

# AA241X: DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND TESTING OF AUTONOMOUS AIRCRAFT

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### *Authors:*

Kartikey Asthana  
kasthana@stanford.edu

Peter Blake  
psblake@stanford.edu

Brandon Jennings  
bjennin@stanford.edu

Erik Moon  
emoon1@stanford.edu

Sravya Nimmagadda  
sravya@stanford.edu

Akshay Subramaniam  
akshays@stanford.edu

Ian Villa  
ianvilla@stanford.edu

Jerry Watkins  
watkins2@stanford.edu

### *Degree & Department:*

Ph.D. Candidate  
Aeronautics & Astronautics

M.S. Candidate  
Graduate School of Business

M.S. Candidate  
Mechanical Engineering

M.S. Candidate  
Graduate School of Business

Ph.D. Candidate  
Aeronautics & Astronautics

Ph.D. Candidate  
Aeronautics & Astronautics

B.S. & M.S. Candidate  
Aeronautics & Astronautics

Ph.D. Candidate  
Aeronautics & Astronautics

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# 1 Introduction

Since the early 2000's, Stanford Aeronautics and Astronautics has taught the AA 241X: Design, Construction and Testing of Autonomous Aircraft course with various missions over the years. In Spring of 2014, teams were tasked with developing an autonomous aircraft to search and accurately locate four targets within the perimeter of Lake Lagunita. Among these teams was Skynet, a group of eight individuals from different backgrounds and expertise who, throughout the ten weeks, collaborated to organize, design, test, and fly various aircraft, guidance, control, and mission systems to optimally complete the search and rescue. The following report outlines the team's structure, mission strategy, aerodynamic design, control strategy, fabrication accounts, flight test data, and overall competition performance.

## 2 The Team

### 2.1 Team Structure

Skynet began as a team of eight individuals from Stanford Aeronautics and Astronautics, Mechanical Engineering, and the Graduate School of Business. In order to effectively tackle the assigned problem sets and deadlines, the team began by designating Ian as team lead and the other members as sub team leaders in the different disciplines required by the class. These areas were Aerodynamics/Configuration Design/Propulsion, Guidance/Navigation/Control, Hardware/Fabrication, Software, Aircraft Performance, and Mission Planning as outlined in the first lecture by Professor Alonso. The initial team structure is outlined in Table 1.

Initial Design Sub-Teams	Lead	Members
Aerodynamics/Configuration Design, Propellers/Propulsion	Jerry, Akshay, Kartikey	Sravya, Ian
Guidance, Navigation & Control	Brandon	Jerry, Sravya, Akshay
Hardware	Erik	Brandon, Peter
Software	Ian	Brandon, Erik, Jerry, Akshay, Sravya, Kartikey
Aircraft Performance	Sravya	Jerry, Akshay, Ian, Peter, Kartikey
Mission Planning	Peter	Everyone
Fabrication	Erik	Brandon, Peter, Akshay, Jerry, Kartikey

Table 1: Initial Team Divisions

For flying, our team had two designated pilots and launchers respectively as seen in Table 2. For each flight, at least one pilot was present and one launcher was present with a flight director also available depending on what code was being tested.

As problem set tasks and goals were more concretely defined, the team structure evolved depending on the roles members acquired. Sub teams and member roles were redefined and grouped

<b>Flight Team Role</b>	<b>Members</b>
Pilots	Peter & Brandon
Launchers/Flight Directors	Jerry & Ian

Table 2: Initial Flight Team

accordingly. Since software was strongly tied to the aircraft performance, mission planning, and guidance, navigation, & control sub teams, the sub team was dissolved with a new focus on systems and logistics. As our mission strategy grew in complexity, Kartikey took the helm as lead with his specialties in numerics. Sub team integration and communication was aided by the fact that members in the flight team were leading separate design sub teams and that there was just the right amount of overlap between divisions. Mid-quarter team configurations are outlined in Table 3.

<b>Mid-Quarter Design Sub-Teams</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Members</b>
Aerodynamics/Configuration Design, Propellers/Propulsion	Akshay, Sravya	
Guidance, Navigation & Control	Brandon	Jerry, Ian, Peter
Hardware/Fabrication	Erik	Brandon, Peter, Ian, Akshay
Systems/Logistics	Ian	Brandon, Jerry
Aircraft Performance	Sravya, Jerry	Akshay, Kartikey
Mission Planning	Kartikey	Everyone

Table 3: Mid-Quarter Team Divisions

From week eight onward, our aerodynamic design was finalized which meant that the aerodynamic divisions could be absorbed by the other sub teams. Because of the level of complexity of our mission strategy, we needed more time to port our matlab codes and functions to the APM which lead to a majority of the team working on software and a light, efficient squad left for fabrication and repairs. As flying became more critical, we decided on a primary pilot for testing and introduced other flight directors as needed for testing of specific pieces of code. Our final sub team layout and flight teams are in Table 4 and in Table 5 respectively.

<b>Final Design Sub-Teams</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Members</b>
Guidance, Navigation & Control	Brandon	Jerry, Ian, Peter
Hardware/Fabrication	Erik	Peter, Ian
Systems/Logistics	Ian	Brandon, Jerry
Mission Planning	Kartikey	Jerry, Akshay, Sravya

Table 4: Final Team Divisions

Flight Team Role	Members
Pilots	Peter (Competition) & Brandon (Testing)
Launchers	Jerry, Ian, Akshay, Kartikey
Flight Directors	Brandon (Controls), Jerry (Phase 1), Akshay & Kartikey (Phase 2), Ian (Backup)

Table 5: Final Flight Team

## 2.2 Team Communication & Logistics

In order to facilitate group discussions, a when2meet form was utilized online. Based on its results, the team met briefly after class on Mondays and Wednesdays for brief sub team status updates and coordination. Major team meetings were held on Fridays during the typical class time on the second floor of Durand and were spent discussing topics requiring everyone’s attendance such as aircraft design and mission strategy.

The team also utilized online methods to meet communication needs. A Google Group was utilized for formalized notices and e-mail discussions. Short-form and quick information relays were handled by a GroupMe that could be accessed via phone or computer.

Prior to week 6, flight testing was scheduled as needed since precedence was placed on airframe and mission strategy development. However, once control laws and mission code needed to be tested in the air, it became apparent that a regular schedule needed to be enforced for sufficient project progress. Flight teams as outlined in Section 2.1 met at Durand 353 nearly every day of the week at 6:00am. Once logs had been cleared and updates had been pushed to the APM, the flight team would head out to Lake Lagunita around 6:30am and fly until 11:00am on good days and 8:30am on bad days. Phone calls were used to communicate for the entire pre-flight and flight duration for real-time updates. Intermittent updates and summaries were sent to team members not present over the GroupMe. Towards the competition week, flight teams would arrive earlier to fly sooner.

Data Storage and problem set completion was made possible via our Google Drive, Google Docs, Github, and a Wordpress. Actual APM code was managed via Github in order to take advantage of Github’s version control capabilities. All other team data, simulation code, and photos were uploaded into categorically defined folders in our Google Drive. Spreadsheets recording budget, weather data, contact information, useful links, and most importantly, problem set requirements were also held here. Having all of these documents in a single location and accessible by all of the team was the last step in facilitating good communication and ensured proper problem set completion. Once written, relevant text, data, graphs, and videos were uploaded to skynet241x.wordpress.com.

## 3 Mission

### 3.1 Approach via identification of score components

Skynet’s mission strategy, and subsequent airplane design, is motivated by the identification of bounds on the three components of score:

1. Accuracy component: Positive real, bounded above by  $\alpha/4 = 50$  (perfect refinement) and below by 0 (estimates at infinity).

This suggests that we should have a high endurance aircraft and a specialized refinement algorithm.

2. Time component: Positive real, unbounded above (save for physical constraints) and bounded below by 0 (failure to locate one or more targets).

This suggests that we should have a trajectory that can locate all the targets with probability 1, and fly as fast as such a trajectory (and battery requirements) would admit.

3. Reliability component: Positive real, unbounded above and bounded below by 1 (less than 6 flights). Note, however, that  $\delta_{rel} \sim 1 + 0.05n_{flights}/5$  as per the final scheme adopted for the competition, which implies that the overall average gets multiplied by only 1.5 after 50 flights.

This suggests that we should have control loops that can ensure identical inner loop performance on every run.

Based on the observations above, the finalized mission plan consists of two phases. Phase-1 consists of a passive search to locate all targets with complete certainty irrespective of the placement of the targets on the field. It includes an analytical trajectory that ensures that every point within the search domain lies within at least one of the snapshots. Phase-2 actively refines the sighted targets based on heuristic arguments of recursion. As an intermediate step, the order of visiting the sighted targets for refinement is decided through a brute force sorting of all possible paths. At the core of the mission plan is the numerical scheme for estimation of the target position based on the randomized values returned from the virtual camera.

### 3.2 Phase-1: An initial passive path to sight all targets with probability 1

The initial passive path attempts to solve the following variational problem:

Denote the target by  $\xi$ , Lake Lagunita by  $\Omega$ , field of view by  $F$ , diameter of the FOV by  $f$  and snapshot by  $i$ . Let  $\xi$  be a uniformly distributed random variable in a closed simply connected subset  $\Omega$  of  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Let  $x^c \in \mathbb{R}^2$  be a smooth curve that has been discretized at  $n$  points  $\{x_i\}_i^n$  so that each point of the discretized trajectory  $x_i$  is associated with a circular region  $F_i = \{y \in \Omega : \|y - (x_{i_1}, x_{i_2})\| \leq f(x_{i_3})\}$ . Find  $x_i$  that minimizes  $L = \int_{x_i}^{x_n} \|dx^c\|$  such that  $P(\xi \in \cup_1^n F_i) = 1$ . The problem is constrained by the distance between snapshots which is bounded above due to maximum cruise speed and below due to the stall speed.

The initial approach to find a solution for this problem had been guided by parametric optimization of spiral-like trajectories. However, these optimal trajectories were quite sensitive to cruise airspeed of the aircraft and, more importantly, had a finite (although small) probability of failing to sight one of the four targets. The final strategy for phase 1 employs an analytical trajectory which by construction ensures that the search domain (Lake Lagunita) is a subset of the union of the fields of view across all snapshots. The existence of such a trajectory can be easily proven by observing that the union of intersecting circles of equal radii  $r$ , whose centers lie on the circumference of another circle of radius  $R$ , strictly contain an annular region of outer radius  $R + \delta R^+$  and inner radius  $R - \delta R^-$  (see figure ??), where  $\delta R^+$  and  $\delta R^-$  are determined from the solution of the following non-linear equations:

$$d_k = R_k \left( 2 \left( 1 - \frac{\cos s}{R_k} \right) \right)^{1/2}$$

$$R_k + \delta R_k^+ - (R_k^2 - d_k^2/4)^{1/2} = (r^2 - d_k^2/4)^{1/2}$$

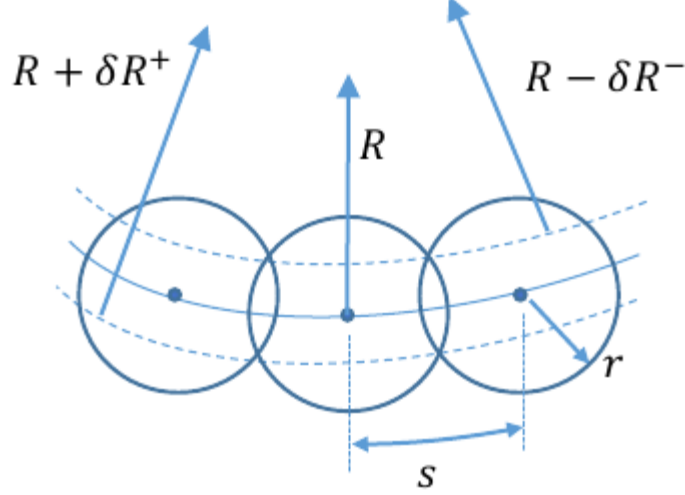


Figure 1: Annular region contained within discrete circles

$$\delta R_k^- = 2 \left( r^2 - d_k^2/4 \right)^{1/2} - \delta R_k^+$$

This suggests that the desired trajectory can be realized by a set of concentric circles whose radii  $R_i$  are chosen to ensure that corresponding consecutive annular regions have non-zero overlap (see figure ??).

The analytical values of  $R - i$  can now be obtained recursively as follows:

1. Recurrence relation:  $R_k + \delta R_k^+ = R_{k-1} - \delta R_{k-1}^-$
2. Base case:  $R_1 + \delta R_1^+ = R_0 = 165$
3. Parametric dependence:  $s = v t_s$

where  $v$  is the cruise airspeed and  $t_s$  is the snapshot time gap.

Clearly, the trajectory is completely specified once the functional relationships of  $\delta R^+$  and  $\delta R^-$  have been established. An instance of the passive trajectory for phase-1 is shown in figure ??.

### 3.3 Phase-2: An active path to refine the estimates of sighted targets

At the end of phase-1, each of the four targets  $\xi^j$  is known to lie within a simply connected and provably convex region  $\omega^j$  with probability 1. Define a suitable norm on the region  $\|\omega^j\|$ . For our purpose, the geometric area or the maximum distance between any two points on the periphery of the region are appropriate measures. We are interested in finding a trajectory  $x_n^j$  for  $n = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n_f$  such that the target region shrinks to a specified tolerance, i.e. the sequence  $\omega_n^j$  converges so that  $\|\omega_{n_f}^j\| < \|\omega_\gamma\|$  for a given tolerance  $\|\omega_\gamma\|$ . For an active trajectory, depends on Given this requirement, we can identify certain key characteristics of the trajectory:

- The trajectory must lead to convergence for any admissible  $\xi^j$  and  $\omega^j$
- The discrete waypoints on the trajectory must be navigate-able within performance constraints



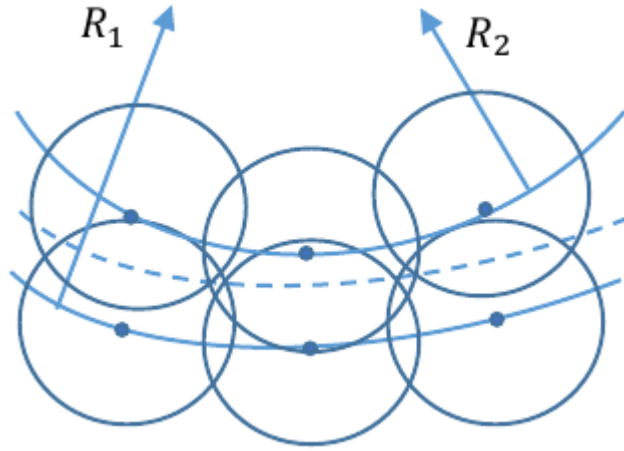


Figure 2: Overlap between subsequent annular regions

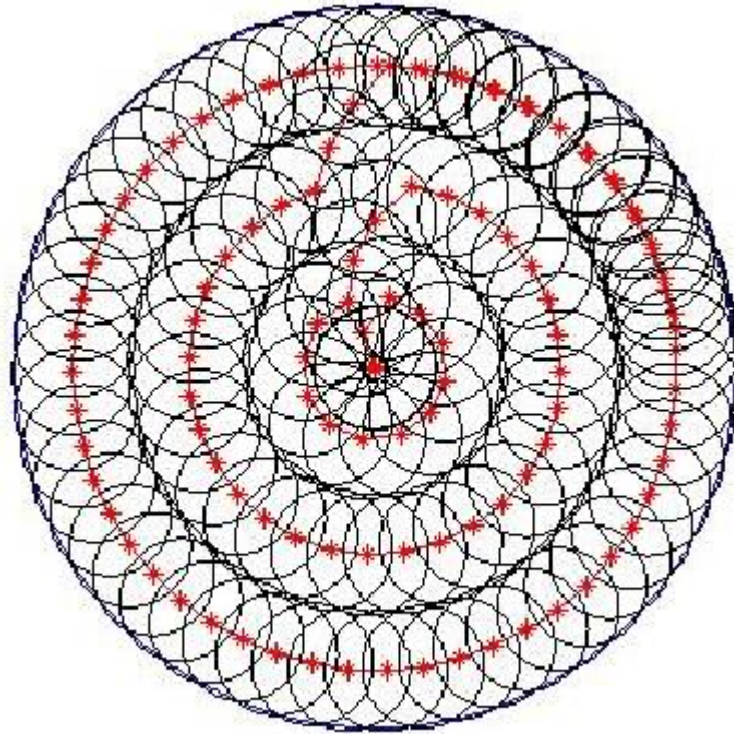


Figure 3: Typical trajectory used for phase-1

- The determination of the trajectory must not be computationally intensive

For this phase of the mission, we augment the estimation procedure by keeping track of unsuccessful snapshots (those that did not contain the target) as well. The target region is then obtained by first evaluating the intersection of all successful snapshots and then exsecting the union of unsuccessful snapshots. The subsequent procedure is the same as before. Note that the estimation strategy guarantees that  $\omega_n^j$  is a non-increasing sequence.

One possible active trajectory that satisfies the essential requirement of convergence can be obtained through heuristic arguments. Let  $v$  be the cruise airspeed dictated by design for maximum endurance,  $R_f$  be the radius of the field of view at the highest admissible altitude,  $t_s$  be the snapshot gap time, and radius  $R$  be an intrinsic parameter. Then:

1. Evaluate  $y_n$  the centroid of  $\omega_n$
2. Let  $x_{n_1} = y_{n_1} + R \cos(v/R)t_s, x_{n_2} = y_{n_2} + R \sin(v/R)t_s$  i.e. follow a circular path of radius  $R$  centered at the centroid of the target region
3. Evaluate the field of view and check for presence of target.
  - a If a target is found, evaluate  $\omega_{n+1}$  using all the snapshots. Then repeat steps 1-3
  - b Otherwise, set  $\omega_{n+1} = \omega_n$  and repeat steps 2-3

The exit criterion used for determining convergence has been taken to be  $\|\omega_{n_f}\| < 1$  which approximately corresponds to the norm of the region being smaller than  $\gamma = 1m$ . The parameter  $R$  is taken to be equal to  $R_f \sim 30m$ , and  $v$  is taken to be  $5m/s$ .

In words, this active path is composed of ‘shifting circles’ where the changing circles correspond to levels of the algorithm. Several very interesting geometrical convergence statements can be proven. However, instead of delving deep into theoretical results, we briefly comment on the salient features of the process that are directly related to the key characteristics outlined above.

- The algorithm is guaranteed to converge for any admissible target location and target region provided that  $v < (2\pi R)/3$ . In fact, the convergence is proportional to  $\sqrt{n_l}$  where  $n_l$  is the level of the algorithm. This follows from the fact that during each level of the algorithm the area of the region decreases on average by at least a factor of  $1/3$  due to the following geometric result: A circle of radius  $R$  can be equi- partitioned by 3 circles of radii  $R$  centered at the vertices of an equilateral triangle inscribed within the original circle.
- The radii of the circles for any level of the algorithm is fixed to be  $R = R_f \simeq 30m$ . Since  $v$  is taken to be  $5m/s$ , the required rate of turn of very low and the waypoints can be navigated easily.
- The simplicity and strength of this method lies in the recursion among levels. The definition of the trajectory is dependent on the target region only through the centroid. Thus, no special treatment is required as the target region shrinks. The altitude is kept fixed at the highest admissible value. Clearly, the generation of waypoints is computationally simple.
- The performance of the algorithm is fairly robust with respect to small variations in the possible parameter set -  $R, v$ , altitude etc.

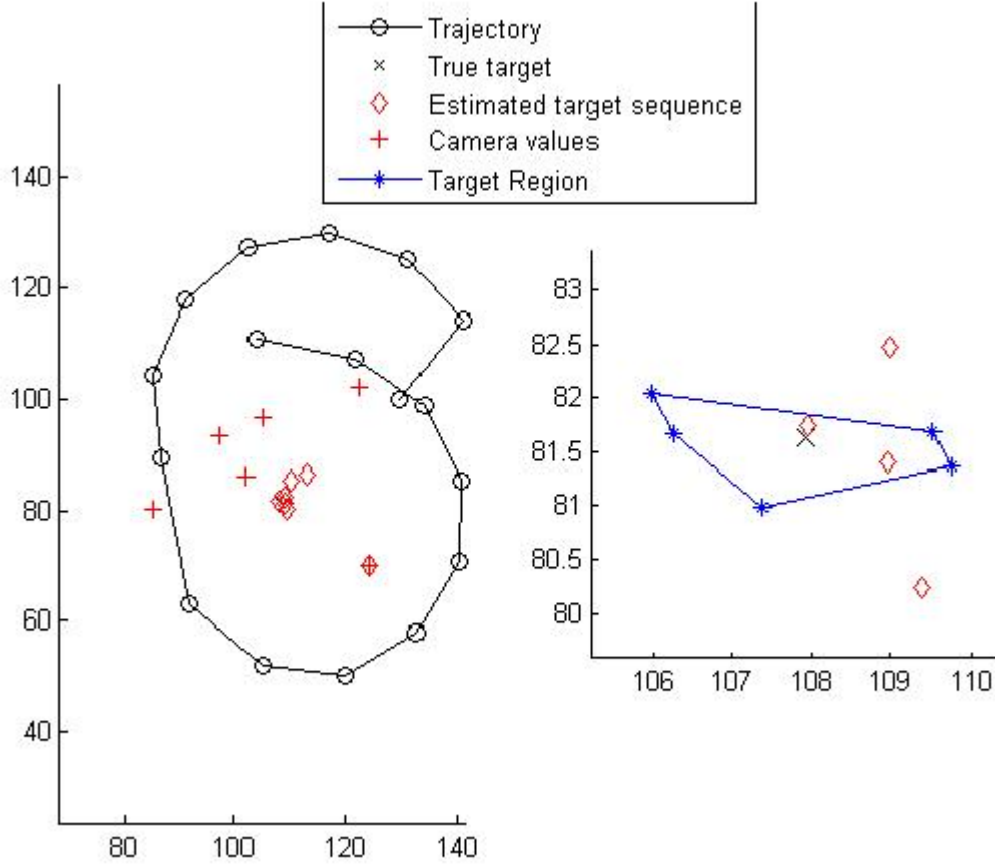


Figure 4: An instance of the refinement procedure

An instance of the refinement procedure for a randomly generated target starting from a single snapshot (worst case scenario at the end of phase-1) is shown in figure ???. The ‘x’mark is the true target, the ‘+’ marks are estimates returned by the camera, the diamonds are processed target locations, and ‘\*’ denote the target region.

A portrait of the successful and unsuccessful snapshots is shown in figure ??.

Figure ?? plots the convergence history of the algorithm through a geometrical as well as an exact measure.

### 3.4 Target position estimation scheme

Skynet’s target position estimation algorithm is based upon the following two observations:

1. The camera reports an estimate only when the true target is located within the FOV. Hence, after  $K_j$  successful snapshots for the  $j^{th}$  target, the target must be located in  $\cap_i^{K_j} F_{j_k}$  with probability 1.
2. The estimates  $y_{est_{j_k}}$  returned from the camera for the  $j^{th}$  target are drawn from a bivariate normal distribution with mean  $(y_{true_{j_1}}, y_{true_{j_2}})$  and finite expectation. The maximum

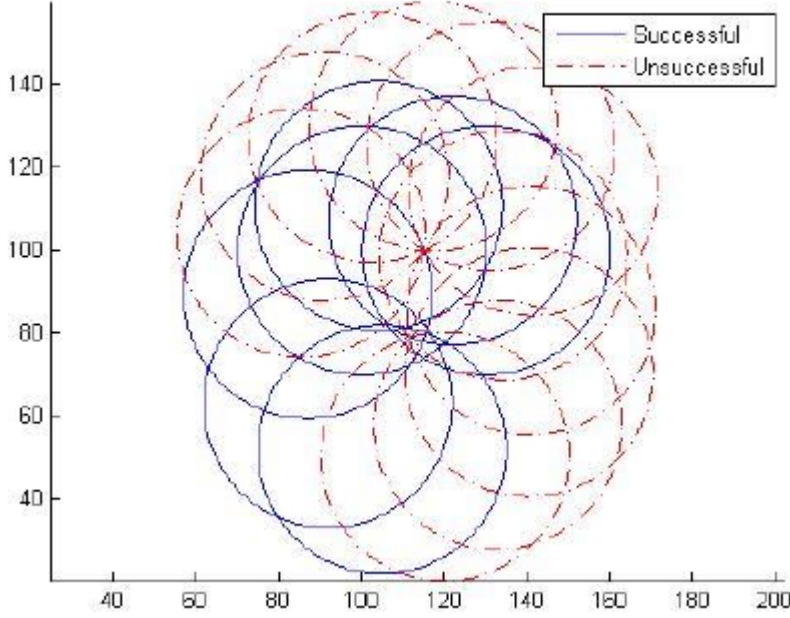


Figure 5: A portrait of the successful and unsuccessful snapshots

likelihood estimator for this case is exactly the sample mean

$$(\hat{y}_{j_1}, \hat{y}_{j_2}) = \frac{1}{K_j} \left( \sum_l imits_1^{K_j} y_{est_{j_{k_1}}}, \sum_l imits_1^{K_j} y_{est_{j_{k_2}}} \right)$$

The following asymptotic results provide theoretical reliability to the two measures mentioned above

1. Let  $F_i = \{y : \|(y_1, y_2) - (y_{i_1}, y_{i_2})\| \leq r, \|(\xi_1, \xi_2) - (y_{i_1}, y_{i_2})\| \leq r\}$  denote circular areas with radius  $r$  centered at  $y_i$  that all necessarily contain the point  $\xi$ . Further let  $y_i$  be drawn from a uniform random distribution in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Then,  $P(\|y_n - \xi\| > \delta) \rightarrow 0 \forall y_n \in \cap_i^n F_i, \delta > 0$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  as .

In other words, the intersection of the random circles converges to the common point. Hence, if we take enough snapshots, the fields of view alone would be enough to provide us with the true location of the targets.

2. The maximum likelihood estimator is asymptotically convergent (i.e. consistent)

Hence, if take enough snapshots, the random estimates from camera alone would provide us with the true location of the targets.

The actual implementation of the above procedure is relatively complicated. While the sample mean of estimates is easy to calculate, the intersection of circles is more involved. Similarly, the

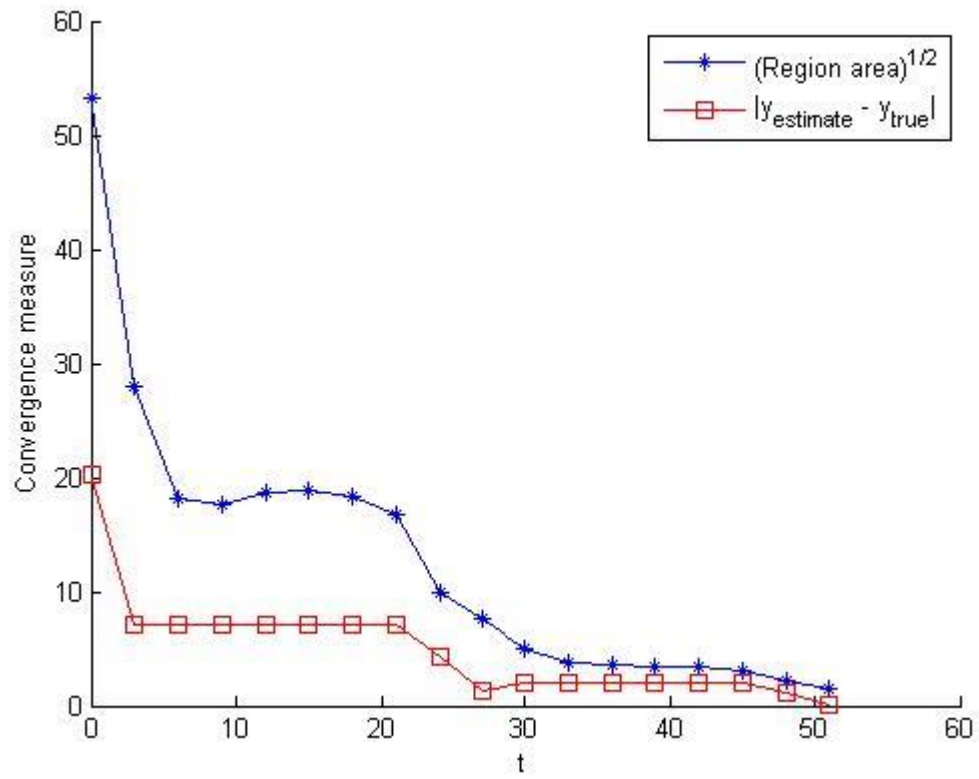


Figure 6: Convergence history of the algorithm

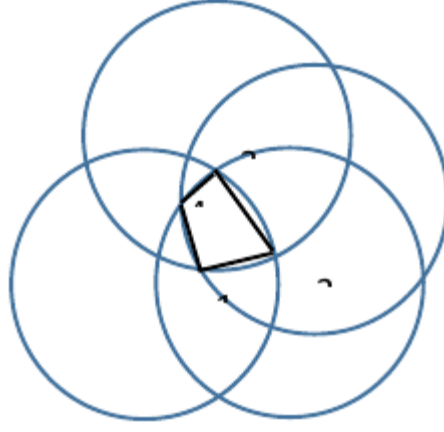


Figure 7: Region that contains the target with probability 1

process of ensuring that the final estimate falls within this intersection is another task. Skipping over the details for brevity, we provide here a flowchart of the process for each target:

1. Find a discrete representation of the region of intersection of the FOV circles -  $I$

Scheme: The intersection of  $n$  circles (that all contain a common point) results in  $\binom{n}{2}$  intersection points. Out of these, only  $p \leq n$  points lie on the periphery of the intersection of the circles. The necessary and sufficient condition for these points  $z_m$  for  $m = 1, 2, \dots, p$  is given by

$$\|z_m - y_i\| \leq R_i \text{ for } i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

where  $y_i$  are circle centers, and  $R_i$  the radii.

Owing to the convexity of circular arcs, these  $p$  points result in a  $p$ -sided convex polygon (see figure ??).

2. Find the sample mean of the estimates return by the camera  $\hat{y}$
3. Check if  $\hat{y} \in I$ . If yes, report  $\hat{y}$  as the final estimate (see figure ??).

Scheme: Standard geometric algorithm for detecting if a point lies inside a convex polygon.

4. If  $\hat{y} \notin I$  report  $y_{target}$  as the point in  $I$  that is 'close' to  $\hat{y}$ .

Scheme: Find the point of intersection of the line joining centroid of the polygon and with the perimeter of the polygon. (see figure ??)

The following figure shows the advantage of this estimation method during actual simulations. The 'x' marks are the true targets, the '+' marks are estimates returned by the camera, and the squares are processed target locations.

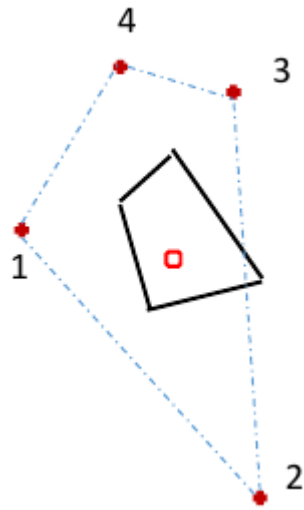


Figure 8: MLE within geometric requirements

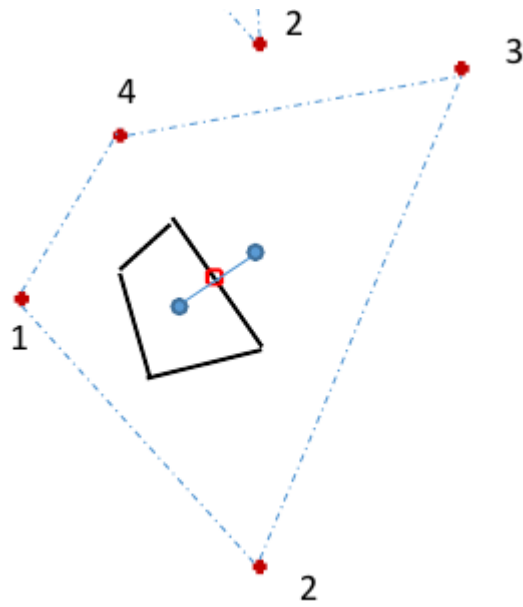


Figure 9: Geometric correction to MLE

### 3.5 Statistical measure of score and mission time

As per the analysis of the aircraft performance group, the finalized aircraft design was expected to have maximum endurance near stall speed. For this purpose, the airspeed for Phase-2 was simulated at  $5m/s$ . (Actual flight tests later revealed that the airplane stalled around  $7m/s$  and, incidentally, could operate stably only above  $9m/s$ ).

Similarly, the optimal rate of climb at the beginning of Phase-1 was simulated as per design values. The only free parameter remaining was the cruise speed during phase-1. Towards this aim, a parametric study against cruise airspeed was conducted by gathering statistics over 100 realizations of the target locations. Figure ?? plots the variation of the sample mean of the two components of score ( $\beta/t_{sight}$  and  $\alpha/\sum_{i=1}^4 \max(\gamma, \|y_{target} - y_{true}\|)$ ) and the total score along with their standard deviations as error bars. We note that

- The accuracy component is very close to its maximum value ( $\sim 50$ ) for  $v \leq 11m/s$
- The  $t_{sight}$  component increases with  $v$  for  $v \leq 12m/s$  after which the battery gets consumed for some realizations even before phase-1 can be completed
- The accuracy component for  $v = 12m/s$  is reduced due to excessive battery consumption during phase-1
- From a-c, we conclude that  $v = 11m/s$  is the ideal cruise speed for phase-1

It is important to mention that these observations should have been ideally been dictated by actual flight tests rather than empirical estimates. However, the final implementation, integration and debugging of the airplane system did not leave much time for testing and fine tuning.

Figure ?? plots various components of mission time for such cases where all targets could be located before the battery was consumed. As expected,  $t_{sight}$  does decrease with  $v$  under this restriction. The refinement times start to go down for  $v \geq 12m/s$  as the targets are not fully refined before the battery is consumed, and are therefore not plotted on the graph below.

Finally, the detailed statistics for the chosen parameter values are tabulated below. This is the theoretical expectation of the mission values.

Quantity	Component	Mean	Standard dev.
Score	Total	78.3	9.3
	Accuracy	49.3	4.1
	$t_{sight}$	29.0	8.2
Time	Total	557.0 s	56.1 s
	$t_{sight}$	180.9 s	33.0 s

## 4 Airframe Design

### 4.1 Propulsion System Analysis

The propulsion system analysis was performed in three parts:

1. Propeller analysis



2. Motor analysis
3. Propeller and Motor matching

#### 4.1.1 Propeller Analysis

For the propeller analysis, we used wind tunnel experimental data from the UIUC Propeller Data Site <sup>1</sup>. The exact same propeller data was unavailable in the database, so we used a very similar propeller (Graupner CAM Slim 9x5) albeit from a different manufacturer.

The data was given in terms of the rotations per second instead of the angular velocity and hence, the following scaling had to be performed

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda &= \frac{J}{\pi} \\ C_T &= \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^3 C'_T \\ C_P &= \frac{1}{\pi} \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^3 C'_P \\ \eta &= \eta'\end{aligned}$$

where  $\lambda$  is the advance ratio based on the angular velocity,  $J$  is the advance ratio based on the rotations per second,  $C_T$  is the thrust coefficient,  $C_P$  is the power coefficient and  $\eta$  is the propeller efficiency. The primed quantities are the ones reported in the database.

#### 4.1.2 Motor Analysis

The motor analysis was performed by using the standard electric motor model. The motor speed constant, motor resistance and the no-load motor current were obtained from experimentally measured values on the manufacturer's website <sup>2</sup>.

The values of the model constants are reported below:

$$\begin{aligned}K_v &= 980 \left(\frac{2\pi}{60}\right) \text{ rad/s/volt} \\ R_m &= 0.220 \, \Omega \\ i_0 &= 0.4 \, A\end{aligned}$$

#### 4.1.3 Propeller and Motor Matching

For a given free-stream velocity, the required torque for the propeller was calculated as a function of the angular velocity of the propeller. For the motor, the torque generated was calculated as a function of the angular velocity. By matching these two torques, we solved for the angular velocity and obtained the total propulsive efficiency. This process is illustrated in Figure 10.

For the  $7 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  case, we see that the propeller efficiency,  $\eta_p$  peaks at very low angular velocities and hence the total propulsive efficiency is poor. For the  $12 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  case, the propeller efficiency,  $\eta_p$

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<sup>1</sup><http://aerospace.illinois.edu/m-selig/props/propDB.html>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.maxxprod.com/pdf/HC2808-xxxx.pdf>

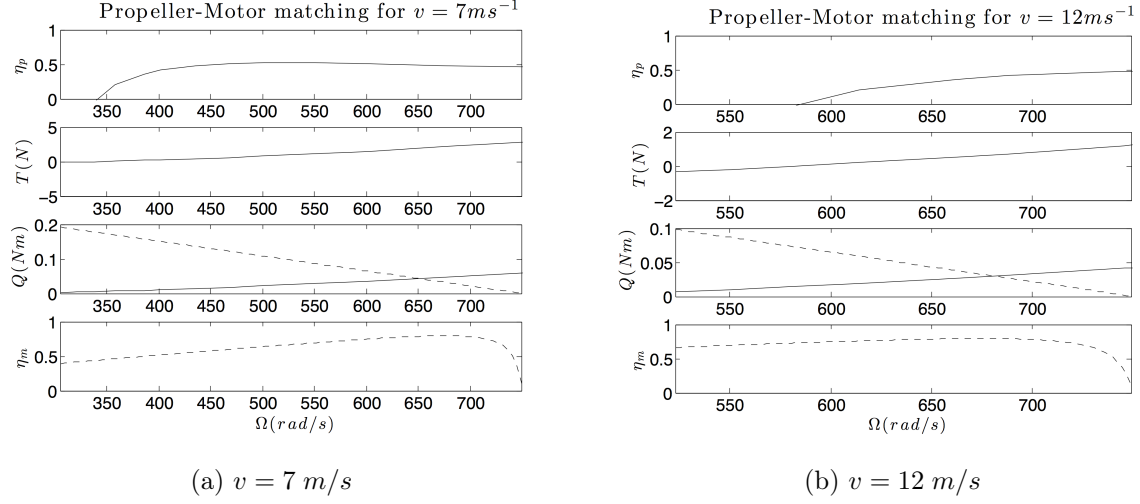


Figure 10: Propeller-Motor matching shown graphically. Solid lines: propeller curves. Dashed lines: Motor curves

peaks at high angular velocities which again leads to a low total propulsive efficiency. Optimizing the total propulsive efficiency over different airspeeds, we get the best motor-propeller matching illustrated in Figure 11

The total propulsive efficiency and the thrust are plotted against airspeed in Figure 12.

## 4.2 Design Approach

For our mission plan, it is critical that we climb to an altitude of  $400 \text{ ft}$  as fast as we can to efficiently scout the search area and sight all four targets as soon as we can. Hence, the rate of climb for our airplane is of crucial importance. In addition to this, the endurance of our aircraft is also very important since the allowed battery consumption is very limiting. We designed our aircraft mainly based on these two considerations.

First, we obtained the drag polar for a generic 2D semi-symmetrical airfoil section (Clark-Y) in XFLR5 that we used as our first estimates for our full aircraft drag polar. From some preliminary weight estimates, we allotted a  $450 \text{ g}$  weight budget for our aircraft. Using this weight and the 2D drag polars data, we found the wing area that would maximize our rate of climb using the data from the analysis of the propulsion system. We chose a taper ratio of 0.5 for our wing. This choice was influenced by structural constraints on the total root bending moment and the stall characteristics so that in the event of a stalled aircraft, aileron control is not lost. Then, we assumed an aspect ratio of 6.8 (that of the Bixler 2). This allowed us to construct a wing in XFLR5 to get a more realistic drag polar. This process was repeated iteratively until convergence. However, we changed our aspect ratio to 10 since we felt it would be possible to make a wing with that aspect ratio that is still rigid enough.

After this preliminary analysis, we did the same analysis with different airfoil sections and chose the SD-7037 airfoil section since the predicted  $(L/D)_{max}$  was the highest for this airfoil. The effect of the choice of airfoil section on the climb performance was found to be minimal and hence we were able to perform a decoupled analysis for the choice of airfoil sections.

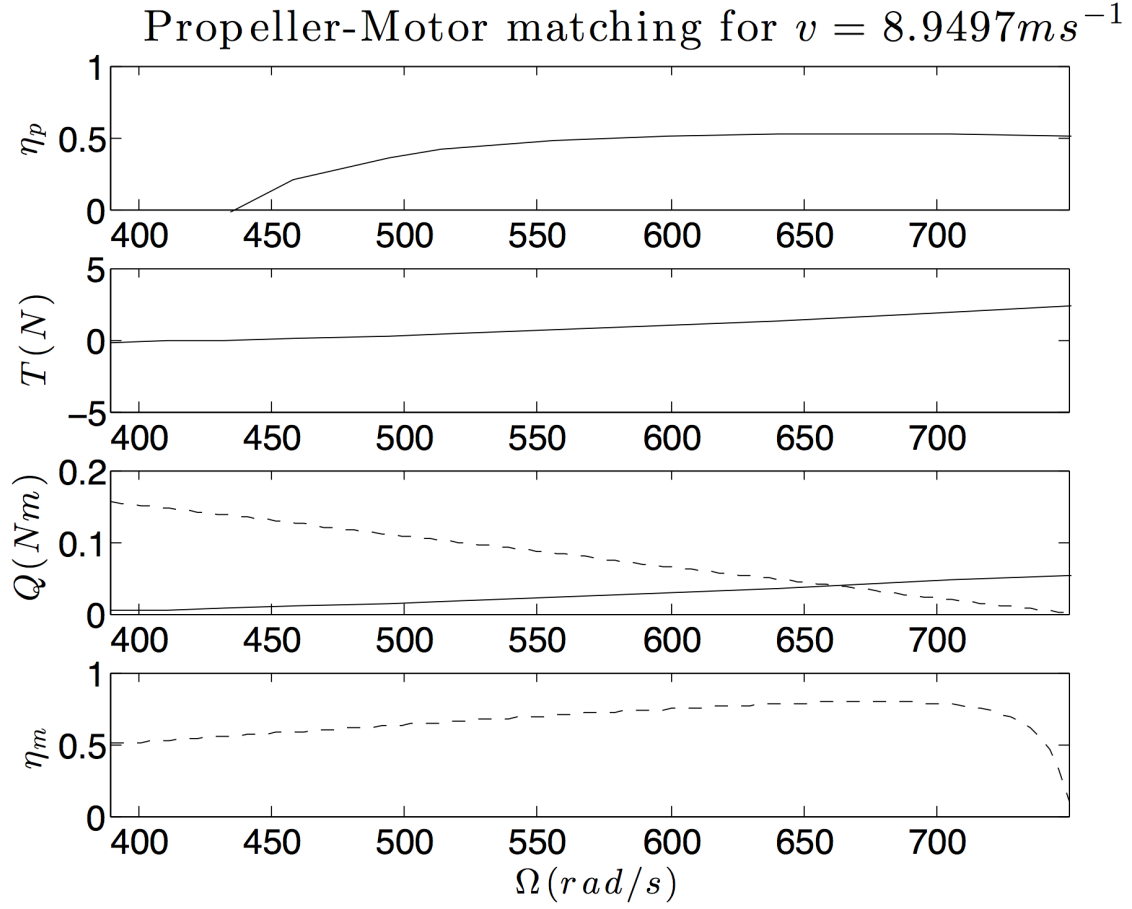


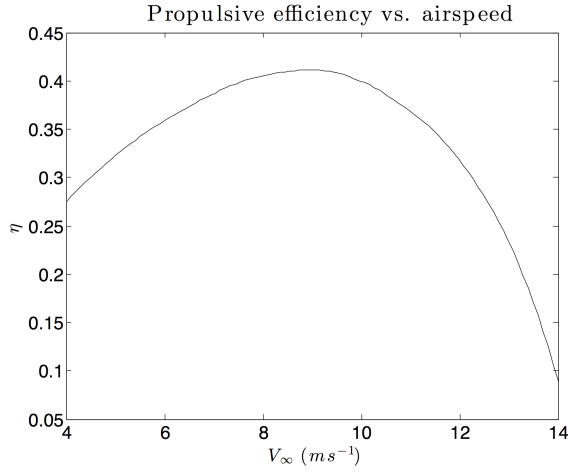
Figure 11: Optimal Propeller-Motor matching shown graphically. Solid lines: propeller curves. Dashed lines: Motor curves

Then, we calculated the horizontal stabilizer area from considerations of the longitudinal stability that were backed by Vortex Lattice Model predictions. The vertical stabilizer size was chosen based on previous aircraft designs similar to our aircraft and then validated using stability analysis in AVL.

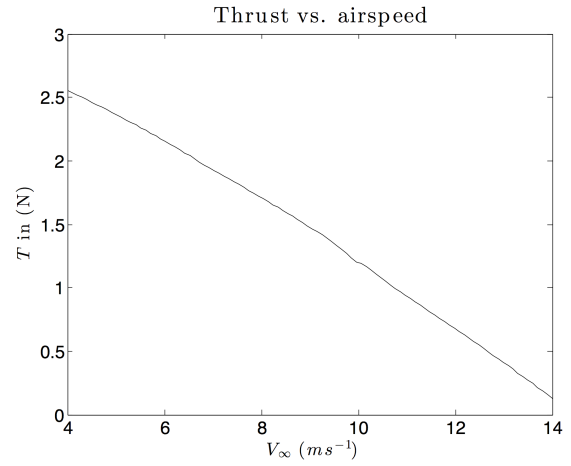
### 4.3 Performance Characteristics

The different performance parameters of our design as predicted by XFLR5 are shown in Figures 14 to 18.

A comparison of the performance parameters estimated from our analysis with the performance parameters obtained from measured data during flight tests is shown in Table 6.



(a) Plot of the total propulsive efficiency against airspeed



(b) Plot of the total thrust against airspeed

Figure 12: Thrust and efficiency plots

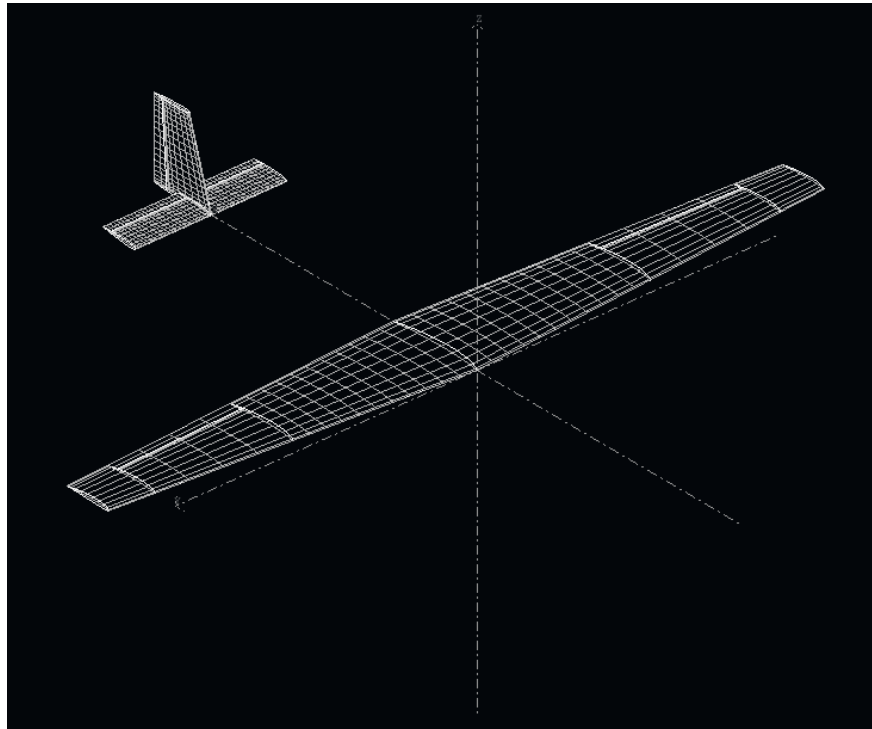


Figure 13: VLM model of our design in XFLR5

#### 4.4 Stability Analysis

The stability analysis of our design was performed in AVL. Three different straight and level flight trim states and one level turn trim state were analysed. The four cases used are listed in Table 7.

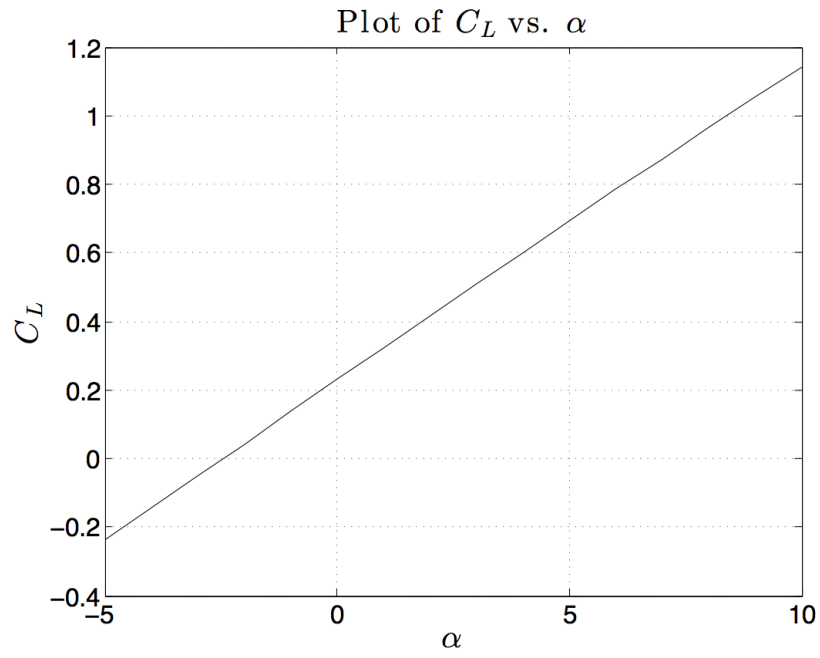


Figure 14:  $C_L$  vs  $\alpha$

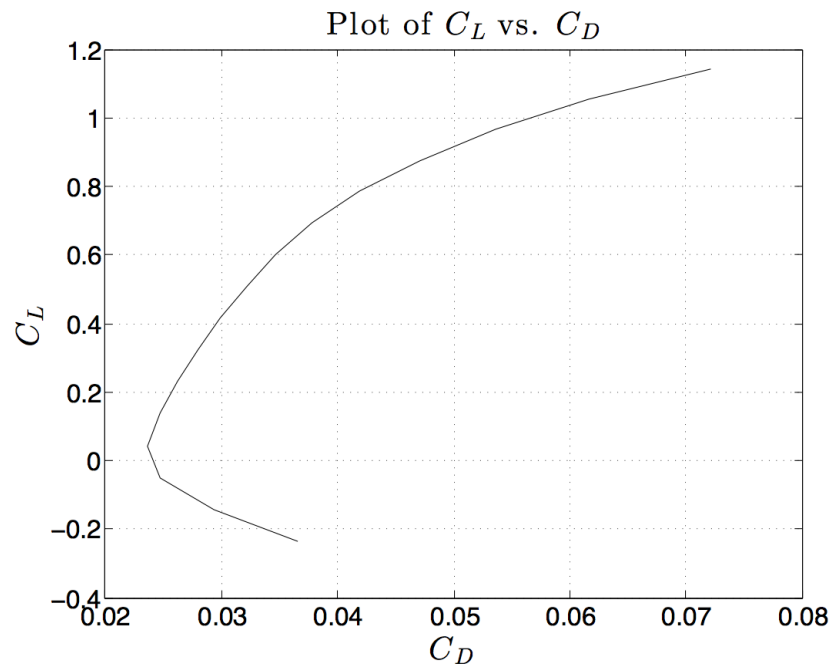


Figure 15: Drag polar

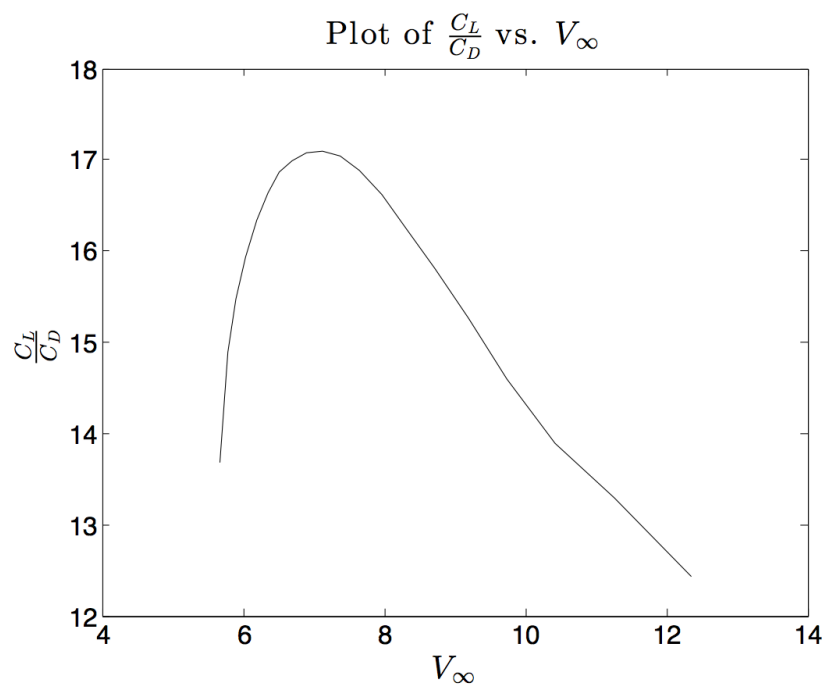


Figure 16:  $C_L/C_D$  vs  $v_\infty$

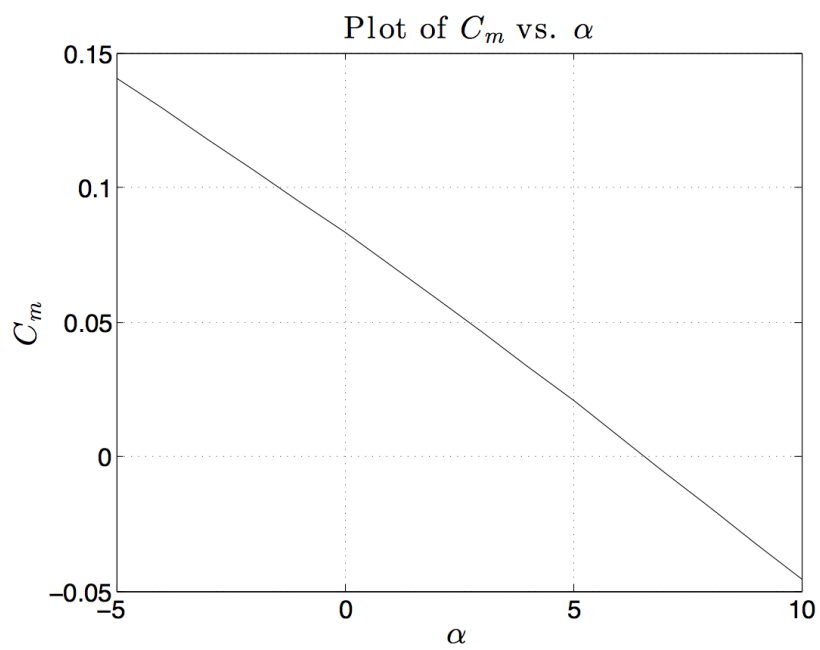


Figure 17:  $C_m$  vs  $\alpha$

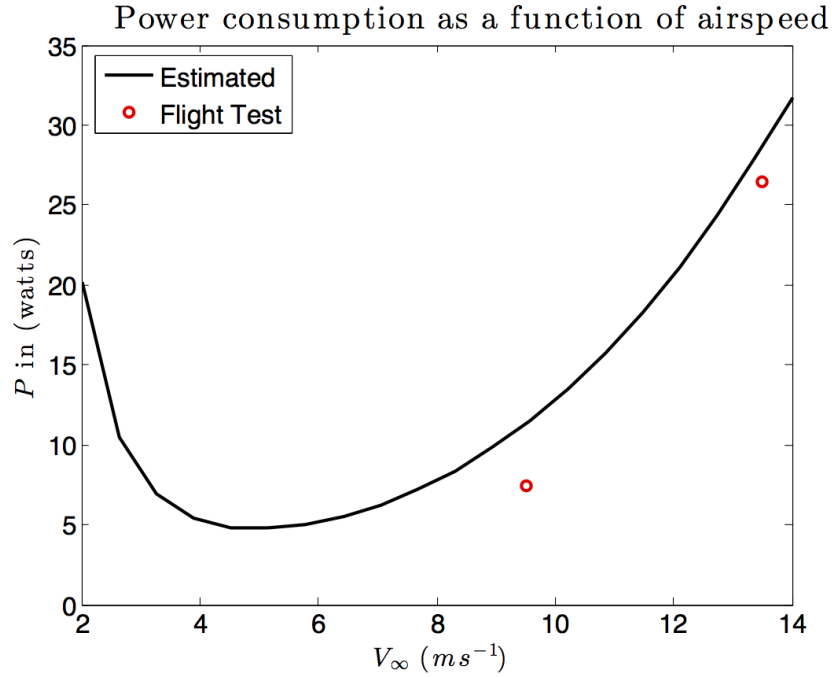


Figure 18:  $P_{level}$  vs airspeed

	$C_L max$	$(L/D)_{max}$	$P_{level} (9.5 ms^{-1})$	$P_{level} (13.5 ms^{-1})$	$P_{max climb}$
<b>Estimated</b>	1.14	19.0	11.29 watts	28.62 watts	34.12 watts
<b>Measured</b>	0.73	16.3	7.45 watts	26.47 watts	39.98 watts

Table 6: Estimated vs. measured flight performance parameters

The eigenvalues, frequencies and damping ratios for the different modes are plotted in Figures 19, 20 and 21.

#### 4.5 Three-view drawings of the final design

Figure 22 shows the CAD drawings of our final design. Figure 23 shows the SolidWorks model of our design that we used to get all the parts for the laser cutter.

Case	Airspeed (in m/s)	Bank Angle (in degrees)
Case 1	8.5	0
Case 2	7.0	0
Case 3	10.0	0
Case 4	8.5	30

Table 7: Different cases for stability analysis in AVL

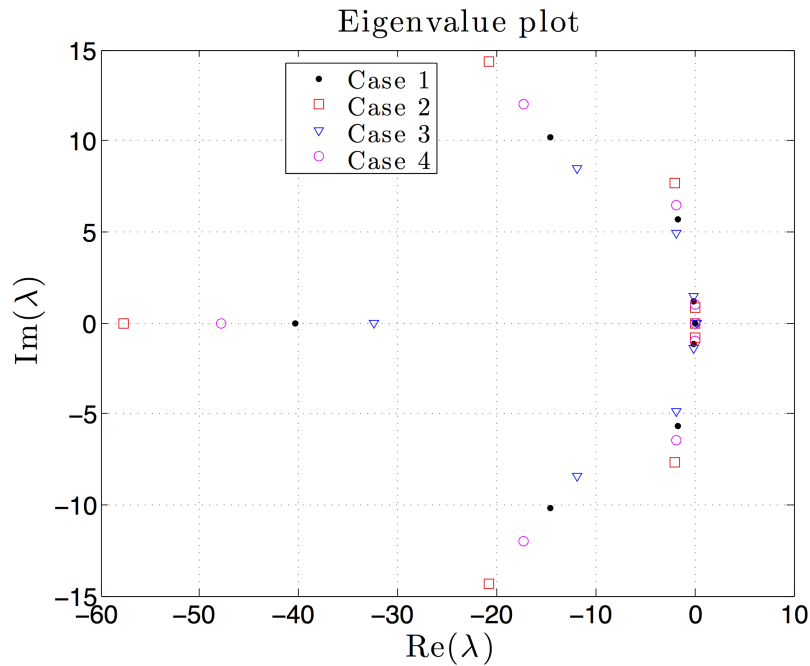


Figure 19: Eigenvalue plot

## 5 Controls

### 5.1 Control Strategy

### 5.2 Flight Performance

## 6 Fabrication

### 6.1 Prototype Construction Approach

#### 6.1.1 Mk-I "The Red Baron"

#### 6.1.2 Mk-II "The Pig"

#### 6.1.3 Mk-III.1

#### 6.1.4 Mk-III.2 "Ronald McDonald"

#### 6.1.5 Mk-III.2 "Terminator"

#### 6.1.6 Mk-III.2 "The UltraLight" 23

## 7 Flight Testing

### 7.1 Flight Test Approach

### 7.2 Simulation vs. Actual Tests



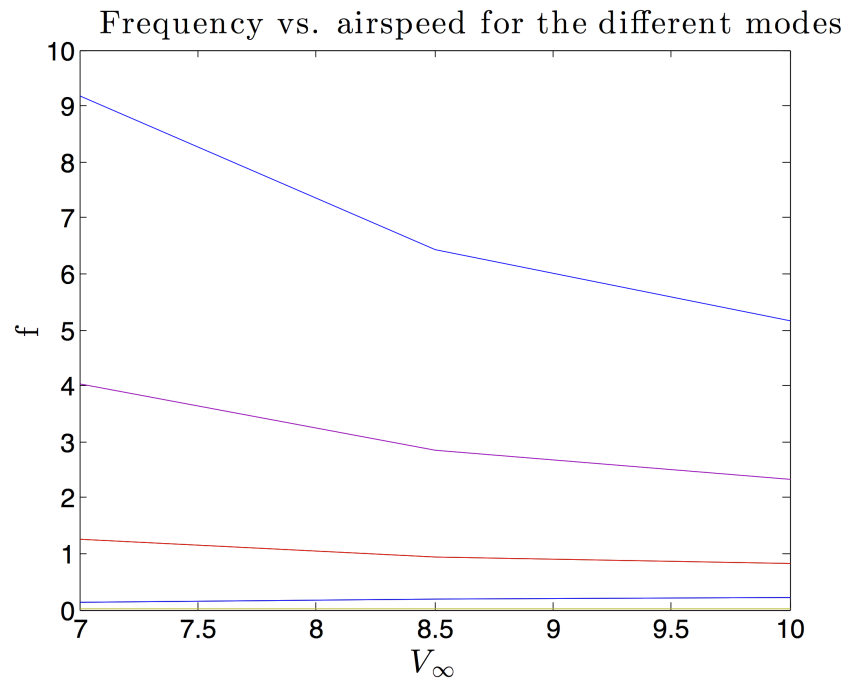


Figure 20: Frequency

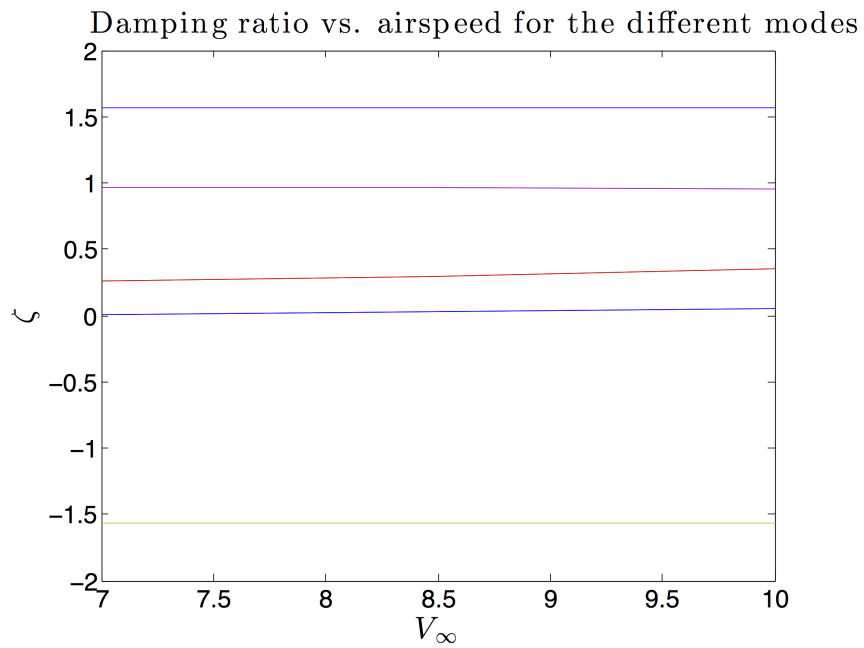


Figure 21: Damping ratio

Flight	Date	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total	Comments
1	6/6/2014			76.84	
2	6/6/2014			50.26	Dropped
3	6/6/2014			25.27	Dropped
4	6/6/2014			74.61	
5	6/6/2014			35.76	Dropped
Overall	75.725				

Table 8: Official Flight Results

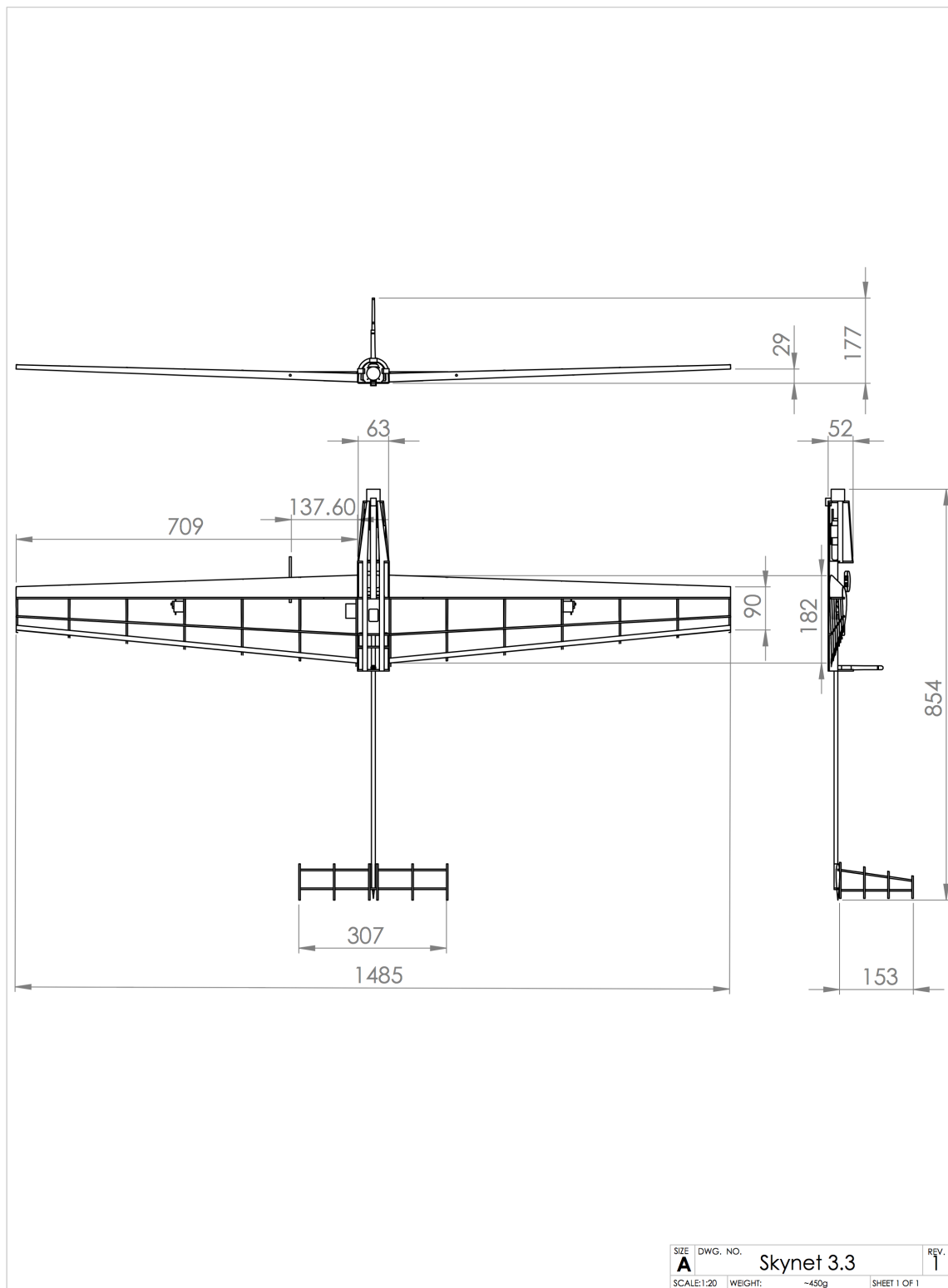
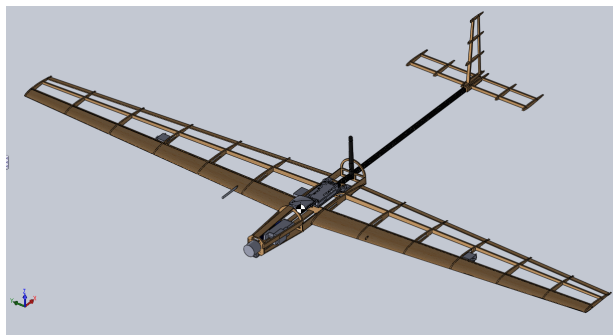
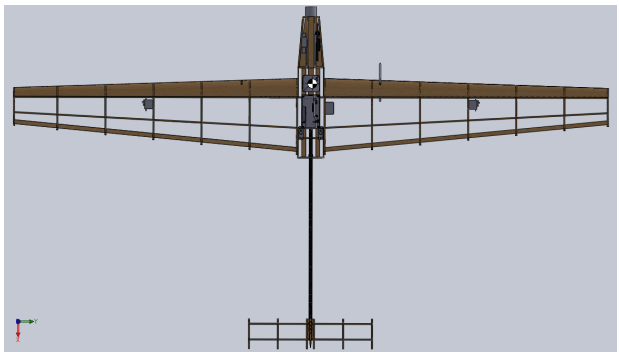


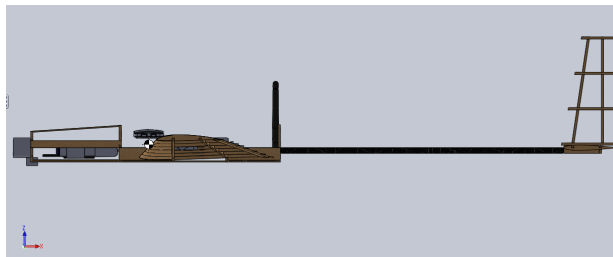
Figure 22: CAD drawings of the final design



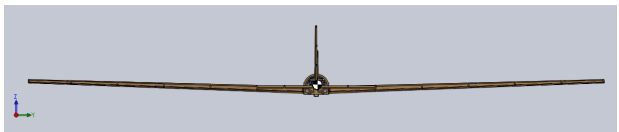
(a) Isometric view



(b) Top view



(c) Side view



(d) Front view

Figure 23: Solidworks model screenshots