



**Ripon Parents Network (RPN) Annual Spring Meeting**  
**Meeting Highlights and Minutes from the In-Person and Virtual Hybrid Meeting**  
**Saturday, February 19, 2022**

**Present**

**RPN Leadership:** **Miko Gill P'23** (RPN Co-Chair), **Chris Smith P'23** (RPN Co-Chair), **Shelly Boelter P'25** (RPN Social Media Ambassador), **Stefanie Meeker P'24** (RPN Social Media Ambassador), **Ann Wendt P'24** (RPN Social Media Ambassador)

**RPN Attendees:** **Lisa Bayer P'24**, **Brian and Telisa Drake P'25**, **Tim and Nicole Geocarlis P'24**, **Karyn Graham P'24** and **Sue Cook P'24**, **Kristin Hauck P'25**, **Becky and David Hickman P'24**, **JJ Johnson P'25**, **Chad and Jill Liptow P'23**, **Ron and Karen Millard P'24**, **Tim and Lisa O'Halloran P'24**, **Jean Rigden P'19/P'22**, **Deanne and Curtis Schultz P'23**, **Beverley Sadha P'24**, **Jennifer Von Ruden P'25**, **Lavelle Gill P'23**, **Michelle Willits P'22**, **Dawn Zielinski P'25**

**College Administration/Staff:** **Dustin Tessmer** (General Manager, SAGE Dining Services), **Amy Gerretsen '04** (Director of Constituent Engagement), **Shawn Karsten '09** (Vice President for Advancement and Marketing & Communications), **Chris Ogle '80** (Vice President and Dean of Students), **Kedren Hardee** (Executive Chef, SAGE Dining Services), **Jolene Schatzinger '07** (Associate Director of Engagement), **Michele Wittler '76** (Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar), **Michael Zink** (Catering Manager, SAGE Dining Services)

**Welcome and Greetings (10:15 a.m.)**

Attendees settled in and those who attended in-person enjoyed light refreshments provided by the Office of Constituent Engagement.

**Called to Order and Introductions (10:25 a.m.)**

- Jolene Schatzinger '07 opened the meeting with a brief welcome, followed by a welcome from the RPN Leadership Team: Co-Chairs: Miko Gill P'23 and Chris Smith P'23, Social Media Ambassadors: Shelly Boelter P'25, Stefanie Meeker P'24, and Ann Wendt P'24.
- All attendees who joined the meeting in person or virtually took turns introducing themselves.
- Meeting Schedule Overview and Explanation of RPN Purpose and Mission
  - Smith P'23 drew attention to the RPN Constitution and recited the RPN Mission Statement for the group.
  - The RPN Fall 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as written.
  - Future opportunities to volunteer with the RPN were shared, along with an explanation of how families can engage with the College and other members.
  - Meeting materials were briefly reviewed (in a folder for those meeting in person or included in an email for those joining virtually).
  - The schedule for the day was reviewed and all were encouraged to ask questions to the presenters.

- Gill P'23 was re-introduced and led all presenter introductions.

### **Shawn Karsten '09, Vice President of Advancement and Marketing & Communications (10:45 a.m.)**

Karsten '09 provided updates on the following:

- The search for Ripon's 14th President that is being led by Russell Reynolds - search committee is reviewing candidates and initial interviews will begin in late march
- A campaign feasibility study to understand the viability of future fundraising initiatives including infrastructure priorities and projects.
  - Farr Hall new construction and renovation - conversations with principal gift donors will begin by this summer with a goal of breaking ground in the summer of 2023
    - Residence hall upgrades - conversations with student leaders are actively stadium facility for the football and soccer fields (currently share facilities with the local school district)
- These updates have only yet been shared internally, and will soon be shared externally
- As a reminder, prioritization of student scholarships, faculty support, and the Ripon Fund, as a whole, are always fundraising priorities no matter what new initiative the College has
- Encouraged parents to be partners and advocates for the vision and mission of the College
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*Meeting attendees took a short break and participated in a "get-to-know-you" activity with fellow attendees.*

### **Chris Ogle '80, Vice President and Dean of Students (11:15 a.m.)**

Ogle '80 provided an overview of the current state of student affairs including:

- COVID-19
  - Discussed COVID-19 numbers throughout the year, the College's testing protocol, and why decisions were made for procedures and practices at the College.
  - Shared that the current masking practices were being reviewed by the College administration in consultation with local health officials.
  - Reminded parents that the campus does have a nurse practitioner on staff, and several current students are employed as EMTs through the City of Ripon.
  - Vaccination rates were addressed, as well as the COVID-19 dashboard.
- Student activities remain strong and there are many ways that students can get involved on campus. Involved students are often those who matriculate at a higher rate. Reminder to parents that appointments with mental health counselors are available on campus at no charge to students.
- Provided a facilities update as to the current challenges and opportunities for the College.

### **Michele Wittler '76, Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar (11:30 a.m.)**

- Ripon College Plus Semester(s) Program is designed to help students deal with the COVID-19 disruption to academics.
  - Tuition may be waived for students who extend their academic career and who qualify under the program's guidelines.
  - The College had ten students participate in the program in the fall and eight students participated this spring semester.

- Information was shared regarding recent tenure-track faculty hires at the College: Politics & Government, Business Management and Economics, and Exercise Science.
- Discussion of how mid-semester grade reports are handled for students receiving a D or Fin a course, as well as how parents may have access to grades keeping in mind FERPA compliance

### **SAGE Dining Services Overview (11:45 a.m.)**

Introduction of SAGE Dining Services' new general manager, Dustin Tessmer.

- Provided an overview of SAGE and where they plan to go in the future at Ripon, as well as options across campus and hours of food availability.
- Encouraged attendees to utilize the Touch of SAGE app and encouraged parents to have their students use this app too.
  - Features include the daily menu, allergen information, nutritional values, and accessibility.
  - Students are encouraged to advocate for their needs by using the Touch of SAGE app menus and filters first, and then by speaking with a member of the SAGE staff if preferences and needs are not being met.
- Reviewed meal plan information and shared that the number of meals a student has can be checked at the register when they swipe their card.
- Grab n' Go options were explained to members of the RPN.

**SAGE Tour of Pickard Commons (Noon)** SAGE personnel guided RPN members through each food station in the Main Dining Room.

### **Recognition of Outgoing RPN Members with Graduating Students (12:25 p.m.)**

- RPN members who are parents/guardians of seniors who were present at the meeting and who will be ending their service to the RPN were acknowledged and thanked.
- Recognized and thanked the outgoing RPN Leadership Team: **Cheryl Bair P'22** (RPN Co-Chair), **Jean Rigden P'19/P'22** (RPN Co-Chair), and **Amy Fischer P'22** (RPN Social Media Ambassador) for their service.

### **Local Community Overview, Stefanie Meeker P'24 (12:30 p.m.)**

- Attendees were asked to write down what they wish they would have known earlier about the Ripon community and what they wish they still knew; answers were collected to be answered on the RPN Facebook group
- Meeker P'24 provided a testimonial as to why the downtown is a great place to shop and visit with their students. Meeker P'24 is a business owner of a downtown boutique (Blue Sparrow) and she shared how she sees businesses welcoming students and their families.
- Ripon Community links:
  - Ripon Area Business Directory: [ripon-wi.com/ripon/connect/find-a-business/](http://ripon-wi.com/ripon/connect/find-a-business/)
  - Historic Downtown Business Directory: [riponmainst.com/riponmainst/](http://riponmainst.com/riponmainst/)
- A short informational session was provided about Ripon's local grocery store, Webster's Marketplace. Students can order food and other items online and have it delivered to campus for a minimal fee.

**Meeting Wrap-Up (12:40 p.m.)**

Reminder, please be active in the RPN Facebook group, and look for opportunities to volunteer at Summer Orientation (late June), Move In Day (August), and Family Weekend (October 7-9).

**Adjournment and Invitation to Attend Parent Social (12:45 p.m.)**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jolene Schatzinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jolene Schatzinger '07  
Ripon Parents Network Executive Secretary  
Associate Director of Engagement  
Ripon College