Accola Programs & Opportunities Committee
Monday, September 14, 2026; 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Karen Gervais; Mari Ann Graham; Anne Weyandt; Sandy Vargas

Staff: Andrée Aronson; Matt Halley; Tiffany Melnik

Excused Absence: Comfort Dondo; Colleen O'Malley, CSJ; Adele O'Sullivan, CSJ; Lacy Sietsema

The Accola Programs and Opportunities Committee convened online at 2:30 p.m.

Introduction: Anne welcomed new committee member Mari Ann Graham.

DEI Statement: Andree read the DEI statement.

Spiritual Centering: Anne led the committee in spiritual centering.

Minutes: The August minutes will be voted on at the October meeting.

Discussion: Wisdom Ways
Anne provided a recap regarding Wisdom Ways and its two-year journey, as well as the committee's role in affirming Wisdom Ways as part of Accola. She reviewed the challenges Wisdom Ways has encountered, particularly around audience. The Programs and Opportunities Committee has been charged with drafting a recommendation for Wisdom Ways and presenting that recommendation to the Board in October. The committee reviewed four scenarios:

1. Sunset the Entire Program
2. Reimagine Delivery Through Partnerships
3. Full Speed Ahead
4. Combination/Phased Approach

Anne asked committee members and leadership to approach this discussion in terms of audience before considering any actions. The committee discussed community engagement, partnerships, and how Accola creates partnerships with regards to spirituality and equity. It was pointed out that audience demographics have changed since the creation of Wisdom Ways. There was a discussion about how Accola honors the past (CSJ Charism) and the origins of Wisdom Ways, as well as where the world is at with regards to how people learn and tell stories. Mari Ann asked about how Wisdom Ways serves as the spiritual center for Accola and its programs. Matt explained how Wisdom Ways traditionally served program attendees and that there is opportunity for

Wisdom Ways to bring people and community together through listening and story sharing. Now, Accola is wrestling with how to better engage community and meet the needs of the time. There was a discussion about adaptability and how to increase diversity/include more people. The committee discussed challenges that are impacting the growth of Wisdom Ways and how Wisdom Ways is defined. Mari Ann stated that there is a need for grounding with regards to activism/social justice. Sandy pointed out that this is how the Wisdom Ways idea was initially conceived.

Anne asked committee members to reflect on how we can connect spirituality with activism and the possibility of shedding some aspects of its past ("bless and release") so that Wisdom Ways can move into the future. There was a discussion about additional feedback from other committees (CSJ Mission Education and Finance/Audit) that might inform which direction to move in. Andree explained to the committee how spirituality would be implemented if Wisdom Ways becomes imbedded in Advancement. The committee has instructed staff to develop a program that incorporates their priorities and provide a recommendation about a particular future direction for Wisdom Ways. This recommendation will be discussed at the October Programs and Opportunities Committee meeting and provide the basis for the Board recommendation. It was also suggested that this topic be brought up at the next Advancement Committee meeting.

Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lacy Sietsema, Accola