

GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



L-Priscila's Graduation from A&M, R-First day at Chevron!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: PRISCILA PAEZ

By Priscila Paez

I participated in the GeoFORCE program as a student from the summer of 2012 to the summer of 2015. After my freshman year at Texas A&M University and my first summer working as a GeoFORCE counselor, I switched my major from engineering to environmental geoscience. I realized that I was more interested in the creative side of science – the curiosity, observations, and hands-on experience. During my environmental coursework, it was required of me to take the class: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) where I found my combined passion for technology and science. In August of 2020, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Geoscience with minors in Spanish and Geographic Information Science and Technology.

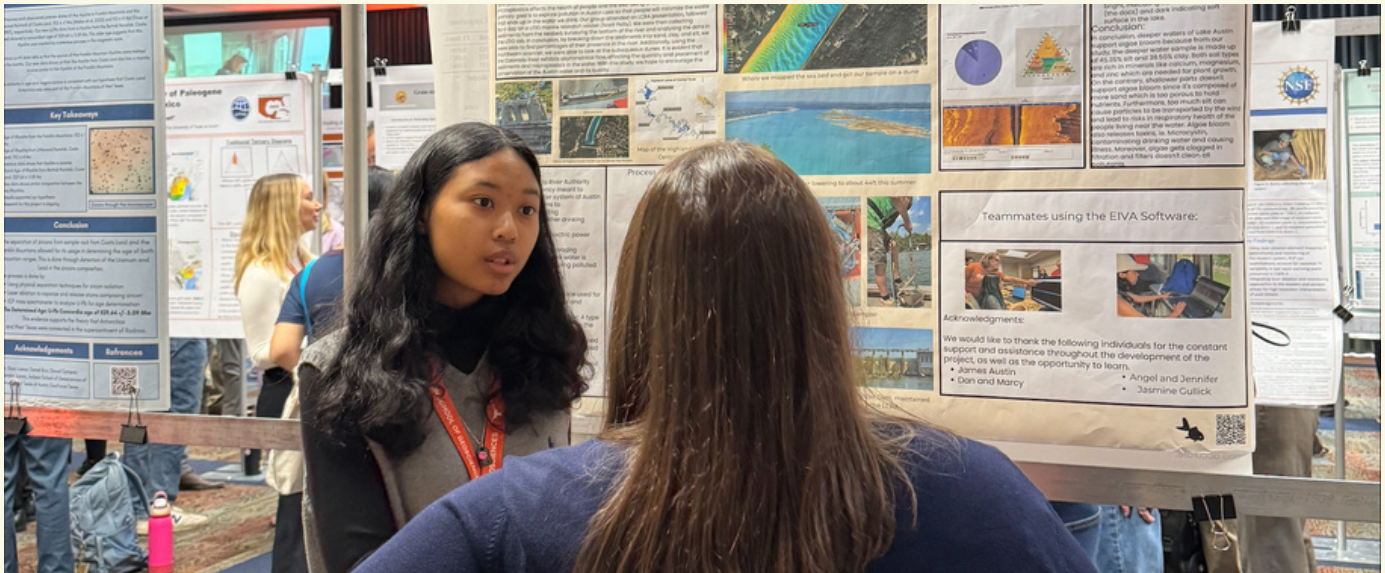
I am currently a Geoscience Technologist at Chevron working in downtown Houston. At times, I feel as if I either became extremely lucky or just kept persisting until landing here. In fact, back in high school, my speech teacher gave us an assignment of what we hoped our “grown-up” life would look like and it is crazy to me how similar I wrote that speech to where I am now, so I guess I “manifested” it. As always, hard work pays off.

I have had a unique path to my job at Chevron. The pandemic and other circumstances were challenging times for me and there were many ups and downs in between. So, if you are in similar situation where: you graduated college thinking you have no relevant experience, you were laid off from your first job, or you find yourself questioning your next move, please do not give up and keep pushing. There are opportunities available to achieve all that you want to do and always utilize your network –especially your GeoFORCE family.

My experience at Chevron has been wonderful. I am part of a team where I am given the necessary tools to succeed, the confidence to speak up, share my ideas and the adequate support, guidance, and mentorship. Additionally, I have the freedom and flexibility to learn so much here – the sky is truly the limit. At first, I was intimidated, these tall skyscrapers and huge buildings are not usually found in my hometown of Del Rio, Texas, but within my six-month journey, I feel I have adjusted well, and truly feel like a valuable member of my business unit. I am bringing and sharing my unique set of skills every single day.

Regardless of the industry, there will be boundaries to break – at times you might also feel you are the first one on this new path. It might feel lonely but reiterating this – you are not alone, use your network and acquire those tools to keep moving forward – YOU GOT THIS.

Lastly, I remember one of the first exercises that the GeoFORCE staff made us do in the bus was a simple task – drawing a scientist. My first drawing was a typical person in a lab with a whitecoat and many test tubes. Now, and after many experiences (many firsts with GeoFORCE – first plane ride, first trip to a national park, first time traveling to the Pacific Northwest), I know a scientist can also look like me. GeoFORCE opened many doors for me and continues to do so. If it was not for the support of this program, I would not have learned that there is a big world out there, and as long as you take a chance and work hard, you can truly achieve anything.



Hoang Thach presenting her poster titled "The Stresses on the Colorado River"

GEOFORCE AT THE JSG SYMPOSIUM

Last month, The Jackson School of Geosciences hosted their annual research symposium. We had 13 GeoFORCE students attend and present their 12th Grade Research posters in the high school section.

Several of the students had joined us at AGU, including Elizabeth Kvale, who worked under Dallas Sherman for their project which focused on the water table surroundings outside of Dripping Springs.

"The JSG Symposium was a lot more inviting than the location of the AGU conference, mainly due to the hall's formidable size. The atmosphere of the Symposium was also a lot more energetic and lively compared to AGU's more business-like environment. However, both were equally nerve wrecking and fun, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to experience the events."

And a handful of students had not presented since July 2023. Because the spring semester of senior year can be hectic, several students were the only members of their group in attendance. However, that did not deter our students from giving their all!

Madeline Hefti, who researched carbon capture and storage under Dr. Sue Hovorka, mentioned that at first it was daunting to be the only member of her group at the Symposium.

"In the process of creating our research poster, each member of my group had become most familiar with a certain aspect of the presentation. For example, my group member Alexcia was much more familiar with the financial calculations that went into our project and was able to explain them much better than I was. This led to it being a bit of a challenge to go back and relearn what I was not familiar with, but in the end, I think that I managed it well. As I presented, it got easier as I became more comfortable with presenting on my own, and I'm glad that I did it despite my initial apprehension."

Overall, many of the students expressed that they were happy to be able to present their research again, interact with Jackson School students and faculty, and reunite with their peers and research mentors.

"Everyone was smart and kind! Walking around, I saw amazing posters and talked to many intellectual scholars and experts. I made new friends and reconnected with old ones. It might seem intimidating, but it'll get better. All in all, I really enjoyed the event," said Hoang Thach, who worked with Dr. James Austin doing research on water quality.

Thach, who also presented alone, didn't let the intimidation get the best of her.

"My first few presentations weren't the best, but I learned how to improve throughout the event and soon grew confident in myself and my presentation, earning my spot for 3rd place."

Two of our groups ended up placing. Hoang Thach won third on her poster titled "Stresses on the Colorado River", and Benjamin Blume and Elizabeth Kvale won first on their poster titled "Onion Creek Water Table Surroundings". We are so proud of our students, and wish them the best as they near graduation!

IMPORTANT DATES

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

| MARCH | | | | | | |
|-------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| 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 |

| 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 | | | | |

Future Students

Alumni

Current Students

Mar 15th Summer Registration Closes

Mar 15th Math & Science Institute
Application Closes

Mar 15th AGU Bridge Application Closes

Mar 27th GeoFORCE Longhorn Social Event

Apr 6th Southwest Orientation

Apr 13th Austin Orientation

Apr 20th Houston Orientation

Apr 27th Virtual Orientation/Makeup
Orientation

**LOOKING FOR AN INTERNSHIP THIS SUMMER?
CLICK [HERE](#) TO CHECK OUT OUR JOB BOARD!**

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

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