



DUKE AERO

A BRIEF HANDBOOK FOR
CORPORATE SPONSORS
2026-2027



DUKE AERO

MEET DUKE AERO BUILT BY STUDENTS

Duke AERO is a collegiate high-powered rocketry team providing students with hands-on technical experience in aerospace engineering. Each year, our team designs, manufactures, and tests a competition rocket while fostering mentorship, technical growth, and professional development—all with the goal of preparing our members for careers in the aerospace industry.

7

rockets designed, built,
and launched

3rd

in category at the 2026
IREC competition

152

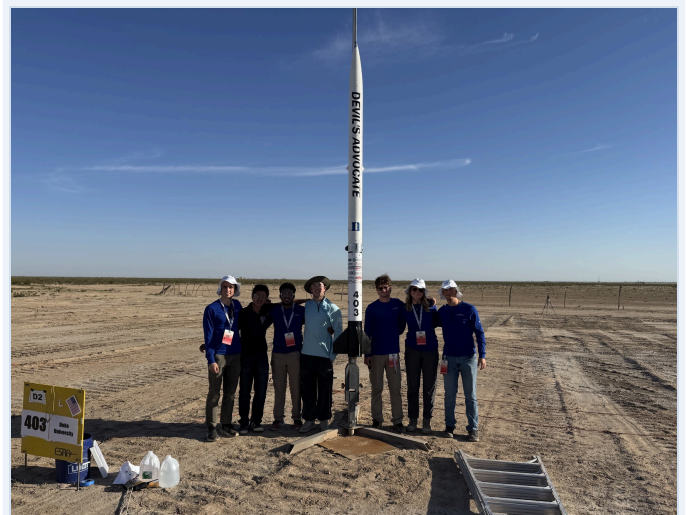
international teams
attended the competition

30k

feet, the altitude we
target this season



The 2026 team with *Devil's Advocate* at IREC.



Launch day at the competition range.

From a foundation in aircraft design to numerous rocket launches, Duke AERO has a history of evolving engineering excellence. During the 2023-2024 season, we designed our first SRAD solid-fuel rocket, which flew in the 10,000-ft category at the 2024 Spaceport America Cup and earned the Jim Furfaro Award for Technical Excellence. As the club's largest and most advanced rocket to date, Devil's Advocate was launched at the 2026 International Rocket Engineering Competition, placing third in its category. This year, we plan to return to the International Rocket Engineering Competition with another 30,000-ft SRAD rocket while continuing development of our liquid rocket engine. As our technical ambition continues to grow, we invite you to join us in pushing the boundaries of student-led rocketry and supporting the development of increasingly capable and innovative rockets.

LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Our members are rocketry and aerospace enthusiasts, through and through. With beyond-the-classroom involvement in design and manufacturing, and internship experience at premier organizations such as SpaceX, Blue Origin, RTX, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin, Duke AERO members truly are some of the brightest and most dedicated young engineers in the country.

**Junwoo Kim ('27)**

President

B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering &
Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Brady Gouin ('27)**

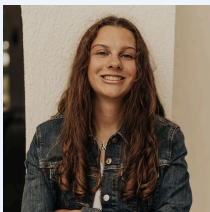
Vice President

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Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Arthur Gwozdz ('27)**

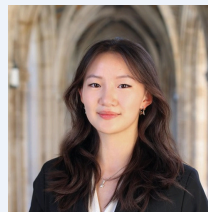
Treasurer

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Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Jack Do ('28)**

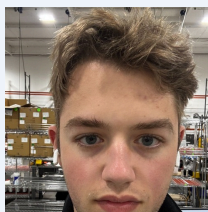
Secretary

B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering &
Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Katelyn Steele ('27)**

Corporate Outreach

B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering &
Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Katherine Hua ('29)**

Strategic Initiatives

B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering &
Certificate in Aerospace Engineering**Maddox Hussar ('28)**

Integration & Test

B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering &
Certificate in Aerospace Engineering

2018-19 Duke AERO is Founded

Duke AERO is founded at Duke University. The team designs, builds, and launches Bluestone, its first competition rocket, establishing the program's foundation.

2020-21 First 2-Stage Rocket

The team designs, builds, and flies Thing One & Thing Two, its first two-stage rocket, completing the project despite a year of COVID-19 restrictions.

2023-24 First SRAD Motor & Jim Furfaro Award

Pitchfork debuts as Duke AERO's first rocket powered by a student-researched-and-developed solid motor and earns the Jim Furfaro Award for Technical Excellence, selected from 152 international teams.

2024-25 First 30k SRAD Rocket

Perseus becomes Duke AERO's first competition rocket to reach the 30,000 ft altitude class on a student-researched-and-developed solid motor.

2025-26 Project Prometheus

Duke AERO begins Project Prometheus with the goal of developing its first fully flight-capable liquid propulsion platform, featuring COPV propellant tanks, an electric pump-fed feed system, and regenerative cooling using nitrous oxide and IPA.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE – 2026

Our most capable vehicle so far, Devil's Advocate carried numerous highly advanced systems that most teams don't attempt.

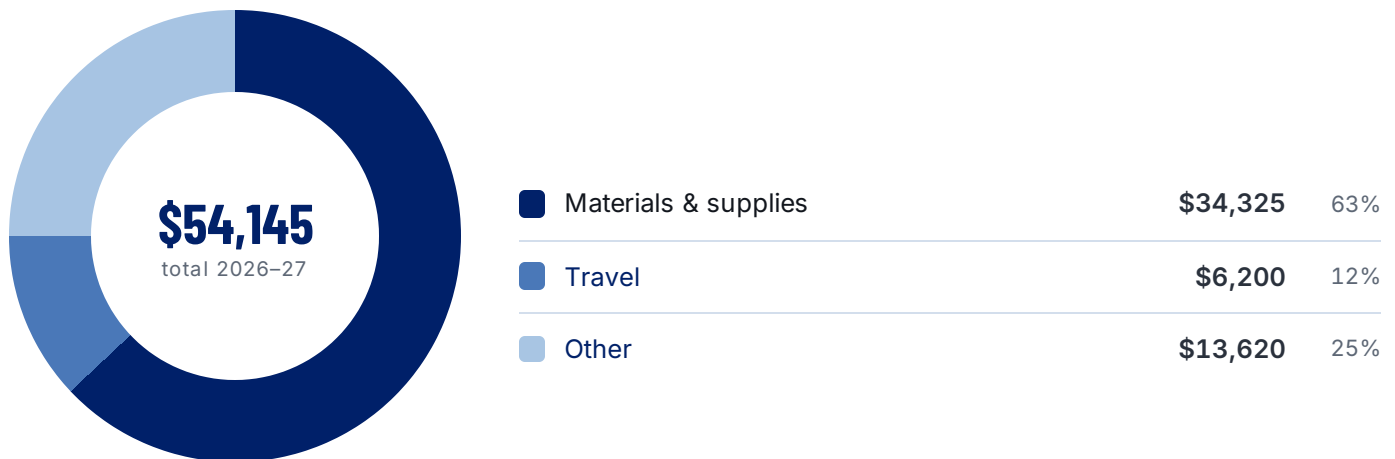
- **Variable-drag airbrakes** that trim drag in flight to hit a target apogee.
- **Canards** providing active roll control on the way up.
- **Guided recovery system** that flies the vehicle down to reduce wind dispersion.
- **Ground station** tracking telemetry through every phase of flight.



WHERE THE MONEY GOES

EVERY DOLLAR IS ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

For the 2026-2027 academic year, we as a team have set our sights high. Our goal is to return to the International Rocket Engineering Competition (IREC) with another 30,000-ft SRAD competition rocket and continue development of our liquid engine. These projects will be the highlight of our club's achievements, but these endeavors come at a cost. Receiving no travel funding and a minimal build budget from our university, our team's accomplishments are largely made possible by your generous contributions. Below you will find an outline of this year's budget.



BUILD BUDGET

Liquid propulsion research	\$9,500
Avionics	\$5,500
Solid propulsion	\$6,000
Structures	\$4,500
Payload	\$3,000
Recovery	\$2,000

WHAT SPONSORSHIP BUYS

Materials and supplies is the largest line because we manufacture nearly everything: composite airframe sections, machined couplers and fin cans, cast solid motor grains, and custom avionics boards. Travel covers flights, gas, and ground transportation to competition. Other covers competition fees, lodging, and additional costs.

In-kind support counts. Donated material, machining time, services, and software are credited toward a sponsorship tier at fair market value — frequently the most efficient way for a supplier to work with us.

WHAT SPONSORSHIP RETURNS

FOUR REASONS COMPANIES WORK WITH US

01

Fly your brand

Your mark goes on the airframe, on team apparel worn at competition and outreach, and across a website and social presence built around launch season.

02

Hire from the roster

Our members intern at SpaceX, Blue Origin, RTX, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin. Sponsors get the resume book and a direct line to students who have already shipped flight hardware.

03

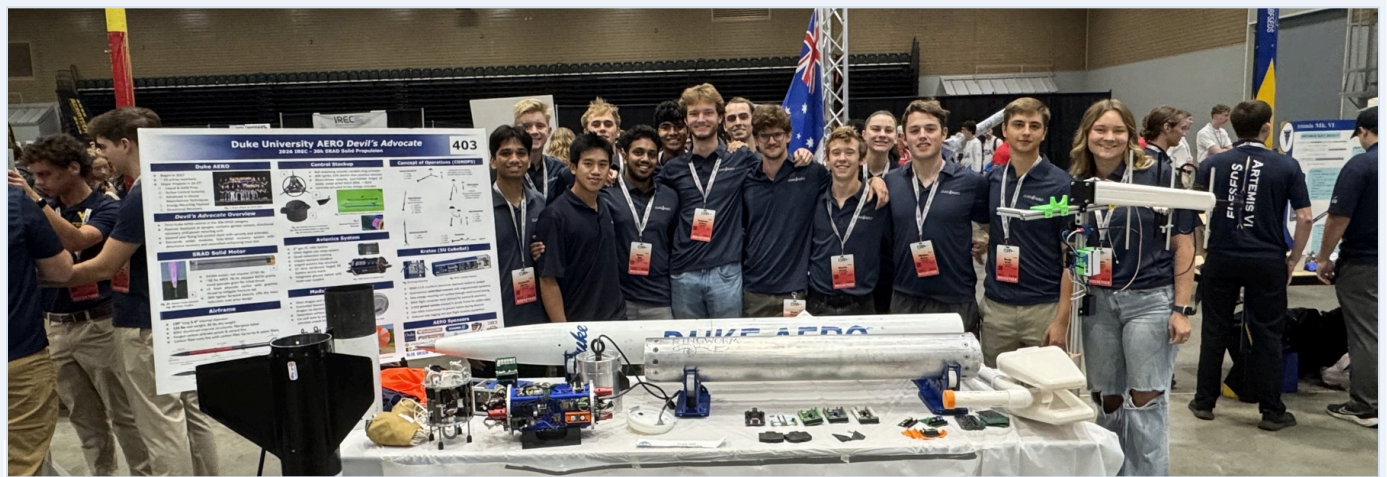
Invest in the next generation

Your support helps fund hands-on aerospace experience for Duke students and lets us bring that same experience to local schools through outreach and mentorship.

04

Give hardware, not just budget

In-kind support, like raw material, machining time, or software licenses, is often easier to approve internally than a cash sponsorship, and it puts your product to work in a real flight vehicle.



Tabling at the IREC conference alongside industry judges and recruiters.

NON-MONETARY SPONSORSHIP

We welcome non-monetary partnership just as readily: raw material and component donations, machining and manufacturing services, software licenses, on-campus info sessions, career mentorship, and site visits for our members. If your company has something that would help a student team build a better rocket, we'd like to hear about it — and it counts toward a tier.

2026-27 SPONSORSHIP

TIERS & BENEFITS

Benefits are cumulative: each tier includes everything in the tiers below it. Contributions of any amount are welcome.

Benefit	BLUE DEVIL \$10,000+	GOLD \$5,000+	SILVER \$2,000+	BRONZE \$750+
Logo on the rocket	Premium	Large	Medium	Small
Logo on the /sponsors page	Premium	Large	Medium	Small
Logo on the homepage sponsor spinner	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social media shoutout	✓	✓	✓	✓
Team newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo on team apparel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to team resume book	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sponsor listing in YouTube videos	✓	✓	✓	
Thank-you package	✓	✓	✓	
Named in the IREC technical report	✓	✓		
Dedicated sponsor profile on website	✓	✓		
Logo on the live video transmission overlay	✓			
Premium thank-you package (5 merch pieces)	✓			

Logo sizing: Premium 20 sq in · Large 15 sq in · Medium 10 sq in · Small 5 sq in

Terms. Sponsorships run for twelve months from the date the contribution is received. Donations of material, services, software, or machining time count toward a tier at fair market value. Logo artwork should be supplied in vector format (SVG, EPS, or AI) with a transparent background; we will match the requested size as closely as the airframe geometry and surface preparation allow. Final placement of markings on the flight vehicle is subject to competition rules and range safety requirements. Sponsors contributing above \$10,000 are invited to work with us on a custom package. Sponsors receiving benefits in exchange for a contribution should consult their own tax advisor regarding deductibility.

2026-27 SPONSORS



LET'S TALK

To discuss sponsorship, an on-campus event, or an alternate form of partnership, contact our Corporate Outreach Chair, **Katelyn Steele**, at kas237@duke.edu or (267) 664-4379.

Browse our work at dukerocketry.com and follow us on LinkedIn and Instagram.



If you are a first-time sponsor, please reach out with any questions. To our returning sponsors — thank you. We look forward to another season with you.