

See MSU students and film professors' picks for Best Picture

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The State News

CUTS COULD STALL MSU RESEARCH



Eric Collar of Eaton Rapids, left, checks levels of potassium hydroxide as Ryan Fitzgerald of Saginaw carefully drops some into a solution to determine its acidity during an advanced biodiesel class Wednesday at Michigan Brewing Company in Webberville, Mich. The class is three days long, starting with a beginning biodiesel class and ending with a production class in which students make a large batch of biodiesel. Collar said he would like to be able to make his own fuel — he drives a truck that can use biodiesel.

"We can't accomplish the goal that (Granholm) set ... if we take this kind of cut to our budgets. It's simply impossible."

Tom Coon, director of MSU Extension

By Allison Bush
THE STATE NEWS

MSU chemical engineering professor Dennis Miller spends his days researching a seed 1/16th of an inch in diameter. The canola seed, which can be used to produce biodiesel, could be one answer to achieving energy independence, he said. "Every gallon of fuel we use is one less gallon that we have to import," he said. "It's a very good answer to Gov. Granholm's objectives of being energy independent."

Miller's research, sponsored by MSU's Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, or MAES, can further Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm's agenda of creating a green economy in Michigan. But if Granholm's proposed funding cuts go through, future projects like Miller's may have difficulty securing funding.

During her State of the State address earlier this month, Granholm proposed a 45-by-20 plan, calling for Michigan to reduce its dependency on imported fuels by 45 percent by the year 2020. In proposing her budget just more than a week later, she recom-

mended consolidating the MSU Extension program and MAES and cutting their state funding by 50 percent, or \$24 million.

MAES is directly involved in conducting and supporting important research on biofuels. MSU Extension then assists in translating those research findings for use by companies, businesses and jobs, said Tom Coon, director of MSU Extension.

"We can't accomplish that goal that (Granholm) set ... if we take this kind of cut to our budgets. It's simply impossible," Coon said.

State funding is the largest single resource for both MSU Extension and MAES, he said. MSU Extension receives about 33 percent of its roughly \$200 million in annual funding from state appro-

priations, followed by 30 percent from grants and 9 percent from federal funding.

State funding cuts would probably affect about 70 percent of Extension's biodiesel and renewable energy programs, Coon said. And if state funding reduces the size of the programs, Extension could risk losing federal funding, too.

"I don't know how we would live up to the \$50 million grant we get from the U.S. Department of Energy," he said.

Liesl Clark, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth, said these programs are important tools, but cutting their funding should not affect the 45-by-20 plan.

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SECCHIA CENTER

MSU, Ferris to share Grand Rapids med school building

By Justin Harris
THE STATE NEWS

MSU students and faculty will have company when they move into the College of Human Medicine's Grand Rapids campus in 2010.

At last Friday's meeting, the MSU Board of Trustees approved a 10-year lease to Ferris State University's College of Pharmacy, giving Ferris' program access to the Secchia Center's seventh floor.

"It's a great opportunity for us to be working with the pharmacy program at Ferris State University and to develop some joint learning experiences for all of our students," said Marsha Rap-

pley, dean of MSU's College of Human Medicine.

MSU will fund and complete the construction on the 23,340-square-foot seventh floor according to Ferris' specifications. During the first five years of the lease, Ferris will pay back MSU for the construction costs.

MSU officials would not comment on the cost of the construction until Ferris's Board of Trustees approves the lease.

Provost Kim Wilcox said design plans for the facility anticipated the amount of space MSU would need during the next 20 years. However, MSU won't use the top floor

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AUTOMAKERS

No bright side in GM, Chrysler bailout

From staff and wire reports

General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC, two venerable titans of American industry, will burn through \$17.4 billion in government loans in three months and want billions more to stay alive.

The ink is still drying on their new requests for an additional \$21.6 billion, but for President Barack Obama's month-old administration, there are no easy answers.

Give them more money? GM and Chrysler could return seeking more. Let them slip into bankruptcy? Hundreds of thousands of jobs could be lost. Try a government-led bankruptcy? In GM's case, that might cost up to \$100 billion.

"The big unknowns are how much worse and long this recession will continue, how the credit market will work going forward and when people feel more confident in being able to afford new cars," said John Revitte, an MSU labor and industrial relations professor.

"A lot of these plans are for what they are going to have in 2011, 2012. There is probably going to be a point where the population will want the government to stop supplying companies if they don't see improvement."

At stake are jobs at assembly plants, car dealers, parts suppliers and the small businesses that serve them, all of which could be at risk in a fatigued economy with nearly 12 million people who are unemployed.

"This is an entire way of life here," said Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia. "An entire state is hanging in the balance."

Even if Obama meets GM and Chrysler's requests for an additional \$14 billion in loans and the companies execute the turnaround plans they released Tuesday, it would come with a painful price: An estimated 50,000 workers worldwide would lose their jobs and five more U.S. plants will be closed.

"The best case scenario is still a substantial loss of jobs," Revitte said. "Worst case scenario would be absolutely devastating to Michigan and the country. Hopefully, the stimulus will kick in

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ASMSU

ASMSU post in question after member resigns

By Chris Vannini
THE STATE NEWS

A top ranking student government position is in limbo after ASMSU's Academic Assembly chairperson stepped down Tuesday evening.

The resignation came a week after his performance was called into question.

Christopher Kulesza, an economics and political science senior, resigned and sought another position within ASMSU, but the request was denied by the assembly.

ASMSU is MSU's undergraduate student government.

"I decided to resign because there have been some difficulties as far as how staff is put together," Kulesza said.

Many assembly members were shocked by Kulesza's decision.

"I was actually very surprised when it happened. I didn't see it happening," said David Katanski, a College of Social Science representative. Katanski introduced a bill last week to review Kulesza's performance because of communication issues.

Katanski said he didn't know whether the bill had affected Kulesza's decision.

"That's his personal call to relate the two or not," he said.

Kulesza said events last week made him think about other options.

"The previous situation gave me new perspectives on things," Kulesza said. "It made me want to pursue things that Academic Assembly needs now and help where it needs to be strengthened."

Academic Assembly deals with academic issues such as tuition and book costs. Student Assembly deals with nonacademic issues such as funding for student organizations. The chairperson is responsible for overseeing the assembly and making sure it follows procedure.

Internal Vice Chairperson Brad McDonald became the interim chairperson but said he is unsure if he will remain as chairperson until ASMSU holds elections April 21.

"It's going to be an extra burden for the next couple weeks up to spring break," McDonald said. "I feel willing and able to pick up the role. Whether it's beyond that time period, we'll have to see."

Many assembly members said they are confident McDonald will be able to fill the role left by Kulesza.

"(McDonald) is usually the one during meetings who is the most knowledgeable on those procedures," Katanski said. "I think he's very capable of it."

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STUDENTS D.C. BOUND

More than 70 students from MSU head to Washington to lobby for global warming legislation, page 3A

Weather
Snow showers and windy
High 21° | Low 16°
Three-day forecast, Page 2A