

REPORT OF THE REVIEW TEAM
CONCERNING THE REQUEST FROM
TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
FOR AUTHORIZATION TO OFFER IN MAINE
ACADEMIC COURSES LEADING TO THE DOCTOR OF
MEDICINE (MD) DEGREE

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Introduction

Following is the report of the Review Team appointed by the Maine State Board of Education to review the application from Tufts University School of Medicine partnered with the Maine Medical Center with the purpose of providing greater access to medical education for Maine students, to address Maine physician workforce needs, and to develop innovative curricula for future physicians. To accomplish these goals TUSM and MMC have developed a program whereby upwards of 36 students per year will be admitted to the “Maine-Track” program. During the first two years students will be enrolled primarily on the TUSM campus in Boston, with the final two years conducted at the Maine Medical Center, and/or at affiliated hospitals in Maine. The Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree would be granted by TUSM.

The review was conducted in accordance with State of Maine Statute Title 20-A, and state policies 05-071-149 and 05-071-170 which set forth procedures and standards governing consideration of such an application as it applies to offerings in Maine by an out-of-state institution.

The team was comprised of RADM Len Tyler, Chair, President, Maine Maritime Academy; Dr. William Beardsley, President, Husson University; Dr. Mark Lapping, Distinguished Professor, Muskie School of Public Policy and Management, University of Southern Maine; and Dr. Heather Schwemm, MD, Internal Medicine, InterMed. The team reviewed materials provided by Tufts University School of Medicine, the Maine Medical Center and from the MMC-TUMS Program Steering Committee, and met with representatives from the Maine Medical Center and members of the MMC-TUSM Program Steering Committee. The team was supported by Harry Osgood, Higher Education Specialist for the Maine Department of Education. The hearing was observed by Ann Weisleder, Chair of the Maine State Board of Education and Marilyn Temple Tardy, a member of the Maine State Board of Education.

A. Operating Authorization and Accreditation:

Tufts University School of Medicine has been in operation since 1893 and has authority to operate and grant medical degrees in the State of Massachusetts. TUSM is fully accredited by the Liaison Committee of Medical Education (LCME), the accrediting body for all allopathic medical schools in the United States. The “Maine Track” program would be considered a separate branch campus and educational track by the LCME.

This standard is met.

B. Organization and Governance:

Tufts University School of Medicine is a well established institution of medical education with a worldwide reputation for excellence. On February 5, 2008 the University and the Maine Medical Center signed a formal agreement to establish the MMC-TUSM Program Steering Committee. The Steering committee is comprised of six members of senior management from each of the institutions and is co-chaired by the Dean of TUSM and the CEO of MMC. The TUSM Dean has ultimate academic authority for the Medical School Program. Sub-committees include a Medical School Program Curriculum Committee and a Medical School Program Admissions Committee. A clear line of authority and a process for conflict resolution has been established.

This standard is met.

C. Institutional Objectives:

TUSM in partnership with the MMC has as its mission the development and implementation of a unique medical school program. The program will feature an innovative curriculum that will offer tertiary-care and rural-based educational experiences in Maine, train exceptional physicians, and encourage graduates to pursue career opportunities in Maine.

The proposed four-year program will lead to an M.D. degree upon successful completion of the courses prescribed and degree requirements as specified in writing in the student handbook. The program will aim to develop a national model for the education of medical students while improving access for qualified Maine students. With a center of study in Maine, the degree program will assist in addressing Maine physician workforce needs in all specialties and all geographic areas. The program will further provide access to quality medical care for all Maine residents.

The program will undoubtedly attract some of our best and brightest students as the curriculum will be designed to be innovative, dynamic and forward thinking and will carry with it the prestige of the Tufts University School of Medicine name. It is the further objective of the program that students from away, once they have experienced the Maine lifestyle, will be inclined to remain in Maine to begin their practice of medicine and contribute to the well-being and the economy of the State.

This standard is met.

D. Degree Requirements:

All degree requirements are published in The Student Handbook. Students in the “Maine-Track” program will follow essentially the same required curricula as do medical students at Tufts - Boston. However, “Maine-Track” students complete the “majority of their 3rd and 4th years of medical school in Maine.” Documentation on this requirement is clearly stated in the TUSM submission.

This standard is met.

E. Admission Requirements:

Tufts University School of Medicine (TUSM) has specific standards for admission to their MD Program, including the “Maine Track”. These standards are documented on their web site (www.tufts.edu/med/admissions). Many of these standards are common to the majority of other American medical schools and are documented on the web site for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) (www.aamc.org/students).

A minimum of three years of college work is required for admission to TUSM, and strong preference is given to applicants who will earn a bachelor's degree from an American college or university. No specific major field of study is required but there are specific class requirements that must be met during those years of college work. These classes include a full-year (eight semester credits each) of introductory biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, each with laboratory work. Additional recommended courses include genetics and biochemistry. There are no specific requirements for either English or Mathematics, although course work in calculus, statistics, and computer science is recommended and applicants must possess the ability to communicate effectively in spoken and written English. Applicants may count Advanced Placement courses towards the admission prerequisites if their undergraduate school awarded credit that appears on their transcript and they subsequently took at least one higher level college course in that discipline.

Tufts University School of Medicine also has a set of Technical Standards that must be met in order to be considered eligible for the MD Program, including the “Maine Track”. These standards define the essential functions that an applicant or medical student must be able to perform in order to be admitted to TUSM, to progress satisfactorily through the program of study, and to graduate. Additional information about these Technical Standards is available on the TUSM web site.

The admission process for the MD Program, including the “Maine Track”, requires that the applicant take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). This test must be taken within the five calendar years preceding enrollment and no later than September 1st of the calendar year prior to enrollment. The applicant must complete the online application of the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), which

distributes the application to TUSM. In addition, there is a Secondary Application which is specific to TUSM which must be completed and submitted with letters of recommendation and an application fee. Application to the “Maine Track” occurs through the secondary application process. Once this process is complete, applicants are considered for a personal interview which is conducted at either the Boston campus of TUSM or at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine. Committees representing both TUSM and Maine Medical Center will review applications to the “Maine Track” the month following the interview.

The Maine Admissions Subcommittee (consisting of Maine-based and Boston-based faculty) will select up to 36 students for the “Maine Track” program. If fewer than 36 students are selected, the students for the remaining positions are recruited from the larger TUSM student class. Legal residents of the state of Maine are given preference in application to the “Maine Track”. Other applicants with strong ties to Maine (such as those who attended a Maine undergraduate institution) and those with an interest in the practice of rural medicine are encouraged to apply, as well. In addition to the standard “Maine Track” admission process there is a Maine Track Early Assurance Program for eligible students at participating institutions. The institutions currently in this program are: Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College and University of Maine (all campuses). This early assurance program offers successful applicants acceptance into the “Maine Track” of TUSM at the end of their undergraduate sophomore year. As long as accepted applicants continue to fulfill all eligibility requirements, they will be guaranteed a seat in the entering medical school class two years later as part of the “Maine Track” program.

The AAMC (whose recommendations are cited by the TUSM web site) encourages all applicants to medical school consider volunteering at a local hospital or clinic to gain practical experience in the health professions. In addition, a well rounded sampling of extra curricular activities or work experiences, both related and unrelated to medicine, are highly desirable. However, TUSM does not grant academic credit for work experience. There is no process for the transfer of credits from another institution, although TUSM does accept transfers into the second and/or third year classes when vacancies have been created by attrition. The number of seats available has traditionally been extremely limited (typically two students per year into the third year of the TUSM program).

The Student Handbook section on the TUSM web site clearly documents the criteria for refund of tuition and fees.

This standard is met.

F. Academic Programs:

The partnership between TUSM and MMC is intended to provide a unique Medical School program to enhance access to medical education for Maine students, to address Maine physician workforce needs, and to develop innovative curricula for the future physician. The TUSM-MMC joint Mission Statement describes this curriculum as one

that will “...offer both tertiary-care and rural-based educational experiences in Maine....and encourage graduates to pursue career opportunities in Maine.”

The goal of the “Maine Track” program, like that of the traditional TUSM medical program, is to train outstanding physicians to be well-prepared for entrance into a residency program. This is a progressive curriculum with new experiences and activities building on a broad and in-depth foundation of knowledge and skills in both the basic and clinical sciences.

For the “Maine Track” students, focus of the first and second years is achieving competency in the basic sciences at the TUSM Boston campus, the details of which are clearly documented in the Student Handbook and on the school’s web site. The basic sciences curriculum is accompanied by a longitudinal experience in Maine that has similar outcomes-based goals as the experiences of students at the TUSM main campus. This longitudinal experience begins in March of the first year. Maine Track students will be in Maine for two days every other week, working with Maine community physician preceptors. The students will also be completing small group and skills based sessions with Maine-based faculty in a course called “Foundations of Patient Care I.” The last month of the first year consists of a class that is taught entirely in Maine, entitled “Scientific Foundation of Social and Behavioral Medicine.” There is an optional summer program between years one and two that offers a Maine-based community service project. Maine Track students will continue to spend two days every other month in Maine during the second year, working with preceptors in the community and participating in “Foundations of Patient Care II.” These experiences are equivalent to those of the Boston-based TUSM students.

The third and fourth (clinical) years are spent primarily in Maine. The clerkship (third) year will be a traditional, discipline-specific block of rotations at Maine Medical Center: Social & Behavioral Medicine, Internal Medicine, Surgery, OB/GYN, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry. The fourth year rotations will be taught at MMC and various other sites, depending on the elective activities chosen by the student. The fourth year clerkships will be in Family Medicine, Rural Medicine, Neurology, and Emergency Medicine. There will also be an Acting Internship in Internal Medicine at MMC. Alternatively, there will be a longitudinal, integrated clerkship for the 3rd and 4th years which will be taught both at MMC and various rural sites in Maine. During their time in Maine, students in the “Maine Track” program will have access to all the resources of MMC, affiliated Maine hospitals, and community-based physicians in Maine, in addition to those of TUSM. These resources and experiences will be equivalent to those of students based at TUSM in Boston.

TUSM has a clearly documented process for evaluation of student performance, which applies equally to the Boston-based and Maine-based students. This process includes the establishment of criteria for satisfactory performance, academic probation, and conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory performance.

This standard is met.

G. Faculty:

All “Maine Track” faculty members (MMC, community, and rural hospital-based physicians) will have academic appointments with the TUSM. Guidelines and criteria for Clinical Professors of Medicine are well documented in the TUSM Faculty Handbook. Both Maine-based and Boston-based faculty will deliver the didactic portions of the curriculum, with activities in Maine being taught primarily by Maine-based faculty members. Video-conferencing with Boston faculty will be used if a specific curricular activity cannot be conducted by one of the Maine faculty members. The clinical clerkships of the third and fourth years will be taught by Maine-based faculty. In addition to didactics, teaching activities include small group discussions, clinical supervision, and working with standardized patients. Maine-based faculty members will also be involved in teaching at the Boston campus.

“Maine Track” faculty members will have access to a wide variety of faculty development opportunities, both in Boston and in Maine. Focus areas will include: educational skills development; career and leadership skills development; educational scholarship; and inter-professional faculty development in collaboration with other health professions such as nursing and pharmacy.

Evaluation of “Maine Track” faculty is equivalent to that of the Boston-based faculty. Students will evaluate all faculty involved in teaching basic science and clinical courses. Individualized data is received by all faculty involved in teaching during the first two years, and aggregate data is available for the clinical clerkships. Students also have the opportunity to identify faculty and resident physicians that they wish to highlight as role models.

This standard is met.

H. Student Services:

These include such areas as financial aid, personal counseling, tutorial assistance and career advising. These services will be provided in much the same manner as those enjoyed and utilized by students in the current MMC-UVM program. Some of these services will be provided on-site in Maine and others on the main campus.

In terms of financial aid a unique feature of the program will be half-tuition support for one year for twenty (20) students for this year’s entering class provided by the MMC Board of Trustees. Likewise, the Maine Legislature has provided significant scholarship support in the form of the “Doctors for Maine’s Future” program. This program is administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). Student health services will be provided by the MMC Family Medicine Center, just as they have been provided for UVM medical students in the past. UVM students currently receive personal counseling

support through the University of Southern Maine. It is anticipated that this same support will be provided to Tufts students via contract. Career counseling will be available to MMC-TUSM students both in Maine and in Boston through assigned faculty advisors, advisors in clinical settings, and the extension of the “Careers in Medicine” program that UVM students currently enjoy. Documentation on student services is clearly covered in the applicant’s submission.

This standard is met.

I. Library and Learning Resources:

Maine students will be provided full access to Tuft’s Tisch Library through the TUSK online system. The Maine Medical Library at MMC –with current holdings of over 5,000 volumes and subscriptions to over 500 journals – will also be available to students enrolled in the program. Databases available to students are plentiful and include Medline. There are additional smaller MMC libraries available to medical students. Finally, as Maine residents, students will have access to the library resources of the University of Southern Maine and, with that access, to collections at all of Maine’s public institutions. Documentation on library and learning resources is clearly documented in the applicant’s submission.

This standard is met.

J. Facilities:

The visiting team recognizes the existing medical school at Tufts University which is fully accredited regionally and professionally. The team is assured that Tufts has adequate facilities, health, safety and maintenance as well as appropriate learning technologies. The application attests to the fact that MMC currently has 40 clerkship students from the University of Vermont College of Medicine and smaller numbers from the Dartmouth College Medical School and the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. MMC has approximately 40-50 4th year students rotating at MMC at any one time, doing elective rotations and internships. The facilities available for these programs remain and will be expanded upon for the Tufts/MMC program. In the Dana Education Center at MMC, visited by the visiting team, there are 14 classrooms and a strategic plan for a Simulation Center with 10 exam rooms, 3 high-fidelity simulation rooms, classrooms and a skills lab. Dana Auditorium seats 235 and is available for lectures. The MMC’s Falmouth Standardized Patient Center is available for objectivity structured clinical examination and a new simulation center is scheduled for completion in 2010 at Brighton Medical Center, two miles from MMC.

This Standard is Met.

K. Financial Resources

The visiting team reviewed the financial plans and the capacity of TUSM to carry out this proposed TUSN/MMC program. The application clearly documents that Tufts University has the financial resources necessary to support its purposes, implement its Maine programs and maintain its continuity for a period of time by providing its most recent accredited financial statement and showing evidence of long-range financial planning and viability.

The proposed TUSM/MMC program will have minimal financial implications for Tufts as MMC is bearing net incremental costs. Under this plan, the visiting team believes that Tufts can fully meet all financial requirements; concurrently, MMC will pay the incremental costs of the program. The MMC cumulative net loss associated with start-up is expected to peak at \$3.5 million in year 2013 and decline thereafter. The program financials vary modestly from MMC's board approved long-range strategic financial plan but the negative variance affects MMC's operating margins by a negligible .14%. The capital amount of \$3.1 million for space and equipment is unchanged from the original plan.

This Standard is Met.

K. Telecommunications:

The program anticipates no courses delivered via telecommunications. However, the team encourages TUSM/MMC program administrators to assure "Maine Track" students have access to instruction on the uses of various telecommunications technologies given that rural-based physicians often utilize such technologies in their practices.

Review Team Recommendation:

The Review Team recommends that the Maine State Board of Education grant the Tufts University School of Medicine request, in collaboration with Maine Medical Center, to offer academic courses in Maine leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine. The period for approval would be from fall 2009 through fall 2014.