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24 NEW MPLP FELLOWS KICK OFF YEAR OF TRAINING

Michigan State University’s newest class of Michigan Political Leadership Program Fellows met for the first time this past weekend to begin their 10 months of training in the nation’s premier leadership program.

“We are proud to welcome the Class of 2014 to MPLP at MSU,” said Douglas B. Roberts, Ph.D., director of MSU’s Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. He announced the new MPLP class Monday.

MPLP makes its campus home at IPPSR, which specializes in leadership training, public policy and social research as a part of MSU’s College of Social Science.

The first sessions focused on the economy as MPLP Fellows heard from Roberts, a former Michigan Treasurer with 20+ years of experience in guiding the state through some of its toughest economic times.

Future sessions will take the Fellows around the state and through the challenges of campaign advertising and finance, media relations and policy analysis.

MPLP was established in 1992 to help prepare rising leaders for state, local and regional office. Since that time, more than 500 people have been granted MPLP certificates and an estimated 45 percent of them have been or are in elected or appointed positions.

“Fourteen are currently serving in the state House,” noted MPLP Co-Director Steve Tobocman, a former Majority Floor Leader, the second-highest position in the Michigan House. He is currently is managing partner at New Solutions Group, LLC.

A total of 17 MPLP alumni plan to run for state House in 2014, including three from the Class of 2013. Six MPLP graduates are, to date, on record as seeking state Senate seats and one is running for the U.S. Congress, Tobocman said.

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“That’s an exceptional record and one we’re all immensely proud of,” said MPLP Co-Director Anne Mervenne, a former executive in the administration of former Gov. John Engler. She most recently served on Gov. Rick Snyder’s Transition Team. She is president of Mervenne & Company, a governmental relations consulting firm.

MPLP Fellows and alumni are also rallying to gather for some of the state’s largest multipartisan gatherings – two events featuring two national political leaders and providing majority support for the Fellowship program. Each Fellowship is valued at about $12,000.

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty and former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson are this year’s keynoters. MPLP’s 19th annual dinner takes place Thursday, March 6 at Laurel Manor in Livonia. The 12th annual breakfast takes place the next day, Friday, March 7 at the JW Marriott in Grand Rapids.

More information about tickets and MPLP is available online at http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/mplp/mplp.html.

MPLP’s Class of 2014 includes:

- **Vince Brown**, of Royal Oak, executive assistant for state Rep. Robert L. Kosowski. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and legal studies from Central Michigan University.

- **Wendy Burris**, of Vicksburg, a member of the Michigan National Guard deployed to combat operations in Afghanistan. She attended Lake Superior State University and Spring Arbor University.

- **Brian Davis**, of Port Huron, a member of the Michigan National Guard, deployed to combat operations in Iraq. He holds a degree from Western Michigan University.

- **Christina DeMoore**, of Petoskey, self-employed attorney. She has earned a bachelor’s degree at Michigan State University and Juris Doctor at Wayne State University.

- **Dennis Fedewa**, of Grand Ledge, retired chief deputy director of the Michigan Department of National Resources. He was recently elected to the Delta Charter Township Board of Trustees for a four-year term.

- **Kyle Harris**, of Chesaning, a legislative staffer for state Rep. Tim Kelly. He is a graduate from Saginaw Valley State University where he studied public administration and economics.
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- **Tiffany Hauser**, of Grand Ledge, a government relations consultant with AAA Michigan. She graduated from Purdue University with a dual major in political science and law and society.

- **Barbara Holt**, of Walker, former Walker mayor, and 18-year member of the city commission. She is the chairwoman of the Interurban Transit Partnership.

- **Amina Iqbal**, of Canton, Outreach Director for Michigan Muslim Community Council. She earned a bachelor’s degree in professional child development and a master’s in education policy.

- **Sarah Kile**, of Gladwin, veteran of public health education and advocacy. She earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Central Michigan University.

- **Chelsea Knauf**, of Grand Rapids, state researcher for Michigan Small Business Development Center. She earned degrees in political science and criminal justice at Grand Valley State University.

- **Kylee Mitchell**, of Romulus, division director for Detroit’s Planning and Development Department. She holds a master’s of public administration from Baruch College.

- **Thomas Nafso**, of West Bloomfield, assistant attorney general in the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division of the Michigan Department of Attorney General. He earned his Juris Doctorate and Master in Business Administration from the University of Detroit Mercy.

- **Robert Nederhood**, of Grosse Pointe Woods, attorney in the Detroit office of Foley & Lardner LLP. He previously was deputy director of the state Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Calvin College and Juris Doctor from Northwestern University School of Law.

- **Trevor Pawl**, of Ferndale, director of Pure Michigan Business Connect. In 2012, he was named to Crain’s Detroit Business’s “40 under 40” and Development Counsellors International’s “40 Under 40 Rising Stars of Economic Development.”

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- **Enrico Razo**, of Detroit, director of Neighborhood Revitalization for Council District 6, development chair for Healthy Detroit and part of the Detroit Medical Center’s Path to Health Community Council.

- **Kayla Roney**, of Royal Oak, executive director of the Hazel Park Promise Zone and College Access Network. She graduated from MSU’s James Madison College with a bachelor’s degree in social relations and policy.

- **Jacob Santangelo**, of Holland, member of the East Lansing Housing Commission and an Honors College student at Michigan State University. He is a former White House intern and 2012 winner of MSU’s Daniel Rosenthal Legislative Intern Award.

- **Kimball Silverton**, of Grand Blanc, physician/owner of the Silverton Skin Institute. The former emergency room physician is a board certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained cosmetic surgeon.

- **Sean Sucharski**, of Woodhaven, recently an extern at Kelley Cawthorne. He earned a bachelor’s degree in general studies from the University of Michigan and Juris Doctor from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

- **Jennifer Suidan**, of White Lake, assistant to former Michigan Democratic Party Chair Mark Brewer at the law firm Goodman Acker, P.C. She holds a bachelor’s of science degree in psychology from Central Michigan University.

- **Megan Petzko-Sweet**, of East Lansing, policy analyst for the state House of Representatives’ Republican caucus. She is a graduate of Thomas M. Cooley Law School and holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Western Michigan University.

- **Robert Thomas**, of Detroit, vice president of Detroit’s Board of Zoning Appeals. He is a third year law student at Wayne State University Law School. He earned a bachelor’s of science in mechanical engineering and master’s of science in industrial technology manufacturing systems at North Carolina A&T State University.

- **Sarah Thomas**, of Detroit, associate attorney for Todd J. Stearn, PC. She is a graduate of Thomas M. Cooley Law School and of James Madison College at MSU.

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