Editorial: Some mixed reviews

Being ranked among the top 351 colleges in the nation for its academics by The Princeton Review has caused much excitement around Rider. But a closer look at all the facts may paint a different picture of the school.

Rider ranks eighth for schools where students are unhappiest, eleven where professors get bad grades and fifteenth for schools with small and unsightly campuses.

A glance at these figures can be extremely confusing. It raises questions as to what can be done to improve things and to how things can be so bad when academically things are so great.

As for students being unhappy, for the most part, it may not be the school’s fault entirely. Getting involved is key to a rewarding college experience and here at Rider there is a club or organization for almost everything imaginable. There is almost always something going on around campus for a chance for students to get out of their routines.

Professors being graded badly by students should not be a huge shock for anyone. Every teacher is different and sometimes who you get is just the luck of the draw. There are some teachers who are loved by many and those who are loathed. Unfortunately, that is probably the case almost everywhere. Rider’s faculty, however, is terrific about having office hours and is usually available if a student looks for the help.

Rider’s small campus is probably what attracts many people to it. Size is an important factor for most when selecting a school and changing that would change what Rider is all about. The small campus keeps everybody and everything relatively close together, which works out not only for residents but commuters as well. If the walk to classes seems long now, imagine what it’s like at a school with 15,000 people.

Saying Rider’s campus is unsightly seems a bit silly. The grass is practically always mowed to a decent length, there is not trash everywhere and flowers are planted where possible. Adding to the atmosphere are ducks and extremely pudgy squirrels that roam the campus. Rider is incredibly photogenic in the spring when the flowers bloom and in the fall when the leaves change colors. Trees that are toilet-papered are usually cleaned up within a few days and the only thing that makes this campus gross is when it rains and everything turns to mud. It’s something everyone deals with, and really cannot be helped.

To really get things done at Rider, students need to speak up about what they want. Write to the newspaper (see for the newspaper) and express your opinions so that someone can address them. Use the directory to look up the people you need to speak to and make a few phone calls. If enough people speak up, somebody just might listen.

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 campus 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:

“Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you walk into an open sewer and die.” — Mel Brooks

The Upcoming Election: It pays to stay informed

Mention politics to another college student and you will most likely get a glare, a puzzled glance or a smile. If you get the last reaction congratulate yourself because it is a rare occurrence. Why is this? In today’s world doesn’t it pay to be politically active, or at least politically aware? Beyond the economic reasons, politics can be funny and interesting to everyone. There is also no real excuse not to be informed about it, since everyone has to have an opinion about something.

The topic of politics, at least, should be interesting to everyone. That is exactly what politics is about, and most of the issues directly affect college students. Taxes and Social Security are consistently talked about in the debates near election time, but they are merely the topics politicians think voters want to hear the most about. So if you’re a voter, or want to be, the only way to get them to address a topic close to your heart is to speak up about it and make it known that you think it’s important.

Also, sometimes finding the right candidate takes some work. It may seem like a waste of time to those with the mentality that their vote doesn’t count, but at the very least everyone should try to find someone to support. If nothing else, select an issue you feel strongly about and then choose your candidate based on that. Social Security may be discussed by the candidates on TV, but you can typically find out more by going to their websites or channel surfing to see if they are being individually interviewed.

To give an example, right now the Democrats are having their primaries to choose a candidate who will eventually go on to run against President George W. Bush, Senator John Edwards is my current favorite. One of his campaign issues is to have a “College for Everyone” plan which would make the first year free for public state universities and community colleges. To me, that sounds like a great idea. I think that the high cost of education should be addressed by candidates and on the federal level. His plan would be one way to do it.

Also, as an animal lover, protecting the environment is an important quality I look for in a candidate. Edwards has a Senate record of voting to preserve Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from drilling, as well as voting to preserve the Clean Air Act.

It also pays to get informed. Whether you like it or not, taxes are a part of life, and how much you pay and where it goes is controlled by the people in office that you vote for. This brings up another important topic, which is voting. It’s often pushed on everyone at election time to vote. If you don’t like or pay attention to the candidates, why would you want to vote? This makes no sense. I’ve always thought political awareness should come first. This way, you can smile the next time someone asks you about politics, knowing exactly who and what you voted for.