



Dear Class of 2026,

Congratulations on your admission to Robson Hall, the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law. On behalf of the Manitoba Law Students' Association (MLSA) executive team, we would like to warmly welcome all of you to law school and congratulate you for your hard work to get here. To help orientate you to Robson Hall, we have some information and advice to share with you.

First, information regarding the MLSA. The MLSA is comprised of the executive team (President; Vice-President Internal; Vice-President External; Vice-President Finance) and various representatives of the Robson Hall community, including other vital student associations, such as the Manitoba Indigenous Law Students' Association (MILSA) and the Black Law Students' Association (BLSA), representatives for each class, and other external bodies. These student representatives are elected by the student body each spring. The executive team also appoints groups of students to form committees that oversee and coordinate the numerous aspects of student life at Robson Hall, such as social events, accessibility, professional development, academics, clinical experiences, and much more! The full list of our executive, elected representatives, committee members, and more can be found at [robsonmlsa.ca](http://robsonmlsa.ca). We encourage you to visit the website and familiarize yourselves with the structure of this student-run body, as it is largely responsible for creating community and enhancing your student experience at Robson Hall. We also encourage you to follow the Robson Hall Instagram page, [@umanitoba\\_law](https://www.instagram.com/umanitoba_law) which posts regularly about students, faculty, and events. Ultimately, the MLSA represents your interests as law students.

Second, as a student at the Faculty of Law, you are entitled to our student services, activities, and advocacy. The MLSA holds monthly Council meetings that are open to the entire student body and regularly communicates important information through email and various Facebook groups (so make sure you read your emails!). All student-wide information can be found on the "MLSA Robson Hall" Facebook page, which we highly encourage you to join, as well as the Facebook page for your class.

Third, looking forward. Starting law school is an exciting time in your life, but we know that the great and the new is accompanied by the stress of the unknown. A combination of excitement, stress, and countless other emotions is to be expected; we know because we've all experienced the beginning of law school – even though our journey at Robson Hall began over Zoom. Our shared experience and resilience as law students, new and old, gives us confidence that you will show tenacity, resilience, and capability. Above all, the Robson Hall community of students, staff, faculty, practitioners, and beyond want to see you succeed. This community will help you achieve your vision while making the experience as rewarding as possible during your time at Robson. While much is still uncertain for you, there are some aspects of Robson Hall that remain consistent, such as:

- (1) **Your classmates.** Last year was Robson Hall's first year in person since 2020, which means the classes above you had to make extra efforts to make friends and network – these students will be an incredible resource for you in building connections. For 1Ls, making connections within your assigned section, and within your year, is essential to forming bonds, some of which will last a lifetime. Having assigned sections in 1L provides social and educational benefits when forming study groups, sharing outlines, and navigating new topics and experiences together.
- (2) **Your professors.** Robson Hall has incredible professors that are dedicated to student growth. They are experienced and superior academics, teachers, listeners, and socialites. As we pen this letter to you, two incredible Robson Hall professors were promoted to the Bench, with Professor David Ireland taking his seat on the Manitoba Provincial Court and Dr. Gerald Heckman taking his seat on the Federal Court of

Appeal. You can enhance your law school experience and education by speaking in class, visiting professors in their offices or attending office hours. Building connections with your professors can also lead to a strong reference letter. Nobody should leave Robson Hall without hearing stories from The Lord Irvine himself!

- (3) **Your building.** We say this with the caveat that there has been and will continue to be construction projects to update and improve Robson Hall over the summer and fall. When you arrive at Robson Hall in September, you will find new study spaces, and a newly constructed gender-neutral washroom, a project that would not have occurred without the advocacy and support of groups such as OUTLaws and members of the Faculty! We want the building to represent our goals of community, so we welcome you to fill the student spaces such as the Common Room and EK Williams Library with spirit. As students, we have exclusive access to the Common Room on the main floor of Robson Hall, where you will find group study spaces, washrooms, and our coffee corner!

Lastly, we would like to offer guidance on the law school experience. Attending law school is a privilege that so many other deserving people are not afforded. With that privilege comes the responsibility to improve the world around you and create a positive impact. Thankfully, this can be done in a variety of ways, including mentorship, volunteering, or giving back in other ways to your community. Law school will present you with many challenges—this is no secret. Your preconceptions of the law will be challenged, your way of thinking and analyzing will change, and you will undoubtedly become better at reasoning your position through the fires of debate. Learning the law often feels like learning a new language (especially for those taking part in the Concentration in Access to Justice in French), so you are not alone if you are struggling to gain your footing.

Throughout the challenges of law school, you will make memories and friends, achieve accomplishments you hold dearly, and make inroads into your chosen career. Allow these triumphs to outweigh the challenges; be patient with yourself and those around you, and treat all involved with dignity and respect. As you will hear repeatedly throughout your legal education, the Manitoba Bar is a close-knit community, so you must remain professional and courteous in your interactions, while remaining true to yourself. Take responsibility for your education and especially for your health. Make use of the resources offered by the faculty and MLSA, and ask others for help. Your MLSA representatives and Robson faculty are here to support you—we all want to see you succeed and we will gladly share resources to facilitate your success. If you are uncertain about resources or anything regarding your experience at Robson Hall, please reach out to the MLSA or faculty, and we will all be happy to help.

Our final piece of advice for you, is to believe in yourself. It is not easy to get to where you are, it takes hard work, determination, and perseverance. Your class is filled with accomplished people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. You are not an imposter here, no matter how strongly you believe yourself to be one. You have all earned your spot at Robson Hall, and you will all contribute to building a stronger, more inclusive, and more supportive community. We hope you take the time to enjoy your summer and we look forward to meeting you all in September for what we hope will be a fantastic introduction to law school at Orientation Week. Until then, take care!

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)