

Bill Branch, MD
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The Executive Committee conference call yesterday afternoon was a long and rambling, but thoroughly enjoyable wide ranging discussion of how we define our mission. Our impetus for this discussion was the upcoming Winter Course, where presumably we should focus "training" ourselves and our FITs to accomplish the mission. When all was said and done, I think we pretty much agreed among ourselves on the core activities and goals, though it was nothing startling or even controversial. We do want to expand the short institutional courses. This needs marketing. It may go the route of building relationships with certain institutions, like Park Nicolette and Mayo that share our values and want the kind of training we provide. Institutional Courses tend to focus on helping docs to achieve better patient satisfaction. Personal awareness is certainly a key component, but perhaps more structured than the classic Rogerian group. Maysel had success at a recent course with a type of personal awareness that started by identifying the "hot button" issues of participants, and then explored these using some techniques that I recognize from Balint-type groups. We also have identified a strengthening of the Summer Course, especially by more structured and focused workshops, and these will be offered in three tracks at the next Winter Course at Ghost Ranch. Still, we did come back to the Rogerian PA group as a central component of the Academy. Rogerian PA groups worked well as part of "integrated groups" at the three and one half day Michigan State Summer Course. They are almost always wonderful experiences at the Winter Course. We agreed, Rogerian groups prepare us for whatever more focused and structured exercises we might offer elsewhere. I personally think PA-work is at our core, and skills of all types radiate from PA as we reach out to the larger community of health care workers.

With all best wishes for the Holiday Season,
Bill Branch, President