



*Refined program will raise standards over a period of years  
until everything is in place by 2004.*

# Implementing The Profession's New Certification Plan

## Review

As described in the September issue of *Golf Course Management* magazine (page 68), GCSAA now has a new Certification Long Range Plan (CLRP). Basically, it provides for more effectively correlating the GCSAA Continuing Education Program with the Certification Program and gradually raising certification standards so that, ultimately, Certified Golf Course Superintendents will be fully equated with other learned professionals.

Eventually, there will be a minimum educational requirement for entry into the professional status of certification which can be met either via college graduation or GCSAA's own educational programs.

In GCSAA's Continuing Education Program, there will be a clearly defined curriculum of a balanced mix of courses. Division I will be the basic program, providing a well-rounded education in general agronomics and turf-grass science as related to the responsibilities of growing turf. Completion of Division I will be a prerequisite to Division II, which will be broader and more technical, and will expand into business management. Two options will be offered: "Advanced Turfgrass Management" and "Golf Course Management."

Consideration is being given to setting up three-week Division I and II crash courses at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. It is also possible that the crash courses could be conducted once, videotaped — and that would be that. Independent study could do the rest.

Certificates of Professional Education will be awarded by GCSAA upon successful completion of Division I and II, with Division I equaling an associate's degree and Division II equaling a bachelor's degree.

Division III will be known as the Executive Management Program and will require completion of Division II and CGCS status as prerequisites for admittance. Completion of Division III, to be offered in cooperation with K.U., will lead to expanded professional career opportunities.

Also a part of the CLRP will be attesting and interning. Basically, this means that proven, qualified and experienced practitioners of golf course management will attest to the fact that candidates for certification have more than

"book learning" and actually have demonstrated their ability to grow grass.

Four important things to remember about the CLRP are that:

- No one meeting regular qualifications as set by the Executive Committee will be barred from membership in GCSAA; certification will remain voluntary.
- The CLRP is not set in concrete; it will be reviewed and revised each year as necessary by the GCSAA Certification Committee.
- There is an exemption clause for current members.
- A unique phase-in implementation plan, together with the exemption clause, will eliminate the possibility of disqualifying large numbers of GCSAA members from certification yet will allow progress toward developing a true profession.

This report was prepared by the GCSAA Certification Committee. Members of the Committee are Don DeLaney, CGCS, of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Donald E. Hearn, CGCS, of Chelmsford, Mass.; Bob Heron, CGCS, of Ontario, Canada; John E. Laake, CGCS, of Columbus, Ohio; Dennis D. Lyon, CGCS, of Aurora, Colo.; Keith E. Paterson, CGCS, of Spring Lake, Mich.; John F. Streecher, CGCS, of Warwick, R.I.; Clifford Wagoner, CGCS, of Modesto, Calif.; and James G. Prusa, CGCS, GCSAA Associate Executive Director.

Verified educational and experiential requirements will not be mandatory for a number of years, but, because of provisions of the implementation plan, the world of golf

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will recognize the existence of the pending future standards and interpolate them as applying today.

### The Plan For Implementation

The GCSAA Certification Long Range Plan has been in the making for a long time. It is a milestone which many involved, devoted and dedicated professional golf course superintendent members have been hoping for the Association to reach. And, just as the goal has taken so much time to attain, so it will take time to refine and carry out. True professions are not established overnight. They require intensive effort and planning and evolve over an extended period. GCSAA's CLRP will take about 21 years from now to fully implement.

After years of informal discussion and debate among members of GCSAA, the first real draft of the CLRP was drawn up in 1983 by the Certification Committee. The proposal was then reviewed, revised, amended, edited, rewritten and studied, then studied again sentence by sentence, word by word. It was based on extensive research into many subjects — particularly into how other professions such as medicine and law have matured — and into the specific professional needs and requirements of golf course superintendents and managers. Finally, the Certification Committee's approved draft was made available to each member of GCSAA to examine and respond to with feedback to the Committee.

Meanwhile, cost projections for implementing the CLRP were prepared for the GCSAA Executive Committee, public awareness factors that would be involved in a program to educate members and the rest of the golf world about the new Certification Plan were considered, and there was a proposal that the GCSAA Certification Committee become responsible for the Continuing Education as well as the Certification Programs.

Early this year, a special open forum on the proposed new CLRP was held for members to have direct personal input during a luncheon at the 1984 GCSAA Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas. Certification Committee Chairman Donald E. Hearn, CGCS, summarized the plan and provided ample opportunity for discussion. After more refinement of the document, the GCSAA Executive Committee gave its formal and official approval to the Certification Long Range Plan at its spring meeting in Washington, D.C.

As for budgeting for implementing the CLRP, it is difficult to project revenue and expenses for such a program with a high degree of accuracy for more than two or three years ahead. Costs in 1983-84 were estimated at about \$7,000, mainly for committee meetings. For this fiscal year, revenue — mainly from fees paid by an anticipated increasing number of candidates for certification — was estimated at \$5,000 while expenses were projected at

\$16,000, mainly for publicizing the program, additional computer requirements, part-time help and committee meetings. In 1985-86, revenues are expected to total somewhere between \$10,000 and \$25,000, again mainly as a result of an expected increase in participation in the Certification and Continuing Education Programs. Expenses may be around \$15,000 for part-time staff and committee meetings.

It is fairly certain that, three to five years down the road, revenues will surpass expenses. Substantial increases in revenues can be realized through greater participation in continuing education required by higher certification standards. Certification can be a break-even GCSAA function.

Most Association programs, no matter how professional in nature — like the commercial products of a company — need a certain amount of promotion at the time of introduction in order to win acceptance. The GCSAA CLRP is no exception. The difference is, with a professional Association such as GCSAA, it is usually called an educational rather than an advertising campaign. Well before the close of 1984, GCSAA plans to launch a "media blitz" and initiate other informational efforts to build awareness and acceptance of the GCSAA CLRP. Actually, the campaign began with publication of "Certification: Restructuring the Route to Professionalism" in the September GCM.

For members of the Association and other readers of the magazine, the GCSAA CLRP was outlined in detail in that article. Already in the preparation stage is a series of news releases on the program. They will be offered to every possible communication medium serving the world of golf: newsletters published by GCSAA-affiliated chapters; golf writers for newspapers and magazines; publications such as *Golf Journal*, *Golf Digest*, *Weeds, Trees and Turf*, *Grounds Maintenance* and *Sports Illustrated*; the publications of allied golf associations such as USGA, PGA, the National Golf Foundation and state golf Associations; television and radio sportscasters; and others. Slide/sound shows are to be created and videotapes and audio-cassettes are to be produced; speeches will be written and delivered; brochures will be designed and distributed; posters will be printed; and mailings will be made.

That's not all. There are also plans for CGCS jewelry including an 18K golf lapel pin, special GCSAA business cards for certified members, luggage and golf bag tags, window decals and special membership cards. The idea of all this is to win for Certified Golf Course Superintendents the recognition they deserve and to help the golf world recognize the existence of the future higher professional standards called for in the CLRP and to interpolate them as applying now.

Even the GCSAA Certificate of Certification may be redesigned by a graphic artist. And all visual communication relating to the CLRP will bear a special logo — the handsome crest accompanying this article unless the Cer-

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tification Committee and Executive Committee choose to redesign it.

Other immediate or near-future implementation plans include:

- Revising and updating certification examinations, to be implemented in 1985. Exams are to utilize a mark-sense answer format and computer programming for constant evaluation of each question.
- Developing and approving a well-defined Code of Professional Standards for Certified Golf Course Superintendents, to be implemented in 1985.
- Finalizing five-year continuing education requirements providing that:
  - CGCS status must be renewed every five years.
  - To renew, an individual must have completed 15 recognized Continuing Education Units (CEUs) equaling 150 contact hours.
  - Attendance at the GCSAA Annual Golf Course Conference and Show will be worth 2 CEUs per conference up to a maximum of 10 CEUs per five-year renewal period.
  - Attendance at Regional Turfgrass Conferences and Research Field Days will be accepted and assigned a CEU value by GCSAA. The burden of initiating the program evaluations will rest solely with the individuals attending such conferences and seeking CEU credit. A minimum lead time of 30 days is recommended to provide evaluation prior to conferences.
  - Attendance at local GCSAA chapter meetings will be evaluated and credited with CEUs in the same manner as above. A minimum of five hours of educational programming per year will be required for evaluation. In order for such education programs to be accepted for evaluation by GCSAA, the cumulative total of five hours of educational programming must be submitted at one time. The cumulative total may extend over a period of time not to exceed one year. (Example: a series of 10 monthly chapter meetings having a cumulative total of more than five hours of educational programming.)
  - At least three CEUs of the required 15 CEUs necessary for CGCS renewal must be taken from the GCSAA Continuing Education Program. These may be taken at live presentations or by correspondence.
- Developing and approving a well-defined internship program which will:
  - Require twelve months of work under a member of GCSAA. Internships will be served only under a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS).
  - Become mandatory for entry into the Certification Program beginning in 1997.
- Permitting members of any class except B to retain

their CGCS status if they currently hold it, provided they meet all other requirements for recertification and specifically fulfill their continuing education requirements. This will provide another incentive for members who expand their careers outside of strictly golf course management to remain active and participating in the continuing education program. This program will result in the retention of desirable members and the growth of our membership and profession.

- Continuing to permit retired GCSAA members to retain their status as CGCS Retired without maintaining continuing education. If they reactivate, however, they must again meet all requirements for certification. For the sake of this program, retired means a person who has reached the age of 55 and is no longer employed.

- Instituting requirements for two CGCS attestors to visit the golf courses of candidates for certification and confidentially report their approval or disapproval of candidates' professional performance abilities.

Next year, the CLRP implementation calendar calls for:

- Bringing a formal and specific Code of Professional Standards into effect.
- Implementing new testing procedures. (Exams will remain "open book," however, until 1988.)
- Beginning work to revise all certification exams to "closed book" by 1988.

In 1989, the period of exemption from the new Certification Program requirements is scheduled to expire. In other words, beginning in 1989, all candidates for certification must complete 15 CEUs from Division I or hold the equivalent in college education.

Year by year, here's an outline of the rest of the tentative implementation plan:

**1988**

Implement closed-book examinations.

**1989**

A minimum of one year of college (30 semester hours of credit) or completion of the first 15 CEUs of the GCSAA Continuing Education Division I curriculum will be required for entrance into professional certification.

**1991**

Individuals planning to be certified in 1997 must now begin the twelve-month internship program under a CGCS Class A member.

**1994**

A minimum of a two-year associate's level degree (60 semester hours of college credit) or completion of the GCSAA Continuing Education Division I curriculum will be required for entrance into professional certification.

**1997**

All candidates who apply for certification must have completed a twelve-month internship under a CGCS Class A member.

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To Prelude  
To Washington '85!

# 1984 Las Vegas Conference Member Survey and Critique

*Data compiled this year is helping the Association plan  
an even more spectacular event for February in Washington, D.C.*

Final tabulations of GCSAA's 1984 Las Vegas Conference and Show Attendee Survey were completed this summer. Planned as a Conference critique and demographic study, the survey is already assisting the Association's Headquarters in planning and improving educational programming, member services and the upcoming 1985 Conference and Show in Washington, D.C.

GCSAA members who had been registered 1984 Conference attendees were asked to respond to a 78-item questionnaire covering a range of topics related to the Conference programs and formats, overall GCSAA services and member demographic characteristics. Thirty-six percent of those who received the survey questionnaire completed it and returned it to GCSAA Headquarters. This is an outstanding response to a survey of such detail and length.

Tabulated totals, item analysis, and correlations of the returned information enable the Association to summarize

many items that reflect the interests and needs of the membership. A profile of the typical GCSAA member can also be constructed to assist in identifying trends and the segmented needs of the membership.

## Member Demographics

Class A members made up 81.2 percent of the responding attendees, with another 10.1 percent listing Class B membership. These percentages show a strong professional commitment by GCSAA members. Over 96 percent indicated that they liked their profession very much or absolutely. These figures might also direct attention towards the bolstering of programs directed at the "new superintendent" and students pursuing careers in golf course management.

Among those responding, 83.1 percent listed "Golf Course Superintendent" or "Golf Course Manager" as

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## CERTIFICATION

*from p. 68*

Individuals admitted to certification status must have completed their twelve-month internship under a Class A GCSAA member.

### 1999

A minimum of three years of college in an applicable major (90 semester units of credit) or completion of the first half of the GCSAA Continuing Education Division II curriculum will be required for entrance into professional certification.

### 2004

A minimum of a bachelor of science degree (in an applicable major) or its equivalent will be required for certification. Completion of the GCSAA Continuing Education Program will be considered equivalent to a bachelor's degree — and useful for CGCS's to meet continuing education requirements for recertification.

The Executive and Certification Committees are convinced that the continuing education mandated by the Certification Program will benefit all GCSAA members, regardless of their classification or their desire to be certified.

The Certification Committee will interpret the intentions of the revised Certification Program and will serve as a review body to approve exemptions in special cases and act as an appeals body. In all cases, the GCSAA Executive Committee will be the final appeals body.

For more information call 1-800-GSA-SUPT. □

