The Challenges of Land Grant Schools

BY KARL DANNEBERGER

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The majority of turfgrass research is conducted at land grant institutions. We have seen a steady erosion in state and federal funding for science. With the decline in the monies provided by state and regional turfgrass foundations, along with reductions in golf related funding agencies like the USGA, the type of applied and basic turfgrass research that has been influenced by the turf industry will be guided more by government-directed competitive funding sources, which may or may not relate to industry needs.

The greatest change and challenge in the land grant mission is occurring with extension or outreach. The dissemination of information to the industry and the public has resulted in a better quality of life in general, and specifically a higher and environmentally sound quality of turf. That this information is “free” is difficult to sustain in a current world where everything we do must pay for itself.

For turfgrass programs at land grant institutions and the golf industry, we need to stay engaged in determining the needs and means by how we can provide a better golf world.

Whatever the challenges, land grant institutions will play an important role in the golf industry due to our inherent comprehensive nature. Dr. Roger Geiger, distinguished professor of higher education at Penn State, stated in a recent conference, “I think the distinctive mission of land-grant universities is to provide access to expertise, which they have developed and cultivated.”

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