

# GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



Carlos Rodriguez graduating from UT Austin in May 2019.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

"Getting the opportunity to see the Grand Canyon during my second year [as a GeoFORCE student] was definitely a breathtaking experience," Carlos Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez spent four summers traveling with the GeoFORCE Program, making memories and friends that he remains in contact with to this day. He credits GeoFORCE for inspiring his curiosity in STEM, leading to his decision to become a structural engineer.

"GeoFORCE allowed me to meet so many professionals within different scientific fields who taught me to be curious and constantly ask questions," Rodriguez said.

In 2019, Rodriguez earned his Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from The University of Texas at Austin. He went on to earn a Master's in Structural Engineering from Texas A&M University in winter 2020. While at school, Rodriguez was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He also enjoyed intramural flag football and basketball.

Now, Rodriguez works for a structural engineering firm called DB Structures. His firm designs a variety of buildings, including data centers, healthcare facilities, office buildings, and parking garages. Rodriguez works on all stages of design, from 3D modeling, performing structural analysis, coordinator with CAD drafters, reviewing construction documentation, and problem-solving with the project managers on issues that arise during construction.

"My advice for new GeoFORCE students would be to take the initiative and go after the things you want. Don't just wait for opportunities to fall into your lap because you will be waiting a long time. Do your research on what requirements you need to fulfill and work towards them," Rodriguez said. "At the same time, remember you aren't racing anyone. Don't be too hard on yourself when things don't manifest right away, just make sure you're always moving forward."

GeoFORCE Texas is an outreach program through The University of Texas at Austin's Jackson School of Geosciences that introduces high school students from underserved communities to STEM and geoscience careers through summer field experiences, corporate mentoring, and college guidance. In 2015, our program was honored with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring—the highest such honor from the United States government. More information can be found on our website at <https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/geoforce/>.



GeoFORCE Texas Coordinators (L to R: Gulick, Hash, Quintero, Mueller) at Crater Lake National Park in March 2022.

## MENTOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

Austin Community College's Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Achievers program is a summer camp for middle school students taking place 6/6 - 6/24.

Makeisha Muwana, co-director of the program, is looking for interested high school and college students to serve as mentors on this program.

[Learn more here](#) or contact her at [makeisha.muwana@austinctc.edu](mailto:makeisha.muwana@austinctc.edu).

## INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

- [Geoscience Research Programs & Internship Opportunities for Undergrads & Recent Grads](#)
- [Scholarships for Undergraduate & Graduate Students](#)
- [Scholarships for High School Students](#)

**GEOFORCE**  
TEXAS  
JACKSON SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES

 [@GeoFORCETexas](#)

 [@geoforce\\_texas](#)

Questions or comments? Email us at [geoforce@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:geoforce@jsg.utexas.edu)

## GEOFORCE RECON: 6 STATES IN 6 DAYS

After two years of virtual programming, GeoFORCE Texas is gearing up for a summer of in-person adventure. Coordinators John Hash, Jasmine Gulick, Linda Quintero, and Carlton Mueller joined with GeoFORCE Alaska coordinator Sarana Schell embarked on a six day reconnaissance of the 10th and 11th grade GeoFORCE experiences.

The recon started in Oregon and Washington State, where 11th grade GeoFORCE students will explore sites such as Mt. St. Helens and Multnomah Falls this summer. At Crater Lake, the coordinators searched for the typical lecture locations through seven-feet of packed snow, while the Oregon coast brought a dreary day of rain.

"The weather in Oregon is much nicer in the summer!" Jasmine Gulick promised as the team finished the drive to Portland and boarded the flight to Las Vegas, Nevada.

The next day, the coordinators began the 10th grade recon, driving from Nevada to Utah. They hiked to the Narrows at Zion National Park before passing state boundaries yet again to visit Horseshoe Bend in Arizona.

The weather in the desert southwest was gorgeous, leading to heavy spring break crowds at the Grand Canyon. John Hash showed the other coordinators the best places to park and how to schedule the day to avoid the worst of the summer traffic.

"Recon was extremely helpful. I can't imagine what my first summer as a GeoFORCE coordinator would be like without it," Carlton Mueller said. "I was able to experience the physical locations of the sites, foresee limitations, figure out best practices, develop a sense of realistic schedule for the stops, and plan academy logistics such as accessibility, parking, amenities, food, lodging, and travel time."

The GeoFORCE Texas team was also thrilled to reconnect with the GeoFORCE Alaska program. The new GeoFORCE Alaska coordinator, Sarana Schell, will be taking the 10th grade Alaskan students to Utah and Arizona for the first time this summer. Her group will overlap with one of the GeoFORCE Texas 10th grade groups for one day in Page, Arizona. Schell and Hash planned to find a place where their groups could get dinner together.

"I really enjoyed bonding with my fellow coordinators during our trips," said Linda Quintero. "As a first-year coordinator, I'm appreciative for the exposure to all the geologic sites and logistical procedures for various stops across our academies. I'm a GeoFORCE alumna so it was amazing to be able to revisit some stops that I visited as a high school student - which is where I found my passion for the earth sciences."