Welcome Class of 2020! Congratulations on making it this far, you are on your way.

My name is Corey Westfall and I am a third-year student (3L) and President of the Student Bar Association (SBA). It is with great honor that I welcome you and give you some basic tips about getting started.

Think of SBA as a professional student-government. SBA facilitates activities, communications, and relationships between students, faculty, and staff within the law school community, as well as supporting the 40+ student-run organizations at the Law School. And soon, SBA will grow by adding your class representatives, so please stay tuned in for more news.

Here are some things that my predecessors and I wish we had known upon entering Law School:

1. Get Involved. You are only a law student once. As part of the Marquette family, we have access to the University’s facilities and resources. And as part of the Law School, we have access to special events such as the On the Issues speaker series, which brings in influential people from around the country to discuss important issues affecting Milwaukee and beyond. My Advice: Read Law News (our bi-weekly email) to find out what is going on in the Law School and join a few student-run organizations to attend some events that will expand your network. You cannot (and should not) spend all your time with your books, so find a balance between work and play.

2. Crave challenges and do not be afraid to make mistakes. Many of you probably soared through prior academic life without batting an eyelash, but Law School is a different beast. Law school is designed to make you ask difficult questions and attempt to answer the impossible ones. There might not be a “right” answer. My Advice: Try new approaches and seek feedback. Listen to new ideas. Examine what makes one thing “right” and another thing “wrong”. Law School is not about right and wrong, it is about the path you take to get to your answer.

3. Grades are only letters. Many of us enter law school as scholastic stars who have measured success by a three-letter-acronym that rhymes with EPA. But now, the competition is stronger. Law school classes are graded on a curve, so the average grade in each class is a B (or a B+ in some classes). Be prepared to work hard. My Advice: Strive for good grades, but do not let one grade (or three grades) shake you. Success in law school is not merely defined by your GPA, but also by your experiences, involvement, networking, and planning. You learn from success; you learn more from challenges.

I am truly excited that you have chosen to join us at Marquette, where the extraordinary community of students, faculty and staff are committed to serving those around them in the true spirit of “Cura Personalis.” At Marquette, we are in this together because together we are stronger. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for anything and everything.

I look forward to meeting you!

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