

Rider Model United Nations team wins top award

By Caroline Haviland

The five days spent in New York City for the National Model United Nations Conference proved to be fruitful for Rider's Model United Nations team, as they walked away with the Outstanding Delegation Award, the highest award of the conference, for the 17th time.

Prior to attending the simulation, the team members were paired off into committees, ranging from larger general assemblies of over 200 delegates to smaller ones with 100 or less delegates, with each committee pertaining to topics like economic development, environmental protection, international security and human rights.

To share their success with the Rider community, a debrief teach-in was held on April 14 in Sweigart Hall, giving each delegate the chance to share their experiences of the long days spent negotiating while representing the country of Bolivia.

Sophomore political science major John Stollsteimer said, "It's a really good experience to work with people who you kind of don't see eye-to-eye with on everything, and to find a common compromise because the [United Nations] is all about inclusivity and everyone's voice."

Stollsteimer and senior environmental science major Nicole Filipowicz added onto MUN's accolades with an award for their position paper regarding their work in the environmental agency committee.

Additionally, two peer delegate awards were given

to senior political science major Lady Baldeon alongside senior political science major Eloise Jones, as well as sophomore English major Sofia Santiago and senior political science major Ben Collins.

However, junior political science major Nick Smith, one of the team leaders, said he felt the team deserved more recognition for their hard work, specifically regarding their numerous position papers, calling them "some of the best papers" he has ever read.

Another struggle the MUN team vocalized at the teach-in was the usage of artificial intelligence by other schools at the conference.

Head delegate and senior political science major Adrian Kebuz said "When I did the math, about 60% of the papers that won position paper awards had AI disclaimers, noting that the papers that had won these awards had generative AI to help develop the research or writing."

Junior psychology major and one of the team leaders Adrienne Bishop said Rider's MUN stayed true to their zero tolerance of artificial intelligence. However, Bishop ensured that the delegates were "well over prepared" in their research and necessary skill sets before attending the conference.

As the teach-in went on, various team members attributed their personal growth to MUN and encouraged those interested, regardless of their major, to join the team.



Photo courtesy of Adrian Kebuz

Rider's Model United Nations team won the Outstanding Delegation Award for the 17th time.

"There is some level of exponential growth between years. I think who I am now is a completely different person than who I was last year," Smith said. "This has helped me come into myself and kind of helped me grow as a person. I think that's kind of what [MUN] does for everyone."

Features Editor Sofia Santiago is a member of Rider's Model United Nations Team and attended the conference. She had no part in the writing or editing of this story.

Lizbeth Ortiz: Reviving Rider's spirit as SGA President

By Brannagh Rattigan

The election results for Rider's Student Government Association's presidential race are in, and Lizbeth Ortiz was elected as the student body president for the 2026-27 academic year.

After hearing the results of the race, Ortiz, a junior human resources management major, explained she was overcome with joy and was extremely grateful to all of those who supported her.

"It felt great [to hear the election results]," Ortiz said. "I'm so grateful for the people that voted for me. It wasn't my friends or anything, it was people that I genuinely had conversations with."

Ortiz defeated her opponent and friend, Jaiden David, a junior political science major, in the election.

Despite the competition, Ortiz endorsed and appreciated David's hard work and capabilities.

"It takes a lot of guts to present yourself to the student body, so he should keep pushing, he has great things in store for him," Ortiz said.

Moira Geiger, a senior computer science major and outgoing SGA president, was equally as excited to hear the election results, not only for the winners, but also for the student participation.

"I was very excited to hear about the election results. It doubled last year's voter count and was our highest turnout in three years, so I was just so proud with how well the candidates did at spreading the word and getting people's attention," she said.

Geiger is finishing her term as SGA president with sadness, but without concern, as she is confident in the



Brannagh Rattigan and Yaniel Santos/The Rider News

Lizbeth Ortiz was elected as SGA student body president.

transition between her and Ortiz, as well as Ortiz's potential as president.

"I can't believe how fast it has truly gone. It is definitely a little bittersweet and I will miss the board, but I am excited to see how next year's board's vision comes together," Geiger said. "I do feel confident handing over the presidency — Liz and I have plans for a transition meeting, and everyone on our executive board does a great job creating documents outlining suggested timelines."

Ortiz explained that, as SGA president, she wants to implement her value for community into Rider's atmosphere and to give students and staff more opportunity to build connections.

Ortiz intends to carry this out by, "rebuilding Rider's spirit, building more community on campus, getting more people to engage within student government and getting facilities to start working on campus projects," she said.

While Ortiz has big ideas, she emphasized wanting to do things the right way to ensure that the Rider community she fosters is built on trust and confidence in SGA and the student body.

Cate Bergevin, a junior accounting major and voter in the SGA election, expressed an idea similar to Ortiz — no matter who won the presidency, Rider would be in good hands.

"I thought both candidates were qualified and had a lot of passion, not only for SGA, but for Rider in general. I knew of both of them before they decided to run, so it was great to see people who are already involved around campus taking initiative within SGA," Bergevin said.

Geiger completes her term with pride and hope for the future of Rider, a conviction that is reassuring for the student body.

"I am so proud of everyone who put themselves out there to campaign, vote and stand up for students. I am excited to see next year's board come together, and I hope they are as lucky as I was with mine," Geiger said.

Ortiz enters her new chapter at Rider with a statement of gratitude, saying, "Thank you for engaging and voting, thank you for using your voice."

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Putting a spotlight on indie artists



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TRANSFER PORTAL RESHAPES RIDER BASKETBALL

Seven Broncs entered the transfer portal.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY MADISON LEWIS

Information provided by Public Safety Director Matthew Babcock

Wary of weed in the wings

Undetected drugs. On April 7, at 9:01 a.m., Public Safety was performing a park, walk and talk of Poyda Hall when they detected the odor of marijuana. While walking through the building, they detected the odor of marijuana coming from the area of the A and B wings on the fourth floor of Poyda. The source of the odor was narrowed down to the A wing of the building, but the source could not be exactly located.

Fluffy door stop

Propped pillow. On April 8, at 10:18 a.m., Public Safety was performing a park, walk and talk of Ziegler Hall when they found an exterior door propped open with a pillow. The pillow was removed and the door secured. The residents in the area of the propped door were charged. The matter was referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Lamenting over laundry

Detergent and disputes. On April 7, at 4:12 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to the Poyda Hall laundry room for the report of a verbal dispute. Upon arrival, Public Safety found two students arguing over dryer use. Public Safety was able to defuse the situation.

Sarah F. Griffin/The Rider News

Rider partners with ONNJ, sponsors morning show

By Grace Bertrand

Rider entered into a new media partnership with On New Jersey, the state's only 24/7 TV network for news, sports and entertainment, allowing the university to consistently highlight the campus community.

The partnership comes after ONNJ collaborated with Rider, covering the gubernatorial debate in October when it was hosted by the university.

Tatiana Sciancalepore, executive director of marketing and communication at ONNJ, told The Rider News, "Our relationship with ONNJ has been building for a while, starting with the gubernatorial debate, where we really saw how aligned we were in terms of civic engagement and the kinds of stories we want to tell. From there, it felt like a natural next step to deepen the partnership."

With the statewide partnership comes the announcement of Rider as a presenting sponsor for the network's flagship morning program, ONNJ Mornings with Ken Rosata.

The partnership will introduce on-air segments on the network that spotlight Rider's academic programs and campus life traditions. ONNJ covered Rider's annual Eggscellent Egg Hunt, organized by 107.7 The Bronc, on March 31 to kickstart the partnership.

Rosata, host of the morning program, said in an April 2 Rider press release, "As someone who's spent decades connecting with viewers across this region, I know how powerful local storytelling can be."

The network will also feature recurring segments of conversations with Rider faculty, staff, students, administration and alumni.

Rosata continued, saying that the partnership allowed ONNJ to introduce new voices, ideas and stories to their audience, "shaping the future right here in New Jersey."

Lisa Marie Falbo, co-founder of ONNJ, shared a similar sentiment, adding that, "This partnership allows us to bring real voices, real perspectives and real impact to our audience every single morning."

Falbo shared that she was pleasantly surprised to see Rider "show up" as not just a sponsor, but also a partner with the TV network, actively helping to shape the stories about Rider.

Sciancalepore explained that the hope is for the on-air segments to allow Rider to showcase its students, programs and faculty to a much broader audience. The goal of facilitating a partnership with the network, in addition to a sponsorship of the morning show, she said, was to "help reinforce Rider's visibility and



Grace Juarez/The Rider News

Rider became a sponsor for morning show as part of its statewide partnership with ONNJ.

keep us top of mind."

"This sponsorship represents an exciting opportunity to expand Rider's presence and connect with audiences across New Jersey in a way that feels authentic," Sciancalepore added. "Looking ahead, this gives us a platform to be more active in statewide conversations and continue building meaningful connections beyond campus."

Rider's Villalobos-Buehner earns second appointment as Department of State's English Specialist

By Samantha Clark

Professor María Villalobos-Buehner was selected for a second appointment by the Department of State as an English Specialist, serving as one of three representatives abroad.

The program allows representatives to develop one project per year in a foreign country, aiming to assist the U.S. Embassy in maintaining quality English language programs.

"There is a list that the Department of State creates with all of the applications, and if they select you, they send that list to the different embassies around the world," Villalobos-Buehner said. "Once you're on that list, you stay on it."

Bridging language for global collaboration

In her second appointment, Villalobos-Buehner utilized her background in artificial intelligence in language to Peru, creating a content-based experience to better develop linguistic skills in South America.

Villalobos-Buehner served as the secretary of technological innovation while in Peru, where she aimed to assign projects that apply such topics to the real world, asking students to create ways technology could improve areas in health, education and transportation departments.

"That experience was almost like I was creating my own canvas, if I were to use art as a metaphor to that process," Villalobos-Buehner said. "And that really

excited me in big ways."

These real-world scenarios set students up for success after developing their basic linguistic skills, Villalobos-Buehner said, since English serves as the main language in collaboration with other countries which helps expansions and developments overseas.

"We cannot work in isolation, so when it comes to topics such as technology, ... if you want to be part of that conversation, English becomes extremely important for that development," she said.

Local impact

Villalobos-Buehner's work in Peru also coincides with her work in Lawrenceville.

At Rider, she is a professor that teaches across 14 different Spanish courses, ranging from introductory levels to graduate student programs and certificates.

In the classroom, she designs similar content-based experiences and real-world language simulations, offering direct synergy between her teachings in the United States and Peru.

Additionally, she serves as the coordinator for Rider's TESOL Program, or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, which allows graduate students to put their education into action and instruct the language to adult learners.

Kathleen Pierce, the director of Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certification and an affiliate with the TESOL Program said, "[Villalobos-Buehner] understands how vital global connections are to our world's very



Grace Bertrand/The Rider News

María Villalobos-Buehner spoke about her experience serving as the Department of State's English Specialist.

survival. ... Her passion for and understanding of the world's need to positively connect to each other informs all her teaching and service here at Rider."

Villalobos-Buehner work in the program is what first put her on the map, as the list from the Embassy is "considered a list of experts in the field of TESOL."

She enjoys challenges, as she sees new and seemingly uncomfortable situations as an opportunity to learn. With that, her experiences abroad from her time as an English Specialist have also become experiences to grow as she grapples with the responsibility of representing the U.S. abroad.

"It's really an honor," she said. "I feel that life has presented me with something bigger than myself."



Morgan Dickens/The Rider News

Students enjoyed the warm spring weather and free fun festivities, like the inflatable bouncy house, at the Stomp Out Stigma Wellness Event.

Students 'stomp out' stigma and spread awareness

By Morgan Dickens

Mental health advocacy and fun-filled activities were shared on Rider's Campus Mall on April 14, offering resources in the campus community that are available to students in need.

In partnership with the Multicultural Studies Program, the Counseling Center presented its Stomp Out Stigma Wellness Fest. This event highlighted 42 different on-and-off-campus organizations, helping to break the stigma of mental health and showing students how to build skills to support one's wellbeing.

Students enjoyed various activities, including a raffle and an obstacle course for a chance to win prizes. The Rita's Italian Ice truck maintained its popularity, as students lined up to get some assistance in cooling off during the hot day. The gentle spring atmosphere was filled with feel-good music, such as "Blame it on the Boogie" by The Jacksons, provided by 107.7 the Bronc.

Tables lined the perimeter of the Campus Mall, all representing different organizations. Senior psychology major Sharon Yu hosted one of the many Counseling Center tables at the event. There, students were met with a kind smile and a raffle card for a chance to win some prizes. Students were encouraged to visit different

tables to complete a quick task to get a sticker for the raffle ticket, and once their card was full, students could go to the prize table to collect their winnings.

Yu shared that, not only was the event meant to spread awareness about mental health, but also to provide a place for people to converse freely and not have to be shy to learn more about mental health. Staff psychologist Jill Siletski at the Counseling Center shared the same sentiment, also sharing how the event coincided with Unity Day.

Siletski said, "Unity Day is an annual day that is meant to bring the community together. ... We really wanted to highlight not only the stigma around mental health, we also wanted to show that our community is strong and vibrant."

Stomp out Stigma Wellness Fest brought attention to well-being beyond physical health. Siletski shared her desire to have the fest be a part of Unity Day, saying "so we could show we are unified, we are a community and we really believe in what's happening here."

While the majority of tabling was done by Rider organizations, such as the Student Health Center, Black Men United and the Rider Spanish club, one section was dedicated to outside organizations that also work

with Rider and its students.

Penn Medicine, Circle of Strength, a service for ones with disabilities, and Younity, formerly known as Womanspace, a domestic & sexual violence support group, came out to show their support for Rider and help spread mental health awareness

Grace Flagler, a prevention and community educator at Younity, said she was happy to come out to Rider. She shared how she enjoys interacting with the students, and in light of sexual assault awareness month, she wanted to decrease the stigma on survivors. She shared how some survivors do not share their story for fear of judgment and wanted to show them that this organization is here for them, spreading the message, "We see you, we love you, we are here to support you!"

Messages of support, good music and fun activities during the sunny spring afternoon were what attracted students like senior arts and entertainment industries management major Mekhia Gwynn.

Gwynn participated in the obstacle course and shared that she enjoys coming out to events like these that help bring the community together.

"I didn't even know this was happening! But I love fun campus events," Gwynn said.

Upcoming Events

<p>AAPI Cultural Celebration & Night Market 6:00 p.m. Daly's Mercer Room</p>	<p>APRIL 16</p>	<p>107.7 The Bronc's Build the Ultimate Bronwich Finale 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. BLC Lower Patio</p>
<p>Spring Opera: Speed Dating Tonight! April 17th and 18th at 7:30 p.m. BLC Theater</p>	<p>APRIL 17-18</p>	<p>ArtBeast 3:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. BLC Terrace, Patio and Campus Green</p>
<p>Puppies, Games & Treats 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Campus Mall</p>	<p>APRIL 23</p>	<p>Spring Musical: 9 to 5 7:30 p.m. : May 1, 2 2:00 p.m. : May 2, 3 The Yvonne Theater</p>
	<p>MAY 1</p>	
	<p>MAY 1-3</p>	

Grace Juarez/The Rider News

Senior Spotlight: Rashel Robles-Arevalo

By Sofia Santiago

Rashel Robles-Arevalo's life at Rider has been full of firsts: from freshman year and being a first-generation college student, to winning a first place award for her writing during junior year and finally starting her first day of student teaching on Jan. 27, a mark of her senior year.

Robles-Arevalo, a senior English literature and elementary education double major, with a certification in English as a second language and bilingual education, discovered her passion for teaching through a class named "Tomorrow's Teachers" offered at her high school.

As part of the course, students were assigned classrooms around the district to observe the basics of how a lesson is taught. Robles-Arevalo was placed in a fifth grade classroom and sat in to observe once a week during this time.

"I really liked the age group, because the kids were independent, but you still needed to guide them a little more, which I really enjoyed. It was really rewarding," she said.



Photo courtesy of Rashel Robles-Arevalo

Senior English literature and elementary education double major **Rashel Robles-Arevalo** (right) received merit scholarships her sophomore and junior year and posed with the donor, **Elizabeth Clayton**.

When it came time to choose a major, her experience in the class moved her to choose education. Robles-Arevalo had heard about Rider from that same class, as students enrolled in the elective had the option of earning college credits from Rider. Although she did not take the class for college credits, the course put Rider on her radar when applying to schools.

"I've always loved reading, and I've enjoyed writing too, but I mostly liked reading about literally anything, that's why I chose to be an English [literature] major as well," Robles-Arevalo explained, "With education, you can be literally any major you want. That's the cool thing about it. I got to choose two majors I enjoyed."

Even though she has always commuted, her involvement on campus has not been impacted.

Robles-Arevalo currently serves as the event coordinator of Rider's chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, the International Honor Society for Education, as the treasurer for the Student Education Association and is a member of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. She was also previously a part of Rider's Pulse K-Pop Dance Crew and the Council for Exceptional Children, a club for those with an interest in special education.

"I'm not a special [education] minor, but I wanted to be part of the community a little more," Robles-Arevalo said.

She expressed how clubs like these gave her opportunities to explore different career paths in teaching and to branch out socially.

"If you're unsure of a major, go to a club meeting, talk to people there. I met some really great people through all my clubs. And since I'm a commuter, it was kind of difficult to find friends. Because I didn't have a dorm, I couldn't become friends with my roommate, or just people next door," she explained. "So the clubs helped, and I really had to push myself to be involved. No one else was going to do that for me."

She shared what drives her mentality, "Since I was a child, my mom always said I wanted to do things on my own. I refused to let her help me put my socks on, even when I was like two. That's just kind of who I am." Robles-Arevalo said.

As the oldest child in her immediate family, the oldest of her cousins and extended family, and the first born from her family in the United States, she explained, "Just so many firsts, it can get a little overwhelming."

She is no stranger to being a role model, and although this carries added pressure, it also brings her fulfillment.

"My family is very close. I grew up around a whole bunch of cousins, and I was the oldest cousin, so they all kind of looked up to me in a way," Robles-Arevalo said.

She has been able to guide her younger relatives through the college process, "It's been nice to help them feel more confident in their own abilities and their academic performance."

Heather Casey, professor of literacy education and coordinator of the reading specialist program, has been Robles-Arevalo's academic advisor throughout her journey at Rider.

"[Robles-Arevalo] is thoughtful in everything that she does. She is very committed to all students. She is particularly committed to the multilingual language students with whom she is preparing to work, and she has a lot of insight into how she approaches her own academic work, as well as her preparation for teaching students," Casey said.

This also now translates into how she approaches her student teaching, especially in a fourth grade ESL classroom. She teaches math, literacy and grammar, reading and also leads a small group with level two ESL students, which are students who can speak and write, but need more support.

"I can empathize with students in that part, which is something I like," she shared. "Representation in education is a huge thing. It's been really nice to find a



Photo courtesy of Rashel Robles-Arevalo

Rashel Robles-Arevalo discovered her interest in teaching through a 'Tomorrow's Teachers' class in high school.

community where I look like the students and the students look like me, because I never really had that growing up."

Robles-Arevalo hopes to continue working in an ESL classroom or as a bilingual instructor after she graduates to use her Spanish-speaking skills to support English learners.

When approaching students who are learning a second language, Robles-Arevalo explained, "You have to use their language as a skill, as a tool, rather than like an obstacle."

Casey said, "[Robles-Arevalo] lights up when she talks about her students. As I have gotten the opportunity to know her and know the many layers to her story and who she is, I've seen her grow in confidence in her teaching. I think that really shines in the way that she speaks about her students."



Photo courtesy of Rashel Robles-Arevalo

Rashel Robles-Arevalo (right) was a member of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Creativity shines on Independent Artist Day

Everyone wants to be a star; to have their art seen by the world. So naturally, they would seek opportunities, or as I would like to call them, “golden tickets” towards fame. Some examples might include: getting signed by a record label, securing a contract with the American Ballet Theatre or showcasing works of art as a professional artist in a gallery, such as the Cristea Roberts Gallery in London.

Of course, many artists finally found their breaks when they got signed. With grand prizes and opportunities to work with big names, it is no wonder why so many reality television competition shows seem so enticing.

Kelly Clarkson, the first winner of American Idol, won a \$1 million recording contract with RCA Studios. She is now a household name and has garnered an international following. Yet, the vast majority of people will never be signed. It is nearly impossible to win these singing competitions, or any other television competition show for that matter.

This phenomenon is not just in music. Fine arts, dance and other creatives find it difficult to find connections, or a company that sees enough potential to reach out to them.

I am not saying that aspiring creatives should give up on their dreams. What I am saying is that they certainly do not need the funding from a major conglomerate to be successful.

Independent Artist Day, observed annually on April 3, celebrates these individuals who have thrived on their own terms. It spotlights the importance of artists outside the mainstream who hustled from nothing.

In fact, there are plenty of successful independent artists who have garnered a fanbase without initially getting signed. Take two of my favorite artists, Oh Wonder and Paris Paloma, for example.

Oh Wonder is a London-based duo, Anthony and Josephine Vander West. They started their band 12 years ago. Initially, they wanted to work as solo artists with their own careers. For their first releases, however, they challenged themselves to produce one song each month, which eventually became their debut album titled, “Oh Wonder.” In just three days, their first song

of the album, “Body Gold,” received 100,000 streams on Spotify. This blossomed into 8.4 million monthly listeners today. Eventually, they caught the attention of records like Virgin Music and Republic Records and got signed.

On April 11, they started their United States and Canada tour, expanding their geographic performances outside of England.

As for Paris Paloma, she started releasing music in 2020 with her debut single “Narcissus.” She did not have any major companies behind her. Like Oh Wonder, she found her big break when she kept trying. In 2023, her hit song “Labour” circulated worldwide on social media. With her powerful vocals and resonant feminist lyrics, she captivated the world.

Paris Paloma shows artists that, if you are dedicated and have something meaningful to convey, people will appreciate you.

Another caveat of contracts are the limitations that creatives have to abide by. Most companies have policies they enforce to make their works as commercially successful as possible. Though, this leaves little wiggle room for experimental pieces that they want to explore.

Being an independent creator allows them to make these daring pieces of art. One of my favorite contemporary artists, Yinka Shonibare, for example, owns his own studio. This allows full creative liberty without the nagging of companies’ standards. Shonibare explores sensitive topics, such as cultural identity and post-colonialism in his works, which these conglomerates would likely flag.

One of his works, titled “Woman Shooting Cherry Blossoms,” shows a human-like figure shooting a cotton gun. The figure’s head is a globe, representing globalization, while its body is clad with Edwardian and African-style textiles, representing imperialism and the two aspects of his cultural identity.

It is so beautifully represented in this piece, and I do not believe any contractual limits would have allowed him to generate such a moving sculpture. His works have been showcased in big-name museums such as Tate Modern and the Museum of Modern Art.



Grace Juarez/The Rider News

Independent artists outside of the mainstream are worth celebrating.

Shonibare is another wonderful case study of someone who worked outside the box of a fancy contract. Really, all of these artists are. They show us the greatest values of being an independent artist. Although not all of them stayed that way, they demonstrate the importance of getting started, despite your lack of connections.

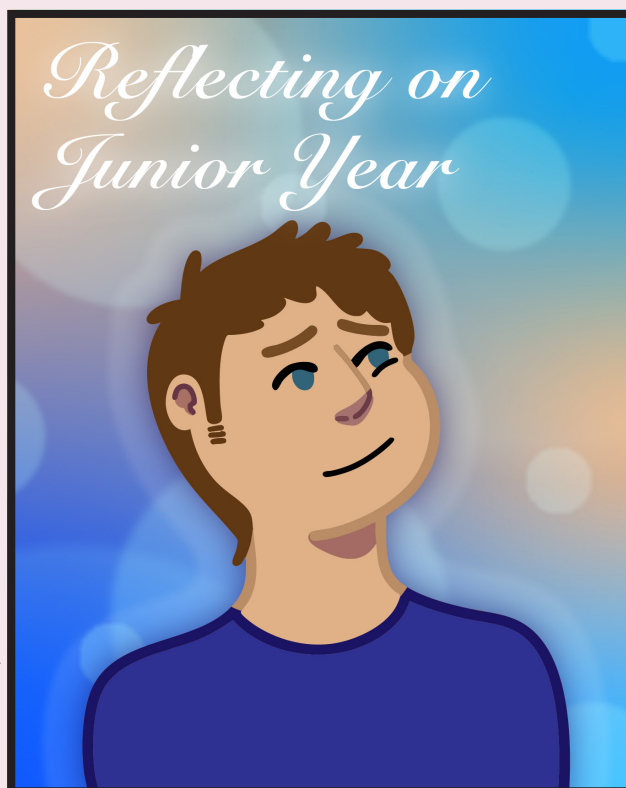
Stacie Hueter
freshman journalism major

Junior Journals: Reflections on another year

My junior year is coming to a close and I cannot believe it. From life-changing experiences, to an important milestone in my college career, junior year has been a roller coaster of a ride. A year of change and maturity. A year that was so different compared to my first two years at Rider. This school year, I said goodbye to my childhood home in Jackson, New Jersey, and over winter break I said goodbye to my dad after his passing in January. Two events that have shaped my whole world forever. Grief is another thing that I have experienced during this year, as my dad’s passing affected me and my whole year.

I would like to express my thanks to all of the people who have been helping me during this tough time in my life. Another thing that has been supporting me through this tough time is the Counseling Center, who has been helping me manage through my academics and challenges that have been going on through my life. My mom, sister and grandma have always been there for me, and we have each other’s backs as we all work together. Junior year has been by far the toughest school year yet for me, and with life changing events, it has been a wild ride for sure. It felt like everyday there was something new going on.

Another thing that has helped me to get through this challenging year is doing my favorite hobbies: walking, watching anime and playing video games. Doing the little things helps me to relax and push through. Walking helps me to reflect on myself and anime inspires me to go forward and be the best version of myself; characters like Goku from Dragon Ball and Luffy from One Piece help me to get through each day. Playing video games lets me release my feelings. These interests mean so much to me, as they help me push through tough moments. One milestone



Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

This academic year at Rider brought challenges and triumphs for students.

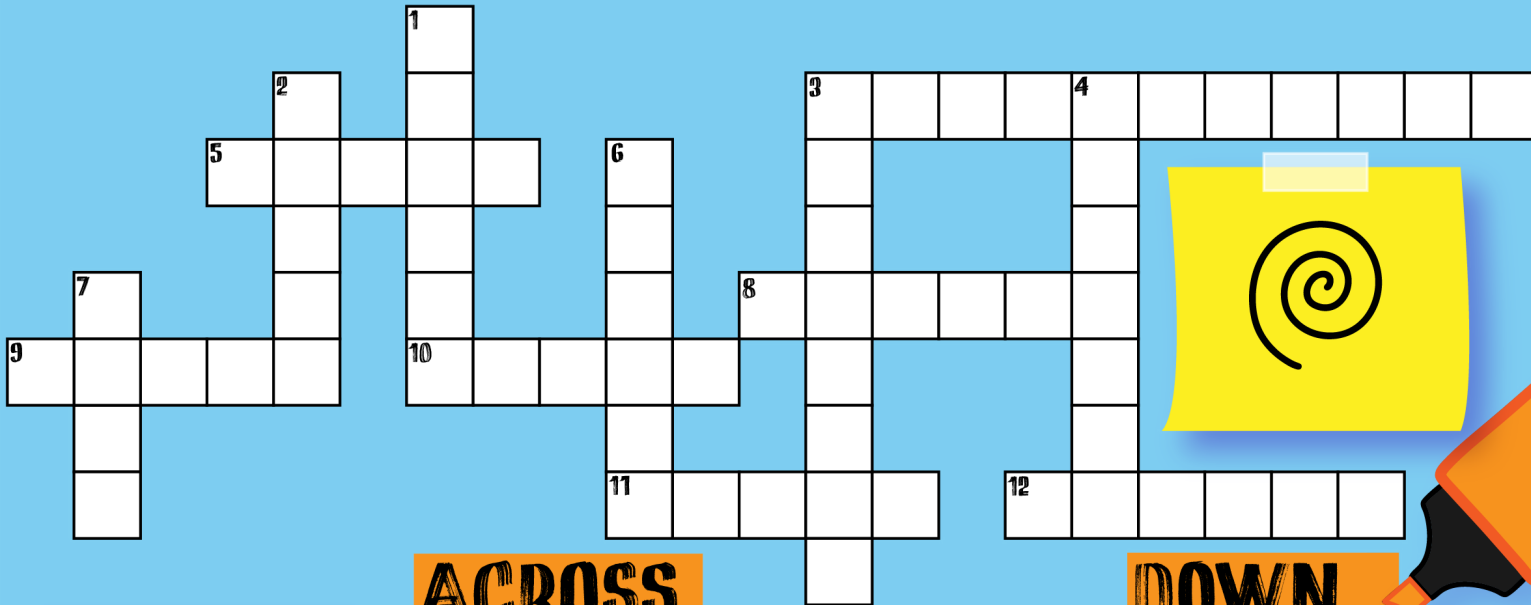
that I hit this school year was buying my first car. I have worked the past few years at Six Flags Great Adventure and that money has added up to help afford my first car: a 2023 Chevy Trailblazer. It has been something that I have been wanting since high school and the fact that I got one was a dream come true.

If there is one thing that I can take away from this school year, it is that maturity and life changing events are tough, but make you stronger. This school year taught me that not everything will be easy and that things might be dark at times, but there is always

a light at the end of the tunnel. Stress and losing a parent is not easy, but it does not make you lose what makes you happy. Talking to someone, doing your favorite hobbies and taking time for yourself helps you to manage everything. Getting the help that you need is essential as you need to deal with tough times. It has pretty much been an obstacle course for me, as I had to climb through this year to reach my own goals. Everyday, there is always something new to look forward to, whether it is good or bad. Junior year is the end of a chapter for me, as it opens the door for my senior year. Buying my car opened the door of new opportunities for me. I am excited for what my future holds and what senior year unfolds as graduation is only a year away.

Michael Bolcato
junior communication studies major

STUDY HARD CROSSWORD

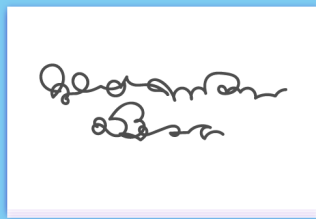


ACROSS

3. You can use this colorful writing utensil to make words you are reading stand out.
5. GPA stands for Grade _____ Average.
8. You can fix written mistakes with an _____.
9. Be sure to return all of your _____ before the semester ends.
10. Dedicate a little bit of time each day to _____ for exams.
11. You should prioritize getting enough _____ before a test.
12. This type of class meets both online and in-person.

DOWN

1. _____ week for Rider starts on May 4.
2. It is important to take clear _____ in class.
3. It is important to stay _____ by drinking plenty of water.
4. You can reserve study rooms in Moore _____.
6. The University Library website has research _____ to help you.
7. Graduating students wear a cap and _____ at commencement.



Libby D'Orvilliers and Gail Demeraski/The Rider News

COMIC: Harvey and Schnoz

By N. D. Medal



THE Rider News

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©2026 General Meetings: Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.

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Broncs snatch crucial series win over Fairfield, defeat Seton Hall late

By Benjamin Shinault

In the midst of chasing back-to-back Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference regular season championships, Rider baseball continued its hot streak in conference play, as they were able to secure two wins in its three-game series against Fairfield University. With the series victory, Rider continues to maintain sole possession of first place in the MAAC standings. Rider then hit the road on April 14 for a North Jersey matchup with Seton Hall University.

'The kids battled'

Game one on April 10 did not go the way Rider planned. By the end of the first inning, Rider fell into a 6-0 hole after four home runs.

Following the rough first inning by senior pitcher PJ Craig, he was able to find a groove, only allowing one more additional run. By the end of his start, Craig finished with five innings pitched, seven earned runs, five strikeouts and eight hits.

Rider was able to scoop up a run in the second inning off a wild pitch to make it 6-1, but in the very next inning, the Stags grabbed the run right back and put themselves up by six runs once again.

Later on, in the seventh inning, two more runs were brought across the plate after a sophomore first baseman Charley Magoulick two-run home run closed the gap to 7-3, but Fairfield also brought across two more runs to seal the deal in game one.

For game two, it started out similar to game one, as Fairfield got out to an early lead with a solo home run. Down 2-0 in the fourth inning, the Broncs scored their first run of the game off a freshman catcher Demetri Bardatsos single to right field.

The Stags then, in the fourth inning, collected that run back with a double to right field. With the score now 3-1 in favor of the Stags, the Broncs turned up the heat the rest of the way.

Starting in the fifth inning with the bases loaded, Bardatsos was nailed by a pitch to bring in a run. Also in the fifth, a bases-loaded walk brought in another.

With the game tied at 3-3, the Broncs scored six more unanswered runs to secure a 6-3 win and a position to win the series.

In the midst of the game two victory, junior catcher Nick Shuhet collected his 100th career hit. Shuhet, in game two alone, racked up four hits, two RBIs and a walk.

For the rubber match, Acting Head Coach Barry



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

Sophomore outfielder **Austin Cannon** recorded a walk against Seton Hall on April 14.

Davis turned to senior pitcher Clayton Poliey for the start.

The Broncs' offense did not sputter in the first inning, as senior outfielder Erich Hartmann got things started with a home run to right field.

Then, in the second inning, Shuhet followed it up with a home run of his own. Shuhet and Hartmann combined for six hits and four runs in game three.

Down 2-0, the Stags did not waiver, as they went on to score seven runs and put themselves up 7-2 in the third inning.

With the series in the balance, Magoulick stepped up to the plate and crushed his fifth home run of the

season to bring Rider within three runs.

With the score 7-4, the Broncs were able to tie the game in the sixth inning after senior outfielder Anthony Paskell stole home and a junior infielder Matt Leahy single scored two more.

Paskell's day was not short of highlight-worthy, as earlier in the game, he climbed the outfield fence and robbed the Stags of a home run.

Now tied at 7-7 and the innings coming and going, the game went into extras, adding more fuel to the fire.

After pristine pitching from the Broncs' bullpen, particularly from freshman pitcher Conner Flynn, Rider held on until the 13th inning, when junior outfielder Kyle Neri shot a ball up the middle, scoring Hartmann and senior third baseman Will Gallagher.

"I just trusted my stuff," Flynn said. "Our field is really good, I just let them [Fairfield] hit to them [Rider] and it usually works out."

Securing the series wins in back-to-back weeks against Marist University and Fairfield was huge.

"It's real big, considering that they're at the top of the league with us," Davis said. "The kids battled, it was a good team win," Davis said.

Clutch hitting, clutch pitching

After some late-game clutch hitting and pitching, the Broncs were able to take home a mid-week victory over Seton Hall, 3-2.

Seven different pitchers threw for Rider in a well-pitched matchup. As a unit, the Broncs pitching staff only surrendered six hits, one earned run and struck out eight.

Rider's offense was limited, much different from the prior Fairfield series.

Collecting hits for the Broncs were Hartmann, Shuhet and Paskell.

Shuhet continued his strong week with his two hits, plus a two-run double in the seventh inning, which ended up being the game-decider.

The Broncs will get right back to work with a matchup against Princeton University on April 15. Then, Rider welcomes Manhattan University in a three-game home series, beginning on April 17.

Broncs drop two of three in Marist series, sit at 10-8 in MAAC

By Samantha Clark

Rider softball fell in two out of three games against the Marist University Red Foxes on April 11 and 12, failing to collect the series win and falling to 10-8 in Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play.

Split doubleheader

The first inning of the first game started slow for the Broncs, with Marist putting up an early 3-0 lead.

However, in the top of the third, senior outfielder Maddie Luedtke's sacrifice fly scored sophomore middle infielder Aspen Wheeler to pick up Rider's first run of the game.

In the fourth, freshman middle infielder Sydney Savatt got her third career hit, advancing junior outfielder Shelby Dyer to cross home plate and setting the Broncs back by just one run.

Marist then put up three more runs, which was followed by a scoreless sixth and seventh innings, leading to the Broncs falling in game one of the doubleheader, 6-2.

The second game began similarly to the first, as the slow start saw no successful action from either team until the fourth inning.

The Broncs then kicked off the game with a bang, as junior catcher Kendall Reda-Fehsal launched a home run to center field, bringing home herself and freshman middle infielder Melissa Purcella.

In the top of the sixth, Reda-Fehsal repeated this with another home run to pick up the third and final run of the game, with the Broncs prevailing, 3-0.

Senior pitcher Fallyn Stoeckel only allowed four

hits over the entirety of the game, contributing to the shutout victory.

Last minute loss

The Broncs tipped off the first inning of the final game in the series with two back-to-back runs, with Wheeler scoring on a fielding error and sophomore utility Keegan St. Cyr following with a run.

The Red Foxes then repeated this in the second inning, putting up two of their own to tie the scoreboard up at 2-2.

With more of the same, Stoeckel doubled to left field to score Luedtke and junior infielder Kiersten Buchanan singled to score Stoeckel, pushing the Broncs up by two runs, until the Red Foxes did the same to knot it up once again, 4-4.

Scoring on a passed ball, Wheeler brought home a run at the top of the fourth, which was followed by another from St. Cyr, who crossed the plate on a throwing error.

"Each team proved they were strong offensively, so when you get an opportunity to capitalize on a mistake, you have to take it," Wheeler said.

The Broncs headed into the fifth inning up 6-4, until the Red Foxes set the score at its third tie, 6-6.

At the bottom of the sixth, Marist collected the final run of the game, closing the rubber match with the Broncs down, 7-6.

Rider hopes to bounce back when they host Lehigh University for a doubleheader on April 15, Canisius University on both April 18 and April 19 and Central Connecticut State University on April 21.



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

Sophomore pitcher **Gabi Rodriguez** recorded two hits in the series opener against Marist on April 11.

Transfer portal reshapes Rider basketball

By Samantha Clark

After a season in which both teams failed to qualify for the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference tournament for the first time in university history, seven Broncs from Rider's men's and women's basketball programs have announced their entrance into the transfer portal.

Changes to the portal

In January 2026, the NCAA announced changes and new rules to the transfer portal, most notably closing the window from 30 days to 15 days.

In an attempt to reduce distractions from the process, a new rule was established that the portal was to open after the conclusion of the national championship game, rather than during postseason play.

With that, the women's portal opened on April 6 and will close on April 20, and the men's portal opened on April 7, closing on April 21. If any player were to enter the portal after the 15 days, it would result in delayed eligibility for the following season.

Lady Broncs on the move

The first of three women's players to announce their entrance into the portal was freshman guard Daniya Brown, who posted a social media announcement over Instagram on April 1.

In her first year, Brown averaged 2.6 points per game and shot 22% from beyond the arc. Off the court, though, she found many successes in her new home in Lawrenceville.

In her post, Brown shared her gratitude in representing the Broncs, saying, "I had the opportunity to compete alongside some incredible teammates who pushed me every day and helped me grow both on and off the court. I've built friendships that will truly last a lifetime. I am forever grateful for Rider University."

On April 3, sophomore guard Amany Lopez announced her plans to enter the portal in a collaborative Instagram post, alongside her highlights from her time as a Bronc.

In the 2024-25 season, Lopez picked up minutes in 17 of 29 total games, achieving a career high five points against the United States Naval Academy. In her sophomore season, she more-than-doubled that, reaching 11 points in an Iona University matchup.

Lopez was one of six returning Broncs this season, allowing her to play a part in guiding a roster filled with fresh faces, among both players and coaching staff.

"I will take away the opportunity to learn new cultures, meet new people," Lopez said. "I will always cherish that and I'll take that with me wherever I go."

The last of the three is junior guard Deb Okechukwu, who reposted an announcement on X, stating her plans to enter her name into the portal as a graduate transfer.

After transferring from multiple junior colleges, Okechukwu broke into the world of Division I basketball as a Bronc due to her relationship with incoming Head Coach Jackie Hartzell.

In her NCAA debut, Okechukwu averaged 6.8 points per game, reaching as many as 18 points in the Nov. 15 battle against the Bryant University Bulldogs.

Taking her time in cranberry as an experience for



Seven Broncs have announced their entrance into the transfer portal, sending Rider's programs into a transformative offseason.

growth, Okechukwu said, "I've learned how to be flexible and be adaptive, ... so I'm just looking to be able to blossom in a new opportunity."

Men's departures

For the men's team, four of 11 eligible players entered the portal, the firsts being sophomore forward Cole McCabe and sophomore guard Flash Burton.

On April 5 and April 7, the pair posted the same announcement on X that read, "Thankful for my time at Rider. I will be entering the Transfer Portal."

As two of four returning Broncs ahead of the 2025-26 season, McCabe and Burton began as consistent starting players. McCabe reached a career high of 12 points in the first conference matchup of the season, stepping on the court as a standout player in the Merrimack University game.

In addition, the MAAC Student-Athlete of the Week honor was awarded to McCabe on Dec. 31, finding success in all areas during his time at Rider.

"I came to Rider for the opportunity to play Division I basketball, ... [and I'm] grateful for my relationships over the past two years, just with a bunch

of different guys, the managers, the coaches," McCabe said. "Those are some people you're gonna talk to for the rest of your life."

Burton's role on the roster has been a pivotal one in his two years at Rider, hitting double figures in 13 games and starting in the final 10 of his first season. As a freshman, he also earned MAAC Rookie of the Week on Jan. 20, 2025.

In his sophomore year, Burton averaged 15.1 points per game, hitting a career high of 27 points against Fairfield University on wJan. 9.

"[Coach Baggett] made a good impression on me from day one," Burton said. "Now, I just feel like this is the next step that I gotta take."

Three days after the men's portal opened, the final of the four declared their entrance, with junior guard Caleb Smith and freshman guard Kristupas Kepezinskas both posting on their Instagram stories on April 10.

Smith shot 39% from the 3-point line, becoming a key contributor for the Broncs in his first year competing at the Division I level.

In Smith's breakout year, he learned the values of competing with a team of dedicated athletes, but now, he looks to compete closer to his hometown of Atlanta.

"I'm definitely going to miss my teammates. Best teammates I've ever had," Smith said.

Kepezinskas, hailing from Kaunas, Lithuania, came to Rider for the opportunity to play in the NCAA, as it can often be hard to find that opportunity when competing overseas.

After his debut season, he decided to enter the portal to explore his options, although the opportunity to return to the Broncs remains on the table.

Despite suffering from an MCL injury early in the season, Kepezinskas played in 16 games in his freshman year, competing for the most minutes against Bucknell University, where he put up 5 points for his best game at Rider.

Though the injury limited his time on the court and offered unexpected setbacks, his first season in America provided meaningful moments for development.

"I made a lot of connections. ... I feel like when you meet new people, you get to know other cultures better, and that's how you grow as a person," Kepezinskas said. "And I worked on myself, so I feel like I've improved as a person and as an athlete."

With the portal's close quickly approaching and seven Broncs announcing their potential departures, the men's and women's basketball programs will face the usual offseason of transition and adaptation.

The coming weeks will shape the future of these teams as the NCAA portal reshapes rosters across the nation.

Graphic by Yanuel Santos/The Rider News, Photos by Yanuel Santos, Josiah Thomas, Lilliana R. Basile and Carl Rizzo

ONLINE



Scan to see our digital-exclusive lacrosse recap!



Sports

The Rider News 2025-26 men's and women's players of the year



Graphic and photo by Yanuel Santos/The Rider News

By Benjamin Shinault

Junior outfielder Kyle Neri is no stranger to collecting awards. After being a member of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference All-Rookie team in 2024, then a member of the 2025 All-MAAC team last season, he has already made himself quite the decorated Rider athlete.

However, Neri will have to make room for one more award, as he has been named the 2025-26 The Rider News Male Player of the Year via a poll conducted between April 1 and April 8, gathering students' opinions on who should be crowned the honor.

This season, for Rider baseball, Neri has picked up right where he left off and has played his part in carrying the Broncos to sole possession of first place in the MAAC standings, as of April 13.

Neri currently sits top 10 in the MAAC in the following categories: batting average, hits and RBIs.

In his 30 games this year, Neri recorded 14 multi-hit games, and in five of those, he collected at least three hits.

Neri transferred to Rider after taking a redshirt-season at Bryant University. After a phone call with then Head Coach Barry Davis, Neri knew he would have the opportunity to shine and smash baseballs at Sonny Pittaro Field.

"[Davis] came out and he checked me out and I just figured it was close enough to home and it was still at the Division I level," Neri said.

Outside of Rider, Neri spent some time with the Upper Valley Nighthawks, a team in the New England Baseball League.

"I think that, when I was there, I definitely struggled a lot. So I think being able to struggle, look at everything, take a breath and get back into it showed me how to really push through everything," Neri said.

Neri, in each of his last three seasons, has had a batting average of .300, brought in at least 25 runs and has had at least 48 hits. This season, the batting average jumped up, but for Neri, he is now comfortable wearing cranberry and black.

"Throughout the years, I have gotten more comfortable. I'm playing against guys that I know more often," Neri said.

Right now, the Broncos are in the midst of pursuing another conference regular season title, as well as a MAAC Championship. Neri likes what he has seen from the Broncos this season and is holding out hope for another distinguished honor.

The Rider News will publish a feature story on Neri in its April 22 issue.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

By Joshua Yuhos

Shining on the court, Rider women's volleyball senior opposite Kiannisha Santiago set herself at a level above the competition and etched herself into the Rider history books.

With recognition from the American Volleyball Coaches Association as an All-American nominee, the 10th Bronc across all sports since 2020 to earn this recognition, alongside conference recognition from coaches with the 2025 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Player of the Year Award, the first Bronc to win since Morgan Romano in the 2020-21 season, Santiago stood out among all other Rider athletes.

Santiago also earned MAAC All-First Team honors for the second consecutive season, her third straight year with an All-MAAC appearance.

Recognition has not only come from coaches, but also her fellow Broncos, in being named the 2025-26 Rider News Female Player of the Year via a poll conducted between April 1 and April 8, giving Rider students the opportunity to choose which female athlete should earn the title.

In the 2025 season, Santiago led Rider to a 12-6 record in conference play and pushed the Broncos forward for a trip to the finals in the MAAC Championships for the first time since 2021.

Santiago peppered her name across the top of the MAAC, thriving in non-conference matches and upping it

a notch when competing in conference play. She ended the season second in the MAAC with 3.92 kills per set and led the conference for league-play kills per set with 4.36.

Reaching 1,000 career kills in the 2025 season, she became the 10th Bronc to achieve this milestone, and her 435 kills this year alone marked her fifth in the single-season program records.

Only getting better by year's progression since arriving in Lawrenceville, Santiago began as an outside hitter from freshman to junior year, where she built up a strong resume.

Getting her foot in the door, she earned 11 starts her freshman year before launching up her sophomore season, starting 25 of her 26 appearances with a team-leading 230 kills on .231 hitting and earning second team All-MAAC honors.

In 2024, she only continued to break out, earning three All-Tournament appearances for the Northern Colorado, Georgetown/George Washington and MAAC tournaments.

Santiago, across her junior season, finished fourth in the MAAC with 350 kills, ninth in kills per set and sixth in blocks with 101 in her 31 starts that season.

Throughout her career with the Broncos, Santiago's play on the court has only grown with a catalyst season in 2025.

The Rider News will publish a feature story on Santiago in its April 22 issue.



Graphic by Yanuel Santos/The Rider News, Photo courtesy of Faith Capolupo/Rider Athletics

Senior opposite **Kiannisha Santiago** was named MAAC Player of the Year, following the 2025 volleyball season.