



Ripon Parents Network (RPN) Annual Spring Meeting
Meeting Highlights and Minutes from Virtual Meeting
Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024

Present

RPN Attendees: Kristin Hauck P'25, Beverly Sadha P'24, Judy Bukstein GP'24, Maria Balderas P'27, Kristy Staszak P'27, Sue Walz P'26, Robb Kahl '94/P'26, Dawn Zielinski P'25, Barbara Beuscher P'27, Joseph Lazo P'24, Julie Plaster P'27, Jen Pacholke P'27, Jenny Gray P'27 (on the phone), Pervaiz Junejo '87/P'27

College Administration/Staff: Victoria Folse (President), Amy Gerretsen '04 (Director of Constituent Data and Experiential Engagement), Shawn Karsten '09 (Vice President for Advancement, Marketing and Communications and Chief of Staff), Chris Ogle '80 (Vice President and Dean of Students), Jennifer Machacek (Vice President for Enrollment), Chris Schumacher (Director of Athletics), John Sisko (Vice President and Dean of Faculty), Kelly Nielsen (Director of Annual Giving and Volunteer Engagement), Solangel Pappas '22 (Assistant Director of Annual Giving and Volunteer Engagement), Brenda Gabrielson P'27 (Director of the Franzen Center for Academic Success), Brittany Followay (Assistant Professor of Exercise Science)

Welcome and Introductions, Kelly Nielsen, Director of Annual Giving and Volunteer Engagement (9:02 AM):

Kelly Nielsen opened the meeting and provided a formal welcome on behalf of the Office of Annual Giving and Engagement, which serves parents, families, friends, and alumni of Ripon College. Kelly thanked families for attending. Staff and parents introduced themselves in the chat forum. Kelly and Amy Gerretsen discussed the restructure for the Office of Advancement and encouraged those present to consider formally volunteering with the Ripon Parents Network. The RPN Facebook page was discussed; those with feedback should reach Kelly directly, as we work together to ensure the page supports both current and prospective families.

9:15 AM: Franzen Center for Academic Success update, Brenda Gabrielson P'27, Director of Franzen Center for Academic Success:

Brenda shared that the Franzen Center (offering six collaborative private study rooms) provides coordinated peer-to-peer tutoring. Students can tutor if they've already taken the class and received a B grade or higher. Writing and presentation help are available for drop-ins, no appointment necessary. Tutors are available every day except Saturday and can be booked through the student portal. Quantitative tutoring drop-in is also available for 100 and 200 level courses.

9:30 AM: Update on Career Services:

Kelly provided an update on behalf of Mary Hatlen, Director of the Center for Career & Professional Development. Resources offered at the Center for Career & 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 Career Services, which is located in the lower level of the Commons. Students are welcome to stop in without an appointment to learn what can be offered to them. There are often employer spotlights and graduate school spotlights - accessible opportunities for students to learn more about opportunities during and after college. Additional career development opportunities include career expos, Career Discovery Tour, professional etiquette and lingo training, and LinkedIn profile support (with professional headshots).

9:40 AM: Career Discovery Tour (CDT) - Amy Gerretsen '04, Director of Constituent Data and Experiential Engagement:

CDT is a donor-funded initiative started in 2013 by a former president and the Alumni Board. Taking place over spring break each year, Amy and Mary Hatlen take students to a different metro area to meet with alumni to learn about their unique industries. Cities visited include Chicago, Denver, Washington, D.C., Houston, Twin Cities, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin. This year's trip is headed to Boston and New York City! The advertised price is \$450 per student and includes transportation, lodging, and some meals. Over 150 students have gone on a CDT trip; 14 are on the upcoming trip.

9:45 AM: Upcoming volunteer and networking opportunities for RPN in 2024:

Kelly discussed the different ways for parents to get involved as RPN members: Summer Orientation, Move-in Weekend, Family Weekend/Homecoming, connecting with prospective families, attending regional events, and supporting Rally Days (online and on-campus giving events). She encourages families on the call to consider volunteering.

10:00 AM: RC 175: A Strategic Plan for Ripon College - President Folsie and the Administrative Council:

College leadership discussed the future of the College and how it will impact current students. President Folsie covered the highlights of the recently released strategic plan that is currently in the final stages of being endorsed by College stakeholders. Below are some of the plan's goals: Achieve at least 1000 students in enrollment, assure financial stability and long-term stability, promote high-impact practices. Residence Halls are a high priority and work will begin this summer on upgrades. Parents are encouraged to read the strategic plan here: <https://ripon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/RC-175-A-Strategic-Plan-for-Ripon-College-web.pdf>. Shawn Karsten '09 covered the highlights of the Forever Ripon campaign. Parents are encouraged to get updates here: <https://ripon.edu/forever-ripon/>. Questions submitted included inquiries on the Ripon Plus program, current enrollment, financial literacy classes, and managing scheduling conflicts while staying involved.

11:06 AM: Barcelona Study Abroad - President Folse:

This experience is new under Folse's leadership; all details can be found here:

<https://ripon.edu/spain/>. Students are encouraged to apply, regardless of financial means.

Applications for the Spring 2025 trip are due May 10, 2024, and deposits are due September 2, 2024.

11:28 AM: Masters of Exercise Science - Assistant Professor Brittany Followay:

Report on the new program. Brittany spoke on both the undergraduate and graduate programs in EXS. These programs leverage Ripon's natural strengths and prepare students for a growing industry. Graduate program information can be found here: <https://ripon.edu/area/master-of-exercise-science/>. Undergraduate majors include Athletic Training, Human Performance, Physical Education & Health, and Sports Management. Capstone experiences include research projects, regional/national conferences, peer-reviewed publications, graduate program applications, and resume development support.

11:45 AM: Closing remarks and questions:

Kelly wrapped up the discussion from earlier regarding RPN volunteer opportunities and encouraged parents to save the date for Family Weekend and Homecoming, October 11-12, 2024. This will coincide with Homecoming and a night football game under the lights! No final questions were submitted.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly Nielsen

Director of Annual Giving and Volunteer
Engagement

