

By Kenzie Jay

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## SAFE celebrates 10th anniversary

**A** decade; some may view it as just a 10-year span in time, but we view it as a celebration. And this year, it's time to celebrate some STMA members. Although we won't literally be popping champagne in our offices, know that our hats are off to you as we celebrate your success.

The SAFE Foundation, STMA's charity, takes pride in its ability to provide scholarships for individuals aspiring to be in the field. Since its inception in 2000, the SAFE Foundation has presented 120 students more than \$225,000 in scholarships and travel to the STMA Conference and Exhibition. For some, this year marks the 10-year anniversary since SAFE has presented them with scholarships, an equally rewarding and honorable recognition. So this month we caught up with them to see what they're up to now. Willing and ready to share their positive experience with us, we dove into the details about the scholarship process, the conferences and advice for future scholarship recipients.



Kyle Slaton



Shawn Mahonski



Nathan Salmore

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Scattered all over the United States, that's where. We tracked down where these SAFE scholarship recipients have made their mark over the past 10 years, working with communities and universities alike.

Kyle Slaton, a Penn State University grad, is the Director of Sports Turf & Grounds at Georgia State University. Slaton has been in this position 4 years and enjoys being in charge of all the NCAA athletic fields within the university grounds. Slaton's favorite part of his job is having the ability to come in during a rebuilding year and see the progress made within the grounds department and athletic fields.

A fellow Penn State grad, Shawn Mahonski, is the Athletic Field Manager at Towson University. With 9 years under his belt at this position, Mahonski credits his loyalty to Towson and college athletics to the unpredictability and array of challenges he is presented with, keeping every day interesting.

Nathan Salmore, a University of Massachusetts-Amherst grad, is the Assistant Grounds Superintendent at Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, MA. Salmore claims he's enjoyed the past 4 years at LCC due to the unique challenge of maintaining both grass and clay tennis courts.



Matt Anderson



Nick Gow



Dan Blank

A graduate of Michigan State University, Matt Anderson is the Grounds Superintendent at the University of Arizona. Anderson said the love of being outdoors and around sports has kept him in Arizona since he began the position 3 years ago.

Nick Gow, an Iowa State University grad, is the Athletics Facility Manager for the City of Muscatine, Iowa. With his position, Gow is responsible for an eight-field soccer complex, an 18-field softball and baseball complex, and is a turf advisor for a golf course.

After 7 years in a non-related field, Dan Blank has taken his talents to Omaha, NE serving on the biggest stage of college baseball. Blank is the Turf Manager at TD Ameritrade Park, home of the NCAA Men's College World Series.

### CONFERENCE TALK

One of the highlights of receiving the scholarship through the SAFE Foundation is the opportunity to attend the national STMA Conference. In addition to a financial scholarship, each winner's conference registration is paid for and each receives three nights lodging at the conference.

STMA's Annual Conference & Exhibition allows members to share information with other successful members of the sports turf industry and participate in educational seminars and hands-on workshops. Conference attendees are able to tour professional, college and municipal turf facilities that offer a range of insights to take back home. STMA works hard to plan exceptional conferences, but it's the unplanned friendships that make the biggest impression on the scholars.

"There were people that came up to me and introduced themselves to me at the first conference. I was able to talk to them and build a friendship," says Slaton. "The best part of the conference is making friends and seeing everyone."

Known for its eclectic host cities, fun events and exceptional speakers, the conference is unanimously the favorite of scholarship perks among the scholars.

"My ultimate best thing about going to the conference was going to see some of my friends that I only get to see at the conference," adds Mahonski, "also the education, the developments presented in the classes and hearing about the research."

The camaraderie among the sports turf managers isn't the only perk that has the conference buzzing. For Nick Gow, the speakers confirmed that the sports turf industry was the right path for him. "There are amazing speakers out there," he notes. "The ability to hear several professors talk about topics that interest me and expand my knowledge in the sports turf industry helped significantly."

## CHANGES IN THE BUSINESS

Over the past decade, the sports turf industry has grown to be a highly visible profession with tremendous growth potential. Things are changing for the better, with rising salaries at top positions and new facilities and field conversions.

"The work I see people do (either on social media, newsletters, pictures), the quality of work people do blows me away," says Anderson.

The industry has secured a spot on the fast track to broader recognition with over \$1.29 billion in purchases of sports turf products and services annually, according to University of Missouri's Sports Turf AdvanTage. Technology has also seen a progression within the industry, helping sports turf managers' jobs become easier.

"It's amazing to look back at the first conference I went to. It's only been 10 years, and there is such a difference and improvement in equipment and types of fertilizers," says Slaton. "I can't imagine what the next 10 years will do. Technology is becoming a bigger part."

The combination of better technology and a growing industry has helped to better equip fields for use and safety. Nick Gow mentions how the growing industry has provided more opportunities for sports turf managers. "The green industry has really gone from growing grass to upper management of synthetic fields," he says. "It's a growing industry and will continue to grow. I've seen major improvements of high school facilities. The number one goal of a sports turf manager is to provide safe, quality athletic facilities for youth and adults in communities."

As the industry has become more recognizable, so have the rewarding aspects of sports turf management. Gow touches on a very important value of being a sports turf manager, and opens up the discussion for how others, such as coaches and players, can make a difference. According to Sports Turf AdvanTage, some of the most rewarding aspects of Sports Turf Management include: appreciation by coaches, players and fans, having a plan come together and seeing fields hold up to heavy traffic.

But the biggest draw, mentions Salmore, is the opportunity to work outside and around sports. "Working outside is a big draw," says Salmore. "Working around sports is great."

Blank shared in Salmore's enthusiasm claiming that being outside was also his favorite part about working within the green business. The desire to work around a particular sport is also important to some sports turf managers.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year, the SAFE foundation awards their scholarships to the most qualified applicants. The applicants are judged on academic preparation, cumulative grade point average, experience in sports turf

management, and references provided by student advisers and previous or current employers. They are also evaluated on their contributions to their school, department, and organizations to which they belong, as well as their career objectives. Although GPA is included, the scholarship is not focused on the idea of grade point average.

"I've recommended applying to scholarships to students and people I know in the industry all the time," says Anderson. "It's not just based on your academic performance and grades. More is taken in account than just your GPA. People think that is what it's all about, so they don't apply." Like any scholarship, the hope is to further encourage the academic success of the individual as well as provide some positive recognition of an individual's accomplishments.

Dan Blank discusses how beneficial receiving the scholarship was for him. "[It] solidified everything for me. It made everything real. It was a 'this is it, let's do this' kind of thing," he says. "It was a positive reinforcement and good to have on a résumé."

Almost all of the scholars claimed the recognition and having the scholarship on their résumé helped with job interviews. Most of the job interviews eventually landed them jobs in the long run.

"[The scholarship] shows that you're dedicated and interested in what you're doing," says Salmore. "It helped on my resume and job interviews. It definitely helped get the jobs that I applied for."

The scholarship is also an important introduction to STMA for those individuals interested in the sports turf industry. An STMA membership allows members to access job postings and a leg up on others applying for jobs within the industry. Shawn Mahonski received his current job as Athletic Field Manager at Towson University because of his membership with STMA.

At STMA, we make it a SAFE bet that applying for the scholarship will be worth it. With the easy application process and long-time benefits, we encourage all individuals planning a career in the sports turf industry to apply.

The application process includes simply printing and completing the application and returning it to the SAFE Scholarship Committee. It's as simple as that: just do it! SAFE's goal is to make it as easy as possible to apply for the scholarship. Nick Gow urges those interested to apply and apply every year. The scholars raved at how easy the process was, and mentioned how they recommend it to their interns and students because it could lead to something bigger and better. "Apply for every opportunity that is out there and take advantage. Most of them lead to somewhere or another opportunity," says Mahonski.

Ten years has come and gone, and these scholars are still reminiscing about the journey they've had. STMA applauds you and your dedication to the industry. Continuously grateful to our members, the SAFE Foundation and its scholarships would not be possible without the support and donations to help us fulfill our mission to enrich communities through championing safe, sustainable sports and recreation fields for all athletes. ■

*Kenzie Jay is the SAFE Foundation intern and a University of Kansas journalism student.*

## List of Current CSFM's:

Richard Alford	CSFM	Amy Fouty	CSFM	Brandon Putman	CSFM
Kari Allen	CSFM	Mark Frever	CSFM	Jon Quist	CSFM
Matt Anderson	CSFM	Dale Getz	CSFM, CSE	Allen Reed	CSFM
Mike Andresen	CSFM	Jody Gill	CSFM	James Rodgers	CSFM
Weston Appelfeller	CSFM	James Gish	CSFM	Matthew Rogers	CSFM
Peter Ashe	CSFM	Josh Glover	CSFM	C. Tom Rudberg	CSFM
Ted Baker	CSFM	Ed Hall	CSFM	Connie Rudolph	CSFM
Robert Behr	CSFM	Kevin Hardy	CSFM	Dean Rush	CSFM
Bob Benyo	CSFM	James Hermann	CSFM	Jeff Salmond	CSFM
Steve Berg	CSFM	Shane Hohlbein	CSFM	Don Savard	CSFM, CGM
James Bergdoll	CSFM	Chris Hohnstrater	CSFM	Casey Scheidel	CSFM
George Bernardon	CSFM	Eric Holland	CSFM	Mike Schiller	CSFM Ret.
Larry Berry	CSFM	Jonathan Holland	CSFM, CFB	Don Scholl	CSFM
Scott Bills	CSFM	Douglas Horn	CSFM	Carey See	CSFM
Ben Boeding	CSFM	Ron Hostick	CSFM, CGM	Alan Siebert	CSFM
Rick Bold	CSFM	Michael Hrivnak	CSFM	Jimmy Simpson	CSFM
Jeff Bosworth	CSFM	David Iannicello	CSFM	Kyle Slaton	CSFM
Jason Bowers	CSFM	Mark Janz	CSFM	David Smith	CSFM
Joey Brazil	CSFM	Allen Johnson	CSFM	Troy Smith	CSFM
TJ Brewer	CSFM	Shane Johnson	CSFM	Grant Spear	CSFM
Noel Brusius	CSFM	Patrick Jonas	CSFM	Jim Speelman	CSFM
Darin Budak	CSFM, CPRE	Martin Kaufman	CSFM	Jim Stamps, Jr.	CSFM
Michael Buras	CSFM	Johnathan Knight	CSFM	Robert Standing	CSFM
Steve Bush	CSFM	Jared Knoodle	CSFM	Scott Stevens	CSFM
Richard Calarco	CSFM	Joe Kovolyan	CSFM, ISA Arborist	Tony Strickland	CSFM
Chris Calcaterra	M.Ed., CSFM, CPRP	Ross Kurcab	CSFM	Joey Surratt	CSFM
Bob Campbell	CSFM	William Lawrence	CSFM	Brett Tanner	CSFM
Brian Carey	CSFM	Timothy Legare	CSFM, CPRP	Michael Tarantino	CSFM
Matt Carl	CSFM	Jeremy Link	CSFM	Kevin Taylor	CSFM
Casey Carrick	CSFM	Shaun Lynch	CSFM	Waldo Terrell	CSFM
Richard Clarke	CSFM	Kevin Malone	CSFM	Peter Thibeault	CSFM
Patrick Coakley	CSFM	Joshua Marden	CSFM	Nolan Thomas	CSFM
Joe Collins	CSFM	Sarah Martin	CSFM	Scott Thompson	CSFM
Herb Combs	CSFM	Stephen Matuza	CSFM	Lance Tibbetts	CSFM, NHCLP
James Cornelius	CSFM	Ryan McCaughey	CSFM	Mike Trigg	CSFM
Clark Cox	CSFM	Mike McDonald	CSFM	George Trivett	CSFM
Joseph Creadon	CSFM	Nick McKenna	CSFM	Elvin Ulmer	CSFM
Stephen Crockett	CSFM	Abby McNeal	CSFM	Tim VanLoo	CSFM
Marcus Dean	CSFM	Joshua McPherson	CSFM	Raechal Volkening	CSFM
Jason Demink	CSFM	Kevin Mercer	CSFM	Kevin Vos	CSFM
Chris Denson	CSFM	Kevin Meredith	CSFM	Michael Wade	CSFM
Jon DeWitt	CSFM	Chris Metcalf	CSFM	Michael Wagner	CSFM
Michael DiDonato	CSFM	Boyd Montgomery	CSFM, CSE	Rusty Walker	CSFM
Adam Dixon	CSFM	Jason Moore	CSFM	Joseph Warner	CSFM
Brian Dossett	CSFM	Timothy Moore	CSFM	Jay Warnick	CSFM
Jesse Driver	CSFM	Marc Moran	CSFM	John Watt	CSFM
Steve Dugas	CSFM	Stuart Morris	CSFM	Glen Wear	CSFM
Matt Duncan	CSFM	Justin Mullis	CSFM	Roger Weinbrenner	CSFM
Alan Dungey	CSFM	Brent Neighbor	CSFM	Dean Whitehead	CSFM
Kenneth Edwards	CSFM	Carol Partridge	CSFM	Jason Wightington	CSFM
Robin Edwards	CSFM	Steve Peeler	CSFM	Brant Williams	CSFM
Robert Ehrler	CSFM, MG, CGCS, CTP, CLM, CGIA	Anthony Pell	CSFM	Clive Williams	CSFM
Eric Fasbender	CSFM	Rick Perruzzi	CSFM, CPRP	Alan Wilson	CSFM
Gregory Fear	CSFM, CGM, LEED AP	David Pinsonneault	CSFM, CPRP	Matthew Wimer	CSFM
John Fik	CSFM, CGM	Joseph Potrikus	CSFM	Brian Winka	CSFM
Michael Flowers	CSFM	David Presnell	CSFM	Shane Young	CSFM
Andy Flynn	CSFM	Chad Price	CSFM, CFB		
		Jesse Pritchard	CSFM		

## Changes to CSFM program increase certification accessibility

**M**any sports turf managers and turf professionals will attest to the fact that an individual's experience "in the field" goes a long way towards making them a better professional. This is especially true for crew members and assistants working in the industry who put in long hours to ensure their fields are operating at their best.

STMA agrees. A discussion began in 2012 in the Certification Testing Subcommittee about slightly recalibrating the certification process to more fully take into account the real-world experience of crew members, assistants and student interns to broaden accessibility and opportunity for all in the industry.

A minimum of 40 points are needed to qualify for the Certification Program. Points are accumulated through education and real-world experience in one's career, with varying employment positions and achievements receiving different numeric values.

Previously, there had not been a formal point structure for crew members and assistants; the Certification Testing Subcommittee and STMA Board of Directors agreed that this needed to be rectified and there was consensus the experience point values for crew members and assistants be increased to reflect the value these individuals bring to their organizations. The following recommendations were made by the committee to the Board:

- Increase the crew member from 1 point per year to 2.5 per year
- Increase the assistant from 3 points per year to 4 points
- .1 point to be awarded per 100 hours worked for students in formal internship programs

The changes implemented allow a crew member with no formal education to be eligible to test for the Certification Program in 16 years, rather than 40 with the original point system. Additionally, the changes rightly acknowledge the importance of turf internships for students and their importance to the vitality of STMA.

### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Those individuals interested in and passionate about providing the best sports surfaces for all levels of play raising the level of the sports turf management industry should definitely consider becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager.

Besides increasing your earning potential by (on average) \$7,500, obtaining certification provides a wealth of personal benefits. Some of these include:

- Recognition of achievement and your expertise as a leader in your field
- Commitment to excellence and the very best ideals the sports turf industry strives to honor

### Sample exam questions

The certification exam required of all applicants covers a broad range of sports turf topics but is extremely accessible to all who have experience in the field. The exam covers four major areas of sports turf management: Agronomics; Pest Management; Administration; and Sports Specific Field Management.

#### Agronomics

1. A 100 pound bag of fertilizer with an analysis of 18-5-9 would contain which of the following:

- 5 pounds of actual phosphorus
- 5 pounds of available phosphate
- 9 pounds of potassium
- 18 pounds of urea

Answer: B (5 pounds of available phosphate)

#### Pest Management

2. A herbicide with the label designation 2EC:

- Contains 2 parts per million active ingre-

dient concentration in the container

- Has an active ingredient concentration of 2%
- Contains 2 pounds of active ingredient per gallon of formulated product
- Weights 2 pounds per gallon

Answer: C (Contains 2 pounds of active ingredient per gallon of formulated product)

#### Administration

3. Providing feedback is one of the most important tools for improving performance. Which of the following is **not** true about providing feedback?

- Negative feedback should only be given at an annual review in order to reduce tensions throughout the year
- Supportive feedback is used to reinforce actions and behaviors that are desirable
- Constructive feedback is used to change

behavior that is ineffective or inappropriate

- It is important that employees understand the positive outcomes for performing well, as well as the consequences when performance is low

Answer: A (Negative feedback should only be given at an annual review in order to reduce tensions throughout the year)

#### Sports Specific Field Management

4. The most appropriate paint to use on a natural grass field is:

- Latex
- Oil-based
- Enamel
- All of the above can be used

Answer: A (Latex)



# DOC'S DUGOUT IS BACK!

This new monthly feature will honor the people, places and equipment that helped to create the foundation for our association and advance the sports turf management profession. The "Doc" in Doc's Dugout refers to the late Dr. Kent Kurtz, who spearheaded the initial effort to preserve the history of STMA.

• Increased educational opportunities by expanding the availability of critical resources that will make you more effective in your position.

The CSFM program, now in its 14th year, has graduated hundreds of sports turf managers from across the industry and country, and continues to challenge those who want to "raise their game." The testing portion is challenging but definitely do-able, especially for someone who has worked on a field; 79 percent of people pass it on their first or second try.

If you are eligible to become certified and want to take your career to the next level, the CSFM program and STMA stand ready to assist.

Visit [stma.org/csfm-program](http://stma.org/csfm-program) to learn more about the program, including details on the recalibrated point system for crew members and assistants, and to download the comprehensive application packet. ■



Roger O'Connor, left, former grounds crew leader for Wrigley Field, paints the field in 1984 using a type of paint striper. It uses a liquid propane tank (hopefully filled with compressed air and not propane) instead of a motor. It was silent and worked well, however it can lose pressure fairly quickly and need to be re-charged. If it was using LP gas, it would last much longer, but smoking near it was dangerous.

## STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:** [www.azstma.org](http://www.azstma.org)

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org)

**Florida #1 Chapter (South):**  
305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates) or  
Tom Curran CTomSell@aol.com

**Florida #2 Chapter (North):** 850-580-4026,  
John Mascaro, [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com)

**Florida #3 Chapter (Central):** 407-518-2347,  
Scott Grace, [scott@sundome.org](mailto:scott@sundome.org)

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org)

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org)

**Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com)

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** [www.ILSTMA.org](http://www.ILSTMA.org)

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** <http://imstma.blogspot.com/>

**Indiana - Contact Clayton Dame,** [Claytondame@hotmail.com](mailto:Claytondame@hotmail.com) or Brian Bornino, [bornino@purdue.edu](mailto:bornino@purdue.edu) or Contact Joey Stevenson, [jstevenson@indyindians.com](mailto:jstevenson@indyindians.com)

**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

**Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.kystma.org](http://www.kystma.org)

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** [www.kafmo.org](http://www.kafmo.org)

**Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):** [www.mistma.org](http://www.mistma.org)

**Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mpstma.org](http://www.mpstma.org)

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mokanstma.com](http://www.mokanstma.com)

**New England STMA (NESTMA):** [www.nestma.org](http://www.nestma.org)

**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

**Sports Turf Managers of New York:** [www.stmony.org](http://www.stmony.org)

**North Carolina Chapter of STMA:** [www.ncsportsturf.org](http://www.ncsportsturf.org)

**Northern California STMA:** [www.norcalstma.org](http://www.norcalstma.org)

**Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):** [www.ostma.org](http://www.ostma.org)

**Oklahoma Chapter STMA:** 405-744-5729;  
Contact: Dr. Justin Moss [okstma@gmail.com](mailto:okstma@gmail.com)

**Oregon STMA Chapter:**

[www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org](http://www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org)  
[oregonstma@gmail.com](mailto:oregonstma@gmail.com)

**Ozarks STMA:** [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org)

**Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.pnwstma.org](http://www.pnwstma.org)

**Southern California Chapter:** [www.socalstma.com](http://www.socalstma.com)

**South Carolina Chapter of STMA:** [www.scstma.org](http://www.scstma.org)

**Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):** [www.tvstma.com](http://www.tvstma.com)

**Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.txstma.org](http://www.txstma.org)

**Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.vstma.org](http://www.vstma.org)

**Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.wstma.org](http://www.wstma.org)

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