



# The Evolution of Snowsports Education:

A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO INSTRUCTOR GROWTH AND EXCELLENCE

By Nicholas Herrin, PSIA-AASI Chief Executive Officer

**P** SIA-AASI celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, highlighting six decades of instructional innovation that encompass new ways of sliding on snow and shaping adventures for students with a wide variety of abilities and backgrounds. Always

striving to maintain the highest standards of expertise, we continue to focus on helping members grow as educators.

In teaching lessons during this challenging season, you likely found that the people-skills component of the Learning Connection<sup>SM</sup> model matters now more than ever. Interpersonal skills, so critical to creating a consistently engaging and welcoming learning environment for all students, received renewed focus from PSIA-AASI's education leaders this year. Their commitment to aligning our certification standards with the

Learning Connection across all disciplines is paying off with truly consistent assessment criteria for you and your fellow instructors (see [tiny.cc/NationalCertStandards](http://tiny.cc/NationalCertStandards)). That's a win in itself, and now our common sense of purpose creates a roadmap for embracing – and achieving – a culture of consistency that can inform how we work with our guests and peers on the slopes.

## TASK FORCES ADVISE & DRIVE SUCCESS

Throughout PSIA-AASI's history, great things have come from collaboration – on everything from teaching models to education materials, and I'm so impressed by the current level of interaction. Over the past few years, creating more national task forces empowered our leaders across the country to lean into a unified message. And it's not just the Education Leadership Council and discipline-specific task forces helping drive our success. PSIA-AASI also forms groups that, rather than focus on the technical side of our profession, also dive into personal interactions and the overall culture of snowsports education in our industry.

As Julie Matisses outlines so well in her article on page 42, this winter we brought our task force and governance leaders together for a series of webinars that challenged us to be more aware of how we work with each other and become more socially mindful of our peers and guests. I believe these trainings will have a powerful impact on how we welcome a more diverse student base and establish a more inclusive instructor community for years to come.

The biggest success from these trainings is the willingness of our leaders to learn, and to stay engaged with the diverse needs and desires of every guest. It's great to see them come together and embrace opportunities to listen to and learn from each other.

## DEVELOPMENTS ON THE DEI FRONT

In my previous *32 Degrees* columns this year, I've focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion and what we can do as educators in the snowsports industry to be more aware of and impactful on these topics. To truly make inroads, we must be honest with where we are now. In consultation with our DEI Task Force, we are currently working on a new "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Message and Commitment to Action" statement that will sharpen PSIA-AASI's messaging on this front.

The journey we've embarked on as an organization is a long-term commitment to our members and our industry. I'm very proud of our leaders and the steps they've taken to break down barriers, whether it's working as "one team" to overhaul our certification standards or taking important actions to educate themselves on barriers within our current culture. The progress made by leaders so far will be the first of many successes I hope we see when it comes to inclusion in snowsports. While nationwide consistency within the certification process has taken many years to achieve; let's work together to make sure inclusion is on a faster track.

I'm excited to be on this path with our current generation of leaders and educators and would like to thank, in advance, the future generation of leaders and educators who will take up the *next* leg of the journey. **32**

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As a member of PSIA-AASI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, Frank Cartwright (shown here at 2016 Team Selection) helps empower association leaders to develop unified messaging that promotes a welcoming learning and teaching environment.



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