

5th Annual Chapter Delegates Meeting

(Editor's Note: James Nicol, CGCS, vice-president of the MGCSA, Chapter Liaison/Delegate and a member of the Chapter Relations Committee, traveled to GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kans. to attend the 5th Annual Chapter Delegates Meeting on September 5-6, 1997. The following actions took place.)

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Actions Taken

Recommendations to the GCSAA Board of Directors

1) Chapter Regional Seminar Rebate/Reimbursement Program — the program has operated at a deficit for the past few years. Chapter delegates were in agreement with the following recommendations made by the Chapter Relations Committee:

- Eliminate the chapter regional seminar rebate and reimbursement programs (except for the complimentary registrations given to chapters in exchange for on-site coordination).

- Continue to reimburse chapters for incidental expenses associated with on-site coordination.

- Maintain the minimum registration requirement of 20 fully-paid participants.

- Provide information on how chapters may solicit financial support from state golf associations and other sources to reduce the cost of regional seminar education.

Recommendations to GCSAA Committees and Resource Groups

1) *Recommendation to Membership Standards Resource Group:* Continue with plans to implement a membership standards initiative that will positively influence the way employers and influential golfers value the golf course superintendent.

Discussion Highlights

1) *Membership Standards Initiative* — Bruce R. Williams, CGCS, chairman of the membership standards resource group, and Gary Bridges, a consultant from Stanford Research Institute (SRI), presented an overview of the outcomes of the group's first meeting. The proposed mission statement is to increase the value of the golf course superintendents in the eyes of employers and influential golfers by providing:

- Clearly articulated levels of membership tied to standards that employers and influential golfers value.

- Ready access to professional development built around the skills and knowledge that provide real value to employers and influential golfers.

- An active campaign to help golf course superintendents communicate their value to employers and influential golfers.

The membership standards resource group was encouraged to incorporate communication and awareness of the golf course superintendent's profession into the proposed mission statement. The attendees agreed that a membership standards initiative would encourage potential members to join the association. They also endorsed the group's goals to increase compensation for GCSAA members through increasing their recognition with employers and to increase job security through expanded job opportunities.

Currently, the resource group is seeking input from chapters and other sources to develop a clear vision for a membership standards initiative. Some of the ideas generated from the resource group meeting that relate to the vision are to:

- Increase the level of respect for the golf course superintendent's profession.

- Effectively demonstrate the value of GCSAA members to employers and influential golfers.

- Significantly increase the recognition of GCSAA's name.

- Have a defined set of competencies (skills and knowledge).

- More effectively show the value of the GCSAA to its members.

- Fulfill the potential to be stewards of the environment.

- Share in the increased self-image the initiative can help achieve.

Chapter delegates were charged with the responsibility of presenting the concept of a membership standards initiative to their chapter members and asking for their commitment. A written copy of the membership standards presentation as well as an illustrated report of the resource group's goals and ideas for developing the initiative were distributed to chapter delegates. A slide presentation will be developed and distributed at a later date.

The next steps in the process are to:

A) Conduct a member survey, an employer survey and a preliminary job analysis.

B) Identify how the membership standards initiative ties in with GCSAA committees and what the interaction among these groups will be.

C) Develop timelines, funding requirements and departmental responsibilities.

D) Identify which tasks the membership standards resource group should undertake before its next meeting, Nov. 2-3.

E) Continue the search for and hire a public relations firm to conduct a member marketing campaign.

A preliminary plan will be developed in 1998, based on the recommendations of the resource group, the board of directors, committee members, chapters, employers and others. The plan could be voted on as early as 2000.

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Employers Advisory Forum

GCSAA invited employers to headquarters in April to discuss employers' perceptions about the role of the golf course superintendent and employers' expectations of superintendents. It was learned that there are differences in employers' attitudes and expectations for the golf course superintendent. Additional groups of employers will be invited to GCSAA Headquarters for similar discussions.

Code of Ethics/Enforcement

Dan Church, GCSAA's legal counsel, reviewed the GCSAA Code of Ethics and the ethics violation process. Delegates were informed about potential chapter involvement and verification in the investigatory process if a violation of the GCSAA Code of Ethics is suspected. Several examples of potential ethics violations versus lack of professional courtesy were also presented.

The GCSAA Foundation Capital Campaign

In an effort to provide funds for education and research, The GCSAA Foundation has begun preliminary work on a \$3.5 million fundraising campaign. The talking points of the campaign and a news release were distributed to chapter delegates. Gary Grigg, MG, CGCS, is the chairman of the chapter committee for the campaign and will be selecting eight additional members to serve on this committee. Chapter presidents will be contacted in the next few weeks by committee members and asked to seek financial support from their chapters.

Dual Membership Verification

GCSAA and chapters are continuing to work through the additional administrative responsibilities and exchange of information. A pilot program will be instituted in 1998 to explore the feasibility of new members having one membership application form, one check and one membership number for both GCSAA and their local chapter.

International Allied Associations

Chapters that are not located within one of the 50 states must complete all reaffiliation requirements, except dual membership, in order to remain GCSAA affiliated chapters. If they are unable to meet these requirements, they have the option of becoming international allied associations. Allied associations do not have voting privileges or representation at the Chapter Delegates Meeting. Affiliation requirements for international chapters were reviewed and approved by GCSAA's Board of Directors at its summer 1997 meeting.

Web Site Utilization for Chapters

Chapter delegates received a first-hand look at the Web site and the services it provides to members. A chapter discussion forum will be added to GCSAA's Web site in April 1998 and will allow chapter members to share ideas and

opinions about chapter-related issues. Chapters interested in developing their own Web sites have the option of asking GCSAA to host their sites. Chapters would be responsible for the maintenance fees and database development.

Dues Increase Philosophy

This issue will be reviewed on an annual basis at the Chapter Delegates meeting. The 1996-97 financial results were reviewed as well as the 1997-98 budget. It was noted that dues increases will be more frequent than every six years in order to sustain program growth, unless a major new source of revenue is identified.

Committee Volunteer Process

GCSAA is asking chapters for information about their committee members' and volunteers' chapter participation to assist GCSAA officers and committee chairs in making selections. Chapter leaders have been asked to sign volunteer interest forms that allow volunteers to document their involvement at the chapter and national levels. Chapter leaders have also been asked to complete evaluation forms of current committee members from their chapters and return them to GCSAA by October 31.

Etonic's Superintendent Leadership Series

This program provides management-based education to members through their chapters at an affordable cost. Chapters are reimbursed for qualified expenses up to \$1,000. The chapter selects the seminar, handles the logistics and markets the program. The enrollment deadline was September 30.

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Schools

Presently, there are 88 schools involved in the program and 66 have been adopted by chapters or golf course superintendents. There is a concern that more involvement is needed in this program. A video was also shown that explained how chapters and golf course superintendents teach school children about the environment, wildlife habitat enhancement, waste management and resource conservation. Delegates received a copy of the video and a brochure, explaining the benefits of the program, to share with their chapter members.

Chapter Needs Discussion

(The following points were made during this discussion.)

- Explore investment opportunities for chapters.
- Conduct a new chapter member orientation on ethics.
- Increase member visits to GCSAA headquarters.
- Improve communication among chapter-paid staff.
 - a) Host a meeting at GCSAA Headquarters for chapter-paid staff in a format similar to the Chapter Delegates meeting.
 - b) Expand conference and show programs offered.
 - c) Offer business and turf awareness seminars.

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d) Develop a discussion forum on GCSAA's Web site only for chapter-paid staff.

e) Place committee outcomes on GCSAA's Web site for easy access.

f) Hold conference calls, facilitated by a GCSAA staff member, to discuss specific chapter-related issues.

- Reduce the administrative work required of chapter-paid staff.

- a) provide more information formatted disks.

- Utilize the Speakers Bureau program to communicate the value of GCSAA membership to chapter members. Assistance is also needed in selling the value of the golf course superintendent to employers. Invite employers to chapter meetings to hear this message.

- Explore ways for chapters to raise funds for charities that are not golf-related.

- Explore ways to get "Par for the Course" more exposure nationwide.

- Assist chapters with publishing and obtaining advertising for their newsletters.

- Consolidate chapter mailings.

- Develop ideas on how to reduce education costs.

- Consider providing grants to those who can't afford to pay membership dues.

- Network more with architects and owners to assist them in hiring qualified golf course superintendents.

- Provide chapter delegates with an edited version of a tape of the Chapter Delegates Meeting, including the Meet the Candidates presentations. This would allow chapter members to see the candidates' presentations and make informed decisions on how they will cast their votes at the annual meeting.

- Provide compelling information to all GCSAA members that they can present to their club's board of directors or owners, explaining the value of sending their golf course superintendents to GCSAA's conference and show.

- Help golf course superintendents to improve their communication skills and encourage them to take advantage of public speaking courses available locally.

- Develop ideas on how chapters can increase members' attendance at their meetings and make this a membership standards requirement.

- Recognize chapters for their work at major golf tournaments through the media.

- Community service should be a membership standards requirement.

- Communicate to students and young members the benefits of volunteering at the chapter level.

- Consider providing scholarships or grants to mechanics for them to receive training and continuing education. Also encourage them to become GCSAA members.

Open Forum and Discussion

Time was allotted for additional discussion of any or all of the meeting agenda items. A majority of the time was

spent discussing the membership standards initiative. Following are the comments and questions raised:

- Improve the standards for holding and earning GCSAA membership.

- Avoid high entry fees for association membership that would discourage members from joining.

- Examine ways that turf programs will be impacted by membership standards.

- We need to communicate to students the commitment involved in being a golf course superintendent and discourage those who aren't serious about the profession or think it's easy.

- Bring back the five-year standard requirement to be certified.

- Create a master certified golf course superintendent level.

- Accredit college programs (college goals are in variance to GCSAA goals.)

- Clarify how being a certified golf course superintendent is a current standard.

- Communicate to student chapter members what it means to be a golf course superintendent.

- Find a way to promote to all audiences what golf course superintendents do and how they are involved at the chapter level.

- Develop a matrix that defines educational requirements for student members, certified golf course superintendents, membership classifications and master certified golf course superintendents and includes a mentoring program where students work with golf course superintendents.

- Be careful of a grandfather clause for membership standards, but allow time for members to fulfill the membership standards requirements.

- Pay attention to the relationships with two-year turf programs.

- Some level of college education should be required for the membership standards, but encourage four-year degrees.

- Recognize all efforts of golf course superintendents, regardless of the number of years of education they have.

- Setting membership standards will show future students what's required to be a member, and it will give educational institutions the initiative to ensure that their programs prepare students for meeting GCSAA's membership standards.

