

# AACOM 2008-09 Academic Year Entering Student Survey Summary Report



Prepared by the Research Department  
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

## Summary

Every year, AACOM sends each college of osteopathic medicine (COM) the AACOM Entering Student Survey. The survey collects data from entering osteopathic medical students about their anticipated debt and their graduate medical education, specialty and practice plans. In 2008-09, the survey was administered in both paper and online formats according to the choice of each COM. The response rate to the survey varied. While the average medical school response rate was 71 percent, the median response rate was 87 percent largely due to the nonparticipation of two COMs.

A problem in the online survey invalidated some of the data. We have included counts in the published tables below to indicate those tabulations that include only partial data.

### ***Student Debt***

New students entering osteopathic medical school in 2008 expect their medical education debt to total \$148,896, on average, by the time they graduate. Mean expected debt for students enrolled in the six public osteopathic schools was \$139,190, lower than the mean expected debt for all students; mean debt for students enrolled in the private colleges was \$150,427.

Less than one-quarter of the first-year students had obtained scholarship funds. Proportionately, slightly more students from public schools (25 percent) than students from private schools (23 percent) had received scholarship monies. Most scholarships were awarded by the student's medical school or its parent university, but the highest dollar awards were provided by the federal government in the form of National Health Service Corps Scholarships and Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarships, both of which require service after graduation.

### ***Graduate Medical Education, Specialty and Practice Plans***

Two-thirds of all survey respondents plan on entering an osteopathic or AOA/ACGME dual-approved residency. The main reason, chosen by 46 percent of the students, for planning an allopathic or dual-approved residency is that it offers more career opportunities.

Sixteen percent of respondents consider themselves most likely to work in a primary care specialty although an identical number are undecided as to their future specialty choice. Restricting the tabulation to include only those students who have reached a decision concerning their future specialty raises the percent of respondents who consider themselves most likely to work in a primary care specialty to 19 percent. Primary care is defined as including family practice, internal medicine and pediatrics.

## 2008-09 First-Year Students' Response Rates to the AACOM Entering Student Survey

COM	First-Year Enrollment*	Surveys Received	Response Rate
ATSU/KCOM	177	162	92%
ATSU/SOMA	103	98	95%
AZCOM	258	101	39%
CCOM	181	57	31%
DMU-COM	228	76	33%
GA-PCOM	91	28	31%
KCUMB-COM	269	254	94%
LECOM	274	242	88%
LECOM-Br	166	162	98%
LMU-DCOM	168	156	93%
MSUCOM	221	192	87%
NSU-COM	239	205	86%
NYCOM	304	301	99%
OSU-COM	95	35	37%
OUCOM	120	0	0%
PCOM	271	255	94%
PCSOM	83	72	87%
PNWU-COM	75	74	99%
RVUCOM	159	71	45%
TOUROCOM	137	62	45%
TUCOM-CA	144	101	70%
TUNCOM-NV	139	41	29%
UMDNJ-SOM	110	106	96%
UNECOM	134	121	90%
UNTHSC/TCOM	185	0	0%
VCOM	192	187	97%
WesternU/COMP	222	201	91%
WVSOM	211	144	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,956</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>71%</b>

\*Source: AACOM, Annual Osteopathic Medical School Questionnaires 2008-09

## Anticipated Student Debt

(Data include all respondents to each question.)

<b>Mean Debt, First-Year Students 2008-2009</b>						
Source of Debt	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students		Public Schools		Private Schools	
	Mean Debt	Percent with Debt	Mean Debt	Percent with Debt	Mean Debt	Percent with Debt
Loans for Osteopathic Medical Education	\$148,896	88%	\$139,190	89%	\$150,427	88%
At Entry, Loans Owning for Undergraduate Education	\$15,315	51%	\$13,023	50%	\$15,675	51%
Family Loans to be Repaid by Student	\$1,467	3%	\$515	1%	\$1,618	3%
Non-Educational Debt	\$18,934	45%	\$17,677	46%	\$19,129	45%

<b>Scholarships/Grants, First-Year Students 2008-2009</b> Average scholarship or grant amount based on those who received awards from each source						
Type of Scholarship or Grant	2008-2009 First-Year Students		Public Schools		Private Schools	
	Dollar Amount	Percent with Awards	Dollar Amount	Percent with Awards	Dollar Amount	Percent with Awards
Total Scholarships/Grants	\$82,923	23%	\$67,193	25%	\$85,622	23%
National Health Service Corps Scholarship	\$143,063	1%	\$208,000	0%	\$140,465	1%
Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship	\$204,399	7%	\$217,204	6%	\$202,783	7%
State Government Scholarship/Grant	\$28,452	3%	\$14,342	4%	\$31,367	3%
Scholarship/Grant/Fellowship from Osteopathic School or its Parent University	\$13,192	9%	\$10,831	12%	\$13,693	9%
Tuition Waiver	\$27,997	1%	\$27,250	2%	\$28,595	0%
Osteopathic Association	\$14,463	2%	\$5,643	1%	\$15,698	2%
Other Sources	\$23,547	4%	\$19,282	4%	\$24,246	4%

<b>Sources of Funds for Osteopathic Medical Education, 2008-2009</b> (Percent of total cost provided by each source)			
Source	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students	Public Schools	Private Schools
Loans	77%	77%	77%
Scholarships	9%	8%	9%
Savings	3%	2%	3%
Earnings	2%	3%	2%
Parents	8%	9%	8%
Relatives	1%	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

## Specialty and Practice Plans

<b>2008-2009 First-Year Students' Immediate Post-Graduate Plans (After Internship)</b>		
Plans	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students	
Osteopathic Residency	454	47%
Allopathic Residency	217	22%
Dual AOA/ACGME Approved Residency	203	21%
Government, NHSC, Military, V.A., etc.	60	6%
Other or Undecided	37	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Reasons Given for Planning an Allopathic or AOA/ACGME Dual Approved Residency*, 2008-2009</b>	
Reason	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students
Opens More Career Opportunities	46%
Preferred Osteopathic Residency is not Available in Preferred Geographic Location	36%
Better Chance of Location in Larger Institutions	28%
Desire Specialty Training Not Available in Osteopathic Program	22%
Believe Better Training & Educational Opportunities Available in Allopathic Programs	21%
Better Chance of Being Accepted in Allopathic Program	16%
Military or Government Service Obligation	8%
Allows for ABMS Board Certification	7%
Higher Pay	7%
Other Reasons	5%
Shorter Training Period	2%

\*Data represent the percent of the 420 respondents planning an allopathic or AOA/ACGME approved residency.

<b>Long-Range Career Plans, 2008-2009</b>		
Plans	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students	
Government, NHSC, Military, V.A., etc.	65	7%
Practice in an HMO	45	5%
Self-Employed with or without a Partner	126	13%
Group or Other Type of Private Practice	406	42%
Other Professional Activity	37	4%
Undecided	292	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Specialization, 2008-2009

Specialty Plans	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students	
Allergy and Immunology	1	0.1%
Anesthesiology	37	3.9%
Critical Care	4	0.4%
Dermatology	25	2.6%
Emergency Medicine	95	10.0%
Family Practice	96	10.1%
Geriatrics	3	0.3%
Internal Medicine, General	27	2.8%
Internal Medicine, Subspecialty	70	7.4%
Medical Genetics	1	0.1%
Neurology and Subspecialties	22	2.3%
Nuclear Medicine	0	0.0%
OB/GYN and Subspecialties	40	4.2%
Ophthalmology	10	1.1%
Orthopedic Surgery	74	7.8%
Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine	1	0.1%
Otolaryngology	5	0.5%
Pathology and Subspecialties	8	0.8%
Pediatrics, General	27	2.8%
Pediatrics, Subspecialty	58	6.1%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Med.	17	1.8%
Preventive Medicine and Subspecialties	6	0.6%
Proctology	0	0.0%
Psychiatry and Subspecialties	17	1.8%
Radiology and Subspecialties	31	3.3%
Sports Medicine	33	3.5%
Surgery Subspecialties	49	5.1%
Surgery, General	37	3.9%
Urology/Urological Surgery	4	0.4%
Vascular Surgery	5	0.5%
Undecided or Indefinite	149	15.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Factors Influencing Specialty Choice Decision, 2008-2009</b>	
Factor	Mean Influence Rating* All 2008-2009 First-Year Students
Intellectual Content of the Specialty	3.1
Like Dealing with People More than Techniques	3.0
Skills/Abilities	2.9
Lifestyle	2.8
Like the Emphasis on Technical Skills	2.4
Desire for Independence	2.4
Role Models	2.3
Previous experience	2.1
Academic Environment	2.1
Prestige/Income Potential	1.9
Debt Level	1.7
Opportunity for Research/Creativity	1.7
Peer Influence	1.7

\*Students were asked to rate the importance of each of the above factors affecting their specialty choice decision. Each factor was rated on a scale of 0 to 4 (with 0 being no influence and 4 being major influence) and the average response is used above.

<b>Primary Care*, First-Year Students 2008-2009</b>			
Primary Care*	Number	Percent All	Percent Decided
Primary Care	150	16%	19%
Non-Primary Care	653	69%	81%
Undecided	149	16%	---
Total	952	100%	100%

\* Primary care includes family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics. Results are calculated from responses to planned specialty choice.

<b>Board Certification Plans, 2008-2009</b>		
Plans	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students	
AOA Boards	309	32%
ABMS Boards	23	2%
Both Boards	546	56%
Other	2	0%
Not Planning Board Certification	1	0%
Undecided	95	10%
Total	976	100%

<b>Reasons for Taking ABMS (Allopathic) or Both Boards*, 2008-2009</b>	
Reason	All 2008-2009 First-Year Students
ABMS Board Certification Provides More Opportunities	59%
Personal Desire for Dual Certification	48%
ABMS Board Certification is More Widely Recognized	33%
Hospital Privileges are More Readily Obtained with ABMS Certification	14%
ABMS Board Certification has More Colleague Acceptance	12%
Licenses More Readily Obtained with ABMS Certification	9%
ABMS Board Certification has More Prestige	8%
Other	4%

\* Data represent the percent of the 569 respondents planning on taking the ABMS Boards or both Boards.

<b>Expected Net Income, 2008-2009</b>	
Years After Completion of Internship or Residency	Mean Expected Income All 2008-2009 First-Year Students
1 Year	\$128,923
5 Years	\$185,289
10 Years	\$249,157