

# Information Packet for New Graduate Students

Welcome to the Zoology & Physiology Department at the University of Wyoming! We are happy to have you joining our community and hope that you will find it a rewarding and enjoyable place to be during your graduate studies.

This document is intended to offer guidance and resources for navigating through the often complicated process of being a graduate student. Much of the information in this document is available in greater detail through the Zoology & Physiology Department's graduate studies policy page ([https://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/students/grad-degrees/policy\\_gradstudy.html](https://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/students/grad-degrees/policy_gradstudy.html)) and the Office of Graduate Education's informational page (<https://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/index.html>). Be sure to check those sites for any additional questions not answered here.

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## **I - Contact Information**

*(For further information on contact and other office related processes - e.g. pay schedules, p-cards, vehicle renting, etc. - see the LSSC Office Procedures document)*

Life Science Service Center Office - Located in Aven Nelson, Rooms 114 & 107

Laura Cole ([lc9@uwyo.edu](mailto:lc9@uwyo.edu)) – LSSC Business Manager overseeing office operations.

Jake Orr ([jorr2@uwyo.edu](mailto:jorr2@uwyo.edu)) – LSSC Office Associate Senior and point of contact for questions regarding forms, requirements, TAs, GA hires, fees, or other graduate student specific questions. Also handles department-approved travel.

Rachel Dobjeleski ([rdobjele@uwyo.edu](mailto:rdobjele@uwyo.edu)) – LSSC Office Associate Senior handling purchasing and providing grant assistance.

Jack Ross ([jross26@uwyo.edu](mailto:jross26@uwyo.edu)) – LSSC Office Associate handling P-cards, room/building access, website, part-time hires, work-study hires.

Diane Gorski ([dpgorski@uwyo.edu](mailto:dpgorski@uwyo.edu)) - Laboratory and Course Coordinator for Zoology & Physiology courses. Point of contact for questions about lab facilities or TAing for Physiology.

Emmalee Moore ([emoore21@uwyo.edu](mailto:emoore21@uwyo.edu)) – Project Manager for the Sensory Biology Center. Point of contact if you work with the SBC.

Plum Schultz ([iguana@uwyo.edu](mailto:iguana@uwyo.edu)) - Office Associate for the Wyoming Co-op unit. Point of contact for anything specific to that unit, including vehicle or equipment rentals.

Vanessa Simoneau ([vsimonea@uwyo.edu](mailto:vsimonea@uwyo.edu)) - Business Manager for the Wyoming Co-op unit, overseeing office operations including GA hires, grant administration, budgets.

Robert Seville ([sseville@uwyo.edu](mailto:sseville@uwyo.edu)) - Department Head; contact in cases of advisor conflict or other major administrative issues.

## **II - Overview of Program Requirements**

The Zoology & Physiology Department offers a thesis and non-thesis based Master's degree as well as a PhD. All requirements are detailed on the Zoology website, ([http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/grad\\_degrees/policy\\_gradstudy.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/grad_degrees/policy_gradstudy.html)), and in the University of Wyoming's Policy on Graduate Study at the same link. All forms are available from the Registrar's website ([http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/graduate\\_students/Graduate\\_Student\\_Forms.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/graduate_students/Graduate_Student_Forms.html)).

### 1. Course requirements

A) MS students are required to take a minimum of 30 credit hours. No more than 4 credit hours can be thesis research (ZOO 5960). Of the remaining 26 credit hours, at least 18 must be structured coursework (in-person or online classes with syllabi and assignments). The final 8 credit hours can be a mix of structured and unstructured coursework.

- Unstructured coursework can consist of lab meetings or advisor meetings in which projects are developed or papers read and discussed (e.g. Research in Ecology (ZOOL 5750), Research in Physiology (ZOOL 5600)). It is also possible to receive course credit for attending the weekly Zoology & Physiology Brown Bag lectures (ZOO 5890). Speak with your advisor for help determining which courses fulfill your requirements.

B) PhD students are required to take 72 hours of course work, of which 42 must be structured coursework (in-person or online classes with syllabi and assignments). The remaining 30 hours can come from unstructured coursework. Credit hours from graduate level coursework can be transferred from a previous institution.

### 2. Committee Requirements

Both MS and PhD students should form a committee before the end of their second semester (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/committee-assignment-new.pdf>). Other required forms (e.g. Plan of Study, Anticipated Graduation Date) will not be accepted before a committee assignment form has been submitted. The committee should also meet before the end of the third semester to discuss the student's research and plan of study. A committee must have a minimum of 5 members for a PhD student and 3 members for a MS student. One of the committee members must be a faculty member from outside of the Zoology & Physiology Department. This committee member is intended to be independent of potential conflicts of interest that might arise in the case of student-advisor disagreements and should be a resource for the student in these situations. Some professors are not eligible to be an external committee member because they either have a partial appointment in Zoology & Physiology or are not tenure track.

In general, it is best to seek out faculty with some expertise in aspects of your intended research and which is complementary to that of your advisor. It is also helpful to consider the resources they can offer, such as access to equipment, help with complex analyses, connections to outside organizations,

etc. Also be aware of faculty's existing commitments as faculty with expertise in popular fields may have many demands on their time and not be able to offer much help.

### 3. Other Requirements

Program of Study - All students should submit a Program of Study (MS - <https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/program-of-study-master-new.pdf>, PhD - <https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/program-of-study-doctoral-new.pdf>) **by the end of their second semester**. The Program of Study is a list of courses the student intends to take to fulfill all of their requirements, which must be approved by each member of the committee. In practice, it can be quite difficult to predict which courses will be available, as many are not offered on a regular basis. Programs of Study are thus often submitted after the second semester deadline. There are some suggested courses later in this document to help students with planning their course of study.

Thesis/Dissertation - When you are starting to write at the end of your graduate studies, be sure to follow the University's formatting requirements ([https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/thesis\\_dissertation\\_guide2020.pdf](https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/thesis_dissertation_guide2020.pdf)). Individual chapters can generally be submitted in the form of publication submissions. In addition, all students are required to give a public defense which must be advertised at least one week in advance of the defense date.

Preliminary Exams - All PhD students must complete a proposal defense and preliminary examination to be administered by their committee prior to defending their dissertation. Detailed information on this is available on the Graduate Student Policy Page ([http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/grad\\_degrees/policy\\_gradstudy.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/grad_degrees/policy_gradstudy.html)).

Graduation - Prior to graduation, all students must declare an Anticipated Graduation Date through WyoWeb (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/declaring-graduation-date-online-through-wyorecords.pdf>). At the student's defense, they should have each committee member sign the Report of Final Exam (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/report-of-final-exam-masters-and-phd-new.pdf>), which is required for graduation.

Request of Course Load Reduction - Finally, many students may wish to take fewer than the required 9 credit hours, but still remain a full time student with access to healthcare and University facilities. In these cases, it is possible to request a reduced course load using the Optional Student Fee Petition (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/optional-student-fee-petition-new.pdf>). In order to be eligible for this reduction, PhD students must have completed their Prelims and MS students must have completed 90% of their coursework. PhD students can only request this reduction three times and MS students two times.

### **III - Timeline for Completion of Degree**

#### Semester 1

Take introductory courses  
Think about committee formation

#### Semester 2

Continue introductory courses  
Form committee and convene a committee meeting  
Submit Plan of Study and Committee Formation forms to Registrar

#### Semester 3 - 4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12...

Complete minimum course requirements  
Defend dissertation proposal (PhD students)  
Complete preliminary exams (PhD students)

#### Final Semester

Declare anticipated graduation date through WyoWeb  
Defend *at least 10 days prior to the final day of the semester*  
Submit properly formatted thesis/dissertation  
Submit Report of Final Examination  
Graduate

## **IV - Courses**

In order to register for courses on WyoWeb, you will need a PERC number. Your advisor should send you this number prior to registration opening each semester. If your advisor is out of reach, you can also request your PERC number from the Life Science Service Center Office.

Below is a list of courses which are offered regularly and which will be broadly useful to most students, regardless of specialty. Most students who lack extensive experience in coding will benefit from taking BOT 5550/ ZOO 5890 early on. BOT 5600 is a more advanced class and ZOO 5500 is best taken after going through the other available courses. You should be comfortable with R before taking these latter two courses.

### **Statistics / R:**

#### **STAT 5050/5051 - Statistics for Biology**

Good overview of basic statistical concepts. Good for those who need to brush up on the basics.

Offered every Fall (5050) and Spring (5051) semesters

#### **ZOO 5890 - Intro2R**

Introduction to R from the basics to data visualization using Base R.

Offered every fall semester.

#### **BOT 5550 - Computational Biology**

Introduction to statistical methods using R including distributions, basic modeling, and introduction to Bayesian.

Offered every spring semester.

#### **BOT 5600 - Ecological Modeling**

Good coverage of statistics from linear regression to Bayesian to multiple regression to structural equation modeling in R.

Offered even spring semesters.

#### **ZOO 5500 - Quantitative Analysis of Field Data**

Advanced statistical analysis of the students' own data in R in preparation for a manuscript. Should be taken once all data has been collected.

Offered every fall semester.

**Theory:***Zoology Specific*

## ZOO 5620 - Advanced Topics in Ecology

A review of the fundamental literature spanning population, community, and landscape ecology

## ZOO 5890 - Advanced Topics in Evolution

A review of the fundamental literature in genetics, speciation and evolutionary ecology.

**Writing:**

## ZOO 5270 - Writing and Reviewing Science

Overview of scientific writing practices. Must have analyzed data for preparation of a manuscript.

**Teaching:**

## BOT 5000- Learning and Teaching in Biology

Overview of the teaching literature and practices, great way to build curriculum.

## V - UWYO Student Health Insurance

The University of Wyoming is contracted with UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR) to provide insurance plans for domestic and international students. Plans are purchased for Fall and Spring coverage to ensure year-round coverage is available. Insurance is available over the Summer but isn't necessarily covered by Teaching Assistantships. Students **are not required** to purchase the student health insurance and can seek out their own insurance plans.

### A Brief Overview

You must go to the Student Healthcare Center (SHC) on campus for any non-emergency health issues if you are in Laramie and the Center is open. They provide many services for free. If they cannot provide assistance, they will refer you to an outside facility. It is important that you go to the SHC first and keep a copy of the referral, otherwise you may not be reimbursed for your costs by the insurance company.

As of 2020, the deductible for the student health insurance is \$400. This means that you must pay at least \$400 in documented medical expenses before the insurance will provide any payments for services. Once you have met the deductible, the company will pay 80% of the total cost for 'in network providers'. If you are going to a facility outside the SHC, it is important to find out **if the facility and the specific doctor** you are seeing are in network. You should check this even if SHC referred you to a doctor as they don't necessarily know who qualifies as in or out of network. The coverage for out of network providers is only 60% of expenses (after meeting the \$800 out of network deductible)! You can check network status using the insurance company's website: <https://www.uhcsr.com/school-page>

For purchasing medications, you pay a copay (an amount required regardless of your payment of the deductible) that corresponds to the expense of your medication. Drugs are ranked in tiers - tier 1 drugs are more common and have a \$10 copay. You should check the insurance provider's website to see what tier your medication is and the corresponding copay.

There is a long list of exceptions for which the provider will not pay on the benefits summary document on the UHCSR website. So when planning health procedures, it is very important to do your research ahead of time. If you have any questions, call UHCSR or the Student Health Insurance office (info below) and ask questions until you are satisfied that they have explained everything so that you understand. It is your financial and physical health that are in jeopardy and these people's jobs are to answer questions about the insurance that you are paying for, so do not be afraid to push until you are satisfied they have answered your questions.

Finally, you will not be mailed an insurance card. You will need to go to the UHCSR website and create an account using your school information and then access your insurance card



information through the website. You should print out a copy of this card and keep it with you at all times.

### Plan Information

Insurance plan information including plan cost, deductible, out-of-pocket maximum, coinsurance, prescription drug prices, preventative care services and per service copays and deductibles for preferred and out-of-network providers is available here:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/plan.html> Please see additional links below to access further details and plan information including the academic year plan brochure.

### Referral Information

A referral from the Student Health Center is required for medical care outside of the SHC. A new referral is required per academic year and diagnosis. The insurance company will not cover (pay) for any treatment or appointments without a referral (exceptions apply). The following circumstances do not require a referral:

- Medical Emergency. The student must return to SHC for necessary follow-up care.
- When the Student Health Center is closed.
- When service is rendered at another facility during break or vacation periods.
- Medical care received when the student is more than 40 miles from campus.
- Medical care obtained when a student is no longer able to use the SHC due to a change in student status.
- Maternity, obstetrical and gynecological care.
- Mental Illness treatment and Substance Use Disorder treatment.

### Additional Benefits

United Healthcare Student Resources has multiple tools to help students navigate their health including:

- Health Discount Program through [United Health Allies](#) that offers discounts to certain healthcare providers, books/media, and fitness supplies.
- Healthiest You 24/7 Doctor Access where students can speak with a doctor via phone and/or video regarding medical questions. The phone number is listed on the student's insurance card.
- Student Assistance 24/7 Counseling Support and other assistance services. More information is available to students in the student's My Account with UHCSR.

### Enrollment Process

Domestic students are required to accept or decline the Student Health Insurance option through their WyoWeb account prior to registering for classes. A confirmation email will be sent to their University email after a selection has been made. Changes to one's insurance choice may be made by selection "Health Insurance" under the "To-Do" list on their WyoWeb account. The

deadline to make any changes to the insurance selection is the drop/add deadline for the semester and is published on the Registrar's website.

International (non-citizen) students are automatically enrolled in the medical insurance every fall and spring semester when they enroll in classes. International students may waive the student medical insurance if they meet requirements outlined in the University Regulation 2-201 Admission of Students. Please see details on website: <https://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/>

### Eligibility

Domestic students: enrolled in at least 4.5 hours. Students are not eligible if they are online or remote only and should not elect the insurance if they are not taking classes in person, on campus.

International students: Students are not eligible for student health insurance if they are only online or remote and should review their registration closely. Contact the Student Health Insurance Office if you are online/remote and insurance charges appear on your account.

### Tax Information

As of 2020 you are required to have health insurance or you incur a tax penalty. If necessary, you can obtain 1095 tax forms which demonstrate that you have been insured through the UHCSR website.

### Contact Information

Student Health Insurance

Knight Hall room 248

Phone: (307) 766-3025

Fax: (307) 766-3024

Email: [stuins@uwyo.edu](mailto:stuins@uwyo.edu)

United Healthcare Services

Website: <https://www.uhcsr.com/uwyo>

Customer Services: 800-767-0700 (7:00 AM - 7:00 PM, CST, Monday - Friday)

### Additional Links:

Student Health Insurance homepage: <https://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/>

Student Health Insurance Plan Information: <http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/plan.html>

## VI - Finances

### Salaries

The university [minimum salaries](#) are \$12,825.00 for MS students and \$17,838.00 for PhD students. This is paid from September through May and does not include funding for Summer, which must be obtained separately. Summer funding is generally procured either through departmental scholarships, independent grants you are awarded, or funding your advisor has.

The schedule provided by Payroll this year for the minimum salaries listed above is as follows:

	<b>Fall Only</b>					
	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>	
MS Monthly Pay	\$0.00	\$2,137.50	\$1,425.00	\$1,425.00	\$1,425.00	\$6,412.50
PhD Monthly Pay	\$0.00	\$2,973.00	\$1,982.00	\$1,982.00	\$1,982.00	\$8,919.00
	<b>Spring Only</b>					
	<i>January</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	
MS Monthly Pay	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$6,412.50
PhD Monthly Pay	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$8,919.00
	<b>Academic Year</b>					
	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>	
MS Monthly Pay	\$0.00	\$2,137.50	\$1,425.00	\$1,425.00	\$1,425.00	
PhD Monthly Pay	\$0.00	\$2,973.00	\$1,982.00	\$1,982.00	\$1,982.00	
	<b>#REF!</b>					
	<i>January</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	
MS Monthly Pay	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$1,282.50	\$12,825.00
PhD Monthly Pay	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$1,783.80	\$17,838.00

**It is also important to note** that there are sometimes issues with the WyoCloud system that can delay payment of these stipends. Please email Jake Orr in the LSSC Office if you notice that you have not been paid after the end of the month you started (usually September or January). Be polite and considerate but persistent in sending reminders until you get paid. The office staff have a lot going on and won't be offended by the reminders.

### Assistantships

Funding will come in the form TAships, RAships, or GAships. A TAship entails teaching a course or lab section; you are responsible for working up to 19 hours per week on teaching duties and must attend the GA Teaching & Learning Symposium the first semester you TA (<http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/symposium.html>). Before the start of the

semester, a list will be emailed to all students who have expressed the need for a TAship asking them to rank their preferences for classes they'd like to TA. In practice students who have been around longer will TA upper level classes and newer students will TA the large introductory Life Science classes. It is usually possible to TA the class that your advisor teaches if you ask them. MS students are limited to 4 semesters of support through TAships and PhD students are limited to 8 semesters.

A RAship entails working on a research project that is not your own, either for your advisor or another professor. A GAship entails working on your own research/projects with independent funding acquired either by your advisor or yourself. For each of these you are expected to work 20 hours per week.

TAships provide the minimum salary guaranteed by the university. You or your advisor can opt to pay a higher salary through a GAship or RAship if you have independent funding. The expected hours of work are supposed to be a running average. In practice you will find that some weeks you work substantially less than 19 or 20 hours and some weeks you work much more. If you feel like you are consistently working more than this, it is a good idea to keep track of your hours. As a graduate student you are simultaneously a student, an employee, and a researcher, often with different supervisors in each realm. As such, you have multiple people demanding your time and efforts, so it is important to maintain for the sake of your health. If an advisor or teaching professor seems to be demanding too much and is not responding to your objections, you can follow the conflict resolution procedure further down.

In almost all cases, your assistantship should cover the cost of university fees, health insurance for a full year, and 9 credit hours of courses. The GTA tuition & fees package does not cover such things as International fees, computing/technology fees, graduation fees, or credits over 9, but your advisor may have additional funding for these fees.

### Departmental Scholarships

The Department of Zoology and Physiology awards multiple scholarships and fellowships every year, by application. Fellowships and Scholarships are available to both graduate and undergraduate students with some awards based on a nomination process. Applications are typically due late in the Fall term with deadlines varying by year. A current list of Fellowships and Scholarships is available on the website: [http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/dept\\_scholarships/](http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/dept_scholarships/) and here: [http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/files/docs/zp\\_gradscholarships2019.pdf](http://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/files/docs/zp_gradscholarships2019.pdf)

Use of award money varies depending on the award and its intended application. Some scholarships can go directly to the student, while others must be used for research or tuition. It is therefore recommended to agree with your advisor how scholarship money is to be used prior to applying. Note that any scholarships given directly to students are taxable.

There are also a number of broader scholarships available through the university which can be accessed here (<https://uwyo.academicworks.com/>). Among these are the Cheney Study Abroad scholarship (dollar amount varies), the Graduate Travel Funding Request (\$350), the Paul Stock Award (\$500), all of which can be used to fund travel to conferences. Each student is limited to one award from each of these sources during their graduate career.

## **VII - Advisor Conflict**

In an ideal world, all students and their advisors would form friendly and professional relationships that are mutually beneficial and productive. However, given it's often loosely defined and hard to measure boundaries, graduate education can sometimes be a difficult and frustrating process for both students and advisors. If such a situation develops into conflict between advisor and student, it's important for both parties to know the proper course of action to resolve the conflict.

First, it's possible to prevent such conflicts from arising in the first place. Students and their advisors should meet periodically (at least once per semester) to discuss expectations and progress in the student's graduate program. Often conflicts can be avoided by creating a set of benchmarks and a timetable that both the student and their advisor agree to meet. When conflicts arise that can't be resolved between the student and their advisor, the student should discuss the issues with the department chair or their outside committee member. This can be a useful way for a student to informally voice their concerns and get advice on what steps they should take from an experienced faculty member. If the student does not feel comfortable discussing their conflict with either of these two resources, or otherwise feels that their issue can't be resolved within the department, they should contact the Department of Graduate Education (GradEd@uwo.edu). As the administrative department responsible for overseeing all graduate students at the university, they can provide an impartial voice to mediate a resolution. In extreme cases where students feel they can no longer continue with their advisor or department, this resolution may include a change in the student's graduate degree program or a switch to a new advisor.

The final recourse if a student feels that they have not been treated fairly according to the department and university's own guidelines is to make an appeal to the Graduate Student Appeals Board (GSAB). This is an appellate body which reviews appeals of graduate students concerning retention in graduate programs and employment as graduate assistants, among other issues. GSAB members are faculty and graduate students from the Graduate Council and represent campus-wide disciplines. Further information about the appeals process can be found on the Office of Graduate Education website ([http://www.uwo.edu/uwgrad/files/docs/graduate\\_appeal\\_policy.pdf](http://www.uwo.edu/uwgrad/files/docs/graduate_appeal_policy.pdf)).

Finally, threats, discrimination, and sexual harassment are not acceptable in any form. If a student feels they have experienced any of the above, they should report to the University's Title IX Coordinator, Jim Osborne ([report-it@uwo.edu](mailto:report-it@uwo.edu)). Further information, including links to confidential reporting, can be found here: <http://www.uwo.edu/reportit/make-a-report/index.html>

## **VIII - Special Information and Resources for International Students**

**ISS:** The first thing to do, if you haven't already, is to contact the International Students and Scholars office (<https://www.uwyo.edu/iss/index.html>). Everyone in this office is working hard to make you feel at home at the University of Wyoming and has a package for you, including workshops on how to start your life as a grad student, how to build skills as a teaching assistant (TA), etc. ISS will send you the important updates on your immigration status. Never ignore any emails coming from the ISS office. They may redirect you to an online newsletter, but it is extremely important that you don't miss any important deadlines they may be trying to inform you of. They also offer special graduate assistantships and various events to meet with other International students. The ISS and Center for Global Studies (<https://www.uwyo.edu/globalcenter/index.html>) may also help fund part of your field work abroad, so always keep an eye to their websites or and the WyoWeb scholarship/fellowship portal (<https://uwyo.academicworks.com/>).

**Taxes:** As a graduate student, you are legally earning income and are therefore required to pay US income taxes. The first thing you need in order to pay taxes is a Social Security number. The ISS organizes a field trip to obtain Social Security Cards in Cheyenne for all International students at the beginning of the semester. The Social Security Card is a form of legal identification, but is very CONFIDENTIAL and should only be shared in limited circumstances, such as with Human Resources when being hired for a job. It is a good idea to keep the Social Security Card in a safe location with your other important documents (e.g. I-20, other immigration forms) rather than carrying it with you. Once you have your Social Security Card, there is a series of tutorials created by Casey Green to help with tax document preparation. Be on the lookout for any emails that contain workshops/office hours for tax-related issues that he will be providing in person or online. When meeting in person with Mr. Green/ or visiting the ISS for any tax/immigration related issues, always make sure you bring all of your original immigration documents with you (the I-20 or other forms, passport, Social Security Card, etc).

International students will sometimes receive personalized scam calls about our legal immigrations status/tax identity in the US. Do not answer these calls or give any confidential information over the phone, unless someone from the ISS office approves it first.

**Driver's License:** Obtaining driver's license in Wyoming is not difficult, but can be very necessary. Don't wait too long to do it. Keep an eye on social media for used cars in Laramie or Colorado and if possible ask the opinion of a native US citizen to double check that you are making a good choice. Then visit the ISS office to obtain pamphlets on how to obtain your license and read about the theory/practice exams. It is important that, when driving with locals, you ask questions about things you may find that are different from your home country in terms of symbols or unwritten rules for the road. What to do if there is an emergency vehicle

approaching? What are the all stop signs at every corner? What to do in a police stop? Be aware of this reality: <https://www.aclu.org/report/driving-while-black-racial-profiling-our-nations-highways>. The WYDOT driver license test is the bare minimum and will surely not provide you with all the necessary knowledge to be safe on the road, so do your own homework on how to become a good, safe driver in the U.S.

- **Leaving and entering the country:** Make sure your passport is stamped when entering or leaving the U.S. and always carry your immigration forms with you. Before leaving the embassy's office, double check that the SEVIS form and passport numbers match or request a letter from ISS explaining such an error (you will have to always carry this with you along with other forms). **Note that your form with the SEVIS information needs to be signed every time before you leave the country so that you can come back to U.S./Wyoming (always double check this signature is valid for the time frame of your travels).**
- Note that the University has a lot of resources for student health: doctor's appointments, therapy/counselling, meditation workshops, group counselling, international student social, cultural celebrations, sport activities, half acre gym, swimming pool, soccer, etc. Although you may feel a bit intimidated or out of place when accessing these, it is important that you know that you can take full advantage of all of the student services because you are paying for them every semester!
- This is not an exhaustive list, but ISS and the other many student-focused offices will be extremely helpful for your introduction to graduate life in Laramie. People are very friendly and courteous so don't be afraid to smile/greet/thank every time you meet someone at an office when looking for information.



## **IX - Campus / Community Resources**

### 1) Social Resources

- Your fellow students! Be sure to reach out to other students in your lab and the rest of the department. Much of the knowledge of navigating grad school is passed down by word of mouth. Students further along in the program can be a great resource for figuring out which classes to take or common stumbling blocks.
- Graduate Student Network: the official organization for graduate students on campus. They organize social events with free food, opportunities to present your research to the public, and write-ins to get work done (<https://www.facebook.com/gradstudentnetwork>).

### 2) Academic Resources

- Writing Center: Receive one on one help with your writing (<http://www.uwyo.edu/writing-center/>)
- Oral Communication Center: Get help practicing your oral communication skills (<http://www.uwyo.edu/cojo/occ/>)
- Elbogen Teaching Center: They can assist in improving your TA skills and offer a certification in teaching to any grad student (<http://www.uwyo.edu/cojo/occ/>)
- Disability Support Services: Offers help to any students with disabilities, including making arrangements with professors (<http://www.uwyo.edu/udss/>)
- Non-traditional Student Center: Offers academic support, links to scholarships, and social events with free food. All graduate students are non-traditional by definition, so all grad students can access these resources

### 3) Safety Information

- STOP violence: resources for anyone who has experienced sexual violence (<http://www.uwyo.edu/stop/>)
- SAFE project: emergency shelter and support for victims of violence (<http://www.uwyo.edu/stop/advocacy-and-support/index.html>)
- Equal Opportunity Report and Response (EORR): Who to report harassment or violence of any form to on campus (<http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit/eorr/index.html>)

### 4) Health Resources

- Student Health Services: Medical services for students at reduced or no cost (<http://www.uwyo.edu/shser/>)
- Albany Community Health Clinic: Affordable community health care if you don't have student health insurance (<https://albanycommunityhealthclinic.com/>)

- Laramie Reproductive Clinic: Reproductive healthcare on a sliding pay scale (<https://laramiereproductivehealth.org/>)
- University Counseling Center: Free individual and group counseling (<http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc/>)
- Psychology Clinic: Low cost mental health care (<http://www.uwyo.edu/psychology/clinic.html>)
- Wellness Center: Offers mindfulness workshops, cooking classes, massage chairs, and other wellness activities (<https://www.uwyo.edu/rec/wellness-center/>)
- Peak Wellness Center: An affordable community mental health program if you're seeking to get outside of the university system (<https://www.peakwellnesscenter.org/>)

#### 5) General Assistance

- Ridley's Grocery Store: Every 1st Saturday of the month there is a 10% discount off of all groceries at the Ridley's store for University students and employees. Bring your WyoOne card!
- Laramie Soup Kitchen: Free lunch M-F 10:30-1:30 (<https://www.laramiesoupkitchen.org/>)
- Interfaith - Good Samaritan Food Pantry: Income-requirement-free food pantry and emergency assistance (<https://www.laramieinterfaith.org/>)
- On-Campus Food Pantries: There are multiple food pantries available to all students on campus. There is one in the Student Union (<https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/student-resources/food-pantry.html>), one in the Haub School building, and one in the Visual Arts building
- Wyoming Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Income based food assistance (<https://dfs.wyo.gov/assistance-programs/food-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/>)
- Clothing Cottage: Low price and free clothes (<http://clothingcottage.qwestoffice.net/>)

## **X - Life Outside of Graduate School**

Laramie is centrally located to a plethora of outdoor activities ranging from hiking, biking, snowshoeing, skiing, fishing, hunting and trail running. There is no shortage of open space, trails, and natural areas to explore and indulge in!

If you're not the outdoorsy type, Laramie still has some cultural amenities, though you may find yourself driving down to Fort Collins to expand your options.

*Mentions of businesses and activities below does not constitute endorsement by the University in any capacity. These are simply the personal recommendations of students writing this document.*

### 1) Outdoor Activities

#### a) Hiking / cross-country skiing trails nearby

Head east 15 minutes on I-80 to access the Tie City, Pole Mountain and Vedauwoo regions of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest area (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mbr/home>). There are miles of hiking (all difficulty levels) and mountain biking trails that are easily accessible during the Spring, Summer and Fall. These areas transition to great cross-country ski trails during the winter with grooming and maintenance conducted by the Medicine Bow Nordic Association (<http://www.medicinebownordic.org/>). Dispersed camping is available in designated spots along the 700 road and several other access points, in addition to regulations per the USFS website.

West of Laramie, HWY 130 will take you to the beautiful Snowy Mountain Range and Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest. Established trails provide beautiful scenery and hiking opportunities, with many trails accessible for backpacking and longer camping trips. Dispersed camping is available in designated spots and per the USFS website.

#### b) Downhill Skiing

The Snowy Range Ski Area (<https://www.snowyrangeski.com/>), about 45 minutes west of Laramie at the base of the Snowy Mountain Range, provides an excellent outdoor reprieve during the colder months of the year. Daily and season passes are available for purchase online (48 hours in advanced) and in person at the lodge. Prices are very reasonable in comparison to other ski resorts, however this also reflects the smaller size and easier ski run diversity at Snowy Range Ski Area. Additionally, Snowy Range Ski Area typically partners with Steamboat Resort in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. With the purchase of a Snowy Range Season pass, you can purchase 5 days at Steamboat for ~\$169 (incredible savings!!). These Steamboat Resort days do not have any blackout dates or restrictions, do not have to be used on consecutive days, but are not transferable. If you're new to skiing, the Snowy Range Ski Area is a great place to learn and

expand your skills. Rental skis are available at the Snowy Range Lodge and through the UW Outdoor Program.

There are also many backcountry skiing opportunities in the Medicine Bow National Forest and through the Front Range. The Outdoor Program leads Avalanche Safety classes and rents out backcountry skis.

#### c) Fishing

Wyoming is known for its incredible fishing opportunities. Fortunately, Laramie offers multiple opportunities within 1-2 hours. Here are a few great places for fishing of any variety:

- Laramie River
- Plains Lakes
- N. Platte River
- Miracle Mile
- Snowy Range Mountain lakes (Mirror, Marie, North and South Gap, Telephone, Brooklyn, etc.)

#### d) Climbing

Half Acre gym has a climbing wall and bouldering, top roping, and sport routes are available.

Vedauwoo is also a famous climbing destination and offers a wide variety of options. For all levels of sport climbing Beehive Buttress is the best option (<https://www.mountainproject.com/area/106189339/beehive-buttress>). Beehive Buttress is the best place for new climbers. The rest of Vedauwoo offers all levels, but is primarily trad climbing and famous for its cracks and offwidth climbs.

The Outdoor Program has many different climbing clinics and trips that can teach you to climb if you're a complete beginner!

#### e) Mountain Biking

The Prairie (<https://www.mtbproject.com/directory/8020400/schoolyard-trails>) has several beginner level mountain biking trails east of town.

The Medicine Bow National Forest has many good networks of biking trails. The Happy Jack and Tie City trails offer a wide variety of mostly forested biking from flowy dirt trails to rocky, technical options. Curt Gowdy State Park has many trails as well in a high desert system interspersed with forest biking. Harder trails in Curt Gowdy are very technical. The Outdoor Program rents out bikes and has several biking trips and clinics if you're a beginner.

f) Places to get gear

Outdoor Gear is easy to come by in Laramie. Keep an eye on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace for a variety of used gear options. Additionally, NU2U (Laramie) has a gear and used clothing store that are usually fairly well stocked all year round.

Laramie's Basecamp typically hosts a used gear sale every spring - community members can drop off gear they are interested in selling and Basecamp will sell it for you and return your proceeds. They also offer a wide variety of new gear for purchase (great option to shop and support local) and rental equipment.

Another gear swap is organized by the Outdoor Center on campus around the beginning of the Spring semester every year. This is a great place to sell your old gear or pick up cheap gear

If you are willing to travel, Fort Collins has several great stores including The Gearage (<https://gearageoutdoorsports.com/>) and Eco Thrift (<https://eco-thrift.com/shop/>). Feral (<https://feralmountainco.com/gear-used/>) is one of many stores in Denver with reasonable prices for used gear as well. You can find further results by asking friends and an internet search.

2) Indoor activities

- a) There are several plays (<http://www.uwyo.edu/thd/whats-playing/>) and concerts ([http://www.uwyo.edu/music/upcoming\\_performances/](http://www.uwyo.edu/music/upcoming_performances/)) put on each semester by the drama and music departments, including visiting performances by traveling groups
- b) The Gryphon theater is also a great local resource for plays, live music, and movie screenings that are a bit different from what the University offers (<https://www.gryphontheatre.org/>)
- c) The Albany County Public Library hosts many free events for the community, including free movie screenings, board game nights, and book clubs (<https://www.acplwy.org/events/library-events>)
- d) 7220 Entertainment, an on campus student group, organizes free movie screenings most weeks during the semester as well as live music and comedy performances (<https://www.facebook.com/7220entertainment/>)
- e) There are Beer Education events in The Gardens (downstairs of the Union) most weeks during the school year. They are advertised cryptically so be on the look out for free beer opportunities
- f) There are several bars that do trivia on different nights of the week, if you're looking for a pub quiz
- g) Several places downtown and around town offer activities for when it's too unpleasant to go outside. You can paint ceramics at Art & Soul Pottery, do a Pop Up Paint Party at a few of the studios downtown, throw pottery at the Civic Center (<http://lpccwy.org/7th-street-studio>), play board games at some of the bars (cribbage at Coal Creek, a big

selection of board games at the Great Untamed, and a more modest selection at Bond's), or maybe even do the ninja warrior course at LEAP. There's also the territorial prison, Ivinson mansion, and an art museum if you're so inclined.

- h) It's not inside, but it's not out of town: there are great murals around town ([https://visitolaramie.org/laramie\\_mural\\_project](https://visitolaramie.org/laramie_mural_project)), including a bike route (<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=38ebb29857cc466692f04bd13969849f>) and multiple public art pieces (<https://www.laramiepublicart.org/archive>).
- i) There are many city leagues for various sports (<https://cityoflaramie.org/181/Adult-Sports-and-Activities>).