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By Dr. William Daniel and Dr. Ray Freeborg

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by Dr. L.C. Truman
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LETTERS

Integration important

I want to respond to your editorial, "The Time is Now to Coordinate Educators With Our Industry," in your March issue.

It is very important to have a strong integration of formal education and industry. That has been our philosophy at Lake City Community College [Lake City, FL] over the past 16 years with our highly successful Golf Course Operations and Landscape Design & Sales programs. Our golf course program is a three year program: one year of mechanics and two years of golf course operations. Landscape Design & Sales is two years. An important part of both our programs is the two required on-job-training periods our students must complete before they graduate. They get college credit for their experience, and the students are evaluated at the sites by us, the instructors. This gets us out into the field to find out what is going on, and it helps us keep good control over what is happening to our students in the field. We place our students anywhere in a 500 mile radius of Lake City, so we cover a lot of miles in the summer. This OJT program has been extremely successful.

Another part of our industry contact is our advisory committee made up of golf and landscape industry professionals. We meet with them once a year to discuss our program and evaluate the courses we are teaching and the job market. We have made changes in our program based on their suggestions.

What we need is more motivated young people to meet the industry demand. The Associated Landscape Contractors of America is making a good initial national effort to increase young people's awareness of the opportunities that exist for them in the landscape industry. However, I feel this is something that all landscape companies should also get involved with at a local level. They should take quality slide shows to high schools to let students know what they do. This might entice a student to work for that company for the summer and perhaps go on to school for further training.

I am very excited about our programs because they are vocational education as it should be: training students to get jobs.

John R. Piersol, Instructor
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