STARTING *the* SEMESTER

The 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. But people rarely address the fact that starting over and beginning college do not happen overnight. This adjustment period 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 to campus culture from students and faculty. Think of this like a travel guide; use it to learn the resources, lingo, and expectations to allow you to do the best you can in your academics while managing to have enough time to have fun and enjoy a rich life outside of the classroom.

"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

Useful Apps FOR STUDENTS

So you have your dorm room all set up, you have your backpack, you even got your textbooks. Think you're ready to start the semester? Unless you have these Android or Apple apps on your cell phone, you may not be completely prepared. Pro-Tip: Put all of these apps into the same folder for easy access. www.uwyo.edu/apps

Penji: Free Tutoring at UW

Successful students use tutoring. Penji is how students make [free] tutoring appointments with UW tutors in dozens of classes in multiple centers across campus. After downloading the app, sign in with your UWYO credentials. After you create a profile, you can see the various centers and free tutoring at UW. Contact stepatuw@uwyo.edu with issues.

Canvas: Access WyoCourses

Nearly all of your classes will be on Canvas. Students can: view grades and course content, submit assignments, keep track of course work with to do list and calendar, send and receive messages, post to discussions, watch videos, take quizzes, receive push notifications for new grades and course updates, and much more. Contact wyocourses@uwyo.edu with issues

1. Select "Find my School"
2. Enter University of Wyoming
3. Sign in with UWYO credentials

Navigate: Advising and Beyond

Navigate Student lets you know how and when to get important things done. Meet with your advisor, resolve a problem, view class schedule, create reminders for yourself, find things on campus, and more. To get started, select UW from the dropdown menu and log in with your UWYO credentials.

Suitable (SOAR)

Gamify your co-curricular experiences and work toward badges with UW's experiential transcript platform.

UW Libraries: Browzine and Libby

Access the University of Wyoming's digital collections. Libby is popular reading; Browzine is discipline-specific scholarly journals.

Handshake

Find and apply for on-campus and off-campus jobs and internships, connect with employeers, and find career fairs.

SafeRide

This is an on-call public transportation service that operates late nights and weekends for safe rides anywhere in the Laramie city limits.

Other Important Apps

Corq: Connect with UW events
Grammarly: proofreader
Scannable: scan docs
Transact Mobile: UWYO Eats
Transloc: Track public transit on campus
UW Campus Rec: Fitness class schedules
Zoom: Be sure you use UW's Free Pro Zoom account by selecting SSO then "uwyo"

Discovering UW'S POLICIES

From Cornerstones for College Success *by Kendall Hunt, Sherfield/Moody*

Using UW's search engine, try to answer these policy questions.

Policy Question	Response
What is the last day to drop a class?	
What is the last day to withdraw from a class?	
Where can you find the grade appeal process? (website)	
Where can you find UW's refund policy? (website address)	
How many credit hours are required to earn a degree?	
Where can you find guidelines for keeping your financial aid at UW? (website address)	
Where can you find the UW statement on freedom of expression? (website address)	
What is your advisor's email address and office location?	

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 most common experience 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 healthy, 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"

Sometimes you hear those feel-good stories about two totally random roommates who end up becoming best friends. Somehow, they just click — they bond over shared interests, realize they have way more in common than they thought, and stay super close all through college. It's a sweet story, but honestly, it sounds a little like something out of a cheesy movie.

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 them, 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 they like 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 them 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 Successful Roommate Relationships

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 (like dirtly laundry), the relationship will start to sour (like forgotten milk). Address issues as they come up, and you'll be able to defuse them more easily.

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. Fill it out intentionally and remember what you agreed on.

For information about Residence Life, dining, go to uwyo.edu/living.

RESIDENCE HALL *Etiquette*

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

Whether you are part of a Living Learning Community (LLC) with themed floor events or simply a resident, one drastic change in college is that you have more than a dozen neighbors living in close quarters to you. It's common to hang out with everyone in the fishbowl, the common lounge area on each floor of the halls. Floormates are great sources of new friendships. Here are some tips for having a peaceful residence hall experience

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?

"

If you see people playing cards or a board game in the fish bowl, it isn't weird to ask if you can join in. Don't be shy."

– Paul Steinke, *UW Student*

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 ¾ 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.

Consult the Housing, Dining, & Residence Life website (uwyo.edu/living) for most up-to-date guidelines and requirements with regards to living in the residence halls.

IMMERSE YOURSELF! *Gem City Culture*

Laramie's nickname, "The Gem City of the Plains" dates back to the late 1800s. It was seen as a bright, promising place in the middle of the wide, open prairie. Integrating into the vibrant Laramie community can significantly enrich your college experience. Here are some ideas to immerse yourself in Laramie's offerings, all while embracing the diverse cultures of college life.

ATTEND THE FARMER'S MARKET

Held in downtown Laramie on Fridays through mid-Sepetember, the Farmer's Market is more than just a place to buy fresh produce. It's a cultural hub where you can interact with local farmers, artisans, and community members.

SWING DANCING

A big part of the UW cultural scene includes swing dancing. There's even a club you can join. Each Wednesday the Cowboy Saloon downtown opens its doors to ages 18+ for swing dancing.

EXPLORE DOWNTOWN LARAMIE MURALS

The murals scattered throughout downtown Laramie offer a colorful and insightful glimpse into the town's history and artistic spirit. Taking a self-guided mural tour is not only an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon but also an educational experience. These murals often depict significant historical events, cultural narratives, and community values. Develop a deeper appreciation for the town's heritage—an appreciation that aligns with the liberal arts in academia.

VISIT LARAMIE'S PARKS AND MUSEUMS

Laramie's parks, such as Washington Park and LaPrele Park, provide perfect settings for relaxation and recreation. Parks often host community events and festivals, offering opportunities to meet new people and engage in local traditions. While UW has many museums, such as the Art Museum and the Anthropology Museum, the community of Laramie also has great offerings, such as the Wyoming Territorial Museum, Women's History Museum, and Laramie Plains Museum.

VOLUNTEER IN THE COMMUNITY

Community service is a powerful way to connect with Laramie on a deeper level. Numerous local organizations welcome student volunteers for various causes, such as environmental conservation, education, and social services. Volunteering not only allows you to give back to the community but also helps you develop valuable skills and a sense of responsibility. It embodies the spirit of service learning, a key component of many university cultures that emphasizes the importance of civic engagement and social responsibility. Search UW's website for "Volunteer Hub" to find local calls for volunteers.

Not only is it enjoyable, but participating in local community events can enhance your sense of belonging and alleviate homesickness. For more ideas on exploring the Gem City, visit www.visitlaramie.org.

Reflect on Engagement

How does getting involved in Laramie complement your personal or academic pursuits?

Preparing FOR CLASSES

UPLOAD YOUR PROFILE PICTURE

By uploading your picture to the WyoCourse account in Canvas, you can help your instructors learn your name better. Follow these steps prior to your first day in classes.

1. Log into your WyoCourse account.
2. Select Account from the top left corner.
3. Select Profile.
4. Hover over the area where you can enter a picture and click on the pencil.
5. You can **Upload a Picture** or **Take a Picture**. (Selecting "From Gravatar" is not recommended since it will not help your instructor get to know your face.)
6. Once you have your picture chosen, you can crop it and save it.

Online Course SUCCESS TIPS

Adapted from University of Michigan Center for Academic Innovation

1. Schedule Like Its In-Person

Just because your online class doesn't meet in person doesn't mean it should be out of sight, out of mind. Treat it like a regular class by setting aside dedicated time each week to watch lectures, complete assignments, and stay on track—your future self will thank you!

2. Stay Organized

Create a chart to keep track of dates office hours 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 (synchronous) or can you watch it anytime (asynchronous)?
- What are the important due dates?
- How will you submit assignments?
- Is your course offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform?
- Is there an online forum for asking questions?

3. Avoid Multitasking

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 (focus on one task until it is complete).
- 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.

4. Make the most of video lectures

- Stick to the instructor's schedule as much as you can.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature? Threaded discussion?
- Close distracting tabs and apps. (See #3 above.)
- Take notes as if you were there in person.

Watch recordings at normal speed. Playback speed of 1.5x can lower retention and result in lower scores on assessments. It is also worse for complex, multi-step material.

5. Access Zoom from WyoWeb for the premium experience.

Use your UW Pro Zoom account – all UW students have access to a free pro Zoom account. Access the account through WyoWeb and click on the camera icon.

6. Be considerate on Zoom

- Project the right image. Dress as you would for an in-person meeting. Adjust lighting so you are easily seen. Move distracting background items. Avoid yawning or 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.

Avoid eating & drinking on Zoom. This is distracting for everyone on video calls.

Understanding ONLINE FORMATS

Taking an online class? 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 do not have a set meeting time, but do have set deadlines.

Example: You access all elements of the course at your own convenience according to deadlines set by your professor.

SYNCHRONOUS (*hybrid*)

There are no in-person elements, but you need to meet online at the designated course time every week. 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 WITH FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITIES (*flipped*)

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 and discussions.

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.

Short-Term & LONG-TERM GOALS

> Growing up isn't a light-switch. It's a set of habits.
> – Paul Steinke, *UW Student*

Freshmen enter college with a range of real world experiences, from working full-time 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 molecular biology 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.

Pre-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:

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.

"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*