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FOOTBALL

Dantonio introduces new, highly ranked class

By Jeff Kanam
THE STATE NEWS

For MSU head football coach Mark Dantonio, becoming a consistent team in the Big Ten means adding top-tier talent throughout the course of several seasons.

Dantonio introduced his second straight top-20 recruiting class Wednesday at National Signing Day and was excited about the potential of the 21 incoming players.

"What we've done is taken the class of 22 players last year and stacked (this one) right on top of it," Dantonio said. "This is another highly acclaimed and highly ranked class, and it shows great versatility with the players that we have."

Wednesday was the first day high school seniors officially could sign a national letter of intent to universities.

The Spartans' class, ranked No. 29 nationally according to the recruiting Web site Rivals.com, features four players considered to have at least four-star talent, as well as a steady distribution of players at each position. Headlined by Detroit Southwestern's William Gholston — the only five-star recruit, according to Rivals.com, to sign with a Big Ten school — the Spartans' class of 2010 includes five of the state's top nine players and two four-star players from out of state.

Quarterback Joe Boisture of Goodrich, Mich., linebacker Max Bullough of Traverse City and running back Nick Hill of Chelsea, Mich., highlight the Spartans' in-state recruits. All three, along with running back Le'Veon Bell (Reynoldsburg, Ohio), have enrolled early at MSU.

"I wanted to get ahead academically," Hill said of enrolling early. "I wanted to get a jump start on the football program and play in the spring, and I felt that by me doing that gave me a good opportunity to showcase my skills early on instead of waiting until the fall. I thought academically, this would be an opportunity."

MSU's class is considered by Rivals.com to be among the top in the Big Ten in recruiting, behind Penn State, Michigan and Ohio State. After bringing in a class ranked by some in the top 15 a year ago, the Spartans have suc-

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STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

GRANHOLM: RESTORE MICH. PROMISE

By Marissa Cumbers
THE STATE NEWS

Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm said during her eighth and final State of the State address Wednesday she will reinstate the Michigan Promise Scholarship in her budget proposal for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

In her speech at the Capitol in Lansing, the governor said she will fund the scholarship, restructuring it to keep graduates in Michigan. However, she did not reveal how she plans to fund it.

"Virtually every economist and anyone who's read the want ads recently would agree — today's jobs demand a college degree or technical training," she said in her speech. "Tonight, I am announcing that my budget for the year ahead will restore the Michigan Promise Scholarship, identify a creative way to pay for it and give it a new focus — keeping our young people in Michigan when they earn their degrees."

The scholarship was slashed in the process of eliminating Michigan's \$2.8 billion deficit in the 2009-10 fiscal year, leaving about 8,200 eligible MSU students without the funding they were promised. About 96,000 students statewide lost funding.

Granholm spokeswoman, Liz Boyd, said details about funding the Michigan Promise Scholarship will be in the governor's budget proposal for the 2010-11 fiscal year, which will be released Feb. 11.

Although potential funding for the schol-



HANNAH ENOELSON/THE STATE NEWS

Gov. Jennifer Granholm delivers the State of the State address Wednesday evening at the Capitol.

ship remains unknown, MSU officials were encouraged by Granholm's proposal for its reinstatement.

"I feel very good about the proposal," MSU Trustee George Perles said. "I hope that happens. We better educate our students. That's

the future of our whole country. Whatever we can do for them is worth every cent."

Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, R-Rochester,

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To explore an interactive graphic comparing Granholm's previous addresses, visit stateneews.com/multimedia.

Students rally to support higher education



LAUREN WOOD/THE STATE NEWS

Residential College in the Arts and Humanities junior Ruth Verdini yells into a bullhorn Wednesday as she and other students walk down Grand River Avenue toward the Capitol.

By Lauren McKeown
THE STATE NEWS

Fumiko Sakashita is on her own. Like many other international students at MSU, Sakashita, an American studies doctoral student, looked forward to being a teaching assistant to help pay for continuing her education. However, in light of the recent budget cuts at MSU, her goal seems less likely to pan out.

"I'm living here by myself," Sakashita said. "I have to support myself. The administration is not listening to students."

Sakashita was one of more than 50 MSU students, dressed in black attire, who rallied at the Administration Building on campus and the Capitol in Lansing on Wednesday to protest cuts in education funding. The rallies took place on the same day Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm held her final State of the State address.

"We're wearing black in solidarity to visibly separate ourselves," said Gabriela Alcazar, an international relations and social relations and policy senior.

Before marching to the Capitol, students stood on the steps of the Administration Building, holding banners and signs in support of education. The students had different concerns ranging from tuition increase to recent cuts in the TA and undergraduate programs. Students called upon the MSU Board of Trustees, President Lou Anna K. Simon and Granholm to change their decision-making habits.

Sakashita said the MSU administration and the state need to have students involved in the decision-making process.

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To see a video of Wednesday's education rally, visit stateneews.com/multimedia.

2009 DONATIONS DECLINE AT MSU, ACROSS COUNTRY

By Zane McMillin
THE STATE NEWS

Donations to MSU in 2009 fell 4 percent from the previous year, but the drop was lower than the Big Ten average, according to a survey released Wednesday.

The report, released by the Council for Aid to Education, or CAE, found the national average in giving decreased 12 percent between July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009. The Big Ten averaged about a 10 percent decrease. More than 1,000 institutions participated in the survey.

MSU placed fifth in the Big Ten in terms of percentage change. According to the survey, the university raised about \$12.7 million in donations from individuals, corporations and other sources for the 2009 fiscal year. The university raised about \$12.8 million in 2008.

Bob Groves, MSU's vice president for university advancement, said MSU officials were aware of how many donations the university received in 2009 and that the survey provides MSU with an opportunity to make comparisons nationwide.

He said although MSU exper-

perienced a drop less than the national average, the survey's results surprised him.

"We knew our numbers, but I think I was surprised that the numbers were down so severely across the country," Groves said. "It gives us a better benchmark of what's happening at other institutions."

The top two Big Ten schools, — the University of Illinois (3.7 percent) and Penn State University (2.7 percent) — experienced an increase in donations from 2008-09.

Purdue University's donations remained almost equal between

the two years, decreasing only 0.1 percent.

Indiana University (-30.4 percent), the University of Michigan (-21 percent) and the University of Wisconsin (-16.7 percent) had the largest decreases in the Big Ten.

MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon said MSU places a high priority on raising donations and she is pleased with the university's showing.

"The raising of external dollars is a very important priority for the university and our goal is to raise more money each year than the year before," Simon

said.

Groves said it is too early to tell what MSU can expect in the year ahead as far as donations.

However, he said numbers tallied last month indicated donations were up slightly compared to the year prior.

"Through the end of December, we were actually up a little bit," Groves said. "I think there has been somewhat of an improvement in the stock market since last spring, so that has been helpful."

MSU Trustee Faylene Owen, chairwoman of the MSU Board

of Trustees finance committee, said although donations declined in 2009, the small percentage decrease shows the university still has many supporters.

"I believe that our supporters will continue to value Michigan State and will do so in increasing numbers," Owen said in an e-mail.

Groves said the fundraising process is "a never-ending job."

He said MSU continues to use tactics, such as phone calls to alumni, to maintain donations

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