

## A New Student's Perspective: Making the transition to college life

For the past few days, I have been completely disoriented. Between what seems like 1,000 projects, endless papers and studying, I seem to have lost track of time. Somehow it is only a week from the end of my first semester at Rider. Although this semester has seemed to drag in places, it really went by fast. Now that it's about to end, I find myself going back to the very first day of this semester. I had all the clichéd emotions during those first few hours and my nervousness only heightened when my roommate, Jess, didn't show up until the very last minute. I arrived on campus as early as possible, but she didn't arrive until after move-in hours. As it turns out, she and I became really close friends. With neither of us knowing anyone else on campus, we stuck together like two girls at a Star Wars convention.

When you get on campus, one of the first nights you spend with your new roommate is an awkward self-disclosure session, where you stay up until 4 a.m. just talking about your family, friends, grades, major and life history. Jess and I did just that, but of course our bonding was accentuated by my sleep talking. During our first night in the residence hall, I threw two pillows at her head in my sleep. The next morning, I had no idea what I had done. To say the least, that kind of broke the ice.

Surprisingly, my first few weeks of balancing homework, classes and friends wasn't that hard. In my old high school, we had block scheduling, so sitting through classes that are an hour or longer are not that difficult. I also didn't have a job at the beginning of the semester, so time was easier to manage. Most of my classes were core requirements, and a lot of the work

was just a review of material I had learned already. One of my favorite classes was my Introduction to Communication Studies class with Dr. Minmin Wang, professor of communication. It was a small class in the middle of the afternoon, and her unique style of teaching made class go by really fast. My science class on the other hand, was a lecture on fungus. Even though it was 30 minutes shorter than Dr. Wang's class, it felt like photosynthesis and animal adaptations were my entire life.

The campus itself took some getting used to. The number of people living here and the diversity meant something of a minor culture shock. I'm used to living around rich, white people and having Quiz Bowl as the most athletic activity around. When I came here, however, I was surrounded by extremely athletic, tall, diverse students. One of my biggest regrets of the year was never getting to the new Student Recreation Center. Even though I told myself time and time again that I would get to that gym, and maybe start to work on some type of muscle, I only ever went when there was free food or T-shirts.

It has been a pretty eventful semester. From witnessing my first fight (in front of the diner) to realizing I was actually doing well in my classes, I've found that the past few months have been quite an experience. All I can ask for now is a short break and an even better semester in the spring.



Nadine  
Tester



**Observer**

## Preparing to come home

It's interesting for me to think that the semester is winding down at both of my universities: the one in Lawrenceville, and the other in Ankara, Turkey. Perhaps it's clichéd to mention this, but time flies fast enough to leave us all in the dust.

I began my study abroad adventure at Bilkent University in the compact Turkish capital of Ankara just a few months ago. I was filled with the anxiety of starting classes and navigating unfamiliar surroundings, while being sincerely happy to be in a new environment. Also, I remember promising myself to make the best of my stay here, knowing that my return was not too far away. Feeling like the "new kid" at school was greatly reminiscent of when I first started at Rider. However, it passed quickly and here I am reflecting on it all.

No one is immune to the passage of time. We may sleep at night, but time doesn't. In high school, one of my teachers told me that everyone is given the same number of hours each day and that what we make of it is up to us. These wise words registered but did not start resonating with me until after starting college life. With my limited, but increasing experience, I am merely beginning to really understand what I was told. To speak for myself, I am very pleased with having spent the past few months of my life studying abroad.

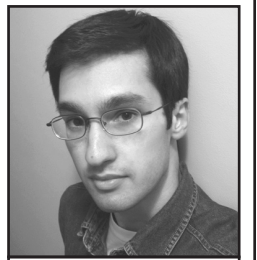
Meeting people from all over the world and being exposed to the Turkish education system, which I was immensely curious about, have both been challenging, yet fully worthwhile. Also, while I did not travel as much as the other "international" students, I spent several memorable days in Istanbul – an enchanting world in itself and the only city in the world located on two continents (Europe and Asia). In fact, my Istanbul trip was so absorbing and tiring that I have been content with staying put for the most part.

It's been interesting to be a member of the Bilkent student body as well. As on Rider's campus, there is great diversity among students. To say the least, I will sorely miss people-watching at Bilkent.

As I am set to return to the United States in January, I will miss certain things that I enjoy here, like the warm culture, the excellent food, the various types of music and the unusually temperate winter. Ankara is more or less located on the same line of latitude as Lawrenceville, yet winter is actually pleasant for now, which is uncharacteristic of this Turkish city. I'm sure I'll miss the times when I sat outdoors in the cafes on campus, sipping steaming tea while reading something or conversing with a friend.

Given that this is my last contribution to *The Rider News* from Ankara, I must emphasize a final time how great it has been to study abroad. I am forever grateful to the Study Abroad office for making everything possible. The globe is smaller than it has ever been and, especially for those who are interested, experiencing our world is within reach.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or are curious about anything related to Yakin's semester at Bilkent University, please feel free to contact him at [yakin@rider.edu](mailto:yakin@rider.edu).



Baris  
Yakin

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY ...

**DECEMBER 9, 1793** — The morning cup of java goes hand-in-hand with the news for the city that never sleeps. Noah Webster's *The American Minerva* becomes the first daily newspaper in New York City.

**DECEMBER 10, 1869** — No need to worry about having to recount the ballots on this landmark day, as women in the Territory of Wyoming are granted the right to vote.

**DECEMBER 18, 1947** — Steven Spielberg is born.

## REALITY, FROM PAGE 8

The fact of the matter is that we were interrupting their drug dealing and intruding upon their territory. These men were upset and hostile about the shooting; it's true they feel wary of police brutality every day of their lives. They were very apprehensive about speaking to the media, having the camera in their faces and even dealing with us as individuals.

Now I wasn't necessarily scared for my life, but I was scared at what I was witnessing firsthand. Just minutes before we arrived, I was continuously going through in my head the list of things I needed to get done for the close of the semester. As significant as these tasks seemed at that moment, my entire life was put into perspective within a matter of 10 minutes. Yes, final exams are tedious, yes my fingers are beginning to get numb because of the hours spent typing and yes, Webmail is almost a constant irritant all Rider students deal with. But all of this did

not even exist as I uneasily stood in front of this housing project.

Every single person at this University is better off than those who live in that terrible, unsanitary and sad place they call home. There is so much in this world we all have yet to experience and before doing so, many, if not all, of us are complaining and groaning about the greatest opportunity any individual can be given: a top notch education. Now I'm not saying you don't have the right to complain about stressful times in your life – we all do it.

What I am saying is that our title right now as "student" is something that many people will never have the opportunity to experience. Instead, these individuals were born into a situation that many will never escape: a situation filled with drugs, illiteracy and a standard of living that many of us could never even imagine. So please, the next time you whine about exams or that obscenely long research study, just for one second imagine the angst and aggression that could be your life instead.

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