

TMI: INFORMATION OVERLOAD & THE ROLE OF THE LAW LIBRARY

The first few weeks of any given semester are usually stressful and chaotic. That stress intensifies with the addition of a law school journey. At the University of Massachusetts School of Law (UMass Law), incoming 1Ls start a week before the rest of school, with a mandatory orientation. During this whirlwind period, students receive their schedules, meet faculty and classmates, attend practice classes, and begin absorbing everything they will need to know—from orientation through the Bar Exam.

The library plays an integral role in this pivotal week. Each year, librarians wrap up orientation by introducing ourselves, guiding students through the library layout, highlighting key services, and demonstrating essential databases. To conclude orientation week, we host a special 1L open house. Following a morning of optional volunteer work at a local farm, students return to the library where we welcome them with a hot lunch, ice cream sundaes, and engage them in a scavenger hunt with prizes (and bragging rights).

Being the last presentation and event of this information-dense week, we harbor no illusions that students will remember all the details we share. Our primary goal is simply to establish our presence. The one critical takeaway we hope students remember is that the library serves as their go-to resource for questions of any kind. While we would love for them to remember our faces, our ultimate aim is for students to view the library as both a safe haven for studying and socializing, and as a reliable guide amidst the overwhelming information overload they need to navigate throughout their law school journey.

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