

# GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



Left: Katherine Garcia at Waggoner's Gap in Pennsylvania for a geomorphology field trip. Right: Katherine Garcia headshot.

## WELCOME GEOFORCE ASSISTANT KATHERINE GARCIA

We are thrilled to welcome Katherine Garcia as the new GeoFORCE summer assistant. Garcia brings a breadth of experience and enthusiasm to the team from her time as a GeoFORCE student, a Youth Development Specialist for Houston's Boys and Girls Club, and four years as an office assistant for the Earth and Environment Department at Franklin and Marshall College.

Garcia hit the ground running in this new position. Using her previous experience managing the Instagram account for the Earth science department at Franklin and Marshall College, she's already coming up with fun Instagram challenges for GeoFORCE's account to keep our students and alumni engaged this summer. She's also taking on an independent project to support program participants as they transition to college.

"As a first-generation college student, it was very hard for me to know where to start in the application process," Garcia said. This passion to educate and inform underserved communities began in her own high school years. "The counselors at high schools are so overworked. At my school, there was one counselor for 500 students. So I would go into his office and help him teach students what to do to get fee waivers and apply for scholarships."

Garcia plans to develop a guidebook of application information and scholarship resources. "I think that providing students with this guidebook will give them guidance that I wanted when I was a student," Garcia added. "A lot of GeoFORCE students are high achieving and want to apply for scholarships and financial aid, but just don't have the resources or understand how."

Garcia will lend her expertise as our GeoFORCE assistant until mid-August, when she'll transition to working on her Master's degree. She won't be going far. Starting this fall, Garcia will be an Earth and Energy Resources graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin. She chose this program for its interdisciplinary programming and the opportunity to work with individuals from a variety of diverse backgrounds.

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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/>.





Katherine Garcia at Franklin and Marshall College.

## GEOFORCE SUMMER 2021

All our GeoFORCE Summer 2021 academies will be virtual this year.

Austin 9th Grade: 6/7-6/12

Houston 9th & 10th Grade: 6/14-6/19

GEAR UP 9th Grade: 6/14-6/19

Southwest 9th & 10th Grade: 6/21-6/26

GEAR UP 10th Grade: 6/28-7/3

Houston 11th & 12th Grade: 7/12-7/17

Virtual 9th Grade: 7/12-7/12

Southwest 11th & 12th Grade: 7/26-7/31

## 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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Questions or comments? Email us at  
geoforce@jsg.utexas.edu

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: KATHERINE GARCIA

Katherine Garcia was an active participant in the GeoFORCE Program from 2014-2017. Her most memorable experience as a GeoFORCE student was her sophomore trip to Utah and Arizona.

"Having the opportunity to visit the Grand Canyon was terrific," Garcia said. "But more importantly, understand the processes that created that landform is mesmerizing. I think the primary mission of GeoFORCE is that spark that is left within us when we return home. I chose to major in geoscience because I enjoyed understanding how our world formed and what we could learn from it, especially now as we see the anthropogenic impacts. I enjoy visiting a national or state park and understanding the processes that created it. While my friends see a mountain, I see tectonic plates colliding, anticlines and synclines, faults, and so much history."

In 2018, Garcia moved from Houston, Texas to Lancaster, Pennsylvania and spent the next four years earning her Bachelor's in Geosciences at Franklin and Marshall College. She explored subjects across the geosciences and sociology, because of her interest in how the social-environmental impacts lower-income communities. After an internship at DRJ Energy, she discovered a passion for sedimentology.

"I feel like every week of undergrad was a week of GeoFORCE," Garcia said. "We were constantly learning new concepts, getting tested on them, and applying them. Coming from a public school, I felt like GeoFORCE provided a much more realistic expectation for college because it was much more academically challenging."

While at Franklin and Marshall College, Garcia helped run the Unlearning Racism in the Geosciences (URGE) program for her department. She developed weekly deliverables to educate her fellow students as well as the department's staff and faculty. As one of the only female Latinx students in the Earth and Energy Department, she was determined to create a more welcoming environment and that passion led her to continue her education at The University of Texas at Austin.

Garcia will begin her Master's program at The University of Texas at Austin this fall, but she doesn't plan to stop there. She's interested in earning her Ph.D. and continuing to research sedimentology, carbon sequestrations, or freshwater initiatives. She's excited to explore the many opportunities that come her way.