

## **SPORTS AND COMMERCIAL TURF MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REPORT**

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Eighteen new students joined the two-year program in Sports and Commercial Turf Management (SCTM) during this academic school year. Spring-Semester 2002 enrollment numbers 17 first-year and 16 second-year students. One student completed his graduation requirements in December. Since 1995, the overall enrollment has been between 30 and 40 students. Since I became the coordinator in 1993, exactly 100 students have graduated from the program. Before that in 1990 through 1992, there had been about 15 complete the certificate requirements.

Historically, courses taken by students in the Institute of Agricultural Technology have not been considered undergraduate-level courses, much to the students' consternation. Beginning in Fall 2001, ten courses were renumbered to the one- or two-hundred level. Since then, the rest of the 000-level courses have either been upgraded numerically or dropped. Table 1 shows the program's current curriculum. It now appears that Horticulture will no longer teach Applied Plant Science. Therefore, SCTM students entering this fall will take Plant Biology 105, which the first-year Golf Turf Management students took last year for the first time.

All of this has made the curriculum more difficult. Overall, GPAs are lower than in the past, and more students are being recessed or continuing under probation. The ones that are graduating now have completed a more strenuous program than in the past, and they have more transfer credit if they choose to go on for a four-year degree. While improvements in the curriculum can and will be made, the fluff that was there is basically gone.

Those entering the workforce upon graduation are finding good opportunities with annual starting salaries around \$28,000. The most demand continues to be from the lawn care and irrigation sectors. Those desiring sports turf jobs usually do not place until near March graduation as those employers often choose to hold off on their hiring until the growing season gets nearer. About 15% of SCTM graduates find employment at a golf course, often one that they had worked at before.

Recruiting continues to be the greatest challenge of my position, and funds for subsequent advertising campaigns associated with the SCTM Open House have been expropriated elsewhere, due to budget restrictions within my department. Referrals are slowly increasing due to the success of our graduates, and because of recommendations by all of our graduates and faculty, including those in the golf course sector. Their efforts are sincerely appreciated.

This April, we will be hosting the first annual Michigan FFA turfgrass competition at the Hancock Turf Research Center in conjunction with other statewide contests. This is part of a partnership that is being built with the high school agriscience teachers, and upon whom the program's numbers are becoming increasingly dependent. Since the curriculum changes outlined above, SCTM will be touted more as a possible stepping-stone to a four-year degree, as well as a

marketable accomplishment for someone after only 19 months of college. I appreciate and welcome all inquiries. I can be reached at [gilstrap@msu.edu](mailto:gilstrap@msu.edu) or 517-355-0207.

Table 1. Sports and Commercial Turf Management Curriculum, Effective Fall 2002, with semester-credit-hour values.

|   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| Fall 1st                                  |   |          |
| CSS 110                                   | Computer Applications in Agronomy               | 2        |
| CSS 210                                   | Fundamentals of Soil and Landscape Science      | 3        |
| CSS 232                                   | Introduction to Turfgrass Management            | 3        |
| CSS 242                                   | Athletic Field Maintenance                      | 2        |
| CSS 262                                   | Turf Management Seminar                         | 1        |
| HRT 109                                   | Intro to Applied Plant Science                  | 2        |
| AT 291                                    | Turfgrass & Landscape Analytical Practices      | 2        |
|   |   | <hr/> 15 |
| Spring 1st                                |   |          |
| CSS 181                                   | Pesticide and Fertilizer Application Technology | 3        |
| HRT 218                                   | Landscape Irrigation                            | 3        |
| AE 153                                    | Engine and Equipment Maintenance                | 2        |
| AT 293                                    | Professional Internship in Ag. Technology       | 6        |
|   |   | <hr/> 14 |
| Fall 2nd                                  |   |          |
| CSS 262                                   | Turf Management Seminar                         | 1        |
| CSS 272                                   | Turfgrass Soils Management                      | 3        |
| CSS 292                                   | Turfgrass Weeds Management                      | 2        |
| HRT 213                                   | Landscape Maintenance                           | 2        |
| HRT 213L                                  | Landscape Maintenance Field Lab                 | 1        |
| PLP 362                                   | Management of Turfgrass Pests                   | 4        |
|   |   | <hr/> 13 |
| Spring 2nd                                |   |          |
| CSS 269                                   | Turfgrass Strategies                            | 2        |
| CSS 282                                   | Turfgrass Physiology                            | 2        |
| HRT 214                                   | Landscape and Turfgrass Business Operations     | 2        |
|   |   | <hr/> 6  |
| Required courses:                         |   | 48       |
| Approved Electives (taken in second year) |   | 6        |
| CSS 211                                   | Turfgrass and the Environment                   | 2        |
| HRT 211                                   | Landscape Plants I                              | 3        |
| HRT 212                                   | Landscape Plants II                             | 3        |
| HRT 215                                   | Landscape Industries Seminar                    | 1        |
| HRT 216                                   | Landscape Construction                          | 3        |
| HRT 219                                   | Landscape Computer Aided Design                 | 2        |
| AT 291                                    | Spanish   | 2        |
| AEE 100                                   | Public Speaking                                 | 2        |

|         |                                     |   |    |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|----|
| AEE 110 | Foundations in Leadership           | 2 |    |
| AEE 220 | Problem Solving and Analysis in ANR | 2 |    |
|         | Total hours required for graduation |   | 54 |