

## **GCSAA CHAPTER DELEGATES MEETING OUTCOMES OCTOBER 28 – 29, 2019**

**TO:** 2019 Chapter Delegates Meeting Attendees

**DATE:** November 11, 2019

**FROM:** John R. Fulling, Jr., CGCS

**CC:** GCSAA Board of Directors  
J. Rhett Evans

The GCSAA Board of Directors, 2020 board candidates, and 84 delegates representing 89 of GCSAA's 99 affiliated chapters, convened at the Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel and GCSAA Headquarters on October 28 and 29, for the 27th annual Chapter Delegates Meeting. Twenty-seven of the delegates were first-time attendees.

John R. Fulling, Jr., CGCS, GCSAA Vice President, called the Chapter Delegates Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on October 28. Mr. Fulling introduced the GCSAA Board of Directors. He welcomed everyone to Kansas City and thanked them for their time and participation at the meeting.

### **President's Association Briefing**

GCSAA President Rafael Barajas, CGCS shared with the delegates how serving his chapter and eventually GCSAA helped him grow professionally and personally. Mr. Barajas outlined a variety of ways that the attendees could volunteer with GCSAA, including serving as delegates, committee members, Grassroots Ambassadors and hosting a First Green field trip. There are numerous ways to grow their skills while helping GCSAA.

### **CEO Briefing**

J. Rhett Evans, GCSAA Chief Executive Officer briefed the delegates on the state of the association. Mr. Evans then shared current initiatives designed to increase member recognition and discussed ways chapters can become involved with these efforts.

### **Association Briefing**

GCSAA remains in a strong financial position with \$7.7 million in investment reserves. GCSAA's philanthropic arm, the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG) has \$9.9 million in reserves. GCSAA has an operating budget of \$18 million. GCSAA is a not for profit 501(c)6 trade association, 100% of its revenue is used to support programs and services that benefit GCSAA members. Highlights shared included:

#### **How GCSAA is funded:**

- 48% Industry Support
- 25% Member Dues
- 18% User fees

### How GCSAA allocates funding:

- 32% Education; Advocacy and Environmental Programs
- 29% Golf Industry Show
- 10% Member and Chapter Services

### Working Together

Mr. Evans spoke with the delegates about ensuring GCSAA members continue to be recognized as a valuable member of the golf facility team. We have made positive gains in the marketplace for GCSAA and chapter members through a range of outreach efforts, such as the association's work with the Golf Channel, the Thank a Superintendent campaign, advertising in employer publications and websites and strategically working with chapters on brand management. Compensation and benefits data show that salaries for golf course superintendents continue to increase, indicating that the golf industry is paying attention to our efforts.

GCSAA's new membership category, Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent, is a strategy to communicate directly with golfers. Initiatives such as National Golf Day and First Green help share the positive message of golf with diverse audiences on the local, state and national level.

Mr. Evans urged chapters that have not adopted the new logo to consider doing so and reminded delegates that GCSAA offers grants to chapters to defray conversion costs. The delegates were given brand strategy "homework." Mr. Evans asked the delegates to provide ideas on strengthening the brand with employers, golfers, communities and the government.

Mr. Evans finished his presentation with a brand strategy call to action. A cohesive brand image gives all of us a stronger voice and greater recognition with our employers, lawmakers, golfers and within our communities. Members should consider placing the logo on scorecards, business cards and golf apparel/uniforms.

### **State BMP implementation and Facility Adoption**

Mark Johnson, Associate Director, Environmental Programs gave an update on GCSAA's goal of completed BMP's in all 50 states by 2020. Mr. Johnson thanked the chapters that have been working diligently within their states to realize this goal. There are currently:

- 21 states with a BMP in place
- 18 states have told GCSAA they will complete BMPs in 2019
- The remaining 11 states are on track to be complete by 2020

### Facility Adoption

Facility adoption is the next step in the BMP project. Superintendents will be able to log into the GCSAA BMP tool and create a facility level plan based on the BMP manual published in their state. GCSAA offers both financial grants, to help offset meeting costs and technical support to chapters that host regional and state workshops that train and assist superintendents to utilize the tool and write their facility BMP plan.

### **Golf Industry Show Update**

Robert M. Randquist, CGCS, GCSAA Chief Operating Officer shared both general information about the upcoming 2020 Golf Industry Show, to be held January 25-30 in Orlando, FL., and news that the trade show is moving to the North-South Building of the Convention Center for the first time. Early feedback from industry exhibitors about the layout of this building is very positive. Other highlights for the 2020 include:

- Over 400 hours of education
- 23 Free Sessions
- More than 50% of seminars offered in 2020 will be completely new

The Golf Championship host resort will be the JW Marriott Orlando with host golf facilities including The Ritz Carlton Golf Club at Grande Lakes; Champions Gate Golf Club – The National and International courses and Shingle Creek Golf Club.

Mr. Randquist briefly touched on future GIS locations, including Las Vegas and Phoenix. Attendees continue to indicate that they value visiting different cities between the anchors of Orlando and San Diego through annual surveys and post show evaluations.

### **GCSAAPAC Fundraising Initiatives**

Kevin P. Sunderman, GCSAA Director and Political Action Committee Chair, discussed PAC fundraising initiatives. Mr. Sunderman stressed that GCSAA does not support one political party over the other. The PAC Committee uses funds raised to strategically lobby members of Congress whose positions impact the golf industry, irrespective of political party. Several new PAC fundraising initiatives include:

- Raffle at the Delegates Meeting
- PAC and Play events – superintendents are encouraged to invite their fellow Class, A, B, C or EM members to play a round of golf with them. Proceeds from the event goes towards the PAC
- Delegates were given postcards to send to their friends to encourage participation in the PAC

### **Chapter Outreach/Affiliation Agreement Update**

John R. Fulling, Jr., CGCS, GCSAA Vice President and Affiliation Agreement Task Group Chair and Steve Randall, Director, Chapter Outreach spoke with the delegates regarding several chapter outreach initiatives and important upcoming deadlines.

#### **Affiliation Agreement**

The Affiliation Agreement is the legal document, which outlines responsibilities between GCSAA and the affiliated chapters. An Affiliation Agreement Task Group reviews it every three years to ensure the document is up-to-date and accurately reflects the relationship between chapters and GCSAA.

This year's task group recommended and the GCSAA Board of Directors approved the following changes to the agreement:

- Section II, Term – Remove the word “resign” and replace with “execute the amended agreement” in the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- Section III, B, Promotional Materials & Logo – Accept the changes outlining an affiliated chapter's acceptable use of the GCSAA logo, trademarks, service marks in their programs and materials.
- Section II, B, 1. – Provide clarity and direction for using the new logo and noting all affiliated chapters who accept Chapter Logo Grants are required to adopt the GCSAA branded chapter logo and abide by the requirements outlined in the current GCSAA Branding Style Guidelines.
- Section IV, E. Officers and Directors – Change language from “Secretary/Treasurer can be two separate positions” to “Secretary and Treasurer can be fulfilled by the same individual.”
- Section IV, F. Annual Reporting of Association Activities – accept the changes in this section that clarify reporting deadlines for IRS Form 990/990 EZ.

These changes were reflected in a new/updated affiliation agreement and shared with all chapters in June. Chapters need to return the signed agreement on or before December 31, 2019 to remain affiliated with GCSAA.

#### Chapter Assessment Survey

Like the affiliation agreement, the assessment survey is sent to all chapter presidents and executives every three years. The information gathered from the survey is used to benchmark chapter best practices and to ascertain areas for growth. The survey will launch on November 15 and is due by December 31.

#### Chapter Programs and Services

Mr. Randall finished the presentation by touching on several items that chapter leaders can take advantage of to help their chapters succeed. Board Orientation and Strategic Planning sessions are offered to chapters free of charge through their field staff representative.

#### Advocacy and Environmental Initiatives Focus Group

GCSAA staff briefly highlighted initiatives underway to help address environmental concerns and ways GCSAA advocates on behalf of its members. The briefing touched on Government Affairs, BMPs, First Green and Rounds 4 Research. Delegates spent a majority of this session providing feedback and sharing their perspectives regarding these topics, including the following observations:

#### **Tips on how to motivate superintendents to participate in BMPs.**

- Have field staff do more outreach on the adoption procedures as well as training sessions.
- Develop some recognition for facilities adopting the program. Certificate, marketing materials, public relations.
- Should BMP adoption be part of Class A 5-year points cycle?

- Use of strong messages, call to arms to show urgency on adopting the BMPs at the facility level.
- Keep pushing the success stories for BMPs.
- Include BMP question in compensation and benefits survey.
- Make it easy to fill out / session at a chapter meeting to demonstrate process.
- Better tie in with state golf associations to get their support.
- Outcome based incentives illustrating value on course for BMP enactment and legislative success.
- Incentive for hosting Facility BMP instructional session at your facility for chapter.
- Award service points for publishing Facility BMP.... We do 0.5 CEU's
- Education associated with wildlife on the course in conjunction with BMP's.
- Set compliance date for facility adoption (Georgia)

### **How can GCSAA motivate members to serve as Grassroots Ambassadors?**

- Outline expectations of program. What should members expect from this commitment and utilize the field staff to communicate expectations.
- Testimonials from existing Ambassadors.
- Use current Ambassadors to recruit for open positions. It's more difficult to say no to peers as opposed to GCSAA staff.
- Current Ambassadors can help train the new ambassadors.
- Ask chapter executives and boards for suggestions on who could serve.
- Is there a system GCSAA has in place to track Ambassador Activity? Yes, GCSAA does have an internal tracking system to evaluate ambassador engagement.
- Can we identify GCSAA members in open Congressional Districts? Yes.
- Assist superintendents who want to attend National Golf Day.
- Better understanding and communication of the rules regarding contributions to the PAC.

### **How do we move from the “great idea” phase to hosting a First Green event at your facility?**

- Partner with the local First Tee programs to have field trips. Students and transportation are typically already in place to have trips.
- Difficult for superintendents to reach out to schools. Can GCSAA assist in this process?
- Work with your local FFA, youth sports group (ex. Little League Baseball), parks and recreation programs and current junior golf programs or recreational program at both public and private golf clubs.
- In some instances, need to overcome financial obstacles.
  - GCSAA does have grants available to assist.
- How do you convince club to close portion of the golf course?
  - Highlight community outreach aspect.
- Difficult to make connection with the schools. Look for different youth groups within the community if you can't get past this hurdle. Ask chapter members if they have connection with local schools (students / teachers).
- Make superintendents feel more at ease with hosting a field trip. Overcome the intimidation of the event.

## **Tips on encouraging participation in the Rounds 4 Research Auction/tips to have a successful auction.**

- Get the word out to golfers through the Friends Program.
- Promote signing up for multiple years.
  
- Share Best Management Practices from successful chapters on how to conduct an auction.
- Get affiliated organizations involved. PGA, CMAA, State Golf Associations, etc.
- Thank you notes for participation
- How do you convince chapters that conduct their own auction to join in with GCSAA?
  - Collectively, we are stronger with national appeal and GCSAA is building beneficial relationships.
- How much communication exists with allied associations about R4R?
  - Members of the USGA, PGA, PGA Tour serve on the EIFG Board.
- Would be beneficial to see a breakdown of where the funds go.
- Can GCSAA do follow up ask on behalf of the chapters for facilities that have donated?
  - Yes, GCSAA can follow up and ask if facilities would like to donate again.

## **Professional Development and Career Opportunities Focus Group**

Finding qualified labor is an on-going and significant challenge for the membership. GCSAA staff shared programs and initiatives that are very useful in training and developing staff, including both the assistant and the equipment manager certificate programs. Staff also briefed delegates on outreach efforts with FFA and high school students and discussed potential benefits these relationships could have on industry labor challenges. Delegates discussed these topics and shared feedback, including:

## **How can GCSAA motivate members to become engaged with their local high schools, FFA chapters and turfgrass university programs?**

- Iowa GCSA held tours for state FFA students at a local golf course and stadium to discuss both golf turf and sports field turf. 125 students were involved in the day which has become a yearly event.
- The Oregon GCSA targets students who play golf by sponsoring the high school championship trophies. Several participants have become employed on a part-time basis at golf courses.
- Northwest Ohio works with their local high school teams to obtain employees and have had success reaching out to coaches of the various teams.
- A delegate started an internship in his area with high school students. Student have limited duties to begin, but he has turned two of the interns into regular employees.
- A delegate from California discussed challenges facing the industry in California, particularly with the decline in university turfgrass programs in the State of California. How do we educate future golf course employees without educational facilities?

- The group discussed using high school students working at facilities. Courses face numerous difficulties based on the duties that kids under age 18 can perform under state labor laws. Some courses can do more than others.
- The group agreed that GCSAA assisting local chapters in getting high school students involved and then into college turfgrass programs would be a good starting point. Also focus on high school trade/tech schools that focus on alternative education (mechanics, plumbing, electricians, etc.).
- Some success cold calling schools that have programs associated with golf course management. Faculty advisors at Vo Tech schools.
- New Jersey has intern program for these students as well as an apprenticeship program with local high schools w/ co-op programs that receive funding through local governments.
- Superintendent compensation is impactful when speaking with student groups.
- Need to share curriculum of what golf course superintendents' study to earn their degree at university level. More than mowing grass.
- Ask to speak to student groups.
- Need tools for lower budget clubs who do not have ability to pay entry level positions competitive wages with McDonalds. (Help club officials see the demand for higher wages).
- Need patience when hiring younger employees and the ability to overcome age restrictions.
- Utilize "Some Get to Call This Work" brochures at First Green field trips.
- Communicate success stories to members that highlight labor strategies that are working.
- Access to training videos for entry level staff.
- Balanced school year calendar in Indiana limits students to about 8 weeks availability during summer. "Work Release" programs that earn students high school credits while working on course.

**Are GCSAA professional development programs meeting the needs in developing your team? How can GCSAA best engage Assistants and Equipment Managers in their professional development?**

- Place a focus on the pathway for Equipment Managers to go through the certificate program. Try to place a value on how the certificates can increase their earning power. Expand their horizons on alternative subjects including Agronomy, Business, Leadership, etc.
- Work with vendors on assisting with events focused on Equipment Managers. Have them provide some of the training at each event.
- Discuss putting an Equipment Manager liaison position on the Board of Directors for a chapter. Give them some additional buy-in.
- Wages are a concern. Difficult to compete with auto mechanic positions, etc. Many of those starting wages are \$25-\$30 per hour.
- Group would like to see increased marketing efforts to the Equipment Managers. The opinion of the group is the information is not currently reaching all the EM's.
- GCSAA should be in discussions and providing membership and educational information to the events that are already being conducted by Toro, Deere & Jacobson.

- The programs we have in place are helpful in training individuals already on staff when the facility can't afford to pay for external education.
- Need enhanced communications to promote existing programs.
- Be aware that certificate programs are not just for Assistants and Equipment Managers.
- Incentivize with career advancement by participating in GCSAA programs.
- Tailor 5 Minute Fix videos to provide training for new hires.
- Condense "PDR" (Self-Assessment Tool) to help identify strengths and weaknesses for Assistants and Equipment Managers. *We do have competencies for Assistants and Equipment Managers.*
- Need to get facility engaged first to get employees engaged.

**What can GCSAA do to motivate existing members to add additional members?**

- Could GCSAA install some sort of mandatory requirements for assistants or equipment managers to maintain their membership? CEU's, webinars, local education.
- Multimember discounts for new members added at facility 10% up to \$100
- Facility membership classification for lower budget clubs.
- Some superintendents do not have their Assistants or Equipment Managers as members because they don't want to lose them to someone else.
- Is the Assistant and Equipment Managers certificate programs leading to a classification? *Yes, Certified Equipment Manager is in the works.*
- Is GCSAA approaching management companies about having their employees become members of the association? Why are they not joining? Money and Value Proposition.
- Value Proposition is critical to grow membership especially when facility does not pay... \$200 facility membership is too high.
- Need to look at long term benefits of GCSAA membership and how tools will facilitate reaching career goals.
- Any input from PGA Professionals on how they have accelerated their earnings so rapidly? *Rhett Evans stated that they are maintaining their PGA Professional Memberships as they advance to General Manager positions so this helps.*
- Compensation and Benefits survey seems inflated and not truly reflective of actual salaries for our members.
- Best recruiting tool is utilizing existing GCSAA members to recruit new members.
- Appreciate focus on EM's and Assistants but we lack entry level positions. Is there a class for entry level employees? *Yes, Associate Member. Maybe this needs reworded to bring them more into GCSAA family.*

**What can GCSAA do to encourage members to add golfers to the Friends Program?**

- Is GCSAA going to work with the USGA on the Friends Program. Can we access some of their members?
- A lot of confusion amongst the group on the Friends Program. Benefits, why would a golfer join? The membership competes against state golf association offerings and might be difficult to sell.
- Could we put together an incentive program for superintendents to promote the Friends Program? A financial incentive?
- Pricing for the Friends Program may not be competitive for the value.

- Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent to gain insights of role of superintendent. They receive quarterly newsletter. \$50, \$100, \$200, \$400 group memberships.
- Can Friend Member contribute to the GCSAAPAC? *Yes*
- Friend category opens communication with new audience to advocate for superintendents.

### **Town Hall Session**

The GCSAA Board of Directors and delegates participated in two town hall sessions. The first session facilitated by GCSAA Vice President John R. Fulling, Jr., CGCS provided insight into serving on the GCSAA Board of Directors. Board members shared that the skills developed while serving on the board including time management, communication and listening abilities are valuable tools they use in their roles as golf course superintendents. The experience of serving on the GCSAA Board of Directors has been rewarding.

The second session was an open format town hall facilitated by GCSAA President Rafael Barajas, CGCS. The delegates and the Board participated in a robust discussion on numerous topics. A few of the highlights included:

- Why are we allowing facilities to remove portions of approved state BMPs? *Not all facilities have the same needs; not everything is applicable to all facilities. County laws within a state can differ, the template needs to be adjustable.*
- Is there a trade show only registration available for the Golf Industry Show? *Yes, it is \$350.*
- Are we looking to make the website easier to navigate? It is difficult to find information – too much information on the site. *We are working towards improving the website and on a new GCSAA App.*
- Does the GCSAA Board have an SOP on Social Media use? *Yes, we have a social media policy that encourages the Board to stay away from negativity. The minute you are elected – you now represent the entire organization.*
- We continually hear and see how Congress is at a stalemate. How can GCSAA work in that atmosphere? *There has been a shift to the regulatory agencies and working with them to advance our agenda. For instance, the WOTUS repeal and replace.*
- Based on delegate questions regarding glyphosate the government affairs staff advised GCSAA has tools available on the advocacy hub on gcsaa.org.
- Delegate asked for an update on the state of GCSAA financially. *GCSAA is strong financially with \$7.8 million in reserves. The balance sheet is strong and GCSAA is*

*committed to continue “living within its means.” GIS is one of the top trade shows in the country and hits revenue targets.*

### **Code of Ethics**

The Federal Trade Commission’s anti-trust laws prohibits associations from limiting competition amongst members. GCSAA has revised its code of ethics to comply with federal law. The Code of Ethics now reads as follows:

As a member of GCSAA, I accept and fully agree to abide by this Code and pledge to:

1. Abstain from conduct that violates the applicable laws, rules and regulations of the U.S., excluding traffic violations and other minor offenses, including but not limited to conviction of a felony, crimes of moral turpitude and dishonesty, the penalty for which is imprisonment.
2. Abstain from knowingly making false statements or failing to disclose a material fact requested in connection with application or renewal for GCSAA membership or for membership in an affiliated chapter.

### **Candidate Presentations**

The candidates for the 2020 GCSAA Board of Directors gave presentations and visited delegates in breakout rooms. The delegates were awarded ample time to interact and ask questions of the candidates. Those running for the GCSAA Board in 2020 are:

- For President – John R. Fulling, Jr., CGCS
- For Vice President – Mark F. Jordan, CGCS
- For Secretary/Treasurer
  - Kevin P. Breen, CGCS
  - Kevin P. Sunderman
- For Director (electing two directors)
  - Zachary Bauer
  - Douglas D. Dykstra, CGCS
  - Glenn M. Matthews, CGCS

Kevin Breen and Kevin Sunderman are at the end of their two-year terms as a director. The unsuccessful secretary/treasurer candidate will need to be nominated from the floor to run for a director position.