Snowsports Are for Everyone
LET’S MAKE SURE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOME
By Nicholas Herrin, PSIA-AASI Chief Executive Officer

As educators, we strive to create an amazing learning environment for every student we work with. We have a similar opportunity to create an amazing instructor environment by making sure PSIA-AASI reflects a broad cross section of society.

PSIA-AASI is committed to embracing a culture shift that brings about broader inclusion and equity in our association. After all, snowsports are for everyone, so it makes sense to make sure everyone – regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or other identity demographics – feels welcome being a part of PSIA-AASI programing.

Critical Conversations Forge Progress
In my Fall 2020 column in 32 Degrees, I touched on how the Women’s Initiative Task Force and DEI Task Force are so instrumental in challenging our organization’s status quo to forge greater understanding for how we can support different demographics of our membership through snowsports education. I’ve enjoyed listening to and learning from the passionate members of both groups. Their conversations affirm that inclusion in education and taking a just and equitable approach to learning – and teaching – benefits us all as we strive to create safe, fun, and welcoming environments for all members and all guests.

I’ll be the first to admit these conversations can be uncomfortable. For example, it can be hard to call out – or recognize in yourself – instances of implicit bias. But having these critical conversations at all levels of leadership is a good thing, and when it’s done correctly it will move our organization forward. PSIA-AASI’s Learning ConnectionSM – particularly the people-skills fundamentals – provides something of a roadmap (see sidebar).

Like any new skill we learn on the hill, nothing comes smoothly or instantly. How often do we hear that the new move we teach to a student doesn’t feel comfortable to them? Learning a new skill only begins to feel comfortable when we put in the time and practice to make it automatic. Similarly, comfort within an organizational context only comes from spending time on critical conversations and becoming more aware of all facets of the topic.

Leaders Participate in DEI Webinar Series
In her column on page 4, PSIA-AASI Board Chair Eliza Kuntz describes a webinar series that gave examiners and clinicians tools they’ll use to enhance your understanding of new certification standards in the works. Similarly, I’m excited to share the news that leaders from all corners of PSIA-AASI (a group of more than 280 people, including national and division board members, PSIA-AASI National Team members, national task forces, and staff) will participate in a three-part, interactive webinar series on DEI training – which will help inform programming the association develops for you.

Together, when we commit to advancing our personal awareness on these topics, we commit to driving organizational awareness and unity through education. This will truly make a difference that’s felt and seen, not just at our leadership level but throughout our entire membership.