned 2025 First Team All-Conference & All-Region five honors and was named the North Texas Junior College Athletic Conference Newcomer and Defensive Player of the Year.

Adding two Atlanta-natives to the roster, junior guard Caleb Smith and Mohamad Diallo traveled north to get the chance to play for a Division I program, bringing the veteran style of play needed for a team filled with fresh faces.

From Los Angeles, senior guard Devean Williams previously competed at Canisius University, a program also in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, as well as Bryant University.

Redshirt senior Shemani Fuller has competed

at both the Division I and II levels, earning 2025 Third Team All-Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference at Clark Atlanta University.

The Broncos also picked up three international athletes in the off-season, including senior forward Daniel Helterhoff from Cologne, Germany, and freshman guards Kristupas Kepezinskas from Kaunas, Lithuania, and Xaviel Rodriguez from Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

The final two additions to the roster include freshman guards AB Coulibaly from Philadelphia and Jamir McNeil from Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey.

Broncs at a glance

Only four Broncos return from last season, including sophomore guards Flash Burton and Maurizio D'Alessandro, sophomore forward Cole McCabe and senior guard Zion Cruz.

Looking ahead, Head Coach Kevin Baggett is excited for his by-committee team, one that is not dependent on a specific player, but an effort contributed to by every name on the roster.

"One night, it might be Flash [Burton] and Zion [Cruz], another night, it might be [Mohamad Diallo] and Davis Bynum," Baggett said. "I'm excited about that because the more you can get guys to contribute, the better it is for what we call a team."

Working hard to establish the tone of a team that plays hard, placing defense as the flagship of the program, Baggett and his team are continuously striving to welcome the newcomers to Lawrenceville the "Rider way."

According to the 13-time head coach, fan support can make or break a season, emphasizing its importance ahead of this new era of fresh Broncos.

"There's nothing greater in my 20 years than walking from the locker room and seeing a packed gym... just cheering as loud as they can," Baggett said. "We can't just [win] with our players, we need our fans to come out and support us as well."

The Broncos will host the Rowan Profs on Oct. 25 at 3 p.m. for their annual exhibition game. They will continue in out-of-conference play, facing ranked teams such as No. 2 University of Houston and No. 11 Rutgers University.

The Broncos prepare to tip off their new season with the same fight, a punch packed with grit, hunger and drive. This fresh chapter for Rider men's basketball is not just about the new roster coming together as a team, but the cranberry community that rallies behind them.



Looking ahead, Head Coach **Kevin Baggett** acknowledged that the returning players have a better understanding of the coaches from their experience, while newcomers are quickly adapting to their roles on the court. Photo by Josiah Thomas/The Rider News.

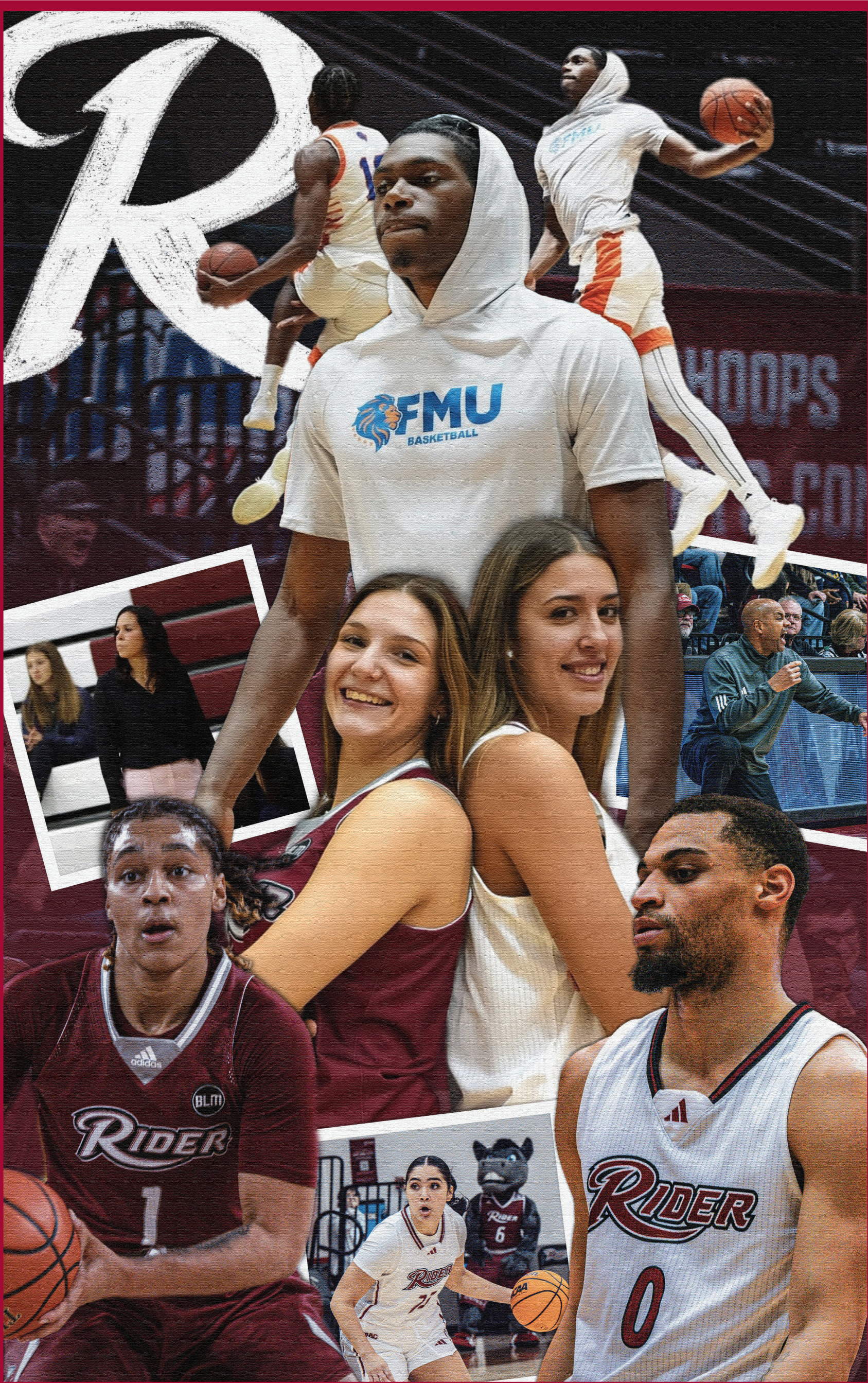
Sports

ONLINE

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