

**TURFGRASS CONTINUING EDUCATION AT  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## **Introduction**

With the naming of James Votruba as Vice Provost for University Outreach, Michigan State University has consolidated its efforts and indicated its desire to foster a formal continuing education program. In many ways the MSU faculty in the college of Agriculture and Natural Resources have, and are, conducting formal lifelong education programs and the visibility and thrust by the university was done to make its efforts university-wide.

The turfgrass industry is a leader. Through its help and assurances an educational specialist is now on staff at MSU working on your behalf. Dr. Frank Rossi began the effort, and now Mr. Greg Lyman as well as Dr. Paul Rieke are spearheading turfgrass educational programs throughout the state of Michigan. To reach more students with formal university courses, Institute of Agriculture Technology (IAT) courses have, and are, being offered throughout the state. Dr. Clifford Jump, the director of IAT, also directs the lifelong education efforts of the college and has supported these efforts. For the Crop and Soil Sciences Department David Gilstrap has taken much of the leadership in the off-campus offerings of the IAT courses.

Our goal is to offer the basic courses to a turfgrass management curriculum in many localities to make it as easy and convenient as possible for the turfgrass professionals that want to continue their education.

## **Discussion**

We at MSU view our continuing education program in five component areas. First, for those with little formal training and wanting to increase their knowledge but probably not having the time or resources to commit to two or more years of school there is the School of Turfgrass Management. Greg Lyman now coordinates this where they follow an intensive one week session of instruction of all aspects of turfgrass management. The third class was completed in November, 1994 with many positive comments.

Second, MSU offers the IAT 2 year Certificate Program both on an off-campus locations. Courses required within the Turfgrass Management program have been offered in Grand Rapids, Novi, Beverly Hills, and Caro, Michigan over the past few years. The off-campus program was initiated to take required courses to students to make their stay at the MSU campus shorter. At this time, the numbers of students enrolling in these off-campus courses need to increase to sustain their offering.

Two IAT programs specializing in Turfgrass Management are offered at Michigan State University. The two programs are Golf Turf Management, coordinated by Dr. John Rogers, and Lawn Care/Athletic Turf Management, coordinated by Dr. John Rogers, and Lawn Care/Athletic Turf Management, coordinated by Mr. David Gilstrap. Both programs require 54 semester credits of instruction with a summer internship required.

Within the Department of Crop and soil Sciences an option in Turfgrass Management that leads toward a Bachelors of Science degree exists. The numbers of students within this option have increased dramatically in the past few years in what we believe is the call for more educational training by many within the turfgrass industry. In fact,

several students within the 2 year turfgrass program that do not already have bachelor's degrees express an interest in completing a Bachelor's degree after completion of the 2-year program. One of the main obstacles is the transfer of credits. Only one-half of the credits transfer to the undergraduate program leaving 93 semester credits required to complete the bachelor's degree. Very few of those courses that remain are turfgrass management courses. The options for a student that has a 2-year certificate are many.

IAT courses are viewed by most Universities (including MSU) as preparatory course work. That is, the courses taken at MSU are NOT considered college level. However, as those of you who went through the program realize, some of the classes are the same whether you are a 2 year or 4 year student. MSU realizes this and so will grant up to ½ the class room credit hours earned in the IAT program towards a Bachelor's degree in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. If you decide to earn a Bachelor's degree in the Crop and Soil Sciences department with an option in Turfgrass Management, you will take maximum advantage of the credits earned in the IAT program. Fifty-four credits are now required to complete the Turfgrass Management programs in IAT. One-half of the credits would be twenty-seven, leaving 93 credits to complete a bachelor's degree at MSU. Some important facts to know are: MSU allows up to 60 credits transferred from a community college (IAT credits are counted here); MSU allows up to 90 of the 120 required credits to be transferred from a college or university. This means you do not have to complete all your requirements at MSU. At least the humanities, social science, chemistry, and mathematics requirements are generally easily fulfilled at other places and then can be transferred. We in Crop and Soil Sciences are just a phone call away if you would like to discuss your options. Other options might include studying Landscape Architecture, Horticulture, or even obtaining a business degree.

MSU has a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) program located at the regional campus in Troy, Michigan. The program is designed for those working during the day and meet on Tuesday Thursday evenings over two Fall and Two spring semesters. During the summer between school years an international trip is required. Because of the requirement of greater than five years of experience in the work-place, several students have been admitted to the program not holding Bachelor's degrees. Although the cost of the program is in excess of \$20,000, it has a full class every year because of its convenience to the students and the quality of instruction.

To meet the needs of the professionals throughout the state that need educational updates on specific subject, Greg Lyman routinely offers intensive one or two day seminars. Examples include seminars on Handling Pesticides and Pond and Aquatic Management. These are advertised through mailings and newsletters. If you have specific ideas for subjects for which you would like a seminar developed, please do not hesitate to share it with us. If you are interested several others are probably also.

Traditional extension education programs are routinely, offered throughout the state. At these programs the research results of the turfgrass professors are discussed, informal educational programs offered, or question and answer sessions held. As always, these programs are well attended and effective.

### **Conclusion**

We at Michigan State University view one of our primary functions as supplying educational programs to our clientele. The many programs offered have been summarized here. We want to hear your comments and suggestions of ways we can improve MSU educational programs.