



The 2017 Syngenta Business Institute brought a inquisitive group of superintendents to Wake Forest.

Overheard and observations at SBI17

Labor was the topic of interest with the 2017 class of superintendents attending the Syngenta Business Institute Dec. 4-7 at Wake Forest University.

For the last decade, Syngenta has partnered with Wake Forest's School of Business professors who teach a program focused on interpersonal and intergenerational communication, financial management and budgeting, delegation, and negotiation tactics.

Superintendents apply to attend SBI, and Syngenta hand picks 26 attendees.

Here are some takeaways from this year's event:

- Superintendents lament over the fact that labor is in such short supply, often blaming housing surges in their markets for poaching labor. Many are forced to pay record wages to secure their turf management teams.
- Speaking of labor, assistant superintendents are in short supply in the Midwest. According to attendees, not only are turf schools not churning out the number of junior turfheads like they had in the past, but these graduates instead head toward the East and West Coasts in pursuit of internships and jobs, leaving a large hole in the middle for talent. One Michigan turf manager said he was forced to promote a long-term laborer into the assistant position because pickings are so slim in his market.
- When it came to intergenerational relationship building, much of the conversation was steered toward how younger superintendents can better manage laborers who may be 20-plus years their senior. To further complicate matters, some of the older laborers are retired former superintendents. Junior superintendents were intent on learning skills to overcome anxiety and better manage those who have "been there, done that."

TURF & SOIL DIAGNOSTICS

accredited labs
providing performance
testing for greens, tees,
bunkers and fairways

www.turfdiag.com
855-769-4231

• Our evaluations
provide insight into
material properties
and course
conditions.

• Our reports offer
sound scientific data
to aid renovation,
maintenance and
management
decisions.

