

For Immediate Release

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Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Pledge \$200,000 in Support of Research Positions

Liberty, SC - Golf course superintendents in the Carolinas have committed \$200,000 to help ensure the future of world class turfgrass research at Clemson and North Carolina State universities. The 1,950-member Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association has pledged \$100,000 to each university in support of campaigns to create endowed golf-specific research faculty positions. The gifts, to be delivered over five years, were announced this week.

“Clemson and NC State have played a critical role establishing the Carolinas’ standing as one of the game’s great golfing hubs,” Carolinas GCSA president Brian Green says. “Decades and decades of turfgrass research performed at both institutions underpin the health of the golf industry that delivers billions of dollars in economic benefit to the region every year.” Green is director of golf operations at Lonnie Poole Golf Course at NC State.

The pledges follow years of conversations between the association and the universities to address shifts and uncertainties in traditional turfgrass research funding sources. NC State is working to raise \$2.5 million to establish a Distinguished Chair in Golf Turf Management. Clemson’s target is \$1 million for a Distinguished Professorship in Turfgrass.

They also follow the retirement of long-serving turfgrass scientists at both universities in recent years, some of whom commanded international reputations as leaders in the field. Examples include Drs. Bruce Martin and Bert McCarty from Clemson, and Drs. Fred Yelverton and Rick Brandenburg from NC State.

“Not only were these scientists world leaders, they built their knowledge and expertise right here in the Carolinas, on and around our golf courses,” Green says. “Having such ready access to them was enormously helpful to our ability to produce excellent playing conditions in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.”

Green hopes the Carolinas GCSA pledges will help both universities attract and retain scientists who can extend that legacy. As a submission from NC State to the Carolinas GCSA explains, “Endowed faculty positions are essential to thriving research and outreach efforts. Those positions signal the commitment of the university to an academic discipline at the highest level. They attract leading scholars who, in turn, attract top faculty and students.”

The \$100,000 gifts are funded by money the Carolinas GCSA raises through the now national Rounds 4 Research online auction of donated golf rounds, which the association launched locally in 2009.

“Golf course superintendents have to be problem solvers in our day-to-day work, and we are just as committed to providing solutions on an industry scale,” Green says. “We are proud to support Clemson’s and NC State’s efforts to ensure the best science will always be at our fingertips.”

The Carolinas states are home to nearly 900 golf courses including major championship venues such as Pinehurst No. 2, Quail Hollow Club and the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island Resort. The region is also seeing some of the greatest expansion in the game with dozens of new courses either recently opened or currently in the pipeline.

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