

Over the years, PDXWIT has been many things to many people. The community-at-large certainly saw the value of its mission of helping to create a better tech industry by creating access, dismantling inequities and fueling belonging. That will always ring true for this organization's legacy. PDXWIT evolved through community and provided a safe, fun and welcoming space for anyone willing to help create a better tech industry. The PDXWIT team and volunteers outperformed and outdid themselves in keeping our mission alive, and for them, I am forever grateful and in awe of them. And our ardent sponsors and supporters provided the financial resources that allowed us to deliver the programming and services that our community needed.

But times have most definitely changed.

Nonprofit organizations go through a lot in one year. My time with PDXWIT has shown me that funding and fundraising is key to survival of any nonprofit organization. As a leader, I spoke, I watched, I listened, I learned, and at times frustrated to hear words like, "We don't have a budget for you," or "It's not a good time," or "We love your work, we just can't donate," or even worse, chase down a nominal donation only to be ghosted for three months on end.

Equity and inclusion work, it seems, was merely a passing fad to countless organizations in the tech industry. Yes, we know the economy is different now. Yes, we know it is an election year. No, it does not mean the work of equity and inclusion ends. It ends when nonprofit organizations ask for financial support to continue serving its community and mission, and the response is crickets.

And so it is with PDXWIT. We have reached our end.

I was the number two employee for PDXWIT back in 2018 with five hours on the books for them as a very small grassroots organization. Back then, grants gave me and the organization the opportunity to spread our wings and do more good for this community.

Grow. Help. Be a resource. Be a champion for good. Be.

I was proud back then, and proud still to have been part of all the work that this organization has put forth for this community. I am also sad that it is coming to an end. But, I will celebrate knowing that we've provided this community with:

- Over 1200 mentor/mentee matches
- Supported over 40 #InvestingInYou Scholarships
- Grown its membership to over 8,000 people
- Provided assistance to various other nonprofit organizations over the years
- Facilitated over 400 programming events since 2011

With the passing of the board vote to dissolve PDXWIT, steps include informing our staff, volunteers, vendors and sponsors and making sure that PDXWIT's team has a soft landing and that operational commitments are carried out. The wind down of PDXWIT is expected to conclude by March.

I am gutted as the person leading this organization to have to say goodbye. For now. I encourage all of you, our community-at-large, to continue fighting for equity and inclusion. Take what you have learned and experienced from PDXWIT with you and pay it forward in your networks.

Until then, thank you for your support and I hope to work with you in future endeavors.