

**Ripon College Parents' Network Meeting (RPN)  
Meeting Highlights and Minutes  
Saturday, October 13, 2018**

**Present:**

**Parent Attendees:** Rebecca Kollmann P'19 (President), Kevin Dykstra '83/P'16/P'16, Dionne & Mark Landgraf P'21, Kathleen O'Brien P'21, Julie and Frank Korb P'20, Jean Rigden P'19, Heidi Grignon P'22, Candice McHugh P'21, Charles Reid P'21, Robert Przybelski P'22

**College Administration/Staff:** Yvonne Nicklaus (Associate Director of Engagement and Outreach), Amy Gerretsen '04 (Director of Constituent Engagement), Michele Wittler '76 (Associate Dean of Faculty & Registrar), Solon Pietila (Sodexo General Manager), Kyonna Henry (Director of Multicultural Affairs), Emily Ingemann '12 (Assistant Director of Admissions)

**I. Welcome, Introductions and Lunch (11:30 a.m.)**

**II. Welcome Call from Shawn Karsten '09, Vice President for Advancement**

**III. Sodexo Update (Pietila)**

Updates since his arrival as executive chef in June '17 (Pietila has been the General Manager since January '18):

- The Spot restaurant created from the ground up.
- Overhaul of service hours around campus to better fit the needs of our students.
- New revamping of The Commons menu to include Mindful items (items menued from this program doubled again in current year). Mindful program is attached.
- Creation of gluten free cooler and station items, including GF options at the pizza, grill, deli, toast/cereal stations as well as, The Mix and The Spot.
- Re-invented Starbucks services including in house scratch bakery and complete beverage staff retraining.
- Created a no frills (only pay for food, not catering services) catering menu priced for student organizations.
- Created the Micro Market at the Willmore Center - Driven primarily by athlete needs (heavy protein / healthy choice options).

Upcoming changes:

- Additional changes to the commons on both menuing and events.
- Creating quick grab station at The Spot to alleviate lines during peak times.
- Working with campus to identify slow points in service speed and find creative solutions to assure our students can eat between classes.
- Partnering with student groups to help them fundraise by staffing larger catering events on campus.

Pietila also handed out business cards to parents so they can contact him at any time, but encourages students to contact him with any issues. He wants to fix problems, but he has to know about them first. He can be reached at [Pietilas@ripon.edu](mailto:Pietilas@ripon.edu) or 920-748-8169. Sodexo is currently eight people understaffed and he loses good staff people to surrounding businesses who are able to pay \$17 per hour. A few other reminders:

- Sodexo offers a "to-go" box option to those students who are NOT on the unlimited plan.

- Sodexo app called “Bite” provides the current menu along with other features.
- Comment cards are reviewed daily, but not a lot of them have specific issues that could be used to make changes.
- He wants to make Ripon a better place for students and that is why he is here.
- Food is doing so well at The Spot a few menu items have been brought to the Commons, but haven’t done well.

**IV. Admission Update (Ingemann)**

Admissions is busy and doing really well. They were thrilled to welcome the largest first-year class in nine years. Specifically, 268 students (233 in 2018) with 12 transfer students (13 in 2018) of which 51% female/49% male, 70% from Wisconsin with 30% out of state - representing 18 states, plus Nepal, India & Iran. 25 Legacies, 128 first-generation students, 148 recruited athletes, and 60 students recruited to the fine arts are also among the Class of 2022.

Currently:	'19	'18	'17
Applicants:	1193	1165	769
Deposits:	14	11	0

The Admission staff is busy with travel to high schools, college fairs, and presentations at various school programs. Travel will wrap up by November and focus on cultivating and working with prospective students, applicants and their families will continue throughout the admission and financial aid process.

Campus visits keep the staff busy as high school groups and individual visits are welcomed during the week and on Saturdays. During the week, students are able to have a student-guided campus tour, sit in on a class, meet with faculty, advisers and coaches, have lunch with students, and meet with an admission counselor.

On Friday, November 5th, Admissions is hosting a "Preview Day" for prospective students and their families with a variety of activities to showcase the College. There is also an overnight visit offered for admitted applicants. Admission will also have a "Celebration of Excellence" dinner scheduled for Friday, December 7th with social hour beginning at 5 p.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. to honor scholarship recipients and celebrate their achievements.

Parents may be asking themselves, "How can I help?"

- Make a referrals of any high school students who would be a good fit for the College community, and please encourage them to visit campus and apply for admission. As Remember staff try to personalize the admission process as much as possible, so call our office with any details that will help Admission better serve students in the process.
- If prospective parents would like to have a conversation with a parent who has gone through the college search and the Ripon admission process - they are invited to contact Lyn McCarthy '83 at [mccarthy@ripon.edu](mailto:mccarthy@ripon.edu), and she'll coordinate a connection. If you're willing to respond to a request to either make a friendly phone call or receive a phone call, please share your contact information.
- Show school spirit by wearing Ripon College sweatshirts and t-shirts and sharing your enthusiasm with friends, family, and people in line at the grocery store. Thanks to all

parents for sharing your children with Ripon and thanks for your ongoing support of the College!

The Admission team will be sending out an encouraging letter from Kollmann, President of the Ripon Parents Network, as a parent-to-parent outreach method during the process as well.

#### **V. Multicultural Affairs Update (Henry)**

Henry shared the mission statement of the center highlighting that every event hosted fits the mission. The office opened in 2015 is located in Bartlett Hall and is a safe space. The office has a blog called *Diversify Ripon* which can be located on the website <https://www.ripon.edu/diversity/>. Religion has just been absorbed into the office as well.

The self-reported diversity breakdown of students as of September 2018: 71 hispanic, 32 African American, 11 Asian American, 3 Native American, 22- two or more races, and 27 international. A 24% diverse population compared to 6% about seven years ago.

Henry spends 90% of her job working with students in a variety of ways, including:

- She takes students on “self-care” trips if a student wants food from their culture or to get their hair or nails done a certain way and can’t find it in Ripon she will personally drive them to Oshkosh, Milwaukee or Chicago to do so.
- November 28 is Catalyst 210 Day focused on intercultural competence, allowing students and professors to increase their skills on leadership and cultural understanding.
- Henry sends out a multicultural newsletter out each month to the campus community.
- The office celebrates International Month, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month and LGBT History Month which help initiate discussions and connections for students. Within these months, students feast on food from around the world, participate in fashion shows and examine differences and similarities through these and other experiences.
- The center is the home to numerous organizations including: Black Student Union, La Unida, Asian Student Association, Queer-Straight Alliance, RC Feminists, D.R.E.A.M., Cultural Diversity Club and Amnesty International.

#### **VI. Academic Affairs Update (Wittler)**

- Fall enrollment report data: 810 students enrolled this year; 53% women and 47% male. Total international diversity is 20% compared to 11.4% in 2009, and domestic diversity is 17.5% compared to 8.1% in 2009.
- Wittler highlighted a new program called Ignite, an expanded Bridet Program focused on first generation students. The fall 2016 cohort didn’t retain as well as expected (71%, 10-13% lower), but fall 2017 retention was over 79%.
- There is a new grading option, grade forgiveness for up to 12 credits taken during the first two semesters. It will pull the course from the GPA calculation, but will still count the credits earned. Grade forgiveness does apply to Catalyst courses and electives, but not major classes, and students can take back the grade anytime. Students may still invoke credit/no credit for the class.
- B22 in Todd Wehr is a new updated state-of-the-art active learning classroom.

- There was a discussion about some classes not being offered in Political Science because of Catalyst courses specifically. However, there was a late resignation in the department and so some courses couldn't be taught as planned.
- Teachers can only teach one Catalyst course per semester.
- A new In-Focus course will be "Exploring Mexico City" and registration is currently open.
- There is an open search for two music professors since Sarah Kraaz and Kurt Dietrich are retiring in the spring. Other professors retiring are Paul Schoofs (economics) and Bob Wallace (biology).

## VII. Group Discussion

### Summer Recap

1. *Summer Orientation Parent Socials* - Location in the Joyce Lounge of Pickard Commons was great this year and there was a large attendance. It was a successful event.
2. *Move In Day Receptions* - This is the biggest impact the RPN has with students and parents and why some parents give back to the group. Everything went well this year again.
3. *Family Weekend* - Historically, there was always a strong Homecoming presence at Ripon until Alumni Weekend started in the 1980's. Alumni Weekend has remained popular with alumni over the years, but Homecoming has varied. Homecoming and Family weekend have been combined for the past eight years, but starting fall 2018, Homecoming and Family Weekend will once again be two separate events. Homecoming is now called "Fall Fest" and is hosted by Student Life with a strong student focus. Starting in the fall of 2019 Family Weekend will once again be a stand alone event. What would the RPN like to see? Historically, there were open classes, a magician, faculty talks, etc. Members agreed there should be some sort of Friday night parent-only social with a formal short parent meeting on Saturday for updates. Maybe have a catered lunch with faculty and staff, campus tours and an opportunity for a "sibling" event.

## VIII. Adjournment (2:00 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,



Yvonne Nicklaus  
Associate Director of Engagement and Outreach



