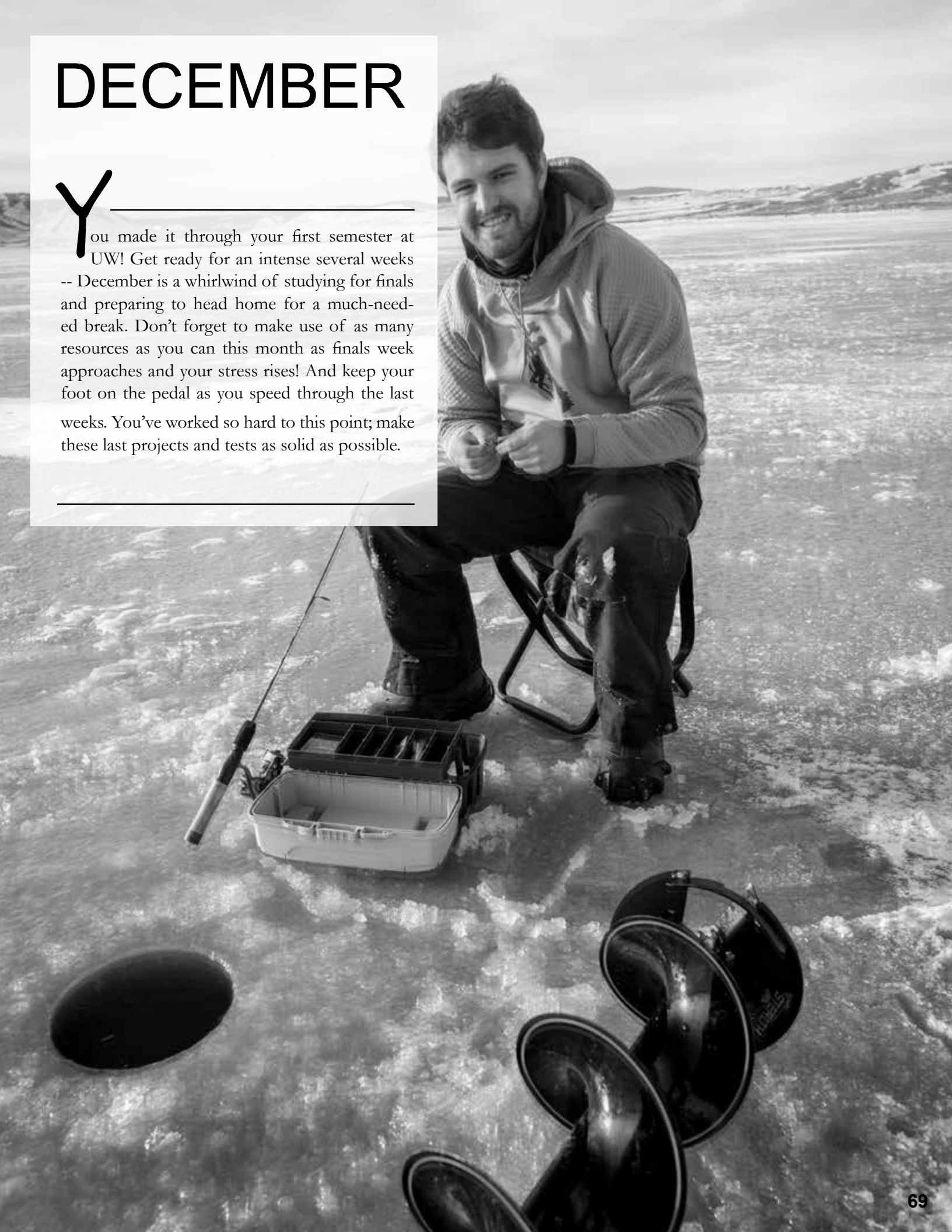
DECEMBER

You made it through your first semester at UW! Get ready for an intense several weeks -- December is a whirlwind of studying for finals and preparing to head home for a much-needed break. Don't forget to make use of as many resources as you can this month as finals week approaches and your stress rises! And keep your foot on the pedal as you speed through the last weeks. You've worked so hard to this point; make these last projects and tests as solid as possible.



PREPARING *for* FINALS WEEK

Including advice from Brian Witte/Varsity Tutors (Time.com)

1. Study for each course in small bursts.

   If you have more than one final, you might be planning to study for each individually, in chronological order. Interestingly, research has shown that human brains are not designed to focus narrowly for long stretches of time. So, plan to work on an individual subject for an hour or two, and then switch. You do not have to split your time equally. If you have a biology exam soon, review for it during more than one block of time (and never in back-to-back blocks). You will find that your recall of material increases, and the repetition that comes from revisiting material more frequently will help your class content "set" in your memory. Be sure to take short breaks each hour to refresh your mind.

2. Take care of yourself leading up to exams.

   Remember to find moments to de-stress while studying. The UW Libraries and the Wellness Center offer de-stressing activities leading up to finals week in Coe Library with various ways to unwind, often including Puppy Time, puzzles, massage machines, and free beverages.

   Going into a final without enough sleep could hurt you as much as a poor study plan. Get a good night's sleep, and take a few small exercise breaks during the week before (and during) final exams. Before a final, be sure to eat a meal that is high in protein. Most final exams are more than an hour in length, and a sugar rush simply will not see you through. Likewise, taking an important test while hungry can be a recipe for disaster.

3. Visit resources to help you prepare.

   To be most prepared for finals, visit some of the help centers. STEP Tutoring offers a Finals-Stravaganza event to help students prepare for their finals. Visit their website for information at uwyo.edu/step. Other good resources include the Writing Center, the Center for Assistance in Statistics and Math (CASM), and the Oral Communication Center. Also, visit your professor's office hours to ask about tips for studying and succeeding on the final.

4. Silence your social media accounts.

   The reverse of focusing too intensely is not being able to focus at all. While it is true that devoting too much time to studying can lead to fatigue, dividing your review sessions into too many parts can lead to scattered and ineffectual learning. Turning off your social media for an entire week may not be realistic or achievable for every student; instead, try turning off the Wi-Fi on your phone or tablet. This will decrease the number of notifications that pop up and steal your attention. Do, however, use social media and text-time as a reward. Check in on your favorite platforms or websites for 10 to 15 minutes during study breaks. However, be aware of the "just for a moment" syndrome. As most people know all too well, checking news headlines can lead to an entire afternoon of watching hilarious cat videos and reading celebrity gossip.

A strong finals week performance may seem impossible, but it is anything but. Set your worries and nerves aside, and remember to stay on task, work hard, eat well, and make time to rest. Soon, finals week will be over, and you can begin your long-awaited holiday!

Mapping your STUDY & EXAM TIMES

CHECK YOUR COURSE SYLLABI TO DETERMINE YOUR FINALS WEEK SCHEDULE

(Or access all finals here: www.uwyo.edu/registrar/class-schedules/final-exam-schedule.html)

Complete this table:

CLASS	FINAL EXAM DAY/TIME/LOCATION

FINALS PREP *Calendar*

Using the calendar from the Registrar's website (above) or the calendar link on WyoWeb, fill in the date of your last day of class and your study days for each of your final exams, papers, or projects. Include the time and location of each of your exams.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT

Tip: Write sideways.

COURSE OPTIONS *over the* BREAK

If you would like to take a class over the winter holiday (or J-term), there are several options each year offered by a variety of departments. Students interested in viewing and enrolling in J-Term courses should utilize the Advanced Search function in registration when browsing Spring courses. Past terms have included courses from Communication & Journalism, African American Studies, Latino/a Studies, Sociology, Environment & Natural Resources, Religious Studies – and more!

**Before enrolling in a J-term course, touch base with your advisor about the option -- make sure a J-term course works with your financial aid and academic/degree progress.*

TIPS *for the* HOLIDAY BREAK

Register for spring courses (before you leave!)

If you have lingering questions about spring registration, or other holds that are preventing you from enrolling, make some time to clear up these issues before you depart for the break. Spring classes will keep filling more each week (and day) – and new spring students will be eating up course availability as they come in. Talk to your ACES advisor and instructor if you need some help completing your spring registration.

Check your UW email over the break

It might be tempting to detach from UW email over the holiday break, but be sure to check your email at least once or twice a week over the holiday. It's possible you may receive notes about your spring courses, financial issues, or important deadlines to stay on top of.

Review your final grades in early January

Grades are due early in January, so you should be able to check shortly after the new year and see all (or at least most) of your final semester grades. If you have questions about any final grade, reach out to the instructor over email and be specific about your concern or question!

Complete SOAR Activities over the holiday

Make the SOAR platform a goal for your spare time over the holiday break. Some badges will help you learn more about your major, plan for courses/internships moving forward, and discover new information about possible careers.

APPLYING *for scholarships*

Another great way to spend your winter break is to find some scholarships. Scholarships are not just for first-year students. Many scholarships are offered beyond the first year. Follow these handy tips for a successful scholarship search and application.

Scholarship Websites

University of Wyoming Scholarships
External Scholarships
www.scholarships.com
www.unigo.com
www.fastweb.com
FAFSA:
Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Start the scholarship search process sooner rather than later.

If you're debating on when to start applying, the time is now. You can apply for scholarships you qualify for as early as you'd like and the rule of thumb is always the earlier, the better. The process can often be very slow, so be patient and continue applying to new scholarships while waiting to hear back from those you've already applied to.

Apply for scholarships in different categories.

Don't limit yourself to one type of scholarship. Balance it out by applying for any merit, athletic, and artistic scholarships you qualify for.

Complete the application entirely and accurately.

Follow all instructions given in the application and answer all questions completely. Review the application more than once to make sure all fields have been completed and that all answers are accurate. If you don't want to, there will be others that will. Scholarship providers are often looking at subtle clues to determine what kind of student you are. The applications that frequently make it to the final round of considerations and are awarded are those that are completed, accurate, free of mistakes, and show a solid command of standard English.

Include letters of recommendation.

A good reference can make all the difference in your scholarship application. Make sure that the letters you include are relevant and that you are confident in the person writing the letter for you — there is nothing worse than a lousy rec letter! Also, give the person writing the letter significant time and a copy of your student resume so they can easily reference your student activities. Be sure to write thank you notes to your reference writers. They took time to write a letter on your behalf, so it is important to thank them for their time.

Don't count out scholarships with lower award amounts.

Some students only apply for scholarships with significantly large award amounts. The problem with that methodology is that you are going to have a lot more competition than with lower scholarship amounts. Applying for all award amounts is a good way to ensure that you have a better chance of winning. Remember, there is no limit to how many scholarships you can apply for or win, so winning several smaller awards can really add up.

Don't become discouraged if you don't win right away.

It's important to keep in mind that applying for scholarships is a numbers game. The more Inc

you apply to, the better your chances of winning – so apply for as many as you qualify for. There are millions of scholarships and they are refreshed daily, so don't give up if your efforts aren't rewarded immediately. It's difficult at times to win a scholarship, and not everyone is guaranteed to be awarded. If you give up applying, you're guaranteed to never win one.

Don't avoid scholarships that require essays.

Many students avoid scholarships that require essays, yet focusing on those opportunities can be a smart decision. Yes, they do take more effort, but once you have several essay applications under your belt, the process gets easier. The Writing Center is a good resource for help with those essays.

Stay organized, keeping deadlines in mind.

Always aim to complete your applications before the deadline so that you have plenty of extra time to fix your application should any issues occur. Application deadlines aren't suggestions – they are final. Keep a calendar that outlines your application deadlines.

Make a scholarship application schedule and stick to it.

Set aside a specific time that you're going to focus on applying for scholarships. It can be one night a week, an hour each day or whatever works with your schedule.

Beware of Scholarship and Financial Aid Scams!

Know the warning signs for scholarship and financial aid scams. They're easier than you think to spot! Here are some scholarship scam warning signs you should be aware of:

- **Fees:** True scholarships are there to aid you, not the other way around so never pay to apply for scholarships or financial aid.
- **Guarantees You'll Win:** Legitimate scholarship sponsors will never guarantee that you'll win. If an offer is guaranteed, it's exactly as it seems: too good to be true.
- **You're already a winner!** You didn't apply, yet you've won. Legitimate scholarship offers are those you need to put effort into winning through the application process – you aren't just awarded money for no reason.
- **Personal Information Requests:** A legitimate scholarship sponsor will never request personal information that you shouldn't be giving out, like your social security number. If you're ever uncomfortable with the type of information requested, it's likely not a legitimate offer.
- **Missing Sponsor Information:** When a scholarship sponsor is legitimate, you will always be able to access their contact information in some form. If it seems like a "don't call us, we'll call you" type of situation, look at it as a red flag.

FALL FINAL *Reflection*

Write a brief note to incoming students in the spring (or next fall) semester. Include 2-3 pieces of advice you would give them after completing a semester of college. What tips do you wish you'd been given when you started college? What would you like to see included in "Student Voices" in the next booklet?