

President's Letter,
June 2008

This year's 26th Annual National Faculty Development Course at Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL was perhaps the biggest change AACH has ever attempted in the "Summer Course" format. That is, since the revolutionary first Course was offered at Brown University in 1982. The 2008 Course focused on team building. This was more than a theme. It was the subject matter of the Course. To enhance the effectiveness of the learning, we allowed intact teams from Mayo and other institutions to form small groups with an AACH facilitator and usually an FIT as co-facilitator. There were additionally individuals who followed a more traditional AACH format.

My group was an entire MICU leadership team (medical director, three nurses, pharmacy and respiratory therapy directors) from Mayo Rochester. Luckily, I had a very able FIT to help me. But facilitating this group—who had worked together for several years and already formed patterns of interaction, especially addressing "team building" with a real, highly-functioning team--was truly a challenge. So the challenge was invigorating. I found it hard to do traditional personal awareness but facilitating honest and direct feedback was something we are good at and proved highly relevant in enhancing team-work, as well as achieving some personal awareness for the individuals.

Thankfully, our Course Director, Marla Rowe Gorosh, and our VP of Education, Maysel Kemp White, planned faculty development that included reading materials, a refresher on the theory of teams, and some highly useful and fun exercises. The wonderful AACH faculty had worked hard to create workshop tracks, including one on team building that provided me each morning with a trove of new ideas for the afternoon session with our group. At the end, I felt we had contributed to a great group of professionals who will work together on an even higher plane to deliver superb patient care. AACH succeeded in offering a new course on the cutting edge of today's practice. Many thanks to Bill Maples, Course Co-director, who first approached us about hosting a course on team building at Mayo Jacksonville.

Team-building is now in our repertory. This is not to say that we won't go back to a more traditional format for future Courses. Personally, I would like to see us vary our offerings from the traditional AACH "Summer Course" at a major medical school to new challenges related to today's healthcare--quality improvement and patient-safety come to mind, both much dependent on communication skills.

I am immensely proud of our Leaders, Faculty and FIT's for meeting the challenge of this newly-designed Summer Course.

Best wishes, Bill