



# WESTERN SNOW CONFERENCE

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July 22, 2020

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On behalf of the Western Snow Conference (WSC) Executive Committee, and as the Chair of the WSC, I first want to acknowledge that we at the WSC have failed to foster a fully anti-racist, diverse, inclusive and welcoming culture for everyone in the WSC community. Secondly, I also must acknowledge and commit to a better understanding of the effects of ongoing violence against Black people in our community and across the United States.

The Western Snow Conference recognizes its participation in a racially unjust system. The Western Snow Conference attendance and Executive Committee has historically been composed largely of white men, and we have passively accepted the lack of diversity among our professional associates. For many years at our annual banquet, the WSC carried on a tradition that was inadvertently demeaning to people of color -- presenting the 'El Farsante Award' to an attendee who made an embarrassing error. The award, established in 1953, had a Spanish name and consisted of an unflattering statue of a Mexican man on skis. In 2019, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to retire the award 'without fanfare', i.e. without acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

We take this moment to start a new chapter in the history of our organization. To begin, we formally apologize for the El Farsante award. We affirm that Black Lives Matter. We stand in solidarity with those protesting police violence against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). We commit to dismantling prejudice and discrimination within the Western Snow Conference as well as within our home agencies, companies, and institutions. We commit to fostering racial and gender equality. We commit to helping develop and support an anti-racist scientific community, as indicated by our signing of the Geosciences Call to Action: <https://notimeforsilence.org/>. We will continue to work to understand the connections between racial justice and environmental justice, especially as it pertains to our work with snow.

We recognize that statements are not sufficient, and that action is needed in order to make the aforementioned commitments a reality. We will establish a new standing committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion to establish strategic plans to work toward the commitments we have made. At its next meeting, the WSC will discuss establishing scholarships for BIPOC participants, formalizing outreach to tribes and BIPOC-serving schools, universities, and other community groups, establishing mentoring programs to serve participants from underrepresented groups, reassessing award names and awardee selection, and diversifying the Executive Committee.



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We make these commitments with earnestness and humility, recognizing that we are not experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and have minimal organizational experience with marginalized communities. We welcome feedback and ongoing conversations regarding how the Western Snow Conference can support marginalized communities and contribute to anti-racism in the geosciences more broadly.

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