

# Rider introduces Presidential Hope Fund campaign

By Caroline Haviland

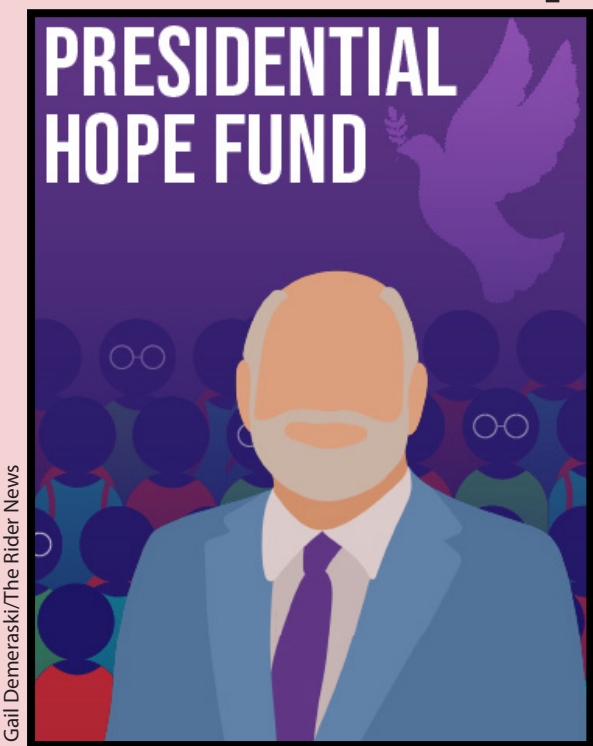
**W**ith the intention of offering Rider students supplementary financial assistance, the university announced the creation of the Presidential Hope Fund in an Oct. 29 universitywide email, a new initiative established by Rider President John Loyack aimed toward students experiencing “unforeseen financial or family hardship.”

“The immediate need for the university is to make sure that students have resources they need to be able to finish their experience and stay with us and be part of the community until they do,” Loyack said in an interview with The Rider News on Nov. 4.

Initially introduced to university leadership and trustees a week before its universitywide announcement with a three-year goal of \$1 million, the fund surpassed that target in less than a week, according to the email, with Loyack personally pledging \$150,000 over the next three years.

“I wouldn’t ask somebody else to be committed to something that I wasn’t committed to. Maybe that’s part of the early success of the campaign,” Loyack said, regarding the reasoning for his large contribution.

The fund currently sits at a little over \$1.2 million, Loyack said in his interview with The Rider News, surpassing his expectations and sending a strong message about the Rider community. The new president attributes the surge of donations in a week’s time to the core purpose behind the campaign;



Rider President **John Loyack** unveiled a new fund aimed to provide tuition assistance for students experiencing financial difficulties.

financially supporting students to continue their education.

In a Nov. 4 email to The Rider News, Board of

Trustees Chair Joe McDougall said, “President Loyack set the tone by being donor number one to Rider’s Presidential Hope Fund. This quickly inspired me and several other trustees to join him to ensure a launch that will allow the fund to immediately assist students. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated and generous trustees who support Rider at every turn. I’m hopeful this will encourage others to give to a cause that is solely focused on supporting our students when they are most in need.”

While the call to give funds has only been extended to certain members of the Rider community, Loyack plans for the Presidential Hope Fund to continue to grow once outreach begins to the university’s donor base, alumni and people connected with Rider on a consistent basis.

In addition to its benefit to the student experience, the email said the new plan intends to increase retention and degree completion, which comes as Rider’s retention rate continually declines. According to an Oct. 17 email from Provost Kelly Bidle to all deans and department chairs, the rate of returning Rider freshman for the current school year is 75%, down from 79% in 2024.

However, data from years prior to 2024 show a pattern of Rider struggling to retain students and get them to graduation, Loyack said, and the top reason is



# Universitywide emails announce new initiatives

By Cal Sutton and Caroline Haviland

**R**ider President John Loyack detailed multiple initiatives to strengthen the university’s support for students in a Nov. 4 universitywide email, following the announcement of a new plan to preserve Rider’s finances in an Oct. 31 universitywide email.

Among these initiatives was the recently launched Presidential Hope Fund, an expansion of Rider’s admissions staff to more geographical regions and a newly appointed Retention Task Force, with the hopes of boosting spring enrollment.

An integration of the Counseling Center and Health Center into a comprehensive Wellness Center in the Vona Center was also listed, along with a chaplaincy program and an Interfaith Advisory Council, to help students connect with their spirituality.

The email stated, “Together, these initiatives represent a comprehensive, forward-looking effort to enhance every dimension of the Rider experience, from the moment students arrive on campus to the day they graduate and beyond.”

University officials did not announce any faculty or staff layoffs by Oct. 31, the deadline for Rider to make that decision, and instead presented the March to Sustainability plan in the Oct. 31 email, without naming any public details.

The email read, “The Board of Trustees met to discuss the University’s financial situation and restructuring steps it might take to improve the financial health of Rider, meet its fiduciary duties and establish a new foundation for a strong Rider ... The Board has unanimously approved the March to Sustainability plan that was presented.”

The March to Sustainability is a plan with hopes of improving Rider’s financial stability and growing the university’s finances. Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown did not respond to multiple requests for comment or provide The Rider News with a requested copy of the March to Sustainability outline.

Loyack also declined to elaborate on the new plan announced in his Oct. 31 universitywide email, saying there is nothing further to add beyond the communication.

The university has also avoided faculty layoffs in 2023 and 2024, making 2022 the last year in which professors layoffs were pursued.

The AAUP released an update in a facultywide email on Oct. 31, minutes after The Office of the President sent out their email disclosing the university’s new financial sustainability plan.

The faculty union’s email contained their view on the financial situation at Rider, while also outlining their expectations of Loyack.

According to the Oct. 31 email, Rider’s AAUP chapter expects “radical transparency ... about the University’s financial situation. ... [and] an understanding that we will not agree to any restructuring plan where the consequences of the previous administration’s financial mismanagement are born primarily by the faculty.”

The Rider News reached out to Rider’s AAUP chapter President Maria Villalobos-Buehner, and in a Nov. 3 email she stated, “Unfortunately, I won’t be able to comment on this topic right now.”

In his Oct. 31 email, Loyack announced



Rider President **John Loyack** introduced new vision in order to support students.

that he had invited the leadership of the AAUP and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to further discuss the options available.

Loyack wrote, “We continue to evaluate options and appreciate union leaderships’ engaging in these continued discussions. We will do our best to keep you informed as those unfold.”

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See what is in store for your sign this month!

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Rider brings a father-and-son energy to wrestling



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It is time to share support for healthcare workers.



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## BY BRIANNA VELAZQUEZ

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babcock

**Safe squashes.** On Oct. 29, at 1:18 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Delta Phi Epsilon for the report of suspicious activity. Upon arrival, a student reported that someone had tampered with pumpkins that were on display at the entrance of the house. The student reported that the pumpkins had been moved onto the sidewalk and rearranged. No damage was caused to the pumpkins. Public Safety is investigating.

Unlocated source. On Nov. 2, at 6:59 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Conover Hall for the odor of marijuana coming from the exterior of the building. The caller stated that the odor was coming from someone smoking near the main entrance. Public Safety arrived and detected the odor of marijuana. They checked the interior and exterior of the building and did not locate the source.

Disconnected campus. On Oct. 31, at 2:40 p.m., Public Safety became aware of an internet outage on campus. Public Safety noticed the internet connection at their dispatch desk went offline. They confirmed that the outage was campuswide. The Office of Information Technologies was contacted and notified. Internet connectivity was restored shortly after.

**By Grace Bertrand**

**A**fter filing a grievance against the university, the faculty union's case for Kate Ecke, a former social work adjunct professor who was abruptly fired in September, was dismissed by the university's attorney on Oct. 22.

Ecke was terminated on Sept. 17 after posts on Facebook about conservative political commentator Charlie Kirk led to threats made against her and the university.

Rider's chapter of the Association of American University Professors filed a grievance on Ecke's behalf, challenging the university's decision to fire her. A hearing was held on Oct. 16 with Rider's AAUP Chief Grievance Officer Jeffery Halpern and the university's attorney. Ecke was not present at the hearing.

According to Rider's AAUP website, the hearing should be between the grievant, a representative of the AAUP and a representative of the university. The university's attorney then acts as the hearing officer and has seven days to render a decision in the case.

On Oct. 22, Rider's AAUP executive committee heard from the university's lawyer that Ecke's case would be dismissed and did not state any reasoning, according to Richard Zdan, Rider's AAUP at-large member of the executive committee.

“We went through the process, and internally, the university informed us that they were denying the grievance without actually addressing the merits,” Zdan said.

Rider's AAUP executive committee reached out to challenge the dismissal, but the university's attorney has still not responded with why the case was dismissed, Zdan said. Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown declined to comment on the matter, stating it was a personnel issue.

The faculty union has seven days to appeal the decision to move up to the second step in the process, where the grievance would have been appealed to Provost Kelly Bidle or a designee, according to Rider's AAUP website.

“Because the university denied [the case] without commenting on the merits, it’s impossible to appeal a decision if you don’t know what the decision is based on,” Zdan said. “So, what we said was we want to go immediately to step two.”



From left to right: **Luis De Agustin, Jeffrey Halpern, Richard Zdan, John Loyack** and **Maria Villalobos-Buehner**. Rider faculty members handed a petition on Oct. 7 regarding the firing of former adjunct professor **Kate Ecke** to **President Loyack**.

The university responded to Rider's faculty union saying they would be more comfortable moving directly to arbitration, according to Zdan. Arbitration is the third and final step in the grievance process and takes place when the AAUP is not satisfied with the appeal to the provost. In this step, an arbitrator is appointed by the university and, after looking at presented information from both the university and the faculty union, they will make a final decision.

Zdan said Rider's AAUP executive committee is not aware of when the arbitration meeting will take place.

In October, Ecke told The Rider News she was considering pursuing legal actions of her own against the university. While she said she could not comment on any legal cases, Ecke said that Rider's attorney responded to a letter from the AAUP, saying that they were not going to settle the case and that other Rider employees had seen her Facebook posts and complained.

Ecke will be speaking at a panel discussion on Nov. 7 at Rutgers University, hosted by Rutgers' AAUP's Joint Academic Freedom Committee, that features

speakers from campuses in New Jersey, New York and Texas who have seen or experienced a crackdown on basic academic freedom and free speech.

“It’s really important for Rutgers to host panels like this because it shows a real commitment to academic freedom and open dialogue. Those are values every university should protect,” Ecke said. “After what I experienced at Rider, this feels especially meaningful.”

The roundtable discussion, called “Fighting for Our Right to Teach and Learn,” will also have other speakers joining Ecke, including Tom Alter, an associate professor at Texas State University who was fired for speaking at a conference on socialism, and Max Weiss, a professor at Princeton University who was disciplined for speaking about Palestine.

"I'm definitely nervous but this is something I really believe in," Ecke said. "As educators, we talk a lot about courage and critical thinking and this is a chance to live that out. Even though it's uncomfortable, I know that growth doesn't come from staying quiet. It comes from showing up and using your voice when it matters."

# Laura Montanari uses music to center unheard voices

By Zyheim Bell

**A**lmost no one can claim to be a stranger to the events of World War II, as the topic has been explored countless times through books and films. Adjunct music education professor Laura Montanari, however, takes a new approach to the subject matter.

Montanari’s dissertation, “Songwriting Oral History Interviews: Archival Songs as Critical-Creative Pedagogy in Dialogue with Women of the Italian Resistance,” and coinciding research-based album, was awarded the 2025 Mason Multimedia Award by the Oral History Association during their annual conference meeting.

Montanari took an artistic approach to her doctoral dissertation. Rather than report on collected data, she instead used audio recordings from Italian women who resisted fascism during the Mussolini regime, giving them the chance to “literally speak for themselves.”

“Their voices being kept at the margins for too long. I put them center stage by collaging them thematically, so you can hear a choir of women who took part in their resistance,” she said.

The chorus of voices were accompanied by subtle musical arrangements composed by Montanari, an effort to avoid instrumentation detracting from the importance of the story and the result of poor audio quality.

Montanari presented her work in a collaborative concert where the audience peers within similar fields as Montanari, such as social justice movements and collective history were invited to give recorded feedback of the tracks.

“What happens if we uncover these voices through music?” Montanari asked the workshop’s listeners.

She used their feedback to help her answer two of her research questions, “How the stories of the women could be moved beyond paper and academics,” and “How could access to their stories be expanded beyond the confines of the archive?”

Montanari merged the audience’s opinion with her own, to create her “Archival songs,” a collection of tracks that feature both Montanari’s own entirely original works and her musical interpretation of the interviews.

Her dissertation stems from the pedagogical techniques she has developed throughout her career teaching in New York City. When teaching her middle school course, Montanari played a WhatsApp interview where the students heard a story from her grandmother discussing life in Italy and Montanari would translate for them after.

Despite the language barrier, Motanari said it was the quietest and most engaged her students had been from her entire time knowing them.

“I’ve been knowing you for nine years, from kindergarten to eighth grade. I never heard you be this quiet, and you don’t even understand what she’s saying,” Montanari jokingly told her class. The students shocked her with the response that her grandmother was sharing a “real” story.

Using first-hand experiences such as her grandmothers, Montanari saw that she was giving students an understanding of history beyond the “big” dates, facts and names and instead uncovering the layers that were harder to communicate to 13 to 14-year-old students, exploring the lives of people who experienced the events.

“With such a diverse world, I think that this is an

approach that can help us listen to each other’s voice differently rather than just a written document,” she said.

As a professor here at Rider, Montanari teaches the “The Art of Teaching Music II,” a course designed to prepare sophomore music education majors, where for Casey Decker, Montanari helps her students “bring fun to the classroom.”



Photo courtesy of Laura Montanari

Adjunct professor **Laura Montanari’s** dissertation earned her recognition from the Oral History Association during their 2025 conference in Atlanta.

# President Loyack’s new initiative puts students first

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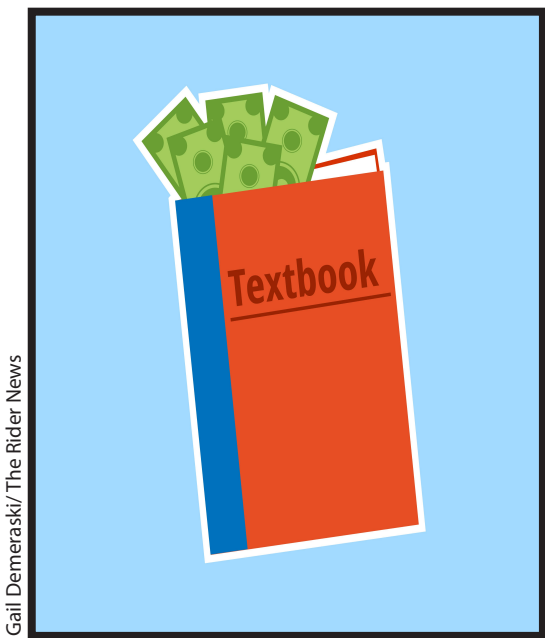
finances. By taking an idea he implemented at both of his prior universities, Loyack said he intends for the Presidential Hope Fund to benefit retention by showing students that, “we’re here to help each other get through tough times, and to get where we all want to go.”

At his past universities, Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and Alvernia University in Reading, Pennsylvania, Loyack said he realized once these initiatives were implemented, he became more aware of how he could provide students with additional support since the students in turn felt comfortable to “start the conversation.”

“Once you get communication going, you get a powerful thing,” Loyack said.

Funding will be available starting in spring 2026, and the university is currently working on the procedure for students to seek this additional support. Loyack said the process will be as effortless as “making a request and sending an email to the right place” without filling out an excessive amount of forms.

“It could be that you need a new set of tires, and if you can’t get them, you can’t drive to campus, so we’ll help you do that,” Loyack said. “Maybe you need a little bit of extra aid or a bus pass or you need books, whatever it is ... You’re here to have a good experience and graduate and it’s our job to find the resources to do that.”



Gail Demeraski/ The Rider News

The Presidential Hope Fund will provide students extra funds for their academic needs.

Toward the end of 2025, the university will have an idea of how many students this fund will benefit. With about 4,000 students in attendance, Loyack said even \$1.2 million is a fair amount of resources available.

In addition to students in need of financial assistance, the Oct. 29 universitywide email explained

the fund will support graduating seniors close to their degree’s completion, enhance scholarships for students in all programs and levels and grow the resources for academic necessities.

“Everybody has a component of their education, for the most part, unless you’re on scholarship, where you have to find a way to fund it and sometimes parents’ situations change and students’ situations change,” Loyack said in his interview with The Rider News. “The hope would be to be able to use the fund for that, to keep them going toward graduation.”

This new campaign shifts gears from former Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo’s fundraising initiative, Transforming Students, Transforming Lives, which concluded with \$98.7 million upon his retirement in July. Its purpose was to increase Rider’s endowment, fund student scholarships and finance campus upgrades.

Loyack said he relates to students’ financial struggles on a personal level from his experience funding his own college education. While the university will continue to fundraise for other campus necessities, Loyack said he wanted to make his first initiative revolve around the core of the Rider community: the students.

He said, “From the heart, as a first-generation college student, who paid their way through college, I get how hard it is to do that and so many of our students are in that position. We have to have some resources to help.”

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# NOVEMBER HOROSCOPES

Presented by Zyheim Bell  
Designed by Gail Demeraski

## SCORPIO

(Oct. 22 - Nov. 21)



You feel an impulse to spend and fall into hedonistic, or self-indulgent, desires, Scorpio. As you find yourself clarifying who you want to keep in your life, make sure to monitor your spending and stick to your charm.

## SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

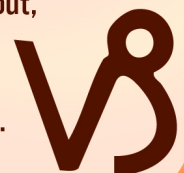
You will feel released from your inhibitions and free this month, Sagittarius. Make bold choices and give in to your confidence knowing that you are grounded within the work you are doing.



## CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

You feel caught between choosing your career and relationships this month, Capricorn. Deadlines and your routine will bring an upcoming burnout, leaving you time to redefine your view of success and community in the aftermath.



## AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

You feel as if you are in the spotlight this month, Aquarius. Tensions within friends and colleagues will lead to heated debates as you take on new roles and responsibilities, forcing you to redefine how you want the world to see you.



## PISCES

(Feb. 19 - Mar. 20)

You will feel called to love and self-indulgence this month, Pisces. The past comes to force you to deal with denied emotions as slight hiccups wear at your patience.



## ARIES

(Mar. 21 - Apr. 19)

This month will bring you self discovery, Aries. Though your relationship will feel chaotic this month, retrograde will bring you a sense of enlightenment.



## TAURUS

(Apr. 20 - May 20)



Your personal relationships are taking center stage this month, Taurus. You will feel forced to change your routines and give up some of the commitments that have been causing your life stress, as relationships will feel more dramatic than before.

## GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)

Your relationship will be keeping you on your toes, Gemini. Whether you feel ready or not, this month will bring closure to denied feelings in order to lead you into December with a clean slate.



## CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)



Your emotions and sense of creativity will reach new heights this month, Cancer. Navigating your sense of independence and keeping the peace at home will prove difficult this month as you fight through bursts of passion and sudden burnouts.

## LEO

(July 23 - Aug. 22)



This month brings rocky friendships and creative outburst for you, Leo. You can expect to feel a sense of accomplishment within your creative sectors this month, though navigating friendships will not come to you as easy as your art will.

## VIRGO

(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)



This month you are being called to focus on yourself, Virgo. To splurge or live by order? That is the question keeping you awake this month as you crave a release from all aspects of your life.

## LIBRA

(Sept. 23 - Oct. 21)



You will feel like you are under pressure as you work toward the things you want this month, Libra. It is OK to feel you deserve more and, being perceived as selfish this month, it is time to explore your own sense of self-worth.

# The Burgos stick together after cancer diagnosis

By Alfie Eville

**W**hat began as an effortless transition to freshman secondary education major Matthew Burgo’s fall semester at Rider abruptly shifted in an instant, as a life-altering diagnosis was delivered to his sister, Briana Burgo.

Earlier this fall, Briana was diagnosed with Stage IV Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, a type of cancer that destroys a person’s lymphatic system. Even through her diagnosis, she has remained a light for her family.

Matthew said, “[she] is a very positive person,” “loves to make jokes and tell stories” and “can be the light in any conversation.”

However, behind her positivity, Briana has gone face-to-face with her challenges.

“She has special needs, and at a young age, no one understands what that means,” Matthew said. “I would constantly hear questions like, ‘Why isn’t she normal?’ or ‘What’s wrong with her?’ I always felt the need to protect her, which still carries to this day.”

This sentiment was also expressed by their mother, Jessica Trump. She said “Since they were babies, he has been there supporting her, teaching her and protecting her. Matthew is her strength and the reason she has always walked so bravely in this world and overcame so much.”

The bond built between the siblings through the years was tested with Briana’s illness, in a way so profound that neither were prepared. The Burgo family was negatively impacted, left to navigate this difficult situation, trying to figure themselves out, and how to take care of Briana.

The emotional toll on Matthew and his mom was immense, “We both broke out into tears instantly, thinking the worst.” However, it would be his sister, true to form, to be a pillar of strength. Even in her most vulnerable of states, when fear could have overtaken her, Briana was there to be courageous.

Trump asserted that her daughter “has been a fighter and defying the odds since the day she was born. Briana went from Friday night in the ER to the following Friday getting chemotherapy. Briana has been so strong through this, and she is so brave.”

Matthew reflected on his sister’s attitude, saying,

“Things have seemed really bleak recently, but she is always reminding me that things will be better, and she will be OK.” That sense of resilience, he added, has been the family’s biggest comfort throughout the whole process. “I know she’s scared, but she’s also the bravest person I know,” Matthew continued.

Right now, Briana finds herself out of the hospital and back home with her family. She’s undergoing chemotherapy, and things look to be back on a positive trajectory. While having Briana back home is a sign of a positive future, it has brought a difficult period of adjustment for Matthew and his mother.

“Things seem to be better now that she is home, but it is still rough as my mom is no longer working and college has been a lot more stressful,” he concluded by maintaining that “it’s all worth it for my sister.”

Matthew ascertains that Briana “is a champion” and that she has spent her entire life defying the odds. He said, “They once told my mom she would never walk or smell — she can do both — or that she could never read,” to which she overcame.

Briana is a strong-willed soul and has a natural gift of strength and perseverance so seldom found in average folk. To aid her family through medical expenses, Trump has set up a GoFundMe account to assist in paying medical expenses, as well as household finances, while she is out of work caring for her daughter. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps lift a weight off the Burgo family’s shoulders and fuels Briana’s fight to recover, Matthew said.

In coming together as a community, concern can be transformed into action and hope into something tangible. Briana’s mother expressed her gratitude, and said, “Since all this has started, I’m beyond thankful for the Rider community not just for supporting Briana and our family, but the way Rider has shown up for Matthew as a family.”



Photo courtesy of Matthew Burgo

Briana Burgo (left) and freshman secondary education major Matthew Burgo have been close since their childhood, with Matthew acting as her protector from an early age.

As Briana continues her fight against Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, her family asks for the Rider community to stand with her, whether it be through a donation, a kind word or simply by sharing her story, ensuring she never has to face this battle alone.

Matthew said, “I know times are hard for a lot of people right now, so if you do not donate, all I ask is that you share support for my family. It would mean the world to all of us right now.”

*This QR code is linked to the Burgo family’s GoFundMe. All proceeds will go to assisting the family during Briana Burgo’s fight against cancer.*



# Spectrum dresses for the occasion in ‘Dress to Impress’

By Sofia Santiago

**S**tudents gathered in Lynch Adler Hall Room 127 on Oct. 29 to attend the weekly Spectrum club meeting, this time with a Halloween twist.

For an hour, the room went through intervals of silence, followed by loud cheers. The reason for these intense volume shifts: the hit Roblox game Dress to Impress.

Club regulars and newcomers alike partook in the evening’s activity while dressed in spooky costumes. After candy had been distributed around the room and everyone’s electronic devices were booted and running, the competition began.

In the game, players have a limited amount of time to walk around the enormous walk-in closet-like space and pick out different pieces of clothing, with the goal of forming an outfit that matches the chosen theme of each round.

Eden Nadella, junior political science major and vice president of Spectrum, explained how the idea for this meeting was chosen over the summer during an executive board meeting and what the process of planning club meetings looks like.

“We set up our events relatively a few months in advance, so that way we can already have an itinerary and not really worry about what we have to do. So we figured, since we want to do more activity-based meetings, we figured to just leave it for around Halloween.”

Nadella also looks at the attendance of each meeting and tracks it on a graph to see which activities and meetings do well.

Some of Spectrum’s most successful events were Drag Queen Mafia, a card game similar to Mafia in



Sofia Santiago/The Rider News

Spectrum members competed on the game Dress to Impress to be featured on the leader board and final display of winners.

which players are given roles and must deduce who the outlier in the group is, and an Open Mic Night that was a collaboration with the Rider Poets.

The virtual fashion show resulted in a significant amount of turnout.

Ella Hess-Sallach, sophomore secondary education major and secretary of Spectrum, commented on her time during the event.

“It was really nice. We figured out how to do the server, and we could all play together. It was fun. It was cool to see everyone’s different ideas,” Hess-Sallach said. “It was an awesome opportunity for people to get to know each other a little more, so it was a good way for people to connect.”

As a new player, Hess-Sallach had no issues learning how to play. First, Nadella set up a private server of the game so that the whole club could play together without any random interruptions.

Then, players were given a theme, such as doctor, Halloween or doll, and a set amount of time to get dressed to fit the theme.

At the end, everyone’s outfits were shown off and voted on by others as the virtual characters strutted down a catwalk.

The top three with the most votes were crowned at the end of each round.

This was entertaining for those participating in the competition, but also allowed members who did not have Roblox or simply did not want to play the game, to watch and encourage their friends.

Kai Samad, junior graphic design major and club regular, said even though he did not participate, it was still a fun time. Samad remarked how this was one of his favorite things about the club.

Hess-Sallach agreed and said, “At Spectrum, everyone is included. And I think we celebrate individuality and creativity a lot. I think there are two things that are shown throughout [Dress to Impress] and it’s just a fun game... we just want to make a very comfortable, welcoming environment.”

# From Rider to the real world: Trevor Sullivan

By Jasmine White

**T**revor Sullivan, '22, would have never imagined the great lengths that his involvement at Rider would take him to, exploring new heights in Virginia over 390 miles from home as director of volunteer recruitment for Sigma Phi Epsilon Social Fraternity at its headquarters.

Sullivan majored in popular music studies, while being involved in over 10 different clubs and organizations. Since the start of Sullivan's freshman year, he made it his business to place himself in every event, organization and club if he even showed the slightest interest in it, expressing how "letting Jesus take the wheel" and "giving 100%" to everything he partook in guided him in all his academic and social endeavors.

"With the combination of just going to God before joining something, doing a calendar and always wrapping it up with 'Jesus take the wheel,' that's how I was able to balance everything," Sullivan said.

Sullivan became involved with Greek organizations early on in his career at Rider and took on leadership roles in most of the clubs and organizations he was a member of. Sullivan was vice president of Rider's chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon's learning community from fall 2019 through 2020 and elected as president in the 2020-21 school year.

Sullivan is a member of Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity, Alpha Symphonia Music Fraternity, a "sweetheart" of Alpha Xi Delta Sorority and was named "Mr. Ivy" for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in 2020, holding this title for five years until the recent crowning of "Mr. Ivy" in 2025.

Outside of Greek life, Sullivan was a community assistant, an orientation leader and a part of the Rider cheer team, obtaining the title of cheer captain during his sophomore year through his senior year. Sullivan was the only male cheerleader that stayed all four years during his time.

"I left one team to join the cheer team [from highschool] and was like, 'this is a great decision, and



Photo courtesy of Trevor Sullivan

**Trevor Sullivan (left)** looked to **Nick Barbati** as a mentor and a friend during his college career and post graduation.

it's my freshman year,'" Sullivan said. "I made a lot of great friends and we had our little cheer family."

Sullivan was known for many things, but his love for the gospel and singing in churches in the community and letting God guide his life purpose came above all. He was a part of Unashamed Voices, a club on campus that welcomed students to minister on campus and sing in church choirs.

"It was a place for me and others to continue to express their faith through what we know to do, which is singing," Sullivan said. "Growing up in church and singing, this is a great way to jump in and continue to express my love for God."

Throughout Sullivan's consistently busy schedule, he made many connections by putting himself out there and being a "ray of light on campus" as described by Vice President for Student Affairs Nick Barbati.

Barbati and Sullivan developed a mentor-to-mentee relationship, which then translated to a long-lasting friendship over the years. Sullivan described Barbati

as being one of the three mentors for him that he could talk to, whenever necessary, during the ups and downs of his college life.

"If [Sullivan] wasn't in class or wasn't involved, he was working in the [Bart Leudeke Center] where he would just kind of set up camp and do all his work, but he was always present," Barbati said. "By seeing him so frequently, I got to develop this really wonderful bond with him."

Barbati admired Sullivan's diligence in being able to juggle all of his activities along with being an "exceptional student and an exceptional alumni," saying how Sullivan made sure everyone got to experience Rider pride during and after the pandemic when it was tougher because that is "what he exuded."

Sullivan also looked to Kadi Diallo, director of student involvement and first-year programs, and Christine Mehlhorn, dean of students and deputy Title IX coordinator.

"I would go to their office to just spend time with them if I had a problem, but sometimes it was just, 'Hey, your door is open and I want to see you,'" Sullivan said.

While in his current position with Sigma Phi Epsilon, Sullivan expressed how he loves helping people, traveling and making connections with his fraternity brothers from outside of Rider. Sullivan wears his letters because he believes God placed him in the position he is in for the sole purpose of being in a position to continue to build up himself and others.

Sullivan leaves two pieces of advice to current students and the Rider community as a whole.

"Pray without ceasing," Sullivan said. "I say that because my second piece of advice would be to try everything."

*This is an installment of The Rider News' "From Rider to the real world" series highlighting accomplishments of Rider alumni.*

## Candy Crawl: Rider's new terrifying trick-or-treat tradition

By Teagan Rotella

**H**alloween's crisp, autumn afternoon would not have been completed without Candy Crawl's perfectly nostalgic atmosphere. Despite the strong winds and long walks, students were determined to gather as much free candy as they could before the end of the event.

On Oct. 31, Candy Crawl's inaugural event featured 24 different participating locations scattered in various buildings across campus. At each location, students were met with warm and welcoming faces, eager to meet anyone who walked through their doors.

Each room marked on the Candy Crawl map was filled entirely with Halloween decorations, featuring skeletons, pumpkins and spiderwebs, along with a large variety of candy options.

Beyond the candy and decorations, this event stood out as Rider's newest Halloween tradition and made a positive impression on many students.

Ella Hess-Sallach, a sophomore secondary education major, mentioned how Candy Crawl has now changed Halloween at Rider for the better.

"People dressed up last year, but there wasn't that same sense of community," Hess-Sallach said, remembering how the Halloween-themed events around campus last year felt more separated rather than together.

"I don't remember one thing being open to the entire community ... I don't really remember anything involved," she said.

In previous years, Rider never had a Halloween tradition set in stone. However Vice President for Student Affairs Nick Barbati planned to change that.

This year, Barbati was inspired to coordinate Candy Crawl based on the increasing interest in Halloween from students and faculty.

"I thought it would be really great to turn this into a bit of a map to get students around, acclimated to the different offices on campus and in the process, get candy!" Barbati said.

Barbati believes that Candy Crawl will return next

year due to the unexpectedly high amount of student interest. There was an estimated 165 students that signed up for it, Barbati said, which was beyond what they had anticipated.

Despite its inspiration, faculty members found themselves enjoying the event not just for Halloween, but for the chance to engage with students on a more personal level.

Director of Performance Management Kristen Rogers highlighted the uniqueness of Candy Crawl, stating how she would love to see more interactive events between faculty, staff and students in the future.

"This was a great event ... [the Candy Crawl] has been a lot of fun ... It's just really nice to be able to connect directly with students and see everyone's creativity," Rodgers said.

Similarly to Rodgers, Global Programs Manager of the Office of International Education Joana Pirela de De Gregorio liked that Candy Crawl allowed her to build "relationship[s] with the student[s]" rather than only focusing on advertising the services and opportunities Rider's study abroad program offers.

However, for most students, connections were not the most memorable part of Candy Crawl.

Vyan Datt, a sophomore psychology major, particularly enjoyed the atmosphere of this event, expressing how it was "very nostalgic" for her.

"I used to trick or treat a lot when I was younger. I haven't done it in a while, but it just brings that back. I really enjoyed this event and I'm really glad they did it," Datt said.

Junior psychology major Vanessa De Jesus also highlighted the nostalgic atmosphere of Candy Crawl.

"You can kind of feel like a little kid again, especially when walking to the president's house," De Jesus said.

Rider President John Loyack's house is located across the street from campus, which De Jesus said reminded her of trick or treating.

After crossing Lawrence Road and passing a few

houses, students reached a white Colonial Revival home, its windows framed with black shutters and decorated with oversized spiders, ready to greet them.

Upon knocking on the bright front red door, Rider students were given candy trick-or-treat style. And not just any candy, but king-sized candy!

Despite being far away from the rest of the Candy Crawl locations, Loyack's residence earned the right of being the most favored location of them all.

Freshman behavioral neuroscience major Catherine Potgieter has attended most, if not all, of Rider's events on campus since the start of her first semester here.

Potgieter believes that what makes Candy Crawl stand out compared to other events is how she "got to see most of [Rider's] campus."

Sophomore English major Lacey Kochuba also loved exploring parts of campus she had never seen before, such as the second floor of the Student Recreation Center and the basement of the Moore Library.

Kochuba said, "It's nice seeing people in the Halloween spirit."



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

Trick-or-treaters partake in Rider's Candy Crawl, collecting candy from set places on the map provided.

# Supporting healthcare workers on and off campus

**R**ecently, I have seen the phrase “health is wealth” coming up frequently. Being healthy is something that most people strive for. In this specific instance, I am referring to physical health and wellbeing. Behind all of this are our healthcare workers, but as of late, they are becoming undervalued.

I have seen the process of higher ups disregarding healthcare workers at our own university. Rider used to have three nurses working in the Student Health Center, but recently they have been reduced to only one nurse practitioner.

I reached out to the nurse practitioner on staff for an interview on her experience with everything going on, but she politely declined. There are students, including myself, that are completely baffled by the situation on the staffs’ behalf. According to the university’s website, Rider says that there are over 3,100 undergraduate students. It also says that over half of the students here live on campus. Leaving one nurse practitioner to account for all of those people, excluding the commuter and graduate students who can still access the Student Health Center, is completely unfair.

Earlier in this semester, I went to the Student Health Center when I came down with a cold. As a student who lives on campus and does not have a car on campus, it is really my only option. In past years, doing a walk-in appointment has worked out fine for me. This time, however, I was told that the nurse practitioner was not in that day and the Student Health Center was not seeing anyone at the time. The women at the desk told me budget cuts left them with only one working nurse to see students.

To clarify, I am not angry at any of the staff at the health center. I am angry at the university for making this decision. While I do understand there are changes that had to be made, this should not have been one of them. Students, no matter if they live on campus or not, should not have to worry about whether they can receive medical help that day. Having the

Student Health Center be open 24/7 would be more accommodating to everyone, however it is unreasonable to expect a single healthcare provider to do that all on their own.

Instead, the university should recognize that their students’ health is a priority. We need medical professionals to provide care so that hopefully cold and flu outbreaks across campus can be prevented or at least managed more efficiently.

We should appreciate everything that the Student Health Center does, like offering a full day of flu shots without needing an appointment. Providing care for sick or injured students is a lot of work; the higher-ups at this school should not have placed that workload onto only one person.

If you make a visit to the Student Health Center, make an effort to be kind and show your appreciation to the staff. It is the least that we as students can do. If you cannot get an appointment one day, do not direct any malice toward the staff at the Student Health Center because it is not their fault the system is this way now.

Healthcare workers getting the metaphorical short end of the stick is not just a Rider issue either. It is happening everywhere, including our own government. An Oct. 11 article by The New York Times stated that dozens of employees at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lost their jobs due to federal layoffs. Among these layoffs, there were scientists in offices that addressed concerns such as chronic diseases and global health; the staff of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report that discusses health trends and infectious threats, and even Epidemic Intelligence Service officers who respond to outbreaks globally.

It is so disappointing to have read The New York Times article and learn what was happening. I cannot imagine a world where diseases and health are not managed like they are now. These are people whose entire careers are based on helping citizens everywhere get the help they need. After a pandemic



Rider’s Student Health Center is located in Poyda Hall.

that practically shut down the world not even six years ago, I cannot understand why people are dismissing workers in healthcare professions.

In light of all of these issues, it is our responsibility to be more understanding. Do not show anger to people in these professions no matter how frustrating it is to receive help; they are likely struggling, too. Support the healthcare workers on Rider’s campus and your local doctors’ offices, as well. Make it known that their jobs are important and that they matter.

Jenna Munswami  
junior communication studies major

# Respecting national parks — even during shutdowns

**U**.S. Government shutdowns have large impacts on the health and upkeep of our national parks. The National Park Service staff and park rangers do not work during government shutdowns. Even though national parks remain “closed,” this only is true in the vain of not having active staff and park rangers physically on the grounds.

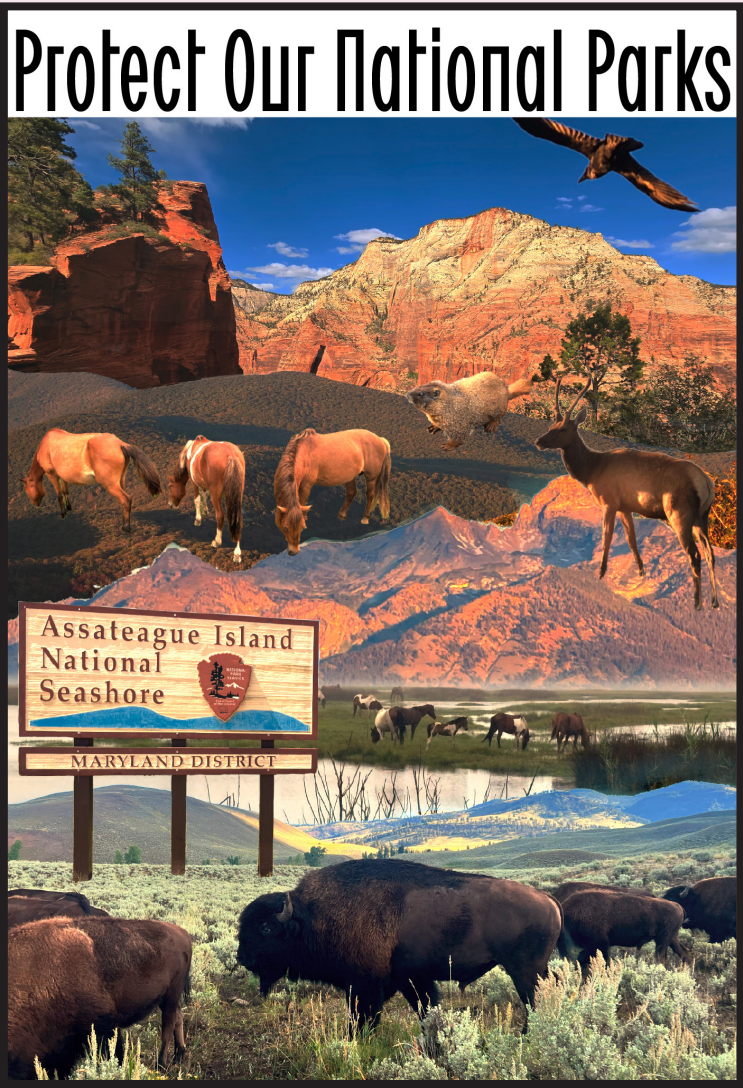
While it is highly appealing to bypass the entrance fee for a national park, as there is no one at the booth to monitor payment, this action is taking money from the National Park Service and the U.S. government — I believe that going to national parks during a government shutdown is, in turn, stealing from the government.

Through visitor revenue in 2023, The National Park Service provided \$55.6 billion back to the government. This money is substantial, and if we truly loved our national parks, I think we would be doing more in our power to make sure they are not losing their money — which is precisely what is happening because people are going and experiencing the national parks’ resources without paying for it.

Monetary issues aside, people taking advantage of government shutdowns can be detrimental to the wildlife in national parks. National parks are protected land, with animal species, various plants and other parts of nature that we should be able to experience for many years to come. Though, taking advantage of government shutdowns to “appreciate” this wildlife is not ethical.

This summer, I went to Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland. From the moment I got to the entrance, I was made very aware of the fact that the horses you encounter there need to be left alone. There were signs that patrons must stay 40 feet from horses at all times and to not touch or feed wildlife.

Though, there were times where park rangers would come through on golf carts letting patrons know



It is important to not take advantage of national parks during government shutdowns.

that they were too close to the horses and they could be subject to hefty fines of up to \$5,000.

Without the rangers working at Assateague Island National Seashore, the horses that are already touched and bothered by humans will not be protected at all.

There are people on social media who claim that

it is okay to go to a national park as long as they “leave no trace,” which is just an aspirational phrase conservationists use — there is no such thing as leaving no trace. Visitors of national parks claim that they engage in conservationist behaviors, but there are still excessive amounts of trash on the ground and damages to pieces of important wildlife among various national parks.

According to a 2019 New York Times article, after the most recent government shutdown, Joshua Tree National Park, located in southern California, felt disastrous impacts from people taking advantage of the parks without the majority of its rangers present, who are there to keep wildlife safe.

When the majority of the park rangers resumed work, they noticed that there was vandalism throughout the park, as well as Joshua trees cut down and driven over. Now, this is so detrimental because it can take 100 years for a Joshua tree to mature, and there can be seasons where the trees do not grow at all, if it is particularly dry.

People who come to national parks during shutdowns can ruin wildlife in national parks, even if they have good intentions. We should have a larger awareness of what it means for the national parks when the government is shut down, so we can avoid the ill-treatment of nature when extenuating circumstances occur.

Cal Sutton  
sophomore journalism major

ALBUM REVIEW

# “Everybody Scream” for Florence + The Machine

**F**lorence Welch has done it again. She has completely stunned me with yet another flawless album. “Everybody Scream,” the sixth and latest studio album from the band Florence + The Machine, was released on Halloween this year and I was practically screaming in excitement to anyone around me all week prior to listening to it. I am sure that my coworkers were tired of hearing me during my morning shift on Friday as I continually repeated how excited I was to attend a listening party for the release that evening once I clocked out.

In “Everybody Scream,” Welch has concocted the perfect potion of dynamic notes and enchanting lyrics to create the kind of music that would have put her on trial in the 1600s for suspected witchcraft.

I knew right away from the first teasers of the album on social media that Welch’s ethereal vocals would be a huge selling point of the album. But that almost seems like a given, considering that she could sing the nutrition facts off of a cereal box and still fill me with awe.

Bewitching is one of the first words I would use to describe the new record. I have been so entranced by the 12-track record that, as of the time of writing this, I believe I am currently on my sixth full listen-through of the record. That being said, let me give you some of the highlights of the album to look out for.

My current favorite track from the album is “Music By Men.” This contemplative song truly showcases Welch’s poetic lyrics. In this four and a half minute-long song, Welch elegantly and earnestly acknowledges the complexity of relationships and the role she plays in them with lyrics such as “All the love that came my way, I found a way to push away // I don’t wanna be afraid anymore // I don’t wanna run from love like I had before.” Welch paints gorgeous pictures in her lyricism you cannot help but become fully enveloped by them.

However, the more I listen to the album, “Buckle” is slowly working its way up the ranks to becoming my favorite. Being one of the softer songs on the record, “Buckle” truly showcases Welch’s ability to share such intimate parts of herself in an authentic way that listeners can connect with.

If you do not listen to the whole album straight through — as I would recommend — you should also

make a point of listening to “Kraken;” it is another one of my top favorites with sharp ear-catching lyrics that paint the songstress as not only a witchy figure, but also as a “creature from the deep” that is sure to haunt you — in the best way, of course.

Adding to the witch allegations against Welch are the interwoven feministic themes throughout the album, albeit through a more sardonic lens; more critical of patriarchy than anything else. For example, in the song, “One of The Greats,” the album’s second single and second on the tracklist, Welch belts “so like a woman to profit from her madness // I was only beautiful under the lights, only powerful there” and “you’ll say it’s all pretend // That I could never be great being held up against such male tastes” in a reflective reference to how she feels as a woman in the music industry. Welch truly knows how to assert her place and throw a lyrical punch at those who try to keep her down.

Florence + The Machine will always hold a special place in my heart primarily because the first concert, that I paid for with my own money, was for Florence + The Machine’s “High as Hope” album tour in Miami back in 2019. I love that album and it is one of my favorite records of all time. That being said, after years of listening to and resonating with that softer album, it was so refreshing to hear “Everybody Scream.” In this latest album, I feel empowered to finally yell out all my frustrations with being soft and melancholic alongside the artist. Welch knew it was time for a radical takeover in her music to reflect the radical frustration so many of her fans are feeling.

This dynamic shift is only improved by the way “Everbody Scream” seems to be in direct conversation with “High as Hope.” For example, the eighth track on “Everybody Scream,” “The Old Religion” seems to correspond to “Hunger” from “High as Hope.” I will not go into detail on how the two songs compare, so as to encourage you to give them a listen for yourself, just know that you will be pleasantly surprised with how well they pair.

The two records are almost like a “before-and-after” photograph. “High as Hope” has a sense of loneliness and contemplative hopefulness that “Everybody Scream” seems to respond to with it is more carefree resignedness that seems to say “what will



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

“Everybody Scream” is **Libby D’Orvilliers’** new comfort album.

be will be” therefore we might as well just scream out. Where “High as Hope” showed Welch struggling with a sense of longing, “Everybody Scream” shows her fully embracing the tumultuous nature of life. Welch has sonically captured the essence of coming into her own and being OK with all her power, flaws included.

Fiery and full of female fury, as wild as it may sound, “Everybody Scream” is my new favorite comfort album. Florence + The Machine gave me their magic potion and I gladly drank it up.

Now, if you will excuse me, I have to go register for presale tickets for the album tour.

*Libby D’Orvilliers*  
senior psychology major

## Halloween festivities warrant a day off of work and school

**E**very Oct. 31, a special holiday comes around: Halloween. Kids get dressed up as their favorite characters or spooky icons, go trick-or-treating in their local neighborhood or even stay at home watching their favorite Halloween movies and specials. This is truly the greatest feeling as it shows people of all ages can enjoy something about Halloween. If that is the case, why is it not nationally recognized as a day everyone can have off from work and school? Kids still have to go to school and adults still have to go to work on Oct. 31 despite how they may be celebrating.

What I am saying is that Halloween should be recognized as a true holiday. This gives adults and kids the time to plan for their festivities. Kids do not want to be in school learning about math and science on a day when they would rather be hanging out with friends in costumes. Adults would also rather be at home helping their kids getting ready to go trick-or-treating or putting up a Halloween display in front of their house, than working a 9-to-5. Having Halloween as a day off will give everyone a break from everything going on in their life.

As someone who absolutely enjoys Halloween, I feel that it is important for everyone of all ages to get ready for any festivities and events that happen throughout the day. Halloween is almost as big as Christmas when it comes to retail sales. I see Halloween as being bigger than Easter and Thanksgiving, in terms of commercial success, but yet everyone has a day off from their jobs on those holidays. From a study that was conducted by the National Retail Federation this year, total Halloween spending is expected to reach a record \$13.1 billion.



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

Employers and schools alike should allow a day off on Halloween.

That is well above 2024’s \$11.6 billion and even tops the 2023 record of \$12.2 billion. These are impressive numbers, especially considering price hikes on imports this year alone. This goes to show that people are willing to spend money on costumes and to dress up and bring joy to the world. This is very exciting to know, as it sets a new high standard for next year’s

Halloween. This can lead to more people buying Halloween-related items in the coming years. This also leads to an increase in the amount of people who get dressed up each year as it brings more excitement in the air. This could be partially due to trends on social media.

I had spent approximately \$200 dollars this year on Halloween accessories and a costume to go out in, dressing up as Jason Voorhees. Alongside my costume, I got the knife and the mask as accessories, which added up to nearly \$100. I also bought Halloween candy to pass out in my neighborhood, as we got plenty of trick-or-treaters this year.

I had a blast this Halloween. From the fun time I had at Scream Screen to the decorations on the houses this year, something about Halloween this year felt extra special. Fall and Halloween were always two things that I really enjoyed, even as a kid. Something about dressing up as somebody else for a day always excited me and I have always liked the spooky vibes around Halloween. It always brings a certain energy that cannot be matched anywhere else, even on Christmas. I truly believe everyone of all ages deserves a day off of regular activity from school and work on Halloween.

*Michael Bolcato*  
junior communication studies major

# Sports betting has ruined the fun of sports

**S**ports betting has become very popular in recent years, with millions of users logging on to betting websites every day. Once sports betting became legal in New Jersey in 2018, and many other states, eager gamblers found the perfect opportunity to earn money.

I would like to argue, however, that sports betting has ruined the authenticity of games; it has completely corrupted the “on the edge of my seat” fun of sports.

Before sports betting, watching sports brought so much excitement no matter what sport it was. Viewers had no idea what to expect and no one placed a parlay, or wager, before a game; that was the beauty of it.

Now, viewers place bets before a game and when the player or team they placed a bet on are not playing well, they become frustrated throughout the game. It is as if they forget what sports is all about.

I love sports and the passion that comes with it. I love the players’ emotions, the fans cheering in the stands and the authenticity of it all. I believe that this authentic joy is being robbed by the increasing emphasis on betting on the games.

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2025, 22% of U.S. adults said that they have personally placed bet money on sports in the past year. That percentage is 3% higher than it was in 2022.

Apps like FanDuel Sportsbook, BetMGM, DraftKings and ESPN BET Sportsbook have become highly promoted on television and social media. Almost every commercial that I see for any of these betting apps, contain a former or active athlete and an actor.

The way that sports betting is highly advertised must be why it draws the attention of young adults. If you think about it, they spend most of their time on social media and watching television, which is where most of these applications promote themselves.

In the 2025 Pew Research survey, it was found that 17% of adults under the age of 30 have placed an online bet this past year. I feel like the appearance of these actors and athletes in the commercials influence young adults to place a bet themselves.

Most of these impressionable adults probably

cannot wait to turn 21 years old so that they can legally place a bet. But, unfortunately, this age restriction does not really prevent underage betting.

Back in September of 2023, four former University of Iowa athletes plead guilty to underage gambling, according to ESPN. This resulted in penalties by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, including a fine of \$645 for each of the former players.

Aside from underage gambling, there have also been cases of illegal gambling in professional leagues. In October of this year, Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier and Portland Trail Blazers Head Coach Chauncey Billups, were arrested with illegal gambling charges.

I was definitely shocked to see Rozier’s name in that news but unfortunately, it is nothing new in the National Basketball Association. Sports betting also affects athletes because if they are caught betting on their own sport or league, they are susceptible to penalties that could be career-ending.

Simply put, I do not see the point of an athlete placing a bet on sports. They are already rich enough, and at that point, it is as if they are throwing their whole athletic career away.

If it were up to me, I do not think that athletes should be allowed to place bets on any sport. It seems unethical and useless.

There are many problems with gambling, but a predominant concern is one developing a gambling addiction. According to an estimate by the National Council on Problem Gambling, 2.5 million U.S. adults meet the criteria for a severe gambling problem.

That number is honestly heartbreaking to see. I often question if the disclaimer, “Gambling Problem? Call One Eight Hundred G-A-M-B-L-E-R,” at the end of every commercial that promotes sports betting, is actually effective.

Sports betting has unfortunately caused the love for sports to oftentimes turn into hatred and frustration



Sports betting can cause fans to become frustrated with the game they love to watch.

due to a player or team’s performance. It often does not even matter if a gambler’s team is winning because if the player they placed a bet on does poorly, they ultimately become frustrated because of the money they lost.

I strongly dislike sports betting and how popular it has become, and it irritates me how heavily promoted it is now. Betting on players and teams has taken away the thrill of the sports I love to watch.

Gabriela Tobar  
senior sports media major

## COMIC: The Twisted Ventures of Harvey J. Cedars

By N. D. Medal



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MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Broncs fall to Cavaliers in season opener

By Samantha Clark

Rider men's basketball opened their regular season in Charlottesville, Virginia, facing the University of Virginia for the first time since 2009. Despite a well-fought battle, Rider fell short 53-87.

### Late first-half punch

The first half opened with a two-minute scoreless drought, with both teams taking turns racing up and down the court but struggling to find the net.

Virginia broke the streak, but sophomore guard Flash Burton quickly responded with a deep two, giving the Broncs their first points of the game.

Junior guard Antwan Wilson continued with this momentum, fighting in the paint against two Cavaliers to finish with a layup.

Out of the first timeout, Virginia turned up the heat and energy on the court, forcing Rider to fight as hard as possible.

Burton sank another long jumper and paired it with a free throw to complete the three-point play, pushing his total to 10 points in just seven minutes of play.

Senior guard Zion Cruz drove to the basket through three defenders, fighting for a jumper and his first points of the game.

Both teams went three minutes straight with no successful field goal baskets, but combined for nine free throws on the line.

Cruz broke the streak with a three-pointer, cutting the Broncs' deficit to a single-digit margin.

Ahead of the 2025-26 season, the National College Athletic Association introduced a new rule to college men's basketball programs, which allows coaches one challenge at any point in the game to review specific plays, including out-of-bound calls.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Sophomore guard **Flash Burton** led Rider in scoring with 17 points, just three under his 2024-25 season high of 21 points.

Head Coach Kevin Baggett used the new rule to Rider's advantage, successfully challenging an out-of-bounds call against freshman guard Jamir McNeil, giving possession back to the Broncs.

With two minutes left, Virginia missed four straight

three-point attempts, but held their lead by securing the offensive rebounds.

Junior guard Caleb Smith sank a layup through two defenders, getting in the paint with less than a minute left of play in the first half.

Smith's layup, combined with Burton's 15 points that led all scorers in the first half, put the Broncs down by 10, trailing the Cavaliers 32-42.

"We need to make scoring easier for one another and trust each other to play off one another's roles in the game," senior forward Mohamad Diallo said.

### Scoring struggles continue

The second half opened very similarly to the first, with a seven minute scoring drought for the Broncs.

Virginia went 11-0 in this stretch, until Smith sank a free throw with 13 minutes remaining.

Despite his leading performance in the first, Burton did not score in the second half until the 8th minute, with his third deep two-pointer of the game.

Rider continued to go scoreless for the next six and-a-half minutes, allowing Virginia to go on a 17-1 run for five minutes.

McNeil snapped the Cavaliers' run with a steal and drove to the basket for a fastbreak layup in the paint.

Sophomore guard Maurizio D'Alessandro hit a three-pointer, his first and only points of the game, in the final two seconds, closing out the matchup at 53-87.

"I thought our guys competed well in the first half," Baggett said. "We didn't make the adjustments that we needed to make in the second half ... I think we'll be better come Wednesday, have a quick turn around."

The Broncs look to get their first win in the regular season on Nov. 5 when they face Rutgers University in Piscataway, New Jersey, at 7 p.m. The game will be streamed on Big Ten Sports Network.

MEN'S SOCCER

# Broncs' Senior Day efforts fall short to Sacred Heart University

By Joshua Yuhas

Rider men's soccer took to Ben Cohen Field one last time for a Senior Day battle. After a hard-nosed clash, the Broncs fell 2-1 on Nov. 1 to Sacred Heart University, the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference regular season champions.

### Brotherhood at Rider

Seniors and graduate students across the pitch made their presence known on Senior Day, bringing a fight until the final minutes of the match.

"Something that I'll always remember, the brotherhood here and the way everyone just likes each other ... I think for me that's bigger than any other wins," senior midfielder Ricky Joasilus said.

The Broncs opened the first few minutes quickly with two corner kick opportunities from graduate student defender Kaelan Debbage.

Moments later, a free kick shot from outside the box by senior midfielder Theo Da Silva was saved by the Pioneers goalie.

When Sacred Heart countered, they forced graduate goalie Marius Helias to dive to his left for the save, taking possession back after a blocked clearance two minutes later, failing to score.

In the 13th minute, Helias got caught outside the box and slipped, allowing a Pioneer attacker to take the ball and fire it into the net for a 1-0 Pioneer lead.

A pair of Rider turnovers tested Helias and the Broncs' defense, but a diving save by Helias after the first and a strong defense after the second, did not allow either shot attempts.

Starting in the 22nd minute, senior attacker Lovro Kostanjsek led a near 10-minute surge, finding three runs to the box, two unsuccessful.

On the second run, Joasilus stole possession from the Pioneers and found Kostanjsek in the box, who scored the equalizer into the left side of the net.

At the end of the half, Rider was tied with Sacred Heart, leading the shot totals seven to six, despite allowing four more corner kick opportunities.



Liliana R. Basile/The Rider News

Senior midfielder **Theo Da Silva** and senior forward **Xavi Csato** wait ahead of their few final games as Broncs.

"I told the group at halftime that you guys can play with anybody and you've proven it. We've got 45 minutes to showcase it," Head Coach Chad Duernberger said.

The Broncs started the second half similar to the first, with multiple crosses toward the box. However, the Pioneers took control, constantly pressuring the Broncs' defense.

In the 65th minute, a Pioneer corner and cross to the box were headed away with a shot blocked by senior defender Christian Graham.

Helias survived a flurry of attacks starting in the 76th minute and dealt with chaos in the box before grabbing control of the ball to end the series.

The attack resumed five minutes after, with two shots blocked inside the box before a Sacred Heart

corner found the foot of a Pioneer attacker for the game-winning 83rd minute score.

"Unfortunately, it's another set piece goal to lose, but just proud that these guys have been able to fight against any team in the league," Duernberger said.

Until the final whistle, the Broncs battled, earning a corner kick a minute following the shot-on-goal, which was knocked away.

On a charge into open field for the Pioneers, Debbage charged back on defense, earning a yellow card for the contact made, but halting the breakaway.

Senior forward Xavi Csato fired a shot from tight left of the net in the 87th minute which was saved before a final minute effort from the Broncs.

Sophomore defender Max Schrader launched a long pass up the field, and Joasilus headed it over to Kostanjsek for a shot on goal, but was saved by the Pioneer goalie to solidify the win.

Kostanjsek scored Rider's lone goal, leading the team in shots with three, and Joasilus posted the lone assist for the Broncs.

After his Senior Day performance, with an assist and a near second one in the final minutes, Joasilus described his role and mindset.

"For me, it's all about helping out the team. It doesn't matter what I'm called upon to do," Joasilus said. "As long as I'm available, then I'm just always going to work myself out to bring something positive to the squad."

Duernberger, reflecting on the season, shared the same sentiment as Joasilus of the brotherhood of the team after the Senior Day action.

"Really what it comes down to is brotherhood and family. I love these guys through the fun and the tough times and this group stuck together," Duernberger said.

The Broncs will head back on the road for their final regular season game against Mount Saint Mary's University on Nov. 5.

# Sports

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## 'I love having him here': The Hangey name lives on

By Benjamin Shinault

Rider wrestling runs deep within the bloodline of the Hangey family. The father, Head Coach John Hangey, who wrestled at Rider in the 1990s, was an All-American, and is now a current member of the Rider Athletics Hall of Fame. He is also entering his ninth season coaching the Broncs.

The son, sophomore JP Hangey, was born with headgear and a singlet on. Now, both Hangeys are looking to continue the strong tradition of Rider wrestling and keep the family pipeline going strong.

### 'He had no choice'

Growing up and having his father as a wrestling coach, the probabilities of JP escaping the hard-nosed sport was slim to none.

"I was three months old and I was in a singlet and I was wrestling by four years old," JP said.

Coach Hangey, a young father at the time, purchased a singlet for his three-month-old son, and it was a perfect fit.

"I went to the high school nationals in Pittsburgh and I brought back a onesie that was a Mat Monkey singlet and it snapped right in the crotch," Coach Hangey said with a chuckle.

A Pennsylvania native, Coach Hangey, joked, "You come out of the womb with headgear on in Pennsylvania."

Whether his son aimed to be a wrestler or not, the wrestling coach wanted JP to give it a shot. "He had no choice, he was going to be exposed to it. Whether he stuck with it or not, that was yet to be determined, but it was definitely happening early," Coach Hangey said.

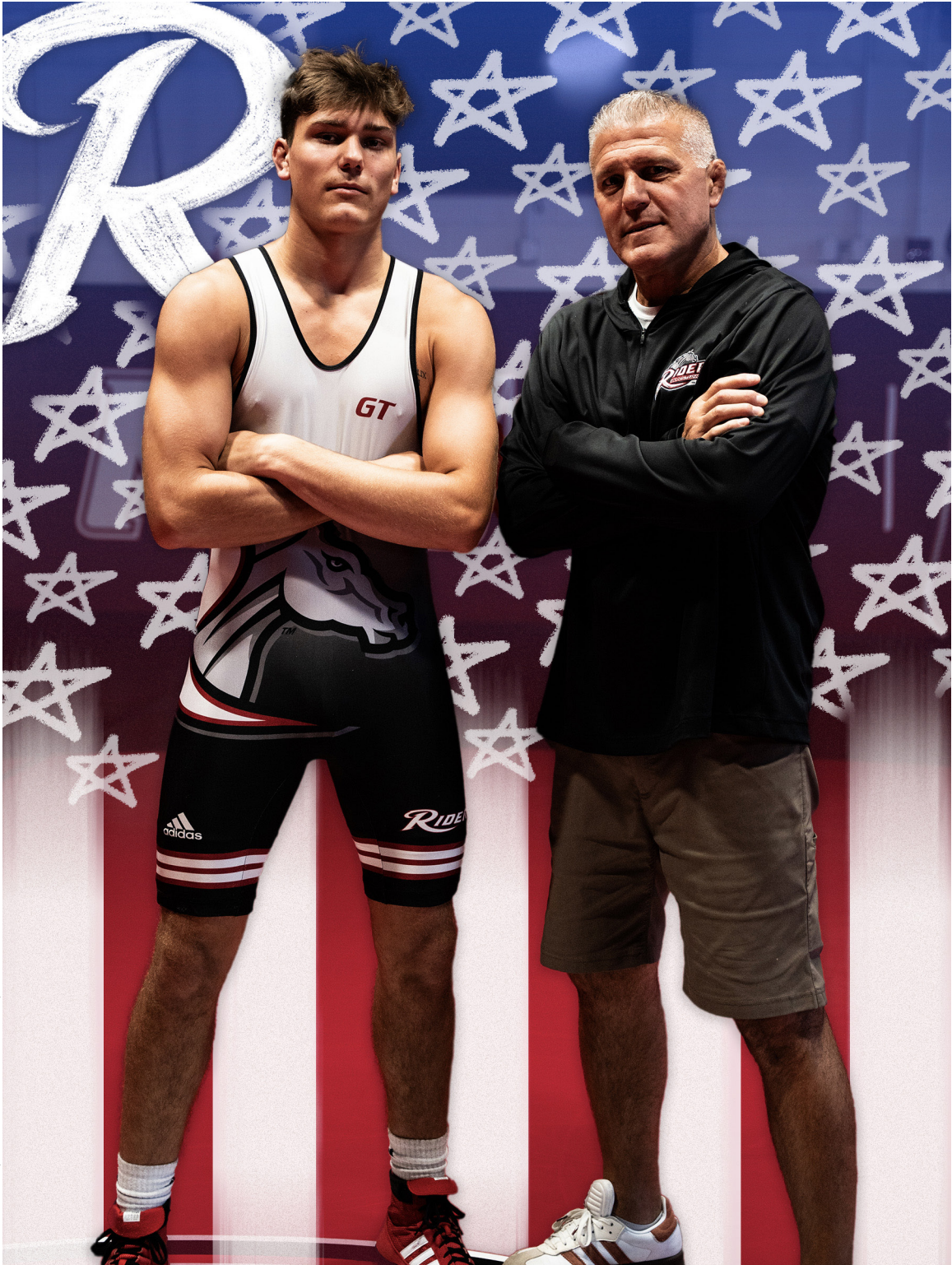
JP, coming out of Cherokee High School in Marlton, New Jersey, had a handful of offers to wrestle in college. Coach Hangey put his Rider bias to the side, and stepped in as a father trying to find JP's next wrestling home.

"I didn't want it to be a situation where he felt pressured into coming to Rider," Coach Hangey said. "I went to all his visits, but I tried to be a dad as much as I could."

After visits to Long Island University, University of Pittsburgh and Drexel University — JP decided to follow in his father's footsteps and wrestle for Rider.

When JP announced he was coming to his dad's alma mater, Coach Hangey was elated.

"I wanted him to make that decision," Coach Hangey said. "I wanted it to come from him and once it did, I was ecstatic."



Sophomore JP Hangey (left) poses with his dad, Head Coach John Hangey.

son, JP views having his dad as his coach as a plus. "A lot of times it is easy because I have easy access to him, I can walk in [Coach Hangey's office] and say whatever I want, but when I am wrestling, I can hear him say something to the whole room and I know he is talking about just me," JP said.

### Walking in his father's footsteps

Coach Hangey was inducted into the Rider Athletics Hall of Fame in 2000. In his time wearing the Rider singlet, he was a three-time conference champion, an All-American and recorded 108 wins over the course of his wrestling career.

Now, flash forward to 2025, JP is entering his second season of wrestling for the Broncs and Coach Hangey is beyond proud to have his son wear the same letters across his chest.

"It is really hard to put into words, it really is," Coach Hangey said. "The fact that he is experiencing what I did in his own eyes, in his own time ... As a coach, you hope to coach your kid and when it becomes reality, it is really rewarding."

Coach Hangey, being one of the more decorated Rider wrestlers in the history of the program, did have his fair share of losses.

One of them came from his own son, just a few years later.

"Over the summer, we were having a freestyle match and I was winning on criteria 6-6 and he was on top and he was actually trying to snap my back in half, but I did end up winning," JP said.

Coach Hangey added his own two cents to the story. "I don't take losing very kindly."

Coaching wrestling might be Coach Hangey's top priority, but with his son by his side, he is also teaching JP life skills on and off the mat.

"I love having him here," Coach Hangey said. "It is me molding him as an adult even on a deeper level right now because all of the things he is learning in the wrestling room are going to carry him forward to being a professional, being a husband, being a father. And to me, that is the best education I can give him."



Photo courtesy of John Hangey

Young JP Hangey stands proud with his gold medal.

Photo courtesy of Rob Gindia, Graphic by Yanuel Santos/ The Rider News