



**Ripon Parents Network (RPN) Annual Fall Meeting**  
**Meeting Highlights and Minutes from the Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom**  
**Thursday, October 28, 2021**

**Present**

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

**RPN Attendees:** Tonya Bartoletti P'24, Chris and Shelly Boelter P'25, Rob Davis P'24, Brian and Telisa Drake P'25, Kathy Fuentes P'24, Thajuana Giles-Smith P'25, Miko Gill P'23, Kristin Hauck P'25, Kris Hodgkins P'25, John and Gail Johnson P'25, Denise Jess P'23, Jani Koester P'23, Tim Krueger P'25, Dawn Murry P'25, Sheila Oppeneer P'24, Mike Schafer P'24, Mark and Nancy Schindler P'25, Chris Smith P'23, Robert and Amy Stapley P'25, Becky Thorson-Randall P'25, Maida Villanueva P'25, Ann Wendt P'24, Dawn Zielinski P'25.

**College Administration/Staff:** Scott Dahlin (District Manager, SAGE Dining Services), Brenda Gabrielson (Director of the Franzen Center for Academic Success), Amy Gerretsen '04 (Director of Constituent Engagement), Mary Hatlen (Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development), Chris Ogle '80 (Vice President and Dean of Students), Beth Pierce (Catering Manager, SAGE Dining Services), Jolene Schatzinger '07 (Associate Director of Engagement), Tom Williamson (Interim General Manager, SAGE Dining Services), Michele Wittler '76 (Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar).

**Welcome and Introductions (7 p.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 were 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, Director of Constituent Engagement, was introduced and provided a formal welcome on behalf of the Office of Constituent Engagement, which serves parents, families, friends, and alumni of Ripon College. Gerretsen thanked families for attending Family Weekend on campus in early October, and encouraged participants to continue contributing throughout the meeting using the chat feature to connect with each other.

**Update from Chris Ogle '80, Vice President and Dean of Students**

- COVID-19 Overview - A couple of weeks before fall break, campus had an increase in COVID-19 cases, so social activities for students were reduced and some classes were moved to larger spaces. The College has had 43 positive COVID-19 cases this semester with seven of the students remaining on campus to quarantine, and the remainder leaving campus.

- 261 contact tracings have occurred to determine close contacts resulting in 52 students needing to quarantine with just 12 of those remaining on campus.
- Subsequently, a large number of students had to miss in-person courses this semester, and Ogle applauded the faculty for making accommodations.
- Of the entire student population, the College's data shows that 1% of vaccinated students tested positive compared to 25% of unvaccinated students.
- Current challenges with SAGE Dining Services - The College has been in regular contact with SAGE colleagues and a plan is in place to get food service back on track with the expected level of service. Ogle prefaced the SAGE discussion that is planned for later in this meeting with the fact that there are currently staffing and supply chain challenges across all businesses in the local area.
- Increase in Parking Concerns - More students have cars on campus, so a new temporary parking lot by the Willmore Center has opened, and the College is looking at more permanent options. Ripon College has historically provided better parking options than most campuses.
- Shared -
  - A new contract with an outside campus security firm will begin in January to provide enhanced services, including an improved ability to provide backup since they provide services to other local entities.
  - Mid-semester grade reports show good news, the percentage of students who received one is the lowest that the College has seen in a number of years. Grade reports are issued for students receiving a D or F in a particular course.

#### **Ripon Parents Network Overview and Election of New Officers (7:10 p.m.)**

- Schatzinger read the mission of the Ripon Parents Network as written in the constitution. The outgoing RPN Leadership Team of Jean Ridgen P'19/P'22 (RPN Co-Chair), Cheryl Bair P'22 (RPN Co-Chair), Amy Fischer P'22 (RPN Social Media Ambassador) was thanked for their incredible service to the College and their commitment to engaging parents and families over the past few years. A message of appreciation was read by Schatzinger for Lyn McCarthy '83, Regional Director of Admission, on behalf of the entire Office of Admission staff.
- A brief explanation of the RPN officer positions was provided, as was a list of members who had volunteered to be considered for officer positions. The meeting attendees were given an opportunity to put forth any additional nominations. Hearing none, a motion was made by Ridgen and seconded by Fischer to accept the slate of officers as presented. The following RPN members were elected by a vote of all present without any objections, and will begin service in 2022:
  - 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
- Congratulations were bestowed upon the newly elected RPN Leadership Team.

#### **Mary Hatlen, Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development (7:20 p.m.)**

- Hatlen introduced herself to the group as she began her role as the Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development on July 15. She brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education with her to Ripon.
- Resources offered by the Center for Career and Professional Development include: resume and cover letter help, interview preparation, mock interviews, personalized career assessments to help explore career paths and/or majors, meeting spaces to connect with employers, job shadowing and internship exploration, and areas to study.
- Parents were encouraged to ask their students how they are engaging with the Career and Professional Development Center which is located in the lower level of the Commons. Students are

welcome to stop in without an appointment to learn what can all be offered to them. There are often employer spotlights held in the Center, as well as numerous other events for students.

- November is National Career Development Month and a number of events are planned, including an Open House on November 1.
- The new Rally's Career Closet that offers professional attire free to students for interviews was highlighted.

### **Brenda Gabrielson, Director of the Franzen Center for Academic Success (7:30 p.m.)**

An overview of the types of academic assistance provided free of charge to students through the Franzen Center, located in Lane Library, was shared:

- Writing and Presentation Drop-In Tutors - Students can bring in a hard copy of their paper to be reviewed and receive feedback, with no appointment needed. Parents are encouraged to remind their students to have a tutor review their paper for not just grammar, but also check citations, paper organization, thesis construction, etc. There is also an option for electronic paper drop off.
- Contracted Tutoring - Students can request a one-one-tutor at any time during the semester, and although earlier is better, it is never too late to request a tutor. Requests for tutors are made online through the myRipon portal, Franzen Center tab.
  - Parents are encouraged to promote becoming a tutor to their students. Tutoring is a great on-campus job because of high demand and strong pay for an on campus position. A tutor must be available for a minimum of two hours per week.
  - Contracted tutors must have received a B or higher in the class they tutor, have a 3.25 cumulative GPA, and be recommended by a faculty member.
- Quantitative Drop-In Tutors - For assistance with coursework in physics, math, biology, chemistry, economics, psychology, and Catalyst 120, with no appointment needed. This resource is available three nights per week.
- Peer-Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) - A student-led workshop that enhances learning with a more hands-on approach. The session leader works closely with the course instructor to develop this small group student session (approximately 10 students). This semester the PLUS focus is Biology 121.

### **Michele Wittler '76, Associate Dean of Faculty and Registrar (7:40 p.m.)**

- Faculty Search - Currently, adding three tenure-line positions in the departments of exercise science, politics and government, and business, economics, and finance. A limited-term search for psychology is also open. There are a few other academic areas that are being considered for faculty additions.
- Mid-semester grade reports came out recently, on a positive note, the number of grade reports was lower than the previous semester.
- Students still have time to make improvements to their course grades, and to use resources available to help them do so. For some students, these grade reports may inform them of whether they may want to drop a course.
- Registration for the spring semester opened October 28 with student's registering based on seniority. Students must meet with an academic advisor to register for their courses.
- As a reminder, the Registrar's Office certifies that every student is meeting the requirements to satisfy their degree, working very closely with academic advisors, as well as the Franzen Center for Academic Success, the College's professional counselors, the Dean of Students Office, and the Residence Life Office.

**SAGE Dining Services - Scott Dahlin, Regional Director; Beth Pierce, Catering Director; and Tom Williamson, Interim General Manager (7:50 p.m.)**

- The current concerns from both students and parents were acknowledged, as the current challenges faced by SAGE, including supply chain issues and staffing shortages, many of which are still related to COVID-19, were shared.
  - Staff recruitment has been a challenge with large employers in Ripon, like Smuckers and Alliance Laundry, paying linework employees over \$20/hour.
  - Last minute menu changes do occur when scheduled items are no longer available.
- The Touch of SAGE app is accessible by all students and features filters to search for food items that fit certain food preferences and allergies. 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.
- Recent improvements on campus:
  - Seven out of eight stations in the Commons for lunch are now open, but there is still room for improvement on the evenings and weekends to open more stations.
  - Dahlin talked about how Pierce and Williamson are working at food stations, and are committed to doing the best they can. Scott emphasized that they are fully invested and are trying to be better.
- Addressed questions:
  - Recent supplier issues with providing lactose-free milk options, but soy milk is currently available.
  - Students are able to work for SAGE as an on-campus job. 12 students were hired at the beginning of the year, and SAGE is currently looking to hire more students who are willing to work a few hours each month on weekends.
- Dining options throughout campus include:
  - Grab & Go at the Willmore Center - The SAGE retail manager has been working with students directly to improve offerings.
  - The Spot, located in the lower level of Harwood Memorial Union, features burgers, wraps, boneless wings, and casual food.
  - Starbucks is located in the lower level of the Pickard Commons.
  - The Main Dining Room on the upper level of Pickard Commons has eight different stations up on and running for lunch during the week.
  - Rally on the Run allows students to take food to go from the Main Dining Room for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.
- Recently the dishwasher was broken in the Main Dining Room causing diners to use disposable utensils and dishware for several meals until the parts arrived and the service call could be completed.
- Issues and/or questions related to food service at Ripon College can be directed to Tom Williamson, SAGE Dining Services Interim General Manager, at [thomas@sagedining.com](mailto:thomas@sagedining.com).

### **Meeting Wrap-Up (8:10 p.m.)**

Final acknowledgements of appreciation were shared for the outgoing RPN Leadership Team, tonight's meeting presenters, all parents who were able to attend, and, a special congratulations, for the newly elected RPN Leadership Team.

### **Reminders:**

- All members are invited to stay active on the RPN Facebook group sharing positive content and support of prospective and current parents: [www.facebook.com/groups/RiponParentsNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/groups/RiponParentsNetwork).
- Information regarding transportation for students for upcoming Thanksgiving and winter breaks, was shared with students directly by the Office of Student Activities and Orientation (SAO), and posted to the RPN Facebook group.

- Parents are welcome to visit campus and meet with tonight's presenters in-person, as long as the campus COVID-19 protocols are being followed.
- Contact the Office of Constituent Engagement with any questions and/or to express interest in getting more involved with RPN volunteer opportunities.

**Adjournment (8:15 p.m.)**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jolene Schatzinger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

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