

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Leaders Sought: Michigan Political Leadership Program Applications Available

EAST LANSING – With a gubernatorial election a year away, Michigan State University’s Michigan Political Leadership Program is seeking applicants to the 2010 class of the nation’s foremost political training program.

The program offers fully paid fellowships to 24 people each year who are interested in seeking public office.

“We’re looking for leaders and for those who’d like to sharpen their leadership skills,” said Douglas B. Roberts, director of MSU’s Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. “We’re looking for people who want to expand their vision, their sense of commitment and their skills in effective governing.

IPPSR

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IPPSR, specializing in public policy, leadership training and survey research, administers MPLP.

Applications are due Friday, Sept. 4, 2009 Application forms are available at <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/MPLP/ApplyNow.htm>, by calling 517-353-1357 or by emailing cusickk@msu.edu.

MPLP offers 10 months of specialized training, one weekend each month from February through November. The training takes part throughout the state and focuses on such topics as conflict resolution and negotiation, local and state government, voter targeting strategies, media relations and campaign ethics.

MPLP is co-directed by a Republican and a Democrat. Fellows are selected from all political parties.

The program was founded in 1992, and since then has celebrated the graduation of more than 400 MPLP Fellows. At least a quarter of them are serving or have served in public office, Roberts noted. “That’s a great record,” he said.

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Among MPLP alumni are former House Speaker Craig DeRoche of Novi, former Detroit Mayor Kenneth Cockrel Jr., state Sen. Wayne Kuipers of Holland, state Rep. Robert Dean of Grand Rapids and state Rep. Ed Clemente of Lincoln Park.

“This program is a leader,” said Anne Mervenne, MPLP Co-Director and former executive in the administration of Gov. John Engler. “MPLP fulfills MSU’s mission as to serve as a land grant university and to work toward a strong democracy here in Michigan.”

MPLP Fellows also have the opportunity to forge strong contacts with colleagues in their class, MPLP alumni and the elected leaders and executives invited to share their expertise and experience during weekend sessions, Mervenne said.

“MPLP will enrich your life and enrich your community,” she added.

MPLP classes are diverse. Fellows come from every corner of the state and represent a broad range of ages and professional backgrounds, said MPLP Co-Director Dianne Byrum, the first woman to hold a caucus leadership position in the Michigan Legislature.

“What we’re really looking for are people who want to serve in the state Legislature or who want to have a major policy position that will help shape state policy for the future,” Byrum said.

MPLP Fellows are exposed to a diverse range of elected leaders, communities around the state and public policy issues, Byrum said. “We do have robust discussions on issues,” she said. “We encourage that. Fellows are exposed to a variety of issues and activities they couldn’t duplicate anyplace else.”

MPLP training traditionally concludes with a festive graduation and a special dinner in suburban Detroit and a breakfast the morning after in Grand Rapids. The events, open to the public, help provide fundraising support for the program and feature point counterpoint with a nationally recognized Republican and Democrat.

Past speaking duos have included CNN Crossfire co-host Tucker Carlson and Democratic presidential adviser James Carville, former presidential candidates Howard Dean and Patrick Buchanan and vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro paired with conservative columnist and pundit William Kristol.

Speakers and dates for MPLP’s 15th dinner and 8th West Michigan breakfast are expected to be announced this fall.

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