CSJ Mission Education Committee
Monday, August 17, 2026; 1:30-3:00 p.m.
In-Person: 2nd Floor Conference Room, CSJ Admin Center

Meeting Minutes

Present: Marilaurice Hemlock, CSJ-C; Andrea Pearson Tande, CSJ-C; Kris Smyth; Sandy Vargas; Karen Zeleznak, CSJ-C

Staff: Andree Aronson; Matt Halley; Lacy Sietsema

Excused Absence: Kevin Berg; Jill Underdahl, CSJ

The CSJ Mission Education Committee convened on Monday, August 17, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.

DEI Statement: Andrea read the DEI statement.

Spiritual Centering: Led by Kris.

Agenda: The agenda was presented for approval. Hearing no changes or additions, Kris moved and Sandy seconded to approve the agenda. All present members voted to approve.

Minutes: The June minutes were presented to the committee for approval. Hearing no changes or corrections, Kris moved and Sandy seconded to approve the minutes. All present members voted to approve.

Introductions
The committee welcomed Marilaurice Hemlock onto the committee.

Chairs Wishes for the Committee
Andrea and Kris explained that the CSJ Mission Education Committee plays an important and unique role for Accola. Members discussed how it can bring the spirit of this committee to Accola and the wider community. Sandy emphasized the importance of generative discussion and stated that the question of mission comes up often at a Board level. This committee could outline/give/have a discussion with Board members to make sure the CSJ spirit is there.

Accola Update
Matt reported several leadership transitions and program updates across the organization:

Learning In Style has welcomed its new director, Cavan, who comes from adult education through Minneapolis schools and is eager to grow LIS and expand outreach. Elisabeth is moving into a support role and preparing onboarding. Summer enrollment was nearly double last summer's, reflecting recovery after COVID-related declines and Elisabeth's work rebuilding the program.

Sarah's… an Oasis for Women recently welcomed its new director, Sara, from CVT. She is bringing renewed energy to the program, helping staff feel heard, and has strong community connections.

Wisdom Ways (WW) had strong summer programming, though overall attendance was low. The environmental program aspect was well attended, but leadership leave has created challenges. The

board is reviewing program outcomes, attendance, and WW's future direction. Matt emphasized the need to balance discernment with action as the organization considers how to carry forward the CSJ charism and legacy.

Committee members discussed how organizational decisions may create tension, especially because Accola is now separate from the sisters and resources have changed as province start-up funds decline. They emphasized the importance of communication with the wider CSJ community and ensuring the CSJ spirit remains central.

Andree noted that the organization is laying thoughtful groundwork and intends to do its work well. Matt added that while resources are shrinking, fundraising is going well. The group discussed the nature of WW's future because of its long history as the spiritual arm of the community and the continued presence of its founders.

Walk Through & Discuss Committee

Bylaws: The committee reviewed its charter and bylaws. It was suggested that stronger language be used to reflect that monthly meetings take place and to highlight an intentional commitment to the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Kris suggested that all Accola committees should include a Consociate or a CSJ, which would ensure that the CSJ spirit grounds all committee work. Language focused around helping, supporting, and providing resources was discussed. The bylaws will be revised based on feedback and be reviewed at the September committee meeting. This will allow the committee to organize its FY27 goals/work plan. Sandy suggested that one goal can be gathering committee feedback on Board discussion topics. Andrea suggested the possibility of the committee contributing to new Board member onboarding. It was noted that the Nomination and Governance Committee is working on an onboarding document which will be shared with the CSJ Mission Education Committee.

Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lacy Sietsema, Accola