

Morgan Creighton, Assistant Superintendent, The Glencoe Golf and Country Club

The golf course industry is facing a wholesale change on its view of inclusion and diversity. This change is not new but is recently gaining momentum from a number of events in the last couple of years. Both Bayer and Syngenta have been involved in presenting programs designed for women in the turf industry. These events are intended to help female turf professionals, in this male-dominated industry, to meet each other and create a network of industry professionals with common experiences and goals. These events are not designed to denigrate or exclude male peers, but more about working on personal growth and development to be the best version of yourself.

I was fortunate enough to be chosen as one of 50 women from across North America to attend Bayer's inaugural Women in Golf event. This event focused on self-improvement, understanding the importance of perception, discovering and developing the type of personality you have and how that affects your personal and professional life. It created a venue for a few women in the turf industry to develop meaningful connections and a form of networking that was not previously available.

During this event, I started brainstorming ways I could give back to my industry and help fellow female turf managers to understand the difference having a network of female peers can make. In conjunction with the CGSA, Guelph University, and Olds College, I have developed The Women in Turf Mentor Program. My goal for this program is to pair a female student attending a post-secondary turf management program with an established female mentor. The mentees (students) would have access to their paired mentor for the entirety of their turf program.

At this time, I am looking for female mentors who are interested in pairing with a student. The mentor could help in a variety of ways that may include: sharing their knowledge; helping the student tailor their resume and cover letter; giving guidance to school or work; and giving industry advice.

Ultimately, my goal is to grow our network of female turf managers and to encourage those in the early stages of their career to stick with it. The students are meant to use the mentors as part of their development in the industry. There will be an initial survey sent out to the willing participants which will help create the best possible mentee/mentor pairing.

As the program grows, mentors and mentees will be asked to complete an additional survey detailing their experiences so the program can be tailored to fit the needs of the individuals involved and to attract new participants.

I believe that creating a channel for young female students to feel like they belong and have people to turn to in a male-dominated industry will ultimately build a stronger generation of turf managers.

Finally, we need to drive the change we want to see in this industry and creating a network of Women in Turf is a big step in supporting that change.

If this is something you would like to be a part of, or would like more information, please contact Morgan Creighton at mcreighton@glencoe.org.