

# Making COLLEGE COUNT



UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

LeaRN Programs

A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO  
FIRST SEMESTER SUCCESS

*Fall Bridge Edition*



# Welcome to the FIRST-SEMESTER COLLEGE SUCCESS GUIDE!

**W**e encourage you to explore this guide with your instructors, peer leaders, advisor, and other friends or mentors who are beginning this college journey with you.

If you have questions about the content of this guide or resources on the University of Wyoming campus, please contact your advisor or First Year Seminar (FYS) instructor.

## LEARN PROGRAM - FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

University of Wyoming

[www.uwyo.edu/fye](http://www.uwyo.edu/fye)

[first-year@uwyo.edu](mailto:first-year@uwyo.edu)

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### CONTRIBUTORS

#### LEARN FACULTY & STAFF

April Heaney  
Director, LeaRN Programs

Makayla Stewart  
Manager, Bridge & LeaRN Programs

Jess Willford  
Manager, STEP & LeaRN Programs

Allison Gernant  
First Year Seminar Coordinator

Mollie Hand  
Manager, First Year Experience,  
Freshmen Interest Groups, Summer Bridge

---

#### OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

David Bray

Tim Etzkorn

### STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS

Austin Buckius  
Nathan Villalobos  
Diana Loza  
Mary Schwope  
Darcy Inhulsen  
Kassondra Giacchino  
Olivia Balanoff

Emilee Inez  
Haley Garner  
Mary Grace Bedwell  
Sienna Trujillo  
David Weitzel III  
Jamie Materi

Olivia Cole  
Abby Madden  
Nathan Coupal  
Jaron Bartosvek  
Matt Kratochvil  
Peyton Lunzer

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We honor our heritage as the state's flagship and land-grant university by providing a accessible and affordable higher education of the highest quality; rigorous scholarship; the communication and application of knowledge; economic and community development; and responsible stewardship of our cultural, historical and natural resources. In the exercise of our primary mission to promote learning, we seek to provide academic and co-curricular opportunities that will:

- Graduate students who have experienced the frontiers of scholarship and creative activity and who are prepared for the complexities of an interdependent world;
- Cultivate a community of learning energized by collaborative work among students, faculty, staff and external partners;
- Nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity, internationalization, free expression, academic freedom, personal integrity and mutual respect; and
- Promote opportunities for personal health and growth, physical health, athletic competition and leadership development for all members of the university community.

As Wyoming's only public university, we are committed to scholarship, outreach and service that extend our human talent and technological capacity to serve the people in our communities, our state, the nation and the world.

# STARTING *the* SEMESTER

**T**he months and days before you leave for college can be some of the most exhilarating and thrilling moments of your life.

Family members are proud; friends are sad; you have an opportunity to start over and be a new you. That's a nice thought. But people rarely address the fact that starting over and beginning college do not happen overnight. It takes time, and doing it well takes guidance—guidance which can feel scarce in your first semester. That's where we come in. This fall semester guide will give you insider's advice from students and faculty to help you excel at the University of Wyoming. Think of this like a strategy guide; use it for helpful advice on performing the best you can in your academics while maintaining as much time as you can to have fun and enjoy a rich life outside of college.

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One of the hardest things about starting college was embracing the new and unknown. For a while, I kept to myself and talked to friends from home almost every night. Once I embraced new friendships as well as clubs and student organizations on campus, I realized I had a new home and a great community.”

Matt Kratochvil  
*UW Student*



# Starting the Semester

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People don't talk much about the challenges that freedom presents at the start of college. I know I was excited to be outside of the house, but that was because of visions of free time and fresh adventures. The first few weeks of school, I was challenged getting to class on time and getting my homework done. I didn't know where things were or how long things would take me. I would recommend that any incoming student figure out how long it takes to get to class and ask their teachers how much time to allot for homework – professors won't mind such questions, they'll appreciate and remember you for it."

Jaron Bartosvek, *UW Student*

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# Navigating the ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIP

Experiences with roommates range from the start of a “best friends forever” relationship to friction that leads to finding new roommates before the first semester ends. The reality is more often in the middle. Our goal is to help you make the right steps to building a positive relationship, the type of bond that allows you to live peaceably for a year -- and hopefully you can build a lasting friendship that is a positive, memorable part of your college experience.

## HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUR COLLEGE ROOMMATE

*From Campus Explorer's article, "How to Get Along with Your College Roommate"*

Every once in a while, you hear a story about two randomly matched roommates who become best friends. Beating all the odds, they find miles of common ground, discover that they're actually a lot alike, and become extremely close throughout college.

It's a nice story, but it sounds like something you'd see on an after-school special.

Realistically, you're likely to encounter some tension and even conflict with your roommate. Many roommates do become friends, but what if you can't get along with yours? Don't despair -- you can still overcome your differences and have a healthy relationship with your roommate.

### First Impressions Matter

Like it or not, people are prone to making snap judgments. Whatever impression you give of yourself when you meet your new roommate is likely to stick with him or her, whether it's accurate or not.

Even if you're still a little grumpy from moving in, try to be as amiable and positive as you can through the first few days. Make eye contact, be polite and show an interest in getting to know your new roommate. If he or she likes you right off the bat, they'll be more likely to respect your needs and boundaries later on.

### Roommate Rules and Boundaries

As you and your roommate get to know each other, make sure you set some boundaries. Ask him or her about their needs and experiences in creating a workable living environment, then share your needs. Calmly and politely explain your ideal living arrangements while also listening to your roommate's needs.

It's crucial to get this out of the way early. The longer you wait, the more you risk a possible conflict due to clashing lifestyles. Remember, compromise is essential here. You probably won't get everything you want, and neither will your roommate, but the important thing is to create a comfortable, healthy living environment for both of you.





### Open Communication: The Key to a Successful Roommate Relationship

***Talk to your roommate.*** We can't stress this enough. Don't avoid conversations because you're afraid that they might be awkward. This doesn't mean you have to be best buds who share everything, but if your roommate does something inappropriate, you should let him know. If you let problems pile up without addressing them, the relationship will start to sour. Address issues as they come up, and you'll be able to defuse them more easily.

### Finding Solutions to Roommate Conflict

Even in the worst roommate situations, there's always a way to resolve the conflict. Sometimes this could mean peer mediation to work through the problems. Or it may mean switching roommates.

Whatever the end result, it's important to remember that there's always help. If you've tried everything and can't get through to your roommate, try talking to your resident adviser (RA). Your RA will listen to both sides of the conflict and help you and your roommate find a reasonable solution. If you find your roommate conflicts still aren't resolved, speak to the residence coordinator for your building.

**In your first weekss at UW, you and your roommate will be tasked with completing a roommate agreement. A copy of the agreement is on the following pages for you to complete.**

For information about Residence Life, dining, and other first-semester issues, check out the Mobile App UWyo Guide and social media handles:



UWyo Guide



UWyo Reslife  
& Dining



UWyo RLDS



wyorlds



Residence Life and  
Dining Services

This agreement is for room \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ Hall

## UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING RLDS ROOMMATE AGREEMENT

*Completing this roommate agreement is required by Residence Life & Dining Services.*

*You must fill this out together. Please be as descriptive as necessary in order to have a clearly defined agreement. This agreement will be referred to in case of roommate conflict.*

How will we communicate with each other? (Examples include: in-person for sensitive topics, email, and texting, we agree to respond to each other's messages within a certain time frame)

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How will we deal with conflict between us? (Examples include: voicing your concern to your roommate as soon as possible and in a polite way, communicate with an RA if concern persists, etc.)

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How should our room be utilized?

*Hall Quiet Hours are from 10pm to 8am Sunday through Thursday, and 12am to 8am on Friday and Saturday nights. Courtesy hours are 24/7. Please sign in acknowledgement of this policy.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

We will have study/quiet hours from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. (choose one) to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. on the following days (circle all that apply)

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

At what time will it be okay with us to be awake and making noise?

o Weekday mornings \_\_\_\_\_ Weekend mornings \_\_\_\_\_

o Weekday evenings \_\_\_\_\_ Weekend evenings \_\_\_\_\_

What time is it okay to have lights and/or electronics on? (Please be specific with which lights/electronics can be used at what time, also consider when to use them while roommate is asleep)

Morning: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: (Do you need silence or noise to study well/sleep well) \_\_\_\_\_

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On the following scale, how do we want to spend time in our room?

Alone      1      2      3      4      5      With Others

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Will allow each other to have visitors during certain hours/days:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. on the weekdays
- \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. on the weekends

What items are we okay with sharing/allowing others to use? (Please include use of furniture, food, and other personal items for this question and the next)

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What items are we not okay with sharing/allowing others to use?

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How do we feel about overnight guests? RL&DS policy requires roommates to get verbal consent from each other before any guests stay overnight and no guest may be in the room overnight for more than 3 days in a two week period. Guests are also required to be escorted at all times and must be checked in at the front desk.

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I will inform my roommate and/or Resident Assistant when I am having an extended stay away from the residence halls, for security reasons.

How clean and organized should we keep the room?

Please define your cleanliness (Examples include: number of items on the floor, whether the beds should be made, etc.) Refer to room care/health & safety in the "Policies and Procedures."

☐ Would like to keep the room very clean and organized, and to make that happen we will

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☐ Would like to keep the room clean and organized, and to make that happen we will

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☐ Would like to keep the room clean enough to walk through, and to make that happen we will

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☐ Will allow each other to keep our own side of the room in whatever condition we choose.

How will we divide cleaning responsibilities? (Vacuuming, dishes, wiping down the sink, taking out the garbage, etc.)

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What temperature do we want to keep the room? (Please include window usage)

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Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: _____	Signature: _____	Date: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____	Date: _____
Resident Assistant Signature: _____		Date: _____

# RESIDENCE HALL

## *Etiquette*

You may or may not have a roommate, but you have more than a dozen neighbors living in close quarters. Here are some tips for having a peaceful residence hall floor experience. Always consult to Residence Life & Dining's website ([uwyo.edu/reslife-dining/](http://uwyo.edu/reslife-dining/)) for most up-to-date guidelines and requirements with regards to living in the residence halls and issues surrounding

*From Campus Explorer's article, "How to Get Along with Your College Roommate"*



### RESPECT QUIET HOUR RULES.

Hall Quiet Hours are from 10pm to 8am Sunday through Thursday, and 12am to 8am on Friday and Saturday nights.

### YOU ARE SHARING BATHROOM SPACE.

Clean up after yourself (don't leave hair in the drain) and don't leave anything in the bathroom.

*Ask yourself – am I being a good neighbor?  
Would I want to live with me?*

### DEVELOP GOOD LAUNDRY HABITS.

- Set a specific day/time every week when you will do your laundry (and yes, you should do your laundry every week).
- Know the "rush hours"
- Budget your time (you don't want to start a load of laundry then have to rush to class)
- Set a timer on your phone so you don't forget to return to your laundry
- Doing laundry is no one's favorite chore. Be courteous to others (e.g. don't dump someone's wet laundry on the floor)!
- If you have issues with your laundry card swipe (WyoOne card) or a laundry machine not working, tell your residence hall desk
- Washing machines should only be filled  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way full. If you stuff a washing machine all the way full it will probably lock up, then you have to wait until it manually unlocks (about 10 minutes) and you will still have to rewash your clothes (if the machine locks it won't clean anything)
- Laundry Pods do not fully dissolve in the washing machines. Use liquid high efficiency detergent in the washing machines otherwise your clothes will not get cleaned very well.

For information about Residence Life, dining, and other first-semester issues, check out the Mobile App UWyo Guide and social media handles:

UWyo Guide



UWyo Reslife  
& Dining



UWyo RLDS



wyorlds

# Online Course SUCCESS TIPS

Some of your coursework might be online, so here are some strategies to keep in mind. The end of this document will include other UW-specific resources to help you through these times.

## STUDY AND TIME-MANAGEMENT HABITS FOR AN ONLINE PLATFORM

*Adapted from University of Michigan Center for Academic Innovation*

### 1. Stay Organized

Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:

- What are the in-person parts of this course? (lecture, lab, etc)
- Where can you find it or how do you access it? (live-stream, lecture capture, etc)
- Is it at a specific time or can you watch it anytime?

Keep track of assignments.

- What are the due dates?
- How will you submit assignments?
- Are any quizzes or exams being offered virtually?

What should you do if you need help?

- Is your course offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform?
- Is there an online forum for asking questions?
- One example of a way you could keep track:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Important Dates			
Important Links			

### 2. Avoid Multitasking

If you're doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be more tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once. But research shows us that only about 2% of the population can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you're probably not... really, you're switching between tasks very quickly (some call this "micro-tasking").

What to do instead:

- Consider the Magic of Monotasking. ([www.huffpost.com/entry/the-magic-of-monotasking\\_b\\_9239892](http://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-magic-of-monotasking_b_9239892))
- Try the "pomodoro method" to help you focus for 25- or 50-minute periods, and then reward yourself with a 5- and 10-minute break. [tomato-timer.com](http://tomato-timer.com)

### 3. Make the most of video lectures

- Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
- Close distracting tabs and apps. (See #2 above.)
- Continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.
- Watch recordings at normal speed. Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material (which most of your lectures probably are).





#### 4. Set a schedule

Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like the example below to organize your time. Include time for exercise and self-care. See page 27 for more information and a template.

#### 5. Find new strategies

If you have a semester with all online courses someday, you will need to adapt. For example:

- If you usually study in a coffee shop or library, ask yourself what kind of environment helps you study. See if you can recreate that at home. Maybe it's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. If you feel you need background noise, consider a white noise app.
- If you always study in groups, try a virtual or even phone-based study session with your group.
- If you thrive on tight timelines, but now have a more open schedule, think about how working with others or setting up a schedule can recreate that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can even do fifteen minutes at a time.

#### 6. Stay connected to other people

Even if we limit how much face-to-face time we spend with others on campus, connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. And staying in touch with instructors, classmates, and group mates is still important for continued classwork.

Here are a few ideas:

- Schedule video calls with friends and family. Talking with loved ones is often really helpful when you're stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- Attend virtual office hours or study groups so that you can stay up-to-date on your classwork.
- Utilize resources available. On-campus tutoring, online tutoring, SI, are all available to help you stay connected to others.

#### 7. Work with a group or team

- Do not procrastinate.
- Meet regularly. Consider a quick text on your group chat about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have real conversation when working together.
- Set a purpose for meetings and use a shared notes doc. Meetings might feel different when using video, even if your team was really good at working informally in the past. Try to set the purpose of your meeting in advance.
- Keep videos open when you can. As long as you can see whatever you need to collaborate, aim to keep the video visible on your computer screen. It'll help you see the expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other.
- Check on each other and ask for backup: If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, ask them directly if they're still able to participate in the project. If you aren't getting responses within a day or two, let your instructors know. Know it isn't being petty, it's your team's responsibility.

## 8. Be considerate on video calls

*Video conference etiquette adapted from [blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2013/08/20/video-conference-etiquette/](http://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2013/08/20/video-conference-etiquette/).*

- Use your UW Pro Zoom account – all UW students have access to a free pro Zoom account. Access the account through WyoWeb ([wyoweb.uwyo.edu](http://wyoweb.uwyo.edu)) and click on the Zoom button
- Project the right image. Dress as you would for an in-person meeting. Adjust lighting so you are easily seen. Move distracting background items (such as a pile of old laundry). Avoid yawning or distracting exaggerated motions.
- Practice speaking to the camera and not the screen.
- Utilize the mute button. Unless you are actively speaking, you should keep your mute button on. However, you should still actively participate in class discussions. Think of questions you want to ask and jot them down, or join in when a question has been thrown out.
- Reduce eating and drinking during calls.

## Understanding COURSE FORMATS

Your instructor may choose a variety of design options for your coursework. Here are some formats and important terms that may come up.

### ASYNCHRONOUS *online*

All of your lectures, assignments, activities, discussions, quizzes and exams are placed in modules. Modules are like storage bins in the Canvas learning system we call WyoCourses. Asynchronous courses can be completed on your own time rather than setting aside time like you would for face-to-face lectures. **Example:** You access all elements of the course at your own convenience according to deadlines set by your professor.

### SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE (*hybrid*)

You have no in-person face-to-face elements, but you need to reserve time each week for online work that occurs at the same time as your classmates. These synchronous activities may include lectures, study sessions, active learning, or discussion. Quizzes and exams are on WyoCourses.

**Example:** You access lectures and other resources online at your own convenience, but you set aside time each week to attend classes where you interact with other students and your professor.

### ASYNCHRONOUS CONTENT WITH FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITIES (*flipped*)

You view the recorded lectures online during a time that works for you, but then you will attend face-to-face (in-person or online) classroom sessions where you will interact with what you learned through activities, such as group discussions, problem solving activities, online labs, etc.

**Example:** You watch short recorded lectures each week on your own prior to coming to class. Depending on your professor, class may be in-person or offered synchronously online. During those sessions, you interact with the material that you learned on your own time.

### YOU CHOOSE: FACE-TO-FACE, ZOOM OR ASYNCHRONOUS (*HyFlex*)

Your professor leaves the course design up to you. Class sessions are offered in a classroom for those who prefer face-to-face. Those sessions are recorded live on Zoom for those who prefer a synchronous format, and uploaded as videos for those who prefer an asynchronous format. You may be asked to voice your preferred course method early in the semester. **Example:** Some classmates go in person to each lecture, others view the lecture at home as the professor delivers it, and others watch the lecture videos at a time that is convenient for them.





# CREATING *a* BUDGET *as you* START COLLEGE

*From "College Budget Template: Keep Track of Your School Expenses." (mint.com)*

College textbooks, a night out with buddies, furnishing your room - the expenses during your college years can quickly and easily burn a hole through your bank account in no time if you don't have a detailed college budget set up. No one enjoys counting pennies and controlling spending, but budgeting is a necessary part of financial health. Your college years in particular are the perfect time to learn how to budget properly before real adult life kicks in.

Don't think you need to maintain a budget? Here are some reasons why it's important to have one set up now, using a college budget template, as you start your first year of college.

## Your Family Isn't Constantly Watching Over Your Shoulder

While your parents may have had a dominant handle over your expenditures while you were living at home, you don't have this type of supervision when you're off on your own. Many times this financial freedom can get the best of college students, who end up finding themselves tempted by the myriad of items that are available to buy. Without mom or dad there to say "no," you could find yourself with mounting debt. Having a budget is a responsible step towards adulthood and maturity that helps you take control of your spending.

*Having a budget in place can help you delegate every dollar you make.*

## Your Funds Are Probably Limited in College

Most college students don't exactly have a ton of cash to work with, which makes the art of budgeting even more crucial. No matter where the funds are coming from - mom and dad, a part-time job, or even a scholarship or award - you'll most likely have to be savvy and learn how to stretch your dollar. Money has a tendency to be spent on 'wants' rather than 'needs' when no budget exists (more in the November chapter!). Having a budget allows you to see if whatever money is coming in is adequately covering your expenses, or if you have to look for more ways to supplement your income, or lower your spending if possible.

## Managing Your Money

Having a budget on a detailed spreadsheet with the help of a college budget template allows you to better control your money. It will show you where your money needs to go, including your savings, expenses, and extra spending money. This tool will also provide you with a reference to identify what your financial position is at the end of each month. For instance, if you've allotted \$100 to be spent on entertainment, but notice that all the receipts you've kept that month total \$150, you know you need to cut back \$50 from your entertainment expenditures.

## What Should You Include in Your Budget?

A budget can be as detailed as it needs to be for you. When it comes to your expenditures, don't leave anything out. Include items such as textbooks, tuition, room and board, student loans, transportation, groceries, entertainment, and other miscellaneous items. When it comes to your income, make sure to include anything on top of your part-time job that may bring money in, including awards, allowance from parents, and so forth. At the end of the month, compare the difference between the two, which will tell you whether your income covers your expenses, or whether you're ending up in the red.

## COLLEGE STUDENT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Monthly income for the month of: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	AMOUNT
Estimated Monthly Income	
Financial Awards	
Allowance from Parents	
Other Income	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Monthly expenses for the month of: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	AMOUNT
Rent	
Utilities	
Cell Phone	
Groceries/Car Expenses	
Student Loans	
Insurance	
Medical Expenses	
Credit Card	
Entertainment	
Laundry	
Miscellaneous	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

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Semester costs for the month of: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	AMOUNT
Tuition	
Books	
Lab Fees	
Deposits	
Other	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

How am I doing?

ITEM	AMOUNT
Monthly Income	
Monthly Expenses	
Semester Expenses	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

# SHORT & LONG TERM GOALS

Freshmen enter college with a range of real world experiences, from working full-time to never having done laundry to only having the culinary skills to make instant Ramen. Being independent is more about a mindset than an actual skill set. You can learn to do anything, from Calculus to making marinara from scratch if you are willing to own that you are responsible for learning to do it. This will apply to a range of tasks in the next four years, spanning from paying bills to academics.

Famous author, Annie Dillard, once said, “How we spend our days is how we spend our lives.” This is an important mantra as you move through college. Your college degree is not a golden ticket to a new life; rather, you spend four years working towards a degree, and those four years teach you how to live.

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I want to quote the advice I received during my freshman orientation: “when you are in a new town, school, or place in life, sometimes the best thing you can do is show up. Show up and be open and willing to try new things.” Show up for class, for clubs, and for your friends. Remember that people here care about you, whether it’s the student next door in the dorms or your English 1010 professor.

Make a great freshman year for yourself!

-Peyton Lunzer

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## Early-Semester REFLECTION

Answer the following questions considering how you want to make a new home and how that will make your time at the University of Wyoming. Not only will this help you settle into the semester, some research shows that students who write down goals are more likely to overcome obstacles and to achieve their dreams.

Jot down five goals for your freshman year:

Now write down five “two-year” goals:

Write down five “five-year” goals:

Write down five “ten-year” goals:

Finally, write a paragraph that considers how you want your life at the University of Wyoming to look, and what steps you can take this fall to work toward achieving your short term and long term goals.

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Partying is a part of the college experience for many, but don't let it be your only college experience. It's fun. It's a great way to socialize, but remember why you are here and what will count four years down the road. You can go out, have a good time, and still get to bed early enough to stay on track. Set smart boundaries, watch out for yourself and your friends, make time for fun and your studies, and you will have a well-rounded and amazing college experience.”

Mary Grace Bedwell, *UW Student*

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