

APRIL 15, 2024

THE PSIA AASI WOMEN'S SUMMIT REPORT

IN-SPIRE!2024



The CSIA-AMSC

WOMEN IN SKIING COMMITTEE REPORTS

ATTENDING THE WOMEN'S SUMMIT

This season your Women in Skiing Committee sent a representative at the PSIA-AASI Women's Summit, an annual event organized by their Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion.

The Summit, which took place at Solitude Mountain near Salt Lake City, Utah, provided an excellent opportunity for our committee to learn best practices for increasing gender diversity in the Snow Sports professions as well as to forge new ties with the PSIA AASI Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion for future joint projects and amplifying impact.

PSIA - AASI

The Professional Ski Instructors of America and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI) boasts a vibrant community of over 33,000 members. Established in 1961, PSIA-AASI has been at the forefront of Snow Sports instruction and education for 63 years, continually evolving to meet the dynamic needs of winter sports enthusiasts. Their mission: “PSIA-AASI supports its members, as a part of the ski and snowboard industry, to develop personally and professionally, create positive learning experiences, and have more fun.”

The PSIA-AASI offers members a structured pathway for professional development and certification. With a commitment to advancing the art and science of teaching Snow Sports, PSIA-AASI offers certification across three progressive levels, with an additional prestigious designation known as Trainer. This designation parallels what is recognized as Level 4 in our organization and represents a pinnacle of expertise and knowledge in Snow Sports instruction.

At the heart of PSIA-AASI's is the National Team, which mirrors the role of our Demo Team. This elite group of Instructors sets standards and showcases instructional techniques across various disciplines, serving as role models and leaders within the instructional community across the United States.

PSIA-AASI embraces a wide range of Snow Sports disciplines under its umbrella, including Alpine, Telemark, Cross Country, Snowboard, and Adaptive Snow Sports. This inclusive approach ensures that instructors are well-versed in a variety of skiing and riding styles, catering to a diverse clientele with different needs and interests.

A cornerstone of PSIA-AASI's teaching philosophy is [the Learning Connection Model \(LCM\)](#). This innovative framework emphasizes a holistic approach to instruction, integrating technical skills, teaching abilities, and interpersonal skills. The Learning Connection is designed to enhance the effectiveness of instructors by focusing on these core competencies, ensuring a well-rounded and impactful learning experience for students.

PSIA-AASI WOMEN'S COUNCIL FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The PSIA-AASI Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion WCEI is a dynamic force within the organization, dedicated to fostering diversity and promoting equality within the Snow Sports industry. The council actively works to dismantle barriers to participation and advancement to make Snow Sports Instruction more inclusive and representative of all who wish to participate.

For those interested in learning more about the influential work of the PSIA-AASI Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion, or in exploring ways to contribute to their initiatives, a wealth of information and resources can be found on their dedicated webpage, [Women in Snow Sports](#). This portal offers insights into their ongoing projects, upcoming events, and opportunities for involvement, providing a platform for advocacy and change in the Snow Sports industry.

The PSIA-AASI and its Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion are pivotal in shaping the future of Snow Sports, making it more accessible, enjoyable, and equitable for all. Their commitment to excellence in education and equity in participation exemplifies the progressive spirit that drives the Snow Sports industry forward.

More about the PSIA AASI Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion. Want to dive deeper into the groundbreaking work of the PSIA-AASI Women's Council for Equity and Inclusion? Explore their initiatives and find out how you can get involved by visiting [Women in Snow Sports](#).

REFLECTING ON THE SUMMIT EXPERIENCE

The Summit brought together a diverse group of women from across the Snow Sports disciplines—including Alpine Skiing, Snowboarding, Nordic (Telemark & Cross Country), Patrol, and Guiding sectors. The assembly was a melting pot of ideas and experiences,

enriched by the presence of top trainers, members of the National Team, and several influential guest speakers.

Solutions-Oriented Learning and Inspiration

This event was emphatically solutions-focused, with sessions meticulously designed to inspire women to strive toward and achieve their goals. Themed sessions provided invaluable insights and strategies aimed at empowering attendees to push their limits and aspire to new heights within the Snow Sports arena.

Challenges in Gear

A significant topic of chairlift discussion was the challenge of finding high-performance gear that fits women properly. Observing that most of the women were using high-performance unisex gear sparked extensive conversations about the scarcity of suitable options tailored for women. This gap in the market highlights a specific and unmet need among Women Snow Sports Instructors, a niche audience whose gear requirements are not currently being satisfied by the industry. In surveys conducted by both WIS and WCEI, gear specific concerns have been identified by members.

Empowerment Through Community and Awareness

One of the key takeaways from the summit was the emphasis on leveraging our strengths to support and elevate other women. The summit underscored the importance of adopting a 'pay it forward' approach through relationship-building strategies such as mentorships, allyship, and sponsorship. Such initiatives are crucial for increasing the representation of women in leadership roles within the Snow Sports community.

Addressing Bias to Foster Equity and Inclusion

A major focus of the summit was the impact of bias—both implicit and explicit—on our actions and attitudes. Through sessions dedicated to self-reflection and understanding these biases, the summit provided tools for personal growth and development. This self-awareness is essential for anyone looking to advocate for and exemplify gender equity and inclusion, setting a standard for others in the industry to follow.

Women of Winter: A Beacon of Inspiration

I also had the opportunity to learn about the "[Women of Winter](#)," an organization with a compelling mission to "inspire and empower women and girls to get outside, to be courageous, and to boldly embrace and pursue their dreams by carving their own paths in the mountains and in life." This message resonated deeply with my own experiences and the overall spirit of the summit.

The summit was not only a gathering of like-minded professionals but also a hub of strategic thought and personal empowerment. It provided us with both the tools and the inspiration needed to forge ahead in our respective journeys, challenging the status quo and contributing to a more inclusive and equitable Snow Sports Industry.

ENVISIONING FUTURE COLLABORATIONS: CSIA-AMSC AND PSIA-AASI

The recent participation of a representative from the Women in Skiing (WIS) at the PSIA-AASI summit has opened up exciting avenues for networking and potential collaboration. This interaction was not only fruitful in terms of immediate connections made but also sparked a series of preliminary discussions about what future partnerships might look like.

Exploring Potential Collaborations

While the full scope of potential collaborations is still in the ideation phase, the possibilities being considered are promising. One of the key areas identified for potential collaboration is the sharing of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) best practices within the Snow Sports professions. Both organizations have valuable experiences and insights that, when shared, could benefit the wider community and enhance our respective efforts in promoting inclusivity.

Furthermore, collaboration on research initiatives related to Snow Sports could greatly enhance our understanding and implementation of effective practices across both organizations. It's important to note, however, that these ideas are currently being explored and are not yet finalized. Our discussions are ongoing, and these opportunities

are being carefully considered to ensure they align with the strategic goals of both CSIA-AMSC and PSIA-AASI.

Potential Initiatives Under Discussion

Among the exciting ideas discussed were several initiatives that could directly benefit members of both organizations:

- **Mentorship Programs:** We are discussing how to share information and potentially harmonize our approaches to facilitating successful mentorship programs. This exchange of knowledge could prove invaluable in strengthening the mentorship structures within each organization.
- **Cross-Promotion of Women's Summits:** There is a possibility being considered for cross-promoting our respective Women's Summits. This could increase attendance and diversity of perspectives at each event, enriching the experience for all involved.
- **Inter-Organizational Summit Attendance:** Perhaps one of the most stimulating ideas is opening up avenues for members of each organization to attend both summits. This would not only enhance networking opportunities but also foster a deeper understanding and collaboration between CSIA-AMSC and PSIA-AASI members.

Cautious Optimism for the Future

It's important to emphasize that these discussions and the ideas generated are still in the preliminary stages. While they are exciting and hold significant potential, they are not yet definite plans. We are committed to exploring these ideas thoroughly to understand their feasibility and potential impact.

Exciting possibilities are indeed in the pipeline for upcoming seasons, but we approach these with a careful consideration of practicality and mutual benefits. We look forward to providing updates as these ideas develop further and move closer to realization, ensuring that any expectations are grounded in carefully laid plans and shared commitments.

The CSIA-AMSC

WOMEN IN SKIING COMMITTEE REPORTS

THE COACHES AND SPEAKERS WHO INSPIRED US

Unfortunately it was not possible for one representative to attend all of the speaker sessions on offer at this year's Summit but below is a description of each session that was attended and what was learned.



CHRISTINE BAKER

VICE PRESIDENT OF MOUNTAIN SPORTS AT BIG SKY RESORT

Participating in Christine Baker's ski training group at Big Sky Resort was a truly enriching experience, both professionally and personally. As Vice President of Mountain Sports and a PSIA Trainer, Christine's leadership qualities shone brightly from day one.

Being grouped with nine other women, each a seasoned expert in ski instructing and various facets of the skiing industry—from top-level certified instructors and ski resort executives to leaders of organizations and former competitive athletes, including Olympians—was an incredible opportunity.

Christine's approach to coaching was particularly transformative. Her ability to read the individual needs of each skier in her group stood out. Unlike traditional sessions where feedback is given automatically, Christine asked about my preferences for receiving feedback, which I found refreshing and empowering. This approach aligns with the PSIA-AASI's Learning Connection Model, which prioritizes the learner's needs and enhances the overall guest experience by tailoring feedback and interactions.

The knowledge exchange extended beyond skiing techniques. Chairlift chats provided insights into the philosophical, cultural, and methodological aspects of PSIA-AASI, drawing interesting comparisons and distinctions with the CSIA-AMSC. Christine's continual check-ins on our needs and the adaptability of the training sessions ensured that everyone could tailor their learning experience according to their personal and professional growth needs.

A memorable aspect of the training was the symbolic wooden button given during the indoor sessions, which served as a pledge to support other women in their career paths in the ski industry. I committed to supporting the women of the CSIA-AMSC on my button, reinforcing the spirit of mentorship and community that Christine fostered throughout our time together. This experience was not only a testament to the power of expert coaching but also to the supportive network that women in the ski industry can build together.

[Christine's LinkedIn Profile.](#)



DR. PAMELA LEMONS

DARE TO BE EXTRA

Dr. Pamela Lemons is a distinguished Sports Psychology Consultant with a rich and eclectic educational background, holding degrees in music, Counseling, and Sports Psychology. A native of Wisconsin, she now operates out of Park City, Utah, where she continues to engage in her passion for music alongside her professional pursuits. Dr. Lemons is a Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) and has played a significant role as an Olympic sport psychology consultant, particularly with various specialties on the US Ski Team. Her professional experience extends to working with a broad spectrum of disciplines, assisting not only athletes but also musicians and corporate executives to enhance their performance through mental training. Dr. Lemons is also known for her contributions to academia, having taught various psychology courses across the United

States and Europe, and she is actively involved in delivering specialized presentations on a multitude of topics both domestically and internationally ([PAMELA J. LEMONS](#)) ([Association for Applied Sport Psychology](#)) ([PAMELA J. LEMONS](#)).

Dr. Pamela Lemons delivered an impactful talk titled "Dare to be Extra," where she shared personal anecdotes and professional insights to inspire her audience, to transcend conventional expectations. She recounted an enlightening moment when her employer commended her for always striving to be 'extra'—not just doing what was required, but consistently going beyond expectations. This, her employer explained, set her apart as someone extraordinary.

Dr. Lemons used this narrative to encourage her audience to adopt a similar mindset. Her key message was about pushing beyond the norm in productivity and performance, challenging stereotypical roles, and not diminishing one's ambitions to appease others. She emphasized that such efforts could lead to remarkable achievements and recognition.

Significantly, Dr. Lemons highlighted statistics underscoring the importance of mentorship among women: 67% acknowledge its value, yet only 10% actually have mentors. This gap illustrates a critical area for development that can empower more women to excel in their fields.

Furthermore, she discussed the workforce composition, correcting an initial figure to a 70:30 split between men and women, underscoring the ongoing gender disparity in many professional environments. Dr. Lemons also encouraged the celebration of effort as much as success, recognizing that acknowledging and overcoming biases and cultivating a growth and outward mindset—seeing beyond oneself—can profoundly impact personal and professional development.

Learn more about Pamela Lemons Sports Psychology, PhD and Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) at [Dig Deep Eliteam Online](#). [Pamela's LinkedIn Profile](#).



LESLIE BAKER-BROWN

ON WOMEN-SPECIFIC SKI GEAR

Leslie Baker-Brown, the Global Leader of the Women 2 Women Project and North American Marketing Manager at Blizzard Tecnica, delivered an enlightening presentation on advancements in ski gear tailored for women. With over 30 years at Blizzard Tecnica, Baker-Brown provided valuable insights drawn from her extensive experience in the field.

The Women 2 Women initiative was founded in 2015. The Women 2 Women project is a dedicated department focusing on designing ski gear specifically for women. This initiative underscores Blizzard Tecnica's commitment to understanding and addressing the unique needs of female skiers. Design Innovations in Women's Skis

Baker-Brown highlighted several key design features that distinguish women's skis from men's:

1. **Material Construction:** Women's skis are engineered to be stiff underfoot with less metal than men's skis, allowing them to bend more uniformly and suit the specific biomechanical needs of female skiers.
2. **Binding Placement:** The bindings on women's skis are set more forward. This adjustment enhances tip engagement, making it easier for women to initiate turns due to their center of gravity.
3. **Ski Lengths:** Women's skis typically start at shorter lengths, catering to the general height and strength characteristics of female skiers.

Customization for Optimal Performance

A unique aspect of Blizzard Tecnica's approach is the customization of skis based on their length. The core stringers, or strips of wood running the length of the ski, are tailored for each specific ski length. This ensures that the skis are not merely smaller versions of men's skis ("shrink and pink") but are optimized for the skier's weight, height, and skill level, providing a significantly better skiing experience for women.

Leslie Baker-Brown emphasized the importance of demoing skis to find the perfect match for one's individual skiing style and physical attributes. She advised:

- **Testing Multiple Pairs:** Skiers should try multiple pairs of the same ski in different lengths and observe differences in performance.
- **Evaluating Performance Characteristics:** It's crucial to note how the skis perform in various conditions, such as stability at speed, edge hold on steep slopes, ease of turn initiation, and overall fatigue levels after skiing.
- **Engaging with Representatives:** Speaking with brand representatives about one's experiences can reveal insights into the design elements that influence ski performance.

The key takeaway from Leslie Baker-Brown's presentation is that women should not rely solely on ski shop recommendations but should actively test different skis to become more knowledgeable consumers. This approach will enable them to find skis that truly enhance their skiing experience, tailored to their personal needs and abilities.

[Leslie's LinkedIn Profile.](#)

Watch Leslie's CSIA-AMSC Equipment Talk from Tuesday February 10, 2021 Zoom Recording (available to everyone) with passcode MMhOynS^ : [click here](#)



ANN SCHORLING

GENDER EQUITY IN SNOW SPORTS INSTRUCTION INTERSKI KEYNOTE ADDRESS Q&A

Gender Bias in Assignment of Lessons

Ann Schooling began her address by highlighting the pervasive nature of gender bias in Snow Sports instruction, originating from supervisors, fellow instructors, and clients. She pointed out that implicit bias often leads to the binary assignment of tasks, where physically demanding lessons are typically assigned to men and emotionally challenging lessons to women. This allocation not only stereotypes gender roles but also restricts professional growth opportunities for women, relegating them to lower-level lessons and consequently, lower compensation. Schooling offered a practical solution for handling guest requests that might perpetuate these biases. By asking clients to discuss the skills

and behaviors they expect from instructors rather than specifying a gender, biases are mitigated, leading to rare pushback and promoting a more inclusive approach to instructor assignment.

Impact of Skewed Group Proportions

The keynote also delved into the dynamics of group composition, especially when minority groups represent less than 30% of the total. In such scenarios, the majority often subconsciously expects the minority to conform to their norms. This assumption forces the minority into a survival mode where they suppress their unique perspectives and adopt the majority's opinions. This dynamic leads to stereotype threats, lower performance, and increased disengagement among the minority group members, exacerbating the challenges they face in diverse working environments.

The Role of Gender Balance and Affinity Training

Schooling discussed the implementation of affinity training at Big Sky, which has been notably successful. These training sessions are designed to foster community and professional development among high-level skiers but can be challenging to execute effectively. They are most beneficial when participants at the top of the skill pyramid are of the same gender, which ensures peer support and shared professional growth experiences. However, such programs must be critically evaluated to understand whom they benefit—whether they support community building, professional development, or both, and crucially, if they include the right demographic to ensure meaningful progress.

Influence of Role Models, Mentors, and Advocates

A crucial part of promoting gender equity in Snow Sports instruction is ensuring the presence of accessible role models, mentors, and advocates. These individuals play a pivotal role in inspiring and guiding less experienced instructors, offering them a tangible pathway to success and the encouragement needed to advance in their careers.

Legal and Best Practice Recommendations for Affinity Training

Schooling raised a critical question regarding the legality and efficacy of affinity training sessions that exclude men or other groups, noting that such exclusions are illegal in the U.S. under Title IX. Her recommendation for Snow Sports schools is to develop training sessions focused on best practices for teaching and training women, rather than implementing gender-exclusive groups. This approach not only complies with legal

standards but also enriches the professional development environment by focusing on inclusivity and equity in instructional methods.

Ann Schorling is a Facilitator of Leadership Development and Social Change | Alpine National Team Member at PSIA-AASI.

[Link to her Interski Talk](#)

[Ann's LinkedIn Profile.](#)



HEIDI ETTLINGER

DESIGNING, BUILDING, AND ENHANCING WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING

Data Is A Weapon For Understanding and Addressing Disparities

Heidi Ettlinger, a notable figure in PSIA-AASI, founder of the Women's Summit, and President of the Women's Advisory Group, delivered a comprehensive presentation on optimizing women's programming in Snow Sports. Ettlinger, as described by Ann Schorling, employs data meticulously to track and improve women's involvement in Snow Sports. Schorling emphasizes that data acts as a "weapon" for understanding and addressing the disparities in lesson assignments and the broader scope of women's participation in Snow Sports.

Barriers and Instructional Dynamics

Ettlinger's presentation highlighted the various barriers that women face as participants in Snow Sports lessons, including the type of instruction received, safety concerns, comfort, and the camaraderie within the sporting environment. She pointed out the importance of instructors being sensitive to these factors and actively working to create accommodations that cater to women's specific needs and expectations. This approach helps in fostering an environment where women can learn effectively, free from stereotype threats and other inhibitions.

Program Design and Implementation

In her strategy for enhancing women's programming, Ettlinger advocates for viewing the lesson experience as an ecosystem. This involves assessing every aspect of the participant's experience, from gear evaluation before hitting the snow to the overall goals for participation. She stresses the importance of creating women-only programs where participants can network and share experiences, significantly enhancing the value and impact of learning in a gender-specific group.

Cultural and Social Considerations

Ettlinger also delves into the hypothetical scenario of ski areas and services designed by women, encouraging a reimagination of these spaces to better accommodate and appeal to female participants. She discusses the broader demographic trends and gender splits within Snow Sports organizations globally, pointing out the minimal progress in increasing women's participation over the past 23 seasons—a mere 3% increase. Such insights underscore the role of socialization in shaping how men and women are instructed in these settings.

Retention and Participation

Focusing on beginner retention rates, which have only slightly improved from 15% to 18%, Ettlinger makes a strong business case for investing in professional development for women. This approach not only equips them to become better educators but also enhances retention and participation rates among women in Snow Sports.

Influence of Role Models and Media

Drawing parallels with the "Scully Effect" from the television series "The X-Files," which inspired a generation of women to enter science fields, Ettlinger underscores the

profound impact that visible role models and supportive leadership positions can have. She advocates for the Snow Sports industry to leverage marketing and communications effectively to showcase women's participation and success, thereby inspiring more women to join and remain in the field.

Through a data-driven and culturally sensitive approach, Heidi Ettlinger's presentation articulates a clear pathway towards enhancing women's programming in Snow Sports. By addressing instructional needs, fostering supportive environments, and leveraging the influence of role models, the industry can move closer to achieving gender equity and equality, thereby enriching the overall Snow Sports community.

Resources referenced in talks by Heidi Ettlinger:

Interview with [Greg Normand Inside Great Lakes Skiing Season One Show No. 6.](#)

[Pen State University - partnership](#) so that Instructors educational pathway can get credit for post secondary.

[Here hold my kid](#) - Movie

[Heidi's LinkedIn Profile.](#)

[Startup: Gearing to Go](#) - Heidi's company.

PANNEL DISCUSSION



(Top left) Carol Levine 2 term National Team Member and Team Selector. (Top right) Amber Broadway - CEO Solitude Mountain. (Middle Left) Kelly Pawlak - CEO NSAA. (Middle right) Peggy Hiller - CEO PSIA/AASI. (Bottom Left) Stephanie Cox - CEO NSP. (Bottom Right) Dee Byrne - President and COO of Palisades Tahoe.

ON LEADERSHIP, IMPLICIT BIAS, EQUIPMENT AND EVERYTHING ELSE

Implicit bias in the context of women in the snow sports industry refers to the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding and actions, often leading to unequal treatment of women in this field. These biases can manifest in various ways:

Employment and Opportunities: Women might receive fewer job offers, promotions, or sponsorship opportunities compared to their male counterparts. Key positions in management, coaching, and other high-profile roles may be predominantly offered to men, under the assumption that they are more capable or suitable.

Media Representation and Coverage: Women in snow sports might receive less media attention, which affects public perception and can limit their visibility and commercial opportunities. When they are covered, the focus might be on their appearance or personal lives rather than their athletic performance or achievements.

Equipment and Investment: There might be less investment in developing high-quality sporting equipment tailored for women. This can affect performance and safety, subtly reinforcing the notion that women's sports are less important or demanding.

Perception of Skill and Competence: Implicit biases might lead to assumptions that women are inherently less skilled or serious about snow sports. This can affect the level of coaching and training they receive and the seriousness with which their ambitions are taken.

Wage Disparity: Similar to other industries, implicit biases can contribute to wage disparities, where women might be paid less than men for similar roles and achievements within the snow sports industry.

Addressing these biases involves raising awareness, promoting equal opportunities, and actively working to change the culture within the industry to be more inclusive and equitable.

What was fascinating about this conversation was these women sharing their lived experience becoming leaders in our industry. Amber Broadway shared the story of how she felt like she needed to conceal the fact that she was breast feeding to her new prospective employer during her interview. Stephanie Cox shared a really great tip about how to be assertive in meeting without being perceived as bossy. (Balancing likability with competence). Say “excuse me” to interrupt conversation and make your point. They talked about times when they did not support other women and what they learned from that experience. Heidi Ettlinger made the point that all of these women are in the same office building but this was the first time they had been on a stage together.

AT THE END OF THE DAY WERE ALL SNOW PROS

I was invited to join the panellists along with the Coaches for dinner. I felt so honoured to be there. The conversation started serious but quickly relaxed to become about sharing stories of days working as Ski Instructors at various resorts across the continent and around the world.

A theme of the event was the idea that each of us can inspire a fellow female colleague by being the best example we can be. We inspire others when we strive for our personal best. More profoundly the Summit was about creating an experience where women from across the country could gather and experience a sense of comrade while improving skills, learning, and being inspired by one another. Attending the PSIA AASI Women's Summit was definitely one of the most incredible experiences I have had to date as a Ski Instructor. I can't wait for the next opportunity to re:connect with the amazing women I met there. I suspect I will as our's is a small world of people who are passionate about the art of sliding on snow.

By: Christine Davidson

BC Representative, Women In Skiing Committee