*Presiding:* Lewandowski

*Attending:* **Alumni Board:** Buss, Carlson (Alumni Trustee), Cisar, Fancher, Ferris, Kaounas (student), Kern, Key, Kitslaar, Klaas, Lenz, McHale (student), McNaughton, Nemecek (student), Petersen, Phillips, Prodoehl, Schwarzenbart (student), Tolan, Wade, Woods, Zindar.

**College Administration/Staff:** Machacek, Mlodzik (Admission); Messitte (President); Ogle (Student Life); Vaubel (Career Development); Gerretsen, Hintz, Liethen, McDonnell, Scanlon, Schroeder, Webster (Advancement).

*Absent:* Konopacki, Spaeth, Waldvogel-Leitner, Warmack; Meier, Ryberg (Alumni Trustees).

**A. Proceedings (Friday, September 27, 2013)**

Board President Lewandowski welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with the singing of the Alma Mater at 8:00 a.m. Introductions and announcements followed.

**BOARD ACTION:** The Board approved the minutes from the spring 2013 meeting.

Ms. Gerretsen reported on the 2013 Commencement festivities. Ripon received lots of positive press about keynote speaker, Nate Silver. May 18, 2014 is this year’s Commencement and she’ll have more information to share about it at the spring meeting. She thanked the board members for volunteering at Alumni Weekend which had over 700 attendees, 11 class reunions, over 30 activities, and raised $17,000 for the Athletic Department with the Red Hawks Golf Scramble. Planning is underway for Alumni Weekend 2014 which will take place during June 26-29, 2014. New this fall, all current parents received a Ripon welcome packet including a wall calendar, letter about the Parents’ Advisory Committee, Annual Fund parent appeal, and magazine (first year parents only). Ms. Gerretsen also pointed out the new Alumni Board booklets which contains key board information in one place for easy reference.

Ms. Schroeder- reported on the Senior Class Gift effort, and in particular, the VIP Party which was held last night. 52% of seniors showed up for event and 39% contributed to raise $762. She proposed the Alumni Board Senior Class Gift match be held at the same level this year.

**BOARD ACTION:** The Board approved 2014 Senior Class Gift match as follows:

**The class reaches:** **The Board match is:**

70% Participation $20.14 per member

80% Participation $25.00 per member

90% Participation $40.00 per member

100% Participation $75.00 per member

There are eight returning and 25 new Phonathon callers this semester who have raised $30,000 to date. There was increased training this semester with the first calls being made to the staff members. The Phonathon is now automated on the Ruffalo Cody system and will eventually have automatic dialing. Alumni Board members will be called in the spring Phonathon. Tuition Free Forward Day will be celebrating its third year in the spring celebrating donors’ gifts to keeping tuition lower. This winter, TFF will be held on February 6, and will expand to a full week celebration involving more groups.

Ms. Liethen shared that the fiscal year 2013 Alumni Board giving was at 100% participation raising $69,000. New Annual Fund strategies for fiscal year 2014 include: emailing pledge reminders (December), sending out reunion ask letters in the spring (aside from reunion leadership gift asks), end of the year stock letter written by Professor Paul Schoofs will target a larger audience. The fall all constituent letter was written by Helen Holter '78 and was mailed out in September. Ms. Liethen shared the restricted and unrestricted gift reports; restricted giving is very strong and the unrestricted bequest goal should be met soon.

Vice President Kitslaar shared details on the 2014 Alumni Award (Distinguished Alumni Citation, Outstanding Young Alumni, and Athletic Hall of Fame) selection process and nominees.

**BOARD ACTION**: The Board approved the recommendation of the Governance (Nominations) Committee for the Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Citation and Outstanding Young Alumni Awards to be presented during Alumni Weekend 2014.

**BOARD ACTION**: The Board approved the recommendation of the Athletic Hall of Fame Selection Committee for the following Hall of Fame awards to be presented during Alumni Weekend 2014.

Mr. Vaubel reviewed several career development initiatives: educational campus posters have been displayed, a career section has been added to the College Days, and student workers are helping with writing and critiquing resumes. He is planning an alumni mock interview program and networking reception for students. The human resources director at Alliance Laundry Systems in Ripon is teaching a class this semester, and he is looking to partner with her on this event. The second Career Discovery Tour will be held in Washington D.C. during fall break (October 20-24). The Center for Social Responsibility received a grant for 60 paid internships, and Career Development now has a student intern in the office. Minneapolis will be the focus for the Career Discovery Tour during spring break. Stressing alumni engagement with students is important right now and those connections need to be strengthened to increase engagement. Mr. Vaubel has put in a request to have business cards made for all seniors here on campus. They will look similar to the Career Discovery Tour business cards. He is also planning a fashion show about proper dress for a variety of professional situations.

Mr. Mlodzik, Dean of Admission, gave an update about the Class of 2017. Prior to new Vice President for Enrollment, Jenn Machacek’s arrival August 1st, a consultant was helping with recruitment efforts.

* Applicant pool was the largest in history (1320 applicants), 300 more than previous year.
* The first year class enrollment is 247 (including 9 transfers), goal was 250 students.
* 37% of the students are from out of state, compared to 32% in 2012.
* 17% diversity compared to 14% last year. The expectation for diversity is increasing, and 8 foreign students representing 4-5 different countries in the class.
* Gender break down goal is 50/50 with 51% female, 48% male in the class.
* Average GPA was 3.44 and average ACT was 24, which is pretty consistent with class over the past 10 years.
* 90% are from public high schools.

Ms. Machacek shared Admission Office initiatives with the Board. There are seven new staff members in the Office, with four solely focused on recruiting including a Hispanic recruiter who is bilingual. Another new hire, James Bland, the assistant director of multicultural recruitment and program development, spends half his time in admission and half in student activities. A new director of financial aid also started in August. There is a strong desire for the incoming class to be at 300 students while also increasing the academic profile and the geographic diversity. Recruiters will be visiting more schools around the country including St. Louis, Washington D.C., Southern California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota and Texas. The goal is have a large enough applicant pool to shape our student body, requiring strategic planning and time, but the goal is achievable.

Challenges facing Admission:

* The media has not been kind to the higher education causing families to question the value. Increased marketing should focus on outcomes including student internships and research.
* Students are applying to numerous schools, so it is understood that most applicants have no intention of actually attending. How can the team determine the serious inquiries and applications?
* Since most high schools have advanced technologies and newer facilities, students are demanding the best. Plans for upcoming renovations will become a key factor in recruiting.
* Students control the entire recruiting process, so keeping on top of technology and internet marketing that stealth parents and students receive. She mentioned the importance of monitoring online information since most students are getting their information from the internet and it is unclear what they know once they finally do apply.
* Ripon’s brand recognition needed to be elevated and increased nationwide.

Main Admission focuses/goals:

* Having more diverse staff available on campus.
* Spending a large amount of focus in Ripon’s backyard- surrounding areas in Wisconsin, Chicago and Minnesota, and working more with independent counselors to get on their radars.
* Being accessible to potentials students by having staff available on Saturdays, always having hotel interviews while counselors are traveling, and increasing tele-counseling hours on Monday through Thursday nights, plus Saturdays and eventually Sundays too.
* Actively going out and searching for seniors again to build the inquiry pool which should be around 12,000-13,000 per year.
* Increasing the social media presence. The CRM will allow staff to do more personal outreach to students, but it takes time to maximize the CRM’s functionality. Only at about 40%, and this very sophisticated tool will take time to build key communications.
* Rebuilding the Ripon brand by working with the Marketing and Communications team to develop new materials and online messaging.
* Expanding volunteers including alumni, current students, parents and faculty. With more training for key volunteers (new training piece shared), outreach can begin in the secondary and tertiary Admission markets.
* Ways the Alumni Board can help now: Referring students to Admission and finding alumni volunteers who are passionate and willing to go to fairs, coffee chats, etc. More volunteers are needed especially for Illinois and Minnesota college fairs and high school visits.

Mr. Ogle, Vice President and Dean of Students, spoke about student life. Students are enjoying their experiences and the retention rates are the highest in the last decade. He mentioned that the Student Senate one fund to support campus organizations, which is based off enrollment, has fallen short the past three years. Student Support Services are down one employee given the government sequester; and with so many first generation students attending, services might have to be cut if the funds don’t increase. There are 60 paid student internships available this year from the Great Lakes Higher Education Board. The starting enrollment this fall is 906, down from the previous years.

Additionally, the residence life team has three new hall directors, and resident assistants have completed substantial training including a visit from Trustee Phil McCullough '69 and his daughter, Kristen '04, who discussed student mental health concerns. The counseling and health services offices are staying busy and finding ways to help students who don’t have insurance get the services they need and making sure that local providers don’t get stuck with a bill. The Rave alert system is available to the college community, but improvements need to be made to campus security (access systems and key cards, outdated technology) that includes lock down procedures. Due to Mary deRegnier’s retirement (former Vice President for Finance), summer conferences, physical plant, Sodexo, and mail room staff all now report to Mr. Ogle. Physical improvements on campus over the summer include the following updates/renovations: Center for Social Responsibility, the Museum, the Commons and Pub awnings, widened the path from the Commons toward Tri-Dorms, carpet, mattresses and desks were replaced from the 1960s- in the residence halls, two roofs (West Hall and Tri-dorms), and five new boilers were purchased for buildings.

The Board took a 15 minute break.

Mr. McDonnell, social media and web content coordinator, reviewed changes to social media presence over the past year (since he was hired), and goals to help capture prospective students and alumni. A self-auditing process is being conducted to ask the questions, “Where are you, where are we and where are they?” The goal is to drive as many people to the website as possible so the website content needs to be constantly changing too. Ripon has experiences a large media growth:

* The number of Facebook likes grew by 26% in one year. 1200 Facebook referrals, a 1000% increase occurred in April 2013.
* Twitter followers have increased by 60%.
* 22,000 video views on Ripon’s You Tube channel although the goal is to decrease the number videos and focus more on the content.
* The Linked In Ripon College Professional Network currently has 300 members. Peer to peer social media can be more successful for alumni and students to share and network, but the Linked In company page and education page could be used a branding tool.

Mr. McDonnell reiterated the delicate balance he has to strike inhow much Ripon posts on Facebook, indicating that two to four times a week on Facebook and two to four times a day on Twitter is appropriate. He also reviewed several other media tools such as: Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr, Foursquare, Mixcloud and Rebel Mouse that may have uses for Ripon since more outlets are being created daily.

The Board adjourned at 11:00 a.m. to the 7th Annual Alumni Speaker Series “Ripon’s Return on Investment”, followed by lunch and committee meetings in the Main Dining Room of Pickard Commons.

An Alumni Board Reception & Dinner was held at 5:30 p.m. at the President’s House at One Merriman Lane.

**B. Proceedings (Saturday, 9/28/13)**

President Messitte described his visioning process for the Ripon College 20 years in the future, focusing on Ripon’s particular niche and how to separate Ripon from other liberal arts colleges. Main priorities include:

* Focus Admission strategies while the Board of Trustees continues to invest in the marketing tools needed. He stressed how important it is to keep up with social media since a full third of students that apply just see Ripon through the internet. The enrollment goal is to reach 265 incoming students for the Class of 2018 (then ramp up in the following years to 280, 290, leveling off at 300 students a year) resulting in more selectivity.
* Architects have developed a $25 million project design for the Storzer athletic facility including an indoor track, new weight room and cardio center, basketball courts that will allow Ripon to host high school tournaments and Badger Boys State. The initial plans have been shared with several potential major donors with early successes, but nothing major. The hope is to reach $5 million in funds before announcing the project publicly. There is a possibly USDA rural community funding to secure federal low interest loans for this project. He is hopeful and looking to break ground in the next 12-18 months.
* The Imagine Tomorrow campaign has gone very well. By August the $40 million mark has been exceeded, and the goal is to reach $50 million by the spring of 2015. Mead Witter visited campus last week and presented President Messitte with another $500,000 for student scholarships that benefit students from rural Wisconsin. The endowment is strong with consistent growth; hoping to get above $100 million within five years to increase Ripon’s reputation.

Ripon also moved up four spaces in the US News & World Report listing; Ripon is heading in the right direction. Additionally, President Messitte spoke about his ten year plan and the three unique areas he would like to focus on:

* Academic specialties (forensics).
* Culture of wellness: caring about recycling, eating organic locally grown food, community service and servant leadership, environmental focus with sustainability and Ceresco Prairie, fitness, etc. It’s a hard pivot to make, but it could move us to more national recognition.
* Upgrading our faculty, faculty-in-residence program.

What can the greater alumni body do help with this ten year plan?

1. Alumni need to be networking together with students and each other through the Career Development Office.
2. Alumni need to be recommending two to three students every year to come to Ripon.
3. Continue to be generous financially and give back to the college (even in small contributions make a difference).

Mr. Webster, vice president for Advancement, highlighted the latest outcomes due to the Imagine Tomorrow campaign:

* Endowed professorships: Pieper chair in servant leadership, Chemerow chair in theatre, and another one to be announced in next few months.
* Admission/Student Life diversity position.
* New faculty funding opportunities.
* 20 new endowed scholarships with the endowment over $70 million.
* The Annual Fund is staying strong and remains a priority.
* Facilities have been updated from gifts from individuals who want to transform the college.

The next few months will be focused on the Storzer project, a lot of which depends on momentum and the next academic year’s enrollment. Decisions will be made on how the Imagine Tomorrow and Storzer initiatives will work together, and he and President Messitte will continue to talk with alumni about Ripon’s fundraising goals. More language is being expressed about the campaign and Annual Fund during Phonathon callings and Annual Fund mailings.

The Board took a 15 minute break.

Committee reports were given to the full Board (full committee minutes are attached).

Advancement: Ms. Key reporting on behalf of committee chair Buss.

* Career Discovery Tour funding (endowed and spendable) is very strong after only one year in existence, but more work is needed to reach the goal of $50,000 in the endowed fund by 2015.
* In the future, the Advancement committee will evaluate the Senior Class Gift match levels each fall for full Board approval if participation following the Senior VIP is not as strong.
* Alumni Board members are strongly encouraged to get involved with their reunion class gift efforts including soliciting and calling classmates, writing appeal letters, and sharing general Ripon fundraising knowledge, to extent at which they are comfortable.
* The committee desires more specifics to facilitate conversation about the Imagine Tomorrow campaign.
* The committee loves the direction Tuition Free Forward Day is going, and is eager to help make this year’s events a success with both students and current parents.
* Class agents are needed for the Classes of 1954, 1956, 1966 and 1987.

Ripon Person: Ms. Wade, committee chair, reporting.

* The 7th Annual ROI Alumni Panel was reviewed and discussed in preparation for future planning of the event. Particular topics of discussion included format, time, location and topic.
* The Cap and Gown Party will be held during the spring meeting on Friday, April 4 and feature a similar program to recent years including a Board networking game, prizes, and food/drink. Additionally, an incentive for students to use their business cards will be identified, and Alumni Board business cards will also be created. An Alumni Board and Class of 2014 slide show will also be created.
* Ways in which the Alumni Board can further help Career Development connect with alumni and students was discussed in depth including job shadowing, mock interviews and expanding the Alumni Bio form library.
* Social media and engaging alumni and students was a discussion point, particularly how to help students navigate professionalism/job searching in the social media generation.
* Helping further develop the Admission Volunteer Program and support the Admission Office recruitment efforts is a priority for the entire board.
* The spring faculty, staff and Alumni Board mixer will be held on Friday, April 4 in Pickard Commons.
* Discussion continued about strategies for furthering alumni engagement and letting alumni at large know that there are ways to support Ripon without giving money.

Governance: Mr. Petersen, committee chair, reporting.

* The committee developed a meeting evaluation method for improving Board time, especially if a Friday meeting topic needs more clarification on Saturday.
* The committee will review the Board agenda schedule and determine the best ways to maximize the time the group has together and when clarifications can be discussed.
* The committee is developing a qualitative meeting participation form for membership renewal which should not be an automatic process.
* How can the Board promote itself to the Ripon alumni body, the group it represents? (Complimentary to the alumni engagement opportunities being developed by the Ripon Person Committee.)

**C. Old Business**

President Lewandowski called for any old business, of which there was none to discuss.

**D. New Business**

Ms. Key asked about the future of the Alumni Board (projects, initiatives, focus). Given President Messitte’s State of the College report, Admission efforts must be the Board’s priority. Although developing alumni leaders, increasing alumni engagement as a whole, and educating students about the importance of philanthropy are also vitally important. Further discussion of potential Alumni Board admission projects and how to maximize the impact for Ripon is necessary amongst the Board, although it was noted the value of the Admission Office staff members as necessary closers of the recruitment cycle.

Another topic for future discussion is the best methods for sharing the Alumni Board’s firsthand knowledge of Ripon with others (alumni, classmates, parents, students, teachers, administrators, etc.) to get a broader group excited about Ripon College.

Mr. Petersen will also be the point person working with the Marketing and Communications team to expand the Bookstore’s insignia offerings and increase the College’s brand recognition.

**E. Adjournment**

The Alumni Board adjourned at 11:00 a.m. for Homecoming festivities after singing the Alma Mater.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Gerretsen '04

Director of Alumni Relations

Alumni Association Executive Secretary