
1996 Chapter Relations Meeting Synopsis of Recommendations

By Mark Kienert

The fourth annual Chapter Relations Meeting was held September 7-8, 1996 in Lawrence, Kansas. Representatives from 88 chapters came together to discuss pertinent issues and provide direction for the future of GCSAA.

Paul McGinnis, GCSAA Vice President and chairman of the Chapter Relations Committee, asked the chapter delegates to share their concerns and ideas on issues ranging from finances, technology, membership and election activities. With that in mind, the chapter delegates participated in discussion on a variety of topics and issues. The major points and recommendations on each issue are outlined below.

Issue #1.

Is a dues increase needed to generate revenue for the association, to sustain program activity for the next three years and have to moderate bottom line of revenues over expenses? A scenario of a 20% dues increase was discussed.

The potential solutions were to maintain the status quo, or to develop projects and services that set a vision for the future.

In a straw poll, approximately 25 delegates preferred to vote on a possible increase in membership dues at the 1998 annual meeting in Anaheim, while approximately 66 delegates preferred voting on a dues increase at the 1997 annual meeting in Las Vegas. It was unanimous that a dues increase is merited at some point. The issue will be referred to the board of directors for possible placement as a ballot issue at the 1997 annual meeting in Las Vegas.

Issue #2.

Beginning July 1, 1997, individuals who join a local chapter must also join GCSAA to fulfill the dual membership requirement. A verification process must be created to ensure that member who joins a local chapter also joins GCSAA and vice versa.

It was recommended that GCSAA work with each chapter as needed to ensure a smooth process in handling the paperwork after the dual membership requirement takes effect, but would like to develop a standardized plan in handling membership applications and payments. A new member should apply at the chapter level first, and the chapter should then forward the GCSAA membership application and dues payment to GCSAA for processing. This would ensure that new members join the chapter of their choice first.

Issue #3.

GCSAA chapters have raised concerns during the re-affiliation process. Chapter delegates received a survey prior to the meeting, asking them to rank six affiliation

issues in order of importance. The six items were the time, efforts and resources needed to complete the tax-exempt and incorporation requirements; the dual membership requirement and its effect on superintendents from small budget or nine hole courses and whether it will limit chapter growth; problems acquiring insurance; how the directors and officers composition requirements may limit chapter growth; bylaw's conformity; and financial burdens for smaller chapters.

Survey results indicated that the dual membership requirement was of the greatest concern to chapters, followed by the directors and officer's composition requirements, bylaw's conformity requirements, financial burdens on smaller chapters, tax-exempt and incorporation, and problems with insurance, respectively.

GCSAA will try to identify current problems with these affiliation items as well as other affiliation concerns that the chapters are experiencing and find solutions to the problems to help every chapter re-affiliate with GCSAA. GCSAA's chapter relations department staff will work with chapters to resolve any affiliation issues that arise at any

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time and will keep chapters updated on affiliation progress. Chapters who have not submitted affiliation materials to GCSAA by October 1 will receive a phone call from one of the Chapter Relations Committee members, encouraging them to submit affiliation materials before the December 31 deadline.

Issue #4.

GCSAA is seeking a better way to use its logo to increase exposure on "Par for the Course" and the Web site, and is seeking a method to harmonize GCSAA's logo.

In a straw poll, about 50% of the delegates liked the idea of using one unified logo, while the other 50% preferred not having a unified logo. This brought on a question, which is more important — the ownership of the chapter logo or the aesthetics? About 30-40% of the delegates felt that the ownership of the logo was important while about 20% felt that the aesthetics (graphic look) were more important. The additional 40-50% of the delegates didn't have a strong feeling about either, but are pleased with their current chapter logo.

GCSAA and the chapters will continue to explore options and identify opportunities to increase logo exposure for both GCSAA and the chapters.

Issue #5.

At the 1996 annual meeting in Orlando, an amendment was passed to lower the dues for class C members

from \$210 to \$105. In addition, class C members lost the right to vote. Should class C members regain some the privileges they lost, such as voting rights? In addition, should there be a split in classification for class C members between career assistant superintendents and those who intend to become superintendents (entry-level assistants)?

The delegates had to decide whether to submit a proposal to the Bylaws Committee that would add an additional classification for assistant superintendents to recognize career assistants.

In a straw poll, approximately 70% of the delegates said they would like to vote on the split in the classification for assistant superintendents at the 1997 annual meeting in Las Vegas, while approximately 30% of the delegates preferred to table the discussion until next year and consider voting on the issue at the 1998 annual meeting in Anaheim.

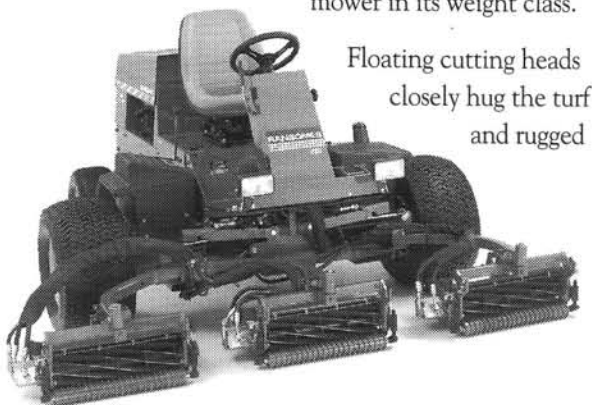
It was decided to send to the Standards/Bylaws Committee a recommendation to create a bylaw's amendment that would be voted on by the membership at the 1997 annual meeting in Las Vegas. This amendment would add an additional classification for career assistants in the class C category. Any member who volunteers to be classified as a career assistant would be required to have at least three years of experience as an assistant superintendent, would pay annual dues of \$210, would have voting privileges, would carry a gold card, and would be required to comply with the dual membership

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requirement. (For some, losing the "gold card" had more significance and was worth paying a higher price.) Any member who is classified as an entry-level assistant would have less than three years of experience as an assistant superintendent, would pay annual dues of \$105, would not have voting privileges, would carry a green card and would not be required to comply with the dual membership requirement.

Issue #6.

The Membership Committee has proposed that class AA members pay no membership dues, which would result in a reduction in membership dues revenue. Currently, class AA members pay \$16 annually. Class AA members must have served as a golf course superintendent for a minimum of 25 years, be retired as golf course superintendent, and be at least 55 years old.

When the delegates were polled, approximately 85% of delegates were in favor of waiving the dues for class AA members, while 15% were in favor of requiring class AA members to continue paying \$16 annually. The proposal to waive the dues for class AA members was sent to the Standards/Bylaws Committee for creating an amendment that would be voted on at the 1997 annual meeting in Las Vegas.

Issue #7.

Currently, to become a class A or B member of GCSAA, the individual must be a golf course superintendent and must pay \$210 dues annually. There are no minimum requirements or continuing education standards for membership and certification is a voluntary standard. Presently, there is no room for professional growth in the GCSAA classification system for members to take on other leadership roles within the golf industry. In addition, GCSAA is not currently able to identify a minimum skill level of its members.

One of the potential solutions brought onto the floor for discussion was to identify and consider the implementation of entry-level membership standards.

In a straw poll, a majority of the delegates wanted to proceed with the creation of entry-level membership standards and approximately 60% said they would like the process to move more rapidly than the 7 years originally suggested.

The Board will proceed with appointing a resource group to begin developing standards. The timeline may be accelerated, depending on how the program develops.

Progress on creation of standards will be brought back yearly to the delegates meeting for review and input. The membership standards would be implemented for class A, B, and C members, but careful consideration would be given to establishing entry-level maintenance standards for career assistants.

Issue #8.

If a member or non-member of GCSAA feels that a violation in the code of ethics has occurred, there are certain steps that should be taken to address the alleged violation.

Some of the partial solutions would be to increase awareness of situations that may result in violations of the code of ethics and assist chapters in developing procedures in how to deal with possible violations.

Recommendations would include considering and adopting an entry-level standard that requires members of GCSAA to follow the code of ethics.

Chapters need to be aware when there is a false claim of membership or when an individual claims to be a certified golf course superintendent they respond to the individual. When a club advertises for an open position, GCSAA should inform the club that they should contact GCSAA and verify that its finalists for the position are indeed members of GCSAA and/or certified before making a job offer to an individual. Newsline and other communication vehicles should be utilized to inform members about good ethical behavior.

Issue #9.


GCSAA is seeking ways to better serve its chapters through the chapter seminar program.

Major problems were economic. Potential solutions were to provide input into whether chapters should continue to receive rebates for chapter seminars, what efforts should be made to increase seminar attendance, and whether the overall education program should show a profit, break-even, or incur a loss of revenue.

In a straw poll, a majority of the delegates said that if the regional seminars cost was decreased, attendance would not increase proportionately, but if the cost of attending regional seminars doubled, attendance would decrease.

Most of the chapter delegates wanted the current rebate program for GCSAA regional seminars to continue, while about 15% of the delegates wanted the chapters to put forth some effort to get the rebate. About 50 of the delegates were in favor of the education program breaking even (expenses equal revenue) and about 36 of the delegates were in favor of letting the education program run deficit funding at a reasonable level.

There was agreement that the goal is to educate the membership and a profit or loss is not crucial; therefore, making a profit on the regional seminar program and using those funds for future programs is not a priority at this time.



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For now, GCSAA will continue the chapter rebate program, and ask the Education Committee to explore options regarding the education budget.

Issue #10.

The Chapter Cooperative Research Program assists affiliated chapters in funding research of local interest. Currently, funding is greater than the chapter support of the Golden and Platinum Tee Clubs. Chapter support is needed in these clubs in order for the GCSAA Foundation to be able to provide matching funds for research projects.

Approximately 23 of the delegates want the Foundation and the chapters to co-fund research projects, but not require the chapters to join either the Golden or Platinum Tee Club. Approximately 45 of the delegates want the program to continue as it is and require chapters to join either the Golden or Platinum Tee Club to receive matching funds.

It was recommended that we should require chapters who are seeking funding for a research project to join either the Golden or Platinum Tee Club, but GCSAA should continue to fund national projects that are good ideas.

Issue #11.

At a recent meeting, the Career Development Committee discussed employment issues such as wrongful termination, ethics, educating employers about the economic consequences of hiring a less experienced superintendent over an experienced superintendent, the effect aging has on salary, employability and opportunity, the

general manager structure, and establishing student GCSAA chapters.

Time was spent to identify the most damaging trends in the industry, defining the success of the employment mandate, and told GCSAA what the association should do for its members regarding employment issues.

It was recommended that GCSAA needs to provide communication tools to bridge the gap between the employer and golf course superintendent. Overall, GCSAA should provide more concerted efforts in implementing standards that lead to respect and professionalism, and educate the media and employers about GCSAA.


Issue #12.

The discussion centered on quicker voting delegate accountability for the voting process and ways to accelerate the voting process. For those of you who have attended an annual meeting, we sought to recommend a new system that increases voting delegate accountability, yet maintains the privacy of casting votes for each chapter. The chapter voting delegate should cast the votes as intended, rather than being swayed by how other chapters cast their votes.

A majority of the delegates want the votes cast privately by the voting delegate, individual voter, or proxy. A majority of the delegates also favor a system that would offer public accountability of the voting results by posting them before the conference and show ends.

The Election Committee will examine several options to have a private casting of the votes at the annual meeting and to implement a voting system that allows accountability of the individual casting the vote(s). ♣

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