Strategic Plan for the
Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

Hancock Turfgrass Research Center at Michigan State University

East Lansing, Michigan

January 26, 2017
and held a strategic planning session with GCSAA staff members Steve Randall and Great Lakes Regional Representative Shane Conroy. The mission of the session was to help the chapter design a roadmap of activities for the coming months and years to help continue the momentum of a very well organized chapter. This document provides a recap of that event.

Those in attendance:
Adam Ikamas, Chapter Executive Director
Mark Ostrander, President
Dan Dingman
Jim Bluck
Justin Bickel
Jeff Holmes
Douglas Ware
Jesse Shaver
Rob Steger
Jeff Hopkins
Troy Evans
Jeff Sweet

After introductions Steve Randall asked the group what their objectives for the meeting were, they responded with the following comments:

- Create a clear unified vision of how the chapter will run in the future
- Continue to add value to members
- Build on current standard operating procedures and continue to implement standard operating procedures moving forward
- How can we better serve our members?
- Financial solvency
- BHAG ideas and focus more on future, what can we do where others can’t?
- Discuss board structure/bylaws
- How can the MiGCSA promote the overall strength of the state’s golf industry?
- Chapter committee vetting/contact
- Chapter committee selection/information communicated through the MiGCSA website

The group then discussed board composition and the following questions were raised:

- How many total board members are needed?
- How many board members from each district are required?
- Must future board members be connected to a district?

Discussions from the above questions produced the following comments:
Various personalities from each district is a strong attribute to the overall strength of the board

In terms of how many members are on the board, more individuals/opinions add value

If we reduce the amount of members from each district, will a certain region miss out on representation? If there are less individuals from each district, will their voice diminish within the industry if they are absent from a particular board meeting

Having 12 board members allows new board members to spend sufficient time on the board and gain valuable experience before they move into officer positions

Without having at-large board positions, the board risks missing out on a strong candidate due to positions already being filled with board members from their district

If we add at-large members, the Mid-District will probably suffer the most as individuals from the district have been historically the most difficult to find

Having 12 board members allows more members, as they join the board, to be exposed to board service and they learn the importance of various chapter initiatives, industry partnerships, association involvement and can help grow and promote membership to non-members and non-board-members

Currently, members are appointed by the board to finish the terms of officers who may leave before their terms end – Adam will look over bylaws and confirm at future MiGCSA BOD meeting

The chapter will look to add Mid-District members to committees and bring them to the board in the future

Should we add an industry partner to the board?

Industry partners are able to voice concerns at the Industry Partner Lunch held during the MTF; Adam was able to gather feedback anonymously from questionnaires sent to industry partners. This acts as a platform to gain information from industry partners in lieu of creating an industry partner board seat

Industry partners are currently not asking for a seat on the board

The chapter/board will continue to keep open communication with industry partners and continue to gather their feedback

Information disclosed at BOD meetings may cause conflicts of interest between various industry partners

Question was asked if anyone feels strongly about adding an industry partner to
the MiGCSA board, the consensus of the group was to not add an industry partner rep to the board at this time

- Adam Ikamas is in constant contact with industry partners and communicates their needs to the BOD
- Information gained at the MTF Industry Partner Lunch was also beneficial to other industry partners who were in attendance, and acted as a platform to communicate benefits of the MiGCSA IPP to those who may not realize partnership value

After discussions surrounding the MiGCSA board composition, the group agreed to keep the current structure of 12 members, including three representatives from each of the four districts. The group also decided to forgo adding an industry partner to the board at this time. This board structure will be discussed in the future if difficulties arise filling board positions from any one of the four districts.

We then went into the SCOR analysis. The summary is as follows:

**Strengths:**

- Membership size
- Executive Director - Tie #1 w/ six marks
- IPP - #3 w/ four marks
- Financial position
- Website – Tie #1 w/ six marks
- Member benefits
- Communications
- MTF/MSU alliance
- Branding
- Committed board
- Vision for all facility types
- Events
- GCSAA BOD presence (John Fulling, CGCS)

**Challenges:**

- Grow/retain membership - #3 w/ three marks
- Value/perception - #1 w/ nine marks
- Reaching smaller courses
- Declining industry
- Increased costs for events
- Public misperception of superintendents
• Lack of students/assistants
• Labor laws
• Marketing
• Fiscally responsible
• Dependence on IPP - #2 w/ four marks
• Time commitments

Opportunities:

• Leadership within the industry
  o Opportunity with the MGA, MTF
• Marketing – Tie #2 with four marks
• Education for non-college educated/smaller facility superintendents
• Be part of rejuvenation of turf program at MSU
• Increased industry partner participation/investment
• New website - #1 w/ five marks
• Non-industry revenue - Tie #2 with four marks
• Investment account
• Full-time staff within MiGCSA, Golf House partnerships with MGA
• Create a FarmLinks-type facility, with research/staff housed at the facility, nine-hole course, MiGCSA owns and operates their own course, IPP opportunities with research, product demos
• Merchandise at golf shops, branding opportunities to be a supporter of Michigan golf, brand can grow outside of the turfgrass industry – Tie #4 with three marks
• Email forum through new website – Tie #4 with three marks
• Funding a scholarship to send member to GIS
• Additional education membership
• Subsidized meeting costs
• Redirecting fundraiser funds, invest in MiGCSA
• Adding more value to industry partners
• Local education/board mentorship program; bring ownership/manager to MiGCSA events

Risks:

• Losing IPP participation/loss of ROI - #1 w/ nine marks
• Shrinking chemical companies/consolidation
• Economy
• Membership retention/growth
• Replacing your executive director
Outcomes from the SCOR analysis discussion included the need to create additional sources of income to place less reliance on the industry partner programs, as well as create new marketing opportunities to build on the MiGCSA brand. Working with a marketing firm to determine and maximize non-industry revenue became a priority, with additional focuses including opportunities to expand member benefits and communication with the formation of a new MiGCSA website.

Following the SCOR analysis we moved into a discussion on the mission statement. The board evaluated the current mission statement and found it to be still relevant today, it was left as is.

**Mission**

The Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association is dedicated to providing value to our members through programs and services that enhance and promote our profession.

**Vision**

Following the mission statement discussion, we moved into the vision statement for the chapter. Ultimately, the vision points out how the chapter should be viewed by its members. It also provides a forward-thinking thought process to uncover a bigger picture perspective. The board was asked what terms should be used in the vision statement and the following were recommended:

- Leaders
- Community
- Innovative
- Continually evolving
- Best we can be
- Reliable source

From the above suggested terms, the board was then asked to craft their own version of the vision statement to share with the group. Once all suggested vision statements were recorded, the group then held a lively discussion utilizing certain aspects from the various suggestions to craft a new vision statement. The vision for the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents
Association is:

OLD

The Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association is passionate about its members and the golf industry.

NEW

The MiGCSA is a community of leaders using innovative solutions to advance our profession.

Upon conclusion of crafting the vision statement we began work on goals and action items:

Goals:

- Increase membership
  - Host round table events (one in each region) for potential members
    - Committees will consist of board members from each respective region to determine host course/club, agenda, format and date
  - Add 15 new members through outreach efforts and invite those new members to meetings/events by end of 2017. Retain 25% of these individuals as MiGCSA members in 2018
    - Board member mentorship program
      - Each board member will invite one new member to the Spring Education Meeting and/or golf events and engage with these members throughout the year

Action items:

- Non-traditional revenue
  - Pursue discussions with marketing firm
    - Adam to meet with various firms to discuss potential MiGCSA marketing opportunities
      - Upon meeting with various firms, Adam will narrow the group to 2-3 firms for the board to discuss, and pursue opportunities
    - Board members to make initial contact with marketing firms where relationships already exist
    - Evaluate next steps
    - Results due by Fall board meeting
- Updated Member Needs Survey
  - Send out to membership by March 1
  - Evaluate results and determine next steps
- Adam to reach out to Greg Stacey at GCSAA for his feedback
- Send survey draft to membership committee and board for feedback, board will send results to Adam before the survey is sent to membership

Financial Plan/Strategy
- Keep 50% annual operating budget in an accessible account
- The group agrees to have the board look at the funds in the mutual fund account and look at EOY financials to decide how much will be invested in the mutual fund account moving forward

Based on the outcomes from the day’s discussions, the chapter feels that by completing these initial action items, it will help the group achieve larger-BHAG goals in the long-term. These preliminary steps will act as the foundation as the chapter continues to elevate the industry and its membership, and will allow the chapter to establish future goals which are relative to their overall vision. As information is discovered upon completion of the assigned action items, GCSAA representatives will be available to facilitate additional discussions as necessary.

At this point we concluded with all members satisfied with the progress that was made. The group discussed a variety of issues and has the groundwork in place to continue to create innovative programs and build upon the chapter’s previous successes. Great Lakes Field Staff Representative Shane Conroy will be available to assist the chapter with this process and will work with the board of directors and executive director to help them meet their timelines.

Shane Conroy

GCSAA Great Lakes Field Staff Representative