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A TWO-YEAR PRESIDENCY

The surest way to have someone question your sanity is to suggest it would be appropriate for GCSAA presidents to serve two-year terms (actually, two one-year terms). I can hear the outcries already: The presidents are overloaded now; how could they possibly double their term lengths, take on deeper workloads and keep their jobs? In my judgment, the two-year-presidency concept isn't only appropriate, it's a necessity.

The persistent problem with the one-year term is it denies each president the opportunity to lead because it's virtually impossible for a president to initiate new programming and see it through within a 12-month period and because it's so easy for board members and staff to simply outwait a 12-month president on any debated issue. Consequently, one-year terms mandate the GCSAA presidency remain a pure ceremonial position.

As part of the present one-year format, presidents have no leverage and, consequently, surrender any idea of leading the association and its members to new ground (i.e., the GCSAA is a rudderless ship at a time when it requires newfound leadership to find its way in today's very demanding world). Fortunately or unfortunately, there's no one else to provide the necessary leadership but the association president, given the opportunity. The GCSAA no longer has the luxury of one-year ceremonial presidencies.

It's clear the only way to create a fit between a working superintendent and a two-year presidency would be to reconfigure the presidential job description to minimize time dedicated to interfacing with sister golf organizations and to maximize the opportunity for the president to focus on the more critical needs of the membership and profession. For example:

The first scheduling issue that must be addressed is the traditional practice of having the GCSAA president attend virtually every one of the industry's key sister association events (the U.S. Open, the Masters,

the PGA Championship, the British Open, the Ryder Cup every other year, the USGA annual meeting, the PGA annual meeting, the CMAA annual meeting, Golf's 20/20 meeting and several international events in Canada, Europe and the Pacific Rim) within a calendar year. Any wonder why the GCSAA wears down its presidents and gets little in return?

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Incoming GCSAA president Ricky Heine estimates he'll be traveling and representing the GCSAA for 75 days during his presidential term. It's not difficult to imagine the GCSAA president could make better use of this time to better serve GCSAA members than dedicating as much as 1,000 hours a year to flying throughout the country to repeatedly meet with the same body of industry officials as a good-will ambassador.

The pressure this extensive travel schedule places on GCSAA presidents can be comfortably eased without sacrificing industry effectiveness by dividing the annual presidential travel schedule equally among all GCSAA board members and c.e.o. Steve Mona. Each board member should be able to represent GCSAA effectively at these sister association events and report back dutifully, otherwise that person shouldn't be on the board. The objective would be to limit presidential travel for non-GCSAA

events to about five days a year.

The next obstacle to overcome would be to reschedule board meetings (except for those associated with the Golf Industry Show) and change them from the more socially oriented three- and four-day meetings with wives at premier hotels and resorts throughout the country to tight, efficient two-day business meetings (without spouses) at the Lawrence, Kan., headquarters. To insure effective two-day weekend scheduling, board members would fly into Lawrence on Friday, meet through Saturday and Sunday, and fly home late Sunday or Monday morning – a scheduling format that has served the GCSAA well for more than 60 years. Wives would continue to attend the annual Golf Industry Show.

This rescheduling would have several meaningful benefits:

1. Presidential travel days, including those needed to attend all GCSAA events and meetings, would be reduced from as many as 75 days to less than 20 days a year, which would render two-year terms plausible.

2. The reduced travel time would allow two-term presidents adequate time to shepherd meaningful, new programming that would directly benefit GCSAA members through to completion.

3. While the GCSAA board always has attracted solid leaders from within membership, the problem has been there hasn't been enough of this. The opportunity that the two-term presidency presents to make a difference would open the leadership floodgates within the GCSAA.

4. Eliminating the scheduling of board meetings at the country's best hotels and resorts would take away the persistent perk incentive for members seeking board service, resulting in better qualified, more dedicated boards serving the GCSAA.

5. The GCSAA would be refreshingly perceived throughout the golf industry as a tight, two-fisted business organization commensurate with the everyday mission of its thousands of members serving the country's approximate 16,000 golf courses.

Leadership begins at home. **GCI**