

GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



GeoFORCE Southwest 12th grade students studying a geologic map of Texas in summer 2019.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS: FIRST YEAR GEOLOGY MAJORS

This fall, students who completed the GeoFORCE and STEMFORCE in the summer of 2019 entered their first semester of college. Ten of our new alumni are now on the path to becoming geoscientists.

Four of these alumni are from the Southwest cohort. We are delighted to welcome two of them to The University of Texas at Austin. Abigail Carnes of Uvalde and Juan Vazquez, valedictorian of C.C. Winn High School in Eagle Pass, join ten other GeoFORCE alumni currently studying at the Jackson School of Geosciences.

The remaining two Southwest alumni who chose geology, Benjamin Chapa and Aracely Saldivar, both come from small cities of fewer than 10,000 people. Chapa was salutatorian of his graduating class at Carrizo Springs High School and now attends Texas A&M University at Kingsville. Meanwhile, Saldivar moved from Hondo High School to The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Vazquez and Chapa are two of six GeoFORCE alumni who received either valedictorian or salutatorian distinction this year. Jazmine Mae Velasquez was the valedictorian for Carrizo Springs High School and chose to major in computer engineering at The University of Texas at San Antonio. In C.C. Winn's sister school of Eagle Pass High, Edwin Pua was valedictorian and Alyssa Barrientos was salutatorian. Pua is now at Stanford and Barrientos is majoring in political science at Boston Collage. Skylar Blalock was salutatorian of La Pryor High School and is studying international relations and global studies at The University of Texas at Austin.

In the anonymous feedback survey given to students at the end of their summer 2019 academies, one student shared how GeoFORCE affected their choice of major. "I love the ambience [of GeoFORCE]. The ability to be around students with the same mindset of college. Holding a bond over the 4 years... I was able to find my passion through GeoFORCE and I now plan on majoring in the geosciences!"

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/>.



Educational Coach-in-Training Audrey Uraih (L) helping GeoFORCE 12th grade student James Sun (R) learn Strike & Dip in summer 2019.

"LISTENING TO EACH OTHER" SEMINARS

The purpose of the LEO Seminar Series is to create a more inclusive and educated community within JSG by sharing and listening to each other's stories. These seminars will take place most Wednesdays from 1-2pm.

Zoom Link for October 21 –
Dr. Leah Turner and Dr. Dev Niyogi

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
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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS CONTINUED

Another four of the students now majoring in geology are alumni of the STEMFORCE program, whose 12th Grade Academy was sponsored by the KLE Foundation. Three hail from Austin ISD's Akins High School where they were enrolled in a UT [OnRamps](#) geoscience class taught by GeoFORCE alumnus Enrique Reyes. Jackson Battle is now at Texas A&M University, Isabel Johnson at the University of Iowa, and Leslie Rosario at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

STEMFORCE also had a strong presence at Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders. Alumni of the 2020 graduating class include valedictorian Anne Katula and Eleanor Jeansonne, who is studying geology at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

Johnson, Rosario, and Jeansonne all participated in the American Geophysical Union's Bright STaRS program in December 2019 and presented their 12th grade STEMFORCE capstone projects. We hope to see them return to AGU in coming years with more geoscience research.

The final two GeoFORCE alumni majoring in geology are from the Houston cohort. Memphis Edwards graduated from Energy Institute High School and chose to attend Oklahoma State University. Meanwhile, James Sun of Bellaire High School was thrilled to enroll at The University of Texas at Austin's Jackson School of Geosciences.

"I feel very fortunate to have been a part of the GeoFORCE program," Sun said. "GeoFORCE was where I made new friends, created lasting memories, and found my passion in geology. Because of GeoFORCE, I was able to find my future and direction in college. I am thankful for the many educators, coordinators, and geologists that I was able to meet with, learn from, and experience adventures with. I hope that many others can experience the same great adventure that I did!"

We wish all our new alumni the best as they begin their college journeys.



GeoFORCE Houston 12th grade students in front of UT Tower in summer 2019.