

U.S. Department of Education  
Staff Analysis  
of the Report Submitted by the  
Cayman Islands

Prepared July 2004

Background

At its September 2002 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the standards used by the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) on behalf of the government of the Cayman Islands to evaluate the St. Matthew's University School of Medicine (St. Matthew's), a medical school located in the Cayman Islands, were comparable to those used to evaluate medical schools in the United States. The NCFMEA voted to limit this period of comparability to one year pending an opportunity for NCFMEA members and Department staff to observe an ACCM site visit at St. Matthew's to be held in March 2003. This site visit subsequently took place as scheduled.

At its September 2003 meeting, the NCFMEA formally accepted a report submitted by ACCM on behalf of the Cayman Islands and voted to extend for a period of one year the Cayman Islands' period of comparability. The NCFMEA requested that the Cayman Islands submit, by June 15, 2004, a full report on its accreditation activities involving St. Matthew's University for review by the NCFMEA at its September 2004 NCFMEA meeting. The purpose of the report was to provide the NCFMEA with a list of medical schools currently operating in the Cayman Islands and their accreditation status; a summary of key accreditation activities during the period July 2003 — June 2004; a report of any changes to laws or regulations affecting the accreditation of St. Matthew's University since July 2003; any changes since July 2003 in the accreditation standards, processes or procedures that ACCM uses to evaluate and accredit St. Matthew's University; and a schedule of ACCM meetings and a listing of on-site visits to St. Matthew's University or its clinical clerkship sites planned for July 2004 through June 2005.

Summary of Findings

ACCM has adequately responded to the NCFMEA request for information regarding ACCM accreditation activities as they relate to the Cayman Islands.

## Staff Summary

### List of medical schools operating on the Cayman Islands and their accreditation status:

ACCM reports that St. Matthew's University is the only medical school in the Cayman Islands. The school's accreditation status is discussed in the next section.

### Open/low of Accreditation Activities:

ACCM, on behalf of the Cayman Islands, submitted a report of accreditation activities during 2004 with respect to St. Matthew's. This report indicates that St. Matthew's, during the period from March 2003 through March 2004, was accredited on a one-year probationary basis pending resolution of three compliance concerns with respect to ACCM standards. The concerns listed in the report pertain to educational goals, corporate management, and college management. St. Matthew's was directed to develop appropriate internal administrative structures, redefine the role of the Board of Trustees, complete the membership of the Board, and approve and implement its bylaws. ACCM representatives visited the St. Matthew's campus in the Grand Cayman Islands on March 24-25, 2004, to observe progress in resolving these three compliance concerns.

As a result of this visit, ACCM has concluded that St. Matthew's is making satisfactory progress in addressing concerns with respect to educational goals as demonstrated by the improved evaluation of clinical students, an improved quality assessment of the teaching program during the first two years, and improved reporting of "first time" USMLE results. With respect to corporate management, St. Matthew's has established its Board of Trustees as the highest governing authority of the school. The Board was found to be composed of members who are appropriately experienced and who are operating in accordance with ACCM standards and school bylaws. With respect to college management, St. Matthews has defined the roles of its senior academic and administrative staff and has made appointments to fill these positions. The responsibilities of the Executive Dean have been separated from the Dean of Basic Sciences so that the job description of the Executive Dean is now consistent with the concept of "Chief Academic Officer" as described in ACCM standards. In addition, improvements related to the provision, supervision and evaluation of third-year teaching at hospital teaching programs was observed.

ACCM has therefore granted St. Matthew's University College of Medicine provisional accreditation for a period of three years. This accreditation is conditional upon satisfactory evidence of the following actions to be taken by the

school: 1) an annual progress report; 2) a satisfactory yearly on-site review by ACCM of the Grand Cayman campus; 3) review of the Windham, Maine, campus in 2005; 4) continued evidence of the participation and authority of the Board of Trustees; 5) continued involvement of a senior clinical faculty with a dedicated role in the management and review of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year training and continued availability of copies of evaluation reports by senior clinical staff of affiliated teaching hospitals; 6) resolution of staffing in pharmacology/therapeutics and biochemistry; 7) accurate analysis of MLE step 1 results with progress toward an 85% "first time take" in 2007; and 8) accurate information regarding the policy of student admissions, number of admissions, staff/student ratios, entrance GPAs and MCAT scores, and the attrition rate.

ACCM made five visits to clinical sites used by students of St. Matthew's University during the period of February through March 2004. The site visitors assessed facilities, student participation, student assessment, teaching evaluation, and quality of rotations. In one case, a recommendation was made to involve more teachers in didactic teaching. The following list provides dates and locations of the site visits:

Date	<u>Location</u>
March 1, 2004	Synergy Medical Education Saginaw, Michigan
March 2, 2004	Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital Windsor, Ontario
March 3, 2004	Provena St. Joseph Hospital, Elgin, Illinois
March 22, 2004	Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York
March 23, 2004	Ridgeview Institute Smyrna, Georgia

### Laws and Regulations

ACCM reports no changes to laws or regulations affecting the accreditation of St. Matthew's University since July 2003.

### Standards, Processes and Procedures:

ACCM reports no substantive changes in the accreditation standards, processes or procedures that it uses to evaluate and accredit St. Matthew's University. The agency's focus during 2004 was to provide experience to new members of the Commission with respect to the procedures and requirements of the NCFMEA.

### Schedule of Upcoming Accreditation Activities:

- The ACCM met on November 14, 2003, and again on June 4, 2004. It is scheduled to meet again on November 26, 2004.
- Site visits at the Grand Caymans campus are scheduled annually for the next three years, with the next visit tentatively scheduled in March 2005.
- A site visit to the Windham, Maine, campus of St. Matthew's University is planned for 2005.
- Visits to clinical clerkship sites will resume in November 2004 pending a favorable comparability decision by NCFMEA.

### Other Information:

It should be noted that, on April 5, 2004, the New York State Education Department notified St. Matthew's University School of Medicine that it had evaluated the school's program of medical education and had approved the St. Matthew's program for the purpose of placing students in clinical clerkships at St. John's Episcopal Hospital, Peninsula Hospital Center, and Wyckoff Heights Medical Center through November 1, 2005. Continuation of approval beyond that date is contingent upon the results of the New York State Education Department's next formal review scheduled to occur in 2005, and upon favorable review of an interim report to be submitted to its office no later than November 1, 2004.

In August 2004, Department staff received a copy of a letter of complaint from a former St. Matthew's University medical student who had attended the school at its former Belize campus. The letter alleges that the facilities at the St. Matthews' Maine campus are inadequate for second year basic science students and that program supervision and structure are nonexistent. ACCM has been reminded that NCFMEA guidelines require accrediting agencies to establish a process for receiving, investigating, and following up on student complaints that are related to accreditation standards and procedures and that the complaint may generate

questions from the Committee at the September meeting. ACCM was advised to come prepared with a timeline for investigation and resolution of the complaint.