



SporeSat

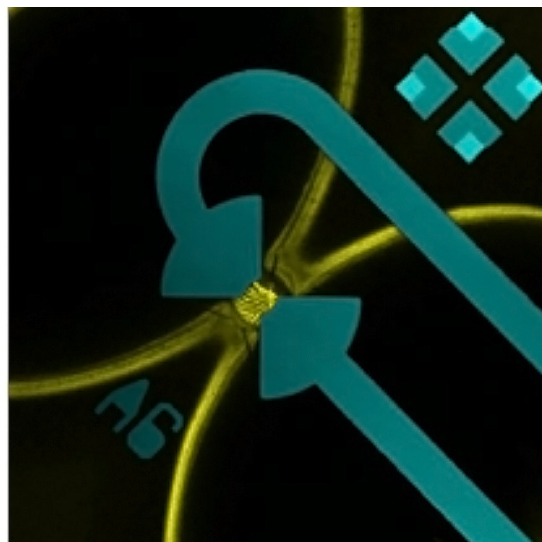
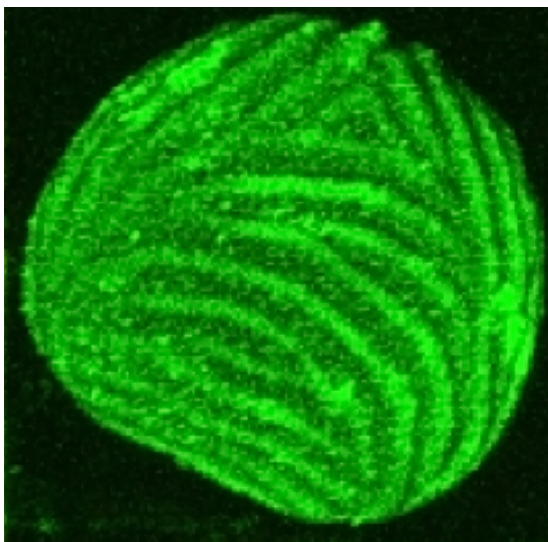
Investigating the Gravitational Threshold for Calcium Ion Channel Activation using a Nanosatellite Platform-Based Lab-on-a-Chip

SporeSat is an autonomous, free-flying three-unit (3U) spacecraft that will be used to conduct scientific experiments to gain a deeper knowledge of the mechanisms of plant cell gravity sensing. SporeSat is being developed through a partnership between NASA's Ames Research Center and the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at Purdue University. Amani Salim and Jenna L. Rickus are the Purdue University Principal Investigators.

SporeSat's space biology science experiment will investigate the effect of gravity on the reproductive spores of the fern, *Ceratopteris richardii*. Some plants, including *C. richardii*, use gravity to determine direction and to guide their roots to grow down into the earth where they find nutrients for growth. Calcium is important to overall plant growth and development, but it also plays a role in the process of sensing gravity and

signaling the response of downward plant growth. To better understand the role of the on/off modulation of cellular calcium ion channels in gravity sensing, the SporeSat experiment will measure the effect of different artificial gravity levels on calcium concentrations that result from the opening and closing of these channels. Specifically, the SporeSat experiment will utilize three lab-on-a-chip devices, called bioCDs, that integrate the sensors that allow for real-time measurement of calcium signaling at each of the variable gravity treatments planned for the experiment. In the microgravity environment of Earth orbit, two of the devices will each have a motor to provide artificial (centrifugal) gravity at pre-determined levels. The third device will remain stationary to serve as a microgravity control.

The SporeSat mission will be flown using a 3U nanosatellite weighing



Single *C. richardii* spore (left) and photo of calcium ion measurement microelectrodes on either side of a single spore (right).

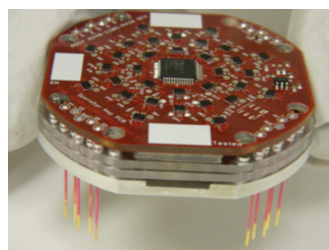
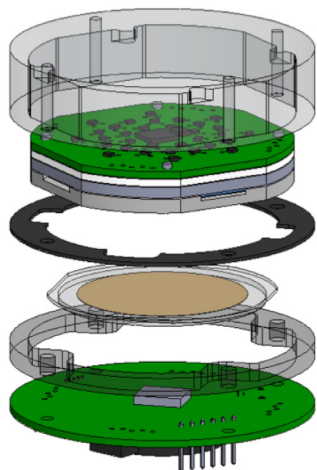
approximately 12 pounds and measuring 14 inches long by 4 inches wide by 4 inches tall. SporeSat will utilize flight-proven spacecraft technologies demonstrated on prior Ames nanosatellite missions such as PharmaSat and Organism/Organic Exposure to Orbital Stresses (O/OREOS) as well as upgrades that increase the hardware integration capabilities with SporeSat science instrumentation. In addition, the SporeSat science payload will serve as a technology platform to evaluate new microsensors for enabling future fundamental biology missions.

The Principal Investigators at Purdue University are responsible for development of the science payload, specifically the lab-on-a-chip device that supports and measures the fern spore ion channel activity and, in collaboration with NASA Ames, for measurement electronics circuit board assemblies.

NASA Ames is responsible for overall management of the hardware development to include the thermal, power, electrical, and mechanical subsystems of the payload including the mini centrifugal subsystems; integration and test of the payload, and for interfacing the payload with an upgraded nanosatellite spacecraft with updated flight software. NASA Ames is also the lead in the design, fabrication and testing of the payload elements.

The SporeSat spacecraft will be contained within a Poly Picosatellite Orbital Deployer (PPOD) during launch, which also deploys the satellite once it is in orbit.

SporeSat was competitively selected for NASA's CubeSat

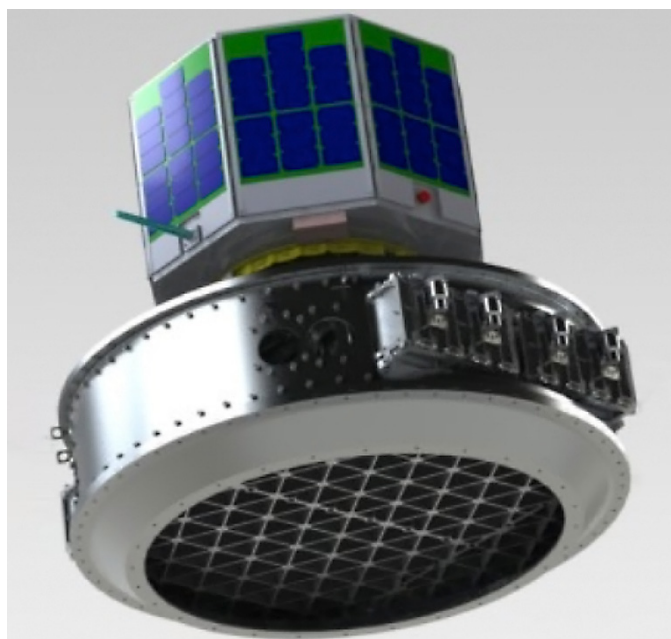


Exploded view and photo of prototype of Lab-on-a-Chip (bioCD) Rotating Assembly that contains and measures fern spores

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, CA 94035

www.nasa.gov



Payload Mission Concept (SporeSat Nanosatellite Integrated with SpaceX Deployer).

Launch Initiative in 2012 and is currently manifested on SpaceX-3 launching from Cape Canaveral in November of 2013.

The mission is funded as part of the Space Biology Project at NASA Ames Research Center. Funding for Space Biology comes from the Space Life and Physical Sciences Research and Applications Division within the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters.

For more information, contact:

Andres Martinez
Project Manager
NASA Ames Research Center
andres.martinez@nasa.gov

Gelsomina Cappuccio
Spaceflight Projects Office
NASA Ames Research Center
mina.cappuccio@nasa.gov

David Tomko
Space Life and Physical Sciences Research and Application
Program Executive
NASA Headquarters
dtomko@nasa.gov