



Dear Class of 2024,

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, first virtually and then eventually in-person.

We wanted to take this first moment 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 (the President, and three Vice Presidents – Internal, External, and Finance) and representatives (for each class, important voices, and 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, and more). For a full listing of our executive, elected representatives, committee members, and for more information about the MLSA generally, please visit our brand new website at [robsonmlsa.com](http://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. Some context might help, so here are the objectives of the MLSA:

- 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 path ahead of you now. As an incoming law student, this is an exciting time in your life, but we know that the great and the new comes with an ebb and flow. A combination of nerves, joy and everything in

between is absolutely normal – we know because we were in your shoes (albeit just before the pandemic hit). Even with all the flux and adaptation we've all gone through, that shared experience and our resilience as law students new and old, we're confident that you have that same tenacity and capability in you – that's why you're here! Above all, the Robson Hall community of students, staff, faculty, practitioners and more want to see you succeed and will help you achieve your vision while making the experience as rewarding as possible during your time here.

Despite the uncertainty that the pandemic continues to cause, the MLSA and Robson Hall are committed to making this the best year possible. There will undoubtedly be a bit of flux and uncertainty given the pandemic, but we will look to provide valuable experiences that align with the boundaries set by the University as well as public health – safety is paramount. That said, here are some fundamental pillars of the Robson Hall experience that you can look forward to.

First, your classmates. Making new friends in a mostly-virtual environment isn't always easy, but trust us when we say they are going to be the best part of your year. Your peers at Robson Hall are each made up of diverse backgrounds, unique experiences, and one-of-a-kind presence. Whether you want to form study groups, share outlines or just swap stories later on, your classmates – especially your initial section – will be people you can depend on. Upper year students and the very collegial Manitoba Bar will affirm that life-long friendships and connections have been and will continue to be built at Robson Hall.

Next, your professors. A central part of the experience, your professors help make Robson Hall a special place. They were once where you stand, and are superior academics, teachers, part-time therapists and all-around friendly folks. Do your best to speak up in class or in office hours, discuss what you are learning with them, and get to know them. It will elevate your experience!

Third: Robson Hall itself. While Robson Hall will be mostly empty during the Fall semester, we're hoping we can access it in a limited fashion in the Winter semester. Robson Hall isn't necessarily contained to the building – it is really about the community – but we're excited for an eventual return to a new normal, where you can see all the buildings staples like the Bearister waiting outside Robson Hall, the always-welcoming Common Room, the world's (or at least the campus's) best library in EK Williams, and of course, our personal favorite – the stained glass art of Justitia (Lady Justice) in one of the stairwells.

Lastly: the law school experience. If you take one thing to heart, remember that law school is a privilege and with that privilege comes the responsibility to make things better than you found them and create a positive impact, even if it means starting with a little one. Law school will be challenging at times, but it will also provide you with great times, lifelong memories, and an excellent launchpad for your budding career. Being a student at Robson Hall is great, and I hope that after your first few weeks, you will see exactly what we mean.

If it sounds like a shift, that's because it is; law school will make you see the world differently. 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. 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 – they are all ready and willing to lend a hand to help you succeed.

My final piece of advice to each of you is this: being nervous is normal, and proof that you're not only alive, but that you care. Just try not to let it override the wondrous possibilities before you, because ultimately, 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,

**Your 2020-2021 MLSA Executive:**

President: Michael Badejo

Vice-President Internal: Kelsey Thain

Vice-President External: Alexis Alevizos

Vice-President Finance: Narayan McRae