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Aurora Flight Sciences Awarded NASA Contract for Space Suit Simulator

Cambridge, MA, February 1, 2010 - Aurora Flight Sciences announced today that it has been awarded a contract by NASA to develop an EVA (Extra-Vehicular Activity) Space Suit Simulator (S3). Aurora is partnered with Professors Dava Newman and Jeffrey Hoffman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics for this effort.

The S3 will be a low-profile, lightweight, and adjustable garment, and will mimic the properties of NASA's current space suit, the Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU). For training and experimentation purposes, it is often quite impractical for the astronaut or test subject to don an actual space suit due to: (1) limited availability of EMUs, and (2) bulkiness/heaviness. The motivation behind developing the S3 is to provide a means for suited astronaut training and research, without requiring an actual space suit.

Most of the properties that effect locomotion and movement are concentrated in the suit joints. "Our wearable space suit simulator will emulate the joint torques of the current EVA suit, while also being compact in form-factor and easily donned/doffed, so that it can be used in various training and simulation environments," said Dr. Jessica Duda, Aurora's Principal Investigator for the project. "Tunable joint torques will also allow the S3 to be used to test future space suit concepts." During Phase 1, Aurora will demonstrate the feasibility of several joint designs, and develop a concept for the complete S3 device.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production plants in Bridgeport, WV and Columbus, MS and a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.