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Trending @ RWU Law: Dean Yelnosky's Post: Spotlight On Faculty Teaching And Scholarship At RWU Law

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July 10, 2017

Dean Yelnosky's Post

SPOTLIGHT ON FACULTY TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP AT RWU LAW

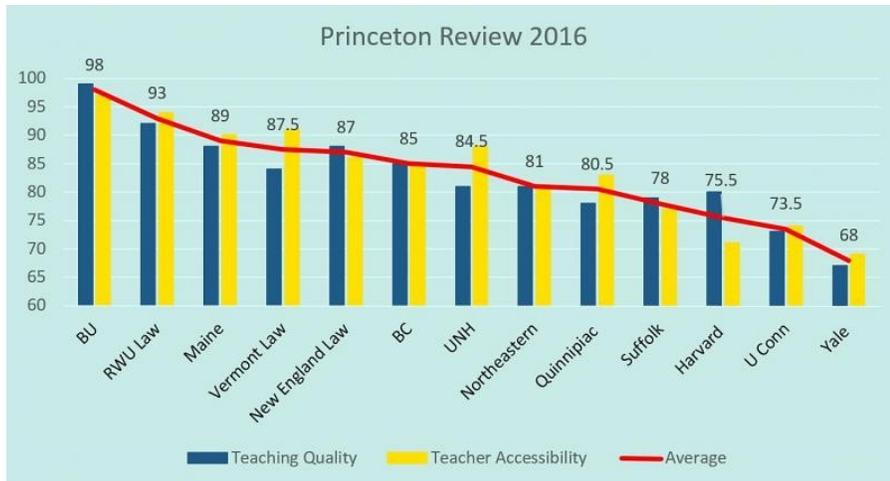
Posted by Michael Yelnosky on 07/10/2017 at 09:52 AM

When I talk to prospective students about RWU Law I have lots to say, but I don't spend too much time talking about our faculty's teaching because all law schools say they have great teachers, and this is a difficult claim for prospective students to evaluate. For similar reasons I don't often talk about our faculty's research and scholarship. Moreover, it is not immediately apparent to prospective students that they should care about whether and what faculty are writing in books or journals.

I am writing this blog to spotlight some of the important information I am withholding when I do not focus on the faculty at RWU Law.

Let me start with faculty teaching. This law school values and rewards great teaching. Whether it is in a required 1L class in Contracts, a small section of Legal Practice I (the required first-semester writing and legal analysis course), elective classes, simulation classes such as Trial Advocacy and Mediation, seminars, clinics, externships, or our unique one-credit Perspectives courses, our faculty put their teaching first, and they are at once rigorous and supportive. They employ different styles, and they are often changing their approaches in order to optimize student learning.

But you don't have to take my word for it. According to the *Princeton Review*, our teachers rank very highly among students reporting on the faculty quality and faculty accessibility at New England law schools. In fact, according to that data we rank second in the entire region. That's right, second - ahead of Suffolk, ahead of New England, ahead of Vermont, ahead of Quinnipiac, ahead of Maine, UNH, UConn, Boston College, Harvard, and Yale. In some cases we are *way* ahead:



We also have a group of faculty who work hard to become true experts in their fields and inform other academics, practicing lawyers, judges, and lay members of the public about their insights and research. Years ago, one study of faculty scholarly productivity showed that the faculty at RWU Law were among the most productive in New England, behind only Yale, Harvard, Boston University, and Boston College.

Per Capita Productivity in Top Journals, New England Law Schools 1993-2012	
1	Yale University
2	Harvard University
3	Boston University
4	Boston College
5	Roger Williams University
6	University of Connecticut
7	Quinnipiac University
8	University of Maine
9	Northeastern University
10	Suffolk University
11	New England School Boston
12	Western New England College
13	Vermont Law School
14	University of New Hampshire
15	University of Massachusetts

And why should prospective students care about the scholarly productivity of a law school's faculty? Here are a few suggestions. A faculty member's teaching can be informed by the subject matter and theoretical expertise gained through producing scholarship. Even theoretical research can provide a lens through which to better organize and better understand the doctrinal material covered in a particular class.

Moreover, many faculty members obtain great professional satisfaction from their research and scholarship – a satisfaction that students are often witnessing when they refer to a professor’s “infectious” love of a subject. Speaking broadly, law professors come from among the most enthusiastic law students. Many are exceedingly happy when they are chasing down some bit of doctrinal arcana or looking for a theory that can unify seemingly unruly bodies of law.

Finally, producing scholarship is a form of engagement with the profession that can inform everything a faculty member does, from teaching, to student advising, to suggesting changes to the curriculum. Some scholars are isolated, and some scholarship is wholly outside of and unconcerned with the legal profession. But it need not be that way.

That is why I am proud to introduce you to two members of the faculty who have recently held the title of Distinguished Research Professor – Professor Emily Sack and Professor Jared Goldstein.

Emily Sack served as Distinguished Research Professor from 2012 to 2014.



She is a graduate of Swarthmore College and Columbia University, and she earned her law degree from NYU School of Law. Through her scholarship, Professor Sack has established herself as a national expert on the subject of domestic violence. Her articles explore the intricacies of the intersection of federal and state law bearing on domestic violence, the role of federal courts in hearing cases involving domestic violence, and domestic violence policy. Her writings are so deeply relevant that it was no surprise that she was cited by Justice John Paul Stevens in his dissent in Castle Rock v. Gonzales, 545 U.S. 748 (2005), a case involving the rights to enforcement owed the holder of a domestic violence restraining order.

Another measure of Professor Sack’s influence, and a scholarly achievement of the highest order in its own right, came in 2013 when she was asked to become an editor of the leading casebook in the field of domestic violence - *Domestic Violence and the Law: Theory and Practice* (Elizabeth Schneider, Cheryl Hanna, Judith G. Greenberg, Emily J. Sack 3d ed. 2013). Thus, her scholarship on domestic violence informs not only our students at RWU Law, but students across the country enrolled in Domestic Violence at their law schools.

Jared Goldstein served as Distinguished Research Professor from 2014 to 2016.



He is a graduate of Vassar College and received his law degree from the University of Michigan. Professor Goldstein's scholarship is creative and ambitious. He has written numerous articles in academic journals on subjects including environmental law and policy, *habeas corpus*, statutory interpretation, and constitutional law. However, a thread runs through much of that work to his most recent collection of articles, which have appeared both in academic journals and in the popular press. He has developed a theoretical framework that characterizes much conservative discourse about the law, and in particular federal constitutional law, as grounded in "constitutional nationalism" – the idea that the nation's fundamental values are embodied in the Constitution and that any other values are dangerously foreign. He has recently been exploring the concept by closely examining contemporary and historical political and social movements.

The relevance of his work can be seen in the articles he has written in the popular press and his regular media appearances about contemporary examples of constitutional nationalism. He has published articles in *Slate* (Trump Executive Order on Immigration; 2014 Bundy Ranch Standoff) and the *National Law Journal* (Tea Party Movement), and he is frequently sought out by media outlets to share his views on contemporary constitutional issues.

His students regularly comment on his creative approach in the classroom and that he makes Constitutional Law come alive for them. His scholarship is no doubt responsible in part for what his students find compelling in the classroom.

So allow me to amend my narrative about RWU Law. "Come for the experiential guarantee, but stay for the faculty." They are a remarkably talented group.