



**John Walsh**  
Editor

## THE NEXT GENERATION

In politics, issues are framed frequently in terms of what life is going to be like for our grandchildren and their children. What condition are we going to leave the earth in? How much debt will the country have generations from now? Politicians use the feel-good image of children to push policies they want to implement now. Genuine or not, politicians say they're concerned about future generations.

What's more genuine is the golf course maintenance industry's concern for its future. Turfgrass professors, superintendents and manufacturers invest a lot of time, effort and money to educate turfgrass students and young assistants about the business of golf course management. The goal is simple: continue to elevate the profession and industry and see them thrive in the future.

Two examples of support for the industry's future come to mind: Jacobsen's Future Turf Managers Seminar and Bayer Environmental Science's and John Deere's Green Start Academy. These companies understand the value of investing in young people because students and assistants will be their customers and leaders of tomorrow.

It's remarkable to see the enthusiasm and determination of these students and assistants who seem to have clear career paths mapped out in their heads. They thirst for knowledge and soak up every bit of information superintendents, suppliers and professors impart. It's marvelous to see them dissecting the information presented to them and forming opinions and theories.

One consistent message superintendents convey to students and assistants at these events is success in the industry doesn't come quickly or easily. It requires personal sacrifice and takes more time than it did a generation ago. At first, this message might seem depressing, but the best and brightest among the attendees seem to understand and accept the challenges laid before them. They don't balk at the difficult path they face because they're intelligent, hard-working people who are determined to succeed.

Events such as these might be just as important to a young person's future as any course of study or internship. Students and assistants network with peers and mentors alike to build relationships that will help them advance their careers. Armed with information, advice and relationships, students and assistants can weave a path of success more easily than those without these experiences.

As superintendents, it's part of your job to be mentors to students and assistants so they'll be prepared to lead the industry when the time comes. Hopefully, you have an active internship program in which you're influencing the lives and careers of future superintendents. Think about your career and the decisions you've made, about the things you would've done differently. Share these experiences with students and assistants. Contribute to their education outside the classroom. Make them the best they can be by imparting your wisdom.

If you're a manufacturer who isn't involved with a program for mentoring and educating students and assistants, think about starting one. There are plenty of quality students and assistants who are worth the investment.

Professors and universities should be marketing to and encouraging graduates to think about continuing their education to become the next generation of professors. Someone has to teach future turfgrass students once this generation of professors retires. Besides, not every turfgrass graduate will become a superintendent.

The industry does an estimable job of investing in its future and should be proud of its efforts. Even with taut budgets, it should continue to do so. **GCI**

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at [www.golfcourseindustry.com/messageboard](http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/messageboard).



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