



2012 Chapter Delegates Meeting:

Citing the considerable amount of dialogue among participants, GCSAA President Sandy Queen, CGCS, said the association's 2012 Chapter Delegates Meeting was productive and will pay additional dividends in the future.

Conducted Oct. 5-7 at GCSAA headquarters and in Kansas City, Mo., chapter representatives met to learn more about association initiatives and to provide feedback on governance, programs and services, and issues regarding the game and business of golf. They also heard from candidates running for GCSAA national leadership positions.

The what and the why

"It is important that our members know the 'what' and 'why' of GCSAA efforts, but it is equally important that we hear what our members have to say," Queen said. "We cannot make decisions or shape policy without that feedback.

That is why I am so pleased that there was debate on what was presented. I continue to be impressed with the quality of representatives the chapters send to the meeting."

Queen noted that prior chapter delegate feedback helped formulate the new conference and show schedule, implement free GCSAA webcasts and restructure the annual meeting. Discussion this year will be utilized to "tweak" certain aspects of the Rounds 4 Research program, study the GCSAA Chapter Affiliation Agreement and help the board of directors and staff prioritize programs and services.

"The thing I like about the meeting is the board listens and wants our input," said GCSAA Class A member Brad Jolliff, a multi-year attendee from Oklahoma. "You get the opportunity to give your point of view. There is such a diversity of membership, and to make the best decisions the board needs input from many sources. The delegates meeting is a good way to get

the information.”

Chapter affiliation deliberated

One of the most lively discussions regarded the GCSAA Chapter Affiliation Agreement, specifically Class A conformity between GCSAA and chapters in terms of membership classification. Ultimately, the board of directors opted to extend the current affiliation agreement to give the association and chapters an additional year to collect data and do further study on the issue.

The extension was also granted to give the association time to analyze the report of the Membership Standards Advisory Group. For the past nine months, this independent panel of members has been studying the impact of the professional development initiative (PDI) that resulted in the creation of membership standards. The MSAG presented to the delegates its findings that PDI had been successful with increased advocacy with policy makers, the creation of the IPM requirement, expanded education opportunities that were accessible and affordable, and improved playing conditions. It did note that the faltering economy and the cost and time necessary to affect change through a public relations campaign worked against the program.

Recommendations focused on membership conformity, simplifying membership classifications, and strengthening the requirements for Class A status and items to help market it.

Dues increase up for vote

The association presented a proposed dues increase that will be voted on at the annual meeting in February in San Diego. The vote will be to increase dues \$25 for Class A and SM members, and \$15 for Class C members, making annual dues \$365 and \$185, respectively. The increase is a combination of a \$15 increase (for Class A/SM) based on the Consumer Price Index and \$10 (for Class A/SM) to compensate for GCSAA’s group life insurance premium being doubled by the provider.

Second-year delegate and Class A member Brian Beckner of the Everglades GCSA spoke to the value members received for their membership. “It’s too bad every member cannot be here to hear and see what they get for their dues,” Beckner said. “It is incredible what I get as a GCSAA member. Everything I heard this weekend was about helping me be a better golf course superintendent and being more valuable to my facility. We are fortunate to have GCSAA.”

The bottom line

GCSAA Chief Executive Officer Rhett Evans shared the association's invest-recover-grow strategy that has shaped the association's budgeting philosophy for the past two years. He described how funds have been invested in new programs such as field staff, Rounds 4 Research, web technology, advocacy and other areas to better serve the members. Giving time to allow these programs to gain traction will ultimately help stabilize association operations.

Evans indicated that staff will present a balanced budget to the board in December, but will pull some funds from the association's reserve just as it has done in the past. Among the new items in the budget will be funds to complete the filling of field staff, pay for headquarters facility improvements and add technology resources. The Mid-Atlantic and the Southeast regions are the remaining two regions without field staff. The facility improvement plan, announced earlier this fall, focuses on necessary structural repairs and enhancing the efficiency of the building. In all, expenses for the project are expected to be approximately \$1.9 million.

"We are by no means out of the woods when it comes to our financial challenges," Evans said. "Golf has had

some struggles. But I believe we have been prudent in what we have done to weather the storm and are positioned for continued success."

Tooting your horn

Among the more popular presentations were those that demonstrated how GCSAA resources were being used to advocate on behalf of members. Staff outlined the various government relations activities and the importance of members meeting with federal, state and local lawmakers to be heard on policy decisions. Various examples of GCSAA media placements on television, in print, on the web and on the radio were shared as well. Evans pointed out that NGF studies continue to place a premium on GCSAA members for their role in driving golfer satisfaction and facility success. He said that reaching out to key influencers such as employers, avid golfers and policy makers will continue to be a priority for the association.

On deck

Chapter delegates will convene on February 7 at 2:30 p.m. for the association's annual meeting in San Diego, held in conjunction with the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show.