



**Ripon Parents Network (RPN) Spring Annual Meeting**  
**Meeting Highlights and Minutes from the Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom**  
**Saturday, February 27, 2021**

**Present:**

**RPN Leadership:** Jean Ridgen P'19/P'22 (RPN Co-Chair), Cheryl Bair P'22 (RPN Co-Chair), Amy Fischer P'22 (RPN Social Media Ambassador)

**Parent Attendees:** Karyn Graham P'24, Dionne Landgraf P'21, Lisa O'Halloran P'24, Jeannette Paulson P'22, Beverly Sadha P'24, Diane Stoeberl P'24, Kristin and Keith Vanden Huevel P'23, Ann Wendt P'24, Dawn Zielinski P'25.

**College Administration/Staff:** Brenda Gabrielson (Director of the Franzen Center for Academic Success), Amy Gerretsen '04 (Director of Constituent Engagement), Lyn McCarthy '83 (Regional Director of Admission), Maria Mendoza-Bautista (Director of Multicultural Affairs), Jolene Schatzinger '07 (Associate Director of Engagement), Michele Wittler '76 (Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar).

**Welcome and Introductions (11 a.m.)**

Jolene Schatzinger '07 opened the meeting with a brief welcome, followed by Jean Ridgen P'19/P'22, providing a welcome on behalf of the RPN Leadership Team. All attendees used the chat feature of the meeting to make self-introductions. The RPN Leadership Team verbally introduced themselves and expressed appreciation for all who are in attendance, as well as acknowledging that they look forward to being able to hold this meeting in person in the future. Amy Gerretsen '04 was introduced and encouraged engagement to continue throughout the meeting using the chat feature. Ridgen announced that all attendees would receive a Ripon Parent Network t-shirt.

**Ripon Parents Network Overview and Meeting Outline (11:15 a.m.)**

Ridgen described the purpose of the Ripon Parents Network and encouraged attendees to consider opportunities to get involved such as through volunteering with summer orientation, student move-in, and/or by taking on a leadership role. Interested families can email Schatzinger at [schatzingerj@ripon.edu](mailto:schatzingerj@ripon.edu) if they are interested in more information. An overview of the following four presentations were given, along with brief introductions and a reminder for families in attendance to ask questions.

**Lyn McCarthy '83, Regional Director of Admission (11:25 a.m.)**

- Discussed navigating the admissions world during COVID-19 and shared how they are connecting with new parents and families virtually. Virtual engagement includes: virtual campus tours, faculty Zoom appointments, Hawk Talks from student to student, alumni connections, and online panels. The goal is to help bring Ripon to life, even when students can't visit campus.
- Shared news of Leigh Mlodzik '02, Dean of Admission, will now be Dean of Enrollment at Simpson College in Iowa. Ridgen and Bair have authored a letter for parents of accepted students, sharing their experiences as parents, as well as welcoming all new parents to join RPN. A similar letter in Spanish has been authored by the parents of Sol Gonzalez '22.

- Incoming student deposit number is 145 compared to 120 last year and 83 in 2019, and is providing excitement for the Class of 2025. Encouraged parents to wear their Ripon gear and help share the Ripon story, spreading the enthusiasm for Ripon. The Admission Office is also always willing to take referrals for potential interested students, and the online referral form can be found here: [www.ripon.edu/refer-student/](http://www.ripon.edu/refer-student/).
- Reminded parents to stay involved in the Facebook page, and encouraged parents to share their enthusiasm and their stories about Ripon on the Ripon Parent Network Facebook page.

**Michele Wittler '76, Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar (11:40 a.m.)**

- Provided an overview of the Ripon Plus Semester(s) Program which allows students to attend for a ninth or tenth semester tuition free. Eligibility requirements include GPA, full-time enrollment status, and an educational reason for the continuation. Students must agree to live on campus as well, but there is some flexibility around that eligibility component. Students and families should direct questions to the Office of the Registrar.
- The VP and Dean of Faculty, John Sisko, is very engaged in new faculty searches, currently conducting several in exercise science, music education - specifically a choral and choir conductor, and a three-year position in business and economics. Two announced searches are in response to the diversity and inclusion audit report conducted in 2020, specifically a program that hopes to bring faculty to campus who are working on their Ph.D. and can enrich campus with diversity and teach speciality coursework.
- Provided an overview of the academic advising program. Once a student declares a major they must choose a faculty member in that department for advising. A student's faculty advisor is involved in helping selecting coursework and discussing potential career plans. Most students declare their major during their sophomore year, but there is no requirement to do so.
- Provided a brief overview of the Catalyst Curriculum and the continuing benefits of the simplicity of its design and implementation for meeting the general education requirements. Many students find the five required course sequence freeing, which allows students to easily pick up a second or third major, if interested, or take classes from around the curriculum and become a well-rounded liberal arts student.

**Brenda Gabrielson, Director of the Franzen Center for Academic Success (11:55 a.m.)**

- Shared an overview of the types of academic assistance provided free of charge to students through the Franzen Center for Academic Success, located in Lane Library. Services include:
  - Contracted one-on-one tutoring, as well as small group tutoring, available by online request on the myRipon Portal tab for the Franzen Center. Currently, all contracted tutoring is being offered online through Zoom.
  - Quantitative drop-in tutoring for assistance with coursework in physics, math, biology, chemistry, economics, psychology, and Catalyst 120.
  - Writing and presentation tutors are available, and no appointment is needed. Students can share papers or presentations for feedback.
  - Peer Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) opportunity allows student-led workshops that enhance learning. This semester the focus is biology.
- Encouraged parents to promote getting a tutor and/or to become a tutor, which is a paid position (one of the higher paid positions on campus). Contracted tutors must have received a B or higher in the class they want to tutor and must receive a recommendation from a faculty member. It is ideal to hire tutors who they themselves had a tutor in the past so that they know how it works. Right now there are about 160 contracts signed for tutoring, and tutoring is something that is highly encouraged on campus.

**Maria Mendoza-Bautista, Director of Multicultural Affairs (12:10 p.m.)**

- Following a land acknowledgement to honor ancestors and honoring the land that she is being invited to, Mendoza-Bautisa shared the Diversity Mission Statement of Ripon College, as well as provided an overview of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI).
- The four core values of the CDI are 1. Education and advocacy, 2. Allyship, 3. Collaboration, and 4. Awareness and Visibility.
- The CDI, opened in 2015, and has been a transformative space on campus that promotes affirmation, validation, and visibility for all members of our campus community.
- Opportunities for students to intern or volunteer with the CDI, while parents and families are welcome to follow the CDI on facebook at [www.facebook.com/ripondiversity](http://www.facebook.com/ripondiversity);
- Resources that are available through the CD includes life coaching/advising, computer stations, a cozy lounge area, a study room, school supplies, snacks, a library collection with culturally relevant books and movies, an art therapy corner, and tv console.
- The CDI provides international students a place they are always welcome, where they can celebrate their birthdays and socialize. The CDI also facilitates the “home away from home” program that connects international students with a community member, such as a professor, to share meals with and have a family-type connection.
- Provided an overview of upcoming events and encouraged parents to motivate their students to engage with the Center, including getting involved in one of the many clubs that are part of the Diversity Coalition.

#### **Wrap-Up and Send-Off (12:30 p.m.)**

- Appreciation was given for the RPN Leadership Team, for the presenters, and for all who attended.
- Reminder to all families to stay active on the RPN Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/RiponParentsNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/groups/RiponParentsNetwork)
- Save the Date for #OneDayRally on Wednesday, April 28, which is Ripon’s annual day of giving. Everyone is encouraged to share their Ripon pride as parents on their social media platforms.
- Contact the Office of Constituent Engagement with any questions and/or to express interest in getting more involved with RPN.

#### **Adjournment (12:35 p.m.)**

Respectfully submitted,



Jolene Schatzinger '07  
Associate Director of Engagement