

Ripon College Parents' Advisory Committee Meeting (PAC)

Meeting Highlights and Minutes

Saturday, September 14, 2013

Present:

Parents' Advisory Committee: Richard Krueger '80/P'13 (President) & Tricia Statz, Kris & Rick Nogal P'14 (V.P.-Student Life), Mark & Penelope Greene P'15 (V.P.-Advancement), C.J. & Diedre Skiba P'15 (V.P.-Admission), Nyla Anderson P'16, Del & Pam Canon P'17, David & Kathryn Gableman P'16, Donald Klingenberg & Kayt Conrad P'14, Keith & Kathy Lamal P'14, Greg & Sue Mehlert P'14, Judy Meisner P'16, Rita Peters P'16, Brian Rychtik P'17, Herve Some P'15, Natalie Sondalle P'11/P'14, Jody Voorhees-Morgan P'17, Kristin Vorpahl P'17, Terry & Penny Wegner P'14/P'16.

College Administration/Staff: Amy Gerretsen '04 (Director of Alumni & Parent Relations), Nancy Hintz '82/P'10 (Director of the Annual Fund and 1851 Club), Chris Ogle '80 (Vice President and Dean of Students), Eliza Stephenson '09 (Assistant Director of Admission), Samantha Van Zeeland (Admission Counselor), Wayne Webster (Vice President for Advancement), Michele Wittler '76 (Associate Dean of Faculty & Registrar).

I. Call to Order (8:35 a.m.)

A. Administration

- Meeting called to order by Mr. Krueger.
- Self-introductions.
- Special thank you to the summer 2013 parent volunteers.

B. Spring 2013 meeting minutes were approved as written.

II. Business Meeting

A. Board Reports

- **Parent Packet (Gerretsen):** A new fall mailing for all parents was just mailed which features a Ripon wall calendar, appeal letter written by the Greenes, a PAC information letter written by Ms. Gerretsen, and the summer issue of Ripon Magazine (new parents only). Once the packet is received, feedback is appreciated.
- **Summer Orientation (June 24-27) (Krueger):** The PAC again hosted the Parent Mixer (no students) on the evening of the first day, and shared information at the Resource Fair during lunch on the second day. Parents interested in the PAC had the opportunity to sign-up. This year, Ms. Gerretsen participated in an orientation session for parents, as well.
- **Family Welcome Receptions (August 16, 18, 24) (R. Nogal):** Traditionally the PAC has hosted receptions on First Year Move-In Day for students and their families (information, refreshments, current parent hosts), which continued in 2013. However, only having receptions on Saturday misses all of the student athletes who move in prior. The PAC and several Advancement Office staff members hosted five other receptions for families of athletes on Thursday, August 16 and Sunday, August 18. It was decided that receptions will be held with PAC volunteers on athlete move-in days in the future.

- **Parent Social/Faculty Gathering (September 13) (D. Skiba):** For the past few years the PAC has hosted a social with faculty/staff on the Friday evening of Family Weekend. Again this fall it was expanded to include all parents as a social activity of Family Weekend and was held in the newly renovated Museum in West Hall. The event was quite successful (about 50 faculty, staff and parents in attendance) and will continue in future years.
- **Review of 2013 Family Weekend schedule (Gerretsen):** The 2013 Family Weekend schedule was highlighted. Additionally, Ms. Gerretsen noted that feedback concerning the weekend schedule is very much appreciated. In 2014, the calendar allows an interesting opportunity for parent-alumni interaction because Family Weekend and Homecoming will coincide (September 26-27, 2014). More discussion of the 2014 weekend schedule will take place at the spring PAC meeting.

B. Committee Reports

- **Advancement (Greene):** Fundraising is the main focus of the Advancement committee, as it relates to both the PAC and all parents. Mr. Greene noted the impressive work of last year's Advancement chairs, Mr. Klingenberger and Ms. Conrad; thank you. President Messitte's ambitions for strengthening Ripon are all inter-related: an admission focus to increase prospective student awareness and campus diversity which results in the need for more resources to maintain and increase campus programming. Mr. Greene highlighted Ripon's personalized education and low faculty to student ratio as selling points. Last year, during the '12-'13 fiscal year, 97% of active PAC members made a gift, which is a strong testament to the value of parents in the Ripon College community. Additionally, \$112,000 was given to the College by the PAC and in order to increase the dollar amount and participation, Mr. Greene offered a challenge that he and Mrs. Greene would match each dollar given about \$112,000 up to \$10,000. Mr. Greene noted the strong example parents set for their student as both a donor and volunteer.
- **Admission (Skiba):** Main initiatives include: parent to parent calling (hoping to expand this year), outreach to prospective families/students, and volunteering with the Admission Office Admission Volunteer Program which Ms. Stephenson will discuss later in the meeting.
- **Student Life (Nogal):** Key topics in the Student Life committee include move in day receptions for first years and athletes, and collecting feedback on those receptions and summer orientation programming for parents.
- **PAC President (Krueger):** Mr. Krueger thanked those parents in attendance and the College staff for their efforts in supporting the PAC. Also, PAC members were reminded of their valuable connection to each other and the Ripon community as parents. The three PAC committees are always looking for volunteers and ways to expand their parent engagement opportunities on and off campus. Most committee work occurs at the spring meeting in February.

C. Vice President and Dean of Students, Chris Ogle '80

- **Summer Update:** Dean Ogle noted many updates on campus throughout the summer including:
 - Commons and Pub canopies, signage, campus maps,

- Tri-Dorms water systems, new carpet, new roof
- West Hall- museum and classroom renovated, new roof
- Rodman- new floor in Demmer Hall, new theatre chairs
- Campus wide- switch to high efficiency lighting, mattress and desk replacement cycle continues, water fill stations at the water fountains
- Campus green space path widened
- Library- renovated computer lab, patio, carpet, furniture
- Johnson Hall- all doorways and stairwells repainted
- Storzer dance studio refinished
- **Student Life:**
 - Trustee Phil McCullough '69/P'04, a psychologist who teaches at Northwestern, visited campus during RA Training with his daughter Kristen '04 to discuss a book they recently wrote for student life professionals.
 - First year students are introduced to the Student Life division during the FYS student life tour.
 - All first year students take a self-assessment called “On Course” as a method of early identification of transition issues.
 - Fire drills were preformed campus wide with high praise from the Ripon fire chief.
 - Dean Ogle, members of the senior administration, and community members recently participated in full-day safety training on campus for campus lockdown/shooting scenarios.
 - More than 90% of students live on campus, 25% are Greek and 15% diversity.
- **Student Activity Highlights:**
 - All campus organizations were present at the Activities Fair.
 - The Taste of Ripon (2nd year) and Clergy Potluck (a long standing Ripon tradition), were well attended this fall.
 - 9/11 Memorial flags covered the Green Space.
 - 150-200 students participated in Take Back the Night sponsored by Panhellenic Council.
 - Increase in multicultural awareness and diversity initiatives through partnership with the Admission Office’s recruiting efforts.
- Dean Ogle highlighted and shared a sample of the monthly Sodexo food service survey distributed randomly to students.
- Mr. Greene asked about fall enrollment and Ms. Wittler shared the headcount of 906.
- Mr. Nogal followed up with a question about the variety and frequency of activities for students. Dean Ogle noted that Residence Life and Student Activities staff members work together throughout the summer on planning events for the entire school year.

D. Admission Updates, Eliza Stephenson '09, Assistant Director of Admission

- Ms. Stephenson introduced her colleague, Samantha Van Zeeland, Admission Counselor, who will be working directly with parent volunteers. She also shared information on the recent staffing changes in Admission including details about the new Vice President for Admission, Jenn Machacek. Ms. Machacek had a prior engagement today and couldn't attend the PAC meeting.
- New Admission publications were routed for review including the travel piece, facts sheet, value sheet, and view book.
- Class of 2017 profile: 238 first year students, 10 transfers (over 1300 applications), average ACT 24.3 and GPA 3.44, 17% diversity, 21 states, 8 international students, 50/50 gender balance.
- The enrollment goal within 10 years is 1100 students and the goal for the Class of 2018 is 300 students.
- Ms. Mehlert made a comment that she appreciates both paper and email copies of information. Ms. Stephenson added that as the Admission staff fully utilizes the CRM (Client Relationship Manager) more fully they will be able to target personal mailing/emailing preferences for prospective students and families.
- The Admission team is working to increase their personal relationships with high school counselors; particularly those from their red-white schools (feeder schools, potential feeder schools) by increasing personal visits/meetings with counselors. In the future, the Admission Office would like to host an on campus meeting for counselors, similar to the long standing traditions of the COWS (Counselors Observing Wisconsin Schools) annual April campus visit.
- The Admission Office is developing strategic outreach nationwide this year which includes further growth of the Admission Volunteer program in Washington D.C. (fall) and Los Angeles/San Diego and Denver (spring). The D.C. pilot group is comprised of alumni who are helping with college fairs, high school visits and drop offs.
- Other Admission volunteers are welcome in any areas. This fall staff travel will focus on Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota.
- Volunteer opportunities for parents include: parent calls (spring) with training TBD (possibly at the spring PAC meeting and/or via conference call), use of the volunteer reference guide (new), making referrals, and hosting/attending yield events/receptions (spring).
- Ms. Canon asked about a virtual tour on the Ripon College website stating that many schools her daughter looked at offered the opportunity. Ms. Stephenson noted that creating a Ripon virtual tour was a very high priority this year for the Admission Office.

E. Vice President for Advancement (Webster)

- On behalf of President Messitte, Mr. Webster thanked the PAC for their strong leadership and all of the work done by the group.
- Marketing: Focusing on outcomes for a new approach with Admission materials and social media outreach/campaigns. The marketing team is pushing out stories constantly and the number of Twitter followers for Ripon has doubled in a year.

- Imagine Tomorrow Campaign: The campaign has hit the \$40 million mark with a goal of completion by June of 2015. The campaign is focused on the endowment and Annual Fund since 25% of the College's budget comes from those two sources. The endowment has increased from \$52 million to \$71 million in recent years. The campaign has created 20 new scholarships, two endowed professorships (third pending). A strong endowment will help Ripon recruit the next generation of faculty though increased resources and facility upgrades (The Commons, West Hall and the Library have all recently been updated by campaign gifts.).
- Storzer: Ripon is in need of a new fitness/wellness facility, Storzer doesn't fit the needs of today's students and isn't an Admission draw. About a year ago, the design process was started with a conversation revolving around a lower campus social center, not just an athletic facility for varsity athletes. At this time, President Messitte and Mr. Webster are talking to key donors for leadership gifts before the project goes public later this school year.

F. Concluding Remarks, Parent Q&A

- Ms. Skiba asked about the drug and alcohol education methods for first year students citing her son's experience at another institution. Beyond sharing information at Orientation, are there creative ways to share the message, possibly involving role playing theatrics? Mr. Ogle noted that he would share this idea with members of his staff who organize orientation and residence life activities.
- Mr. Krueger concluded the meeting by once again thanking all of those in attendance for their on-going dedication and support of Ripon College and their student's education.
- The spring meeting will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2014.

III. Adjournment (10 a.m.)

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Gerretsen '04
Director of Alumni & Parent Relations
Executive Secretary, Parents' Advisory Committee