

Dear incoming first year students,

On behalf of our academic faculty, practicing professionals and administrative staff I would like to welcome you to the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law. We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue your legal studies with us.

Online – for now

This year will start differently compared to our normal practice. You begin your studies under the continuing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and without knowledge of what the year holds other than knowing the Fall Term will largely be online, replete with videoconferencing and other online teaching methods. Obviously, this is not the way we ordinarily like to do things, but after more than a year of experience with this pandemic, we are prepared and ready to provide you with an excellent education.

A Service Profession

As students of law, you are entering a privileged profession that also comes with a lot of responsibility. Though we all arrive with our own experiences, there are certain values that are universal in Canada for those that seek membership in a law society. The role of service is fundamental in law, and your conscientious engagement is critical. Honesty, civility, integrity, professionalism, respect for difference and human diversity, and commitment to service are virtues that must animate your principled conduct at law school. Being a law student connotes a greater responsibility than other undergraduate programs, and this is because your journey into practice must be (in addition to being apprised of the requisite skills and knowledge) ethical and culturally competent.

Law school involves the study of difficult social issues and difficult intellectual pursuits. You will be met with traumatic cases and complex puzzles. Your mission is not to be offended or to throw up your hands in despair, but rather to consider how you can work within these troubling contexts to develop solutions – solutions for prospective clients, for the agencies or the government you may work for or maybe in advocacy for the social change you seek. You will be provided with the skills needed to navigate this difficult terrain, and you will develop the mental resilience required to be a professional lawyer, should you so choose.

Working towards Truth & Reconciliation

As you learn of the laws that govern us, you will also have the privilege of being introduced to governance issues and treaties that pertain to Indigenous nations and persons that reside on these lands. You will have a chance to see how these values and relationships inform this land's legal systems. You will have clinical and research opportunities that develop your skills and intellectual acumen, and you will become ready for the next phase of your career. When we welcome new students to the Faculty, we often offer platitudes about law as a virtuous profession. We should accept this as an aspiration. We fall short of this aspiration when we do not acknowledge responsibility for the grievous harms that Canada has caused and continues to cause to Indigenous peoples; the harms to neighbours, partners, family, and all of whom reside upon and share these lands. Law can be a powerful tool in ameliorating disadvantage and in working towards Truth and Reconciliation.

Get to know us

We are proud to be one of the oldest law schools in Western Canada, having celebrated our centenary in 2014, and more recently, our 50th year of the Law Faculty being housed at Robson Hall on the beautiful Fort Garry Campus of the University of Manitoba. By joining us you are becoming part of the legacy of an institution that is well recognized for its dynamic and innovative approach to teaching, research and scholarship. We offer an exceptional educational experience, providing an opportunity to work with accomplished professors, whose works

are widely published in leading journals, boasting national and international standing. Our strengths lie in the fields of human rights, Indigenous law and policy, criminal law, constitutional law, administrative law, business law, professional practice, as well as international and comparative law. We are home to several well-known scholarly journals and online knowledge mobilization publications, including the *Canadian Journal of Human Rights* - Canada's only journal focusing on human rights, *The Manitoba Law Journal* (an award-winning suite of publications comprised of several specialty and generalist volumes), Robsoncrim.com, the *Banking and Finance Law Review* and *The Asper Review of International Business and Trade Law*. We offer a robust Master of Laws degree. Two years ago, we welcomed our first Master of Human Rights (MHR) students who hail from many different countries and academic disciplines. Our MHR program will continue to grow and expand this year as we welcome a new Mauro Chair in Human Rights and Social Justice to the program.

Our students receive excellent training in the skills of critical and analytical thinking, advocacy and diverse legal knowledge through experiential and classroom learning (online for now). Our clinical offerings provide opportunities to get hands-on experiential learning that will be available to you in your upper years. We proudly offer you a chance to work with Pro Bono Students of Canada, the L. Kerry Vickar Business Law Clinic, the University of Manitoba Community Law Centre, the expanded Court Clerkship program, and the Legal Help Centre. We offer a multitude of moots, and clinical competitions. At the University of Manitoba Faculty of Law, we recognize the transformative power of education for individuals, nations, families and communities.

We are all looking forward to welcoming you to Robson Hall. We are here to work with you as you embark on a journey into legal practice and in achieving the career goals that you may seek. All we require is that you work hard, commit to the program, conduct yourself ethically, develop professional skills and attitudes and be open to what the legal profession and the study of law require. We are here to help you navigate this terrain.

Warm Wishes to Each of You,

Dr. Richard Jochelson

Dean of Law

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