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JOURNALISM

COMM. ARTS DEAN SILENT ON REMOVAL OF DIRECTOR

By Zane McMillin
THE STATE NEWS

For almost two weeks, Pamela Whitten, dean of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences, has been mum about the status of both the School of Journalism and its former director, Jane Briggs-Bunting.

Briggs-Bunting was asked to resign or face suspension after the dean took office almost two weeks ago. Journalism students have questioned the decision and have received no word from Whitten, who has not spoken publicly about the incident.

Repeated attempts by The State News to speak with Whitten have been unsuccessful.

Reporters from The State News have visited Whitten's office several times and only briefly spoke with the dean regarding the status of Briggs-Bunting on one occasion. On the first attempt, Whitten's personal staff directed all media inquiries to university spokesman Terry Denbow, who has declined several times to comment on personnel matters. Also during that first attempt, Kirsten Khire, communications manager for College of Communication Arts and Sciences, told The State News that no new developments with regard to Briggs-Bunting had occurred and attempts to wait and speak with Whitten would produce only the same comment from the dean.

When asked to comment while leaving her office Tuesday, Whitten referred media inquiries to Denbow.

"There is nothing anyone else can say other than what I said (last week)," Denbow told The State News on Tuesday.

An attempt to reach Whitten for comment at home Sunday also failed.

When a reporter showed up to speak with Whitten on Thursday about communication policies in the School of Journalism, the dean's office was promptly closed for the

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Rooted in tradition

Students look to agriculture for careers; some carry on family legacy of farming



SEAN COOK/THE STATE NEWS

Animal science senior Mary McDonald, right, holds sheep #9171 by her head while animal science junior Kelli Rau punches a chunk out of her ear to collect a DNA sample, as sheep #9171 struggles to get away Thursday at the Sheep Teaching and Research Center on Hagadorn Road. DNA collection and analysis is one of the ways in which farming has changed along with technology in recent decades.

By Kayla Habermehl
THE STATE NEWS

The sight of a barn and sound of a tractor mean something different to Greg Thon than to most people. Thon grew up on a farm, and instead of leaving it in his past, he's pursuing agriculture as a future.

His family sold their farm to pursue other careers, but the agribusiness management senior and president of Farmhouse Fraternity said he possibly will pursue agricultural policy because farming is such a large part of his life.

"It's something that's kind of in your blood," Thon said. "I worked on a farm all through school and I decided to do agriculture — I come from a farming family."

Thon is a member of a new generation that is planning on going into the constantly changing world of agriculture.

"We farm completely different than we used to — I could write a whole book on how agriculture has changed in two years," Thon said.

"It's not Old MacDonald on the farm with a pitchfork. It's a science and a business."

Learning curve

The most prevalent change and obstacle to this new generation of farmers is the lack of information the public knows about farming, Thon said.

"The biggest thing changing in agriculture is people are farther removed from the farm and they don't understand why we do

what we do and how we do it," he said.

According to the data from the 2000 Census, about 220 million people, or about 79 percent, of the U.S. population lives in urban areas. The remaining 21 percent, or about 59 million people, live in rural areas.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms has increased by about 75,000, or about 3.6 percent, from 2002 to 2007, bringing the total number to about 2.2 million. Even as this number increased, the total land devoted to farms decreased by about 1.7 percent, or about 16 million acres, to about 920 million acres.

Kevin Turner, an MSU alumnus and herdsman at MSU's Swine Teaching and Research Center, said at one time, most people knew someone who owned or worked on a farm.

"(People are) so far removed from family farms — 20, 25, 50 years ago, anyone you talked to would have some link to agriculture, whether it be to a grandparent having cows and chickens," Turner said. "It's not that way anymore, so that's why you have

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"We grew up on that land, we drink that water and eat that food as well. We're not going to do anything to put us in danger, let alone anyone else."

Greg Thon, agribusiness management senior

COMMUNITY

Farmer's market makes fresh debut into E.L. community

By Zane McMillin
THE STATE NEWS

For Matt Corron, farming isn't just hard work — it's a family legacy.

Corron, whose family runs Corron Farms in Essexville, Mich., and produces a plethora of crops, continued more than 25 years of tradition Sunday at the East Lansing Farmer's Market. The market was the first such event to occur in the city in about a decade.

"Business has been really good today. There's lots of people who are really happy we're here," Corron said.

Fifteen Michigan-based vendors sold locally grown produce and other goods at the market at Valley Court Park, 400 Hillside Court, and many sold out before the event concluded at 2

p.m., market manager Michelle Carlson said.

She said the market serves important functions, such as bringing the community together to support local farmers and businesses.

"I think the event is important for many reasons," she said. "One, it's a great community event. Families are out here enjoying a nice Sunday afternoon. It's very good for the local farmers for their own businesses, and to keep farming going around here."

Michigan's tradition in farming coupled with the health benefits of consuming locally grown produce add to the benefit, she said.

"Everyone's coming together for a common purpose and it's really festive," she said. Local businesses also were

present Sunday, including El Azteco, Grand Traverse Pie Co. and the East Lansing Food Co-op, or ELFCO.

"I can't believe how busy it is," ELFCO employee Heather Fick said. "In the first hour we sold out of many of our things. I think people are just excited that there's a market so close to where they live."

ELFCO sold items to supplement the goods that farmers were selling, such as bread, drinks and packaged goods, she said.

Corron, whose family participates in four farmer's markets in Michigan, said his favorite part of participating in events like Sunday's is interacting with community members.

"I really like coming here, talking to the people and selling stuff. It helps support the



KATIE RAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

While Saori Kobayashi pays for produce, Takayuki Kobayashi, center, holds their son Ryo, 5, Sunday afternoon while the three visit the summer's first East Lansing Farmer's Market.

local economy and (helps bring) Michigan back up," he said.

Lansing residents Jim and Wendy Fall said they decided

to check out the farmer's market Sunday because they wanted to take a look at the locally grown and produced goods.

"I think that a lot of the food that gets grown in Michigan gets sent somewhere else to be eaten by people and ... along the way it sort of loses its luster and a lot of its nutritional value, so having something that's grown right in your own backyard is better for you," Wendy Fall said.

Richard Bowie of Owsosso Organics said he sold out of most of his produce before the event's end.

"I think that once the product starts rolling in, people will be rewarded so they'll come back," Bowie said.

He said farmer's markets are

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