

**Department of Athletics
Divisional Plan
2020– 2021**

**Strategic Theme 1: Focusing on Students First
Our unwavering focus on student growth and development**

SP GOAL 1.4: Strengthen students’ persistence and timeliness to graduation.

Action Plans and Steps not included in SP

- Upgrade physical space comprising the Athletic Academic Support Center in Maurer Gym.

2017-18: Renovated and expanded the renamed Student-Athlete Academic Support Center & Team Meeting/Recruiting Lounge with NCAA funding. This supports student-athlete academic success and strengthens recruiting.

SP GOAL 1.6: Build a vibrant living and learning community that enhances the university experience for students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni, strengthens learning and campus spirit and further builds a sense of community, place and belonging.

Action Plans and Steps

Vibrant Living

1.6C: Foster a greater sense of university spirit through Rider’s Division I athletics. Promote individual and team achievements more broadly. Generate greater attendance at athletic competitions among students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding community. Engage student-athletes more meaningfully with the broader student population.

2017-18: Student-athletes actively assisted with freshman move-in as Bronc Buddies and, along with coaches and staff, served as part of the welcoming committee at PlayFair during move-in.

Engaged students and increased attendance at home competitions through creative theme nights and promotional activities such as Greek Night and Dorm Wars. Achieved the highest conference attendance for men’s soccer home competitions.

Collaborated with Campus Life, SGA and SEC in hosting Midnight MAACness. Introduced the Cranberry Court as part of the event festivities.

Established regular “From the Desk of the Director” communications with athletic alumni and individuals with athletic interest to promote significant team and individual accomplishments, support the Raise Your Game Challenge and promote high profile athletic events.

Created a graphic for use with social media and email to highlight the athletic and academic success of our student-athletes. Emailed faculty, staff, alumni and athletic boosters to share information more widely regarding individual and team accomplishments.

2018-19: Student-athletes took part in freshman move-in as Bronc Buddies. Student-athletes, coaches and staff assisted with distribution of the I Bleed Cranberry Shirts during Welcome Week and facilitated the taking of the freshman class Rider "R" photo on Daly Field.

Collaborated with Greek Life on a 5K Color Run during Homecoming (Event was cancelled due to inclement weather). Worked again with Campus Life, SGA and SEC in hosting Midnight MAACness.

Continued to offer creative theme nights for students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding community to promote home competition attendance. (ie: Office Night, Food Giveaways, Red Bull Night.)

2019-20: Student-athletes took part in freshman move-in as Bronc Buddies. Student-athletes, coaches and staff also assisted with various activities during Welcome Week as well as Cranberry Fest.

Collaborated with Alumni Relations and Campus Life to successfully plan and execute several events during Family Weekend/Homecoming in November. Also worked with Campus Life, SGA and SEC in hosting MAACness in October.

Continued to offer creative theme nights for students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding community to promote home competition attendance.

Continued to utilize graphics for social media and email to highlight the athletic and academic success of our student-athletes. Shared information frequently via email to faculty, staff, alumni and athletic boosters regarding individual and team accomplishments.

Collaborated with CDI to host *Colorful Connections in Sports* event at a men’s basketball game.

Successfully engaged the local community to help fill Alumni Gym for a nationally televised men's basketball game in January while students were on winter break.

Through a Kid's Day Out youth education day initiative, had the first capacity crowd for a women's basketball home game with 1700 local elementary school children and teachers in attendance at a January game televised nationally on ESPNU.

Fostered awareness and actively promoted the MAAC Basketball Championships in Atlantic City in March 2020, 2021 and 2022 to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and boosters. A Campus Activation Team comprised of staff from athletics, campus life, alumni relations, advancement and University communications was established for this purpose.

2020-21: Student-athletes will assist with freshman move-in as Bronco Buddies if possible pending the University's COVID-19 guidelines.

Collaborate with Alumni Relations and Campus Life to plan and execute events during Family Weekend/Homecoming whether in person or virtually. Work with Campus Life, SGA and SEC in hosting a virtual MAACness event in October.

Will plan and offer creative virtual theme nights for students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding community to promote home competition and taking part by watching online if fans are not allowed due to COVID-19 restrictions. If fans are allowed, these theme nights will take place in person.

Continue to utilize graphics for social media, athletics website and email to highlight the athletic and academic success of our student-athletes. Share information frequently via email to faculty, staff, alumni and athletic boosters regarding individual and team accomplishments.

Collaborate with CDI to host *Colorful Connections in Sports* event at a men's basketball game.

Work with CDI to establish meaningful engagement opportunities for our student-athletes with the broader University community and efforts for more education and awareness regarding social injustice and inequality.

Foster awareness and actively promote the MAAC Basketball Championships in Atlantic City and the Mid-American Conference Wrestling Championships at the Cure Insurance Arena in Trenton in March 2021 to media, students, faculty, staff, alumni, boosters, and fans. A Campus Activation Team comprised of staff from athletics, campus life, alumni relations, advancement and University communications will be utilized to assist in these endeavors.

Strategic Theme 2: Raising Rider's Profile

The branding, marketing and promotion of our University

SP GOAL 2.1: Build a dynamic marketing program that integrates marketing, advertising and public relations strategies to raise the University's profile, position Rider to be a university of choice for students and employees, with name recognition and brand awareness, and emphasize Rider's value proposition.

Action Plans and Steps

2.1E: Strengthen the promotion of Rider's Division I athletics programs. Establish the capability to provide ESPN level quality in house-produced video broadcasts of events and competitions in concert with the new Sports Media major. In addition to strengthening athletics promotion, this will increase the number of on-campus experiential opportunities for students in this and other sports and communication related majors. This investment should also facilitate the broadcasting of other events throughout the University including, among others, theater productions and speaker series

2017-18: Hired a new Assistant Athletic Director of Digital and New Media to support and oversee the live broadcast of home athletic contests on ESPN3 and ESPNplus. Prepared facilities with the necessary technology and purchased and outfitted a production trailer.

2018-19: Trained staff and students, in collaboration with the Communication Department and the Sports Media major, for live broadcasts of home competitions beginning in the fall. Produced a total of 51 live ESPN3 and ESPNplus broadcasts and assisted the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference in televising the entire MAAC Basketball Tournament in Albany, NY.

2019-20: Increased number of live ESPN3 and ESPN+ home broadcasts offered in year two of school productions. Hired and trained additional students who were responsible for various aspects of the live home sports productions

and coaches shows. Upgraded quality of broadcasts including additional graphics, more-frequent replays, sponsor elements for various sports productions. During the Covid shutdown video podcasts with each head coach were produced with the Department of Communication. Numerous videos were also produced to promote our first ever WNBA draft pick in women's basketball.

2020-21: With the strong possibility of limited fans, or no fans, being permitted at athletic events, we will look to expand our number of ESPN3 and ESPN+ broadcasts to continue to provide content to promote the Rider Brand. Social distancing guidelines, however, could limit our ability in the production trailer to provide all of the graphic and re-play elements.

Strategic Theme 4: Investing in our Future

The strategic cultivation, management and investment of our resources

SP GOAL 4.1: Build tuition and other net revenue to meet capital and operating needs.

Action Plans and Steps not in SP

- Strengthen Athletics' corporate sponsorship program.

2017-18: Began the partnership with Van Wagner Sports and Entertainment as a corporate sponsorship partner to increase revenue and maximize brand value.

2018-19: Selected Van Wagner Sports and Entertainment to assist in growing corporate sponsorship program. This new partnership has already paid dividends by extending and enhancing current corporate sponsor relationships in addition to establishing new partnerships.

2019-20: In conjunction with Van Wagner sports and Entertainment, grew the university and athletic corporate sponsorship program in the first full year of this partnership. Despite staffing interruptions and a challenging fulfillment environment, numerous new athletic partners were signed to sponsorship agreements and a large university wide sponsorship deal with a major healthcare provider will be in place in the fall.

2020-21 In partnership with Van Wagner Sports and Entertainment, continue to pursue and grow corporate sponsorship program and increase revenue in a challenging athletic and financial environment.

SP GOAL 4.4: Strengthen institutional fundraising and advancement efforts.

Action Plans and Steps

4.4E: Raise funds in support of athletics facilities as identified in the campus master plan including renovation and expansion of Alumni Gym.

2019-20: Oversaw the installation of new bleachers in Alumni Gym following completion of the basketball season and the replacement of the turf at Ben Cohen Field.

See also 4.4G below.

4.4G: Establish a culture of philanthropy among alumni.

2017-18: Raised \$270,200 from track alums and friends to name the track in memory of Coach Mike Brady and expand track facilities. Began planning for the Mike Brady Track Operations Building, construction for which will be completed in 2018-19.

Completed the most successful Raise Your Game Challenge fundraising campaign since its inception in 2010 with the highest number of donors (615), most dollars raised (\$183,437), and highest athletic alumni participation rate (16.5%).

Created a video of our student-athletes thanking our Raise Your Game Challenge donors.

2018-19: Completed the most successful Raise Your Game Challenge fundraising campaign since its inception in 2010 with 603 athletic alumni donors, most dollars raised (\$192,299), and highest athletic alumni participation rate (17.6%).

Worked with University Advancement to secure the largest gift in Rider Athletic history of \$2 million to support the naming of the Canastra Health and Sports Center, the renovation of Coppola Pool and the continued enhancement and expansion of Alumni Gym. Also established a mini campaign targeting swimming and diving alums to further enhance Coppola Pool.

Completed funding and planning for the Mike Brady Track Operations Building and Pavilion.

Worked with University Advancement to create campaign materials to support athletic facility priorities as identified in the campus master plan.

2019-20: Continued to increase support for athletic teams through the annual Raise Your Game Challenge and the Golf Gala. Completed and opened the Mike Brady Track Building and Pavilion and the renovation of Coppola Pool. While the RYGC did not produce the desired results this year due to the

financial environment created by Covid 19 overall athletic fundraising remained on an upward trajectory.

Continued to work with University Advancement to identify donors and close on gifts in support of the Coppola Pool project and other athletic priorities as identified in the strategic plan and campus master plan, with the top priority being completion of the final phase of the Alumni Gym renovation and expansion. Secured several major gifts in support of the Alumni gym renovation project, including a \$1 million gift to support the new bleachers and a \$250,000 gift to support the eventual move of the athletic strength and conditioning center.

2020-21 Continue to work with University Advancement to make further progress in acquiring the necessary funding needed to complete the expansion and renovation of Alumni Gym. Resume steady progress of athletic alumni participation and giving through the Raise Your Game Challenge.