

# MLSA | MANITOBA LAW STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## MANITOBA LAW STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBER REPORTS JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 12:00 PM

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### **President – Nick Noonan**

1. General Updates
  - a. A New Year
  - b. Next Year
  
2. Upcoming MLSA Election & Next Year
  - a. More information will be coming out in the near future about the MLSA elections for the 2021-2022 school year, but these elections and what the MLSA does next year is critically important for the school going forward. If believe you can be a part of the most important year in the school's history, please consider running for a position.
  - b. If you are interested in running, I encourage you to reach out to the student currently in the role you are interested in to discuss the position. I'd love to talk to anyone interested in running for President – please reach out!

## **1L Representatives – Dion Cheung, Housam Jeha, Aiyana McKenzie**

### **1. Virtual Fall 2021**

#### **Dean Asper mentioned that there is a high likelihood of Fall 2021 being virtual next year during a meeting with Section A01**

- This sparked concern amongst peers with this section and we moved to survey all the sections to get a well-rounded picture of what our class' attitudes on returning to school virtually were
  - o We conducted a survey on SurveyMonkey and received 85 responses
    - 45 students wanted in-person learning in some capacity
      - Small groups, in-person while allowing streaming of lectures for those who don't feel comfortable
    - 25 students wanted online learning
      - This was dependant on what the situation in Fall 2021 would look like from a public health standpoint
    - 10 students wanted blended learning
      - This introduced many barriers for out of province students so this likely won't be pursued
    - 5 students had no preference

#### **1L Class Reps and a student from A01 had a meeting with Dean Asper to discuss the survey results and student concerns**

1. Primary concern was the professional development aspect of law school and how online learning is inadequate for helping us learn skills required as practicing professionals
  - a. Our next steps as recommended by Dean Asper was to get in touch with students from other Faculties that are still able to go on campus for their learning and have some testimonies written up that can support our arguments
2. UMSU's current stance on returning back to school in Fall 2021
  - a. UMSU is strongly aligned with the administration for staying virtual in Fall 2021
  - b. We want to make it known that that's not reflective of what we want as a Faculty
    - i. UMSU to take a stance that gives more power to faculties and allows them to have more self-determination
3. Dean Asper is currently reaching out to the Law Society of Manitoba and the Manitoba Bar Association due to their concerns about our professional development

## **2L Representatives – Shawn Singh, Celyna Yu**

### **1. Changing Spaces: Dismantling Racism and Discrimination in the Legal Profession**

The Associate Dean's Office is hosting Robson Hall's first panel discussion regarding the role of racism and discrimination in Manitoba's legal field. The panel's discussion will be focused on fostering inclusivity for non-conforming and trans folks, the personal experiences of the panelists with workplace micro-aggressions, as well as the role of discriminatory hiring practices. Questions from attendees are also more than welcome.

Please join us on January 27, 2021 for: *Changing Spaces: Dismantling Racism and Discrimination in the Legal Field*. Panelists include:

- Justice Kusham Sharma ([Manitoba Provincial Court](#)),
- Penny Piper (Department of Justice)
- Cindy Marshall ([Family law lawyer and mediator, Calgary](#))

#### Details:

Date: January 27th, 2021

Time: 5:30 PM (CST)

Zoom invite: RSVP at <https://bit.ly/346bQjZ>

### **2. Exam Period**

Several students raised concerns with accommodations made during the exam period. Issues were identified with the Student Accessibility Centre, which affected many individual accommodations made for students. The Associate Dean's Office committed to addressing these procedural bottlenecks.

### **3. Advocacy Mock Trial**

2L Representatives traditionally assist students with preparing for Advocacy Mock Trials. This program will not be offered this year, under pandemic restrictions. Rather, students in Advocacy this term will complete an individual assignment over Zoom.

## University Senate Representative – Evan Podaima

### Compassionate Grading - Basics

Senate has implemented a compassionate grading option in December. This compassionate grading option is available to law students. A reminder of what the option entailed is below:

“The newly approved grading scheme gives students the choice to exclude from their UM grade point average (GPA) up to one (1) grade received in Fall term and up to one (1) grade received in Winter term, or, up to one (1) grade received in a spanned course which runs through both Fall and Winter terms.” [UMSU Email sent December 3, 2020]

You will select the course *ex post facto* (after you have taken the course).

Additionally, you should know how the system works and what the repercussions of selecting the options are.

“If a student selects these options, the exclusion of one or two grades will result in a new, adjusted grade point average. This new average will be used for all GPA-based performance requirements, including program progression, probation, suspension, and requirements to withdraw, as well as to determine eligibility for UM bursaries and scholarships.” [UMSU Email sent December 3, 2020]

As far as I am aware, this includes Dean’s List. The course you decide to exclude will still have a letter grade associated with it. **The letter grade will be visible on your transcript, but is not in your GPA.**

### Compassionate Grading – How to Elect This Option

To activate this option, please see the COVID-19 Resources for Students excerpt from the UofM below:

#### **When can I do this and how do I exclude a grade?**

You will be able to see your Fall Term results before deciding on whether or not to exclude a grade. A widget in UM Learn to make the course choice for courses completed in Fall 2020 will be available starting January 25, 2021 and will close on March 1, midnight. The widget will become available again at the end of the winter term.

You will be able to make a decision on Fall Term courses only if you are not registered in spanned (Fall 2020 Term and Winter 2021 Term) courses.

The mechanism (widget) will be available again in a similar time frame at the end of the Winter 2021 Term. At this time, you will be able to exclude a Fall Term grade or a winter term grade or a grade from a spanned course. Please check back

here and watch for further communications as the dates for Winter Term and spanned courses are confirmed.

Once you have excluded your grade(s) you will not be permitted to make any further changes in UM Learn. You will have to contact an academic advisor in your home Faculty/College/School if you have questions about your selection.  
[\[COVID-19 Student Resources - UofM\]](#)

### In-Person Classes for Fall 2021

It has come to my attention that there is clamouring for a return to in-person classes for Fall 2021. To put it bluntly: is extraordinarily unlikely to happen. I sympathize with your concern; our current pedagogical method is not an ideal way to learn much less a subject as complicated as law. Please allow me to explain why this will not occur.

No students or faculty has any input on whether we have in-person classes at Robson Hall for Fall 2021. Which is to say: Dean Asper *et al* are powerless in this scenario. The choice to have our current term held online was made unilaterally by the President's office, *without any Senate or Senate Executive input*. No exemption will be granted, as there is no "real" reason we cannot have in person classes. Taking the example of sciences labs: we don't need to physically manipulate chemicals or lab equipment to further our legal learning. It would be *beneficial* to be in person, but it is not *necessary*; that is the bar we must pass. We have not met that threshold.

Further, this decision of sticking with virtual learning is made well in advance of the term. The President (Dr. Benarroch) makes this decision early to ensure Faculty and Staff have adequate time to prepare for the term. Dr. Benarroch's decision to stay virtual is based on facts at present with a small speculation for how Manitoba is trending. If memory serves, the decision to implement virtual classes for our current term was made in August or September.

Ultimately, this is decision to remain virtual is frustrating, but unfortunately, we can do nothing to remedy the situation.

**Social Committee – Micky Levi, Alexis Alevizos, Kelsey Thain, David Barbour, Alan Lempert, Alexandra Broggy**

**1. Bingo**

- a. Had another successful bingo night on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and are looking into doing a third one sometime later this semester.

**2. Carbohic**

- a. Wine tasting and dinner on February 27<sup>th</sup> on Zoom
- b. Ticket sales started on 25<sup>th</sup>, will go until 5<sup>th</sup>
- c. Pls buy a ticket ☺

**Clinical Experience Committee – Amber Harms, Keira Hasenack, Ryan Johnson,  
Keith Murkin**

The CEC has been planning, and we have announced the dates and the case for Robson Hall's Annual Mini Moot!!

The case is *Law Society of British Columbia v Trinity Western University*, 2018 SCC 32 and it will take place on **March 3rd & 4th, 2021.**

An information session and Q&A will also be held on **February 10th at noon** in preparation for the Mini Moot. Zoom links will be sent out to participants that sign up.

## **Communications Committee – Madison Laval, Zara Kadhim, Larissa Campbell**

### **1. MLSA Website**

- a. Website Login:** The login feature on the MLSA Website has been disabled for everyone except the MLSA Executive and Communications Committee Chair. I was advised that having fewer people with login credentials will improve/maintain the security of the website. This does not affect students' ability to access and download outlines on the outline bank, or view any other page on the website including the event calendar.
  
- b. New Website:** While the current website has been paid for until 2022, my recommendation for next year's Communications Committee is to look into finding a new webhosting service.



**No Report Submitted:**

- **Vice President Internal**
- **Vice President External**
- **Vice President Finance**
- **MILSA**
- **3L Representatives**
- **Manitoba Bar Association Representative**
- **Gender and Sexual Minorities Representative**
- **Students' Living with Disabilities Representative**
- **Women's Representative**
- **Visible Minority Students' Representative**
- **Part Time Students' Representative**
- **Students Providing Care Representative**
- **UMSU Representative**
- **Academic Committee**
- **Sports Committee**
- **Spirit Committee**
- **Grad Committee**
- **Professional Development Committee**
- **Accessibility Committee**
- **Community Outreach Committee**
- **Constitution and Policy Committee**
- **Chief Returning Officer**
- **Governance Coordinator**
- **Council Chair**