



Dear Class of 2023,

Congratulations on your admission to Robson Hall, University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law! On behalf of the entire Manitoba Law Students' Executive team, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt welcome to each of you. We're looking forward to getting to know you this year!

We also wanted to take the opportunity to share a few pieces of information and advice.

The first is to let you know about the Manitoba Law Students' Association, and our role at Robson Hall. The Manitoba Law Students' Association (MLSA) is comprised of an executive (a president and three vice-presidents) and representatives (for each class, important voices, as well as various external bodies) who are elected by the student body each spring. The executive also appoints groups of students to form committees who oversee and coordinate the various aspects of student life at Robson Hall (including academics, social, accessibility, community outreach, etc.). For a full listing of our executive, elected representatives, committee members, and for more information about the MLSA generally, please visit our website at robsonmlsa.com.

As a student entering the Faculty of Law, we are lucky enough to count each of you amongst our members this coming school year. You are therefore entitled to our student services, activities and advocacy – as well as a say in the work that we do! The MLSA hosts monthly Council meetings open to all students and regularly communicates important information via email and Facebook. If you haven't done so already, please be sure to join our Facebook page: [MLSA Robson Hall](#). The objectives of the MLSA (as per our constitution) are:

- a. to support the academic interests and performance of members;
- b. to support the professional development of members;
- c. to support the positive well-being of members; and
- d. to achieve effective self-governance and strong representation of interests necessary to achieve all other MLSA objectives.

The second piece of information we would like to share has to do with the year, and years, ahead. As an incoming law student, this will undoubtedly be a very exciting time in your life, and we are happy to inform you it's only about to get more exciting! However, we also know you may be nervous, anxious, scared, ecstatic, or some combination of all of those emotions, perhaps even more than one at once. Two short years ago, we were in your shoes, a few months from starting law school, and had many of the same questions you have now. Rest assured that Robson Hall is a fantastic community filled with tremendous people, including our students, professors, staff, and everyone in between. We know you will find a welcoming home here.

We are all, collectively, in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic. Things are, as we write this, often rather uncertain, as they likely will still be when you read this. The MLSA, and Robson Hall generally, are committed to making this the best year possible despite these circumstances by operating creatively and flexibly within the parameters laid out by the University, and adhering to best practices in public health. Though as a result of these circumstances many of the specifics of the year ahead are still being finalized, we can assure of some certainties about your time at Robson Hall.

First, your classmates. As we are sure you will soon find, your classmates are really what will make your law school experience one-of-a-kind, and that is simply because they themselves are one-of-a-kind. The students of Robson Hall come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Making an effort to befriend your classmates now will be key to making your experience the best it can be. When you want to form study groups, share outlines or just swap stories later on, your classmates will be the ones you can depend on. As upper year students (and many practising lawyers) will attest – many life-long friendships, and connections have been forged at Robson Hall.

Second, your professors. In addition to your classmates, your professors are an essential part of what makes Robson Hall such a special place. They are talented as both academics and as teachers, and are genuinely caring people. Don't be afraid to speak up in class, discuss what you are learning with them, and get to know them. It will make your experience that much better!

Third, the unofficial mascot of Robson Hall, the "Bearister" (a play on the word barrister) bear, will be waiting outside of Robson Hall to greet you. Don't worry – it's a statute. But many, many photos by many incoming or graduating law students have been shared with this bear, and you can look forward to taking one with it as well.

Fourth, the law school experience. Always remember that attending law school, and becoming a lawyer, is a great privilege. Even though law school may be challenging at times, you will have great times and create fun and amazing memories in your time at Robson Hall. Being a student at Robson Hall is great, and I hope that after your first few weeks, you will draw the same conclusion!

To put it more poignantly, a legal education is unlike any other, and it will forever change your perception of “the way things are”. You are about to undertake an education which will equip you with the tools to think critically about the world around you. You will be challenged to consider laws as the “rules” of our society – and what that means for everyone who is bound by them – for better or for worse. This will not be easy, nor will it be something that comes naturally. I dare say the “law” does not come naturally to anyone, and that is half the fun of it! As a first- year student, you are diving head first into a completely new way of thinking – and in time you will learn how to not only keep afloat, but also to enjoy yourself as you do. In the interim, be patient and kind with yourself, create study groups, make use of the resources offered by the faculty, and ask others for help. In our experience, the faculty, staff and your fellow students will always be willing to lend a hand.

My final piece of advice to each of you is this: don’t be too nervous. You will be okay. While law school is a challenge, and these are far from ideal circumstances, you are part of a tight-knit, caring community who has been through it and is here to support you as we journey together. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of your summer and take some time for yourself. Do what you enjoy (while being safe, of course): try new foods, go outside, spend time with family, or take time to rest in whichever ways that you prefer to. You are about to embark on an adventure – and we can’t wait to get to know you.

Sincerely,

Nick Noonan

2020-2021 MLSA Executive:

President: Nick Noonan

Vice-President External: Braeden Cornick

Vice-President Internal: Meghan Bjorklund

Vice-President Finance: Darius Hunter