

GEOFORCE MONTHLY

Changing lives since 2005



Photo of students who attended the Math and Science Institute this summer, along with Dr. Leah Turner, GeoFORCE Program Director (bottom right).

NEW GEOSCIENCE FIRST YEARS AT JSG

This fall, five GeoFORCE alumni started as first-year geology students at The University of Texas's Jackson School of Geosciences. Of the five students, four are from the Southwest region, and one is from Houston. Aaron Diaz, Carina Stone, Lilie Ramon, Jade Garza, and Emily Moore have begun their journey as General Geology majors by taking classes such as fieldwork based intro geology courses, intro chemistry, and intro calculus. Luckily, these students had some prior experience in all three subjects with GeoFORCE!

After learning about multiple core geology concepts over the past four summers, 32 GeoFORCE alumni signed up to come back this summer for our Math & Science Institute. These alumni were from various cities and towns all across Texas, including Houston, Eagle Pass, D'Hanis, Crystal City, La Pryor, Sabinal, Knippa, Hondo, Carrizo Springs, Cotulla, and Austin.

The Math and Science Institute is a chemistry and calculus "boot-camp" that aims to give GeoFORCE alumni a leg-up before they begin their first year of college. The incoming freshmen were given the chance to experience what a "week in college" might look like. They attended lectures given by two PhD students from UT's Math and Chemistry Departments, participated in hands-on chemistry experiments, completed college-level practice problems, and explored UT's campus and the city of Austin.

Following the academy, the alumni began their first year at campuses across the nation, including University of Houston, Dartmouth College, University of North Texas, Colby College, and of course the University of Texas at Austin, just to name a few. And as they go off on their next journey in life, GeoFORCE plans to assist them and all our alumni in a variety of ways. Scholarships, college organizations, and the chance for internships are just a few of the opportunities we continually push for for our alumni!

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/>.



Photo of Gabriel Villaseñor groundwater sampling at Intercontinental Terminals Co. in January 2023.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: GABRIEL VILLASEÑOR

Gabriel Villaseñor first began his GeoFORCE journey in 2012 as a rising freshman. Coming from a rural town, he hadn't seen much of the broad geologic landscapes the United States has to offer. "I'm from Eagle Pass, coming from a small town in South Texas along the border of Mexico, I was a stranger to mountains and their immense majestic personalities." Now since going through the program, Villaseñor has gone on to obtain a Bachelor's and Master's, and begin work at Roux Associates, an environmental consulting company.

As a professional, Villaseñor joined us on our Southwest 9th grade as the corporate sponsor representative for Roux. After high school, Villaseñor attended the University of Texas at Austin where he obtained a Bachelor of Science in General Geology from the Jackson School of Geosciences in 2020. He continued his education at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he obtained his Master of Science in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.

"As a student at UT Austin, I really enjoyed meeting with coordinators and mentors over a cup of coffee to discuss opportunities in the geology community," Villaseñor said. Throughout his academic journey, he was initially drawn to the oil and gas industry. However, his perspective shifted to a desire to help the environment, so he began exploring other avenues in the environmental discipline of geology.

Villaseñor states, "I hope to use the knowledge I gained throughout my studies to make a safer and healthier community for people." Villaseñor now works as a Staff Geologist for Roux Associates Inc and assisted in bringing the company on as a sponsor. He had interest in connecting his employer with the GeoFORCE program as a sponsor because Roux Associates utilizes avenues in geology and STEM that are not usually discussed much in geology courses at the high school/collegiate levels. Environmental consulting provides a safe and healthful environment for all communities, at all levels.

Villaseñor joined us on the Southwest 9th grade as the professional mentor and representative from Roux Associates. He was joined by students from his hometown, in the same position he had been in nearly a decade ago.

"Being a mentor for the 9th grade southwest group was amazing! I was able to see the GeoFORCE program through a different set of eyes than I did before. My intention was to give students this knowledge, so they may have a broader understanding of what other opportunities/disciplines are available in geology. I saw students become engaged and interested in the science I grew to be passionate about because of the program. Looking back to when I was a student in GeoFORCE, I realize how thankful I am for the GeoFORCE mentors that I had, who made me appreciate geology. So, to be able to give back to GeoFORCE as a mentor was a memorable experience for me."



Gabriel in 2014 on the 11th Grade Academy at Washington State in front of Mt. St. Helens Observatory.

WANT TO BE
FEATURED IN A
GEOFORCE
MONTHLY?

We want to hear
from you!

Email us at
geoforce@jsg.utexas.edu

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Photo: Gabriel Villaseñor

IMPORTANT DATES

Here are a list of dates to keep in mind for **October** and **November**:

OCTOBER						
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	31				

NOVEMBER						
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

Oct 1st - New Student Applications Open	Nov 1st - Summer Staff Applications Open
Oct 11th - GeoFORCE Longhorn Professional Development Event	Nov 8th - GeoFORCE Longhorn Professional Development Event
Oct 25th - GeoFORCE Longhorn Social Event	Nov 15th - GeoFORCE Longhorn Social Event
	Nov 30th - Summer Staff Applications Due

STAY CONNECTED WITH GEOFORCE THIS SUMMER!

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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