7.0 Outreach

During the course of the school year, our KC-135 team has been participating in numerous outreach activities for a wide range of audiences, varying in age from elementary school students to adults. The primary purpose of these activities is to inspire the younger generation of students to gain an interest in science and engineering, and in particular, aerospace engineering. Many of these outreach activities include a presentation followed by a demonstration of our experiment. The presentation varied depending on the audience.

The first outreach project of the Fall 2002 semester was a presentation given to National Instruments in appreciation of their generous support of the previous year’s project. At this presentation, a framed poster showing the different parts of the experiment was presented to National Instruments. After the presentation, National Instruments agreed to support the project again this year.

The next outreach project was given to the College of Engineering (COE) alumni. This project involved giving short informal presentations about the previous year’s project as well as informing them about the proposed design for this year’s experiment (Figures 30 – 31). In addition to listening to the brief presentations, the visitors had information such as posters detailing the experiment and an edited flight video from the previous year available to them.
practice (Figure 32). The Junior High students enjoyed the presentation so much that many of them wrote letters to the team in appreciation of the outreach event.

![Figure 3 - Group demonstrating experiment during SEEK presentation](image)

The largest outreach project that the team participated in was Explore UT. During Explore UT, the team gave six one-hour presentations for packed audiences, with over 100 people during some presentations. The presentations were tailored so that people of any age could enjoy the presentation. The presentations included a discussion of microgravity for the younger audiences, and then a more detailed part describing the experiment for the older audiences. After the talk, the team demonstrated the experiment. Afterwards, many parents thanked the team for inspiring their kids.

The KC-135 team also participated in National Instruments’ Academic Week, in which teams from all around the country whom National Instruments (NI) has supported show off the experiments on they have been working. During this event, members of the team described and demonstrated the experiment to numerous NI employees as well as other college students.

In addition to these scheduled outreach activities, the team was regularly involved in nonscheduled outreach activities. For example, often prospective students would walk into the lab while modifications were being made to the experiment, and the team members would take the time to explain the purpose of the experiment as well as describe various other extracurricular activities going on at the University of Texas. Also, the team will continue to perform outreach activities during the summer and the upcoming semester.