Integrating Sisters’ Life and Governance Committee

If you are interested in joining this committee, a link to the response form is located at the end of this document.

Goal:

The integrating committee will develop processes and structures that integrate governance, sisters’ services/administrative and pastoral functions to address the life and mission of the sisters in the Institute after the Institute Leadership Team (ILT) becomes the one elected leadership team within the Institute. The work of this committee will be based on the values articulated at members’ consultations regarding governance and sisters’ life and on the functions identified in the Constitutions regarding these areas.

Charge:

The new integrating committee will develop processes and structures that integrate governance, sisters’ services/administrative and pastoral functions to address the life and mission of the sisters in the Institute after the ILT becomes the one elected leadership team within the Institute. This committee will:

1. Develop participative structures that afford members voice and the opportunity to influence the direction of the Institute and to shape its policies in promoting the common good and in facilitating the mission (Constitutions 76). Such structures would include a description of the future ILT, the future consultative body to the ILT, how delegates are selected for the Institute Chapter, etc.
2. Develop intermediary governance structures that guarantee the rights of all and the exercise of authority with appropriate
accountability and accessibility between leaders and members and among members (*Constitutions* 77, 78).

3. Develop sisters’ services/administrative and pastoral structures and processes that interface appropriately with governance structures to support the daily needs of the sisters, promote relationships among sisters and enable the mission of the Institute.

4. Develop a Governance Plan that will provide the appropriate framework for the governance structures and processes.

The work of the committee will respond to the international and intercultural aspects of community life within and beyond the continental United States and develop processes and structures that integrate these functions across the Institute while providing appropriate scope for differentiation.

The work of the committee will be attentive to the demographic and geographic opportunities and challenges presented by what the Institute will look like in 2023 and 2033 and will develop structures that will be flexible enough to address the changes over time without further modifications to the *Constitutions*.

The work of the committee will also be informed by the ongoing learnings regarding power structures and relationships from feminist theory, our anti-racism analysis and our *Chapter 2017 Recommitment*.

The committee will be attentive to ongoing communication and engagement with members throughout its work.

**Methodology:**

Given the impact of the work of this committee on the lives of the members, this committee will need to:

1. Understand the realities of the governance, administrative and pastoral structures in the current Communities; what the sisters value in their current structures and processes; and the realities
of our geography and demographics in order to facilitate the transition from the familiar to new structures and processes.

2. Build on the assumptions and learnings regarding governance and community life already expressed by members to the previous Institute Governance Work Group and Sisters’ Life Design Team.

3. Integrate their work with other administrative functions engaged in the care of sisters and the provision of services to the sisters, especially in the area of Health and Wellness.

4. Engage the members and leaders in significant ongoing consultation as processes and structures are developed and provide appropriate mechanisms for ongoing feedback and adjustments.

Timeline:

- **Formation of the Committee**
  - March 2018: Integrating Sisters’ Life and Governance Committee is formed.
    - The Institute Leadership Team will provide an orientation for the work of the committee. This will include a review of the values and assumptions for our Journey of Oneness already expressed by members and leaders and the work of the previous Sisters’ Life Design Team and the Institute Governance Work Group.
  - May/June 2018: Initial meeting of the committee.

- **Work of the Committee:** Given the complexity of the committee’s charge, different aspects of the committee’s work will have different timelines. Process and structures directly related to governance will eventually need to receive Institute Chapter review and approval. Structures and processes related to Sisters’ Life that are not be linked with governance structures may have an evolving implementation.
October/November 2018: Initial consultation with membership and the Institute Leadership Conference.

January – October 2019: Clarification, revision and further consultation.

March/April 2020: Institute Chapter session to review the committee’s initial recommendations.

June 2020 – January 2023: Refinement and further review if necessary; review of required Constitutions and Directory changes; development of an Institute Governance Plan and initial implementation of changes.

June 2023: Affirmation by Institute Chapter.

Membership:
The membership of the committee will reflect representation of:

- Geographic difference
- Age cohorts
- Women of color
- Interculturality/Internationality
- Local leaders (these will represent whatever comparable positions currently exist in each Community that are directly related to the sisters’ daily needs: local coordinators, personal contacts, life and ministry coordinators, local conveners, etc.)
- Connection with Health and Wellness Development Team
- Expertise in governance
- Community Leadership Teams and ILT

The committee membership will be formed of two circles of participants:

- **A larger circle** of committee members (20-30) who engage in the initial brainstorming and serve as a consultative group, coming together at specific times to review and respond to the work of a smaller committee. Members of this committee, as well as others with specific expertise, may be asked to work on specific aspects of the committee charge.
- A **smaller circle** of committee members (4-6) who provide more focused and timely work on the input from the consultative group and from the members at large.
- The committee will be supported by a facilitator.

**Time Commitment:**

The general timeframe for this work is from May 2018 through June 2023.

The smaller circle of committee members will require a significant time commitment, beginning with an extended in-person meeting in May/June and regular in-person and virtual meetings.

The larger group will involve an initial extended in-person meeting in May/June and other periodic in-person or virtual meetings as well as the ability to respond to specific assignments and tasks.

**Accountability:**

The committee is accountable to the ILT.

**Communication:**

The ILT is responsible for the initial communication about the new group to the members.

The ILT and new committee are responsible for frequent, timely and engaging communication with the members.

**Please click here (bit.ly/integratingcommittee) to complete the online response form if you are interested in joining the new integrating committee.**