Editorial: Era of change for Rider

As Thanksgiving nears, the spirit of giving seems to have hit Rider. In the midst of Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week, our president announced that Rider would be receiving a great amount of updates. These updates include updating the current residence halls, constructing two new buildings and replacing many of the roads. The current estimate for all the much needed construction is in the millions. So it seems that Rider is beginning to see some real, positive change. Improvements will be everywhere during the next few years, or at least we hope so.

One of the most exciting parts of the new plans is the update the residence halls will be receiving. Although this is different from the original idea to build an entirely new hall, it is a better one. This way there will be no intense competition for the new building and everybody will be equal and more comfortable than they are currently. Now, in many residents will not have to live in a building that resembles a 1950’s mental institution.

Closing off the campus mall has both its benefits and downsides. Putting a fountain in that area would certainly add to Rider’s looks and maybe improve the spirit of the campus. In the long run, it will probably be beneficial, as students crossing the street would no longer hold up traffic. And if a new student center is built, many will be dashing across the campus mall.

The only problem with these ideas is when you step back into reality. Dr. Mordechai Rozanski has many ambitious ideas to make Rider a better place. The money it would take to do everything he has proposed is not anything near the money we have. To contract a building costs millions of dollars and we’re speaking of building at least two in addition to redoing all the roads around campus and updating the existing residence halls.

In addition, many of these changes are expected to take place before fall 2005. Considering, how long it takes to get a light bulb replaced in a residence hall, does anyone honestly think that things are going to be done by then? It is said that all the construction would have to take place during the summer because most of it is outside work, which makes a dramatic decrease in the time to get all the work done. Even if the construction was done all at once, which would be a nightmare, it doesn’t seem plausible.

As exciting as it is that we have a president with the initiative and drive to make changes, there are thoughts looming in the back of many people’s minds as to what’s really going to happen. Who knows, maybe he’ll prove us all wrong and things will work out perfectly. But for the time being, the campus should tentatively embrace, with caution, Rozanski’s new ideas.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.

Letters to the Editor: The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author for verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail or hand deliver to Centennial House. All letters must be received by midnight the Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

Quote of the Week:

“Traffic signals in New York are just rough guidelines.”

— David Letterman

Lending a Hand: The facts about homelessness

There are many people who say that college students are not apathetic; they just don’t care about important issues. I consider this to be partly untrue. I would not say that college students don’t care; I would say that students are simply not always aware.

This week is national Hunger and Homelessness Awareness (HAHA) Week. The reason why this week is called a week of awareness is because it’s the time to get students to think, something that is supposed to happen at a university.

Many students may not know about the mounting issues of hunger and homelessness around our country. There are often misconceptions and false notions that are repeated and learned. But the reality is that if people don’t take the time to understand and know what is really going on, then nothing is going to change.

Most students, professors and administrators may not know that the average age of a homeless person nationwide is nine and the average age of a homeless person in Mercer County is seven. The homeless all have faces and names and it might be easier to pass them by as a wino or drug user sleeping on a bench somewhere. But the truth is that the growing population of the homeless is composed of single moms and their children, according to USA Today on the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Most students may not know that 19 percent of the homeless are employed, according to the 2003 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. If it were as simple as “just getting a job already” than there would be no reason why people who have jobs have to sleep in their cars or find emergency shelter.

Requests for emergency shelters have gone up so much in urban areas that an average of 30 percent of requests for shelter will go unmet. In fact, 60 percent of shelters in cities have to turn families away because of a lack of resources, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Ten minutes down the road in Trenton there has been a 15 percent increase in requests for emergency shelters. Requests are going up yet there is no one who has a solution to how these requests should be met. An estimated 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness in a year, according to the Urban Institute. I for one don’t know how I would tell a single mom with kids “No, I cannot help you, there is no more room. I can’t give you a place to sleep.”

If everyone at Rider decided to donate food, time or money we could feed everyone at the Trenton Area Soup kitchen for a week, three meals a day, 500 to 600 people per meal, no problem. There is enough food to feed everyone in the world, yet one person dies every 40 seconds from hunger related causes, according to the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness. There are still people in need of food. Why are we still letting this happen if we have...