In early 2012, Northeastern University School of Law launched an Outcomes Assessment Project (OAP) — an initiative to evaluate the impact of Northeastern University School of Law on the careers of its 6,400 living graduates.

Drawing upon rigorous social science methodology, the OAP seeks to improve legal education by better understanding the relationship between the law school experience and lawyers’ career paths, civic engagement, and overall personal and professional satisfaction. Areas of particular interest include the Cooperative Legal Education Program, which has been running continuously for almost 45 years, and the School of Law’s longstanding emphasis on serving the public interest.

Equally important, the OAP will give the legal academy and profession a more realistic, evidence-based analysis of what works and what doesn’t, resulting in models for how to best allocate resources in the years ahead.

Students who choose Northeastern University School of Law seek the school’s unique opportunities for professional development and to make a difference in broader society. Where does that drive and ambition take NUSL graduates? Inquiring minds – particularly current students – would love to know.

As reported in Research Bulletin No. 1, there are approximately 6,400 living Northeastern law graduates; our alumni/ae database contains current employment information on 4,939 (77.2%). This group defies stereotype.

Although some might categorize Northeastern law as a regional law school, a majority of our graduates (51.1%) work outside Massachusetts. At present, there is at least one Northeastern University School of Law graduate working in all 50 US states. Following Massachusetts, the next largest concentrations of Northeastern graduates work in New York (9.4%), California (6.2%) and Washington, DC (4.8%). The adjacent New England states of New Hampshire (2.3%), Connecticut (2.0%), Rhode Island (1.8%), Maine (1.7%) and Vermont (1.1%) collectively account for 8.9% of the alumni/ae employers, though similar concentrations of our graduates work in Florida (1.8%), Washington (1.6%) and Alaska – yes, Alaska (1.5%)!

(continued inside)
Nearly 2% of Northeastern graduates work abroad, in nations including Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, Bermuda, Canada, China, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Palau, the Philippines, Russia, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and the United Arab Emirates.

PRIVATE PRACTICE LEADS
When compared to other ABA-accredited law schools, a large proportion of Northeastern law graduates work in public interest and government service jobs (see Research Bulletin No. 1). Yet, similar to other law schools, private practice remains the single largest area of practice, employing 48.8% (2,483) of Northeastern law graduates. Among these lawyers, approximately two-thirds work in law firms while one-third are solo practitioners.

GOVERNMENT MATTERS
Federal, state and local government comprise the next largest practice setting for Northeastern alumni/ae (892, 22.7%), including more than three dozen graduates who serve as judges at the state or federal level.

As shown in Figure 3, graduates working in state and local government are almost evenly divided between Massachusetts and other states. In contrast, approximately one quarter of our graduates employed by the federal government work in Massachusetts, with the largest concentration based in Washington, DC (approximately 100 graduates, or 31% of all alumni/ae working for the federal government).
FIGURE 2: ALUMNI/AE IN GOVERNMENT BY CONCENTRATION

Federal Government
- US Department of Justice: 7.5%
- Federal Public Defender’s Office: 7.1%
- National Labor Relations Board: 6.5%
- US Department of Labor: 6.5%
- US Environmental Protection Agency: 5.6%
- US Attorney’s Office: 4.0%
- US Securities and Exchange Commission: 4.0%
- US Department of Health & Human Services: 3.4%
- All others: 55.4%
- Total: 100.0%

State & Local Government
- Committee for Public Counsel Services: 8.9%
- Massachusetts Attorney General: 3.1%
- Suffolk County District Attorney: 2.6%
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts: 1.9%
- Middlesex District Attorney: 1.5%
- City of Boston: 1.4%
- New Hampshire Public Defender: 1.3%
- All Others: 79.3%
- Total: 100.0%

FIGURE 3: ALUMNI/AE IN GOVERNMENT BY LOCATION

Federal Government
- Inside MA: 77%
- Outside MA: 23%

State & Local Government
- Inside MA: 53%
- Outside MA: 47%
GOING IN HOUSE
Corporate, business or in-house legal departments comprise the third largest employment sector: 12.9% of alumni/ae (roughly 650 lawyers). These employers are not as concentrated as compared to law firms and government. Nonetheless, the largest private sector non-law firm employers include many well-known companies and nonprofit organizations, such as Ernst & Young, Fidelity Investments, Liberty Mutual Insurance Group, State Street Bank and Trust Company, Boston Children’s Hospital, Fresenius Medical Care and General Electric. Some variation of “vice president” is the most common job title in this category (> 70).

SERVING AND TEACHING
Public interest is the fourth largest employment sector for Northeastern graduates. Among the 9.6% (475 lawyers) working in legal aid and as public interest lawyers, the top employers include Greater Boston Legal Services, Legal Aid Society, Service Employees International Union, Disability Law Center, Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Massachusetts and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The fifth largest sector for Northeastern alumni/ae – and also disproportionately large compared to other law schools – is higher education and academia, which employs 250 graduates, or roughly 5% of the alumni/ae population. Approximately 43% of these graduates are employed in Massachusetts at institutions including Brandeis University, Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, Suffolk University and Western New England University. The majority of this sector, however, is distributed among approximately 150 colleges and universities outside of Massachusetts, including faculty appointments at nearly two dozen ABA-accredited law schools.

So, if you were curious where a Northeastern University law degree might take our students, the most accurate answer may be: here, there and everywhere.

FIND OUT MORE
If you would like to learn more about the OAP, or if you are interested in participating in the project — for example, attending a focus group, being interviewed or hosting an event to review interim findings — please contact OAP Administrator Claudia Zickell at c.zickell@neu.edu or (617) 373-5149.