



UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

Graduate Education

## A Note to Students

Dr. James Ahern, Vice Provost of Graduate Education

Happy Summer, Everyone! I hope that you all have had great experiences this summer, including some time to relax. I have had the privilege of teaching an UW archaeological field school in addition to my usual fieldwork in Croatia. I have especially enjoyed working with the UW and University of Zagreb graduate students this summer, who have been amazing instructors, scholars, and research collaborators. Such experiences revitalize me and make me excited for the coming school year.

I am excited about the establishment of the School of Graduate Education, which I discussed in our spring newsletter. I hope that you can all join us on September 1 (details, below) to celebrate the grand opening of the new graduate school and its newly established offices in Knight Hall.

This issue highlights the many graduate students and faculty honored with Graduate Awards this past spring (pages 4-9). UW is blessed to have so many incredible researchers, teachers, and mentors. One of our faculty awardees, Dr. Kam Ng, will be the chair of UW Graduate Council this coming academic year. His record of graduate student teaching and mentoring is exemplary and will serve Graduate Council well. Graduate Council is the core UW committee that helps oversee and guide its graduate education mission. In addition to faculty members, two graduate students serve on the council each year as voting members. These students play a crucial role in representing student views, raising, and solving issues of concern, and guiding UW graduate policy. Please be on the lookout for a call for graduate student representative nominations in September.

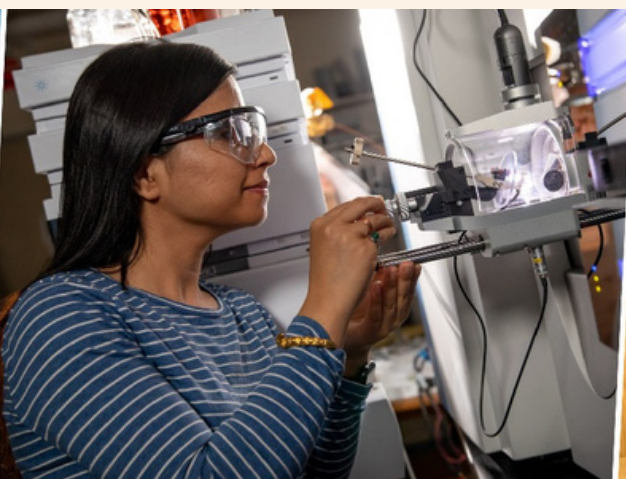


**DR. JAMES AHERN**  
VICE PROVOST, GRADUATE  
EDUCATION

[UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
OFFICIAL COVID-19  
COMMUNICATION WEBSITE](#)

## School of Graduate Education Picnic & Open House

Join us for a picnic on **September 1** to celebrate the official opening of the University of Wyoming School of Graduate Education. A picnic will be held on the lawn by **Knight Hall from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** The school of Graduate Education invites you to tour the new office space in Knight Hall.



# University Resources

## Mental Health

### University Counseling Center (UCC)

Located in Knight Hall, the UCC is open Monday-Friday from 8 am- 5 pm. They offer short-term, **free** support for full-time students. Telehealth and in-person services are available. Visit the [UCC](#) for more!

### WellSpring

Available to most in the university and the broader community. Services are **free**, and a variety of times are offered during the week. Visit the [WellSpring](#) website for more.

### Psychology Center

Offering affordable services to the university and surrounding areas. Services include psychotherapy, assessment, and diagnostic clarification. Review the [Psychology Center's](#) page for more information.

## Wellness

### Wellness Center

Found in Half Acre, The Wellness Center offers many opportunities to destress and feel better, including:

- Puppy or kitten play dates
- Wellness and stress management groups
- Massage chairs
- Personal training

### Half Acre

Offering something for everyone, Half Acre promotes physical wellness. **Bonus: Even brief exercise can improve mood, concentration, and sleep!**

### Student Health Center

The Student Health Center offers a variety of services including a full-service pharmacy, treatment and support for a variety of illnesses and injuries and preventative care. To review more information view [Student Health's website](#).

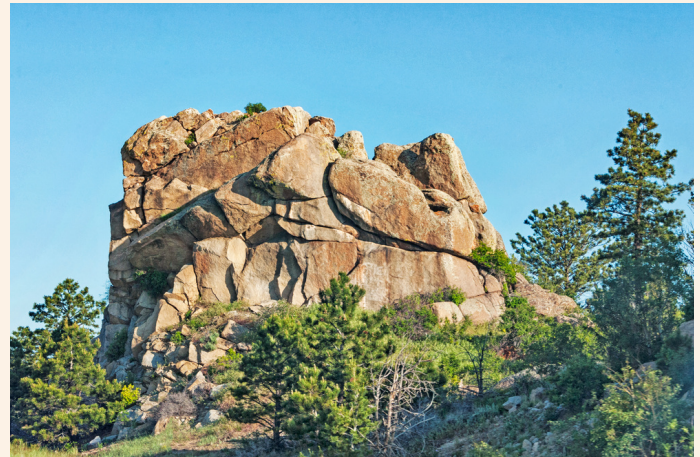


## UW Food Share Pantry

The [UW Food Share](#) is open to anyone associated with the university. University of Wyoming, Knight Hall, Room 106.

### Hours of Operation:

Monday and Thursday | 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm  
Saturday | 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm



## Safe Project

SAFE Project offers free and confidential advocacy to students, staff, faculty, and the University of Wyoming survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and family violence. They can help with safety planning, campus and community referrals, academic support, support reporting to law enforcement and Title IX, protection orders, and more. The campus advocate, Dakota Metzger, can be found at Knight Hall 103 and can be reached either at [campus@safeproject.org](mailto:campus@safeproject.org) or 307-766-3434. Visit them on their [webpage](#).

## Student Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson is a neutral, conflict resolution practitioner. The ombudsperson serves as a mediator between a student and faculty member and/or a department or administrator if the parties agree to mediation to resolve disputed facts and/or explore alternatives for resolution. Contact them at [stombuds@uwyo.edu](mailto:stombuds@uwyo.edu) or visit the Student Ombudsperson [Facebook page](#).

## Social & Professional Development

### Graduate Student Network (GSN)

This registered student organization is focused on improving the professional and social aspects of being a graduate student. GSN activities include:

- Research-specific seminars and speakers
- Focus-group discussions
- Conference presentation feedback
- Social hours

For more information, visit their [Facebook page](#).

# Summer Vacation on a Budget

Graduate School can be stressful, and many of us may be looking for a break. So if you are itching to get out of town, here are a couple of ideas of how to budget for an affordable vacation.



## SLCE Alternative Breaks

Richard Raridon, the senior program coordinator with SLCE, explains that Alternative Breaks engage University of Wyoming students in service-learning across a diverse range of subjects and locations. The Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement Office (SLCE) typically offers international alternative break opportunities during winter break, and domestic and international opportunities during spring break. SLCE has recently sponsored travel to places like Bolivia, Germany, Poland, Trinidad & Tobago, and Northern Ireland. These trips are a great way to experience the world while building community with fellow UW students.

Raridon expressed that the SLCE office prioritizes keeping these trips as accessible to students. The trips are highly subsidized in order to keep the cost low. Additionally, several scholarships are available to further reduce the cost. Transportation, housing, food, and other costs such as admission fees to museums and other sites are all included, making this an affordable way to travel and experience other cultures. The trips are open to all full-time, consolidated student services fee-paying UW students. More information can be found at [uwo.edu/slce](http://uwo.edu/slce) or questions can be directed to [rraridon@uwo.edu](mailto:rraridon@uwo.edu).

## Camping

If you are interested in camping but lack the gear, you can rent supplies from the [outdoor program](#). The outdoor program also rents gear for various activities, including biking, water sports, climbing/mountaineering, and winter sports.

## Staycation

Thinking about a staycation? Visit Laramie as if you are a tourist; try getting outside by visiting Medicine Bow National Forest, Vedauwoo, or Curt Gowdy. Visit one of our many museums: [Iverson Mansion](#), [Territorial Prison](#), [UW Art Museum](#), [UW Geology Museum](#), or the [Planetarium](#). Try a [self-guided tour](#) or go on a [scenic drive](#). Maybe even treat yourself to a special indulgence at the restaurant or bar you have not had time to visit.



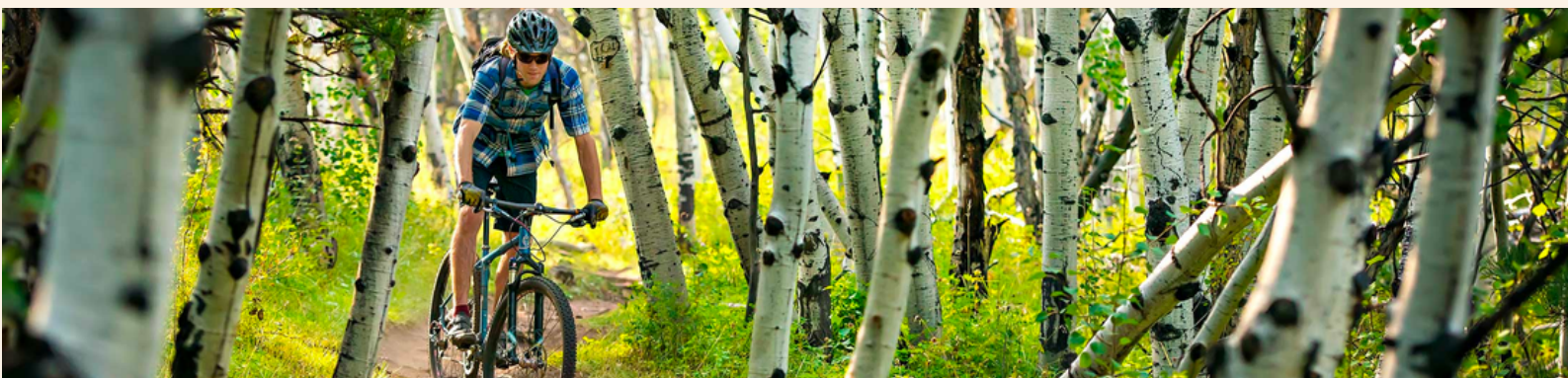
## Budget-Friendly Vacation Tips from Students

When flying, check out Student Universe, the Hopper app, or Scott's Cheap Flights to find student discounts. You can also look for flight deals on Cyber Monday in November after Thanksgiving.

If you are looking for budget-friendly accommodations, check out [hostelworld.com](http://hostelworld.com) or try car camping and visit [Free Camping's webpage](#).

Meals on vacations can add up fast if you are eating out. Be sure to carry non-perishable items, pack a cooler, or use coupon apps to lower costs.

Be sure to check online for more tips about traveling on a budget. One good resource is the [Nomadic Matt Blog](#) or take time to scroll through the [Travel Zoo](#) website.



## 2022 | Graduate Awards

The University of Wyoming's Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate Council have selected the 2022 graduate student and mentor awards winners for outstanding teaching and research.

The Distinguished Graduate Faculty Mentor Award recognizes outstanding faculty commitment to graduate student mentoring. The John P. Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Awards go to graduate teaching assistants to honor their excellence in teaching. The Outstanding Master's Thesis Award recognizes a graduate student for an exemplary master's thesis. The Outstanding Dissertation Award is granted to a graduate student for an exemplary doctoral dissertation. Each award carries a stipend.

Two additional awards were presented this year: the Early Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award and the Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award. Both awards are given to faculty members for their commitment to mentoring graduate students. The Early Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award is presented to a faculty member with less than six years of an academic career at UW. The Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award is given to a faculty member with six to 10 years of an academic career at the university.



## 2022 | Outstanding Dissertation | Samantha Nobes

"Ms. Nobes's thesis research focused on an important and timely topic for Wyoming and the world, investigating how horticultural production might support pollinator health. As insect populations decline, in large part due to human impacts, this work explores how certain aspects of the human environment might be used to support these potentially threatened populations. I suspect this work will have a substantial impact within the scientific community as well as management of our environment."

**-Andrew Kniss**



## 2022 | Outstanding Dissertation | Shaochen Huang

"His dissertation, *The roles of visual and kinesthetic information in learning and control of bimanual coordination*, has elevated knowledge about how humans learn and control motor movements and the contribution of senses such as vision and touch to learning movement control and coordination. These motor movements are applicable to everyday functions (playing an instrument, self-care, driving, etc.), sport/athletic performance, and injury/illness rehabilitation (stroke)."

**Derek T. Smith**



## 2022 | Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award | Sam Choi

"As a legal psychologist, I enjoy seeing the implementation of psychological science in the real world. By perceiving psychology through a utilitarian lens, I am constantly reminded of why psychology matters and how it could make a difference. And being able to preach the utility of psychology through instruction has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. As a psychology instructor, I strive to teach students how theory, concepts, and research could be relevant to their lives and the world around them."

**Sam Choi**

"Sam completed the pedagogy course offered in our department. He clearly takes these recommendations to heart and incorporates scholarship of learning into his teaching practices. His teaching philosophy emphasizes active learning, application beyond the classroom, and the use of activities that foster critical thinking skills."

**Sean McCrea**



## 2022 | Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award | Chase Mahan

"Anthropology was presented to me early on as the field of study that speaks to all aspects of the human experience. Skeptical at first, figuring I understood what people all are about, it only took me one class to realize I was mistaken. The four subfields of Anthropology are a means to uncover the complexity of people from a boundless beginning to an uncertain future—all the more important in an increasingly diverse world. As a professor, I strive to convey my passion for archaeology while situating every lecture with one eye on the past and one on a hopeful future because we are uniquely poised to engage students in conversations across disciplines and reconcile with the diversity of the human experience."

**Chase Mahan**

"I have now seen Chase Mahan in his natural habitat! Given all of your hard preparation and how reflective, thoughtful, and dedicated you have been to teaching over the past year, I had pretty high expectations for today's class observation. Those expectations were far, far surpassed."

**James Ahern**



## 2022 | Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award | Solana Quistoff

"I wanted to design the daily activities in my classroom around some key beliefs I had about writing. Specifically, I went into teaching this class valuing the following ideas: 1.) anyone can learn to write; 2.) writing is best learned through daily, repeated practice; and 3.) students learn best in an engaging environment. These values determined how I approached my daily teaching.

My philosophy was that if *one* student had a bad habit, I could theoretically still be effectively teaching, but if *every* student had the same habit, I needed to change."

**Solana Quistoff**

"Solana's exceptional work is acknowledged at all levels of our first-year writing community. Director Heaney celebrates that "Solana approached her students with empathy and flexibility, and she also brought her talent for making challenging curriculum engaging and easy-to-grasp for a group with diverse learning needs..."

**Nancy Small**



## 2022 | Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award | Claudia Richbourg

*"Good teaching is 1/4 preparation and 3/4 theatre.*

*–Gail Goldwin*

My biggest goal as a teacher is to coach my students and help them acquire the tools to tackle any problem they encounter. I want to promote higher-level thinking skills in the lab so that students can analyze and synthesize the material."

**Claudia Richbourg**

"To be truly effective as a teacher in inquiry-based labs, during which students are asked to discover and explore on their own, instructors must have a strong knowledge of the material and encourage students to think critically about the work they are doing. Claudia excels in both of these areas. She has also successfully taught labs both in-person and online and consistently receives very positive evaluations from students. Students describe her as helpful, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and approachable."

**Christopher A. North**



## 2022 | Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award | Melanie Torres

"My goal as a science educator is to foster and encourage curiosity. I strive for the students I teach to ask questions, make connections to daily life, and discover how strangely fantastic our world is through the lens of science."

**Melanie Torres**

"Ms. Torres is an exemplary graduate student who is a talented, confident, and exceptionally gifted teacher, and I think she is unquestionably deserving of this award and (long-overdue) recognition."

**Scott R. Shaw**



## 2022 | Early Career Graduate Faculty Mentor | Penjman Tahmasebi, Associate Professor

"Prof. Tahmasebi has over 100 peer-reviewed publications, with 62 publications since joining UW. There have been 12 publications in 2021, 17 in 2020, 12 in the calendar year 2019, and 14 in 2018. The majority of his publications over the last four years include UW student co-authors, which demonstrates his outstanding mentorship of students. In addition, Prof. Tahmasebi has authored three book chapters since joining UW and co-authored two book chapters before joining UW. Prof. Tahmasebi's publication rate is the highest in the College of Engineering and Applied Science."

**Dennis N. Coon**

"Penjman has an impressive list of 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals wherein he is the first author or the corresponding author in most of them. He has a total number of 6,200 citations with an h-index of 37. In contrast, he has finished his Ph.D. in two years and attended several elite schools, such as Stanford University, The University of Texas at Austin, and Caltech, which are all regarded as top schools in the world."

**Maohong Fan**



## 2022 | Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor | 2022 | Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor | Boyi Dai, Associate Professor Boyi Dai, Associate Professor

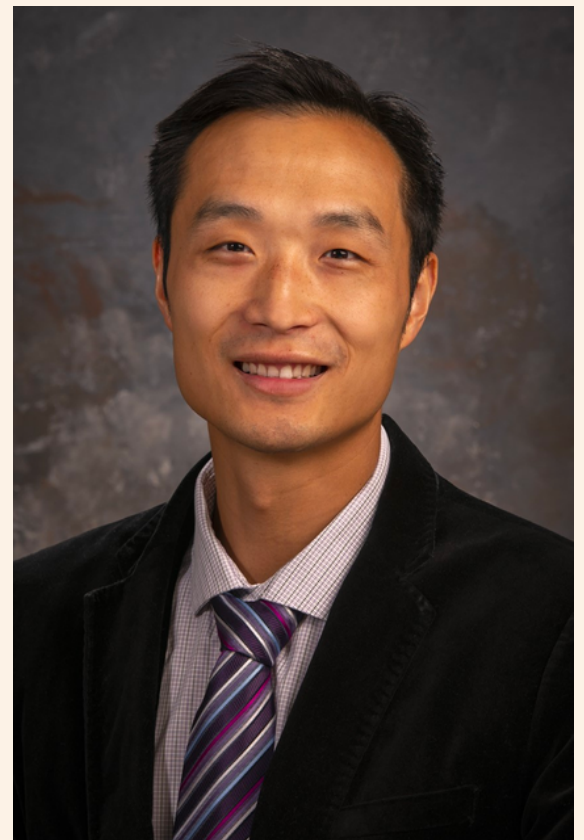
"Dr. Dai is such a kind instructor caring about his students and is willing to help. Before I started my doctoral program, he helped me successfully apply for an internship grant from the International Society of Biomechanics in Sports in the biomechanics lab at the University of Wyoming. That was the first time I came to the U.S. The internship experience cleared my direction to work with him for my doctoral program. I greatly appreciate his help and support

Dr. Dai is very intelligent and extremely hardworking. He has given me someone to look up to and to model my career after. I couldn't have asked for a better advisor during my time here at the University of Wyoming."

**Yu Song**

"Evidence of Dr. Dai's unwavering commitment to exemplary graduate student mentorship extends beyond volume and includes indicators of rigor, student support, and student career readiness and preparation. Of the graduate students that Dr. Dai has mentored, he and his students have submitted and been awarded 10 student research grants to support master's or doctoral level research and accumulated 12 graduate student research awards from intramural and extramural entities, e.g, American College of Sports Medicine and American Kinesiology Association, and his students have published 17 peer-review journal articles with students as the first author."

**Derek T. Smith**





## 2022 | Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor | Kam Ng, Associate Professor

"Dr. Ng is an incredibly dedicated faculty with an amiable personality and generous heart. He has encouraged me, inspired me to think critically, and this is leading me to a greater career path."

**Opeyemi Emmanuel Oluwatuyi**

"When I first met him and his research team at the University of Wyoming in August 2016, I was really impressed by the diversity in his research team. It was not only diverse in terms of the areas of research projects but was diverse in terms of cultural, gender, and social inclusions. This helped me develop my personality as an international student to be open toward inclusiveness and helped me adapt myself very easily in my professional career.

Dr. Ng is an incredibly dedicated and hardworking professor. I must emphasize that his perseverance in offering innovative ideas to the industry has not only to help gained research grants but also motivated students to excel in their research and guided them towards critical analysis of the state-of-the-art knowledge and their solutions. He encouraged the students to think outside the box and be creative in problem-solving. He shared the emerging ideas in the field and helped students acquire those skills."

**Pramila Adhikari**



## 2022 | Distinguished Graduate Faculty Mentor | Ray Fertig, Associate Professor

"When COVID hit, and professors had to pivot, Dr. Fertig was one of the few who welcomed the challenge with open arms. He was determined to continue providing his students with a high level of education by enhancing his teaching style and improving the quality of his classes.

As a graduate student in Dr. Fertig's research group, I have been encouraged to develop a wide breadth of knowledge across various disciplines, from solid to fluid mechanics and optimization to artificial intelligence. His unique style of divergent thinking inspires novel ideas and creative solutions that shed new light on problem-solving in an analytical field. Under his guidance and mentorship, we have published three conference papers and one peer-reviewed paper in a highly ranked engineering journal."

**Sarah Hankins**

"Prof. Fertig is consistently one of our highest-rated graduate (and undergraduate) instructors in the ME Department, as evaluated from student-submitted course evaluations. In Fall 2021, he taught a graduate course in Finite Element Analysis and received nearly perfect scores from his students in each of their three evaluations of him as an instructor, the course itself as a learning experience, and the exams and assignments that Prof. Fertig delivered. Students commented on Prof. Fertig's high level of knowledge of the subject, his enthusiasm for the subject, his availability and willingness to help students, his excellent organization of the course, and the fairness of his assignments."

**Erica Belmont**



# Albany County TANF Preschool Program

There is funding assistance available to help income-qualifying graduate students with child care and preschool costs: the **Albany County TANF Preschool Program**.

To qualify for this funding, children must be reaching their third birthday by August 1, 2022. Free preschool is offered in four locations in Laramie, including Linford and Slade Elementary Schools and Basic Beginnings. Basic Beginnings is also able to use this funding to assist qualifying families with their childcare costs, as well.

If you have questions or wish to apply, **please contact (307) 742-9332 or laramietanfpreschool@gmail.com**, and Jan or Kyla will be happy to speak with you. Thank you.

**Free Preschool**  
for qualifying families  
**Albany County  
TANF Preschool Program**  
Call (307)-742-9332 for more details

- Degreed and certified teaching staff offering individualized instruction to meet the needs of every type of learner
- The Creative Curriculum  
Using Exploration and discovery to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills
- Assessment of your child's progress using the Wyoming Early Learning Standards
- Opportunities for parent involvement

❖ Supported by the Wyoming Department of Education  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SCAN ME FOR ENROLLMENT APPLICATION

## Crisis Support

**University Counseling Center-** 307-766-2187  
**AFTER-HOURS CRISIS**, call 307-766-8989

**Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline**  
Call or Text: 307-977-7777

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Call: 1-800-273-TALK

**Crisis Text Line**  
Free 24/7 line: Text HELLO to 741-741

## Important Dates

**August 18 - Graduate Assistant Teaching & Learning Symposium**

**August 22 - Fall Semester Begins**

**September 1 - School of Graduate Education Picnic & Open House**

For other important dates and deadlines, please refer to the [Registrar's Office calendar/deadlines](#).

