

Why would we make a political squabble within an association our cover story? Because, quite simply, the Professional Development Initiative has the potential to reshape the employment future of every superintendent in the United States.

First, a little history. Six years ago, the GCSAA membership slapped down a radical attempt by the association's leadership to eliminate the chapter delegates system — among other things — and give substantially more power to the Board of Directors and staff in Lawrence (which included yours truly, at the time).

Under the committed leadership of then-president Randy Nichols, a new broom swept the old HQ regime out and a new member-friendly team led by Steve Mona was installed.

Many issues faced the new leadership team in Lawrence, but none loomed larger than the growing need for new membership standards. Basically, the question came down to this: How can we claim that GCSAA members are better than other superintendents when any schmuck with three years' experience and \$250 in his or her pocket can get a gold card? If we want to be perceived as professionals and be treated and paid commensurately, shouldn't we have higher standards than that?

Thus was born yet another committee, the Membership Standards Resource Group, which spent thousands of hours (and lots of money on consultants) to study the issue and recommend a course of action. What emerged was a proposal to enact a strong set of standards that revolve around a college

degree and a complex, competency-based continuing-education requirement. When details of the proposal were announced last fall, a trickle of discontent started to appear in postings on the "Talking it Over" forum on the GCSAA Web site.

That trickle turned into a flood of viewpoints, both for and against, over the past few months. At times, the exchange of these electronic messages has been a marvelous example of professional discourse between reasonable people who happen to disagree about an issue. At other times, it has been downright nasty and personal.

What does Golfdom think about PDI?

Those of you expecting me to issue an opinion will be

disappointed. My opinion is that I'm not a superintendent — and I don't get a vote.

Instead, we asked more than a dozen different superintendents to express their views on both sides of the question. We felt it was important to present a balanced, unbiased story based on your opinions, not ours.

Whichever side you take, I hope you agree the debate over this issue is a sure sign of a vital and healthy profession. Could you imagine plumbers or pilots having this type of argument about standards?

Although some of the discussion has been heated, it has been, for the most part, civil. A decent percentage of members are passionately interested in the issue, not because of how it will impact them, but how it will shape the profession in the future.

As Thomas Jefferson said, "Vigorous disagreement feeds the soil upon which democracy grows."

TJ would love the great PDI debate. ■

The discussion of PDI begins on page 38. Also see page 40.

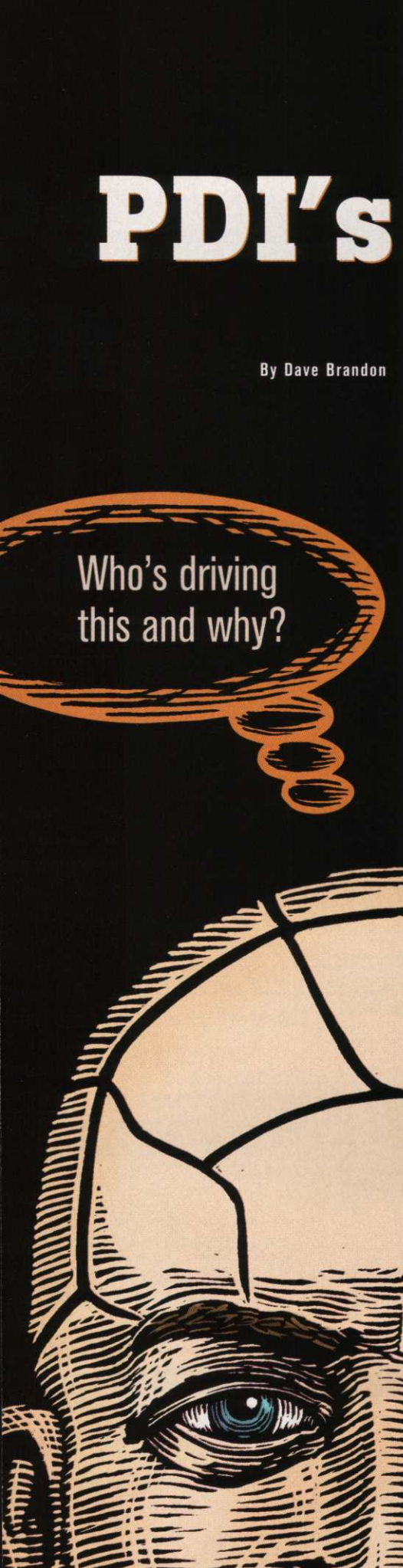
PDI: Pretty Damn Interesting

BY PAT JONES, PUBLISHER/EDITOR



PDI's

By Dave Brandon



Who's driving this and why?

Potential Pitfalls

Here's a hypothetical situation: An employer or headhunter seeking a superintendent calls the GCSAA. The prospective employer is then asked to answer a questionnaire specifying the needs for the position. GCSAA enters this information into its database and a list of candidates pops out of the computer.

Sound good? Maybe, except that you won't be on that list unless you're a Class A or certified member. And no matter how many years of great experience you have, if you don't meet certain formal education requirements, you'll never be on that list. This is the reality of the Professional Development Initiative.

By now, you and many more fellow superintendents are becoming aware of this initiative being set forth by GCSAA. To date, GCSAA has reportedly spent nearly a million dollars for the funding of this research and analysis. Many of the benefits put forth in the PDI are valid. But upon closer examination, the initiative includes potential pitfalls that could exclude many capable superintendents from achieving their professional goals.

The main drive behind the initiative is education. Who can object to that? Education is the cornerstone of our profession. But don't assume that opposing PDI is equivalent to opposing the educational avenues it could open. Instead, the opposition's concerns are primarily about the need for the full disclosure of the costs of the program as well as how and why the initiative is being proposed.

Before you read on, promise you'll do this: Take the time to investigate what's

being proposed, and make up your own mind and communicate your view to your local chapter delegate. On the surface, this initiative is being packaged and sold to you in ways that may seem irresistible. But we the opposition believe the more you find out, the more you'll agree with some of our concerns. For example:

The degree dilemma

New superintendents who hope to obtain Class A status or certification will be required to have two- or four-year degrees. The two-year degree could be in turf or a related field, but the four-year degree could be in any discipline. Under the proposal, current members that haven't achieved a degree (or certificate) will be grandfathered into the new Class A status.

The grandfathering clause is not clear on how long this "amnesty" offer is available. Suppose, for example, you're a grandfathered Class A member without a degree and you lose your job or pursue another non-superintendent career within golf for a while. You would be reclassified as an inactive member. When you were ready to take a superintendent's position, you would never be able to attain a level above Class B unless you returned to school for a degree.

What's more, there is the fundamental question, "Does a degree necessarily make one superintendent better than another?" Look around at the next chapter meeting and then decide for yourself.

Branding

Those that have the desired criteria will be considered a "branded" Class A member and will be actively promoted and

Continued on page 101

Positive About PDI

By Ray Davies

Our profession is tremendously rewarding. Every day, we see Mother Nature work miracles. The grass, the trees and flowers, the sunrise, the wildlife — it's a wonderful feeling to have the course respond to our efforts.

But it's also a challenging and sometimes frustrating profession. Long hours, lower-than-deserved pay, lack of recognition and mediocre job security have plagued our business for too long. How many superintendents do you know who have lost their positions because of bad weather, a poor relationship with the boss or player expectations that exceed the facility's budget?

I am among many superintendents who believe that we can address those challenges and frustrations by taking our destiny into our own hands. The question is how to enhance the image of our profession when no clear standards exist. At least part of the answer lies with the GCSAA's Professional Development Initiative.

Although you may not have heard much about PDI until recently, its origins date back three years. To examine questions of standards, GCSAA's Board organized the Membership Standards Resource Group in 1997. The group realized that before standards could be recommended, we needed to answer key questions, among them:

- What tasks do superintendents perform?
- What do employers value in superintendents and what weaknesses do they perceive in the profession?
- What educational needs do superintendents have?
- How well is GCSAA meeting those needs?

Here's what we learned:

- All superintendents, no matter what size facility — public or private — perform the

same core tasks. We hire, fire, train, schedule, review, purchase, approve invoices, irrigate, fertilize and perform other duties.

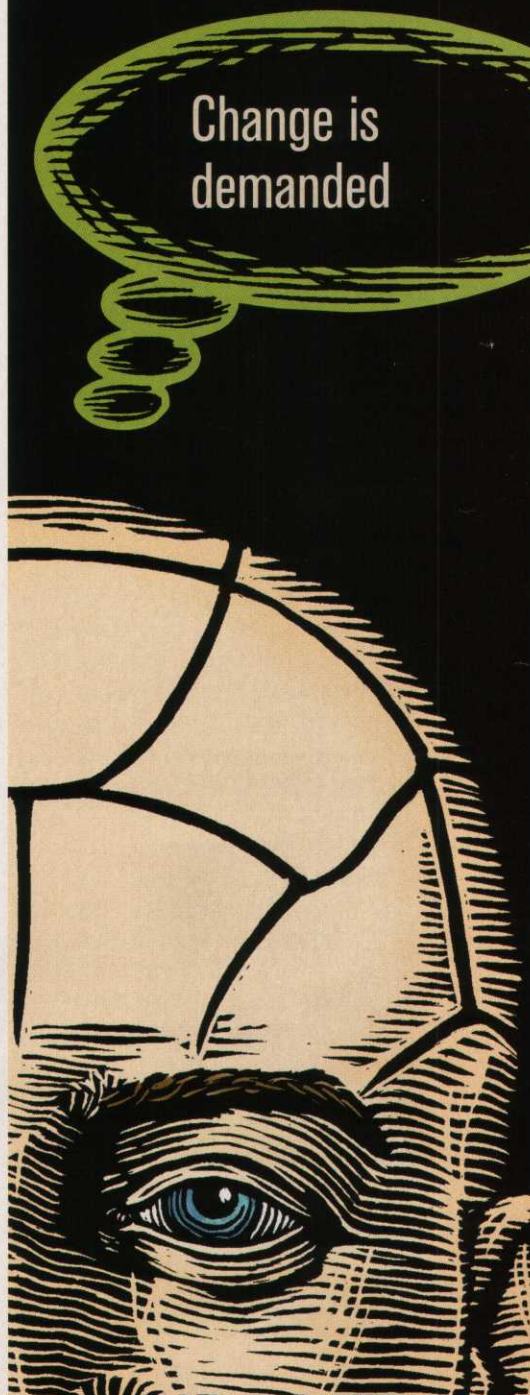
- Differences enter the equation when proficiency is considered. For example, some superintendents perform significant project management functions and others do not. Therefore, individual courses need to determine how proficient a superintendent must be in each competency.
- Employers do not necessarily understand what we do for their courses. This leaves them feeling vulnerable because they don't know if we are simply making excuses about the course conditions.
- Employers believe we have outstanding technical skills and that we work hard.
- Employers highly value college degrees.
- Employers think we don't grasp the business end of golf and make capital improvement requests beyond the ability of the business to support. We may produce great conditions, but employers fear we don't manage costs well.
- Employers believe we don't like to talk to the customers because our communication skills are often weak.
- Too many of us are unskilled in basic computer use, such as utilizing spreadsheet and word processor software.
- We would not make good general managers because we prefer to work early morning hours and go home by 2 p.m. (their words, not mine.) We do not deal well with confrontations with customers and lack effective people skills.
- We do not always manage safety training and other worker issues that leave employers open to lawsuits and workers compensation claims.

Research also suggests that our current education program needs to be fine-tuned to address the following perception issues:

- GCSAA's educational programs didn't address most non-technical tasks.

- GCSAA's educational program was

Continued on page 101



Change is demanded

Squaring Off on PDI

To supplement our primary Pro and Con editorials, *Golfdom* asked other superintendents around the country to give us their thoughts on some key questions about PDI. Those responses follow:

PDI in a Nutshell

Here is a thumbnail sketch of the complex proposal known as PDI. Note that several aspects of PDI impact member classification and will require changes in the GCSAA bylaws. The bylaws vote is scheduled for the 2001 Annual Meeting in Dallas.

- The stated purpose of PDI is to "improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the professional superintendent." The goals include increased salaries, better job security, recognition, opportunities and "branded" credentials that can be sold to employers. (Source: GCSAA)

- PDI would require new Class A and CGCS members to have a two-year turf degree or four-year degree in any subject. Requires member approval of a bylaws change.

- All current Class A members who don't meet the degree criteria would be "grandfathered" to retain their status.

- Class A members would have to complete a self-assessment every three years to develop a "competency profile" to ensure they meet a minimum standard of qualification and to map out educational and career needs. Also requires bylaws change.

- GCSAA will establish the HR Web, a database of the competency assessments, to help superintendents manage their careers and (optionally) participate in employment searches.

Attendees in New Orleans will have their chance to learn more about PDI and voice an opinion at the Town Hall Meeting following the GCSAA elections, 10:30 a.m. (time approximate), Saturday, Feb. 17.

Otherwise, visit www.gcsaa.org or contact the association at 800-472-7878 for more information on PDI.

Keith Ihms, CGCS

BENT TREE CC, DALLAS

Why do you think PDI is being proposed?

This program was initially proposed to enhance the professional image of superintendents, as well as increase the marketability of Class A superintendents to potential employers. As a side benefit, PDI has also given GCSAA an opportunity to review our educational programs, from content to instructors, and make improvements as needed.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I support the concept, but until all details have been worked through, I can't comment on any possible revisions at this time. There is still much work and discussion to be done.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

The key ingredient to the program's success centers on the competency-based Performance Assessment Models. These may be difficult to complete and agree upon. In addition, some type of validation system will need to be developed which has some backbone and is workable.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?

It will increase superintendents' status in the golf business, make branded Class A superintendents more marketable and increase the compensation of qualified superintendents.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?

GCSAA will become an even more recognized player in golf than it is

today. Anyone who wishes to be involved in golf course management as a career will want and need to be a Class A member of GCSAA. And even more important, no golfing facility will want to be managed by anyone other than a GCSAA Class A superintendent.

Sean A. Hoolehan, CGCS

WILDHORSE RESORT GC,
PENDLETON, ORE.

Why do you think PDI is being proposed?

The PDI came out of the desire to create standards for superintendents. It seemed to spin out of discussions held at chapter delegates meetings. There always seemed to be some dissatisfaction that the majority of Class A superintendents attend classes, go to conferences and stay up on new developments while a guy at a nine-hole par-3 course for three years could simply pay \$250 and, voila, he is also a Class A superintendent.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I support it with revisions. I support it because it reflects what the majority of superintendents already do. I don't like the self-assessments or competency tests. This is not necessary for minimum standards and would fit better in the certification program. Class A members already are getting a formal education and getting continuing education. We give them a verifiable credential with no added cost.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

At first, it appears to be the degree re-

Continued on page 42

AERA-vator®

www.1stproducts.com | sales@1stproducts.com



The AERA-vator punches through our hard, compacted soil much better than any aerifier that I have ever seen. I previously owned a crankshaft style machine that did nothing more than bounce off the ground. I use the AERA-vator primarily to relieve compaction in our high traffic areas as well as the "hot spot" areas to allow for better water penetration. The vibration effect really enables the tines to break through hard soil with ease. I use it on fairways without the PTO engaged for minimal turf disruption and still get three inches into the soil. The AERA-vator also works great to prep burned out areas that need reseeding.



Mike Snyder
Golf Course Superintendent
Sun Lake Golf Course
Banning California

First Products Inc | 800-363-8780

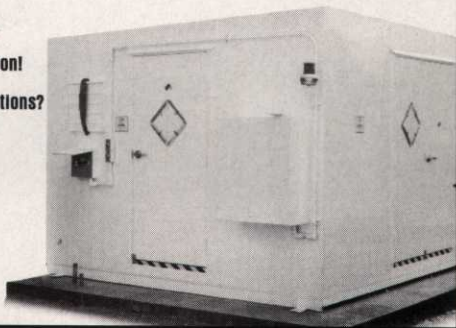
CIRCLE NO. 118

Time's Up!

Avoid costly fines

U.S. Chemical is your source for prefabricated, hazardous material containment buildings. Centralize all your turf care products in one safe and secure location

- Call for FREE site evaluation
- Have EPA, OSHA, DOT Questions? Ask US for answers.
- Select models in stock.
- FREE brochure!



Call 1 800 233-1480

U.S. CHEMICAL
Storage LLC

CIRCLE NO. 119

Squaring Off On PDI

Continued from page 40

quirement. How do you compare turf programs? Requirements are too stiff for some and not hard enough for others. Eventually, it is going to be the competency tests and the self-evaluations (that are most problematic). How are they going to be used and how do you keep people from cheating? Also, the tracking of these and the security issues could be the most expensive part of PDI.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?

It will raise the value of Class A membership. More courses will have GCSAA Class A members. The course that doesn't have a superintendent with minimum qualifications will be questioned.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?

More growth, more cost and a membership held in higher esteem.

Kerry Satterwhite, CGCS

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF GC MAINTENANCE;
BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

Why do you think PDI is being proposed?

We have seen an evolution of superintendents over the past 15 to 20 years, but the public perception has not changed. We are struggling not only for identity, but for recognition for our accomplishments. Our responsibilities have become increasingly diversified, as have the many day-to-day issues we deal with. Many of us are still viewed as "grass cutters" when we have become so much more. For us to be recognized as more, we had to launch an initiative that would help us achieve that.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I would have to say that I support it as is. I have some concerns about how it will affect ALL of the members of GCSAA, but its positives far outweigh its negatives. What has to be taken into consideration is what is best for the majority of the association now and in the future. The proposal is in the long-term best interests of most of the association members. I favor stricter standards. It should be more difficult to become certified and maintain your certification status. In fact, a level above CGCS should be created.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

The provision that has created the most controversy is the (degree) requirement and how that will impact the classification system. This profession has always provided the opportunity

Continued on page 44

OTHER VOICES

The goals of PDI are great – more money, job security, etc. However, I don't see how PDI will cause these things to happen. It's up to the individual to advance. If the superintendent does a good job, pay and security will come. When the majority find out about this, it will be defeated.

Max Bowden, CGCS
Cleveland CC; Shelby, NC

The competency profile – this is being sold as a tool the superintendent can use to objectively measure personal strengths and weaknesses, allowing him or her to seek appropriate educational seminars. This sounds a lot like the original purpose of the Stimpmeter. It was supposed to be a tool the superintendent could use to objectively measure the speed of putting greens and to gauge their consistency.

But look at what the Stimpmeter did for our business. Now we're going to create a tool that will allow the superintendent to be measured? This is potentially very dangerous. All it would take is one ambitious candidate, trying to gain an edge at a job interview, to pass around his or her competency profile and soon other applicants would have to produce their own.

Mike Rewinski
Westhampton CC; West Hampton Beach, N.Y.

It's time to raise the standards for Class A membership in GCSAA. What those standards will be is what the PDI process is about.

Gary Grigg, CGCS
Royal Poinciana GC; Naples, Fla.

HR Web really bothers me. There is no way that this tool can do anything but leave the members that manage low-budget and mom-and-pop courses behind in favor of those with big budgets and numerous assistants. This (competency profile) is supposed to be private information, but anyone with an open mind can imagine that GCSAA or selected headhunter firms operated by prominent association members will use this tool as a job placement system. In the future, GCSAA will represent only upscale private clubs, resorts and multi-course municipalities. Will the member-

Continued on page 47

Squaring Off On PDI

Continued from page 42
nity for someone without a formal education to become successful. That opportunity will not be taken away. You can still belong to the GCSAA, and everyone will have the same opportunities. It's up to individuals to make career choices that benefit them.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?

We will continue to gain the respect and recognition that we deserve. Many superintendents have already achieved that, but that consists of a minority of the GCSAA membership.

You will see career assistants and irrigation technicians. Not everyone who enters this profession is cut out to be a superintendent. As we enter this new millennium and we deal with more regulatory issues and personnel management becomes more critical, you will see the superintendent's responsibility shift away from "turf management" and focus more on other responsibilities.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?

Initially, there will be some attrition. That is unfortunate because some members will drop out as a matter of principle. However, after the growing pains have subsided, you will see membership continue to grow. There will be more educational opportunities for everyone.

Ted Cox, CGCS

RUNNING FOX GC;
CHILLICOTHE, OHIO

Why do you think PDI is being proposed?

There is a feeling by some superintendents that the office superintendents want to separate themselves from the dirty-fingernailed superintendents, and this is what PDI is about. I agree with that view, though I also feel there's an honest effort toward making the education better.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I don't support PDI as written. I would agree to PDI with some revisions. But you must keep in mind that it is not written. We have been told time and again that it is not set in stone, which makes forming an opinion difficult. I'm 100 percent against the degree requirement in any form.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

The degree requirement and the HR Web.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?

There will be a large distinction between club superintendents and public superintendents. Top superintendents will effectively lock out anyone else from the top jobs. The image of a superintendent will have two faces — one will be suit-and-tie elitist' the other will be Joe Slob wearing jeans and not knowing which end of a sprayer to use.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?

The membership will suffer. It won't be able to reach the 45 percent of superintendents who aren't members now, and GCSAA may lose many members. GCSAA might get some competition from another association.

Rick Niemier

CLASS A; MARION, IOWA

Why do you think the PDI is being proposed?

What the Membership Standards Resource Group is saying is that GCSAA needs minimum standards to be able to promote superintendents to employers, and the three years of being employed as a superintendent is too little. Most people who become superintendents work at least five years in the business before they become a superintendent. Some who are already Class A and CGCS want to make it harder to become a Class A. They feel it's too easy to reach Class A status.

The GCSAA is a very political association, and those involved generally do not

Continued on page 47

Continued from page 44

ship drop? At first, probably yes, but with the mass influx of turf school graduates, it will probably level off. I can't believe it will grow at the previous rate. And the 50 percent of all superintendents who do not belong now will never join.

Corey Eastwood
Stockton G&CC; Stockton, Calif.

In time, PDI will make all of us better superintendents. It will enhance our education and make it specific to our needs. We will be better recognized by employers and golfers. You will see superintendents who are the most educated and highly respected become members of the management team.

Ross O'Fee, CGCS
The Country Club; Park City, Utah

I support PDI as it's written. It would be shortsighted to think it's a static program. It will evolve as need arises. There has been a tremendous amount of thought put into it, but that doesn't mean it's perfect.

Tom Schlick, CGCS
Marriott Golf, Orlando

Squaring Off on PDI

Continued from page 44

oppose programs like this because of potential backlash. Many of us who have spoken out against PDI have been attacked personally and professionally. A superintendent told me he defended me to the "powers to be." Did I need defending? I voiced my opinion. Supposedly, this is what the MSRG wanted.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I don't support it as written and changes need to be made before I will lend my support. The education requirement (degree for future Class A) needs to be dropped. The proficiency profiles need to be thought out more. Many potential problems exist when this information could be released.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

The degree requirement to attain Class A, required proficiency profiles and the fact that many things such as cost, number of continuing education credits and professional development units, and grandfathering have not been finalized.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?

It will have forced many lower-budget superintendents to drop their GCSAA memberships. With the dual membership requirement that passed a few years ago, they will also not be able to join their local associations. The result: more superintendents with few educational opportunities.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?

GCSAA will represent higher-end clubs, but most lower- and middle-budget courses will not be represented. These lower- and mid-budget superintendents will have no voice. ■

TurfGrass Trends delivers . . . practical turfgrass management information you can use today

○ **Yes!** Begin my subscription to **TURFGRASS TRENDS**

U.S. & CANADA ○ 6 Months \$96 ○ 1 Year \$180

ALL OTHER COUNTRIES ○ \$210 (1 Year)

Payable in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Back issues available at \$15 each, prepaid.

- My payment enclosed. (Make checks payable to **TURFGRASS TRENDS**.)
- Please Bill Me
- Charge my subscription to: ○ VISA ○ MasterCard ○ American Express

Signature _____ Date _____

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Billing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Fax completed form with credit card information to 218-723-9417 or 9437, or mail coupon with your payment to **TURFGRASS TRENDS**, 131 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802-2065.

Charges will appear on your credit card statement as **Advanstar Communications Inc.**, which publishes and distributes this magazine. AN **ADVANSTAR** PUBLICATION ©2000 Advanstar Communications Inc. All rights reserved.



Name (please print) _____

Title _____

Business _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Country _____

E-Mail Address _____

PDI's Potential Pitfalls

Continued from page 38

marketed by the GCSAA. These are not our words; these are in the words put forth in the PDI presentation and used by many PDI supporters in discussions on the GCSAA "Talking it Over" Web forum. (Note: The forum has been a great communication tool. We urge everyone who has access to a computer to visit this site.)

In short, it's clear that GCSAA intends to put even more of its resources and efforts behind these "branded" superintendents in the future. Is this the role we want our association to play?

Continuing education

If passed, everyone who wants to maintain Class A status will have to accumulate a certain amount of continuing education credits/professional development units and meet other educational criteria. This will cost both money and time. No one seems to know how much, but it's hard to conceive it will be cheap. In addition, those not grandfathered in will have to prove certain competencies that must be validated by a third party. Should we agree to something without knowing what it will cost us?

What's driving it?

The PDI was initially put forth under the premise that "this is what our employers want." Later, the message radically shifted to "this is what we, the members, wanted." Curiously, the great majority of members don't even seem to know this issue exists. How could it be what "we" wanted?

Ask yourself who's really driving this and why.

Get involved

Again, we invite you to please get actively involved with where the GCSAA is headed. The GCSAA isn't just an elite group of leaders or a building in Lawrence, Kan. The GCSAA is you, me and the rest of the membership. The debate surrounding this initiative will, in some way, directly effect your future as a superintendent. This is not about "politics," it's about your livelihood.

We assure you that those of us who question this initiative are proud to be GCSAA members. Because we have chosen to voice our concerns, we have been called whiners, complainers and extremists. We have been told we may even be jeopardizing ("splat!") our future in golf course management.

But like those who support PDI, we are concerned about the future of our association and profession. We represent every region in the country, range from students to veteran certified superintendents, work at properties from nine holes to multicourse facilities, and hold positions from assistant greenkeeper to general manager.

Many of us have college degrees and some do not. We are not a vocal minority. We are simply people who care passionately about the future of our profession. But don't just

take our word for it. Get informed and get involved.

David Brandon is a Class A superintendent in Michigan who can be reached at 2buddha@mach7.com or 517-466-2653. He wrote this column cooperatively with Don Mahaffey, superintendent of Torres Blancas GC; Max



Bowden, CGCS of Cleveland CC; David Pulley, superintendent at Pine Valley CC; Sam Hocutt III, CGCS at Pawleys Plantation; Corey Eastwood, CGCS of Stockton Golf & CC; Rick Niemier, Class A superintendent and GCSAA member; Al Jansen, superintendent at Baraboo CC; and Andrew Gruse, superintendent at Monroe CC.

Positive About PDI

Continued from page 39

strong in technical training.

- Most seminar presentations didn't use the best methods or materials.
- We think of seminars as the primary way to improve skills.

Recommendations

This information led the MSRG to make the following recommendations that are the centerpieces of PDI:

- GCSAA should refine its education program to provide superintendents with the non-technical competencies employers demand.
- The association should provide a tool for members to identify those proficiencies that, if mastered, would bring additional value to their employers. This would improve tenure and compensation.
- GCSAA should teach superintendents to use the competencies in managing their relationships with their employers.
- Employers must be educated about the skills and abilities we possess.
- We should use our skills to influence employers to make hiring decisions based on their golf courses and their demands.
- GCSAA should adopt new membership standards based on what we do, instead of our title and years in service.

We did not make these recommendations without great thought. We spent considerable time working on the membership classifications. We found this to be a difficult subject on which to find agreement, but did compromise on the recommendations that you will find in the graphics in this section.

The MSRG established a one-year period to communicate the proposal to the membership through chapter presenta-

Continued on page 102

Positive About PDI

Continued from page 101

tions, information on the Web site, and a town hall meeting at the upcoming conference to get feedback from as many members as possible.

The group will meet again in April to assess what you, the members, told us and make adjustments to the proposal. The proposal, along with any revisions, will go to the Board of Directors for approval before the delegates meeting in September. A member vote on any changes to the bylaws required by the final proposal won't take place until the 2001 conference.

Concerns

Some of the concerns expressed relating to the new standards for Class A are the requirement of a degree, required continuing education and the mandatory use of the HR Web. Some would prefer that we simply leave the membership standards alone and focus only on revamping the educational program.

Golfdom publisher/editor Pat Jones asked me to write this article as part of a pro vs. con discussion on PDI. This suggests it is a black-and-white issue, but "Should we have change?" is not the appropriate question. The better question is: "What changes are appropriate to address employers' needs for non-technical skills and improve the perceived value of the su-

perintendent?"

The appropriate task is the continued development of this proposal into one that addresses the issues confronting our profession. We can't ignore what we learned from the research.

I know from our work on the MSRSG that aspects of this proposal are controversial, but that's the role of leadership. The MSRSG members welcome suggestions for improvement and will make a final proposal that takes into consideration all the comments and concerns of our members. It has been a great experience. I'm proud of my profession and especially proud of my association for taking a hard look at itself.

I invite you to find out more about the PDI and our reasons for recommending it. When you do, I believe you will come to the same conclusion: Change is demanded.



Ray Davies is CGCS at Crystal Springs GC in Burlingame, Calif., and a member of the GCSAA Membership Standards Resource Group. He can be reached at 650-342-4188 or rsd Davies@pacbell.net.

Want a new source for pest information?



www.pestfacts.org

Termites, cockroaches, rodents, even poison ivy and other nasty weeds. They're all pests, which means they can cause real problems that pose health and safety risks to children and adults. The good news is now you've got the Pest Facts Information Center at www.pestfacts.org. It's a handy resource discussing the problems caused by pests, as well as the safe and responsible use of urban pesticides and related issues. So don't just sit there...log on.

