

GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



James Sun and Juan Vasquez after the Jackson School of Geoscience graduation

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: 2024 GEOSCIENCE GRADUATES

As the academic year comes to a close, GeoFORCE Texas would like to applaud all our alumni who are graduating. The month of May brings about the end of a chapter for many, and an exciting change for those graduating from both high school and college.

Of those who answered our graduation survey, 41 alumni of GeoFORCE Texas are newly graduated college students, and 39% of those graduates earned a degree in STEM. This past weekend, UT Austin celebrated the graduating class of 2024 at its 141st commencement ceremony. Of the 7,630 bachelor's degrees that were awarded, two of the Jackson School degree recipients were GeoFORCE alumni: James Sun and Juan Vasquez.

We had the opportunity to hear from these distinguished graduates about their experiences at the Jackson School of Geosciences and the role GeoFORCE played in getting them to where they are today. James Sun, who was part of the Houston cohort, said he did not know anything about geology, and certainly never considered majoring in the field upon high school graduation before the GeoFORCE Texas Program.

"I am thankful not only for GeoFORCE for introducing me to viewing the wonderful world through geology, but for being monumental in my college and professional development throughout my career at UT," said Sun.

While at the Jackson School, Sun had the opportunity to work on two research projects.

"I am grateful for the wonderful experience working in Dr. Jim Gardner's experimental petrology lab as well as working with the wonderful team at the Gulf Coast Carbon Center."

He stated, "I will carry my sense of accomplishment and drive for learning with me to the University of Arizona next Fall where I will work on my Masters in Economic Geology. Thank you to all the friends and mentors from GeoFORCE that have supported me through this incredible journey. Hook 'em!"

Juan Vasquez, a Southwest cohort alumnus, also credits GeoFORCE for his introduction to the geosciences.

(cont. on the next page)

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



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Juan Vasquez at UT's commencement ceremony

"GeoFORCE is the sole reason for which I decided to major in geosciences. Before I participated in GeoFORCE, I had no clue geology was even an option when it came to valid career paths as it wasn't a path anyone in my hometown ever did. My experiences in the different academies completely captivated me and I knew I wanted to pursue a career in geosciences," said Vasquez.

While getting his degree, Vasquez spent two years working with Dr. Tim Goudge. He worked on a project quantifying the morphological differences between lava channels on the surface of the moon and meandering rivers on Earth. The goal was to see if different formation mechanisms of meandering channel-forms result in differing geometries.

Vasquez reflected on his favorite class while at the Jackson School: Field Camp.

"Spending 6 weeks out in the field getting to apply the concepts we'd learned in class and visualize it all in massive landscapes and features was definitely the highlight of the last four years in the Jackson School for me."

Vasquez plans to join the workforce as soon as possible and, ideally, return to pursue a graduate degree in a few years.

GeoFORCE Texas would also like to highlight the graduates who pursued a degree in a STEM-related field.

Matthew Young received a Bachelor of Science in Ocean Engineering from Texas A&M. Post-graduation, he will be working full-time for NAVSEA as an engineer.

Anne Katula received a Bachelor of Arts in Biological Science from Dartmouth College. She plans to attend the University of Miami, where she will pursue a Ph.D.

Braeden Cardenas received a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from UT Austin. He plans on getting a Masters in Movement and Cognitive Rehabilitation.

Sierra Ybarra received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Ailani Sanchez received a Bachelor of Science in Cellular Biology from Shreiner University.

Kristol Perez Choz received an Associate of Science degree in Nursing from Lamar State College Port Arthur. She will be working full-time as a Registered Nurse at Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas.

Andrew Castro received a Bachelor of Science in Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering Technology from Texas A&M.

Anyka Morquecho received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Policy from St. Edwards University. She plans to travel post-graduation, then return to apply for full-time employment in an environmental education field.

Keithan Lee received a Bachelor of Science in Medicinal Physics from the University of Michigan. He plans to attend medical school post-graduation.

Jackson Battle received a Bachelor of Science in Geosciences from Texas A&M. He is planning to be part of a Volunteer Program post-graduation.

Eric Taylor received a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Texas Tech University. He will be working full-time as an Engineer in Colorado.

Sean Santellanes received a Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in Geophysics/Natural Hazards. He will continue with a postdoctoral position at the University of Oregon.

The GeoFORCE team wishes all our newly graduated alumni success as they transition into the next stages of their lives!

IMPORTANT DATES

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

MAY						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	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	

JUNE						
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						

Alumni

9th Grade

10th Grade

11th Grade

May 2nd Educational Staff Training

May 11th UT Austin Graduation!

May 22nd Logistical Staff Training

June 1st-8th Austin 9th Grade Academy

June 1st-8th Southwest 10th Grade Academy

June 8th-15th Southwest 9th Grade Academy

June 15th-22nd Austin 10th Grade Academy

June 22nd-29th Houston 10th Grade Academy

June 22nd-29th Austin/Houston 11th Grade Academy

STAY CONNECTED WITH GEOFORCE THIS SUMMER!

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