



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AERONAUTICS & ASTRONAUTICS AT UCLA

2026-2027 SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

ROCKET PROJECT



DESIGN BUILD FLY



UNCREWED AERIAL SYSTEMS



BRUIN SPACECRAFT GROUP



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Industry Colleague,

My name is Ruelen Sarion, and I am honored to serve as the President of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) at UCLA. We are a student organization serving at the heart of UCLA's aerospace engineering community, with over 300 members to whom we provide technical experience, professional development, and a community of mentorship. Through AIAA at UCLA, your company has the opportunity to connect with students through networking events, facility tours, career fairs, and professional development sessions, as we provide an engaging and inclusive environment for students from all engineering disciplines to learn more about the aerospace industry and connect with fellow students.

The heart of AIAA at UCLA is our technical project clubs: Rocket Project, Design Build Fly, Uncrewed Aerial Systems, and Bruin Spacecraft Group. Starting their first year, we prepare students for their internships and careers with technical experience designing and building rockets, aircraft, drones, and satellites from scratch. Students gain in-depth experience in industry technologies, from computational fluid dynamics software to composite layups and machining, and learn managerial and communications skills as they work within and across their project teams.

Our project teams are internationally recognized; Rocket Project beat their own intercollegiate world record, reaching an altitude of 22,470 ft with their liquid bipropellant rocket, and our Design Build Fly team placed 3rd out of over 98 international teams and won 11th place for their design report. Our project teams have gone a long way since their establishment, and have continuously grown each year.

AIAA at UCLA relies entirely on the monetary and material donations of sponsors such as yourself to continue supporting the next generation of engineers. Your support gives students the opportunity to learn skills essential to the aerospace industry, provides exposure to industry-level practices and internships, and inspires them to pursue a career in aerospace engineering. The following packet provides details on AIAA at UCLA and our projects, how your contributions will impact our clubs, and our way of thanking you. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions about working together to build the future of the aerospace industry.

Sincerely,

Ruelen Sarion

President of AIAA at UCLA

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS



ROCKET PROJECT AT UCLA



Rocket Project at UCLA is a student engineering team focused on education, with the ultimate goal of preparing students to work in the aerospace industry. Students participate in the complete design-build-test cycle of engineering, gaining the skills to take engineering first principles taught in the classroom and apply them to real-world engineering problems.

Recently, collegiate rocket engineering has grown rapidly nationwide, with competitions like the Spaceport America Cup drawing over 100 teams. Rocket Project at UCLA remains at the vanguard through member education, community outreach, and technical projects. Our projects include both a new-member hybrid rocket and a flagship liquid bipropellant rocket. Over the last 9 years, we have grown from a few dozen students building a single hybrid rocket to an organization serving over 200 students across engineering disciplines. Over the years, we have greatly expanded our commitment to member education, safety, and outreach.

Our liquid propulsion effort has launched 9 liquid bi-propellant rockets, with our most recent launches, Pandora I & II, taking place in March 2026. This mission marked the club's highest apogee to date with an altitude of 30,496 feet. Coming off of a critical tank failure at our launch attempt July 5th 2025, the club was able to rebound and design, manufacture, test, and launch two of the most advanced rockets in program history in only 9 months.



Career and Future Developments



PROJECT ARES & PROMETHEUS Static Fire & Launch Campaigns

Rocket Project at UCLA continues to focus on its core tenets of education, innovation, and outreach. This fall alone, we are planning to educate and train more than 270 new members through our Introduction to Engineering Design: Rockets education program, a 2-unit university class taught by student leaders in the organization.

Project Ares plans to launch its 10th liquid bi-propellant rocket in Spring 2027, pursuing more rigorous engineering solutions to reach a target apogee of 100,000 feet. To achieve this, our team will conduct multiple test campaigns, including several static fire tests of the engine and multiple test rocket launches for the recovery system. Our 2025–2026 team increased the number of static fire tests and recovery launches by 300% compared to the 2024–2025 team, reinforcing the importance of iterative testing in the engineering process. Project Prometheus follows in Project Ares's footsteps by training new members in rocketry, the engineering design cycle, and system safety. By designing and building a smaller-scale rocket, these new members gain the foundation needed to transition into Project Ares. In 2024-2025, Project Prometheus's rocket, Andromeda, broke UCLA's hybrid rocket record, reaching over 19,000 feet with a successful recovery. In 2025-2026, the hybrid rocket, Valkyrie also launched and had a successful recovery.

Finally, our amazing outreach team continues to make great strides, expanding from virtual events to more in-person programming. These events provide engaging resources on rocketry, engineering, math, and science to inspire students to pursue careers in STEM. Our outreach program also travels to K–12 schools across the Greater Los Angeles area, offering presentations and hands-on experiences to spark curiosity in the next generation of rocketeers. We emphasize inclusivity and diversity in all of our work through educational opportunities that make complex problems approachable and outreach events dedicated to inspiring the next generation of rocket engineers from all walks of life.



DESIGN BUILD FLY AT UCLA



Design Build Fly (DBF) at UCLA is an interdisciplinary student team dedicated to researching, designing, manufacturing, and flying model aircrafts. Each year since 1997, the team has constructed an aircraft designed to fit annually changing specifications outlined by the international AIAA Design Build Fly competition. Through this opportunity, aircraft enthusiasts learn hands-on technical and design skills, as well as soft skills such as team work, leadership and time management. The education oriented program sets students up for success in future industry and research positions.

This past year, DBF designed and built Duck Duck Goose, a remote-controlled low-wing aircraft constructed primarily from carbon fiber, wood, and plastics. Goose was optimized to deploy, tow, and release a 249-inch banner in flight while enabling rapid loading and unloading of passengers (rubber ducks), cargo (hockey pucks), and the banner during a timed ground mission. At the AIAA Design Build Fly competition in Wichita, Kansas, our team earned 11th place in the Design Report and successfully completed every flight mission, finishing 3rd out of 98 teams, which was the highest overall placement and first podium finish in UCLA DBF history.



TEAM
2026 Competition

Career and Future Developments



BELL-AIR
2025 Competition Plane

Over the past few years, DBF at UCLA has consistently improved its performance at the AIAA Design Build Fly competition, achieving our highest placement to date this past season. This year, we expanded the team's technical capabilities by developing new testing infrastructure, including a truck-mounted banner drag measurement system, increasing the scope and frequency of prototype flight testing, refining our flight data acquisition and analysis processes, and implementing advanced manufacturing techniques to produce our most capable aircraft yet.

Looking ahead, DBF will continue refining our aircraft design and manufacturing processes by directing our efforts towards the expansion of our collective knowledge and experience. Key areas of focus include dynamic propulsion testing, more advanced aircraft sizing and optimization techniques, improved simulation verification, and the exploration of new composite manufacturing methods. Through these efforts, we aim to make more informed design decisions and continue improving our performance at our future competitions.

We also aim to expand our impact by increasing our organization's membership through more outreach events and increased marketing. With a focus on inclusiveness, DBF seeks to train all interested students, regardless of prior experience, major, or background, in key engineering skills not always gained in the classroom. In the fall, we will be hosting a series of hands-on, discussion-oriented workshops to boost member interest and train new members in aircraft design.



UNCREWED AERIAL SYSTEMS



Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) is the premier undergraduate aerial robotics team at UCLA. Our student team is involved in the full system development process of building drones, from initial design to prototyping, manufacturing, and flying them. UAS is a diverse organization with people of all years and various engineering disciplines, which provides opportunities for our members to develop their skills in an intersectional context. UAS has experience building large scale drones for both mission-driven competitions as well as for grant-funded research projects, many of which involved autonomous flight. From manufacturing carbon fiber airframes, writing and testing new flight control software, fabricating drones of all sizes for different applications, UAS provides the means to explore all aspects of aerial robotics and to challenge today's limits on the capabilities of drones.

UAS has also worked on AVIATA, a system capable of carrying payloads in the air indefinitely. To do this, we used a drone swarm to hold a central frame supporting the payload, allowing us to swap individual drones in and out whenever they run low on battery. Our proposal had been accepted by the NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD) in the University Student Research Challenge (USRC). The upcoming year, we plan to engage in similar research projects, working on harnessing and implementing cutting edge drone technology in different and unique use cases. Led by a team of passionate drone enthusiasts, we hope to introduce everyone to the exciting world of drone technology.



VTOL DRONE
NASA funded project

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Career and Future Developments



UAS FLY DAY
VTOL Flight

UAS is continuing to look towards growth, expanding both our technical prowess and professional development. For the upcoming year, the organization is looking to introduce more workshops and training programmes to increase membership and growth. This would be accompanied by research projects aimed at specific disciplines such as hardware, computer vision, autonomous vision and more, which would help new members go on a self-guided journey to learn and explore nuances of drone technology.

We aim to use this experience from new members and the existing team to compete in the 2026 AUVSI SUAS competition. We also hope to work closely with AIAA to conduct more industry and professional events, in a bid to help members not only gain technical expertise but also connect with individuals in one of the most rapidly growing industries. We already have plans for career fairs, alumni talks, info sessions, collaborations with other UCLA and LA clubs and panel discussions to help the aerospace engineering community at UCLA.



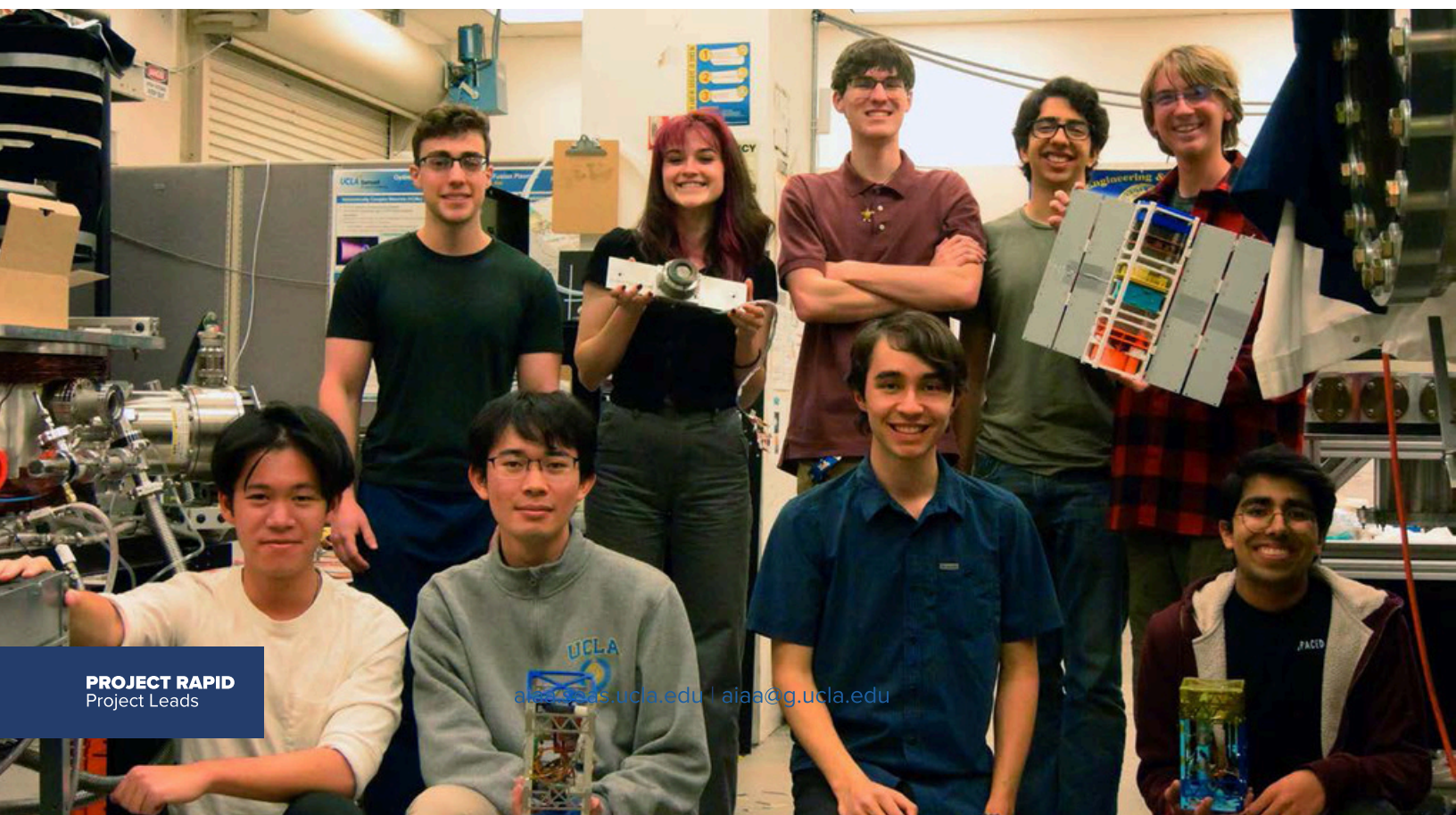
BRUIN SPACECRAFT GROUP



The Bruin Spacecraft Group (BruinSpace) is a student organization that provides undergraduate students with first-hand experience in space engineering. Composed of a diverse team of roughly 50 members, the group is currently developing its flagship project, Project RAPID. This student-led 3U CubeSat mission is designed to conduct an in-space test of emerging technology and has an expected launch window of 2028–2029. The project spans critical aerospace fields including testing, command systems, power, structures, and thermal systems.

Project RAPID is engineered to handle demanding power profiles, specifically designed to store a minimum of 28 Watt-hours (Wh) of energy. This robust energy capacity allows the satellite to supply a custom payload with 130W of power at 12V for a continuous duration of 13 minutes. To support this cycle, the Electrical Power System (EPS) dynamically switches between various electrical modes based on the satellite's state, optimizing power allocation and delivery across subsystems while charging its batteries through solar arrays.

Surviving low Earth orbit requires the satellite to maintain full structural and thermal integrity under extreme orbital conditions. A major focus of the mission is its custom nanosatellite bus and thermal management framework. Project RAPID is partnering with the UCLA Nano Transport Research Group (NTRG) to feature and test an innovative payload of oscillating heat pipes (OHPs), which are designed to support critical heat dissipation.



PROJECT RAPID
Project Leads

aias@ucla.edu | aias@ucla.edu

Career and Future Developments



BSG
Lab space

Once deployed, the satellite relies on a functional Attitude Determination and Control System (ADCS) to manage its orientation. The system's first critical task is to detumble, stabilizing the satellite from rotational motion after separation from the launch vehicle. Utilizing components like magnetorquers and reaction wheels, the control system continuously manages the satellite's attitude to prevent excessive heating while charging batteries via the solar panels.

The ultimate success of the mission relies on a robust communication network that maintains a reliable uplink and downlink with the ground station. This setup enables the spacecraft to execute scheduled commands and manage operational timelines. Once the payload is active, the satellite's systems process the collected data and transmit the acquired scientific results back to Earth for analysis.



AIAA PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY EVENTS



Throughout the year, AIAA at UCLA hosts events to promote professional development for all students. Our cornerstone event, the Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering x Material Science Engineering Career Fair is taking place October 13, 2026. This event invites industry representatives to campus, providing direct recruitment opportunities for internships and entry-level positions.

In addition to the career fair, we organize facility tours and information sessions with participating companies, resume and interviewing workshops, student mentorship programs, and panels featuring alumni and young professionals around the industry. Through these events, we aim to foster professional growth and networking opportunities to have 100% career placement for our members. Historically, involvement in our activities has significantly increased and have doubled successful career placement rates.

AIAA at UCLA is eager to collaborate with industry leaders to continue offering top-tier professional development events to our members. If you are interested in partnering with us, do not hesitate to contact us at aiaa@g.ucla.edu.



LLNL NIGHT
Industry collaboration



GIRL SCOUTS EVENT
Community outreach



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Bruin Spacecraft Group

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Marketing Effort **44497**
Fund Number **63852c**

For donation-related inquiries, please contact Elisabeth Leavitt, Associate Director of Development, Corporate and Foundation Relations, UCLA Samueli School of Engineering at ekealy@support.ucla.edu

To donate by check, please address it to The UCLA Foundation and mail it to:
PO Box 7145 Pasadena, CA 91109-7145
Attn: Elisabeth Leavitt

On the memo line, please include the following:
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AIAA AT UCLA SPONSORSHIP FORM



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(Please check the box and indicate the amount next to the respective projects)

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AIAA AT UCLA!

Your donation will be processed by the UCLA Foundation, which oversees funds from various contributors for on behalf of UCLA's departments and clubs. For more information on fund management, please refer to this link for more details: <https://mygiving.ucla.edu/faq#disclosure>

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Since we hold 501(c)(3) status, donations made to us are tax deductible.

Submission of this form acknowledges that you have read and agreed to the disclosure agreement.

Please email completed form to Elisabeth Leavitt and Ruelen Sarion:
Elisabeth Leavitt, UCLA Samueli School of Engineering Office of External Affairs: ekealy@support.ucla.edu
Ruelen Sarion, AIAA President: aiaa@g.ucla.edu





For more information about AIAA at UCLA, Rocket Project at UCLA, Design Build Fly, Uncrewed Aerial Systems, Bruin Spacecraft Group, or planning an event or donation with us, please contact:

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