The New York and Delaware opportunities draw from the proven Clinical Education Program model of the long-standing Congressional & Administrative Law Program in Washington, D.C. During the last several years, the law school has been adding significant resources to the 35-year-old program in the nation’s capital. Thanks to a university-wide partnership with the Brookings Institution, law students are benefiting from expanded externship opportunities, as well as new programming available through recently created classroom and office space.

One of the oldest legal externship programs in the capital and one of the law school’s oldest clinical offerings, the D.C. program places third-year students in federal agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission, executive branch departments like Health and Human Services and the Treasury, congressional committee offices such as the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Foreign Relations, and in the Brookings Institution itself. Nearly 40 students participate each academic year.

IN ADDITION TO HELPING students strengthen their lawyering skills, these externships immerse participants in legal and business environments, polish key personal management abilities, and help prepare students to transition easily into practice after graduation. “This real-world experience,” says David Myrie, JD ’11, of his New York externship at Standard & Poor’s, “provided the perfect complement to the theoretical training I received in law school.” Thanks to the professional experience and contacts he made, Myrie is currently working in the Big Apple for JPMorgan Chase & Co.’s Management Associate Program.

“But both the D.C. and New York programs have been quite successful,” Laybold says. “We’ve even had students from other law schools asking if they can participate. We’ve had to turn them down, but this shows just how coveted these programs are. The attorney-supervisors also have been highly supportive and are impressed with the work our students are doing. Ideally, we would be able to expand this model to other cities in the near future.”

The CSO also helps students find summer internships and clerkships, another avenue for honing skills and acquiring experience. Now third-year law student Jacqueline Emge landed two summer 2012 opportunities with the CSO’s help.

“I appreciate that the CSO has been so actively involved in my job search,” says Emge, who interned for the St. Louis American Parkinson Disease Association and for Rosenblum, Schwartz, Rogers & Glass PC.

**Intensive Intersession Programming**

**OF COURSE, CAREER PREPARATION** starts well ahead of these on-the-ground experiences. Beginning with Orientation, law students are immersed in programming detailing what it means to become a professional. The fall semester is then filled with numerous career-related programs. Then in January, the week-long Intersession for first-year students focuses extensively on career exploration and development. In 2012 alone, Intersession featured more than 50 representatives of law firms from across the country, who showcased their organizations and got to know students. During the immersion program, experts share advice about ways to accelerate professional development.
While the law school is known for its ability to be at the forefront of meaningful curricular reform, a new required Negotiation course for first-year students during Intersession is among its latest additions. While successful negotiation is basic to almost every kind of law practice, only a few schools nationwide provide this kind of required introductory training.

The Negotiation course lays the foundation for upper-level courses that have negotiation components, like Pretrial, clinical courses, and advanced negotiation and mediation courses. “Our program recognizes that lawyers must be well versed in negotiation, problem-solving, collaboration, and creative dispute resolution to practice successfully in today’s world,” says Karen Tokarz, the Charles Nagel Professor of Public Interest Law & Public Service and director of the Negotiation and Dispute Resolution (NDR) Program.

C.J. Larkin, senior lecturer in law and the NDR Program’s administrative director, was one of five faculty members, including Tokarz and Dean Syverud, who taught the first-year Negotiation course in January 2012. “Law is a highly experiential profession,” she observes. “Introducing the students to negotiation skills helps to anchor all that they are learning in their other classes, connects them to the real practice of law, and demonstrates the critical importance of focusing on their professional skills and judgment throughout their law school career.”

Law student Noah Mullin observes: “I believe the course will make me a more well-rounded attorney. It gave me a new skill-set that will allow me to more effectively advocate for my clients.”

For upper-class students, Intersession brings in top attorneys from around the world to teach short courses providing intensive study in topics pertinent to students’ interests and career goals. Bankruptcy, housing, intellectual property, migration and citizenship, property, and tax law are among many subjects these courses explore in depth. The winning combination of a traditional legal education with experiential and targeted courses ensures that students graduate with the right skills.

Climate of Failing Law Schools

All these efforts take place within a broader context of upheaval in legal education, which Brian Z. Tamanaha, the William Gardiner Hammond Professor of Law, has laid out with unflinching honesty in his latest book, Failing Law Schools.

Tamanaha, a renowned jurisprudence scholar and an expert on law and society, details the realities of the world facing new law school graduates today, after the 2008 economic collapse sent shockwaves of lawyer layoffs through firms. (Indeed, not all the blame can be placed on the recession; he cites one study showing that law firm employment plateaued in 2004, and in the four years following that, the profession shed 20,000 jobs.) Tamanaha notes that according to the National Association for Law Placement, only 64 percent of 2010 law graduates had full-time law jobs, and starting salaries had dropped 20 percent. In a nation with about 20,000 law jobs available each year, law schools are producing more than twice that many graduates, he says. Still, the American Bar Association continues to accredit new law schools—10 of them since 2006, he observes.

For newly minted lawyers, the tough employment market is compounded by the debt with which most graduates leave law school. For most young lawyers, finding good, remunerative positions is not just a matter of personal and professional fulfillment, but of financial necessity.

Tamanaha hopes his book will provoke much-needed soul-searching among law faculties and law school administrators. But law students and recent graduates should find in it an affirmation of their concerns and the reassurance that a leading scholar is paying attention, arguing their case, and looking for creative solutions.

In addition to its innovative approaches to student preparation and job placement, the law school is taking to heart the serious issues being confronted by law schools nationally. Facing the economic climate head on, the school has worked to become more efficient, while reducing budgets and yet still offering top-tier programming. Among the strategies to address these tough issues in the delivery of legal education, the school has made concerted efforts to shrink the size of the incoming first-year class over the last two years. Additionally