

Class of 2015 Orientation September 4, 2012

Good morning and welcome to Western Law your home
(away from home) for the next 3 years.

Since this is only my 2nd year as Dean at Western Law –
actually as Dean anywhere – it is nice to finally have
someone here with less experience than me.

You are no doubt experiencing a range of emotions –
hopefully excitement and anticipation – possibly nausea
or regret – would dental school have been a better
option? Surely not!

Is everyone here smarter than me? The answer to that question is No as I will explain in a minute. Will I be 80 before I pay off my student debt? No again. Will I get a job? Yes. Do I even want to be a lawyer – ah ah? That depends on you.

Yes, the world is an uncertain place these days and what you are about to embark on actually makes you a part of that equation –

So how do you cope? Well, it starts with what you are doing today - you are embarking on a professional career that, despite the lawyer jokes (of which you will hear many) – is valued and respected. The rule of law is

integral to the global imperative of responsible governance and economic development.

Those challenges therefore, simply put – are opportunities for you to make a contribution – to make a difference.

With that opportunity, including the opportunity to attend this great law school, comes a responsibility – and that is to take ownership of your legal education and training.

Most law school graduates will come away with black letter knowledge of the law. In this day and age though –

you need to bring something else to the table. In my parlance knowing the law is simply table stakes. Being smart is good but it's no longer enough – a lot of very smart people get lost in the woods! Western Law, if you invest in it, will allow you to leave here with a lot more. Your legal education can be as diverse and in depth as you want.

In a world of change, those who have the analytical abilities to respond and adapt are those who will do well and effect positive change. We want and will demand a lot from you – we want you to go if I may borrow the phrase from good to great – we expect you to challenge

your classmates, to challenge us and, most importantly, to challenge yourself. The critical analysis, the reasoning, the drive and, most importantly, the professional and social responsibility that you will develop here will also make you equally well-suited to careers in business, the not-for-profit sector, government and academia, as well as the traditional practice of law. In fact, the one thing that we can now say with certainty is that the practice of law is no longer traditional.

It will be in the new ideas you form, the life and career skills you gain, and the confidence and personal knowledge gained from both your failures and

achievements – that growth will be the true measure of both us and you – and that's what we look forward to.

You and of course your friends and families have worked hard to get you here. Make the most of it, and enjoy the journey. Good luck.