

Seasons Greetings



STUDENT LIFE

From Ski Champ to Scholar

Being raised in Alaska, bioengineering student Katie Sciuto had always liked snow, but grew up involved in only a few winter sports. It wasn't until she watched the freestyle aerial skiing competitions on TV during the 2002 Utah Winter Olympics that her interest was piqued. Having practiced gymnastics since the age of five, Sciuto thought aerial ski jumping looked like a lot of fun.

After she graduated from high school, Sciuto's family moved to Spokane, Washington, where she spent a semester studying at Washington State University. "While I was there, I realized I had other dreams that I wanted to pursue as well as going to school, so I started working towards a way to do both," says Sciuto.

Sciuto heard about a nearby stunt school and enrolled in a three-week intensive program. After finishing the program, she went to an aerial ski camp in Lake Placid, New York, "to give my aerials dream a shot." For an individual who had never skied before, Sciuto struggled at first, but learned quickly. Her gymnastics skills helped her train in aerial jumping.

In 2004, Sciuto moved to Utah to continue her training and began to compete. In 2007, Sciuto was ranked 4th in the nation in freestyle aerial skiing. She also placed 8th in the U.S. National Championships. She joined the U.S. Freestyle Ski Team and continued training. But after a couple years, Sciuto decided to put skiing on hold to finish school.

Sciuto spoke with a friend about her future and her desire to continue her studies. The friend suggested the bioengineering program at the University of Utah. "I looked into it, and thought this is exactly what I want to do. I've always liked math and science and have done well in both," she says.

Now a junior in bioengineering, Sciuto is pursuing her degree while studying the effects of voltage-sensitive dyes on the electrophysiology of the heart under Steven Poelzing, a research assistant professor of bioengineering. Sciuto is also busy as co-chair of the department's undergraduate advisory committee. She hopes to involve other students and improve student interaction and mentoring.



Katie Sciuto, a junior in bioengineering, shown performing aerial ski jumps.

Sciuto is also working as a movie stunt woman and has performed stunts in almost a dozen movies filmed in Utah. She is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and was recently elected to serve on SAG's Utah Chapter Committee.

Although Sciuto is still determining what her future will be, she plans to finish her undergraduate degree and hopes to one day earn a PhD in bioengineering. "I'm keeping very busy and having a lot of fun in my bioengineering program and performing stunt work."