



AFTER ALMOST 60 YEARS, PSIA-AASI CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

By Ed Younglove, PSIA-AASI Board Chair

As part of its evolutionary process, PSIA-AASI is continuing a mission of unification that began with its creation. The most recent expression of this is a statement developed by PSIA-AASI Board of Directors that foresees the future it wants to

achieve for the organization's members: "PSIA-AASI and division strategic goals align."

PSIA was originally created in 1961 by founding members with a vision of an organization whose professional education activities and credentialing would span the nation. It would be comprised of separate division entities but function as one organization. As Bill Lash, PSIA co-founder and its first president, wrote in *PSIA Beginnings*, "PSIA was a service organization serving the public, the instructor, the ski school, and the ski area operator." Ten years before PSIA was created, Lash recognized that "the future of skiing in this country – both from a recreational and professional standpoint – depends on the quality of instruction at our ski schools." Both of Lash's observations are still true to this day.

STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD ALIGNED GOALS

Volunteer leadership represented by your national and division boards; the organization's professional staff; and lead educators throughout the country are all cooperating better than ever before. These three groups form a three-legged stool that supports a unified effort to achieve seamless alignment. More than a decade ago, PSIA-AASI's national and division leadership vowed to find unity in their efforts to achieve this dream through Communication, Collaboration, and Consolidation. These "3 Cs" guided many of our conversations in the more recent past but attaining them proved elusive. Old habits die hard, yet by recognizing the power in numbers and the strength of working in unison the groups have continued to work together wherever possible.

The key, as recently recognized in the PSIA-AASI board's expression of unity, is striving for consistency by working from aligned strategic goals. Even in this relatively brief period, various nationwide consistencies have come about. Examples include development

of a singular vision for the organization to "Create Lifelong Adventures Through Education," e-learning modules (e.g., "Course for New Instructors" and "Alpine Level I Certification Prerequisite"), and a single "Code of Conduct" for all 32,000-plus members. The organization is also committed to more uniform management of membership categories across all divisions and creating *Performance Guides* for all three certification levels to support the National Standards – along with unified assessment forms (score cards).

Communication is the foundation for this cooperation. PSIA-AASI facilitates the communication by hosting gatherings of the three key groups to discuss what the organizations' strategic goals are and how they can be aligned. This applies, in particular, to unified education initiatives, more clearly expressed national standards and certification consistencies, and operational efficiencies achieved through economies of scale and greater similarity in operating practices.

GROWING STRONGER THROUGH SHARED VALUES

Sharing and committing to these goals paves the way for nationwide collaboration. Rather than working separately in various silos, divisions can share best practices and find consistencies for members regardless of their division affiliation. Competition in the marketplace of ideas is a positive attribute, but collaboration on shared values promotes shared success rather than winners and losers. While some may see the diversity in our organization, geographic and otherwise, as a hinderance, I see it as the source of our greatest strength. There can't be unity without diversity.

As PSIA-AASI's many components communicate shared goals and collaborate toward their achievement, we've found ways to consolidate our efforts, which helps us avoid unnecessary repetition and wasted duplication of effort. We can take advantage of



PSIA-AASI Board Chair Ed Younglove (left) and CEO Nicholas Herrin (right) recently had an opportunity to talk shop with PSIA Co-founder Bill Lash at his home in Bothell, Washington.

our strengths and minimize areas of weakness. Practicing the "3 Cs" enables us to begin operating the way we've dreamed that we could.

As a result, our members can feel that they are part of a larger nationwide community that transcends their school, resort, and division. Being part of the organization means that we are each on the same shared journey of professional development. Our members share common experiences as professional instructors, which, in turn, generate ideas that promote shared programs and resources that benefit the entire membership.

With more than 32,000 members across the nation, PSIA-AASI represents a cohesive, identifiable, and undeniably valuable presence within the snowsports industry. Using the "3 Cs" to implement our aligned goals results in students, schools and resorts being able to count on consistent, high-quality lessons wherever they may be. I can only imagine PSIA's founders would be pleased to see the remarkable progress toward their original vision for the organization. ☑

VIEW VIDEO



See how a commitment to the "3 Cs" helps guide PSIA-AASI's ongoing evolution.