

# GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



Fabián Peña at Big Bend National Park in 2022.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: FABIÁN PEÑA

Though Fabián Peña first joined the GeoFORCE Program over a decade ago, he had no difficulty relaying the "countless great memories" he'd gained as a GeoFORCE student. These included, "having fun on bus rides, enjoying lectures in and out of the field from UT faculty, GeoFORCE staff, and industry professionals, and learning geologic concepts across Texas, while enjoying beautiful views, that built a strong foundation for what has become my career."

Peña expects to receive his Master's in Geology from Texas Christian University (TCU) this summer 2022. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Geology from The University of Texas at San Antonio in 2018. After receiving his Bachelor's, he worked as a mudlogger then a Measurement While Drilling (MWD) engineer at Halliburton, an energy services company who generously sponsored GeoFORCE academies for years—including while Peña was a student.

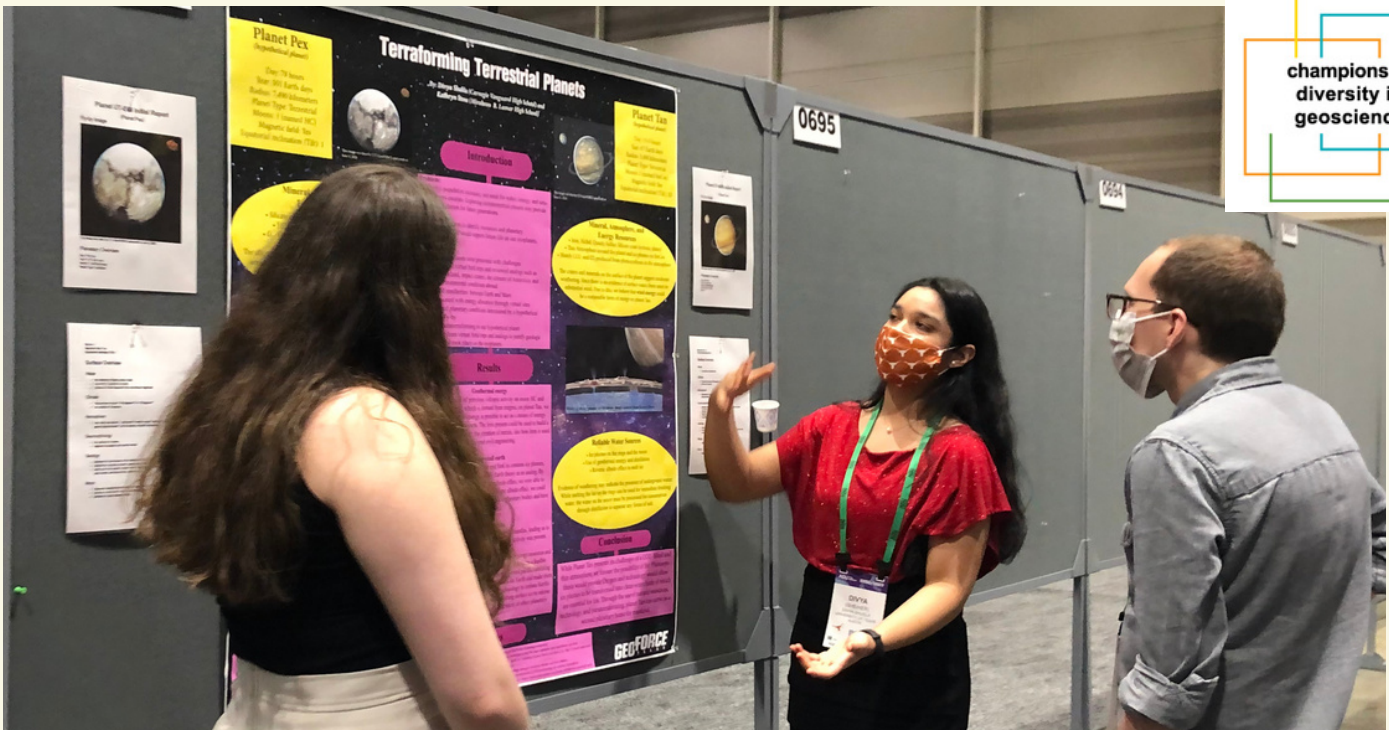
"I worked a total of 14 months in the west Texas oilfields before starting my Master's degree," Peña said. "I wanted to gain field experience before furthering my understanding of geology in graduate school."

Peña's graduate research is a detrital-zircon geochronology study of a sedimentary basin in southern Oklahoma. Alongside his research and classes, Peña served as the head teaching assistant for TCU's geology department in fall 2021, is vice president of their student chapter of American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), and was team captain for TCU's Imperial Barrel Award team—a petroleum exploration competition hosted by AAPG.

Peña hopes to find employment as a petroleum geologist at an energy company once he completes his Master's.

"My advice for new GeoFORCE students is to fully submerge in the experience," Peña said. "I look forward to implementing all the knowledge and experience I have acquired since my days in GeoFORCE. I am entering the workforce with an open mind and look forward to contributing my drive and passion to innovation and sustainability."

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 alumni Kathryn Stone (left) and Divya Shukla (right) presenting at the American Geophysical Union's conference in December 2021.

## NOW OPEN - RTX APPLICATIONS!

Another opportunity for undergraduates and recent graduates looking to expand your research portfolio is the Jackson School's Research Traineeship Experience (RTX). The RTX is a paid opportunity for STEM students to gain technical skills, get involved in geoscience research, and develop their educational and professional goals.

[Learn more and apply by March 22!](#)

## 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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## RESEARCH WITH CHAMPIONS OF DIVERSITY

Undergraduates, do you want to research the development of the Himalayas? How about the fine-grained dust rims in meteorites? Would you like to work on sustainable sand mining in San Francisco Bay or investigate reef community health? These projects (**and more!**) are awaiting interested undergraduate students as part of the Champions of Diversity initiative.

The **Champions of Diversity** are a group of faculty and staff research mentors at the Jackson School of Geosciences committed to building a diverse and equitable geoscience community.

The Champions of Diversity program was created intentionally for the Jackson School and funded by an **NSF GOLD-EN EAGER** award. Our goal is to build, normalize, and empower the JSG community around issues related to diversity in the geosciences by 1) creating an immersive training experience for a cohort of JSG Champions of Diversity (CDs) and 2) developing a program of support for students from historically underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds.

We believe that the Jackson School should strive to achieve the same level of diversity as the broader UT undergraduate population and the population of the State of Texas; therefore, we are working to make that a reality.

**We are current recruiting undergraduate students for 1+ year research projects** with a Champions of Diversity mentor beginning Summer 2022 and continuing through the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters.

Mentees will be provided with a guided, **paid research experience** on a geoscience topic that interests them. As part of this program, mentees will receive **professional and personal development** to help them grow and thrive in their chosen career, as well as expenses-paid travel to a scientific meeting to present their research.

- Paid research opportunity!!
- No major requirement - projects appropriate for students with backgrounds in any physical science.
- Flexible time commitments.
- Hands-on training and support for all skill levels.

[Click here to apply!](#)

Review of applications begins April 11th and will continue until all positions are filled.