Northern Illinois University College of Law in DeKalb, IL, created two certificate programs: the Certificate in Criminal Practice and the Certificate in Civil Advocacy. These specialized programs will allow law students the opportunity to focus their legal education toward one of two distinct concentrations that build on existing strengths at the school. Students will need to complete certain coursework to provide a strong foundation in the area. They will also need to fulfill a capstone course, such as an externship or clinical experience, and participate in an extracurricular or cocurricular legal skill development activity. The programs will go into effect for the class of 2014.

University of Tulsa College of Law graduates surpassed the national employment placement average for the fourth year in a row. The college's job placement rate for 2011 graduates was 87.3 percent, more than 6 percent higher than the nationwide average of 85.6 percent. Of the class of 2011 graduates who are employed, 86.3 percent are in a position where a law license is required or law degree is preferred (76.9 percent law license required, 40.4 percent J.D. preferred). This rate is 8 percent higher than the national average of 78 percent of graduates who are in a position where a law license is required or law degree is preferred.

Texas Wesleyan University School of Law is on its way to becoming part of Texas A&M University. The state university in College Station, Texas, announced it would buy the private Fort Worth law school for $25 million. The new name of the school will be Texas A&M University School of Law at Texas Wesleyan University. If the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the merger, Texas A&M would acquire operational control, and the faculty and staff members would become Texas A&M employees. Texas Wesleyan would continue to own the building and surrounding land and would lease the property to Texas A&M for about $2.5 million a year. The Texas legislature authorized the establishment of University of North Texas in Dallas, which plans to open in fall 2014. It will now have another public law school to compete with in the same metropolitan region.

Thomas M. Cooley Law School's Lansing campus and Davenport University signed an agreement to offer a dual degree where students can earn a joint JD/MBA. The degree will first be offered in fall 2013 at the Lansing campuses of both institutions. This agreement allows eligible students of one program to incorporate coursework from the other degree program. Students can begin taking courses at the other institution after their first year in either program. Students must meet the degree requirements of each respective institution before receiving either degree.

The John Marshall Law School in Chicago recently opened a new lobby and entrance on State Street. The first phase of the school’s 50,000-square-foot, $10 million expansion includes the new entrance, lobby, a cafeteria and bookstore, where a drug store once stood. The second phase will see the renovation of a building at Jackson and Plymouth that the school acquired two years ago. It will be transformed into a clinic.