“Graduate school is full of important professional milestones, all of which require hard work and perseverance. Despite how challenging graduate school can be at times, these experiences have made me into a better scientist and I am proud of the work I’ve done.” - Annie Galizio

After receiving an undergraduate degree at the College of Charleston, Annie Galizio accepted a position as a graduate student in the Behavior Analysis Program at Utah State University. She is a final-year graduate student, research assistant, and instructor with the Psychology Department. Annie is currently conducting translational research on behavioral variability in rats, pigeons, and individuals with autism for her dissertation.

Why USU?

USU has one of the country’s elite behavior analysis programs. I chose to work with my current mentor, Dr. Amy Odum, one of the top scientists in the field. Our research interests were closely aligned and her mentoring style was a good fit for me. She has been a constant source of support throughout my graduate career. Dr. Odum has also helped me learn how to work independently and take initiative.

Why did you choose the behavior analysis program?

I have always been interested in learning how the world works, so a degree in scientific research was a natural fit. I am pursuing a PhD because I hope to spend the rest of my life learning new things and asking new questions. I was fascinated by my undergraduate classes on behavior analysis and by my work in a pigeon lab with my undergraduate mentor, Adam Doughty.

Throughout my studies, my worldview has become more scientific and behavior-analytic, which means that I am focused on finding the causes of behavior in the environment. Understanding why we do the things we do has been my primary motivation in pursuing a PhD in behavior analysis.

What are your plans after graduation?

I hope to spend my life teaching, learning, and conducting research. I am especially interested in helping individuals with autism through behavior analysis. My ideal career is to become a professor where I can teach, conduct translational research, and also help people in a clinical setting.

What advice do you have for other students?

My advice for other students is to try new things and find what you are most passionate about. When you’re doing what you love, hard work becomes easier and is extremely rewarding.

What is the most important thing you learned at USU?

The most important thing I learned at USU is the importance of developing a strong support system. I could not have made it through my degree without the support of my mentors, colleagues, friends, and family.