BEGINNING IN FALL 2013, the law school will offer a new Semester-in-Practice Externship, an innovative program that empowers second- and third-year students to gain hands-on professional experience anywhere in the country. Through the externship program, students will earn academic credit by spending a semester working full time for a nonprofit, government, or in-house corporate law office in the location of their choice.

“Our students tell us that our existing comprehensive clinic and externship programs are the number one reason they chose us,” says Kent Syverud, dean and Ethan A.H. Shepley Distinguished University Professor. “Having established our reputation as one of the highest-ranked law schools in the nation in clinical education, we are taking the next logical step by expanding our clinic and externship opportunities coast to coast.”

THE LAW SCHOOL’S 16 CLINIC and externship programs already in place in Washington, D.C., New York, St. Louis, and abroad are among the most comprehensive programs available, says Robert Kuehn, associate dean for clinical education and professor of law. However, because of their popularity, these unique opportunities are always in high demand, year after year.

“For the 2012–13 academic year, we were oversubscribed for the 70 available spots in our existing U.S.-based clinics and out-of-town externships, with the D.C. and New York placements being particularly popular,” Kuehn says. “The Semester-in-Practice Externship will help address growing student interest in semester-long experiential learning opportunities outside the St. Louis area, including in Chicago and Los Angeles. Students will be able to literally design their own professional practice experience.”

The school’s Career Services Office, which proactively partners with students in their professional development and job placement goals, reports that the current class of first-year law students has identified more than 40 different cities as their first choice for post-graduation employment.

“The Semester-in-Practice Externship will facilitate students in obtaining critical practical experience in their desired geographic location, which in turn will be an important part of their professional portfolio in seeking employment post-graduation,” says Janet Laybold, associate dean of admissions, career services, and student services. “It also will provide valuable contacts as our students work to expand their professional network during law school.”

Recent graduate Joe Franklin stresses the benefits of the coveted Congressional & Administrative Law Externship, one of the nation’s oldest law school Clinical Education Programs on Capitol Hill.

“There is no substitute for work experience in D.C. if your goal is to be an attorney for the federal government,” says Franklin, JD ’13, who plans to work for the Food and Drug Administration’s Chief Counsel’s Office. “The D.C. Clinic provides a combination of relevant course work, networking opportunities, and, most importantly, the chance to work full time in a high-profile agency office.”

SIMILARLY, RAMSEY MESYEF, JD ’12, said his experience as one of the first students in the law school’s New York City Regulatory & Business Externship provided critical real-world experience.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY’S NEW YORK externship was an invaluable part of my legal education,” says Mesyef, who is currently working as an associate in control room compliance for Goldman Sachs.

“In this competitive market, the combination of real-world legal training and built-in networking opportunities was a true capstone to the law school experience that prepared and equipped me for the job search and the next step in my career,” he says.

The Semester-in-Practice program, law students may now pursue professional opportunities anywhere in the country.