

Two-Year Golf Turf Management Report - 1989

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Golf Turf Management

It may seem hard to believe, but it has been 18 months since the changing of the guard for the Two-Year Turfgrass Management Program at Michigan State University. If there are any misconceptions about the condition of the program, this passage will alleviate those fears. The program was a 'Cadillac' upon the retirement of Dr. Kenyon T. Payne and as we all have learned "if it is not broke, do not attempt to fix it." Therefore there have been no wholesale changes for the program, rather only a few minor tuneups to prepare our graduates for the 21st century. In order to accomplish this, we must improve our offerings in computer science and business.

The first change is the curriculum requirement for microcomputers. The student must take two classes in microcomputers (4 credits total). The computer is here to stay; it will continue to take over different facets of our lives, both at home and the work place. We at Michigan State University are committed that our students leave here with a great deal of exposure to the fascinating world of computers.

The second change is the replacement of the Accounting course with a Budgeting for Turf Managers course. The initial class was taught by Mr. Ernie Nichols, a doctoral candidate in the School of Business at Michigan State University. According to the students, instructor, and guest superintendents, the class, taught in Fall 1989, was a tremendous success. Ernie's enthusiasm, combined with that of the students and the exclusive use of computers to complete assignments, helped to make the class enjoyable and beneficial. The guest superintendents commented that the hands on experience was invaluable.

The third change in the program is the inclusion of an additional business class in the area of Personnel Management. It is vital that our graduates have a better understanding of the human element of this business. Hopefully the class will begin in Fall 1990.

Several people have inquired about the location of the internship of the students as well as the home state of the students. The classes of 1989, 1990 and 1991 were and will be comprised of approximately 65-70 percent Michigan residents. The class of 1991 has a 7.5 percent foreign student contingent.

Of the 35 students who went out for placement training in 1989 (Class of 1990) 14 stayed in Michigan. This is up from six students in 1988. The Class of 1991 will also have 14 students completing internships in Michigan.

Change to Semesters

The change of the teaching system from the present quarter system to the semester system is official and will begin in Fall of 1992. Any major change disrupts patterns, but if the positive is accentuated the stresses involved will be minimized.

At present our fall term begins September 20 and is completed December 10 and our winter term begins January 5 and is over around March 15. The typical internship begins around April 1 and is completed around September 5 (Labor Day). With the semester system fall semester will begin August 25 and be completed December 15. The Spring semester will begin in early January and be over around May 10. Obviously, this system cuts into the heart of our program, the internship. It is our plan now to cut our spring semester into modules such that our classes will be completed to allow the student to begin his or her internship by April 1. Our compromise will be in the Fall. The students will have to begin classes along with the rest of the University so as to not disrupt the balance of student life on campus. On the positive side, the students at Michigan State University will benefit from the extra weeks of warm weather in the form of field trips and outdoor labs that were not possible due to the previous late starting times. Change is inevitable. We must concentrate our efforts on making our change as smooth as possible without diminishing our reputation.