



## Sponsorship Opportunities 2025-2026



<https://www.aiaa.rice.edu>



# AIAA Rice

Rice's chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics is the home for all things aerospace at Rice. We host networking events, industry speakers, and behind-the-scenes tours of the aerospace industry across Space City. Rice Flight—the RC airplane competition team hosted by AIAA Rice—is competing for the third time in the SAE Aero Advanced Competition, after competing with two planes and winning the Third Place Design Report Award at the 2025 Fort Worth competition.

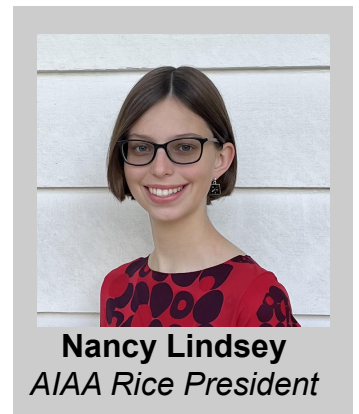
We are brought together by a passion for learning and innovation, and every member is dedicated to helping their teammates reach their full potential as future engineers and scientists.



# President's Letter

Dear Friends of AIAA Rice,

I am writing to introduce Rice's AIAA chapter and Rice Flight, the competition RC plane team which the chapter was formed to support. My name is Nancy Lindsey, and I am the founder and president of Rice AIAA, and former design lead of Rice Flight. Rice has teams focused on rocketry and space technology, but until 2022, had no student organization devoted to fixed-wing flight. When I became interested in studying airplanes, it quickly became apparent that we would need to start a new organization. It has been incredibly rewarding to see so many students come together to explore fixed-wing aviation.



In our first year, we qualified for and competed in the 2023 AIAA Design, Build, Fly international competition. The past year, we have pursued more technically difficult goals: the 2024 and 2025 SAE Aero Design Competitions. In 2024, for the Advanced Class, we built a 10 ft wingspan 'Primary Aircraft' to fly a payload of water and deploy one-pound fully autonomous glider. The team worked hard, and we were one of only three teams that was able to successfully takeoff, deploy our autonomous glider, and land in competition. In 2025, we competed in both the Regular and Advanced classes, building both a 15 ft wingspan 42 pound aircraft with only 100 foot takeoff distance, and a 3.5 pound fully autonomous VTOL aircraft designed to precisely deliver and capture payloads. For the autonomous Advanced Class, we took home third place for our Design Report. This year, we are returning to the SAE Aero Advanced 2026 competition. The team is very excited to build upon our recent success, and we are hoping that this year we can win. To complete our project, however, we need sponsors, and we'd be very grateful if you would consider helping us!

AIAA is unique at Rice in providing students with both academic and practical challenges that no course, and no other student organization, offers. Rice undergraduate courses do not teach the aerodynamics fundamentals needed to design a functional aircraft. We provide Rice students with aerospace design experiences to develop both technical and leadership skills, and we hope to encourage Rice to expand its aerospace education offerings so that students interested in the future of airplane design can begin formal studies as undergraduates. Outside of the competition team, the AIAA chapter hosts a wide range of educational and networking opportunities, including speaker series, K-12 outreach, and field trips to airshows and flight museums. We also partake in national AIAA organization events such as the SciTech conference and local Houston area meetups.

This is a critical year for the survival of AIAA at Rice. We performed well last year, and need to maintain our technical momentum to become an established part of the Rice community. The Rice students who are our members want to be leaders in aircraft technology for the future, and with your help, they can become the next generation of industry innovators. Your support can enable our team to focus on learning what it takes to design an aircraft.

Thank you for your consideration. It would be a pleasure to answer any questions you might have, and I hope that we can count on your support.

Sincerely, *Nancy M. Lindsey*

Nancy M. Lindsey, AIAA Rice President | [nancylindsey@rice.edu](mailto:nancylindsey@rice.edu)

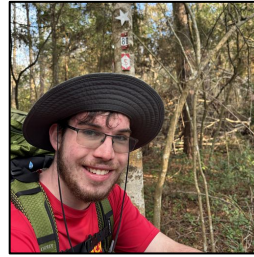


# Student Leadership

## Rice Flight Competition Team Leadership



**Max Kuhlman**  
Rice Flight Team Captain  
*Electrical and Computer Engineering '26*



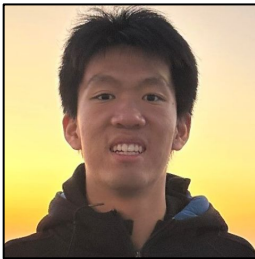
**Ian Schechter**  
Rice Flight Design Lead  
*Mechanical Engineering '28*



**Ryan Mattana**  
Rice Flight Aerodynamics Specialist  
*Mechanical Engineering '27*



**Cristiana De Sousa**  
Rice Flight Simulations Specialist  
*Mechanical Engineering '26*



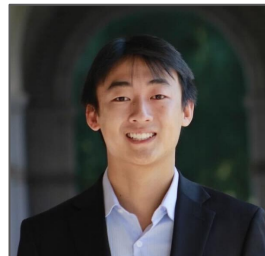
**Gerald Lu**  
Rice Flight Software Specialist  
*Electrical and Computer Engineering '27*



**Inigo Perez**  
Rice Flight Propulsion Specialist  
*Mechanical Engineering '28*



**Nikhil Ashri**  
Rice Flight Avionics Specialist  
*Electrical and Computer Engineering '28*



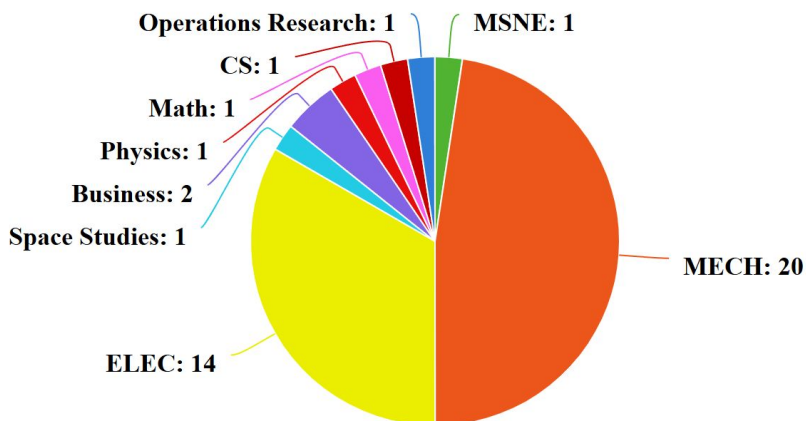
**Will Feng**  
Rice Flight Structures Specialist  
*Mechanical Engineering '28*



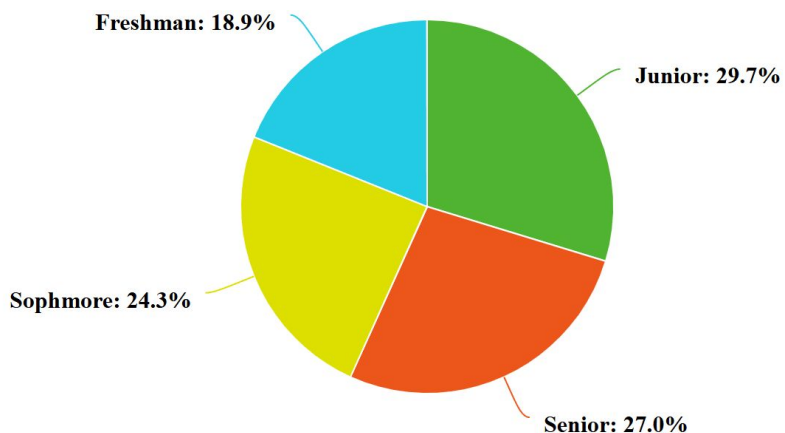


## Meet the Team

### Majors



### Class Level



**40** Active Members

**9** Majors Represented

Mechanical Engineering  
 Electrical and Computer Engineering  
 Materials Science and Nanoengineering  
 Computer Science  
 Mathematics  
 Physics  
 Business  
 Computer Science  
 Operations Research



# 2025 - 2026 Trajectory

## AIAA Rice Organization Events

AIAA Rice hosts many events throughout the year. We host industry and academia speakers at networking and informational events, visit industry partners such as local startup Venus Aerospace and attend outreach events including the Wings over Houston airshow, visits to the Lone Star Flight Museum and the NASA Johnson Space Center, and a K-12 outreach program teaching students to build mini-gliders. We also have a workshop series for new students to build their own RC planes. Finally, we will host a national AIAA conference at Rice in order to build engagement for topics we are passionate about

## SAE Aero Advanced 2025 Competition - Rice Flight

Rice Flight, the competition team hosted by AIAA Rice, is competing in the SAE Aero Advanced Competition for the third time this year. Our first year of competition, we were one of only three teams to successfully take off our primary aircraft, deploy our glider, and land. Our second year of competition, we flew two planes with significantly fewer members than teams from other universities. To build on these strong performances, we are working on advanced projects including a complete custom autonomy system and a mobile payload.







# AIAA Events

AIAA hosts a wide range of events throughout the semester. We leverage our contacts to get inside tours of NASA's Johnson Space Center, attend the annual Wings over Houston Airshow, and visit aviation museums. We also participate in national AIAA opportunities—students enjoy meeting a wide range of professionals and seeking internships and entry-level positions at the annual AIAA SciTech conference, and in getting to know veteran members more personally at local Houston meetup groups. We are hoping to improve our outreach further this year by hosting a national AIAA conference in Houston to provide networking and educational opportunities to all students interested in careers in aviation and aeronautics. Next semester, we plan to host our own unique speaker series on campus, and plan to invite a variety of aviation experts in both industry and academia to help guide students towards future career options.

# Rice Flight Competition Team

## 2025 SAE Aero Advanced Competition

In 2025, Rice Flight competed in both the regular and advanced categories as one of the smallest teams at the entire competition. Our Regular Class Plane, Condor, has a 14'8" wingspan and can take off weighing over 42 pounds within only 100 feet. After designing and manufacturing from October 2024-March 2025, we achieved successful takeoff and flight with payload at the competition.

Our Advanced Class Plane, Magpie, is an autonomous tricopter capable of both horizontal and vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL). We designed and prototyped two iterations of the plane and test flew both before the competition. At competition, we took home third place in the Advanced class design report, a strong performance for only our second year at the competition.



## 2026 Competition

In 2026, we are returning to the advanced division of the SAE Aero Design competition, aiming to improve on our strong performance our past two years competing.

For this competition, we are designing a 3.5 lb fully autonomous fixed-wing aircraft that is capable of both horizontal and vertical takeoff, flight, and landing. This aircraft is designed to communicate with, deploy, and capture a fully autonomous independently mobile payload, using real-time kinematic GPS, inertial measurement units (IMUs), and LIDAR sensors for location and mapping.

Additionally, we are continuing the development of a custom multidisciplinary design optimization (MDO) program to computationally determine the best configuration of design parameters to maximize our competition score.





# Sponsorship

The continued success of AIAA Rice depends on the generosity of private donors and corporate sponsors. Join our team of partners, so we can keep providing Rice University students with the technical and leadership skills they need to succeed as engineers. AIAA Rice is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization, so all donations to the team are tax-deductible.

Our official organization name with Rice University is the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics - Rice University Chapter, and we have an online donation page at <https://riceconnect.rice.edu/donation/AIAA>. Feel free to reach out to us at [aiaaricechapter@gmail.com](mailto:aiaaricechapter@gmail.com) with any questions! We would love to talk about our mission and how you can support us.

## Rotorcraft - \$500+

- Name and logo on shirts, website, all project technical posters, and in promotional materials
- Shoutouts on team social media
- Regular project updates
- Speaker invitation to general meeting

## Fixed Wing - \$1,000+

- Name and logo posted in the SAE team workspace and displayed at AIAA events on presentation materials
- Logo displayed on 2026 SAE Aero Advanced Primary Aircraft

## Spaceplane - \$2,500+

- Sponsor a flight test, field trip, or other team event
- Dedicated company banner displayed in team workspace and at team events
- Logo prominently displayed on 2026 SAE Aero Advanced Primary Aircraft
- Company's promotional material handed out at team events

*All sponsorship levels include benefits of the above levels.*

*Non-monetary donations will be given an equivalent sponsorship level based on the value of goods and services provided.*

