Narrow poll margins depend on swing states

By Nick Ballasy

John Kerry has recently stepped up his attack on George W. Bush’s Iraq policy, but the war in Iraq may not be the deciding factor for the election, according to Dr. David Rebovich, a political science professor and Rider University, who is an active in New Jersey politics.

Kerry has to gain the approval of swing voters leaning toward Bush, and part of that could be from terrorism, according to Rebovich, who hasn’t “seen anything like before.”

“Swing voters know about the mess in Iraq, but they are more concerned about who will protect us the most from terrorism,” Rebovich said.

The U.S. has spent over $200 billion in Iraq this year and analysts say that the war will hit $2.29 trillion in 10 years. The death toll in Iraq is over 1,048 U.S. soldiers and 7,026 U.S. troops have been wounded. Just this month, 56 American soldiers have been killed along with the beheading of two citizens.

It’s becoming bloodier by the day in Iraq because the enemy doesn’t wear uniforms and the U.S. doesn’t know who’s a terrorist and who’s not, according to Rebovich.

“We don’t know who the enemy is,” he said. “However, it appears that Kerry is trying to desperately trying to find a clear position that will win over the small percentage of swing state voters.”

Kerry accuses Bush of dishonesty about the “mess” in Iraq, while the Washington Post has also spoken out in reference to the Iraq War.

“Well not only has Mr. Bush not said how, or whether he intends to respond to the worsening situation; he doesn’t really admit it exists,” said Kerry.

Kerry is also concerned with domestic issues as a result of the war.

“Two hundred billion dollars. That is what we are spending in Iraq because George Bush chose to go it alone. Now the president tells us we don’t have the resources to take care of health care and education here at home,” said Kerry.

“Despite these facts, President Bush wants to ‘push the progress’ and if Allawi, the Iraqi president, needed more troops, ‘he’d listen to him.’” Bush also said the U.S. will “stay the course” in Iraq.

Top Republicans have also come out and highlighted Bush’s “mistakes” with Iraq. Among them is Republican Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, who was featured on CBS’s “Face the Nation.”

“The fact is, we’re in deep trouble in Iraq...and I think we’re going to have to look at some recalibration of policy,” said Hagel.

Senator John McCain of Arizona, also a Republican, said, “We made serious mistakes.”

Bush’s approval ratings are extremely low when it comes to Iraq, healthcare and taxes and his overall job as President, yet he’s winning by a slim margin in many polls. Bush “misunderestimated” the situation in Iraq, but it is uncertain if it will be enough to push voters to Kerry.

“Kerry has some great ideas,” said Rebovich. “He is just struggling to make them clearer to voters.”

RU Connected aims to expand students’ horizons

By Valerie Cedeno

Many clubs and organizations attract a wide array of students, but this year there is a new organization, the RU Connected program was designed specifically for freshmen.

Unlike any other organization, RU Connected is an online-based program designed to help freshmen adapt and make changes to fit their “college life-style.” After witnessing the difficult transition from high school senior to college freshman, Associate Dean of Freshmen, Ira Mayo decided to manage a program that would facilitate the process.

“This is another tool; a different way to reach out to the freshmen,” said Mayo. According to the Goal Quest program, which is the company who allows freshmen to access the program on their computers, and also in the aid of a young staff, RU Connected was created, according to Mayo. The company has a list of all the names in the freshman class and sends them a link through e-mail. This program includes many tips that can help just about any freshman in college, from current events to tips on how to schedule themselves efficiently. The website includes text that link to other sources, alert every morning to ke stu dents posted on what is going on at Rider, time management skills, how to administrate a credit card account, and interactive tools like quizzes on high school versus college and memory skills.

There is also a survey that allows staff members to know a little about each student and interact with them.

“Students are really liking the program,” said Mayo. What matters now is getting this information to the students.

He hopes that all student received several e-mails concerning this new program with links following. Still, there are several freshmen who have no clue about RU Connected.

“I have never heard of it but if it’s something that’s going to help freshmen, I think it should be advertised more,” said freshman, Amanda Boone.

The RU Connected program will be emphasized in freshman seminars and, step by step, the professors will aid students in the progress of getting involved and adapting to college life. Those not attending seminars will receive e-mails from the New Student Resource center concerning this matter.

The staff has made a point of getting the RU Connected program across to all freshmen, according to Mayo.

The RU Connected staff wants to fulfill the purpose of expanding students’ horizons by getting involved. Having to get accustomed to teachers among other things, the Rider staff feels that that many freshmen engage in hobbies they like. Current students, who have the “college life” experience, are recommended to participate in events like the Awareness Fair, which shows a display of many on-campus clubs and organizations.

“I think it is important for students to get involved because it expands their notion of college life, it helps students communicate, and it increases their leadership skills,” sophomore Prisca Figaro, member of the International Club said.

Future plans for “RU Connected” will experiment with the program and later customizing it “Rider style.” Instead of generalizing the program on basic “college life,” Rider staff plans on personalizing it and including activities that relate to Rider. RU Connected is expected to continue as a program that aids freshmen their first year and carries on into their future, according to Mayo.

“I hope freshmen will use the tools they need from this program to be successful,” he said.

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and prospective students.

“The old website was an issue in three areas,” said O’Hara. “First was the navigation, being able to find information, second was the visual performance, making sure that visually we were attractive to our present and prospective students and third was the making sure we were keeping up-to-date information on our website.”

O’Hara commented that since the website is dynamic their site, be some glitches. He asks that the community be patient because some changes will have to be made because a website is a continuous work in progress.

Another project that will be taking place in the very near future is the re-designing of all the signs around campus. According to O’Hara, some signs have already been changed.

“I’m looking at the signs around campus and I’m glad to say that soon they will take on a new, centralized look,” said O’Hara.

O’Hara hasn’t even been at Rider for an entire year but he is making great leaps towards making Rider an even better institution. He says that all the changes that he and the rest of the administrative staff are bringing to our community will attract the right students to Rider.

“We’re not looking for major growth,” said O’Hara.

“We’re looking for student satisfaction and for people to really see that Rider is a place to not only spend a year, but to gradu ate from.”

Along with O’Hara’s short-term goals for our campus but he also has two very important long-term goals. O’Hara hopes that Rider can attract a wider range of students from all over the globe.

“Hope to establish a stronger understanding and appreciation of what Rider University is in our primary recruitment markets as well as a broader reach,” said O’Hara. “Students from New England states all the way down to Florida and across California as well as internally will hopefully receive a better understanding of Rider.”

Rider has two flourishing campuses and O’Hara has made it a goal for the public to both campuses be recognized as a one united university.

“We have a thriving, exciting environment in Princeton and also in Lawrenceville,” said O’Hara. “We want to explain to the public that Rider offers multiple experiences through one university, which is a ter rific thing.”

O’Hara feels that students who choose Rider will be more than happy with their choice and experience here if they get involved.

“Everyone is here to help the students,” said O’Hara. “We’re going to take leaders that come to Rider to the next level.”

Correction

In the September 24 issue of the Rider News, the photograph of the Wright Hall pod in the center spread was attributed incorrectly. The photograph was taken by Pete Borg.