

Rider enters \$10 million deal with Mercer County

By Grace Bertrand

Mercer County's purchase of 56 acres of land from Rider's campus for \$8.5 million, along with access to the university's facilities, provides Rider with a cash flow of \$10 million, according to a March 6 press release from Mercer County.

"[Rider] is an invaluable asset to our community," said Mercer County Executive Dan Benson. "I am proud that we were able to sit down and work collaboratively with university leadership to reach an agreement that strengthens our partnership, and that is a win-win for the school and for Mercer County residents."

Mercer County Commissioners approved the plan to purchase two plots of land and enter into a facilities and services agreement with Rider on Feb. 24, Rider President John Loyack wrote in a universitywide email, calling it "another critical step" in keeping the university afloat.

The funds will be "used to meet requirements under [Rider's] current debt obligations" Loyack wrote to the campus community on Feb. 26, ensuring that the university "will be educating our communities in central New Jersey and beyond for years to come."

The facilities and services agreement, in turn, gives Mercer County employees access to Rider facilities for recreational uses and events, such as the Schimek Family Fitness Center at the Student Recreation Center and the Richard A. Coppola Pool in the Canastra Health and Sports Center.

While Rider is an open campus, with Mercer County residents strolling through on a regular basis, the new deal would allow county employees to enter into facilities also used by students.

This has raised some concerns among parents in how the university plans to keep the campus safe, while



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

Rider reached a \$10 million deal with Mercer County, allowing facilities and land to be open to the public.

committing to the agreement.

Questions on if town employees and their families would be allowed into locker rooms and restrooms were posted in the Rider University Parents page on Facebook, with an overall curiosity for if the deal would pose a security risk for students.

In response to these concerns, Provost Kelly Bidle told The Rider News on March 10, "The facilities and services agreement is with county employees, not all residents."

The landmark agreement also allows Mercer County to designate most of the purchased land as open space, preserving places like the Big Woods, the forest located in the back of campus that was explored by the father of the American Conservation Movement, Aldo Leopold, during his education at The Lawrenceville School.

Daniel Druckenbrod, chair for the department of Earth and chemical sciences, called the forests "a living

ecological connection to Leopold."

He said, "They have been an important part of the campus over the past few decades serving as an outdoor classroom for science courses and research projects as well as a respite to enjoy nature."

Additionally, the deal includes the purchase of "the environmentally sensitive wetlands," the press release stated. Mercer County's plan for the preserved land is to renovate the trails that follow the pathways to the recreation services.

Druckenbrod explained the importance of having the wetlands also protected, saying that the ecological benefits "help reduce runoff and improve water quality both in Lawrenceville and communities downstream, including Trenton."

The majority of the funding for the purchase came through Mercer County's Open Space Trust Fund, allowing the land to be eligible for reimbursement from the state for up to 50% through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the press release stated.

Benson said, "Proposing this purchase allowed us to provide Rider with an alternative to selling off this important land to private residential developers."

As further negotiations ensue between Rider and Mercer County, there is the possibility of another purchase of the Johnson Trolley Trail to provide a pedestrian and bicycle path from Trenton to Princeton.

Lawrence Township Mayor Christopher Bobbitt said in the press release, "Lawrence Township fully supports Mercer County's efforts to preserve vital open space in our community and partner with [Rider] during this difficult time for the school."

Business Hall of Fame welcomes four alumni to 2026 class

By Samantha Clark

Rider recently announced the inductees for the Norm Brodsky College of Business Hall of Fame's 2026 class: Robert J. Decker Jr. '93, Jim Drake '93, Karen West '82, '89 and Joseph Hudicka '93, '00.

The biennial induction honors those who have made significant contributions to the university's business community, both inside and outside the classroom.

This year's list of inductees is comprised of four individuals that are highly active in campus life, whether that be through shaping young minds as professors, bringing experiential learning programs to Lawrenceville or simply engaging with the Rider community on a regular basis.

Meet the inductees

Through the end of summer 2025 and early fall 2025, an email blast that called for a new class of inductees was sent out to business alumni, faculty and staff and posted on social media, which pushed the reach to connected employers and the extended Rider community.

A pool of 10 candidates were narrowed down based on the merit of career achievements, engagement

in the industry and the representation of knowledge in business. This list was then sent to the selection committee, made up of previous Hall of Fame members, who selected the four inductees.

The first of the four is Decker, who upon graduating with the class of 1993, was presented with the President's Award, an honor that recognizes exceptional academic achievement. After Rider, he went on to continue achieving greatness at Johnson & Johnson, where he now serves as the vice president, corporate controller and chief accounting officer.

Similar to the other inductees, Decker remains active in the Norm Brodsky community, as he works on the Accounting Advisory Council where he mentors students through internships and co-op opportunities in the corporate accounting field. Additionally, through his time at Johnson & Johnson, Decker was able to bring the J&J Case Competition to the business program, one of the signature student experiences in the college.

Dean of the Norm Brodsky College of Business Eugene Kutcher, said each inductee is "very actively involved. ... The fact that Rider continues to be part



Samantha Clark/The Rider News

The Norm Brodsky College of Business 2026 Hall of Fame inductees have been announced.

of their story and they choose to still engage with us as much as they do, it just makes it even more special."

Drake is another inductee that is actively committed to student success at the university.

As an employer at Barclays Investment Bank for more than two decades, Drake sat at the heart of one of the most successful financial institutions in the world, allowing him to bring his business knowledge to the classroom.



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ARTBEAST PREPARATION

Go behind the scenes of Rider's annual Artbeast festival.

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HARRY STYLES IS BACK!

Read a review of his new album.

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HISTORY IN BUFFALO

Rider wrestling wins their first-ever MAC title.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY LIBBY D'ORVILLIERS

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babcock

Hungry for trouble

Daly disruption. March 4, at 8:29 a.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Daly Dining Hall for the report of misused equipment. Upon arrival, Public Safety met with dining hall staff who reported messy equipment when they came in for work. Upon reviewing camera footage, it was discovered that a group of students entered the dining hall early in the morning and used the equipment. Public Safety is investigating.

Medical attention needed

Intoxicated incident. On March 7, at 7:19 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to a medical emergency in Ziegler Hall. Upon their arrival, Public Safety discovered a student had vomited in the lobby. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the student was intoxicated. Emergency medical services were contacted to further evaluate the student. This matter has been referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Denting and dipping

Parking problems. On March 6, at 12:40 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Commuter Lot for the report of a motor vehicle collision. Upon their arrival, the officer met with a witness who stated a collision occurred when one car was pulling out of the parking spot, striking the parked car and then left the area. After speaking with witnesses and reviewing camera footage, the vehicle that left the area was identified. This matter was turned over to the Lawrence Police.

Sarah F. Griffin/The Rider News

Rider unveils program to help students in career search

By Cal Sutton

A new program was announced to the Rider community in hopes to better assist students in finding footing within their fields, both in school and post graduation.

The Bronc Career Boost, a replacement program to the Cranberry Investment, was introduced in a universitywide email from Director of Career Development and Success Karl Craft, on March 3.

Craft explained that the Cranberry Investment, while helpful to some students, was hard to make work for most due to its extensive eligibility requirements.

Introduced by former Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo, the Cranberry Investment was a program that guaranteed graduating seniors either graduate school acceptance or a job within six months of graduation, if they had fulfilled the program's requisites.

According to Craft, the Cranberry Investment expected students to maintain their GPA, complete a two or four-year college degree path with Rider, regularly meet with a career coach and take a career planning class, along with other requirements that needed to be met in order to participate.

If a student graduated from Rider after completing all requirements of the Cranberry Investment and did not get an entry-level job or accepted to graduate school within the first six months, the university pledged to assist eligible graduates by giving personal career coaching, extra courses or internship opportunities.

While students wanted to take part in the Cranberry Investment, Craft said, many were not able to reap the benefits because they missed a few criteria while at Rider.

A shift in perspective

To offer a new opportunity, the Bronc Career Boost plans to help students acquire career building skills through ongoing, multifaceted support.

"It's all about support," Craft said. "There's no eligibility. It's open to all students, no matter what."

The Bronc Career Boost is also available to people within the overarching Rider community, unlike the former program which was only accessible to graduating seniors.

"Whether they're current students or recent grads or alumni five years out, it doesn't matter," Craft said. "It's really about support and structure and meeting them where they're at."

Each session of the Bronc Career Boost will include



Cal Sutton/The Rider News

The Bronc Career Boost held its first session on March 10 in the NJM Room.

speakers from organizations that have partnered with the university.

The new format for the program will provide ongoing support for alumni, assistance with different career skills, one-on-one support and networking opportunities with companies that come to speak at sessions.

The Bronc Career Boost also hopes to connect students with one another, whether they plan on going into the same career fields or if they are connecting for peer support and encouragement.

"We don't want people to go home and feel alone," Craft said. "We want them to have that support system through us and through their peers."

The Bronc Career Boost's launch

The first session for the Bronc Career Boost was held on March 10 in the NJM Room. The session began with a highlight on "real recruiter insights."

Three representatives from NJM Insurance Group were the keynote speakers at the event, two of which were Rider alums.

Christine Simon, '94, is a senior talent acquisition specialist, Jeffrey Kuhl, '25, is a business planning analyst and Heather Jones is a university relations specialist.

The three presented ideas during the session that highlighted the importance of communicating professionally during interviews and asking the right questions to a potential employer.

Jones expressed that it is imperative for extensive research into a company be done before an interview, such as looking into their core values, recent product launches, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, industry recognition, LinkedIn and social media presence, mission statements and news releases.

When someone is able to talk about the company they are interviewing for, it can make them a standout candidate next to everyone else.

After the representatives from NJM finished speaking to the group, breakout sessions began, which were based on what each individual thought they needed the most help with. Options included interview, resume and networking support.

Senior psychology major Jada Waddell attended the first session of the program and said, "Any event opportunities at Rider that can help me stay focused on my career or give me that boost for what's next ... helps motivate me."

After the breakout sessions concluded, the groups in attendance reconvened and discussed what each individual believed their strengths and weaknesses were as they plan to enter the workforce.

"Talking about our dream jobs and our dream places gets me excited. ... I hope they do more of that," Waddell said.

The Bronc Career Boost program will have sessions monthly through August. Career Development and Success is also available for personal assistance.

Craft said, "We are not limiting [student support] to these sessions. These are the points of expansion."

Rider Pantry implements weekly walk-in hours

By Caroline Haviland

In an effort to educate the community on its offerings and rebuild a consistent stream of shoppers, the Rider Resource Pantry began a new initiative on March 4 called Walk-in Wednesdays, a weekly shift back to its former open-door policy.

The idea for the weekly event was introduced by Rider Resource Pantry Manager Shayana Reyes-Oatman, who noticed the decline in the amount of students taking advantage of the resource center's supply.

Kickstarted in February 2018, The Pantry's first Walk-in Wednesday amounted to 27 orders, a feat the Pantry did not come close to achieving earlier in the semester, said Reyes-Oatman, a sophomore psychology major, as they usually receive four orders or less a week.

Rider Resource Pantry volunteer Sanaa Christmas, a freshman biochemistry major, said she has also seen the Pantry get orders that were canceled shortly after, or people decided not to show up for their items.

The minimal traffic partly comes from a lack of awareness about the service, Reyes-Oatman noted, and a change in their operations to center around PantrySoft, a software that allows the Pantry's workers to manage their inventory and orders.

Through PantrySoft, each student gets a fixed amount of points each semester to employ while shopping at the Pantry for any of its non-perishable and frozen foods, milk, eggs, fresh fruit, school and household supplies and hygienic products.

However, this ended the Pantry's walk-in policy in 2024, as students could only access the Pantry by registering in the new system and placing a pick-up order.

Vice President of Community Engagement and Belonging Darryl Mace, who became the Pantry's supervisor in October, said that while PantrySoft is a great tool for the workers to track what students need and make data-informed decisions, people still seem to not have gotten used to the new system.

"[The Pantry workers] are so used to doing online ordering. It wasn't that way and now it is that way. I think students just have to get their mind around that," Mace said.

Reyes-Oatman volunteered at the Pantry her entire freshman year and became a manager at the start of her sophomore year. Throughout her time at the Pantry, she said she noticed people like the "personable aspect of the Pantry where you can just come in and meet somebody and say hi."

With PantrySoft's implementation and campus consciousness of the resource center also decreasing, the Pantry's volunteers saw less of that atmosphere.

"[The Rider Resource Pantry] was a high commodity on campus and then over time ... it kind of dwindled," Reyes-Oatman said. "I think that's kind of like the period we're in now, we're trying to build it up to what it once was, or have it be greater than what it once was."

During the first Walk-in Wednesday, Reyes-Oatman said she experienced interactions with students that highlighted the significance of having this outlet on campus.

"Two students in particular stood out to me ... One of them was like 'My meal plan just got canceled and I'm happy that we're able to have this service because now I'm able to have food,' Reyes-Oatman said. "Another student said their food stamps had just got cut and they were like 'This is a great service. I'm grateful to be able to come here and get what I need.'"

The Pantry's inventory is currently entirely donor supported, Mace said, mainly from Gourmet Dining, Rider's main food service provider. The administrator is looking to acquire grants for the resource center to broaden its offerings.

The volunteers at the Pantry, most of which are students within Rider's Bonner Community Leaders



Caroline Haviland/The Rider News

Sanaa Christmas (left) and Shayana Reyes-Oatman work at the Rider Resource Pantry.

Program, have also begun brainstorming future partnerships and advertising plans, Mace said, to get the word out about their services.

"I think first year students may not know so much about the pantry. [The volunteers] have really come up with some plans to advertise the pantry more and just to raise awareness about it," Mace said.

In the same spirit, Reyes-Oatman shared a thought that she felt embodies the purpose behind the Rider Resource Pantry.

She said, "This is a resource for [students]. If they're in need, they're absolutely welcome. The volunteers are super friendly ... and we would love to have [students] come over."

'Getting a glimpse' into business opportunities post-grad

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Returning to his alma mater, Drake has committed his time as the longtime chair of the Norm Brodsky College of Business' Executive Advisory Council, allowing him to serve as a pivotal support system for the university's Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation, a seal that ensures quality education for business and accounting students.

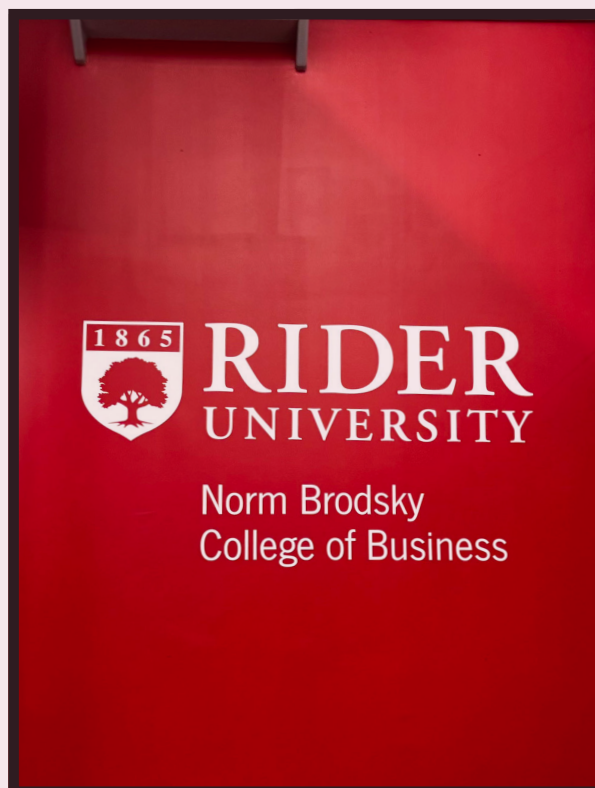
"[Drake] actively came to Admitted Students Day and helped us recruit for the new cohort," Kutcher said. "He came as a judge for the Business in Action finale last year, so he is [helping] us every day."

The final two inductees remain committed to the university on another level, as both currently serve as adjunct professors in the business program. For over three decades, West worked among accounting, finance, operations and strategic leadership fields, gaining a well-rounded approach to the world of business. With that, she brings a wide variety of expertise to the university.

West is a founding member of Rider's Gail Bierenbaum Leadership Council, an adviser for Rider's Human Resources board and an adjunct professor for human resources and organizational development, allowing her to help shape the student experience in diverse areas.

"I simply enjoy helping however I can, staying involved in campus activities, and teaching. The students are so smart and enthusiastic that I feel lucky to be part of their experience," West said.

Finally, Hudicka teaches business at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and serves as a main contributor of experiential learning programs to Rider's business students. As a co-founder of a consulting firm, the CEO of a nonprofit organization



Samantha Clark/The Rider News

Robert J. Decker Jr. '93, Jim Drake '93, Karen West '82, '89 and Joseph Hudicka '93, '00 will be inducted to the Norm Brodsky College of Business Hall of Fame for 2026.

and an author, Hudicka also brings a wide variety of skills to his classroom. As a professor, he assists students by providing "internships and practical opportunities in entrepreneurship and analytics," according to Kutcher.

The night of nights

These honorees are set to be inducted on May 7 at The Marigold in Somerset. Beginning with a cocktail reception, the ceremony will then commence with a legacy video that honors the achievements and impact the inductees have had on students and the university.

In addition to the four alumni, a corporate inductee is always honored, celebrating the relationship the university has with one organization. This year's honoree, Ernst & Young, is an accounting firm that is part of the "Big Four," which is comprised of the four largest professional service networks in the world.

"The partnerships we have with employers is everything to us," Kutcher said, emphasizing the importance of celebrating the relationships between organizations and the business college.

Alumni, friends and family of the inductees, business firms the program holds relationships with and the broader Rider community are invited to celebrate the evening, which also serves as a fundraiser that supports the experiential learning program, allowing all proceeds to be directly returned to the students and the experiences the university offers them.

With the ceremony approaching, the college looks forward to celebrating the achievements of those whose continued engagement and mentorship have strengthened the business school, creating meaningful opportunities for Rider students.

Kutcher said, "All of us need to see where we're going. If we're putting all this effort in coursework and internship, we want to get a glimpse into what life is going to look like on the other side."

Crochet Club hooks interest

By Teagan Rotella

During extremely stressful times for college students, such as midterms and finals, it is important to have a safe place to relax alone or with friends while doing something fun. For many students, Rider's new crochet club has become that kind of space.

As someone who loved to crochet since she was 4 years old, Maggie Peña, a sophomore psychology major, was disheartened to learn during a tour of Rider that there was no crochet club on campus. Fortunately, the tour guide quickly informed Peña that she could create a crochet club if she decided to attend Rider.

Peña's high school had a crochet club, and she loved the welcoming environment and safe space that it gave her. With the help of a few friends, she decided to create one at Rider. The next step was sharing the idea with the Student Government Association.

Despite initial feelings of self-doubt, Peña and her friends successfully pitched the idea and were immediately met with support.

"It seemed like they really wanted us to succeed, which was a good feeling," Peña said. With that, the club quickly moved forward.

On Sept. 11, they held their first meeting and have since met weekly. Peña was surprised by how much freedom they had, such as deciding where they held their meetings on campus and creating a budget for supplies.

Since then, the club has continued to grow and meet throughout the semester. On March 5, the crochet club

held one of its meetings at

Sweigart Hall in Room 110, beginning at 5 p.m.

At each meeting, the executive board arrives at 4:30 p.m. and sets up yarn and supplies on tables for members, according to Peña.

As members settle in, the executive board explains how the meetings work and reviews the club's supply guidelines. Jenna Dambres, a junior accounting major, is the treasurer and supplies manager of Crochet Club. She starts the meetings by telling members they can use any of the supplies and reminds them that projects made with those materials cannot be taken home.

"We don't let people take stuff home, because if they don't come back, then we don't get the materials back, which would dwindle our supply of materials," Peña said.

Beyond managing supplies, Peña emphasized that the club's main goal is creating a welcoming environment where students can learn while socializing.

At each meeting, the executive board provides instructions on how to make patterns for members who want to follow along. Most projects correspond to the month, such as ghosts in October, hearts in February and four-leaf clovers in March.

For many members, these themed projects are what makes the club enjoyable. One of those members is Kaci Franzen, a freshman musical theater major.

Franzen first found out about the Crochet Club at the Spring Involvement Fair, which featured clubs and organizations at Rider.

After learning more about the club, Franzen wanted to join because it gave her the opportunity to continue doing something she's loved since she was 10 years old.

"I just wanted to crochet and didn't have the ability to get the materials on my own," Franzen explained.

She also loved the calm atmosphere of the meetings,

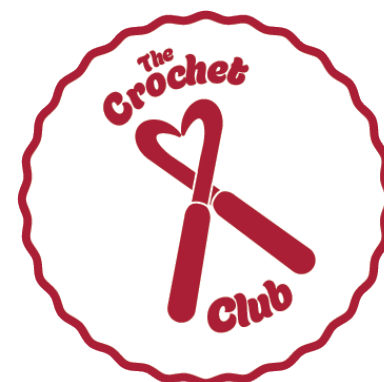


Teagan Rotella/The Rider News

Rider Crochet Club hosted a general meeting on March 5.

enhanced by the background music and community.

"You can just come and sit on your own and crochet or talk to people," Franzen said. "It's a really nice, relaxing period."



Grace Juarez/The Rider News

Cal Sutton is a news editor and the Vice President of Rider Crochet Club. He had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

AEIM's final boss: ArtBeast festival preparation

By Sofia Santiago

As spring prepares to bloom, another campus tradition is gearing up to bring even more life to Rider: ArtBeast, the annual multi-arts festival.

The celebration is produced by the arts events and festivals management class of the arts and entertainment industries management program, and incorporates student clubs and performers from across campus. As one of the applied learning classes for AEIM majors, the class was created as one of the key components of the program and was designed to give students real-world experience. The final project of the class, the ArtBeast event itself, becomes a culmination of everything they have learned throughout the semester and in previous classes.

They will have previously taken courses ranging from business planning, marketing and communications to arts fundraising, venue, production and touring management.

Associate Professor Todd Dellinger explained, "By the time they take this class, they've already learned about all of those nuts and bolts pieces. This is a way for them to apply all those different aspects in producing a live event."

Dellinger is the founder and coordinator of the AEIM program and has taught the class nearly every year since its inception in 2011.

Other than providing access to the funds allocated to the program by the university, he plays a minimal role in the planning and execution of the festival, serving more as an executive producer rather than a director. Dellinger, by taking a step back in class, allows ArtBeast to become an event that is almost entirely student-led.

Anna Dalessio, a senior arts and entertainment industries management major who is currently taking the class said, "This [class] feels more real and concrete and consequential. Since it's a real festival, the stakes are much higher. But I think that makes it more exciting, since we've already learned so much about putting stuff like this together."

Robert McLaren, a junior arts and entertainment industries management major who is also in the class, echoed this sentiment, "This class has been kind of like the final boss of all of our classes."



Photo courtesy of Todd Dellinger

The arts events and festivals management class had a creative brainstorming session to come up with the SpiritBeast theme.

The class begins by coming up with a theme for the current year's festival. Marking its 13th installment, ArtBeast's theme for 2026 is: SpiritBeast "Believe with All Your Art." This was decided through a class brainstorming session, during which ideas and motifs were called out and written on a chalkboard. Their inspiration for the theme this year pulls from the "I Believe in Rider" campaign and from East Asian cultures, such as the Chinese zodiac calendar cycle and the practice of decorating Spirit Trees by hanging colorful ribbons from large trees to honor something.

"[At the] beginning when we had a completely blank slate, and anything was on the table, it was just the 12 of us being like, there is so much we could do with this event. The possibilities are endless," Dalessio said. "What current events, what personal values could we draw a theme from? What's going on in the world right now? What does the school need? That boundless creative potential was my favorite part."

According to the vision statement crafted by the class, "Individuals from every walk of life will celebrate a deeply rooted harmony of culture, letting our spirits run free. In this tumultuous world, we believe in a Rider united under one heart, one community and one artistic soul."

After the initial brainstorming session, students split off into smaller groups to tackle individual tasks, such as designing a logo, coming up with activities and contacting performers.

Previous years have included activities such as photo booths and frame decorating, culinary instruction, Greek Life bingo, tie dye, and of course, the live music and dance performances. This year, the class is also partnering with the Student Entertainment Council and the Pop, Rock and Hip Hop Ensemble, providing various food and entertainment options.

This collaboration across different sections of campus is what makes the class a beneficial experience for AEIM majors, and is also what cements ArtBeast as a special tradition for Rider.

SpiritBeast will take place on May 1 on the Campus Green if weather permits or in the Cavalla room, if needed.

"I think it's important that we have an event where, no matter what major you're studying, science, business, or arts, you have a chance to just be creative and release the artist in all of us," McLaren said.

Westminster's concert highlights history with harmonies

By Mary-Simone Collazo

A goose-bump-inducing presentation reverberated around Gill Memorial Chapel, with all voices being lifted up in power during Westminster Choir College's fourth annual Celebration of Black Music, performed by the Westminster Jubilee Singers on March 4.

Each singer was dressed in black formal attire, their neck and shoulders adorned with a kente stole, a handwoven scarf adorned with the bright colors of African fabrics — passed down to every new yearly cohort of Jubilee singers, first worn by the original members 30 years ago.

This year's theme, "The Courage to Believe," highlighted pieces from various Black composers, proclaiming their strong faith in God and humanity, regardless of what adversity they face.

The program opened with an introduction by Jubilee bass and sophomore organ major Malik M. Jardine, welcoming the audience and giving a brief overview of the concert. Jardine then sat to play a piece on the organ titled "Adoration," composed in 1951 by Florence Price, the first female African-American composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra.

Vinroy D. Brown, adjunct assistant professor of Sacred Music and the conductor of Jubilee singers, as well as a Jubilee alumni, put the entire concert in motion a year ago, picking specific pieces with historical significance. He ensured that all of the singers understood the meaning and context behind each piece, regardless of race.



Morgan Dickens/The Rider News

Vinroy D. Brown is an adjunct assistant professor of Sacred Music and was the conductor of the concert.

"It's important for me as a Black conductor teaching a diverse population of students, but a population that isn't predominantly Black, that they're not getting this music and thinking of it as just 'smart' pieces, but that they're thinking about it critically from historical context and social context," Brown said.

The choral then hopped into the singing portion of the presentation, first singing "Veni Sancte Spiritus," Latin for "Come, Holy Spirit," inspired by a Pentecost prayer and composed by Zanaida Robles of the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 2012. Names, song titles, lyrics and historical context were available in the program for the audience to follow along.

The choir's diction was clear as they swapped between Latin and English. Sophomore music major and soprano Try Quain, and junior music education major and alto Crystal Saar stepped down from the risers and up to the mic for solos.

"As a Black woman, I believe that singing these gospel songs is something that I was born to do ... I've been singing gospel since high school, and ever since then, I fell in love with it, and it's part of my identity ... I really like that it applies to my Christian faith," Quain said.

The second piece was a declaration song titled "I Believe," composed in 2015 by Mark A. Miller, a professor of sacred music at both Drew University in New Jersey, and at Yale University in Connecticut.



Morgan Dickens/The Rider News

Westminster Choir College's Jubilee Singers performed the fourth annual Celebration of Black Music concert.

Inspired by the anonymous message "I believe" carved into a cellar wall of a Jewish hiding spot in Cologne, Germany, during World War II, the song serves as a message of hope through dark times. Alto junior music education major Anna Maher was the soloist for this portion.

The following piece was a song titled "III Credo: I Believe in God," part of Dr. Robert Ray's "Gospel Mass." Ray was the founder of the Saint Louis Symphony's IN UNISON Chorus, and wrote this credo, a musical statement of beliefs, during his time as a liturgy team leader at the National Office of Black Catholics. Sopranos Samantha Murphy, sophomore voice performance major, and Julia N. Gerst, junior voice and opera major, sang the solo verses.

The longest, yet most striking part of the performance was a three-part portion titled "Credo," with a text written by civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois in 1904. The essay was set to music in 2003 by Rollo Dilworth, a professor of choral music at Temple University, as well as Brown's current adviser for his musicology doctorate at Temple.

Brown addressed the audience before the song started, telling them how certain lyrics in this piece contain a relevance to today's political climate.

"I'm going to need everyone to put on their listening ears for this one," Brown said into the microphone.

"Credo" speaks of a strong faith in a God who created people of all colors equally, of pride and happiness in being of African descent and of believing war is wrong and liberty should be for all.

"I believe in the Devil and his angels, who wantonly work to narrow the opportunity of struggling human beings, especially if they be Black; who spit in the face of the fallen, strike them that cannot strike again,

believe the worst and work to prove it, hating the image which their Maker stamped on brother's soul," said the lyrics.

This proclamation in the second part of the song pulled reactions from several audience members, from silent nodding to mouths agape.

The last song was a heartwarming finale, with the choir covering "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written in 1900 by civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson, and his brother, composer J. Rosamond Johnson, and later set to piano in 1978 by conductor Roland Carter. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored



Morgan Dickens/The Rider News

This year's theme, "The Courage to Believe" highlighted various Black artists and composers.

People has since labeled it as the "Negro National Anthem," a fact that Brown informed the audience of.

The special moment came when Brown invited any Jubilee alumni in the audience to come up to the stage and join the chorus for the final hurrah of the evening. Several alumni filed in, returning to their vocal section on the risers, and singing the lyrics in perfect recollection and harmony with the current Jubilee members.

After "Lift Every Voice and Sing" concluded, Jardine sat back down at the organ for the official last performance of the night. He played a version of the hymn "We Shall Overcome Thee," an improvised arrangement by composer Carl Haywood.

The song was originally a gospel hymn, utilized as a protest song by Black tobacco workers in the 1940s, eventually becoming a theme song of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s.

"I just really enjoyed our performance, all of the songs, they're really beautiful. All the soloists, the choir, the congregation, it was just magical," Quain said.

Westminster's "The Courage to Believe" came together as both a harmonic protest demanding justice for those who need it and as a buoyant celebration of the faith and culture.

Brown said, "This happened as the Jubilee Singers are also celebrating their 30th anniversary. So, we did a performance more so reflective of the hopes for the ensemble's futures and about different belief systems, and how we can lean into our shared humanity to continue to create the world that we wish to see."



Morgan Dickens/The Rider News

The Westminster Jubilee Singers wore black formal attire and a kente stole.

Shiny and sincere, Styles' new album pleases

The time has come. Singer-songwriter Harry Styles has released his extremely anticipated fourth studio album, “Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally.” After releasing his chart-topping album “Harry’s House” in 2022, Styles has been relatively quiet for the last few years and fans were chomping at the bit for any sign of new music from the popstar. When Styles announced on Jan. 15 that his next album was to release only two months later, fans were very excited to not have to wait much longer, myself included.

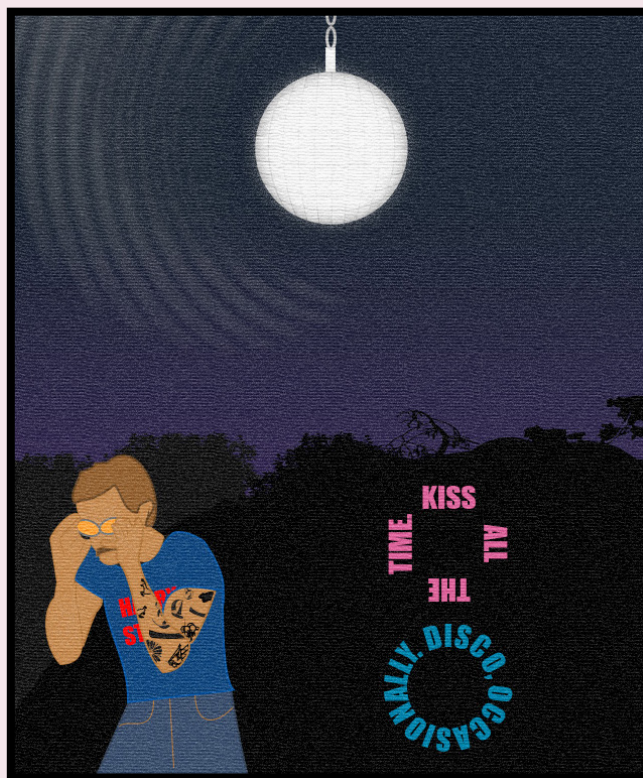
I am not the biggest Styles fan, in fact I know several people who are definitely bigger fans than I. However, I appreciate mainstream pop music just as much as the next young adult. In fact, there was a whole summer that I listened to “Harry’s House” nearly every day on my drive to work. Now, whether that was because it was the only CD I had in my car at the time or that I just really liked the album is still to be determined. Regardless, this album gives off the same vibes — something I can listen to on my drive to work and bop my head along to.

To get into the album, the first track “Aperture,” which was also the first single from the album, sets the tone for the rest of the album. Upbeat lyrics about finding love infused with a steady dancehall-ready beat suck the listener right into the record. I must admit that I also appreciated this song expanding my vocabulary, because I had no idea what the word aperture meant prior to hearing this song and subsequently confirming the definition of the word on dictionary.com.

Moving right along, the album keeps up the energetic vibes with “American Girls,” “Ready, Steady, Go!” and “Are You Listening Yet?” While these tracks do not necessarily have the deepest lyrics, they do their job for the album, giving it a sound perfect to dance to and forget your worries — for about three minutes. As the playful lyrics in “Are You Listening Yet?” state, just “make sure there’s dancing” as you listen to these two tracks.

I think Styles knew what he was doing with the upbeat tone of the album. The world needs some brevity and lightness and Styles provides us with just a few minutes worth of an escape with this album. Just enough time to press “reset” on our stress-o-meter for the day and let ourselves do a little dance to get the energy out. For this, I thank Styles.

To touch on Styles’ vocals, throughout the album, he punctuates and enunciates the lyrics of the songs effortlessly and clearly in a way that is not heard in



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

“Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally” was released on March 6.

too many current records. In parts of the album, I found that the tone of his voice mixed with the subtle reverb was reminiscent of his past solo albums. With his punchy lyrics and signature belty moments, Styles’ relatively unfiltered-sounding voice is up near the top of my list of pop vocalists.

On my list of stand-out songs from this album is “Season 2 Weightloss.” This song stuck with me due to its relatable lyrics reflecting yearning for someone to love you. Styles captured some of my personal feelings of what it is like to go out of your way and change yourself in hopes that someone “will love me now.” Much like Styles, I often recognize that going out of my way to please others is “kind of sad but it’s something I know.” However, again, like most of the songs on this album, if you do not pay attention to these more sordid lyrics, it is just a great song with a good beat.

The 10th song on the album, “Dance No More,” is the song that has the most “disco” vibes to it. For an album that has the word “disco” in the title, the lack of disco music in it is amusing, but one can definitely sense that it was at least inspired to some extent by disco music. I suppose this is true to the current trend of many popstar’s latest albums — sample music from other genres, but ultimately stick to the familiar

pop sound you know will sell. Overall, this song is nothing to write home about, but definitely a song to nod your head along to.

Of course, what would a modern pop album be without at least one slow, genuine, heart-melting song to balance it all out? Styles fulfills this unspoken requirement with “Coming Up Roses.” A slower, more reflective song. It is nice to clearly hear some of the deeper lyrics on this album for a moment from Styles on this record, however, I am glad the song was only four minutes long because I was ready to get back to the catchy beats again.

The final track on the album, “Carla’s Song” is not the most exciting or memorable song on the album, which, to me, seems counterintuitive to how you would want to end an album. What this song does do, however, is point out both sonically and lyrically, that the whole time you were listening to the album, you were hearing snippets of Styles’ personal life, musings and broodings alike, all intertwined with the assortment of unignorable synths and drums. So, while it is not the perfect closure to the album, it does the job.

Overall, the album flows together exceptionally well, mixing genuine lyrics and glam-pop beats to create the perfect playlist ready for a dance party ... or at least a drive to work.

I give the album four out of five stars.

Libby D’Orvilliers
senior psychology major

Gail Demeraski/The Rider News



March Madness is more than just basketball

Every March, something special happens in the world of sports. Class schedules suddenly become more flexible, group chats explode with bracket debates and millions of people who barely watched college basketball all season suddenly become experts. This phenomenon is known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament, but most people famously call it “March Madness.”

March Madness is one of the most exciting events of the year in sports because it delivers something fans rarely see anymore: complete unpredictability.

Unlike professional leagues where the best teams usually dominate year after year, the tournament’s single-elimination format means that anything can happen. One bad shooting night, one clutch three-pointer or one missed free throw can send a powerhouse program home early. That is why fans love chaos. It is why a small school can suddenly become the center of the sports world overnight.

Every year we see a “Cinderella story,” an underdog team that no one expected making a deep run in the tournament. These moments remind fans why college sports are different from professional sports. The players are younger, the emotions are high and the stakes feel much more personal. For many athletes, the tournament is their one chance to play on the national stage before their college careers come to an end.

March Madness is also unique because it brings



Grace Juarez/The Rider News

Basketball fans enjoy watching the high-stakes March Madness games.

together casual watchers and die-hard sports fans alike. Bracket pools have become a tradition in offices, friend groups and college campuses. Even people who do not

normally watch basketball fill out brackets hoping to predict the impossible “perfect” bracket. Spoiler alert: no one ever does.

For college students, the tournament feels even bigger than before. Games are constantly on TVs in student centers, dorm lounges and sports bars. Conversations about classes quickly turn into debates about upsets and “Final Four” predictions.

Beyond the competition, March Madness represents something deeper, which is the excitement of opportunity. Every team starts the tournament with the same chance to survive and advance. It is the ultimate reminder that in sports, and sometimes in life, anything is possible.

That is what makes March Madness magical. The question that still remains, however, is who will be crowned champion and who will have to bear the face of defeat?

Terrell Munford
junior journalism major

'AI 2041' warns readers about the future of AI

Artificial Intelligence went from a student's homework dispenser to a technological behemoth that is threatening our society.

But it is not as if the development came from a vacuum: it has been boiling over for decades since the 1960s. From mimicking human voices, to generating videos, there is no doubt that AI is refining and expanding its capabilities. The rapid advancement of many generative AI platforms, such as Sora, Gemini and ChatGPT in the 2020s prompts public concern over the ethics of its usage.

Many experts have attempted to warn people about the destructive potential of the technology if placed in the wrong hands. Two of these individuals include computer scientist Kai-Fu Lee and science-fiction writer Chen Qiufan in their 2021 book, "AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future." As tech industry experts, they are not against AI, but they can imagine scenarios in which it could be taken too far.

"AI 2041" contains a collection of 10 distinct short stories that cover different facets of artificial intelligence, such as deepfakes and deep machine learning. They all envision futures run by AI and automation, in which the characters experience the consequences. Lee and Qiufan then take turns analyzing the stories by providing scientific insight that helps readers understand how AI functions.

I find it so interesting how many of Lee and Qiufan's visions are already coming to fruition in today's society, even if it has only been around four and a half years since the book was published. AI is more prevalent than ever for the human race, and it is important to identify its impact.

Now, in 2026, I want to do a brief retrospective on their accuracy based on the AI advancements since its publication.

Lee prefaces the novel by objectively analyzing the rise of AI from the 2010s to early 2020s. Qiufan, on the other hand, talks about the importance of science fiction stories in this digital age of media. I agree with Lee's conclusion of not letting emotions take over people's evaluation of AI, and Qiufan's of using fiction to conceptualize the future.

The first major point of the book that "AI 2041" emphasizes is optimization. The authors foresee AI

taking over many industries, such as entertainment, finance and agriculture.

Of course, being a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic, one story of this book focuses on AI use in the medical field. In "Contactless Love," the protagonist, Chen Nan, is mysophobic. She relies on the "Disinfectionbot," which is one of the robots created in the wake of the virus, to ensure her safety.

In this story, the medical world has been revolutionized by AI bots that can cure mutations of the coronavirus instantly. However Chen Nan's phobia prevents her from meeting her boyfriend, Garcia, in person. She learns by the end that her relationship with him will never flourish without genuine human connection.

I find this story the most interesting to read retrospectively since it is one that has "already happened," if you will. Most people generally consider the crisis to be over, but it is interesting to analyze how Qiufan and Lee imagined a post-COVID world down the line.

People still need to travel outside for medicine and vaccines, but they believe that robots could simulate human interaction. It is a chilling cautionary tale for us not to lose the things that make us human.

On that note, the most terrifying story to me was "My Haunting Idol." It follows Aiko, a young girl who resurrects her dead idol, Hiroshi, to life as a technological "ghost." Businesses then profit off Hiroshi's virtual reality alter-ego, despite being dead. This demonstrates how far people are willing to push things when they find the means to.

Recently, I have seen a concerning rise of VR and "VTuber" concerts featuring virtual avatars singing onstage instead of a traditional in-person singer with a microphone. It creates the same feeling of collective effervescence as a physical singer might trigger. However, it sparks debate over what constitutes a "genuine connection."

Character AI, which is an application that allows the users to look up their favorite celebrities and fictional characters and text them as if they were real, tailors itself to each user based on their cookies and recommends bots based on their chat history. It was released just one year after this book's publication.



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

"AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future" was published in 2021.

My favorite aspect of this book was the variety of cultural contexts that the authors interwove into their narratives. It helped me learn some history that I otherwise would not have picked up on. For example, "The Golden Elephant" story reveals India's deep-rooted caste system through the allegory of a fictional AI insurance company, Ganesh, which hinders the relationship between two young students, Sahej and Nayana.

Both authors did a stellar job coming up with abstract future scenarios where AI can be integrated that seems impossible for audiences reading this in 2026. As someone who is not well-versed in the science behind artificial intelligence and things like machine learning, this book was also an informative read.

With the absurdities have surfaced because of AI, this book convinced me that this kind of technology will be more ubiquitous than I initially thought. Perhaps in only 15 years.

I give the book four out of five stars.

Stacie Hueter
freshman journalism major

COMIC:

Harvey and Schnozola

By N. D. Medal



Broncs begin MAAC competition strong, hold on late to beat LIU

By Benjamin Shinault

The Broncs picked up right where they left off in last season's Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference baseball action when they finished with a record of 22-6. In a three-game series beginning on March 6 against Sacred Heart University, the Broncs were able to secure the series win after taking two of three.

Rider then hopped on the road to New York to take on Long Island University in which they escaped narrowly, 7-6 on March 10.

Starting out MAAC right

With rain in the forecast, both teams agreed to play at Heritage Financial Park in Wappingers Falls, New York.

Starting the first game for the Broncs was senior pitcher Christian Aiello. In his six innings of work, Aiello recorded a career-high in strikeouts with 11.

Aiello also allowed just two hits and walked one Pioneer. With his performance, Aiello was named MAAC Pitcher of the Week on March 10.

"My fastball was working up in the zone," Aiello said. "Attacking early was working for me and it wound up being a good outing for me."

While Aiello was dealing on the mound, the Broncs offense was sluggish to start as they were scoreless for the first four innings.

Finally in the fifth, the Broncs broke free and put up five runs on the board.

Starting the scoring for the Broncs was senior outfielder Anthony Paskell with an RBI single. Following that, junior outfielder Kyle Neri also cashed in another run off a single. Up 2-0, the Broncs added three more runs off a triple and a sacrifice fly to leave the fifth inning up 5-0.

Aiello exited the game after the sixth inning and junior Jake Dorety came in to finish it out. Over his final three innings, Dorety struck out four and gave up just three hits.

The Pioneers were able to get a run across to make it 5-1, but the Broncs pitching was strong and gave

them the win in game one of the series.

"[Aiello] gave us more than we probably anticipated, just an excellent outing," Acting Head Coach Barry Davis said. "Of course Jake Dorety did a great job coming in ... he picked up the save and did a good job."

Game two was more of the same for Rider; solid pitching and great offense. Sophomore Kyle Batt got the start for the Broncs and fell into some trouble giving up three earned runs to put the Broncs in a 3-0 hole entering the sixth inning.

In the sixth inning, though, the Broncs were able to get on the board after a Neri RBI. Just down 3-1 entering the seventh, the Broncs struck hard, racking up five runs to go up 6-3.

After Batt exited after the third inning, senior PJ Craig entered and continued the strong trend of pitching as he went the final six innings striking out seven and allowing just two hits.

Up 6-3 in the eighth, Rider was searching for some insurance and got that and more with a three-run homerun from Paskell to put Rider up 9-3.

With the lead now at six runs, the Pioneers faltered and lost the series, while the Broncs emerged victorious, 9-3.

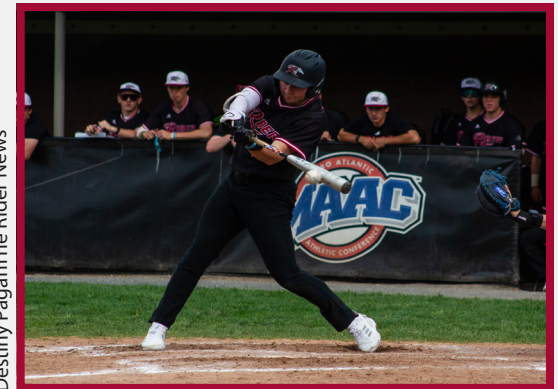
"Well, anytime you win a series, no matter who you're playing, it's always positive in terms of wins and losses," Davis said. "I thought we handled ourselves pretty well."

A series sweep was not in the cards for the Broncs, though. Taking to the mound in game three for the Broncs was senior Clayton Poliey.

Over his five innings of action, Poliey surrendered five earned runs, coming off one mistake that ended up over the wall for the Pioneers that scored them three runs in the first inning. After that, Poliey settled in.

Freshman pitcher Connor Flynn came in after Poliey and pitched well, giving up two hits in his two innings of action. After Flynn, junior Alex D'Ambrosio struck out two in just one inning.

Rider's offense in the series finale was held silent



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Senior outfielder **Erich Hartmann** scored two with an RBI to tie the matchup against Sacred Heart on March 8 at 3-3.

until the third inning when junior catcher Nick Shuhet ran off a single to make it 3-1.

In the next inning, senior outfielder Erich Hartmann tied it up at 3-3 with an RBI double that scored two.

The game was knotted up at 3-3 until the sixth inning when Sacred Heart pushed two runs across off a single to left field.

Now down 5-3 entering the ninth inning, sophomore infielder Peter Crespo launched a home run to close the gap to one, but it was not enough as the Broncs fell 5-4.

"We'd like to have certainly won them all, but nobody does that, but we played well and competed," Davis said.

Survived the Sharks' bite

On March 10, the Broncs took a trip to New York to face the Long Island University Sharks.

Rider immediately pounced and got out to a 7-0 lead by the end of the second inning. Crespo and Neri both brought in two runs each in the second inning.

Up 7-0 entering the fourth inning, the Sharks attacked and came within just one run in the ninth inning, but D'Ambrosio closed the door and secured the win, 7-6. Rider is back on the prowl on March 11 against Hofstra University at 3 p.m.

Broncs win one of three in first conference series at Iona University

By Joshua Yuhus

Rider softball traveled to New York for their first Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference series against Iona University, falling 5-4 in the opener, winning 5-1 in the first of a double-header and dropping the rubber match, 8-5.

Late heartbreak

In the opening game of the series on March 7, the Gaels took an early lead with a solo home run in the bottom of the first.

The Broncs got a pair of two-out walks in the top of the second, but did not score. The following inning, junior catcher Abby Cruz launched a three-run home run for a 3-1 lead.

Moving to the bottom of the fourth inning, Iona responded with a single to start the inning, then lifted one over the wall to tie the game at 3-3.

An inning later in the fifth, back-to-back doubles from the Gaels gave Iona a 4-3 lead that they carried into the seventh inning.

In the top half, junior infielder Kiersten Buchanan reached first on an error and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt from sophomore middle infielder Aspen Wheeler.

A groundout moved Buchanan to third, where senior outfielder Maddie Luedtke crushed a double to bring the game back to a tie.

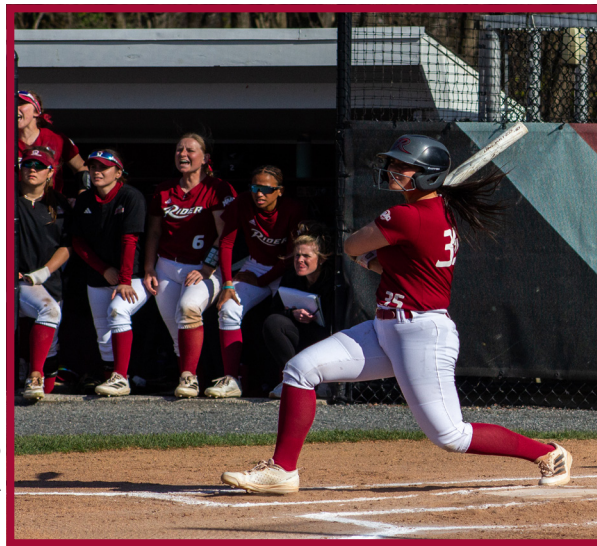
With a one-out walk for the Gaels, a walk-off double with two outs gave Iona the victory, 5-4.

Two-way dominance

The Broncs took early control in the first game of on March 8 with a dominant showing on the mound from sophomore pitcher Gabi Rodriguez.

Following a fielder's choice from senior pitcher and outfielder Fallyn Stoeckel and a Luedtke walk, Cruz roped a double to center, which scored Stoeckel and advanced Luedtke to third base.

Junior catcher and first baseman Kendall



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Junior catcher and first baseman **Kendall Reda-Fehsal** hit the Broncs' first RBI of the day with her teammates cheering her on from the dugout.

Reda-Fehsal reached on a fielder's choice of her own that allowed Luedtke to score for Reda-Fehsal's first RBI of the day.

After a crushing loss in game one of the series, Reda-Fehsal expressed the mindset of the Broncs in the second game.

"We knew we had to bounce back hard after taking such a close loss in game one. We came together and rallied our energy to stay up through the cold," Reda-Fehsal said.

After Rider's two-run first inning, the pitchers took control, as neither side would score until the sixth inning and Rodriguez did not allow a hit until a one-out double in the fourth.

In the sixth inning, the Broncs' offense heated up with a double from Luedtke and a triple from Reda-Fehsal, producing two early runs for a 4-0 lead.

Rodriguez closed out the three-run inning with an RBI single, scoring sophomore first baseman Emma Morgan and extending the lead for the Broncs.

A home run in the bottom half got one back for the Gaels, but was the only run scored by Iona in the contest, ending the matchup with the Broncs winning, 5-1.

On the mound, Rodriguez threw a complete game in the win, allowing just four hits on the day. At the plate, Rodriguez drove in one with her single for a top-level performance in game one of the doubleheader.

Early hole too deep

In the second game on March 8, the Broncs walked twice, but could not bring either runner around to score.

The bottom half was not kind to the Broncs, as the Gaels' first seven batters reached the bases through a mix of hits and walks.

Three singles and a walk scored one and left the bases loaded where a triple to right center cleared the bases for an early 4-0 deficit for the Broncs.

While allowing a walk and a single that pushed the gap to five to start her relief appearance, freshman pitcher Lily Ornelas escaped the jam.

In the third inning, a Wheeler single set up for a Luedtke two-run home run to make it a three-run game, but Iona responded with two runs just an inning later. Luedtke struck again in the top of the fifth with another two-run home run.

The Broncs and Gaels each scored a run in the following half innings, the Gaels leaving with a three-run advantage, 8-5, over the Broncs in the rubber match.

"I believe we are right there," Reda-Fehsal said. "We know what we need to improve on and we are working so hard each week to refine the little things that need improving."

Rider heads home for the first time in the 2026 season with a two-game set against Manhattan University, with a double-header on March 15.

LACROSSE SKID EXTENDS TO SEVEN GAMES

After hosting both Monmouth and Lehigh University, Rider lacrosse saw its losing streak extend to seven games.

READ SAMANTHA CLARK'S STORY ON [THERIDERNEWS.COM](https://www.ridernews.com)



Sports



Photo courtesy of Jack Verdeur

The 2025-26 Rider wrestling roster poses for a picture with the MAC trophy.

History in Buffalo: Rider wins first MAC title

By Benjamin Shinault

Just when you thought Rider wrestling could not get any better, it did just that. On March 6 and 7, the Broncos steamrolled through their Mid-American Conference opponents in Buffalo, New York to win its first ever MAC Championship in program history.

En route to the historic win, four wrestlers qualified for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Championships taking place in Cleveland, Ohio.

Head Coach John Hangey also took home MAC Coach of the Year honors.

Junior Brock Zurawski, who was in the NCAA Championships last year, was able to secure an at-large bid, marking his second trip to the championship in his three years at Rider.

During the regular season, Rider enjoyed an undefeated 6-0 conference record, and a MAC title was the finishing touch.

"I'm just extremely grateful for the program, for the kids in the program, the coaches in the program and the support staff," Hangey said.

Dictatorial day one

Graduate student Will Betancourt got the party started for the Broncos on day one. With his match knotted up at 2-2 entering the final period, Betancourt pulled off a clutch takedown on his opponent to get out in front. From there, Betancourt held onto the lead and snagged a win by decision.

The next Bronc to qualify was feared graduate student Tyler Klinsky. Coming into the match, Klinsky carried a 18-0 conference record.

Klinsky did not walk away from the MAC Championship as just a champion, but as an undefeated one.

Top-seeded Klinsky started out hot with a first-period fall. In the quarterfinal round, he finished on top with a 2-0 lead heading into the third period. He was able to secure a takedown which carried him to a win.

Moving into the semifinals, he did not give his opponent any time to breathe as he coasted to a win after a technical fall in the second period.

After spending six years on the Rider wrestling team, Klinsky is having his best season yet. Hangey, who has coached him for over a half a decade now, is not surprised to see Klinsky finish on top.

"He is a homegrown product," Hangey said. "There are no flaws in that kid's character, he's loyal, he's devoted."

With his imperious performance, Klinsky also took home the Tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler Award.

Following Klinsky's impressive run, graduate student Elijah Griffin followed it up with an impressive run himself.

In his first match, top-seeded Griffin got started immediately with a first period fall that sent him to the quarterfinal. In that, he finished with a 16-4 major decision to send him to the semifinals steaming hot with confidence and momentum.

In the quarterfinal, he had an even more controlling performance as he scooped up a technical fall victory after winning 19-4 to advance to the championship round.

The final Rider wrestler to become an NCAA qualifier was sophomore Dylan Layton, who began wrestling in the quarterfinal round after a first-round bye.

In the low-scoring affair, Layton entered the third period down 1-0. Early in the period, he got a takedown to go up 3-1.

He held firm for the remainder of the third period to win in the quarterfinal round, 3-2.

In the semifinals, Layton had quite the opponent, as he faced the second-ranked wrestler in the nation.

Both wrestlers could not get a leg up on each other as the match went into overtime. With both wrestlers drenched in sweat, a 30-second rideout commenced. Layton's opponent was able to escape in nine seconds.

Layton in his turn, could not escape quick enough and lost. On day two of the tournament, however, Layton emerged victorious and secured his first NCAA berth.

At the conclusion of day one, the Broncos finished in first place as a team with 85.5 points scored.

Same dominance, different day

After a strong day one of the tournament, the Broncos returned to their hotel and got some much needed rest for day two.

The second day kicked off with consolation matches in which Zurawski appeared, as well as Layton.

Layton won his match by decision while Zurawski also dominated and scooped up a 17-2 technical fall victory.

The day one winners, Klinsky, Betancourt, and Griffin, as well as Layton, participated in placement matches.

Klinsky began with a major decision victory to secure him a spot in the NCAA tournament. Betancourt followed Klinsky in a much tighter battle.

In his match, Betancourt and his opponent could not quite get anything going, but his opponent had the slight edge and scooped up a narrow 2-1 win.

Despite the loss, Betancourt still was able to secure a spot in the NCAA tournament based on his strong showings in days one and two.

Betancourt, a transfer from both Ohio and Pennsylvania State Universities, came to Rider as a last chance and cashed in, earning his first NCAA qualification.

Betancourt wants it to be known that the wrestling coaching staff has a place at his wedding.

"I have dreamed of this moment since I was 5-years-old," Betancourt said. "I'm just super happy I came to Rider and I'm with Coach Hangey, Coach [Nic] Bedelyon, Coach Doug [Umbehauer]. They have changed my life forever and I don't know where I would be without them."

Griffin took to the mat next for the Broncos, but did fall in his placement match in another tight one as he fell after a takedown in overtime.

In the second place match, Griffin redeemed himself and crushed his opponent in a 15-2 major decision, securing his second ticket to the NCAA Championships in his career.

Layton, the fourth NCAA qualifier for Rider, had an easy time with his opponent as he scooped up a 12-2 major decision as well. Layton, in his second collegiate season, is on his way to the NCAA Championships.

By the end of day two, the Broncos and their four qualifiers finished with 102 points to secure the MAC Championship, narrowly defeating last year's champion, Lock Haven University.

Now crowned champions for the first time, the team bussed back to the hotel and threw an impromptu party in the hotel conference room.

Pizza was ordered, and drinks were served to pair with the speeches given.

"We had a mini banquet so to speak," Hangey said. "Everybody was celebrating, I gave a speech and I thanked everybody and it was just really good to celebrate."

'This team rivals that'

Rider wrestling is not a stranger to creating All-American talent and accumulating winning seasons.

Back in 1997, Rider wrestling was ranked the seventh-best team in the country for the final five weeks of the season and finished 25th at the NCAA Championships.

In 2016, just 10 years ago, the team finished 21st in the country at the NCAA Championships and had two All-Americans on the roster.

But for Hangey, who was there for both the 1997 and 2016 seasons, believes that this 2025-26 team rivals those historic teams.

"This team rivals that caliber of team because we don't really have a weak weight," Hangey said.

Rider and its four qualifiers, plus Zurawski, will now rest, practice and prepare for the NCAA Championships on March 19 through 21 in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Broncos are rolling and are ready for another taste of history.