

# GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



Photo from Rachel's fieldwork at Volcán Mocho-Choshuenco, Chile

## SUMMER STAFF SPOTLIGHT: RACHEL BREUNIG

In honor of Women's History Month in March, GeoFORCE wanted to highlight women in geoscience who have also played a role in teaching GeoFORCE students. Rachel served as an Educational Coach In Training (now called Research Counselor) for the 12th Grade academies in 2020 and 2021, and an Educational Coach for the Southwest 10th grade academy in 2022 for the GeoFORCE program. We are thrilled to have her join us again this summer as an Instructor for the Houston 10th grade academy.

Rachel became fascinated by geosciences through experiences she had at a young age, "I'm from Houston, and growing up, I witnessed firsthand the extremes of water shortage and water excess through droughts and floods in the city. Learning that I could apply lots of fundamental science like math, chemistry, biology, and physics to real world humanitarian issues like drastic changes in ecosystem water supply was a huge draw to me."

Rachel Breunig is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying Geosciences with specializations in geomorphology & hydrogeology. She also attained a PhD minor in Civil and Environmental Engineering. She is very thankful for great friends, mentors, and colleagues, who have all shaped her experience as a woman in geoscience.

Two women who particularly impacted Rachel are her high school environmental science teacher, Ms. Carolyn Klein (Westside HS), and her undergraduate research advisor, Dr. Daniella Rempe (hydrologist and geomorphologist at UT Austin)! "These women showed me what it is to ask the hard questions, be communicators and advocates of good science, and how to innovate with the tools you have-- all things that I strive to do."

Her advice to becoming a role model for future geoscientists is to just try, even if you aren't sure what the outcome may be. "I'm a big believer in giving yourself opportunities! You may not know 100% whether you can accomplish a task when start out (or whether you even want to), but making an attempt, submitting an application, and applying what you do know seem to be the best ways to grow. Not only is there no harm in trying, but you might just find yourself doing things that you didn't think you could do."

Rachel believes strongly in the power of interactive learning and GeoFORCE's mission to broaden involvement in geoscience by engaging high school students. "The opportunities that GeoFORCE provides to its students in high school and beyond are truly unparalleled. It's pretty spectacular to play a small part in that."

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/>.

Photo: Sally Stevens

# MEET OUR NEW COORDINATORS!

Join us in welcoming three new coordinators for this upcoming summer!



## Eleanor Cote

After participating in the GeoFORCE program as a high schooler, Eleanor found a passion for geosciences and decided to pursue it in college. She graduated with a BS in Geology from the University of Texas at Austin. Throughout her time at UT, she was heavily involved in geoscience outreach and volunteer opportunities, as well as research. She worked in a paleoclimate lab studying the effects of El Niño on coral in the Southwestern Pacific. Eleanor enjoys learning about the earth and spending time outside. She is enthusiastic about introducing people to science, and is eager to utilize her new position to teach the next generation of GeoFORCE about geology.

## Mitchell Lambert

Mitchell lived in Louisiana until he graduated from LSU, "Geaux Tigers", with a Sport Administration degree. Following graduation, Mitchell lived and worked in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. Among his ten years of youth development experience, Mitchell was most recently the Young Adult Development Director with Project Transformation Rio Texas. His hands-on experience with children and college-age young adults will be a strength as he joins the GeoFORCE team. When he is not working, Mitchell spends his time immersed in the soccer world, playing video games, and spending time with his incredible wife Theresa.



## Jennifer Peña

Jennifer is from Eagle Pass, Texas and was selected as a student participant in the GeoFORCE Texas program in 2014. Following high school, she went on to earn her BS in Geology from the University of Texas at Austin. While at the Jackson School, she workshopped the creation of a science, society, and ethics website for college students to discuss ethical issues within their field of study. Jennifer is passionate about science outreach and giving back. Since finishing the program in 2017, she served as an Educational Coach In Training (ECIT), a Math & Science Institute Peer Learning Assistant (PLA), and as a member of the GeoFORCE Longhorn group at UT Austin.

All three coordinators are excited for the summer and to continue developing the program in new ways for both current students and alumni of the program!

# STUDENT RESOURCES

Here are a list of dates to keep in mind for **April** and **May**:

## APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

## MAY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



Current Students



Alumni

**April 1st** - Austin Orientation

**April 15th** - Houston Orientation

**April 29th** - Southwest Orientation

**May 3rd** - Virtual Orientation

**April 21st** - Deadline to submit survey for college graduation cards

**April 28th** - Deadline for Math & Science Institute Student & PLA Application

**May 16th** - 2023 Summer Staff Orientation

## STAY CONNECTED WITH GEOFORCE THIS SUMMER!

Make sure you don't miss out on any of the events going on this summer, internship opportunities, or school year events!

   [@geoforcetexas](https://twitter.com/geoforcetexas)

 [@GeoFORCE Texas Group](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/GeoFORCE-Texas-Group)

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