Hello, my name is Steve Baker, and I am a 45-year-old husband and father of two beautiful children living in Prineville, Oregon. I am writing this letter concerning my interest in the OGCSA Oregon State University Turfgrass Management PACE Course Series Scholarship offered by the Oregon chapter of the GCSAA.

It seems the world had other things in mind at the beginning of 2020 when COVID-19 hit. Just before it hit, I enrolled at GCU to complete my Master’s in special education. Following completion of courses, I waited for placement for student teaching when schools shut down which delayed the completion of my degree. As a father and provider, I knew I needed to find work immediately, so I applied for a position at Meadowlakes Golf Course in Prineville. Golf has been a passion of mine from a very young age. I had the opportunity to grow up on a golf course so I knew I would enjoy the golf course maintenance industry. I thought it would be something enjoyable to do to fill the time before I could get back to the classroom. Little did I know the opportunity would change my life, learning more about the world of turf management and agronomy than I ever imagined. Before I knew it, I was hooked and realized that I wanted to pursue this opportunity in the future. At this point, finishing my Master's is a goal and I always intend to complete any goal I set for myself; however, my love and passion for this industry have unexpectedly taken me in a different direction and created an opportunity within the golf course management industry that I feel I owe to myself to explore.

 Golf course management is the perfect program for me because it combines my love for nature, agronomy, as well as sports. I am finding that the science of turf management is fascinating, and I enjoy learning about the best practices. My goal is to learn the finest and most effective ways to grow resilient turf in the most ecologically-friendly way possible. In turn, Meadowlakes Golf Course would have the potential to be one of Central Oregon’s best municipal golf courses. My goal is to eventually become a golf course Superintendent, but I understand there are many facets of the industry that I will learn in the PACE program offered by Oregon State. The PACE program would provide me with the opportunity to pursue my passion in the industry of turf management as well as make a positive impact on the environment.

 I ask that you respectfully consider my application for this scholarship. I feel I not only have passion but would be a good steward of the environment while responsibly implementing the science and technology that is used in turf management daily. I would be honored to represent my course superintendent Tyler Millsap in the future as a recipient of this scholarship. Thank you for your time and consideration.