

U.S. Department of Education
Staff Analysis
of the Annual Report Submitted by
The Philippines
Prepared August 2002

Background

At its March 1999 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the accreditation standards used by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as administered by the Medical Education Accreditation Council (MEAC), the accrediting body that evaluates medical schools in the Philippines, were comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States.

At its March 2002 meeting, the NCFMEA deferred acceptance of the annual report submitted by the Philippines pending receipt of additional information for review at the Committee's September 2002 meeting. The NCFMEA was unclear about the level of accreditation activity and oversight undertaken by MEAC during the time that the community had been focusing on creating a new accreditation organization, the Commission of Medical Education (CME). Specifically, the NCFMEA requested that CHED provide the following information:

- An overview of key activities and actions (accreditation reviews conducted, meetings held and accreditation decisions reached),
- A summary of any changes in the laws and regulations of the Philippines affecting MEAC's accreditation of medical schools,
- A summary of any changes in the accreditation standards, processes and procedures used by MEAC to evaluate medical schools, and
- A schedule of upcoming MEAC site visits and meetings planned through December 2002.

The Committee also requested more specific information on the transfer of accreditation authority from MEAC to the CME including:

- A copy of any legal documents transferring authority from MEAC to CME,
- A report on the progress made by CME in establishing operational policies and procedures, and

- A copy of the standards, processes, and procedures that are to be used to accredit medical schools as of the date of transfer from MEAC to CME.

Lastly, the NCFMEA also requested the opportunity for NCFMEA members to observe a CME evaluation team conduct an accreditation review of a Philippine medical school once CME is operational.

In July 2002, CHED submitted a response to the Committee's request for information that included a welcome for members of the NCFMEA to visit the Philippines and to observe the accreditation process. However, no schedule of activities was included. The information provided in the CHED response is the subject of the staff analysis that follows.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by the Philippines Commission on Higher Education, it appears to Department staff that the accreditation activities of the Philippines at this time may not be comparable to the evaluation of M.D. programs in the United States.

Staff Analysis

▪ Overview of accrediting activities (CHED and MEAC):

The Commission on Higher Education is the sole governmental body authorized to grant authority to operate a medical school in the Philippines. It does this via the issuance of a permit (registration). In its 1999 application, CHED reported that a permit is obtained only after the institution provides documentation of a self-evaluation. CHED then conducts site evaluations, and permits are renewed annually until the first class is graduated (five years). At that time, it appears that the permit (registration) is permanent barring its being rescinded by the CHED.

In its July 2002 response, CHED makes clear that it is not doing accreditation; that its role is limited to monitoring. This, according to CHED in a 1997 email message and in its 2002 response, is done via monitoring of licensure rates or via identifying potential problems that may occur (i.e., new leadership). Department staff believes that this monitoring function by CHED is ongoing.

CHED reports that MEAC was established, via a CHED initiative, to conduct accreditation in order to assist institutions with seeking eligibility to participate in the FFEL program. CHED reports that MEAC is an independent ad hoc group that conducts accreditation activities, but since

accreditation is voluntary and no schools have requested accreditation, MEAC has not conducted any accreditation activities since its accreditation of Fatima College of Medicine in 1999.

Furthermore, there appear to be conflicting statements as to the status of MEAC. In one section of its response, CHED describes MEAC as an ad hoc group that ceased to exist when its members retired. In another section of its response, CHED reports that, as of January 2002, MEAC, the defacto accrediting body for medical schools, is still MEAC. From a review of CHED reports to the Department since 1999, it appears to Department staff that MEAC, whether it still exists or not, has not been fully functional since 1999-2000.

- Summary of any changes or developments in the following areas:

Laws and Regulations:

CHED reports no changes or developments in Philippine law or regulation affecting medical education.

Standards, Processes and Procedures:

CHED reports no changes to governmental or MEAC standards, processes or procedures regarding medical education.

- Schedule for upcoming accreditation activities:

As stated above, CHED reports that MEAC has not conducted any accreditation activities since its accreditation of Fatima College of Medicine in 1999. From a review of CHED reports to the Department since 1999, it appears to Department staff that MEAC, whether it still exists or not, has not been fully functional since 1999-2000 and no accreditation activities are scheduled.

Additional information:

CHED also responded to the Committee's request for information in the following areas:

- A copy of any legal documents transferring authority from MEAC to CME

In its last report, CHED reported on the formation of the Commission on Medical Education (CME), a new entity that was created under the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) with the participation of governmental agencies, medical schools, and medical educators, to accredit the country's medical schools. The PAASCU is a private, voluntary, non-profit and non-stock corporation, independent from the government and not under the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges.

In this report CHED clarifies that the CME, like MEAC, works independently and autonomously from CHED and that CHED has no authority over the CME. Also, CHED reports that there is no relationship between MEAC and CME, and therefore, no transfer of function or authority.

- A report on the progress made by CME in establishing operational policies and procedures

As part of its July 2002 response, CHED has resubmitted its report of Spring 2002 in which it reported that the new accrediting body for medical schools, the Commission on Medical Education, was in the process of laying down the groundwork for its operations and reported on the developments and activities of the Commission on Medical Education. CHED provided a brief description of the "process of accreditation." The process entails:

- Submission of intent
- Submission of papers on seven areas of a medical program/institution
- Validation via site visits (3)
- Process to take not less than 1 year.

The CHED included with its last report a copy of the CME's "Survey Instrument for Accrediting Philippine Medical Schools (2001)" and reported that all of the country's medical schools approved this instrument, which is mostly a site evaluators' guide.

CHED also reported that individual evaluators have been identified and trained and are now "practicing" by accrediting allied health sciences schools.

CHED further stated that the CME had identified six "priority" Philippine medical schools for accreditation. The first three school accreditations were scheduled to be "piloted" beginning in the second quarter of 2002;

however, no updated information regarding the status of those pilot activities was provided. It is not clear to Department staff when CME will be fully functional.

- A copy of the standards, processes, and procedures that are to be used to accredit medical schools as of the date of transfer from MEAC to CME

As stated above, CHED did provide a copy of the CME Survey Instrument with its last report. The Survey Instrument includes explanations for judging medical schools and their “vision-mission,” and the basis upon which they will evaluate schools, which includes standards or criteria for faculty, curriculum and instruction, clinical training/service facilities, research, students, library, administration and physical plant, and other resources. The instrument also includes evaluation forms for site evaluators to use and instructions for them in evaluating medical schools. There is also an appendix listing the documentation and exhibits that the site evaluators should seek to obtain from the school.