

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2008

## Crisis looms in Canada's \$13B golf industry: clubs face shortage of trained managers

Serious staff shortages loom at golf clubs across Canada



NELSON, B.C. — Amid growing concern about too few skilled trades people in Canada, another crisis is looming for the nation's \$13 billion golf industry—not enough trained staff to manage and operate the 2,200 golf clubs in the country.

In B.C., Selkirk College, the institution that launched Canada's first on-campus golf management program in 1989 has another national first: a fully accredited online golf management certificate designed to address the shortfall.

"We spent a year researching the staffing and training needs of golf clubs across the country," said Kate Tognotti, dean of Selkirk College's School of Hospitality and Tourism. "We contacted 125 managers and found that 54 per cent of respondents reported difficulties recruiting supervisory staff. That's bad enough, but the problem is expected to get worse."



Kate Tognotti

Doug Ferne, B.C. regional director for the National Golf Course Owners Association Canada (NGCOA), also

sounded a note of concern. "It's imperative that the golf industry work with and support programs that are strategic and innovative in providing personnel to operate their facilities," Ferne said.

Tognotti believes the golf industry faces several conditions that set the stage for thousands of managerial vacancies at golf clubs:

- Most of Canada's nine million baby boomers will retire over the next two decades; these are people who will have more discretionary time and money than any generation before them. Golf is going to get even bigger than it is already. Overall, the Canadian golf community spends about \$12.9 billion per calendar year on direct golf expenditures.
- There are 32,000 golf courses worldwide and 20,000 of these are in North America. Canada has the highest golf participation rate in the world. A 2006 study by Ipsos Reid for the Royal

- Canada's 2,200 golf courses employ almost 100,000 people, and conservative estimates call for the construction of hundreds of new clubs in the coming decades, which means thousands more managers will be needed.
- Many of the people now working in management positions at Canadian golf courses are boomers themselves, people who will join the exodus of retirees.

Tognotti said Selkirk College has committed close to \$1/2 million to develop the state-of-the-art 10-course online certificate, which is set to launch in November. She believes the move to high-impact, online education is the appropriate response for several reasons:

"First, it benefits club managers who want staff to acquire new knowledge and skills but don't want their employees to leave the workplace in order to make upgrades.

"Second, it offers new opportunities to club employees who have reached plateaus in their careers that make promotions difficult.

"Third, it opens doors for people who need academic certification to enter the golf industry. Our flexible online program means people can earn as they learn. Avoiding relocation and working at the same time present considerable financial benefits.

"Finally, our path to excellence in golf management will be great news for golfers in the coming years. Golf clubs are expensive and complex to build and operate. To provide excellent golf experiences at thousands of clubs requires highly skilled people."

Contact:	Kate Tognotti: Instructional Dean	1-866-301-6601 ext. 207
	Wayne Schweitzer, Golf Program	1-866-301-6601 ext. 310

For information about the online certificate: [www.selkirk.ca/ht/golf/](http://www.selkirk.ca/ht/golf/)