

GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



GeoFORCE students presenting their 12th grade projects at the AGU Bright STaRS poster session in 2019.

GEOFORCE IS COMING TO AGU'S 2021 CONFERENCE

AGU stands for the American Geophysical Union, an organization for Earth, atmospheric, ocean, hydrologic, space, and planetary scientists and enthusiasts. The annual AGU conference is attended by over 25,000 people each year. This December, AGU will be held online and in-person at New Orleans, LA from December 13th - 17th, 2021.

This year, the program director of GeoFORCE, Dr. Leah Turner, was chosen as part of AGU's first [LANDInG cohort](#). This professional development program is for leaders of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the geosciences. Dr. Kelly Mack will introduce the initiative during a keynote lecture from 11:15 - 12:15 on Thursday, December 16th.

The GeoFORCE team, including Dr. Turner and coordinators John Hash and Jasmine Gulick, will be presenting a poster entitled "Holistic Geoscience High School Student Outreach Programming that Addresses Factors Affecting College Major Choice" from 4-6pm on December 16th. You can find us in Poster Hall D-F, or in the virtual poster hall, under the label ED45H-0784.

At the same time, from 4-6pm on the 16th, twelve GeoFORCE high school students will be presenting their 12th Grade Academy group projects in section ED45B. These students were accepted as part of Bright STaRS, the "Bright Students Training as Research Scientists" poster session. Alongside this formative experience in presenting their summer research, the students will also get the chance to explore the cutting-edge research and presentations at AGU from Wednesday through Friday, including presentations on "The Present-Day Atmosphere of Mars", "Advances in Social Justice in Water Resources", and "Climate Science Applications for the Benefit of Society".

We hope that you will join Dr. Turner, the coordinators, and our brilliant high school students at the GeoFORCE coffee meet-up from 1-2pm on Thursday at the River Blends Café in Hilton Riverside Hotel! We'd appreciate you [RSVPing for this event](#) and we look forward to seeing you at AGU.

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/>.



Jennifer Nguyen (left) with her family at college graduation.

UNDERGRAD RESEARCH AT UT

The Environmental Science Institute at UT Austin will be the host of an NSF-funded Research Experience for undergraduates from May - August, 2022! The program will be focused on interdisciplinary challenges to the sustainability of urban systems.

Learn more and apply to join this diverse cohort by February 22nd, 2022!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JENNIFER NGUYEN

"My advice to new GeoFORCE students would be to embrace the journey," GeoFORCE alumna Jennifer Nguyen said. "Don't knock yourself down if you are not at the place you want to be at a certain time. Everybody has a journey to get to the place in life that best suits them."

Nguyen graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a Bachelor's in Geology just before the COVID-19 Pandemic put everything, including the job market, in lockdown. Nguyen initially struggled to find a relevant entry-level job.

"I did various jobs from waitressing to being a date coach," Nguyen said. "What I did not expect was that those jobs were what really helped me get gain confidence in myself and perfect my interpersonal communication skills which is crucial for the position I am in now."

Now, Nguyen is a project development engineer for ABEI Energy, an independent power company that's leading the renewable energy industry. Nguyen herself leads utility-scale solar energy projects. She does everything from figure out if the power lines have the capacity to support a solar generation site to buying the land to working with the United States Department of Energy for permitting and taxes. Those interpersonal skills she learned at her previous jobs became unexpectedly crucial for tasks like securing contracts and building company relations.

Nguyen's interest in geology, and in energy resources, was sparked during her third summer as a GeoFORCE student. There she learned about the beautiful geology of Oregon under the guidance of Dr. Jeffery Paine, a senior research scientist at The University of Texas at Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology.

In college, Nguyen explored this passion as a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, South Texas Geological Society, the Geoscience Society of America. She also completed a project for the McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program that won 3rd place at the 2019 McNair Research Symposium.

Nguyen's advice for GeoFORCE students and recent alumni is to keep an open mind and perspective. "Only then will you be able to understand how other decisions you have made positively impact your journey to your end goal," she said. "GeoFORCE is an amazing program that not only helps build your geological knowledge at a young age, but also gives you the opportunity to build life-long friends and connections. Take advantage of that."

INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

- Geoscience Research Programs & Internship Opportunities for Undergrads & Recent Grads
- Scholarships for Undergraduate & Graduate Students
- Scholarships for High School Students

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