

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J., and BROOKLINE, Mass. (May 2, 2022) – With a focus on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in golf, The Country Club and the United States Golf Association have selected 25 college and graduate students from 22 universities for the Lee Elder Internship, a dedicated, hands-on career training program that will run throughout the week of the 122nd U.S. Open Championship in June.

The international cohort includes 15 individuals who identify as female and 10 as male, with more than half having minimal exposure to golf. With students from the United States, Argentina, the Republic of Korea and Nigeria, the internship reflects what the U.S. Open represents in golf – the most diverse and democratic major championship, open to all.

“This bright group of young leaders shows us what the future of golf can and will be,” said USGA CEO Mike Whan. “Only a small fraction of the two million golf jobs across our \$84 billion industry are held by people from underrepresented communities. It’s our responsibility to continually advance and grow the game through programs that expose more young professionals to the wealth of opportunities that exist, and to elevate their ability to make our game stronger.”

“We are thrilled with the overall interest and the quality of applicants for this first-of-its-kind program,” said Will Fulton, general chair for the 2022 U.S. Open. “This program embodies Lee Elder’s vision and hope for the future of golf and we recognize that diversification is one of the biggest opportunities for the game. Through this program, we hope to connect with those who can help shape the future of golf as potential leaders who may not have been reached without programs like the Lee Elder Internship.”

Following the program’s announcement in November 2021, the Internship Committee received more than 200 applications from 37 states and five countries. To remove systemic barriers that can impede diverse participation in traditional internship programs, an emphasis was placed on the student’s demonstrated commitment to diversity, drawing from previous and current work or school experiences, referrals and recommendations.

The 2022 class includes students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other accredited universities across the United States who are pursuing master’s degrees in business administration, sports management and public policy, and bachelor’s degrees in a variety of professional fields. They include entrepreneurs, podcasters and advocates whose efforts encompass a variety of social, health and justice issues. Several play golf at the collegiate level, and many have volunteered for junior golf programs such as First Tee in their communities.

Lee Elder, a pioneer in integrating golf and laying the groundwork for generations to follow, was the first African American to play in the Masters Tournament and the first to play on a United States Ryder Cup Team. In 2019, he became the first African American to receive the USGA’s Bob Jones Award, the association’s highest honor, which recognizes an individual who demonstrates Jones’s exemplary spirit, character and respect for the game.

In addition to the Lee Elder Internship, The Country Club offers internships in club management, golf management, turfgrass management, culinary arts and marketing & communications, providing students with year-round opportunities to develop their skills alongside industry professionals.

Through its P.J. Boatwright Jr. Internship Program established in 1991, the USGA annually funds more than 125 paid long-term internships across its network of 58 Allied Golf Associations. Internships are focused on building toward careers in tournament administration, handicapping, rules, marketing, communications, community engagement and more. Offering a minimum of three- to 12-month assignments, the program has helped to cultivate future leaders of the golf industry by providing qualified applicants of all backgrounds with direct experience as staff members at state and regional golf associations.

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