

Class of 2026,

Welcome to Robson Hall! Law school is a new experience, filled with new people, new subjects, and new challenges. While all of this is exciting, we understand how uneasy entering this new phase can be, and that it can raise a lot of questions. At Robson Hall, we have created and maintained the Buddy Program to address the uncertainties facing new students, giving incoming students the chance to connect with an upper year student before the school year starts.

In the Buddy Program, 1Ls are matched with an upper year student (2L or 3L) to help with the transition into law school, and to allow you to build connections. To match buddies, the MLSA creates a survey to match students based on interests, preferences, life experiences, or any other relevant factors identified by the student. Once pairs are made, buddies are encouraged to meet, grab a coffee, remain in contact, and build relationships over the first year and beyond. This program has many benefits, including:

- 1) **Giving 1Ls an upper-year student to rely on.** Your upper year buddy is someone for you to ask questions about law school, Winnipeg, or UofM (or other things you may not feel comfortable asking anyone else). The upper years guide new students, provide them with information, and are a friendly face around the halls of Robson. Upper year buddies are valuable connections and supports for incoming students. Buddies are designed to ease anxiety and dispel any mysteries about entering law school so that you can put your best foot forward.
- 2) **Building connections.** Connections and networking are valuable to a successful advancement and career. Allowing new students to connect with and meet upper years to build connections is an important form of community building. In the past, students have treasured and grown lifelong connections with their buddies. Buddies have unique experiences at Robson Hall and can help guide you as to what classes to take in 2L, where to volunteer, where the best study spots are, and so on. Upper year buddies can also provide you with invaluable connections through their own networks.
- 3) **Helping 1Ls thrive academically.** Upper year students have spent time creating outlines (study guides), learning how professors like their exams written, crafting study habits, and enhancing their abilities in many other ways. Buddies may be willing to pass on these tips, tricks, and practical guides. This is advice, wisdom, and (possibly) written material that may substantially assist you in achieving your goals (but remember to never fully rely on anyone else, you will have to put in the hours to succeed!). Learning how to think legally can be a significant and challenging shift, and upper-year students are here to help with that and to help you craft your approaches.
- 4) **Allowing upper year students the opportunity to mentor.** Mentorship is incredibly important and something the legal profession values. The Buddy Program allows upper year students to grow their mentorship skills and abilities in this area, helping create legal professionals that understand the importance of mentorship and who have experience guiding younger professionals.

For these reasons, we encourage you to register for the Buddy Program and engage with your buddy, early and often! It has proven an invaluable asset to many students, and we hope it will also be for you. The class representatives run this program—you will be contacted regarding this program to sign up and complete a survey after registration. We look forward to matching you and your buddy.

Sincerely,

**Your 2023-2024 MLSA Executive**

President: Jayden Wlasichuk (she/her)

Vice-President Internal: Selene Sharpe (she/her)

Vice-President External: Eric Gagnon (he/him/il/lui)

Vice-President Finance: Thomas Mooney (he/him)