

In a previous posting, I remarked on the increase in the number of publications in environmental law. I thought it would be useful to look at the number of law professors in the field. This was not a rigorous social science survey, so the numbers should be taken with a grain of salt. Some caveats are listed at the end of this posting.

Nevertheless, the trend seems quite striking:

Years of Teaching Environmental Law	2004-2005	2010-2011
<i>1-5 years</i>		
179	325	
<i>6-10 years</i>		
146	144	
<i>10+ years</i>	160	
237		
TOTAL		
485	706	

I also looked at two other areas. The total number of faculty listed as teaching “ocean resources” went from 1 to 14, although I think this must have largely reflected a change in categorization by West. Natural Resources law showed a modest increase:

Years of Teaching Natural Resources Law	2004-2005	2010-2011
<i>1-5 years</i>	93	109
<i>6-10 years</i>	32	38
<i>10+ years</i>	65	80
TOTAL	190	227

The relatively modest changes in the Natural Resources category indicate that the growth in Environmental Law is not simply due to an overall expansion in the number of law professors or a systematic change in the way the AALS subject matter listings are created.

Some caveats are in order:

- The choice of years was arbitrary - I happened to have an old Association of American Law Schools directory from 2004 at home.

- This directory is based on an annual questionnaire to law professors, not all of whom bother to update their information.
- The AALS subject matter listings are compiled by West Publishing, a subsidiary of Thompson-Reuters, and their coding for courses might or might not be the same as I would have used. Also, their lists contain occasional duplicate listings, which I did not try to remove, and the 1-5 year category may include some people who have not taught in the area recently.
- As an alternative counting method, I went back and counted listings in the 1-5 year category with an asterisk indicating that there was an environmental course or seminar in the current academic year. I came up with 130 for 2004-2005, and 178 for 2010-2011, a much more modest increase than the total number of teachers listed. This could be an indication that many of the new environmental law teachers are only able to teach an environmental course every other year, perhaps because the increase in environmental law professors has not been matched by law schools' willingness to offer additional courses. Or the difference could reflect some peculiarity in West's coding or course listing methods.
- Finally, in the interests of time, I combined counting of partial columns with a standard 75 line count for complete columns, and this could have introduced small errors, along with possible counting mistakes.