

PERENNIAL REPORT TO THE MICHIGAN TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

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During my brief presentation today, I will update you concerning the following three topics: the two-year program in Lawn Care/Athletic Turf Management (LCAT), the Robert W. Hancock Turf Research Center (HTRC), and my research.

LCAT Program

Fall enrollment in the LCAT program is at an all-time high. We had 23 new students with ten returning for a total of 33 on campus. Figure 1 shows this enrollment compared to the two previous fall semesters.

The enrollment increase has altered the student demographics. We now have several young men who are less than 20 years old. This most likely is a response to my mass-mailings to Michigan high school counselors. The remaining 75% of this year's class are mostly in their twenties. Career specializations within our industry and the number of students having an interest in each are as follows:

Lawn Care/Landscape - 11
Athletic Turf Management - 8
Grounds - 3
Irrigation - 2
Undecided - 8
Continuation toward B.S. - 1

Job-placement opportunities in the lawn care and landscape sector continue to be strong as I know of at least five openings per graduate. Those seeking a career in athletics don't always have a job waiting for them when they graduate. However, all of them have found relevant employment within a month or two after completion. Baseball appears to be a good source of jobs as three of our five sport-turf graduates are working for minor league teams. A few students have placed themselves as grounds managers, and I expect this number to increase in the coming years. I believe that this is largely due to increasing attendance at this conference of representatives from corporations, institutions, and government agencies.

Last year my presentation focused on the LCAT Marketing Plan. This report projected LCAT's continued growth for the rest of this century until an on-campus enrollment of 40 students is sustainable. I am ahead of schedule to reach this goal, and with your continued help I can achieve it. I thank particularly the board members of your organization.

HTRC Expansion

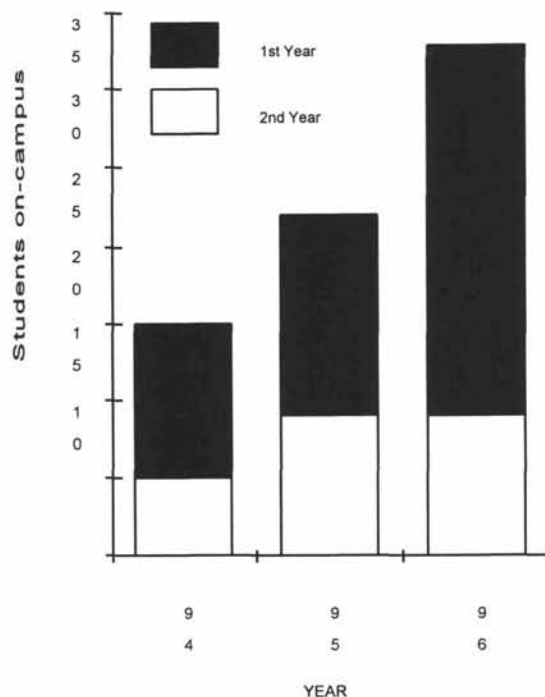


Fig. 1 Fall-enrollment levels for first- and second-year LCAT students.

I am now also directly involved with the renovation of HTRC. Phase I is the construction of an equipment-storage building, phase II involves paving roadways and building soil-storage bins, and phase III renovates our existing building. The equipment-storage building will occupy land adjacent and east of our main structure. It will be a clear-span, steel building with a concrete floor covering 6,000 square feet. Two overhead doors and two walk-thrus will provide easy access. The MSU Physical Plant is preparing the bid specifications and they will advertise it in February. The estimated date of completion is June 1. Mr. Harry Schuermann will give more details in his Vice-President's Report during the Annual Business Meeting. He is looking forward to answering any questions that you have regarding this venture.

Research

My investigations with demethylation inhibitor (DMI) fungicides and dollar spot continued. We have completed our fifth consecutive year of fungicide trials at Lochmoor Country Club in Grosse Pointe Woods. It is at this location in 1991 that Golembieski and Vargas documented one of the first instances of DMI resistance to dollar spot. For economic reasons, we will forego further treatments at this site.

This past season I initiated a study dealing with the effects of different nitrogen protocols on lawnturf. There are ten N treatments with each split for quick and slow release. We are mowing the plots on a weekly schedule in order to mimic the routine of a professional lawn-cutting service. This will be a stop at the 1997 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day.

This year I will look at ways to increase the durability of turf paint on athletic fields. With some treatments I will tank mix the paint with a plant growth regulator (PGR). With others I'll paint within a band of PGR-treated turf. We'll rate them for persistence and show you the results at this year's field day.

In summary, I'm pleased with our progress in developing LCAT as a viable program that stresses non-golf career alternatives. I'm excited by the opportunity to serve the foundation and the university as acting director of the HTRC. And I'm looking forward to the results of my research that I hope will aid you in making sound turf-management decisions.