

## Williams College / Taconic Golf Club model Williamstown, MA

<https://taconicgolf.com>

<http://www.hansegolfdesign.com> (architect Gil Hanse completed full course restoration in '08)

*Taconic Golf Club* (TGC) is independently run by a 12-member board — 4 Williams-affiliated employees + 4 Williams alumni / spouses + 4 non-Williams members from the TGC community.

*Williams College* (WC) owns TGC land on the edge of campus, leases it to club for \$1 per year.

Board completely controls TGC budget (\$2 million total — \$1.1 million comes from local and alumni memberships). Currently, WC contributes baseline \$34,000 per year towards operating budget plus 1/3 of maintenance / equipment projects and capital improvements to *golf course*.

*Example:* TGC recently purchased \$500,000 in new fairway mowers and tee/green mowers. WC contributed its 1/3 (\$167,000) and offered TGC a no-interest loan for the \$333,000 balance. TGC has budgeted repayment of that loan amount over next few years (not sure of duration).

WC is very engaged with TGC, sees enormous synergy and value-added that benefit the school's larger purposes. WC wants TGC to succeed independently, lest TGC fail and default back to WC.

TGC is responsible for all *clubhouse* maintenance, upgrades, operating costs. Keeps revenues.

Clubhouse is a modest but classic New England estate-style home, containing a restaurant, bar area, locker rooms, TGC staff offices, and covered dining patio overlooking course. Historically operates 7 months per year, then closes off-season. Golf shop is adjoining with separate entry.

Overall, clubhouse has experienced a budget shortfall of \$75,000 to \$125,000 annually in recent years due to capital improvements to facilities as well as upgrading their food and beverage capabilities in clubhouse (hiring a serious chef and serving staff, building a menu, marketing it).

During this three-year upgrade, food and beverage revenues have grown from \$250,000 to \$600,000 annually, with net profit of \$45,000 from that latest year. Clubhouse moving to a 12-month schedule now, hoping to continue to grow TGC hospitality business (restaurant, events).

TGC members have charging privileges at club and receive a discount on all food and beverage. TGC working to incentivize / privilege membership by adding convenience / member amenities. Working to engage members year-round, so their TGC involvement and spending is 12 months.

One current clubhouse limitation at TGC is lack of dedicated space to accommodate events. So, hosting any outside dinner / meeting / reception during golf season means denying members, golfers and public diners access to restaurant / bar. TGC Board is studying how to expand clubhouse facility to resolve this conflict, to attract and support more outside business year-round.

*Williams Inn* is building all-new hotel and conference facility on property near TGC 18<sup>th</sup> hole. Looking to do marketing / packages / professional conferences / alumni events — ideally year-round, with XC skiing and snowshoeing on-site, walking, bird-watching, access to WC events.

### **Staffing Details**

TGC head pro (Josh Hillman) is also WC men's varsity team coach and teaches WC P.E. classes. He "owns" the golf shop, purchases and manages inventory, part of his salary is paid by profits from the shop. Tournaments and events are required to buy some portion of prizes from shop.

Head pro paid from two employers: 60% by WC salary, 40% by TGC income. All other shop employees are his staff / financial responsibility.

### **More Financial Details**

TGC is independent financially and gives WC priority access during specific periods for varsity teams, PE classes, faculty / staff league play, alumni outings, and development office events.

WC Development Office pays TGC for use with alumni and donor events (similar to DC / HCC).

Tiered rate structure for students / parents / alumni, as well as faculty / staff, and junior golf.

\$ 2,600 per year for public individual adult membership (currently \$1,599 at HCC)

\$ 1,900 per year for Williams-affiliated adult membership (no discount at HCC for DC affiliated)

\$ 700 per year for junior membership (vs. \$360 at HCC)

\$ 600 per year alumni out-of-town membership (beyond 50 miles). Now 160, goal 300 to 500.

\$ 160 public daily fee (full retail)

\$ 95 Williams College-connected

\$ much cheaper rates for WC students and junior play

### **Evolving nature of Clubhouse Use**

- Less need for *locker room space* as a social hub / destination, more focused on key functions.
- Space for *varsity teams*, including dedicated locker rooms, meeting room, coaches' offices.
- *Casual restaurant / lounge* for food and beverage – nicer than a sports bar, below fine dining.
- "Bring the *outside in* and the *inside out*" – design facilities / landscaping to blend both venues.
- Reciprocal arrangements with other desirable clubs, so TGC members get to play there a few times per year on specified days (during TGC events) at a discounted rate (e.g., \$50 per person).
- Bottom line: **What are you going to be as a club?** TGC is currently a *golf club* offering a few perks, but now *striving to become more*. Not a full-service, one-stop country club, but a year-round destination for meals, occasional social events, *Rotary Club*, reception / meeting venue.