



Preliminary Design Review

November 3, 2025



Presentation Overview

- Leading Launch Vehicle Design
- Leading Recovery Design
- Mission Performance Predictions
- Leading Payload Design
- Air Brakes Design
- Requirement Compliance
- Project Plan
- Questions



Team Introductions



Elizabeth
Team Lead



Donald
Structures Lead



Aditya
Aerodynamics Lead



Lauren
Recovery Lead



Mason
Payload Software Lead



Emily
Payload Structures Lead



Ben
Payload Electronics
Lead



James
Integration Lead



Aidan
Safety Officer

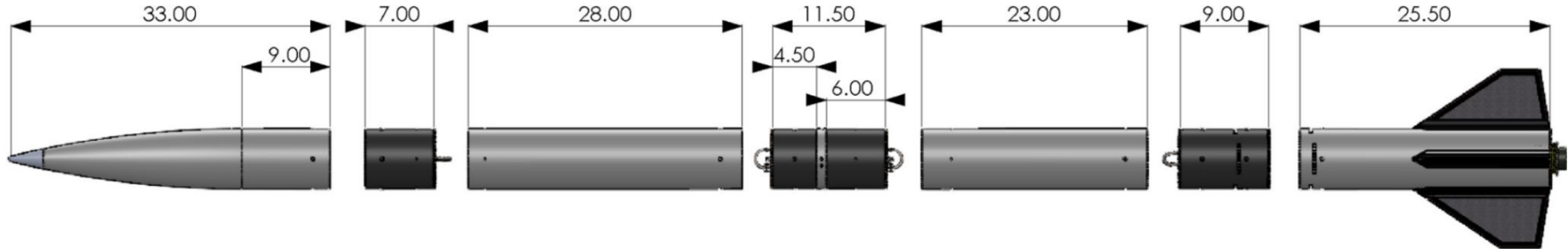


Leading Launch Vehicle Design



Vehicle Dimensions

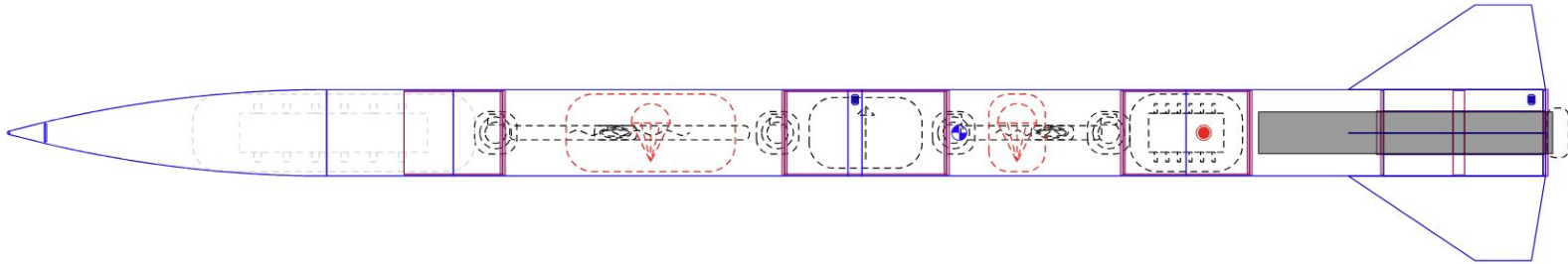
- 111.00-inch Vehicle length
- 6.12-inch Body outer diameter
- .058-inch Body wall thickness
- .068-inch Coupler wall thickness
- 36 lbf loaded





Vehicle Stability

Software	Center of Pressure	Center of Gravity	Stability Margin
OpenRocket	84.901 in.	67.54 in.	2.84 Calibers
RocketPy	84.803 in.	66.693 in.	2.934 Calibers





Vehicle Body Material

- Roll-wrapped S2 fiberglass cloth impregnated with US Composites 635 laminating epoxy
- High-strength, climate resistant, and RF transparent
- 16,500 psi experimental compressive strength

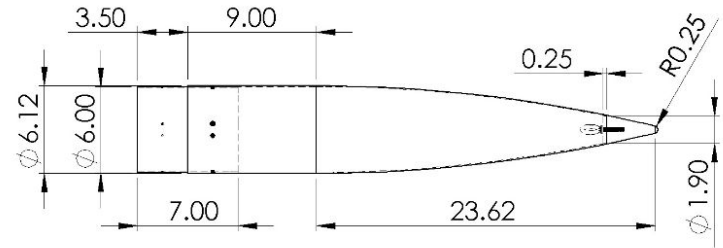
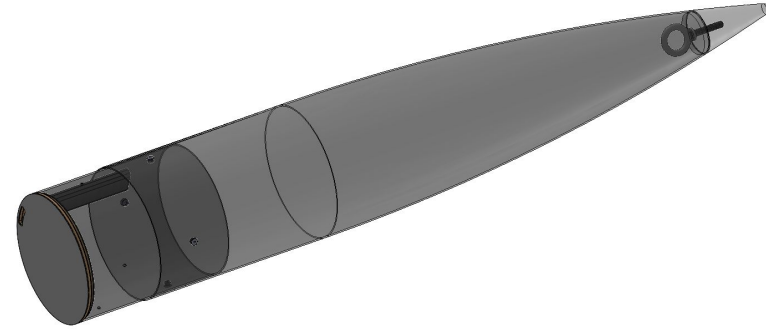




Nosecone / Payload Bay

Multiple layers of fiberglass sleeve with US Composites epoxy

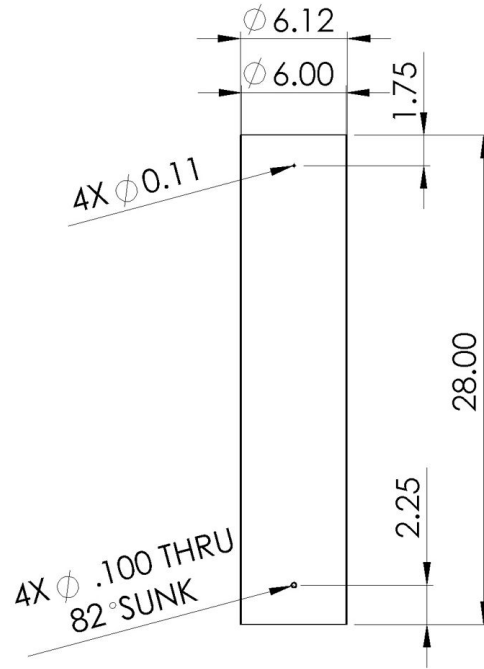
- Extended length full diameter for ample payload volume with 4:1 ratio nosecone
- Recovery attachment at nose cone tip with epoxied carbon fiber tube for shock cord guidance
- 3.5-inches of coupler engagement





Main Parachute Bay

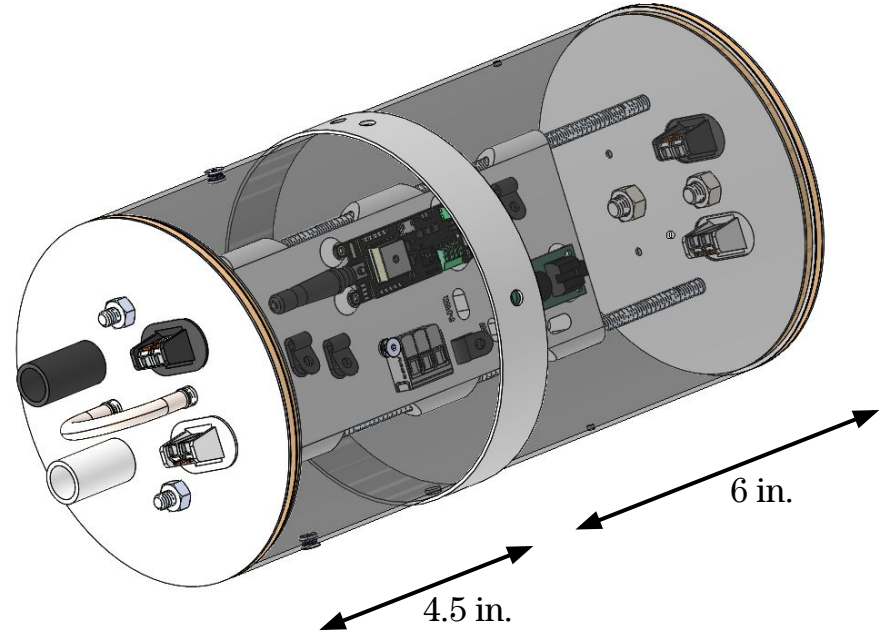
- Single section of roll-wrapped fiberglass
- Houses the main recovery assembly
- Connects to the aft end of the nose cone coupler
 - 4X 4-40 Nylon shear pins
- Connects to the forward end of the avionics bay
 - 4X 6-32 Stainless steel countersunk screws





Avionics Bay

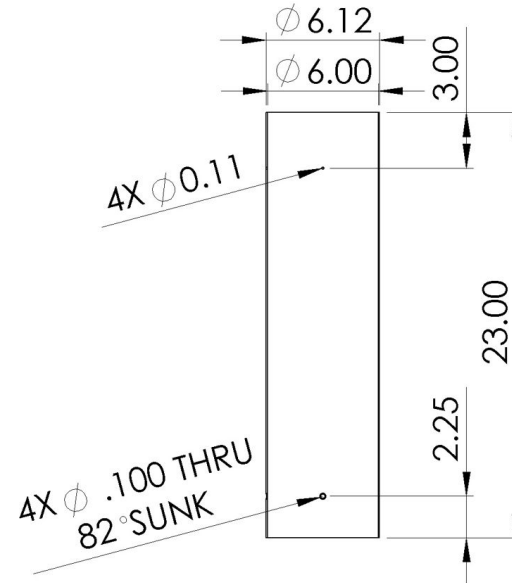
- Contains all recovery electronics and energetics
- Extends 4.5 in. into main parachute bay
- Extends 6 in. into drogue parachute bay
- Stepped bulkheads





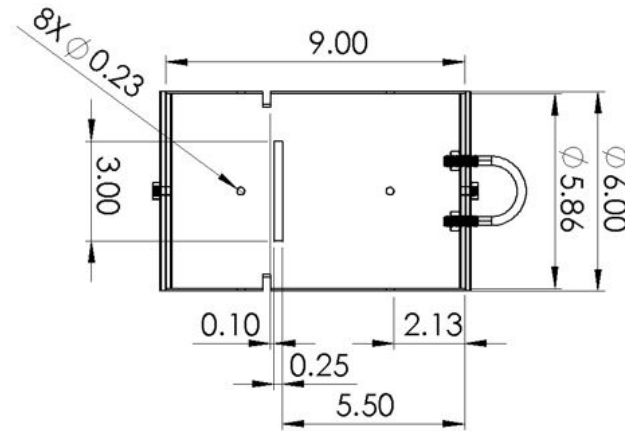
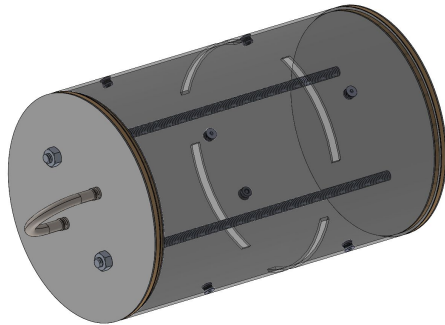
Drogue Parachute Bay

- Single section of roll-wrapped fiberglass
- Houses the drogue recovery assembly
- Connects to the aft end of the avionics bay
 - 4X 4-40 Nylon shear pins
- Connects to the forward end of the air brakes bay
 - 4X 6-32 Stainless steel countersunk screws



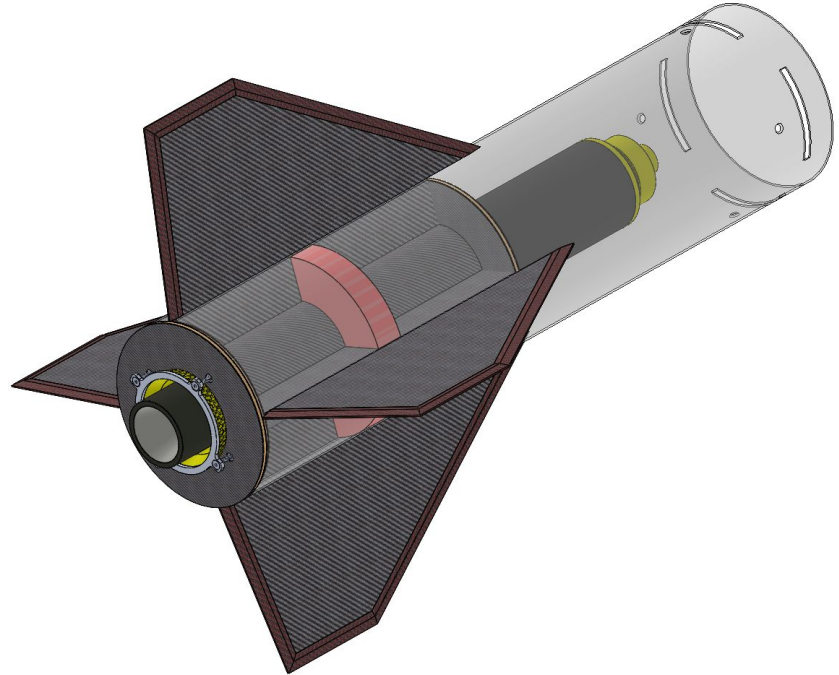
Air Brakes Bay

- Contains the air brakes assembly and aft drogue recovery attachment point
- Extends 4.5 in. into drogue parachute bay
- Extends 4.5 in. into fin can
- Slots cut for air brakes fins



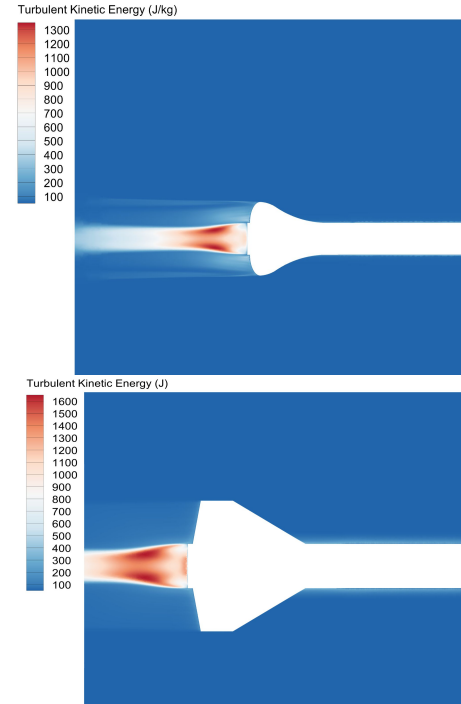
Fin Can

- Single section of roll-wrapped fiberglass
- Slots cut for the air brakes fins
- Epoxied in motor mount, fins, centering rings, and thrust plate assembly
- 3D Printed PLA centering ring with slots matching fins



Fin design

- Preliminary design- Elliptical trailing edge, Curved delta leading edge
 - Superior Drag Reduction
 - Drag per fin = 2.248 lbf at 619 ft/s
 - Little velocity loss across the trailing edge
 - Overall Lower turbulence
 - Complex manufacturing
- Leading design - Swept Trapezoidal
 - Drag per fin = 5.845 lbf at 619 ft/s
 - Similar velocity loss across trailing edge
 - Higher turbulence induced
 - Simple manufacturing

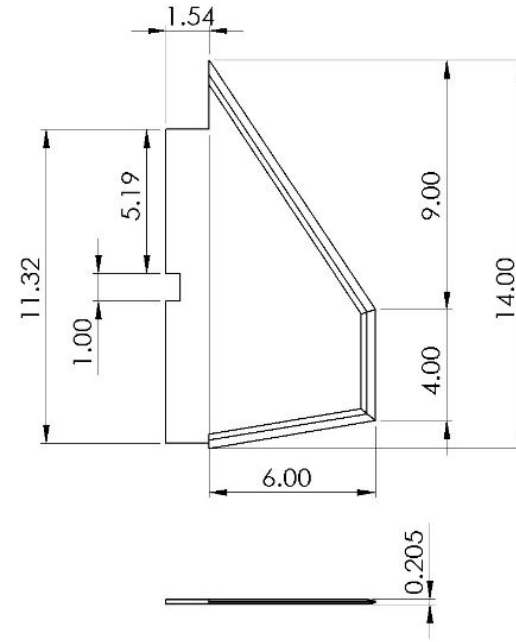




Fin Geometry

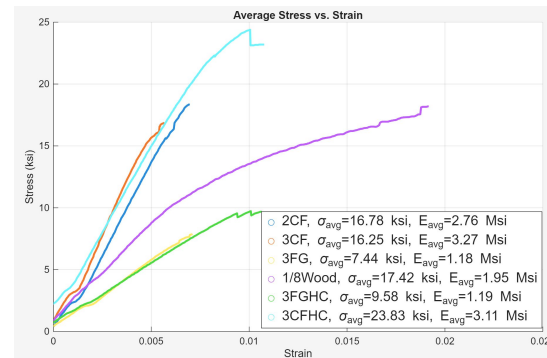
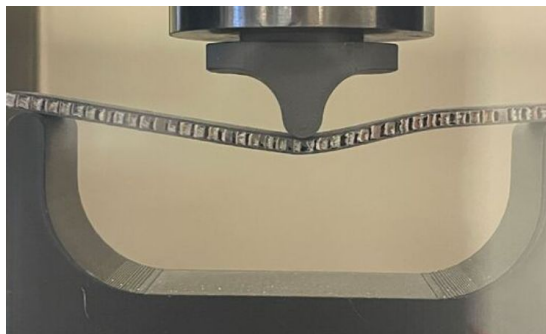
Aft-Swept Trapezoidal Shape

- Tip Chord: 4.00 in
- Root Chord: 14.00 in
- Height: 6.00 in
- Sweep Length: 2.50 in
- Fin Tab Depth: 1.54 in
- Fin Tab Length: 11.32 in
- Fin Thickness: 0.205 in



Vehicle Plate Material

- 0.125-inch Honeycomb Nomex core material
- Multiple layers of S2 8.9 oz/yd² or 3K 5.7 oz/yd² carbon fiber cloth with US Composites laminating epoxy
- Wet layup with vacuum bag compression
- 50-55% fiber volume fraction experimentally





Vehicle Plate Material (contd.)

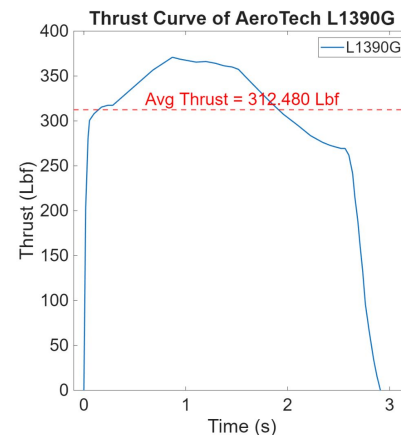
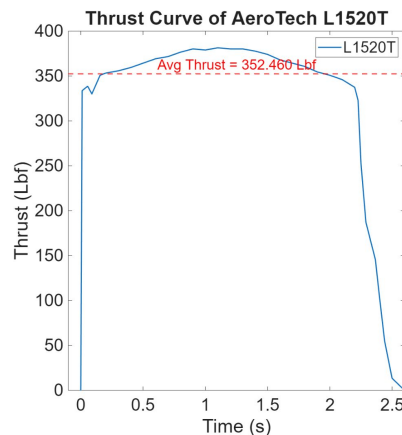
Component	Layup Sequence				
Avionics & Nose Cone Bulkheads	4 x [0/90] FG	Honeycomb Nomex Core	1 x [0/90] FG	Honeycomb Nomex Core	4 x [0/90] FG
Air Brakes Bulkheads	3 x [0/90] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core	1 x [0/90] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core	3 x [0/90] CF
Forward Centering Ring	3 x [0/90] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core	3 x [0/90] CF	NA	
Thrust Plate	3 x [0/90] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core	1 x [0/90] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core	3 x [0/90] CF
Fins (symmetric)	1 x [0/90] CF	1 x [-45/+45] CF	1 x [0/90] CF	1 x [-45/+45] CF	Honeycomb Nomex Core



Motor Selection

- The chosen motor is the AeroTech L1390G
- Its burn time, altitude, and thrust curve were driving factors
- For a given target Apogee of 4600 ft, the motor will carry the vehicle to 5435 ft.

Motor	Rail Exit Velocity	Maximum Acceleration	Thrust to Weight
L1390G	78.5 ft/s	9.56 G	8.58:1 Lbs
L1520T	83.4 ft/s	10 G	9.59:1 Lbs





Leading Recovery Design



Recovery Events

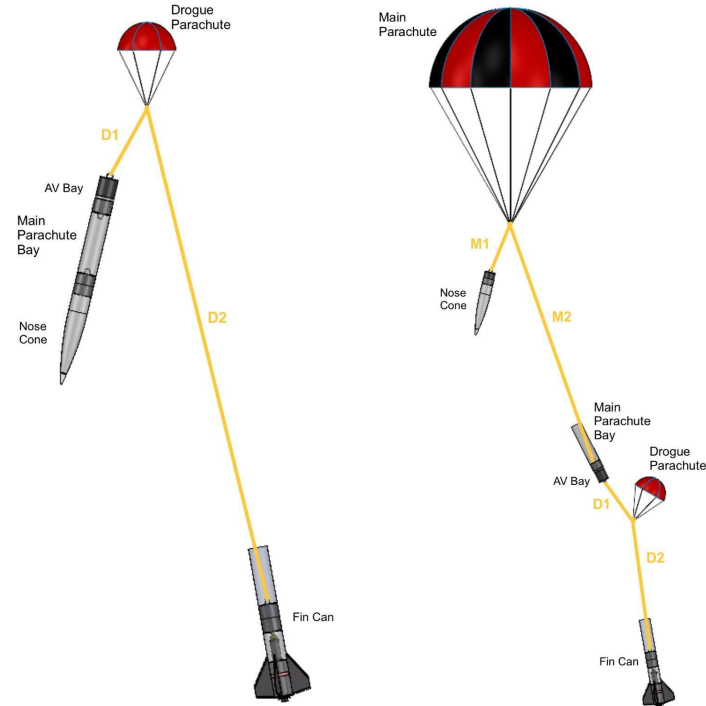
Drogue Deployment

- Apogee
- Secondary 1 second after primary

Main Deployment

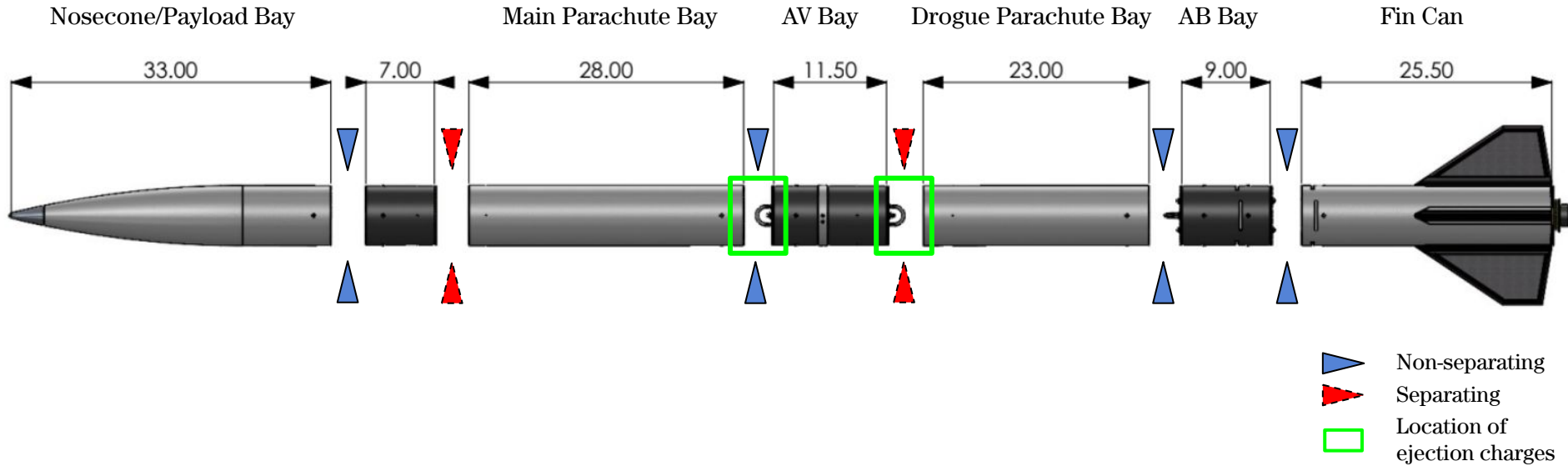
- 550 ft.
- Secondary at 500 ft.

All sections connected via shock cord with a minimum of 10ft. of separation between sections





Separation Points





Altimeters

Altimeter	Size		Power	Cost	Owned	Sensors		Features		
	Length	Width				Barometer	Accelerometer	GPS	Tele	Radio
Silicdyne Fluctus	4.30"	1.00"	3.7V - 10V	\$400	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eggtimer Quasar	5.50"	1.09"	7.4V	\$100	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Altus Metrum EasyMini	1.50"	0.80"	3.7V - 12V	\$80	✓	✓				
PerfectFlite StratologgerCF	2.00"	0.84"	4V - 16V 9V Nominal	\$70	✓	✓				



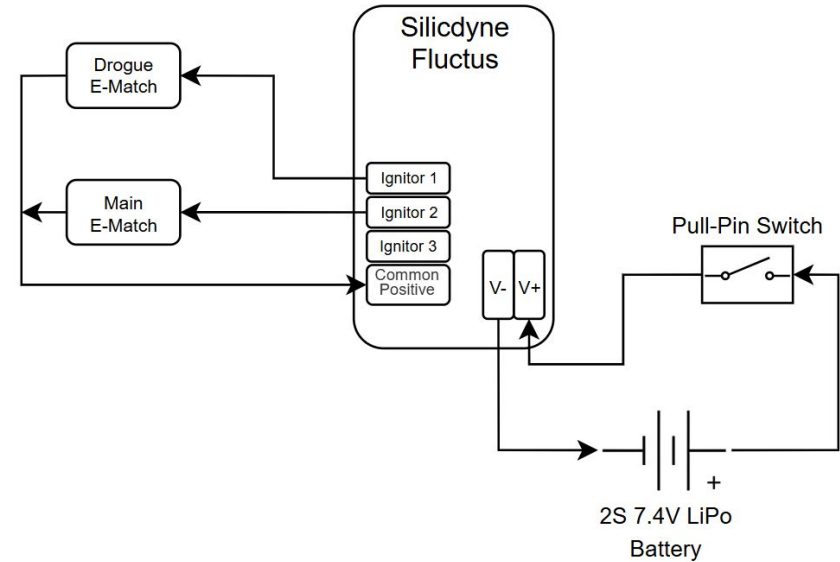
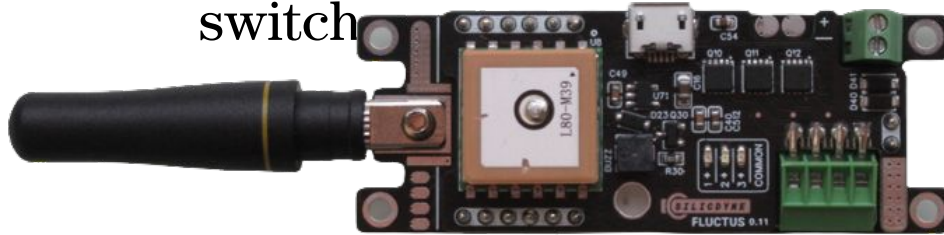
Trackers

Tracker	Size		Transmitter Frequency	Range	Cost	Owned
	Length	Width				
Silicdyne Fluctus	4.30"	1.00"	900 MHz	6.00 miles	\$400	✓
Eggtimer Quasar	5.50"	1.09"	900 MHz	6.00 miles	\$100	✓
Eggfinder Mini	7.00"	3.25"	900 MHz	1.50 miles	\$75	✓

Leading Avionics

Primary Altimeter + GPS Tracker

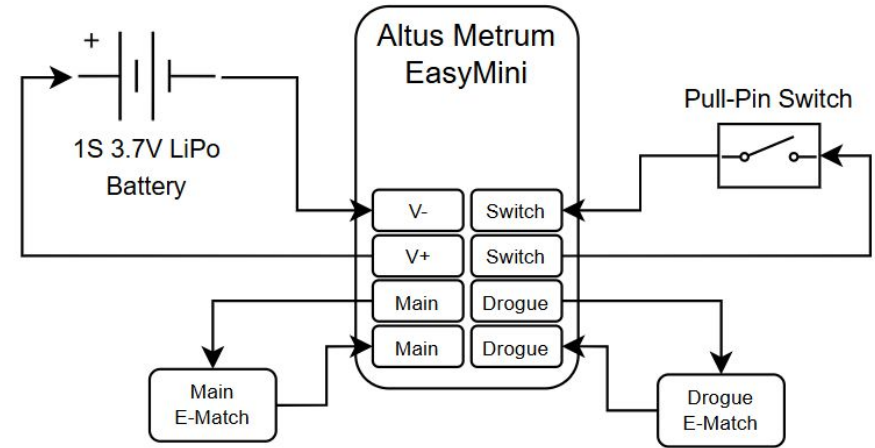
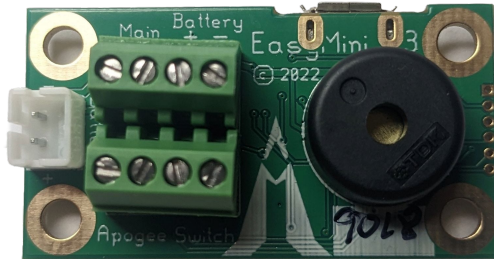
- Silicdyne Fluctus
- Powered by a 7.4V 800 mAh LiPo battery
- Controlled using pull-pin switch



Leading Avionics

Secondary Altimeter

- Altus Metrum EasyMini
- Powered by a 3.7V 500 mAh LiPo battery
- Controlled using pull-pin switch





Drogue Parachute

Parachute	Drag Coefficient	Descent Velocity	Descent Time: Apogee to Main Deployment	Max Drift Distance: Apogee to Main Deployment	Owned
15" Elliptical	1.5	120.27 fps	33.67 s	987.75 ft	✓
18" Elliptical	1.5	100.23 fps	40.41 s	1185.30 ft	✓
24" Elliptical	1.5	75.17 fps	53.88 s	1580.40 ft	✓
30" Elliptical	1.5	60.14 fps	67.35 s	1975.50 ft	



Main Parachute

Parachute	Drag Coefficient	Descent Velocity	Descent Time: from Main Deployment	Kinetic Energy	Max Drift Distance: Apogee to Main Deployment	Owned
Fruity Chutes Iris Ultra 72" Compact	2.2	21.02 fps	26.17 s	99.53 ft-lbf	767.59 ft	
Fruity Chutes Iris Ultra 84" Compact	2.2	17.73 fps	31.01 s	70.86 ft-lbf	909.72 ft	✓
Fruity Chutes Iris Ultra 96" Compact	2.2	15.76 fps	34.89 s	55.99 ft-lbf	1023.45 ft	✓
Fruity Chutes Iris Ultra 120" Compact	2.2	12.61 fps	43.61 s	35.83 ft-lbf	1279.32 ft	✓



Parachute Materials

Parachute Material: Ripstop Nylon

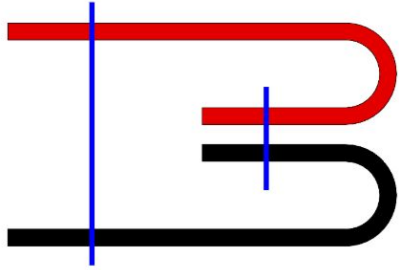
Uncalendered	Calendered
Softer, more flexible	Increases stiffness, maintains flexibility
More porous, breathable	Reduced porosity
Less resistant to abrasion	High resistance to abrasion
Tensile strength: 14.7 lbf/in	Tensile strength: 24.7 lbf/in

Thread Material

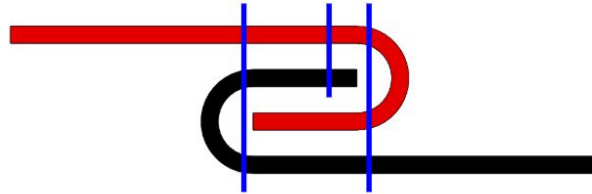
Cotton	Bonded Nylon
Easy to handle	Higher tensile strength
Inelastic	Elasticity
Degrades quickly	Durable



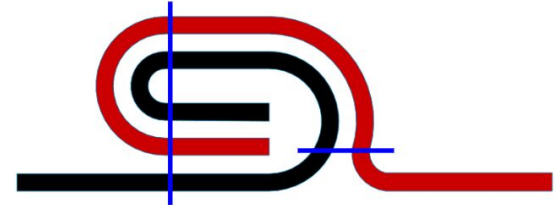
Parachute Fabrication



French Seam



Flat-Fell Seam



Flat-Fell Seam
Variation



Shroud Lines



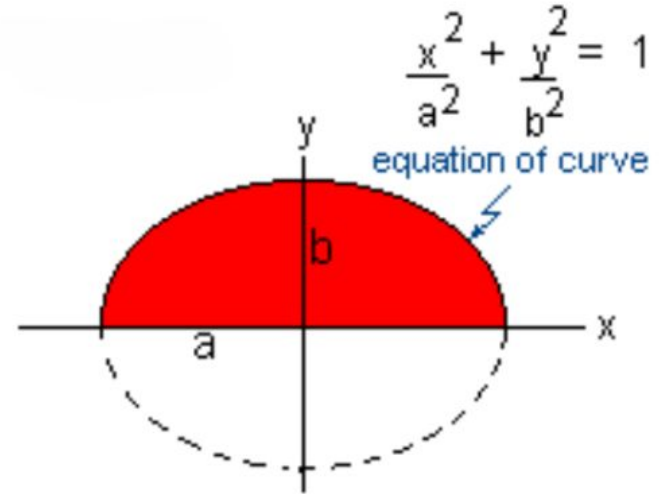
UHMWPE	Kevlar
High strength-to-weight ratio	Abrasion and heat resistant
High tensile strength	Lower tensile strength
Tangles easily	Greater durability
Can twist/distort under loading	Easier to handle, doesn't tangle as easily





Parachute Design

- Elliptical shape
- $b/a = 0.7$
- Reduces required material while maintaining performance
 - Weight and packing volume





Leading Parachute Configuration

Drogue Parachute

- 18 in. custom elliptical parachute
- Protected by Nomex blanket

Main Parachute

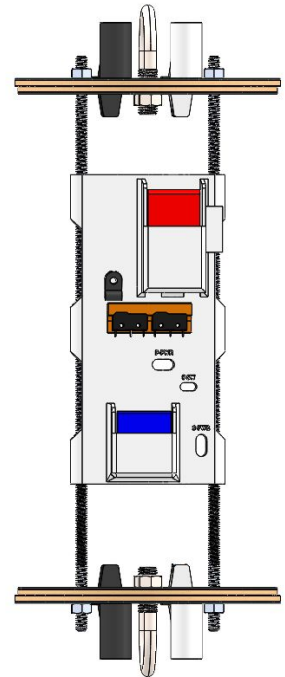
- Fruity Chutes Iris Ultra 96 in. Compact
- Protected by Fruity Chutes deployment bag

Parameter	Value
Drogue Descent Velocity	100.15 fps
Main Descent Velocity	15.76 fps
Max Kinetic Energy	55.99 ft-lbf
Descent Time	75.33 s
Max Drift Distance	2209.71 ft



AV Sled Design

- 3D printed PLA sled
- All electronics mounted directly to sled
- Built-in slots for batteries, in addition to Velcro
- Wire clamps for cable management
- In-line WAGO connectors on each bulkhead
- Color-coded wires and charge wells





Shock Cord Selection

Parachute opening force

- Parachute inflation time: $t = \frac{nD}{v_d} = \frac{4 \cdot 8 \text{ ft.}}{100.15 \text{ fps}} = 0.3195 \text{ sec}$
- Opening shock force: $F_{shock} = \frac{m\Delta v}{t} = \frac{31.63 \text{ lbm} \cdot 84.39 \text{ fps}}{32.2 \text{ ft/s}^2 \cdot 0.3195 \text{ sec}} = 259.42 \text{ lbf}$
- 5/8 in. Kevlar shock cord strength: 6600 lbf
- Shock cord factor of safety: 25.44

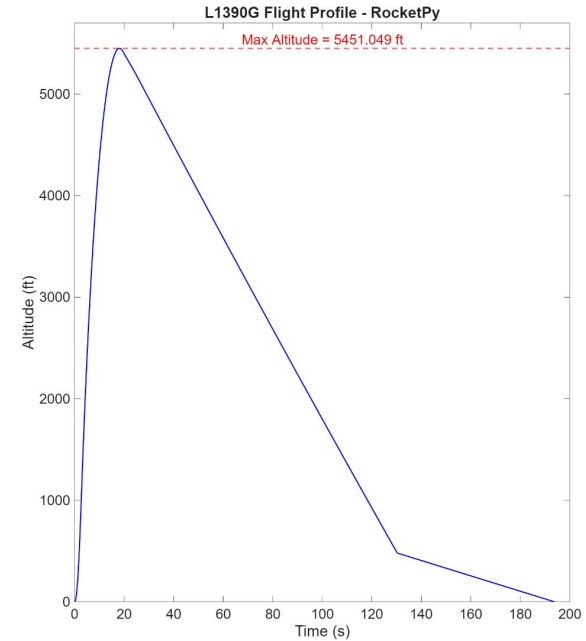
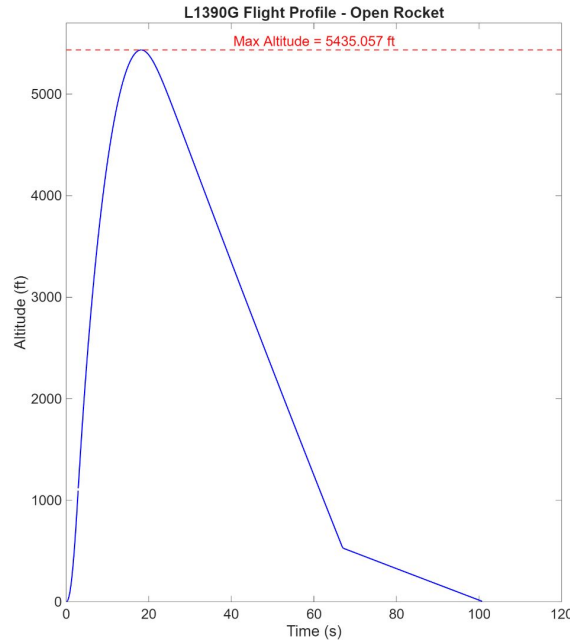


Mission Performance Predictions



Trajectory - Chosen Motor

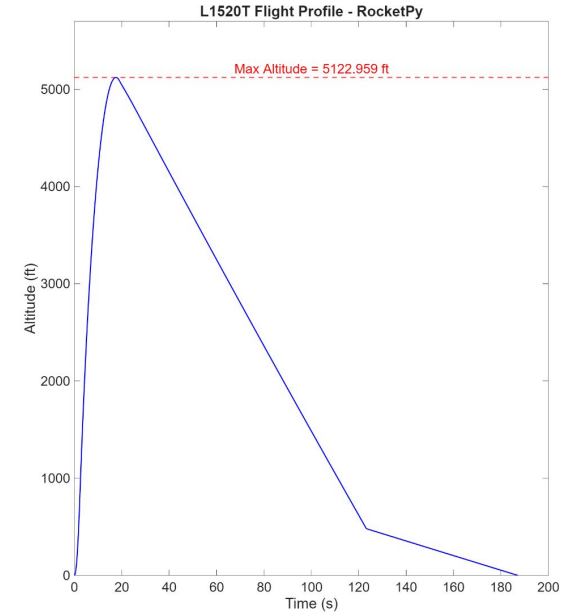
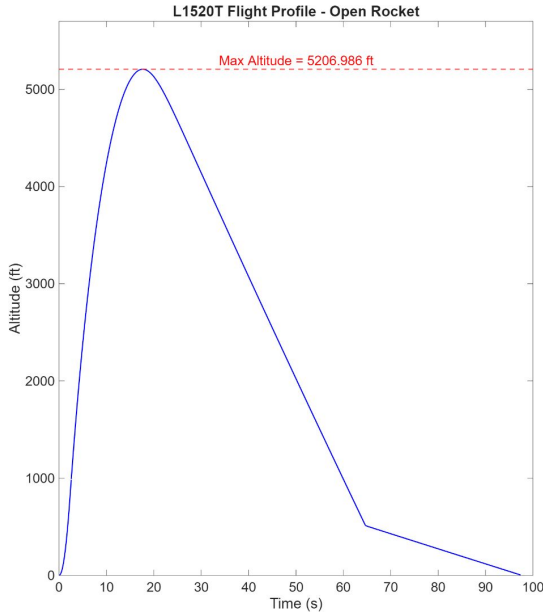
- Flight profiles between OpenRocket and RocketPy show an Apogee of 5435 ± 20 ft.
- Declared Apogee is 4600 ft. with Air Brakes deployment





Trajectory - Backup Motor

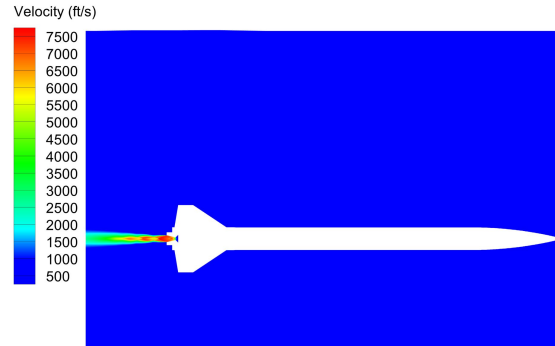
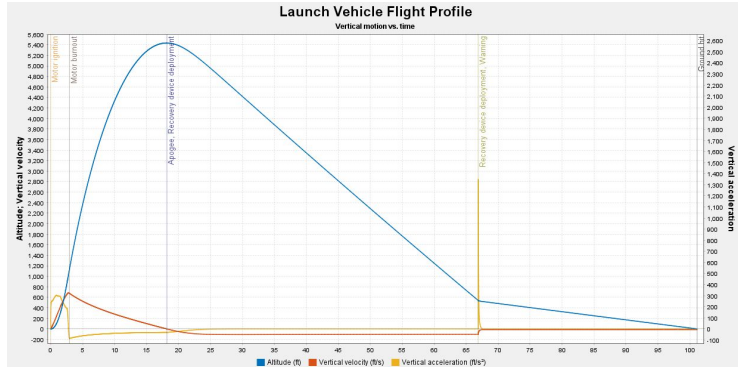
- An Apogee of 5206 ± 100 ft. is projected
- The vehicle will be able to reach the declared apogee with Air Brakes deployment





Performance - Chosen Motor

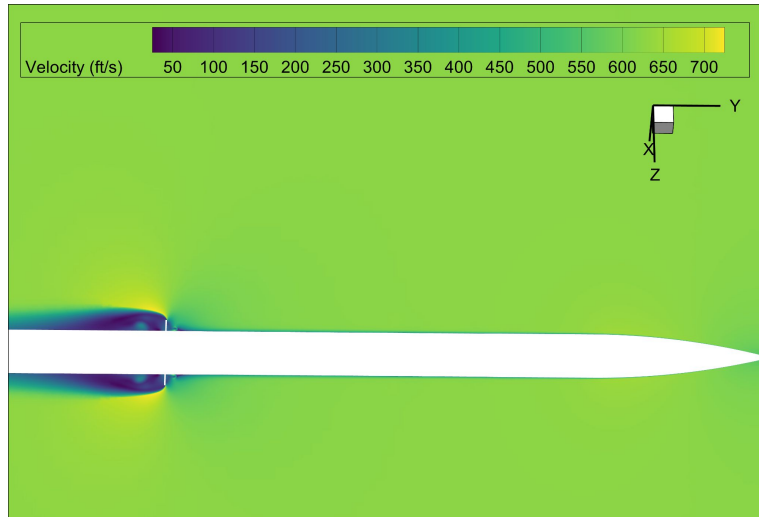
- All simulations were conducted with
 - 144 in Launch Rail
 - 5 mph average wind speed
 - 5 deg, cant



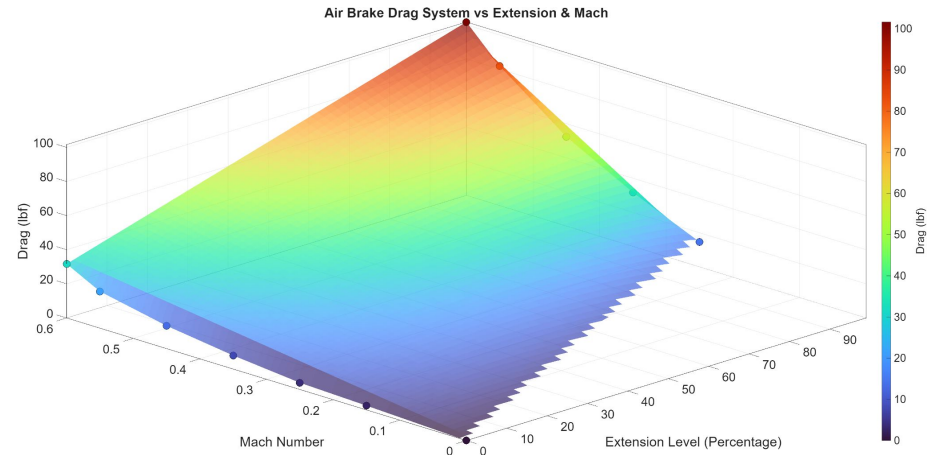


Declared Apogee

- Declared Apogee is 4600 ft with Air Brakes deployment



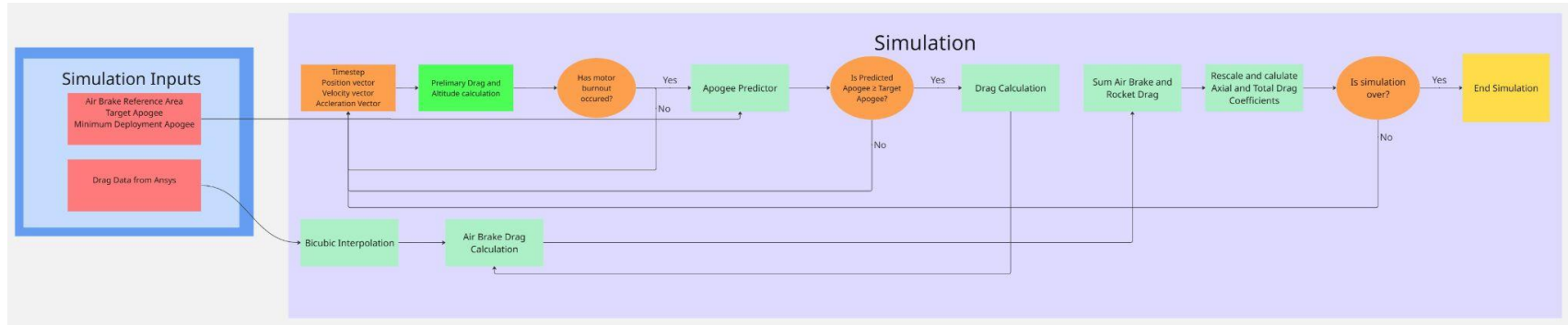
- Drag force per Mach vs Deployment level was simulated for a drag profile





OpenRocket Plugin

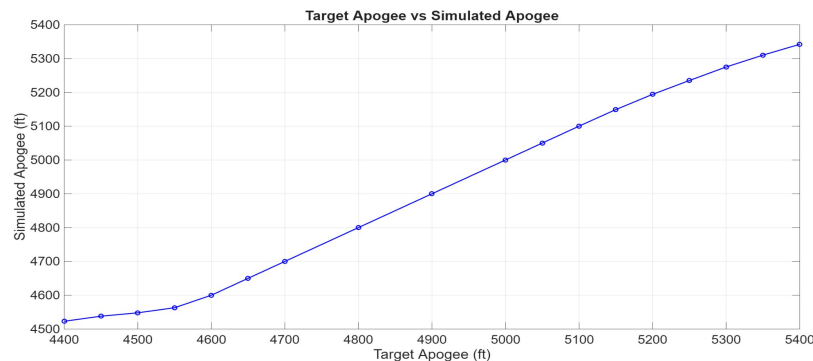
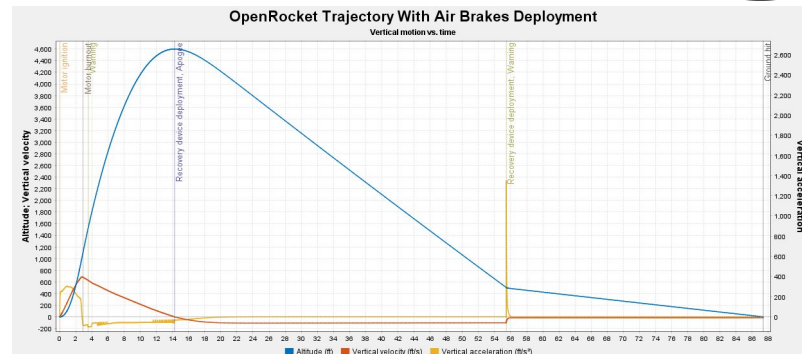
- OpenRocket supports external augmentation software
- Drag profile is used in conjunction with custom software to influence OpenRocket
- Air Brakes control system is translated to OpenRocket for trajectory analysis





Target Apogee

- Trajectory for the declared apogee is generated
 - Target Apogee set is 4600 ft.
 - Simulated Apogee is 4600 ft.
- With the use of the plugin, Target Apogee equals Simulated Apogee
- Further refinement will be employed for accuracy





Leading Payload Design



Payload Objective and Requirements

- Collect 50 milliliters of soil within 15 minutes of the rocket landing
- Test the collected soil for pH, electrical conductivity, and Nitrate-Nitrogen content
- Save this data with timestamps to be presented to NASA
- Create an atmosphere-isolated housing for four STEMnauts

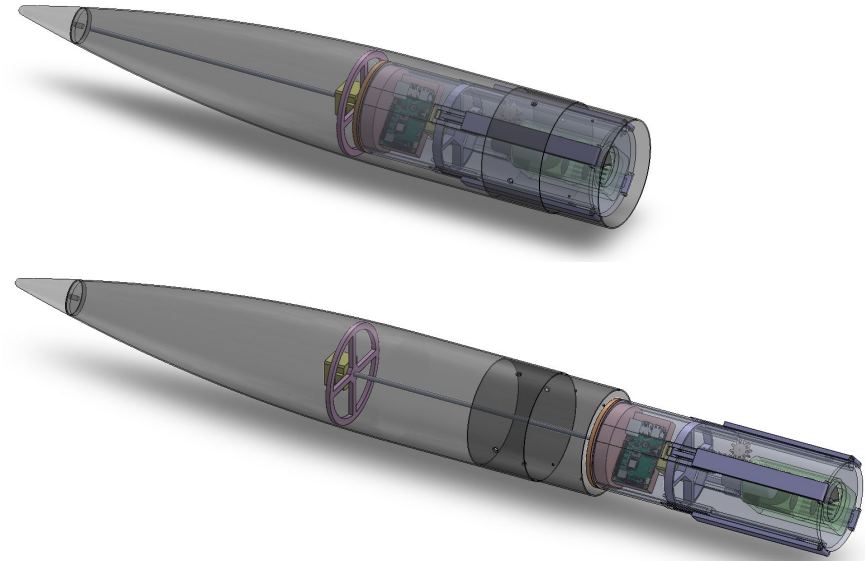


Payload Design Objectives

- Create a self-righting ground-deploying lander
- Use an auger to drill into and collect soil
- Test soil with an integrated sensor

Payload Design: Deployment

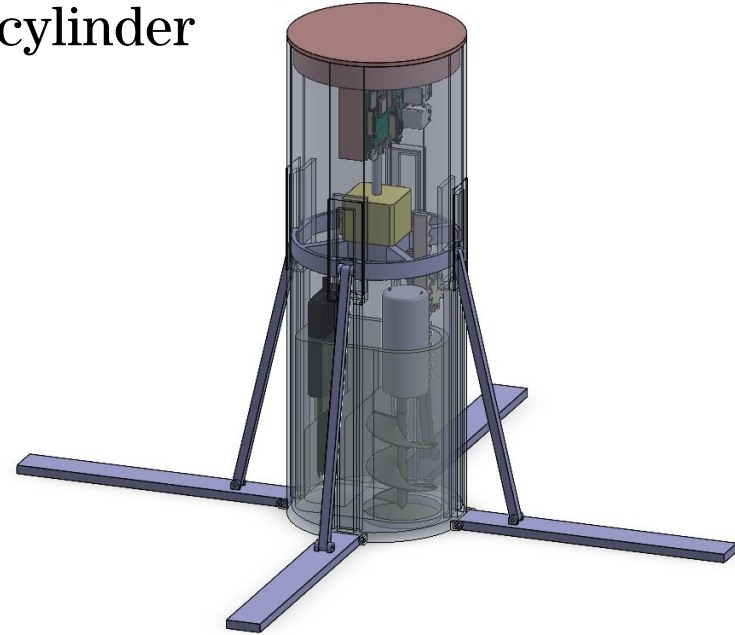
- Housed in the nosecone
- Use a lead screw to push the lander out
- Guide lander with rails
- Use an electronic latch to release the lander when it is fully deployed





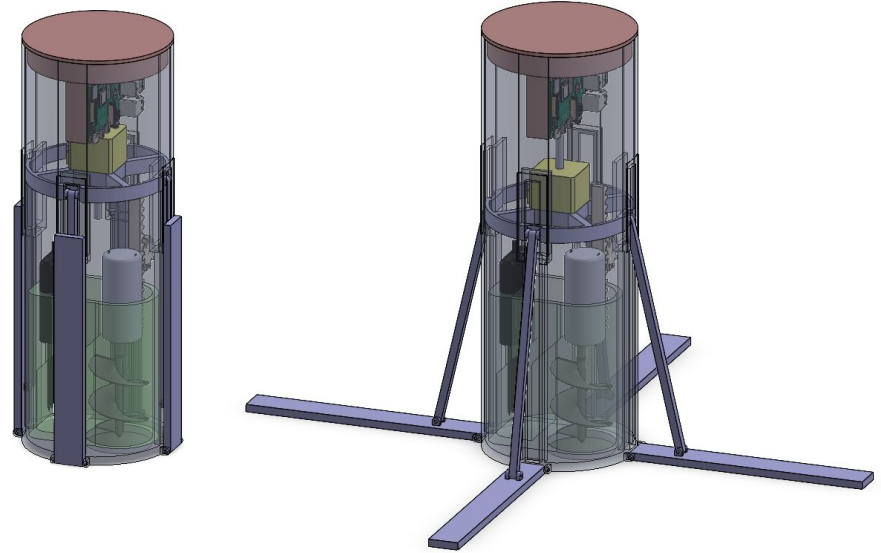
Payload Design: Lander

- 5-inch diameter, 14-inch long cylinder
- Housed in the nosecone
- Deployed after landing



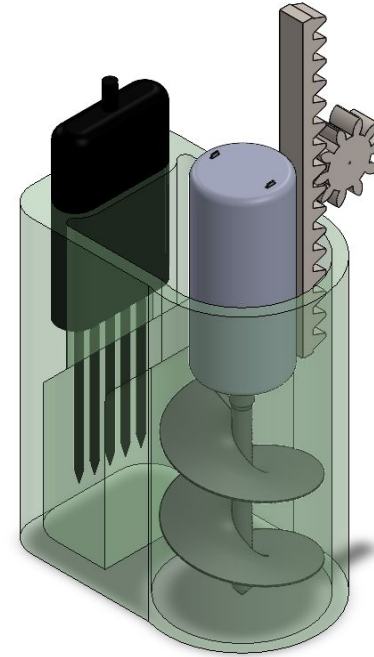
Payload Design: Legs

- Four deployable legs
- Start folded, extend using struts to a moving collar
- This will cause the payload to self-right



Payload Design: Drill

- Comprehensive mechanism to collect, store, and test soil
- Use a rotating and extending auger to collect soil
- Use passive mechanisms to funnel the dirt into a desired container
- Position sensor to be covered by soil



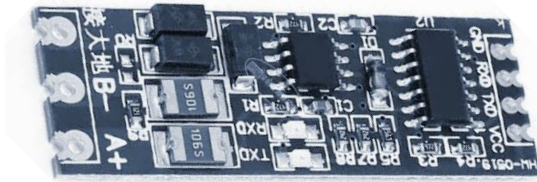
Payload Design: Soil Sensor

- Soil Probe
 - Temperature
 - Moisture Content
 - pH
 - **Electrical Conductivity**
 - **Nitrogen Levels**
 - Phosphorus Levels
 - Potassium Levels



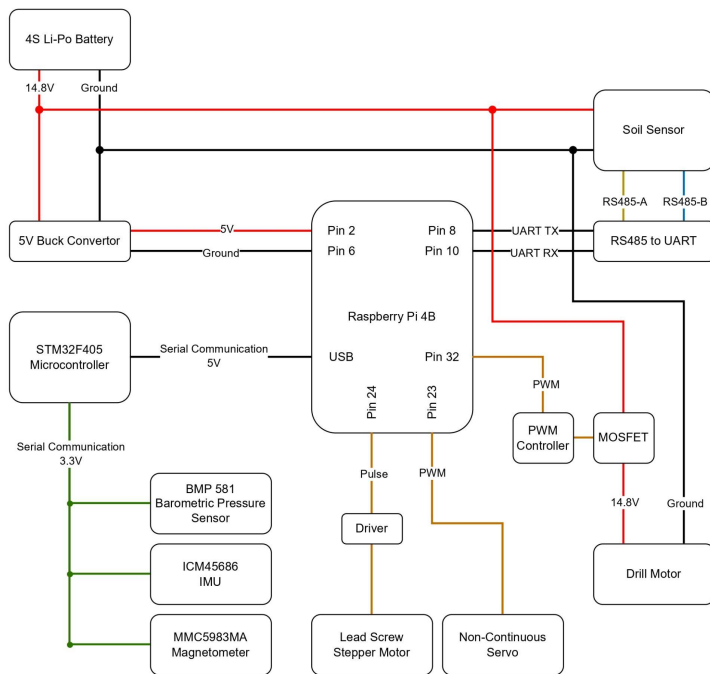
Payload Design: Soil Sensor

- 7-in-1 Sensor
 - Requires 12-24V of power
 - Modbus RTU communication protocol
 - RS485 communication standard
- RS-485 to UART converter





Payload Electrical Schematics



Sensor Array

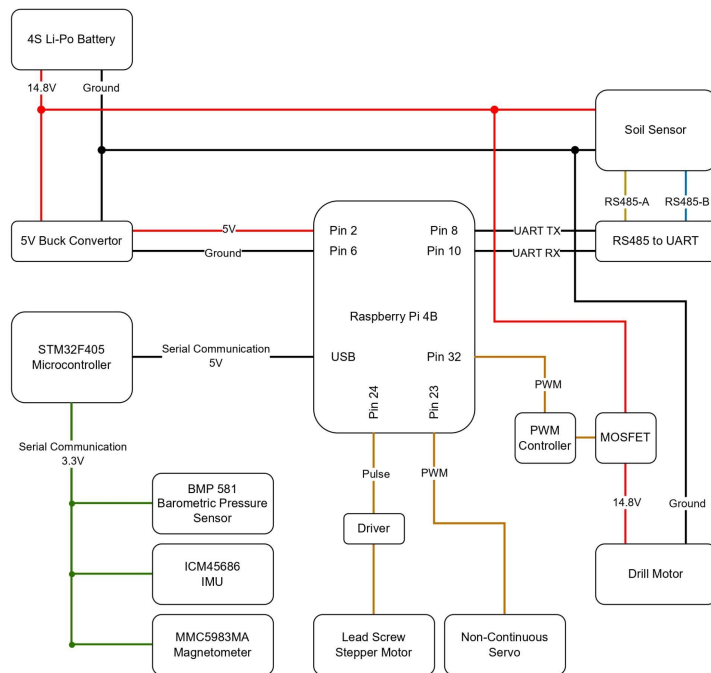
- BMP 581
 - Pressure Sensor
- ICM45686
 - Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU)
- MMC5983MA
 - Magnetometer
- STM32F405
 - Microcontroller

On-Board Computer

- Raspberry Pi 4b



Payload Electrical Schematics



Motors

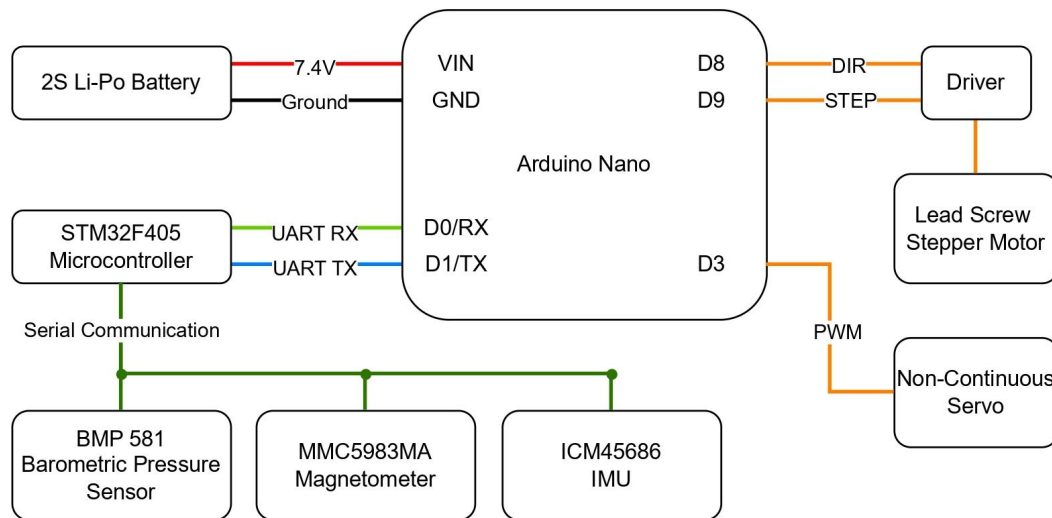
- Planetary gear motor
 - PWM controller connected to MOSFET
- Non-continuous servo
 - Rack and Pinion
- Stepper motor
 - Pulse signal to motor driver

Power

- 4S LiPo Battery



Payload Electrical Schematics



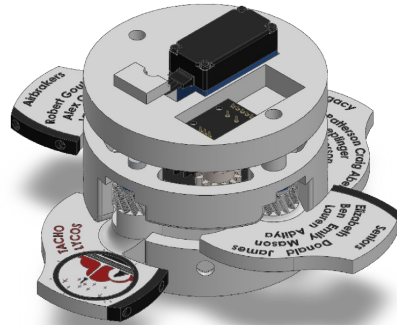
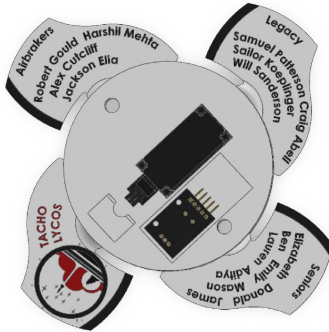
- On-Board Computer
 - Arduino Nano
- Similar sensor array
 - UART (Communication)
- Motors
 - Stepper motor
 - Non-continuous servo
- Power
 - 2S LiPo (7.4V)



Air Brakes Design

Leading Design

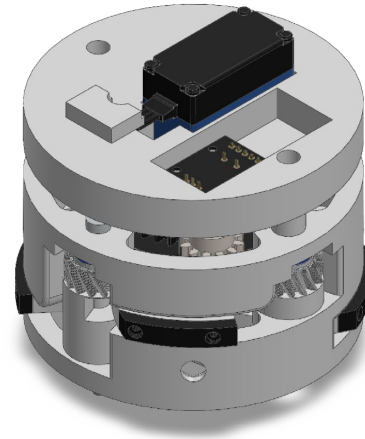
- Planetary gear design
 - Central gear actuates 4 gears simultaneously
 - Helical gears for reduced friction
- 4 fins to maximize area
 - 23.06 in^2 max area





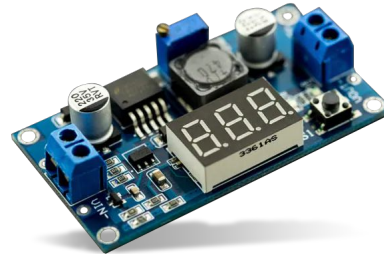
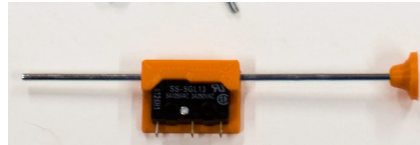
Manufacturing

- All structural parts to be 3D printed
 - Material Choice - PETG
- Electronics
 - Soldered for direct connections
 - Wiring and connectors for ease of assembly



Hardware

- Raspberry Pi 5
- IMU
- Barometric pressure sensor
- Servo
- Buck Converter
- Pullpin
- 4S Li-Po Battery





Software

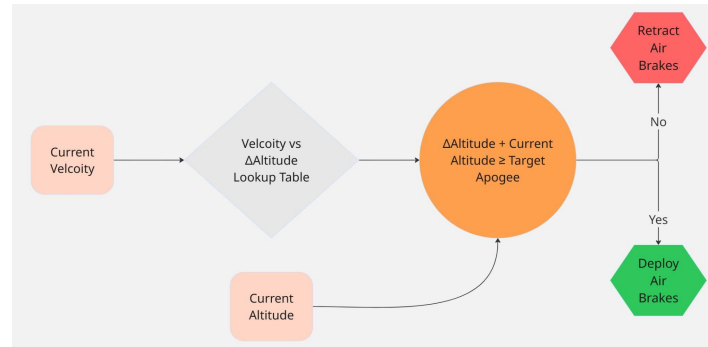
- All programming is done in Python
 - Object Oriented Programming
 - Access to reliable libraries
- Supports multi-threading
 - Raspberry Pi 5 has 4 cores
 - Faster compute
- Programmed as a Finite State Machine





Control system

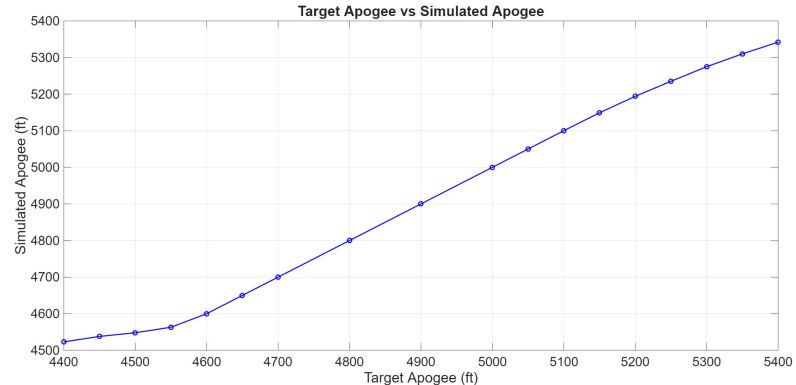
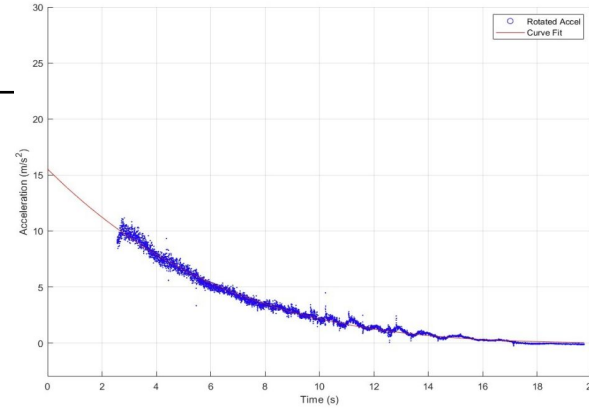
- Bang-bang control scheme
 - Binary decisions
- Takes in and keeps track of
 - Position Vector
 - Velocity Vector
 - Acceleration Vector





Apogee Prediction

- Takes in Z-axis acceleration and altitude from IMU
- Acceleration data fits to a curve
 - $A(1-B*t)^4$
- Double integration yields current altitude
- Back Tested from prior flights
- Quick and accurate within ~4%.
 - ~2 seconds - 32 ft deviation
 - ~3.5 seconds - 16.4 ft deviation





Requirement Compliance



Requirements Compliance

Covers both NASA and Team-Derived requirements

Tool Used: Requirement Verification Matrices (RVMs)

Purpose:

- Ensure all project requirements are satisfied
- Maintain traceability between owners, design elements, and verification activities

Lifecycle: RVMs are maintained throughout the project timeline

Verification Level	Description	Key
Verified	All verification success criteria has been met.	V
Partially Verified	Some verification success criteria has been met, some criteria may still be in progress.	PV
In Progress	None of the verification success criteria has been met, but the verification process has begun.	IP
Not Verified	None of the verification success criteria has been met and not meaningful progress has been made towards verification yet.	NV

Requirement Verification Matrices (RVMs)



ID	SHALL Statement	Justification	Planned Action	Verification Method	Verification Success Criteria	Status	Performing Subsystem	Results
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Inspired Heavily by
NASA System
Engineering
Handbook (2016)



Key Columns:

- ID / SHALL Statement: Identifies and describes each requirement
- Planned Action: Outlines approach for verification
- Verification Method: Defines how verification is performed
- Success Criteria: Conditions for requirement verification
- Status: Current verification state
- Performing Subsystem: Responsible subsystem(s)
- Results: Links to objective evidence of verification
- Justification: Explains rationale and necessity (for Team Derived Requirements)



Team Derived Requirements

Capture project-specific needs beyond NASA requirements

Created collaboratively by subsystem leads and integration lead

Justification Column:

- Documents rationale and necessity of each requirement

Follows same RVM structure and process as NASA requirements

Features Functional, Design, Environmental, and Safety

Requirement Type	Verified	Partially Verified	In Progress	Not Verified
NASA Requirements	32.86 % (24)	6.85 % (5)	45.21 % (33)	15.07 % (11)
Team Derived Requirements	8.86 % (7)	6.33 % (5)	32.91 % (26)	51.90 % (41)



Project Plan



NC STATE UNIVERSITY



Budget Timeline



2025-26 Student Launch Budget Gantt Chart

TACHO LYCOS				Aug				Sep				Oct				Nov				Dec				Jan				Feb				Mar				Apr				May						
Task Name	Task Number	Start Week	End Week	W01	W02	W03	W04	W05	W06	W07	W08	W09	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16	W17	W18	W19	W20	W21	W22	W23	W24	W25	W26	W27	W28	W29	W30	W31	W32	W33	W34	W35	W36	W37	W38	W39	W40	W41	W42	
E Council S25-F25	1	W01	W08	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																																			
Student Government S25-F25	2	W01	W15	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2																												
E Council S25-F26	3	W13	W42													3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Student Government S25-F26	4	W13	W42													4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Space Grant 2025-2026	5	W15	W42															5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
EYE Funding	6	W27	W27																												6															
ETF Funding	7	W27	W27																												7															
Sponsorships	8	W05	W42					8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8



Questions?
