Future NASA Power Technologies for Space and Aero Propulsion Applications

Presented to

Workshop on Reforming Electrical Energy Systems Curriculum

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April 9, 2015
Discussion Topics

• Exciting students on electrical engineering
• Space Power Development Objectives and Roadmap
• Aircraft Power Development Objectives and Roadmap
• Observations on student needs
• Take Aways
Exciting Students on Electrical Engineering

• One of the key themes at the last workshop was the need to excite students on EE
• In subsequent discussions the seems to be two big draws for students
  – Make a difference in people’s lives
  – Need to develop new “things” to achieve the above
• For example: Areas such as biomedical engineering are of great interest because of the potential societal impact
  – Even though the area does not pay as well as EE
• To that end electrical propulsion for space and aeronautics applications holds the potential to have resource impacts on earth and open up space for commercial use and exploration
Space Power Development Objectives and Roadmap
The Future of Human Space Exploration
NASA’s Building Blocks to Mars

- Earth Reliant
  - Proving Ground
    - Missions: 6 to 12 months
      - Return: hours
    - Missions: 1 month up to 12 months
      - Return: days
    - Missions: 2 to 3 years
      - Return: months
  - Earth Independent
- Developing planetary independence by exploring Mars, its moons, and other deep space destinations
- Mastering the fundamentals aboard the International Space Station
- Pushing the boundaries in cis-lunar space
- U.S. companies provide affordable access to low Earth orbit
- The next step: traveling beyond low-Earth orbit with the Space Launch System rocket and Orion crew capsule

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Developing planetary independence by exploring Mars, its moons, and other deep space destinations

Mastering the fundamentals aboard the International Space Station

Pushing the boundaries in cis-lunar space

The next step: traveling beyond low-Earth orbit with the Space Launch System rocket and Orion crew capsule
Advanced Vehicles for Exploration

Orion / MPCV
- 4 Crew
- 2.5 times volume of Apollo
- 16.5 feet in diameter
- (4) solar arrays 11.1kW power total
- Four 120 Volt power channels w/ SiC Switching
- (4) Lithium Ion 30 amp*hr batteries

SLS launch Vehicle
- 70 metric tons scalable to 130 metric tons
- LOX propulsion based on Shuttle
Solar Electric Propulsion (SEP)

NASA is developing high-performance SEP capability to enable future in-space exploration missions.

- High propellant efficiency
- Reduced launch mass
- Lower mission cost
What is Solar Electric Propulsion?

This:

- A low mass / high efficiency propulsion system typically used for reconnaissance of planets and asteroids
- Results in very long travel times for missions – Not high speed intercept
- Real ion propulsion develops fractional Newton's or fractional lbs of thrust

Dawn Spacecraft

Ion Engine

Not That:

Twin Ion Engine (TIE) Fighter from Star Wars
Solar Electric Propulsion (SEP)

Description
• Provides high propellant efficiency or
  ISP = 3000 vs 450 for H2 / O2 Prop.
• Fuel -- Xeon gas
• Reduced launch mass over chemical systems

GRC Role
• Block I vehicle power 50kW (BOL) and 42kW (EOL)
• Extendable to 150kW
• Operates over a range from 0.8 AU to 1.9AU
• Applicable to a wide variety of missions
  - Asteroid Retrieval
  - Cargo
  - Orbit Stabilization
Long-Range Space Power Technology Developments

- Autonomous power management
- Advanced energy storage systems
- Nuclear surface power
- High power solar arrays
- Non-flow through fuel cells
- Efficient, high voltage power processors
- Modular power electronics
- Radiation tolerant wide Band-gap semiconductors
Aero Electric Power and Propulsion
Aircraft Turboelectric Propulsion

Projected Timeframe for Achieving Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6

Spinoff Technologies Benefit

More/All Electric Architectures:
• High-power density electric motors replacing hydraulic actuation
• Electrical component and transmission system weight reduction

Power Level for Electrical Propulsion System

Today 10 Year 20 Year 30 Year 40 Year

- kW class
  • All-electric and hybrid-electric general aviation

- 1 to 2 MW class
  • Hybrid electric 50 PAX regional
  • Turboelectric distributed propulsion 100 PAX regional

- 2 to 5 MW class
  • Hybrid electric 100 PAX regional
  • Turboelectric distributed propulsion 150 PAX regional

- 5 to 10 MW
  • Hybrid electric 737–150 PAX
  • Turboelectric 737–150 PAX

- >10 MW
  • Turboelectric and hybrid electric distributed propulsion 300 PAX

Spinoff Technologies Benefit More/All Electric

(Power level for single engine)
Both concepts can use either non-cryogenic motors or cryogenic superconducting motors.

**Hybrid Electric**

- BATTERY PACK
- FUEL
- MOTOR
- ELECTRIC BUS (TRANSMISSION LINE)
- TURBINE ENGINE
- FAN

**Turbo Electric**

- TURBINE ENGINE
- GENERATOR
- MOTOR
- ELECTRIC BUS (TRANSMISSION LINE)
- FAN
Benefits Estimated For Electric Propulsion

Hybrid Electric Propulsion
• ~60% fuel burn reduction
• ~53% energy use reduction
• 77-87% reduction in NOx
• 24-31 EPNdB cum noise reduction

Turbo Electric Propulsion
• ~63% energy use reduction
• ~90% NOx reduction
• 32-64 EPNdB cum noise reduction
Aircraft Turboelectric Propulsion

Wingtip mounted superconducting turbogenerators

Superconducting motor-driven fans in a continuous nacelle

Power is distributed electrically from turbine-driven generators to motors that drive the propulsive fans.
Long-Range Aero Power Technology Development

- Fully Superconducting Motor/Generators
- Lightweight Cryogenic Coolers
- Multifunctional Structures with Energy Storage Capability
- High Specific Power/Efficiency Non Superconducting Motor/Generators
- Lightweight/High Specific Power Thermal Management
- High conductivity Wire/Advanced Insulation Cable
- Superconducting Cable
- Soft Switch, Matrix, capacitor and Other Advanced Power Electronics
- Advanced Power Architecture, Power system modeling and simulation, Control System Architecture

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Observations on Student Needs

• Students need to be made aware that Electric Power and Electrical Engineering are import fields necessary to maintain our standard of living.
• To be successful students need to have hands on experience with hardware.
• Presentation Skills (Presentation development and public speaking).
• Ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams – mechanical, electrical and software.
• Capability for design and synthesis as opposed to analysis.
• Understand the political, business and financial components as well as the technical component to all solutions.
• Appreciation of systems technology and its impact on large power systems – electrical, mechanical, thermal.

Students need to develop a broad skill set beyond a narrow technical specialty to be successful.
Take Aways

• Students need to be made aware that Electric Power and Electrical Engineering are important fields necessary that enable the lifestyle of modern society

• We need to market ourselves as not only as enablers of modern society but practitioners who are building a better society that
  – Conserving natural resources – high efficiency electrical system
  – Keeping the environment clean
  – Enabling humanity to continue to explore and understand its place in the Cosmos

• Make students aware that new power technologies need to be developed to sustain our lifestyle and explore new frontiers
Questions?
Back-up Slides
Electrostatic Thrusters

- Generate high voltage for ion (plasma) acceleration

**Ion** thrusters use high voltage grids to create an electrostatic field, the PPU produces 1800 V for the beam supply.

**Hall** thrusters use magnetically trapped electrons to create an electrostatic field, PPU produces 300 to 800V for the HET discharge supply.
The Space Launch System (SLS)

- Designed to carry the Orion spacecraft, cargo, equipment and science experiments to Earth's orbit and destinations beyond.

- The SLS will have an initial lift capacity of 70 metric tons and will be evolvable to 130 metric tons.

- It will use a liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen propulsion system, which will include the RS-25 from the Space Shuttle Program for the core stage and the J-2X engine for the upper stage.

- SLS will use solid rocket boosters for the initial development flights, follow-on boosters will be competed based on performance requirements and affordability considerations.
Orion MPCV Electrical Power System

**Solar Array Wings**
- 4 wings with 3 deployable panels
- Triple junction solar cells for high conversion efficiency
- Two axis articulation for sun tracking
- 11.1 kW total power for user loads and battery recharge

**Battery Energy Storage**
- 4 batteries of ≈ 30 A-hr each
- Li ion chemistry for high energy density
- High voltage for direct connection to power distribution
- Cell balancing for high charge/discharge cycle life

**Power Distribution Equipment**
- 4 power distribution channels
- High voltage (120 VDC) distribution for reduced weight
- Current-limiting SiC switchgear for fault protection
- Transient protection for lightning strikes (on ground)