



Mark Garvin

# Q&A

Today, medical students in the United States graduate with a median level of student loan indebtedness of \$175,000, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (October 2013). In 2012, the College of Medicine took an innovative step to help students and alumni manage their debt burden and other personal financial issues by creating a new position in the Division of Medical Education: director of financial planning. Michael Clancy, MBA, CFP, CLU, was appointed to fulfill this important role, bringing a wealth of experience in financial planning, banking, insurance and investments. After 18 months at the College, Clancy reflects on the ways students and alumni are benefiting.

## Michael Clancy, Director of Financial Planning

### WHAT IS NEW OR DIFFERENT about your role at the College of Medicine?

Medical colleges typically have an individual whose focus is financial aid, not financial planning. They may offer some help with financial planning, but I don't know of any other medical college that has an individual on staff whose sole responsibility is to provide financial planning assistance. Drexel is unique and very innovative in providing this personalized resource.

### WHY DID DREXEL DECIDE TO offer this resource to students and alumni?

Drexel University President John Fry recognized the high level of indebtedness faced by medical students. He saw the benefit of having a financial planner on campus to help them understand and manage the amount of money they're borrowing, not only while attending school, but as alumni when they have to repay all their loans. As a College staff member, my interest is solely in educating people about financial planning, not in selling anything. I am an unbiased adviser with an insider's view gleaned from many years of experience in the financial planning marketplace.

### WHO IS eligible to use this resource?

I am available to assist current students and all alumni who received a degree from any program in the College of Medicine or its predecessor institutions, as well as residents and fellows in a College of Medicine program. I also help the families of students and alumni.

### WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS do students bring to you?

Budgeting and student loan repayment strategies are the most popular topics of discussion. Understanding how student loans work is very important. Students usually don't realize that their room and board is the single largest expense they have control over. We can help them reduce their total debt, for example, by suggesting that they consider a roommate to share expenses. Third- and fourth-year students are focused on loan repayment strategies as they transition from student to resident. We also discuss buying versus renting housing, disability insurance, life insurance and taxes, among other topics.

Many residents think that buying a house is out of the question because they are in so much debt. We walk them through how a mortgage might be calculated to fit a residency budget. We show them the potential savings of buying versus renting.

We explain the cost to purchase and the cost to sell if they have to relocate. We also discuss the possibility of renting the property to someone else rather than selling it. We give them the information and tools to make better financial decisions.

### HOW MANY STUDENTS have you advised so far?

I've met with about 420 people individually across all College of Medicine programs, including students, alumni and residents. Also, whenever students are required to be here for a mandatory session such as orientation or intersession, I'm on the agenda, so I give presentations to each of the class years covering topics appropriate to that year.

### HOW CAN STUDENTS and alumni talk with you?

I am available for one-on-one meetings in my office on the Queen Lane Campus. I also visit the Center City Campus once a week, and periodically travel with clerkship directors to meet individually with students and residents at the College's affiliated hospital sites. Students can also talk to me at the mandatory sessions. Students and alumni should feel free to drop by my office — the door is always open! You can also contact me at 215.991.8595 or michael.clancy@drexelmed.edu.