



TURFGRASS MATTERS

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GCSAA Chapter Delegates focus on the future

A total of 98 GCSAA Chapter Delegates plus the association's Chapter Relations Committee met at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. and the Kansas City Airport Marriott Hotel, Oct. 12-13-14 to hear an update on the association's programming and its future direction.

"I applaud the delegates for their focus and contributions to the success of the association and the profession," GCSAA President Ricky Heine, CGCS said. "The delegates are the link to the chapters and the sounding board that provides the leadership and staff direction. This meeting was successful because the delegates came prepared to discuss issues that they and their chapters identified as important."

CEO Succession Plan

Primary was a presentation by Heine regarding the identification and selection of a successor to GCSAA chief executive officer Steve Mona. Heine indicated the process will involve the services of an executive search firm with the ultimate selection by the GCSAA Board of Directors. Heine welcomed input by GCSAA members and emphasized that the board would not be constrained by a timeline given Mona will remain with GCSAA for up to six months since announcing his departure to the World Golf Foundation in late September.

"This will be a professional search," Heine said. "GCSAA is a respected organization and its members are highly-regarded. I believe we will have no shortage of qualified candidates to lead our association. Certainly, Steve deserves much credit for positioning us as a leading golf organization. We believe his appointment not only speaks well of him, but of the association as well."

Mona updated the delegates on a variety of programs and services the association offers to serve its members. He indicated the GCSAA staff has as its focus "Members Matter Most." That mantra is supported with three global initiatives: increasing membership, marketing its members, and attracting additional resources to enhance member programs and services.

Mona also left delegates with three key points regarding the future of GCSAA and its members. He said "image is important" as it relates to members representing their profession and facility in a positive manner. He opined that "inclusion is preferable over exclusion" as the association grows its membership base and works with others to advance itself and the game. Lastly, he encouraged members to promote the fact that being a golf course superintendent is a profession, not an occupation.

Reviewing Outreach Activities

Delegates heard a presentation outlining GCSAA's largest investment ever in outreach to avid golfers and employers that communicates the value of GCSAA and its members. Of note was the long term commitment by the board to the program. That is buoyed by a recent NGF survey that revealed significant process is being made in positively affecting the attitudes and perceptions avid golfers and employers

have towards GCSAA and golf course superintendents. For example, avid golfers indicate the golf course superintendent more than any other golf facility employee is responsible for their enjoyment. Employers weighed in as well, with 85 percent noting GCSAA is a leading golf organization (trailing the USGA by tenths of a percent) and 99 percent indicating the golf course superintendent is key to the economic vitality of a golf facility. It

was reported that GCSAA chapters are seeing the value of leveraging GCSAA's outreach through adopting the GCSAA's logo. As of the meeting, 24 chapters have adopted the new logo.

Chapter Effectiveness Examined

GCSAA Past President Tim O'Neill, CGCS led a presentation that examined the charge of the Chapter Relations Committee. Namely, what should be the relationship between the association and chapters? It is the goal of the board to take a long-term, comprehensive look at how the two entities work together, and to determine how to improve effectiveness in serving shared members' needs. O'Neill and committee members have been given long term appointments to develop recommendations and present to delegates in the future.

Establishing a Dues Strategy

As requested at past delegates meetings, an index-based membership dues structure was unveiled. It is the prevailing opinion that smaller, but more frequent increases are easier for members and the association in the budgeting and planning process. Larger dues increases result in membership losses for GCSAA and members have a more difficult time justifying increases for employers. For example, had the process been used in the past, Class A and SM dues would be at \$285 annually compared to the current \$300 level. The GCSAA board of directors is supporting a dues increase based on the Consumer Price Index, which will result in an increase of \$20 for Classes A and SM, and \$10 for Class C. GCSAA members will vote on the increase at the 2008 annual meeting with a simple majority required to pass.

Committee Process

Delegates were reminded the deadline for members to sign up online for committee service is November 5. The GCSAA board of directors selects the committees, focusing on achieving diversity on many different parameters including facility type, membership class, interests, career length, expertise, etc. The board will be discussing at its Fall 2007 meeting issues such as: no more than three years of service on any one committee,

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