The USU Psychology Department conferred its first doctoral degree in 1969 to Richard Wootton. Wootton was a Utah native who continued his legacy with a 32-year career in graduate education at Brigham Young University.

About Kaitlyn Browning

Tell us about your research.

My research has focused on behavioral relapse phenomena with an emphasis on how fundamental behavioral principles identified in the laboratory can be applied to addressing relapse of problem behavior in clinical populations. Specifically, the research for my dissertation was inspired by recent research demonstrating that discriminative stimuli (i.e., discrete stimuli that signal when a behavior will and will not be reinforced) may effectively prevent relapse of severe problem behavior in individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders. The procedures used in the clinical studies were approximated in the basic laboratory with rats as subjects to further examine the conditions under which discriminative stimuli can be used to prevent relapse.

Who influenced you the most during your time at USU?

My lab mates in Dr. Tim Shahan’s lab. I was really lucky to have the opportunity to work with and become friends with some of the most brilliant people I’ve ever met.

What advice do you have for other students in the Psychology Department?

It’s okay to slow down sometimes. In fact, it’s necessary. Graduate school is incredibly difficult, and there is this pressure to work hard 110% of the time otherwise you aren’t doing enough, but it doesn’t have to be that way. Just slow down and breathe.