



UPDATE 2017

A Report to the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation
From the Michigan Political Leadership Program
Michigan State University
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About the Michigan Political Leadership Program

As Michigan approved term limits in 1992, a new organization was born to help educate the numbers of new candidates that some of the strictest term limits in the country would call to run for office.

With the help of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation and private individuals with a bold dream, the Michigan Political Leadership Program was born to instill civil discourse, practical politics, public policy analysis and personal leadership development into those up-and-coming candidates.

The first MPLP Fellows celebrated their final learning sessions as the MPLP Class of 1992. This year, the Class of 2017 spent their last session together in early November, making 2017 a silver anniversary.

Each year, a class of 24 individuals -- 12 men and 12 women, 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats -- are competitively selected to take part in dedicated training for one weekend during each of 10 months.



The Class of 2017 's 24 MPLP Fellows will formally mark their graduation with what has become a spring tradition – a breakfast and dinner inviting speakers of national stature – one Republican and one Democrat – to speak to two events known as the state's largest nonpartisan audiences.

In 2018, two men who sought to become president – former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and former Pennsylvania U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum – will be the featured speakers at a Thursday, March 8 dinner in suburban Detroit and the next morning Friday, March 9 in downtown Detroit.

As MPLP emerged as a successful leadership academy, those individuals who helped to establish it brought the program to Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. IPPSR, already known for its policy education and data-rich survey research, continues as MPLP's home.

Since 1992, MPLP's progress has been outstanding and its structure and curriculum has become a national model for similar programs operating around the country. Just to note a few of those successes:

- More than 600 MPLP Fellows are graduates.
- More than half of MPLP's alumni have served in elected or appointed positions or are currently serving in such posts.
- MPLP alumni serve at every level of state and local government. They are seated as mayors, city council members, county commissioners, school boards, judicial benches, members of the Legislature and the state's executive offices.
- Impressively, 11 are now seated in the Michigan Legislature, seven in the state House and four in the state Senate.
- MPLP alumni include Michigan's Director of Agriculture, director of the Michigan Film Office and three tribal leaders. Increasingly, MPLP alumni can be found in executive offices of city and county government around the state and in the state's corporate suites as well.
- MPLP alumni are rising leaders in economic development, communications, technology and advisory and nonprofit directorships.

While facing the same budget headwinds as every other institution of higher education, skillful fiscal management, controlled costs and strong fundraising efforts have helped MPLP and its alumni progress.

Exciting New Leadership at IPPSR and MPLP

The last two years have represented a time of change at IPPSR and at MPLP.

At 2015's close, former Michigan Treasurer Douglas B. Roberts, Ph.D., retired from MSU and as director of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. IPPSR welcomed nationally known political scientist Matt Grossmann, a member of the university's faculty, to lead the Institute and its programs, including MPLP.

Dr. Grossmann is an expert on American politics and government. His research focuses on national and state policymaking, election campaigns, interest groups and political parties. He is author of three books and currently at work on a fourth. His latest is the well-reviewed *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats*.



Under Dr. Grossmann's direction, IPPSR has created a new digital footprint in its redesigned website, invited more than 60 faculty members to serve as IPPSR affiliates, and added dozens of IPPSR Policy Fellows. IPPSR's Public Policy Forums have expanded and its Rosenthal Legislative Internship has increased with two new annual workshops. Additionally, new events are on MPLP's growing calendar.

The Institute now seeks to offer policy analysis and training opportunities from everyone from those starting out in public service to cohorts of those seeking public office and professional development later in their careers, in essence, through the political lifecycle.

In another step to broaden the Institute's reach, IPPSR welcomed Arnold Weinfeld, director of Urban Policy Initiatives at MSU's Office for Outreach and Engagement, as IPPSR's associate director. His research interests range from civic engagement to municipal collaboration, municipal finance, program and policy development, research and analysis, issues and skills at the heart of MPLP's curriculum.

At IPPSR, Weinfeld is working to cross boundaries and connect directly with affiliated faculty, student learners and a growing roster of programs, including MPLP, that transform leadership roles from a statewide stage to a national platform.

At the same time, longtime MPLP Co-Director Anne Mervenne is stepping aside from her current duties to become Co-Director Emeritus of MPLP. Well-known veteran of political campaigns and public administration, Susy Heintz Avery is stepping into that position.



Avery joins MPLP Co-Director Steve Tobocman, former Michigan House Majority Floor Leader and currently managing partner at New Solutions Group, LLC, in leading the program and mentoring its Fellows.

Tobocman has become a national leader in the area of immigrant economic development serving as the

founder and director of Global Detroit and the Welcoming Economies (WE Global) Network.



Avery is a former chair of the Michigan Republican Party, ran a spirited congressional race against an incumbent, has been member of the Board of Directors of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, served as Michigan Director of Travel and Tourism and recently retired as executive director of the Michigan Women's Commission.

She's hosted two cable television programs, been a frequent panelist on CBS television and radio programs, worked for the Wayne County Airport Authority and as advancement director at The Henry Ford – Greenfield Village.

Lack of Financial Stability in Uncertain Times

MPLP is sincerely grateful to the Trustees of The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation for support that has helped to prepare MPLP Fellows as informed and ethical leaders.

That support has created the foundation that inspires the giving that has inspired generous contributions over the years from Michigan associations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, labor organizations, MPLP alumni and private individuals.

MPLP has also created new structures for giving and sponsorship designed to stabilize the unpredictable effects of Michigan's economic cycles. The trend: a year of revenue that outpaces costs followed by a year or more of greater costs than revenue. A \$1,000 administration fee is now asked of each of the 24 MPLP Fellows. In addition, creative giving opportunities, new in the past two years, include:

- Weekend sponsorships, giving donors opportunities to interact with MPLP Fellows and alumni, have been added.
- Session sponsorships are opportunities to offer lunch-and-learn programming focusing on industry trends and policy innovations.
- Sponsorship of tables at annual breakfast and/or dinner events.
- Partnerships, MPLP's signature program-level donors.
- Fellow Scholarship Funds. These can be legacy funds honoring friends or colleagues, a scholarship that funds one MPLP Fellow or a donation in any amount to help support MPLP in general.

Even as MPLP has added these new opportunities, current legacy funds honoring the late Jacalyn Hart Hadden at Consumers Energy and Barbara Burr Gattorn Memorial Scholarship Fund were specifically timed contributions and will expire in the near term.

Across its history, MPLP has relied upon short-term financing to meet its goals. MPLP has traditionally hosted large-scale events or asked statewide policy interests, MPLP Fellows and alumni along with professional fundraisers to help support the program. MPLP lacks an endowment, and that remains a continuing goal. As a result, sufficient operating funds are a constant concern requiring considerable investment of time and energy from staff, alumni and executive management. We know that the efforts of an already stretched staff must be realigned to develop innovation, instruction and insights leading to long-term planning for MPLP, its current Fellows and alumni. We will continue to vigorously seek creative sponsorship contributions, while planning fundraising events and looking forward to new external grant opportunities, and ultimately, sustaining financial resources.

Innovation at MPLP – Planning for a Dynamic Future

There is much to be excited about at MPLP. New initiatives are underway with the transition to new leadership, grant funding and experiential learning activities.

IPPSR conducted new research to test the results of MPLP's curriculum and format. The findings, after tracking more than 1,000 applicants since 2003, confirmed MPLP's success:

MPLP more than doubles the chance that participants will run for elected office and triples the chance that they will win.

In the past two years, MPLP's curriculum has been reviewed to add policy simulations with small-group discussions and build policy analysis skills. MPLP Fellows and Alumni are encouraged to write for IPPSR's new Michigan Policy Wonk blog, and to take part in all other IPPSR activities. A third annual biennial MPLP alumni conference this year brought graduates together for sessions on race relations in politics, social media, campaign development and healthcare. An Election Wrapup every other year reviews November election results.



2017 marks the first of MPLP activities funded through a three-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek. This grant has supported events that help MPLP reach new and more diverse audiences, inspire new fellowship applicants and share the knowledge that's necessary to engage citizens and build their waning confidence in the government they elect.

Those events – Engage Detroit, Engage Battle Creek and Engage Grand Rapids – brought specialists in public health, personal finance and childhood health to the communities. Scores of citizens gathered to learn about new financial and healthcare resources from expert panelists and to take part in interactive roundtables that brought them together with practitioners. Lastly, they met local MPLP alumni and learned how they personally could make a difference in their community and their state through such public engagement.

The programs excited local citizens, social agencies and MPLP Alumni, and importantly, increased the number of MPLP applicants. These events are planned for two more years, building awareness of MPLP and connecting citizens to local sources of crucial expertise and family security.

A new grant from the Madison Initiative of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation affords MPLP the opportunity to shine in the national spotlight.

The grant empowers IPPSR to survey state candidate leadership programs like MPLP and share the best of recruiting, training and financing. A conference and website is planned and the inventory will compare program structure, curriculum, costs and support, political emphasis, scope, history, recruiting and tracking of results. The goal: to export the MPLP model and effective programs around the country, laying the groundwork for a national network of programs to produce the next generation of bipartisan problem-solvers in state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress.

With this progress report, applicants for the MPLP Class of 2018 are being interviewed. An MPLP Alumni Conference is on the horizon, and plans are underway for the major dinner and breakfast fundraiser. MSU's College of Social Science, where IPPSR is a unit, is outlining its new vision of science that "transforms the human experience and inspires leaders." MPLP shares that vision, working toward a program that transforms its Fellows and Alumni and inspires leaders in communities, the state and the nation.