Editorial: Champions for change

Move-In Day at Rider University’s Lawrenceville campus was especially turbulent this year. In addition to the standard worries of unpacking, getting ready for classes and missing family members, students now had a completely new environment surrounding them. Fences were blocking off what once was a large grassy field and huge mounds of dirt stood in its place. It seemed as if residents were entering a prison rather than a renowned university preparing for the future.

The new scenery comes as the result of construction that will bring the Lawrenceville campus a new residence hall, a Student Recreation Center (SRC) and several major landscaping improvements. However, in addition to the campus’ current ugliness, the work has brought about a large number of other problems for students, many of which are much more serious than a less-than-picturesque view. Those living in Hill Residence Hall have been hit particularly hard. The construction work begins at 8 a.m. every day and, as a result, does so the life of a Hill resident. They must also deal with the scores of students who, rather than walk around the building to get to Daly’s Dining Hall, decide to cut through instead. This has raised the hallway noise level for those trying to study and triggered an outbreak of vandalism, causing damage to the hall and greatly inconveniencing everyone living inside.

However, these are all temporary problems that will hopefully relent through-out the year and end when the construction is completed. At that time, students will be greatly rewarded for their patience. The new residence hall promises to be much more accommodating than the existing ones and will certainly be easier on the eyes than a mound of dirt. The SRC will give intramural sports teams a place to call their own while also providing residents not living in Poyda Residence Hall with a gym that won’t require a work-out to reach. Finally, those upset with the campus’ current appearance will have no reason to complain once all of President Mondechai Riznik’s landscaping projects have been completed.

All of these improvements are still a long way off, but not due to lack of trying on Rider’s part. Permit problems over the summer pushed the start of construction back considerably, causing the estimated finish date of spring 2005 to be changed to fall 2005. Sadly, this situation could not have been avoided and the University worked quickly to overcome it. The delay could have lasted much longer than it did and would have caused even more problems for students if it had continued.

In addition, constructing two completely new buildings is not an overnight process. Workers must ensure that the facilities have plumbing and electricity while also running telephone, Internet, and television cables to each room as well as building the actual structures from the ground up. Every one of these things will take time to complete and often students will not see a significant amount of progress. Rest assured, work is being done. Hopefully, this time next year, the Lawrenceville campus won’t just go back to being the same old Rider, but will be considerably better off.

While residents may criticize the campus’ current condition and be upset by the many inconveniences they are experiencing, they must realize that these things are all short-term problems. They are unavoidable consequences of the effort to make life at Rider better than it has ever been before. With a little bit of patience, we can all help to turn that mountain range of dirt into something we can all be proud of.

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