

ECLIPSE

EFFICIENT CRYOGENIC
LOW INVASIVE PROPELLANT
SUPPLY EXCHANGE



**The Grainger College
of Engineering**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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Sebastian Rojas | Anna Rudenko | Nate Vattana



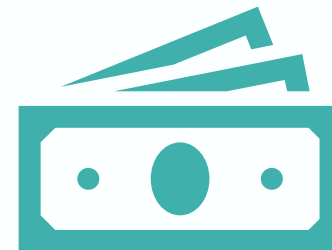
Overview

- **Cryogenics Background**
- **Objective**
- **Value Proposition**
- **Mission Timeline**



Concept of Operations

- **Line Chillydown**
- **Tank Chillydown**
- **Propellant Transfer**



Mission Assessment

- **Cost Analysis**
- **Test Campaign**
- **Risk Analysis**
- **Key Innovations**



Intro to Cryogenic Propellant Transfer

- **Importance?** Cryogenic liquids in the HLS mission architecture must be efficiently and safely transferred in microgravity
- **Issues?** Propellant boil-off during transfer reduces useable propellant and risks tank over-pressurization
- **Impact?** Proper boil-off mitigations techniques reduce propellant loss and improve transfer safety in support of long-duration missions





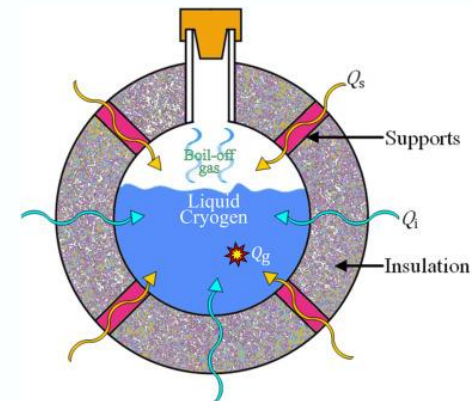
Propellant Losses

- Directly impact long-duration missions
- Jeopardize transfer timeline



Tank Over-Pressurization

- Critically endangers HLS architecture and crew
- Damages surrounding tank structure and instrumentation



Transfer Line Heat Leaks

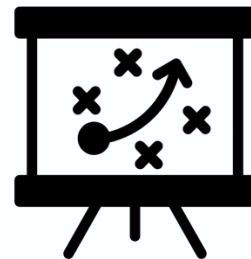
- Compromise efficiency of one-phase propellant transfer
- Result in unintended gas entering storage tank



Goal

Address gaps in existing research:

- Holistic cryogenic transfer protocol
- Propellant line flow monitoring
- HLS architecture health



Strategy

Direct research efforts towards:

- Line Chillydown
- Tank Chillydown
- 2-Phase Flow Imaging

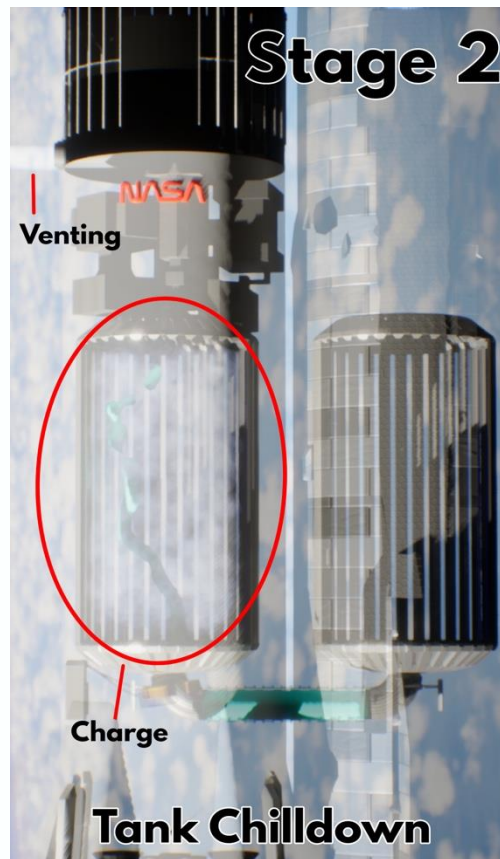
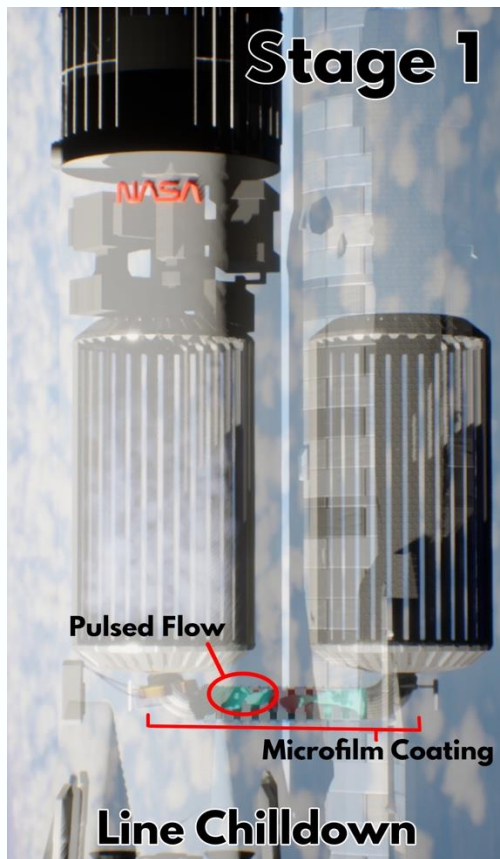


Goal: Monitor and manage boil-off during transfer

The University of Illinois proposes ECLIPSE, which will:

- **Mitigate propellant losses** during line chilldown through transfer line coatings and pulsed propellant flow
- **Reduce tank over-pressurization risks** through operational changes in the tank chilldown protocol
- **Monitor heat leaks** along the transfer line with a flow-monitoring sensor





**Key Goals**

- Develop mission concept and integration
- Verify concept with simulations

Mission Milestones

- MCR
- SRR
- MDR
- PDR

Key Goals

- Develop and test each component of ECLIPSE
- Refine fabrication processes

Mission Milestones

- CDR
- ORR

Key Goals

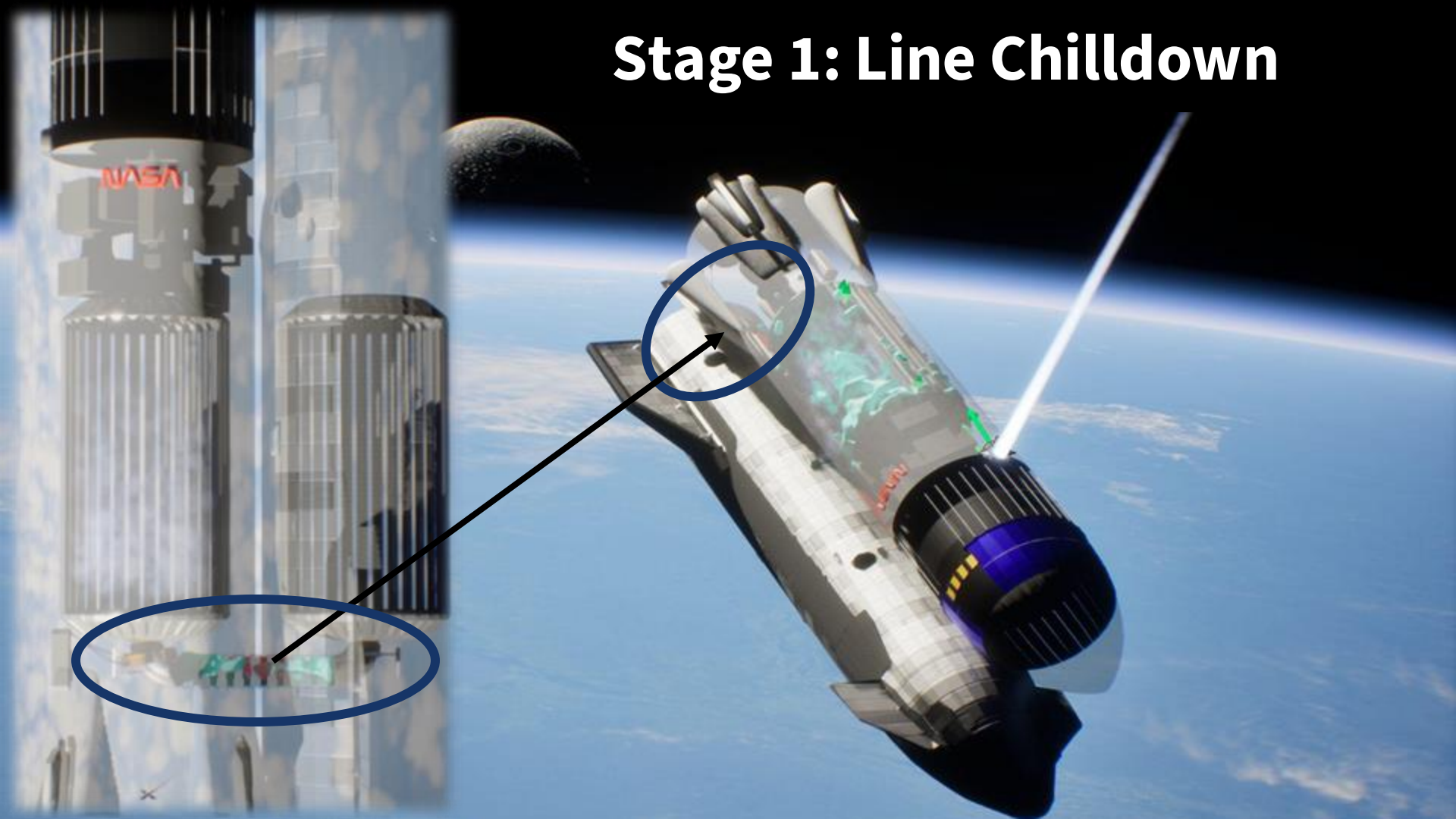
- Run precursor mission
- Refine simulations based on precursor
- Launch first mission

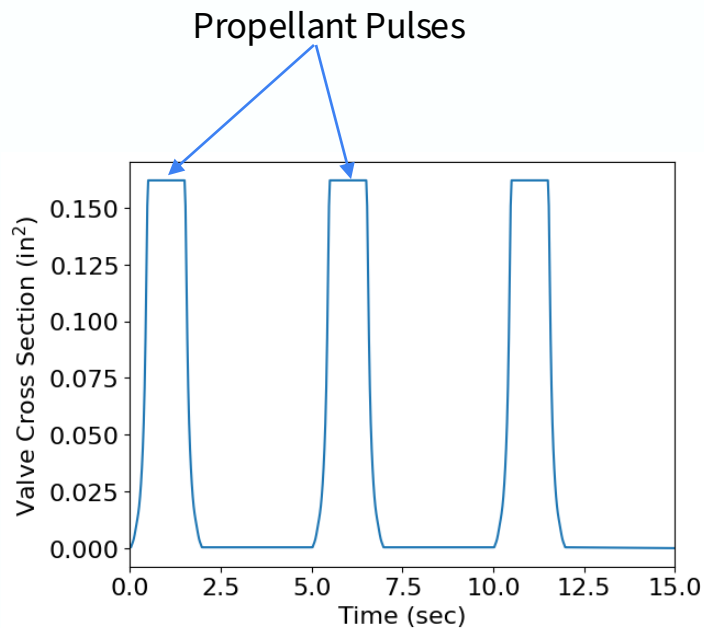
Mission Milestones

- PLAR
- FRR

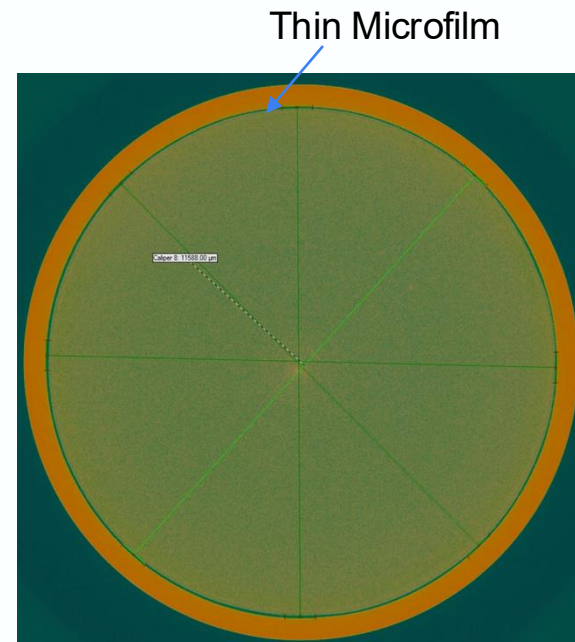


Stage 1: Line Chardown





Pulsing propellant during line chilldown¹

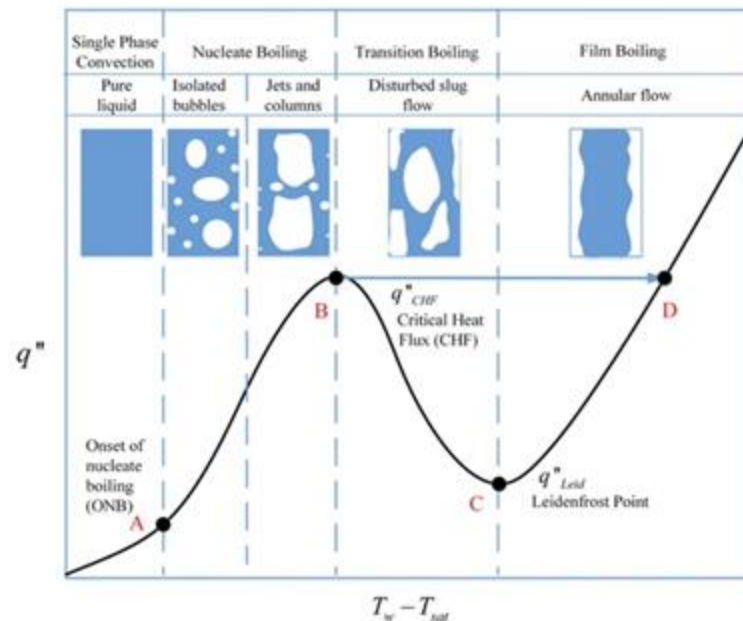


Pipe alterations²

Current research has focused on mass savings in the line chilldown process.



- Pulsed flow destabilizes its vapor film
- Less consumed propellant mass** during line chilldown (compared to cont. flow)



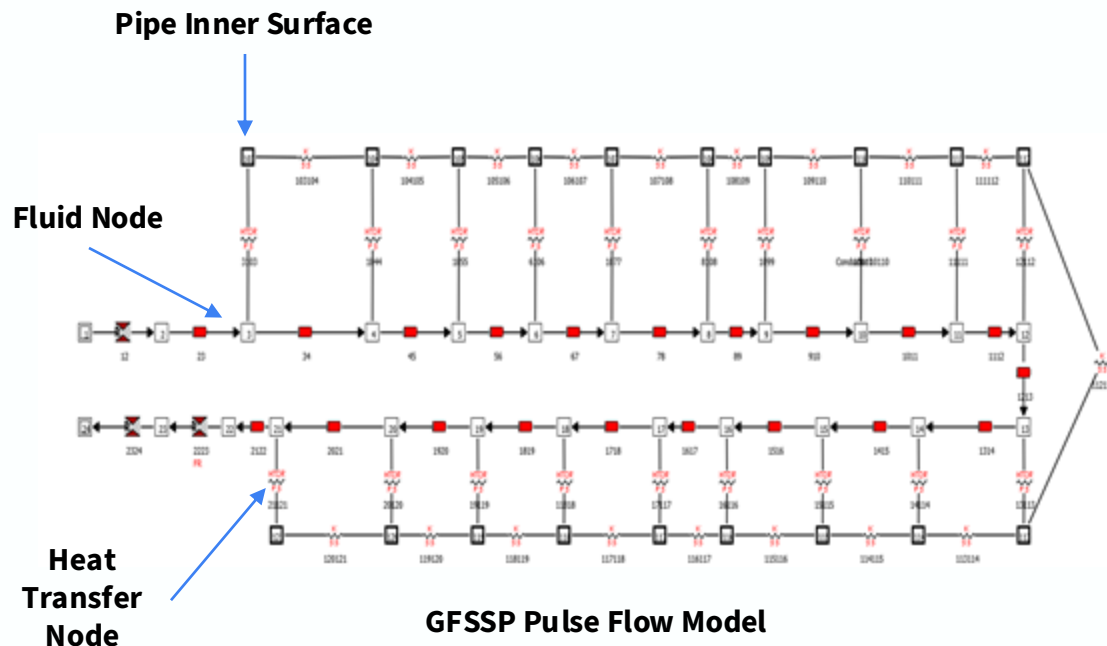
Flow boiling curve: film boiling insulates and reduces efficiency.

Pulse flow results in significant mass savings.





- Simulation developed based on existing literature
- Heat correlations obtained from Dr. LeClair.
- Parameters**
 - 0.46in inner diameter
 - 0.02in pipe thickness
 - 22.5in pipe length
 - Fluid is LN2

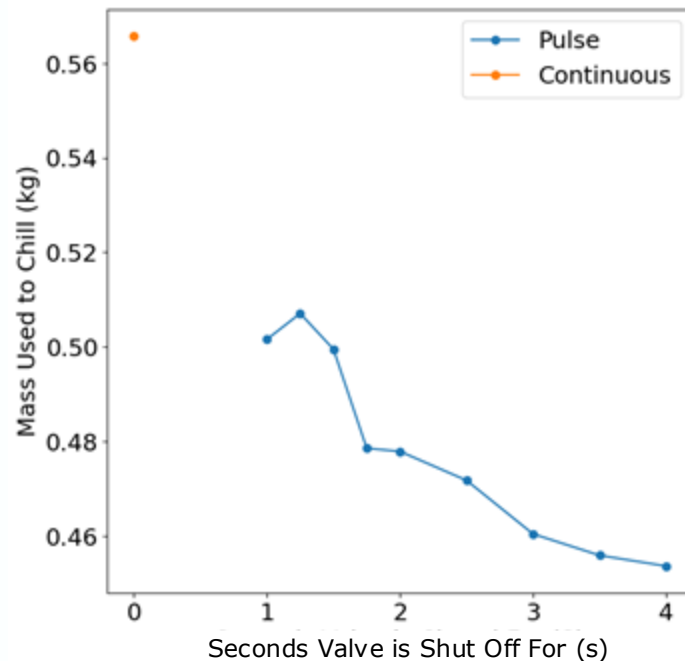


GFSSP used to simulate pulsed flow.





- **Chilldown times**
 - Continuous flow: ~12 seconds
 - Pulse flow: ~ 20 seconds
- **LN2 Propellant Mass Used**
 - Pulsed flow saves up to **24% of propellant**
- Decreasing propellant mass utilized with higher valve close times

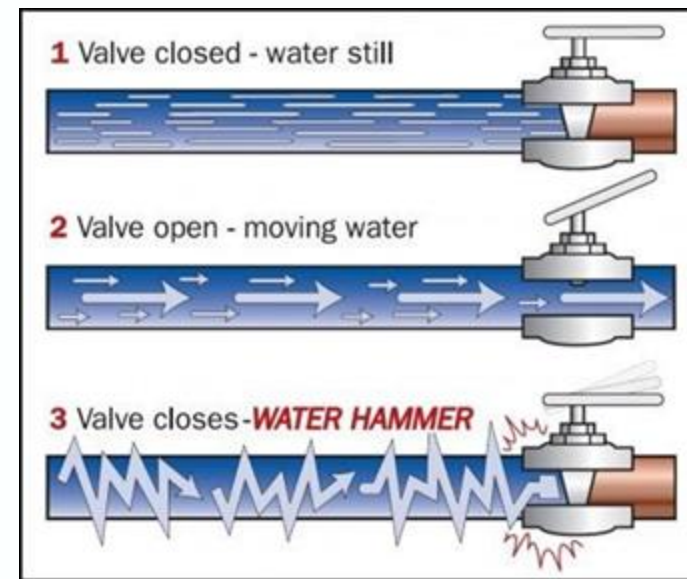


Propellant Mass Used to Achieve Chilldown for Different Valve Closed Times

Despite longer chilldown times, pulse flow results in significant mass savings.



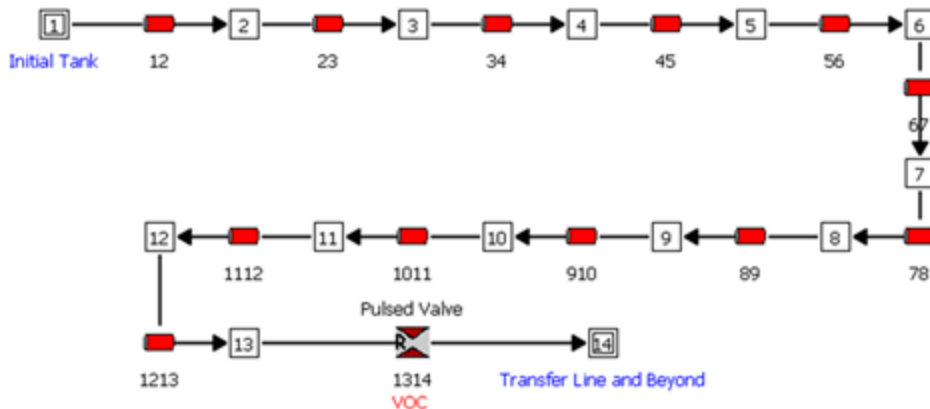
- **Hydraulic shock effect:** Pressure spike that occurs due to rapid change in fluid momentum
- Lack of research within this field
- **Mitigation methods**
 - Increase pipe diameter
 - Decrease flow rate
 - Pressure spike damper
 - Increase valve closing times
- **This may reduce effectiveness of pulse flow**



Water Hammer Progression⁸

Pulsed flow may induce the hydraulic shock effect, which can be reduced through optimal valve closing time.

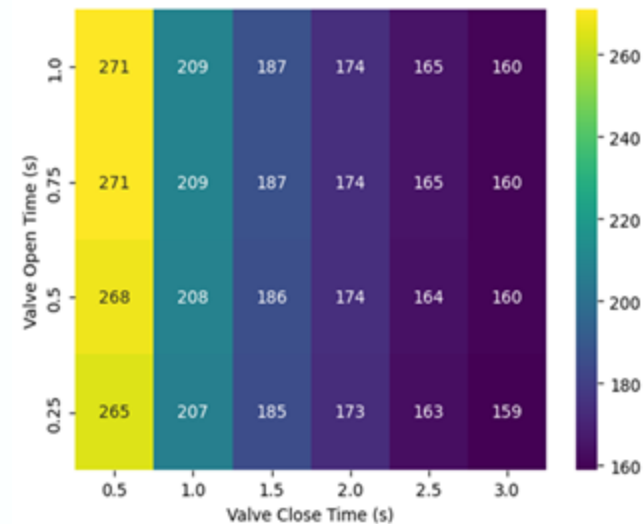
- Model created using GFSSP
- **Parameters**
 - 127 psi – 87 psi
 - Total length : 60'
 - Pipe ID: 10"
 - Simulation tested for various open/close times



GFSSP Hydraulic Shock model

A safe valve closing time can be found to match an acceptable pressure spike.

- **ASME B31.4: max total pressure should not exceed 110% of design pressure**
- Valve limitations
 - Stronger motors/pneumatics may add mass/complexity
- Proposed open-close times
 - **Open:** as fast as possible
 - **Close:** two seconds or longer



Maximum pressure in system as function of valve open and close time

Close time much more impactful than open time, hydraulic shock is a fixable issue



- **Benefits**
 - Reduce boiloff during line chill-down
 - Increase heat transfer coefficient
 - Decrease chilldown time
 - Increase sensible latent heat
- Trade study conducted, microfilm chosen

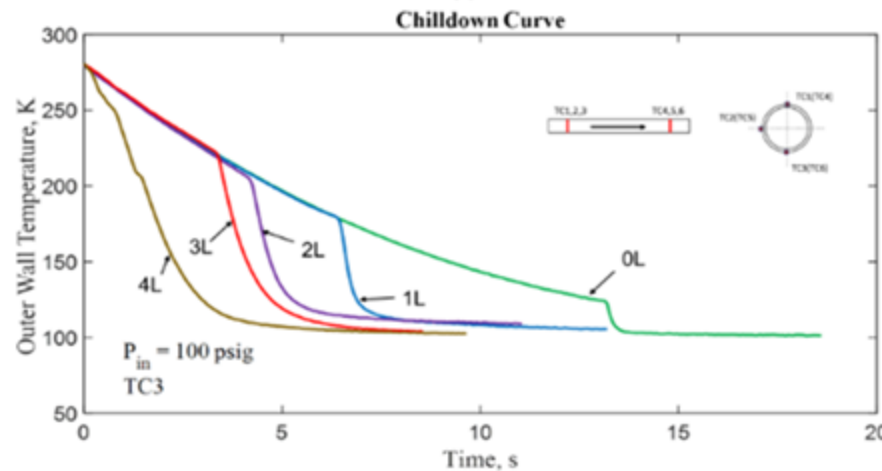
Item	Microfilm Coating	Microfins	Capillary Coatings	Surface Etching	Microstructures	Weight
Technology Readiness Level	1	0.71	0.43	0.71	0.43	0.15
Manufacturing Readiness Level	1	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.375	0.15
Heat Transfer Enhancement	0.22	0.12	0.5	0.21	1	0.2
Pressure Fluctuation	0	1	0	0.48	0	-0.1
Durability	1	0.3	0.5	0.55	0.4	0.15
Total	0.494	0.1505	0.277	0.258	0.38075	

Modifying the tube's inner surface is an effective way to reduce propellant loss.





- Low-conductivity coating insulates tube surface from bulk tube mass
 - Enables **faster film boiling**
- Optimal thickness balances initial cooling with ongoing heat conduction



Chill-down curve with varying coating layers¹⁶

Low-conductivity microfilm coating enhances heat transfer, reducing the mass of propellant loss.





Coating Material Options

- FEP: lower thermal expansion, more formable, used in more tests
- PTFE: wider temperature range, higher mechanical strength

Application Technique

- Pour and drain: used in experiments, can be inconsistent
- Spray coating: requires dedicated equipment, used in long tubes

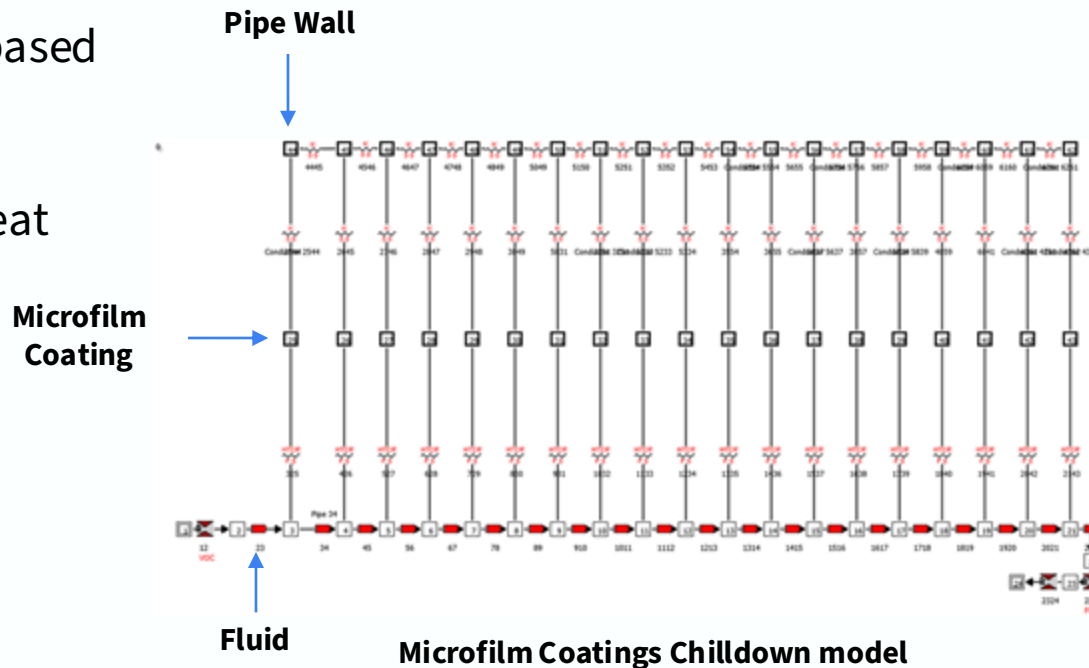
Chosen: FEP with spray coating

The ideal microfilm coating is FEP applied to the tube using spray coating method.





- Model created using GFSSP, based on existing literature
- Continuous flow utilized
- Modelled with Miropowlski heat correlations
- **Parameters**
 - 0.46in inner diameter
 - 0.02in pipe thickness
 - 22.5in pipe length
 - Fluid of LN2

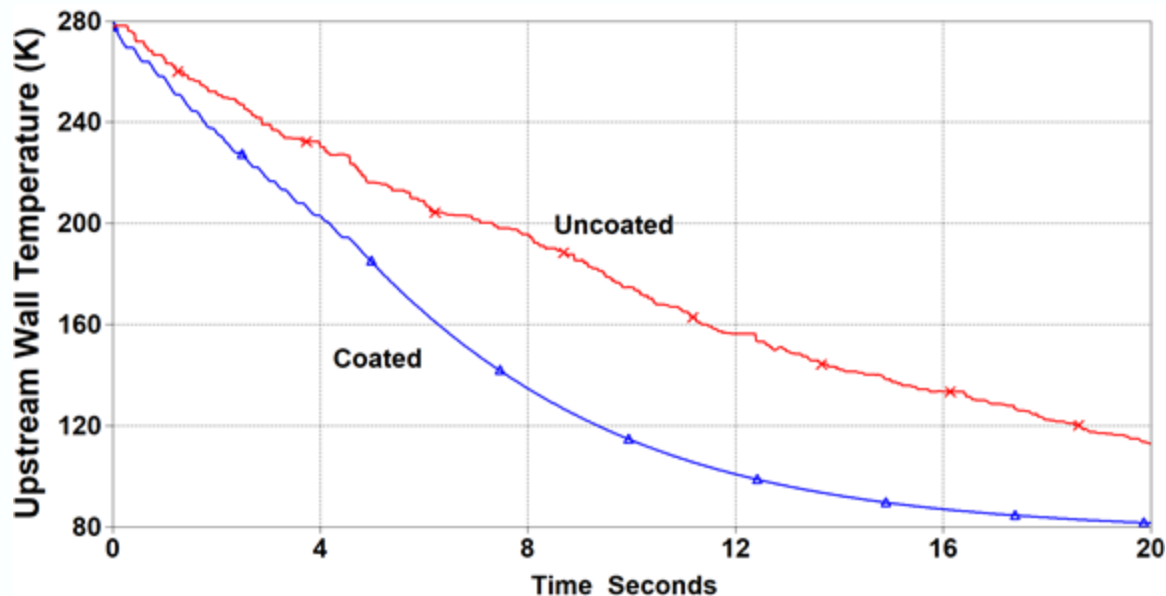


GFSSP can be used to simulate microfilm coatings effects on chill-down.





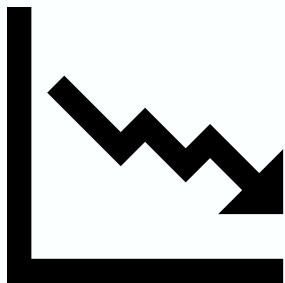
- Microfilm model has **faster chilldown** due to higher heat transfer coefficient
- Allows for line to enter nucleate boiling regime **faster**



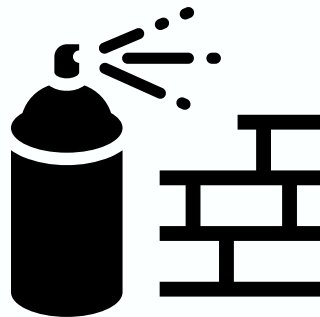
Upstream node temperature coated vs uncoated over time

Microfilm model results in faster line chilldown.

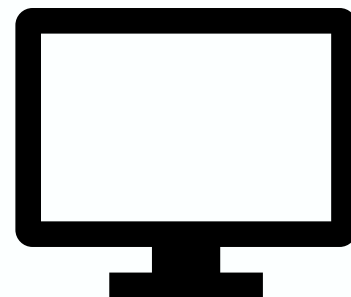




**Pulse flow reduces
propellant mass used**



**Microfilm coatings
improve chilldown
time**



**Solutions can be
modelled through
GFSSP**

Stage 2: Tank Chardown





- Key risks caused by microgravity environment
 - Tank over-pressurization
 - Accidental venting of ullage
- Priorities when performing tank chilldown
 - Lower propellant utilization
 - Maximize tank fill percentage
- **Solution: Charge-Hold-Vent (CHV) and No-Vent-Fill (NVF)**



Cryogenic tank chill fill is easier in gravity

Tank chilldown brings a risk of over-pressurization.

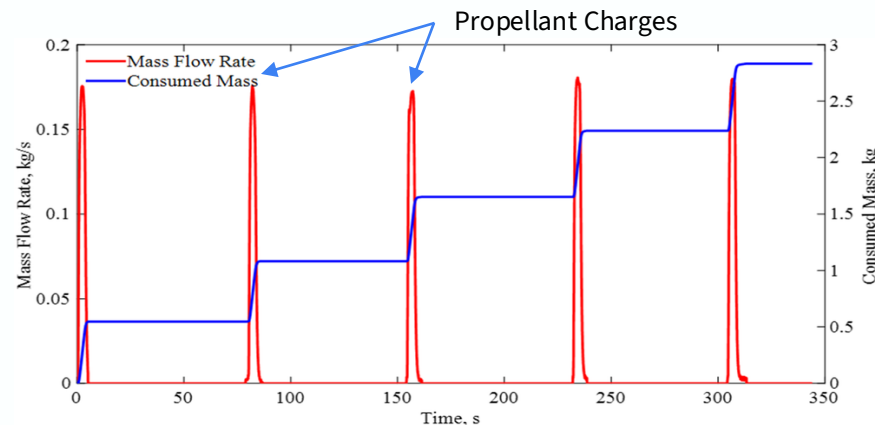


Steps:

- 1) Open and close valve to send a pulse of fluid
- 2) Allow fluid to completely boil while valve is closed, then vent gas
- 3) Repeat until tank is conditioned, then fill the tank without venting.

Benefits:

- Each charge is used efficiently
- No propellant is accidentally vented
- Tank over-pressurization risk is mitigated

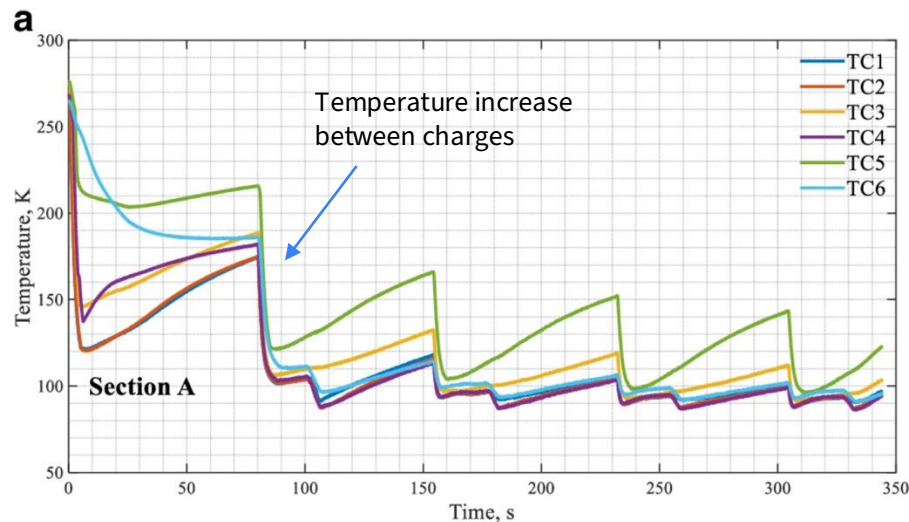


Cooling receiving tank with periodic propellant charges³

Charge Hold Vent (CHV) and No Vent Fill (NVF) mitigate over-pressurization while chilling down tank.



- Tank wall temperature is most consistent trigger to switch from CHV to NVF
- Place thermocouples at **areas of highest thermal mass**
 - Near structural interfaces like stainless-steel flanges



Highest thermal mass tank locations see largest temperature increase in between charges.

Transition point determined by areas with highest thermal mass.

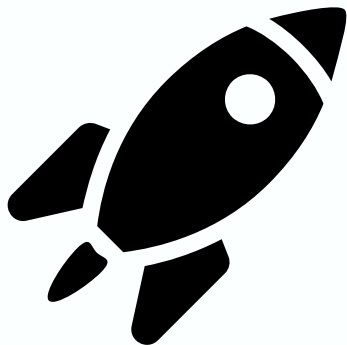
- Script developed to solve for system
 - Stainless steel tank
 - 1200 m3 volume
 - 200 mT fluid transferred
- Final temperature = saturation temperature
- Output
 - Maximum Initial Temp for LOX = 105.35 K
 - Maximum Initial Temp for LHC4 = 129.61 K

$$m_{fluid,final} u_{fluid,final} - (m_{liquid,initial} u_{liquid,initial} + m_{vapor,initial} u_{vapor,initial}) - (m_{fluid,final} - m_{fluid,initial}) h_{inlet} = \dot{Q}_{para,avg} \Delta t - m_{tank} \int_{T_{initial}}^{T_{final}} c_{tank} dT$$

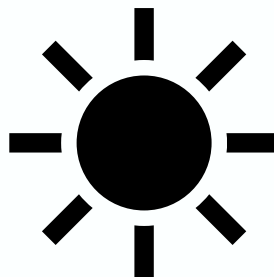
Energy balance equation²¹

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Final fluid heat | • m = mass |
| • Initial fluid heat | • u = internal energy |
| • Heat gained from the inlet | • h = specific enthalpy |
| • Loss to the environment | • Q = parasitic heat leak |
| • Loss of the tank metal | • t = time |
| | • T = temperature |
| | • C = specific heat |

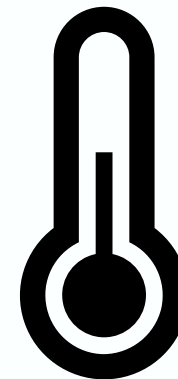
An optimal tank temperature can be found to transition between CHV and NVF.



**Charge-Hold-Vent
and No-Vent-Fill
utilized**

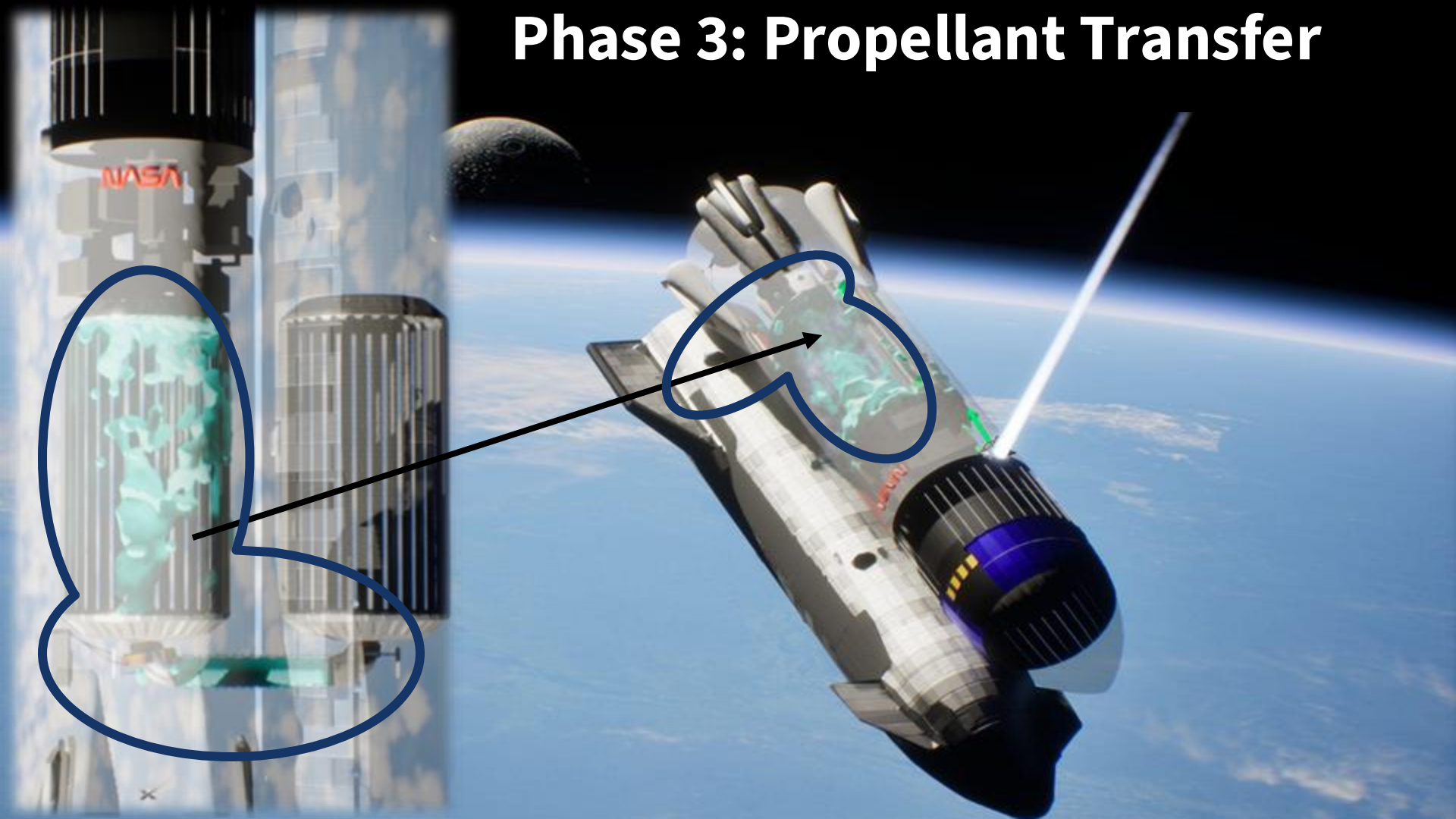


**Hottest tank locations
determine transition
point**



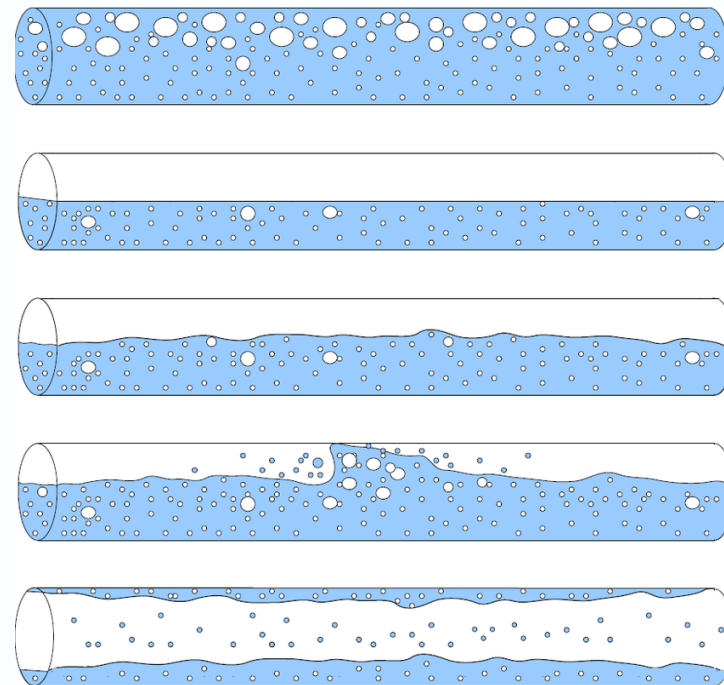
**Optimal transition
temperature can
be determined**

Phase 3: Propellant Transfer



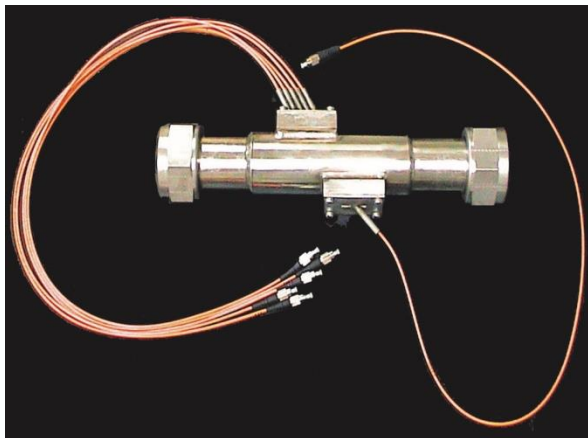


- Monitoring micro-g 2-phase flow regimes during transfer gauges transfer health
- Can point out:
 - **System heat leaks**
 - Propellant losses

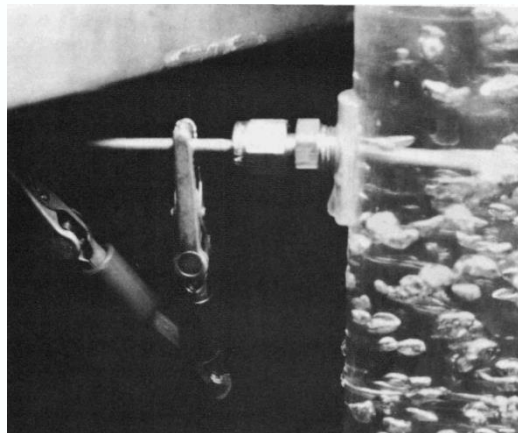


Flow patterns for 2-phase flow in horizontal pipes

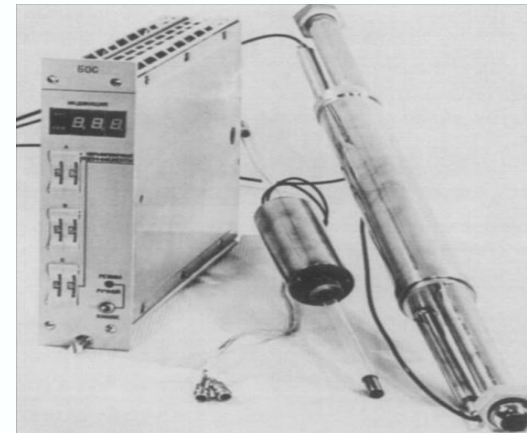




Fiber Optic Multi-Phase Sensor



Electrical Resistivity Probe Sensor



Radio Frequency Void Fraction Sensor

Current research is limited by unreliable measurements or system-level integration incompatibility.

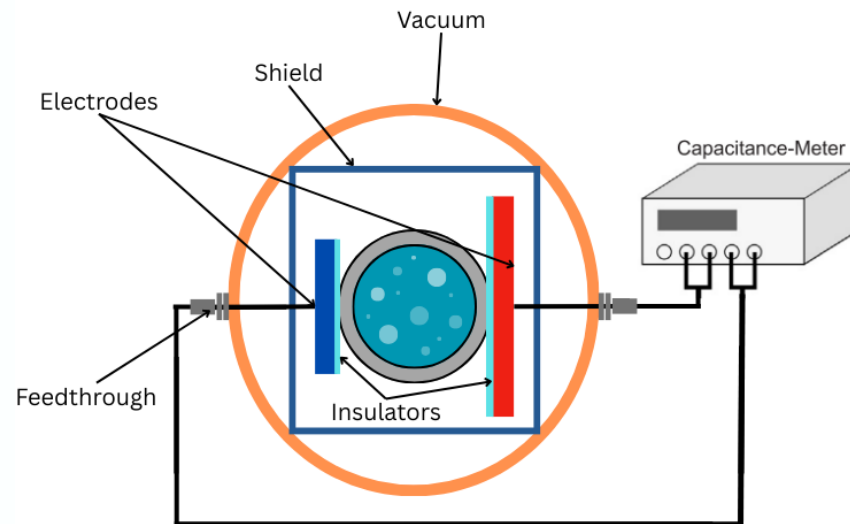


Operation: Measures **time-domain capacitance** signal

Comprised of:

- Asymmetric Copper electrodes
- X-Aerogel insulation
- Aluminum sensor shield

Location: End of transfer Line



Capacitance 2-phase visualization

- 2-phase flow sensing with a capacitance sensor is:
 - **Gravity independent**
 - **Minimally invasive**
- Measured time-domain capacitance signal is **informative about flow behavior**
 - Capacitance mean $\rightarrow$ void fraction
 - Statistical moments from signal $\rightarrow$ flow topology

$$\alpha_{linear} = \frac{C_L - C_M}{C_L - C_G} \times 100\%$$

Void fraction relationship with capacitance

C_L = Capacitance of the liquid

C_G = Capacitance of the gas

C_M = Measured capacitance

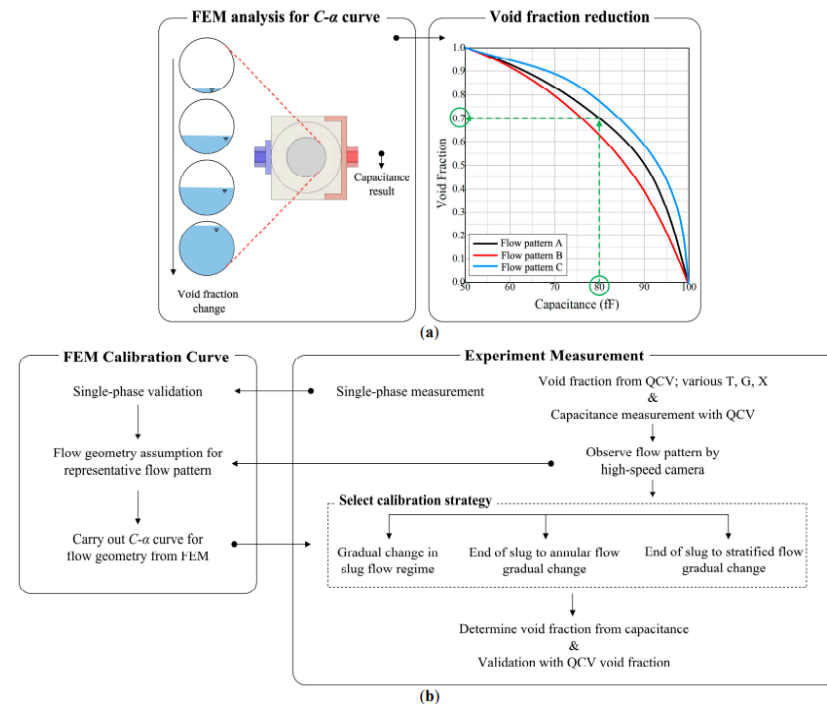


Requirement	Value
Sampling Frequency	≥ 200 Hz
Excitation Frequency	10 Hz (Can burst to 1 kHz)
System Power	~ 10 W
Potential Difference	25 V





- Calibration is done with Finite Element Method (FEM) simulations
 - Curve fit with void fraction vs capacitance trend
- Curve is verified using data from suborbital flights



FEM analysis and proposed calibration process



Motivation: Monitoring two-phase flow regimes can identify

- **System Heat Leaks**
- Propellant Losses

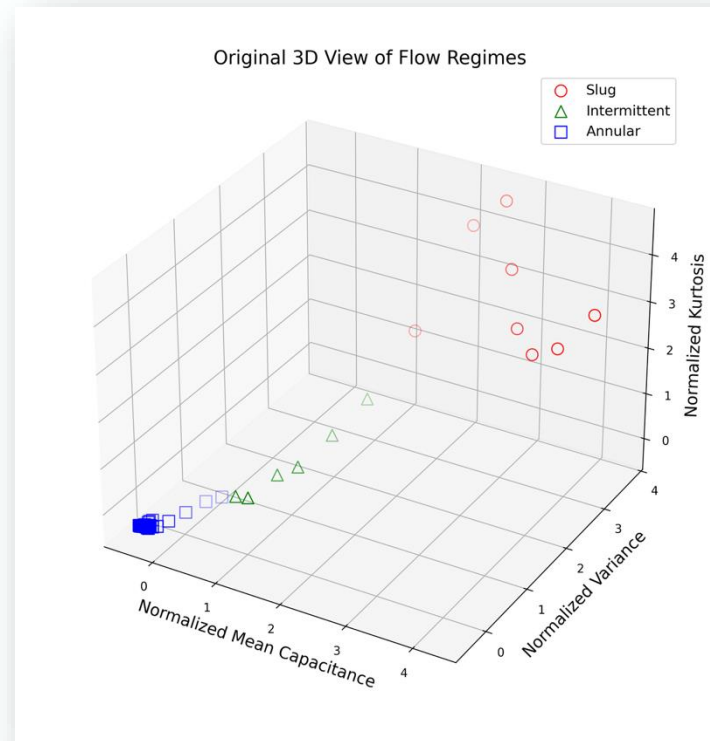
Challenge: Past work coupled statistical features + Fourier Analysis for identification

- Fourier analysis requires **large datasets** for **coherent results**
 - Short micro-g test flights **limit datasets**

Goal: Develop flow regime identification technique using **time-domain statistical features** of measured capacitance signal



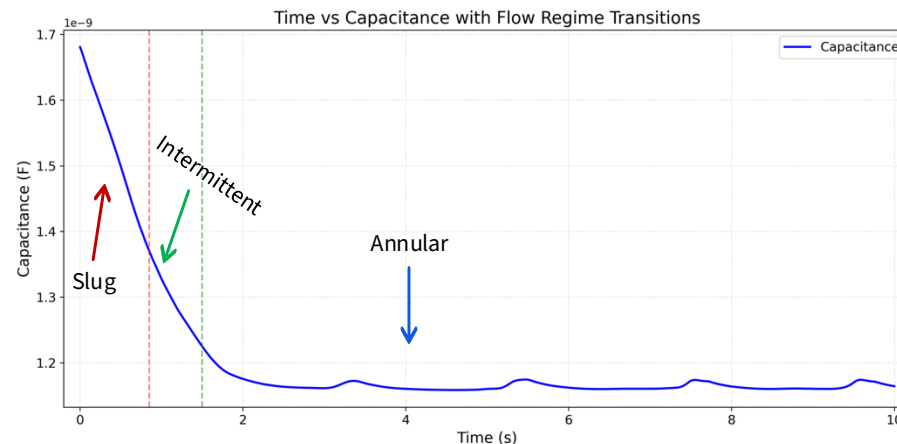
- Flow regimes identified with
 - Mean (1st moment)
 - Variance (2nd moment)
 - Kurtosis (4th moment)
- Probabilistic clustering** used to group points
- High probability** of accurate flow regime detection
 - Smooth regime transitions



ECLIPSE Initial Flow Regime Map



- Two major concerns with micro-g experimental data
 - 1.) Duration of data
 - 2.) Imbalance of points per flow regime
- Extending data will overemphasize one flow regime due to **regime transitions**
- Solving (2) is much **more feasible**
 - Curve interpolation is done

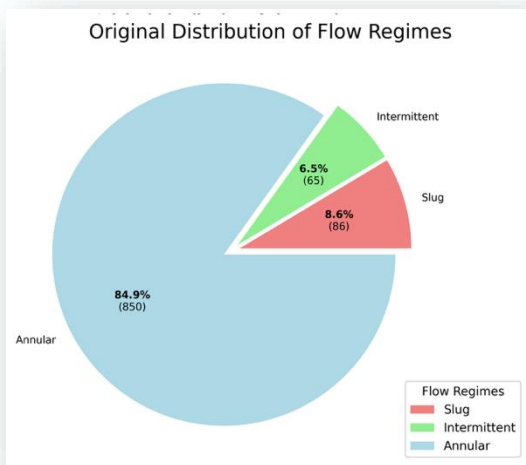


Measured Capacitance v Time from ANSYS

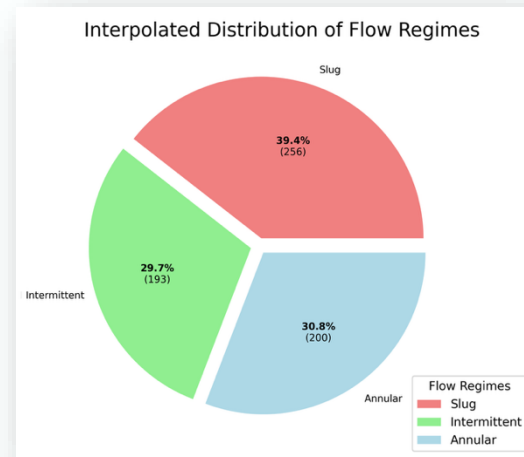


Curve interpolation done with **Gaussian Process Regression (GPR)**

- Machine Learning probabilistic interpolation model
 - Smooths out noise
 - Low probability of over-fitting



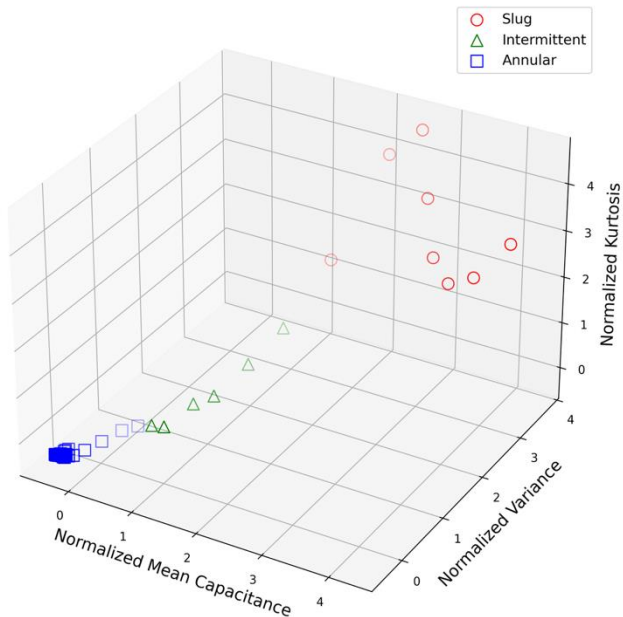
Before interpolation



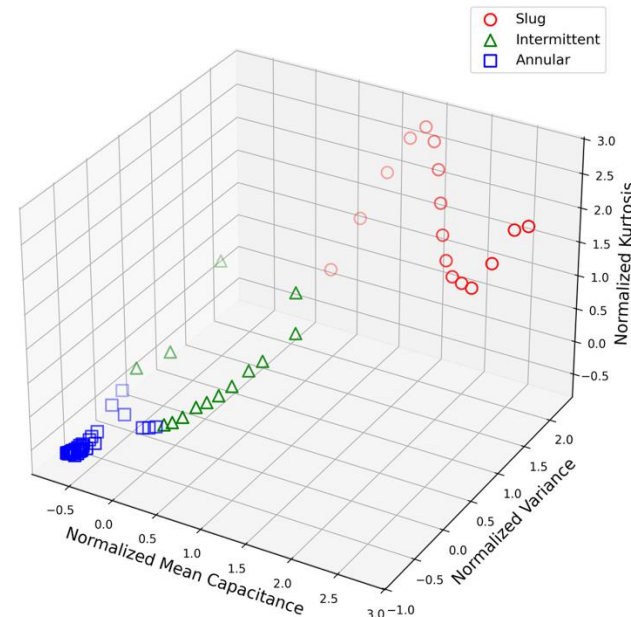
After interpolation

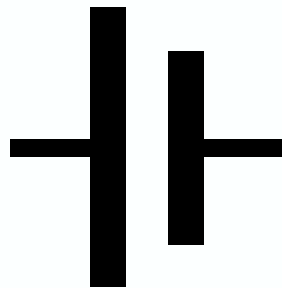


Original 3D View of Flow Regimes

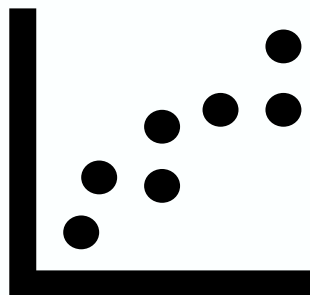


3D View of Flow Patterns





**Capacitance sensor
monitors propellant
transfer health**



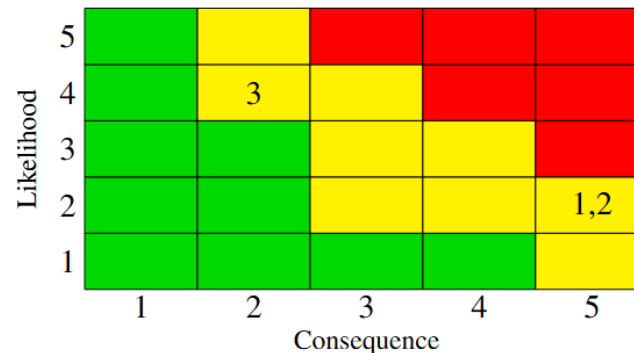
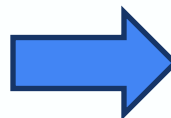
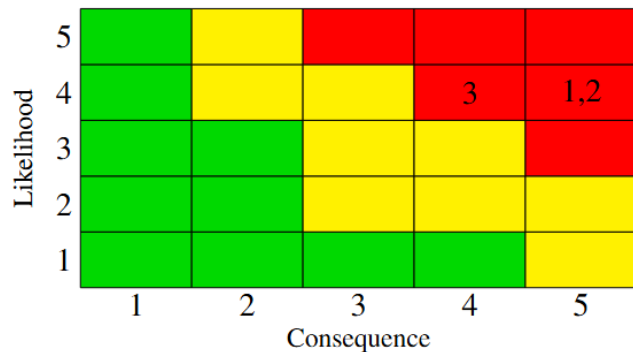
**Statistical moments
are used to determine
flow regime**



**Propellant losses
and heat leaks can
be identified**

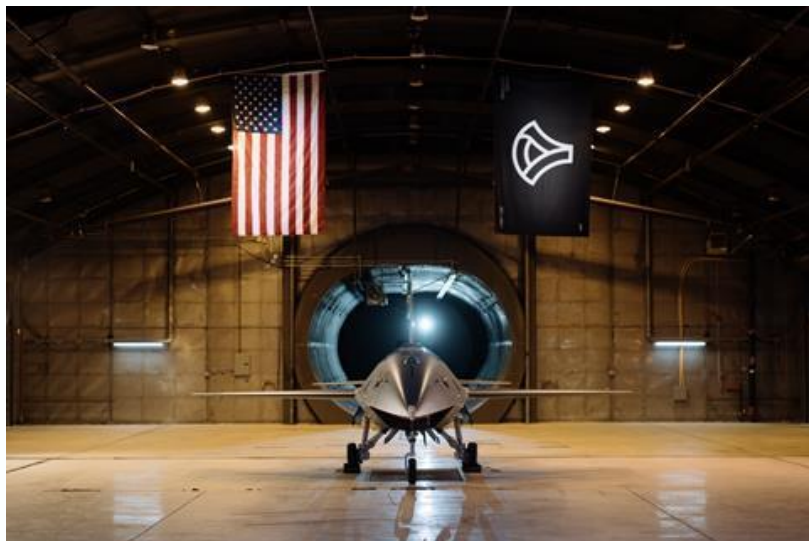


Risk Informed Decision Making



ID	Risk	Mitigation	Impact
1	Unvalidated microgravity fluid dynamics models	Conduct precursor flight experiments to calibrate micro-g models; integrate updates prior to final launch	Adjustments to current models and heat correlations
2	Valve depreciation from pulsed flow	Perform valve lifecycle testing under simulated pulsed flow conditions before system integration	Ensures robust chilldown protocol
3	Lack of funding	Conduct sensor feasibility and prototyping during ground test phase to reduce early-stage funding burden	Reduces development risk and keeps project on schedule





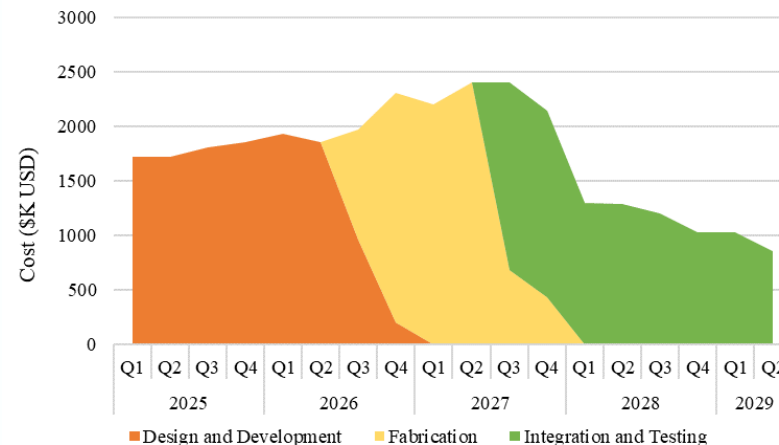
Ground & Prototype Testing

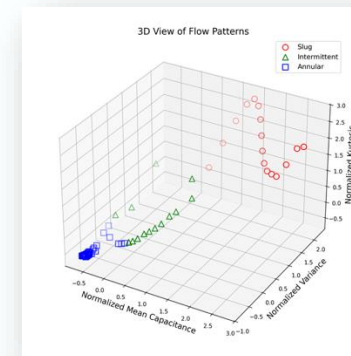
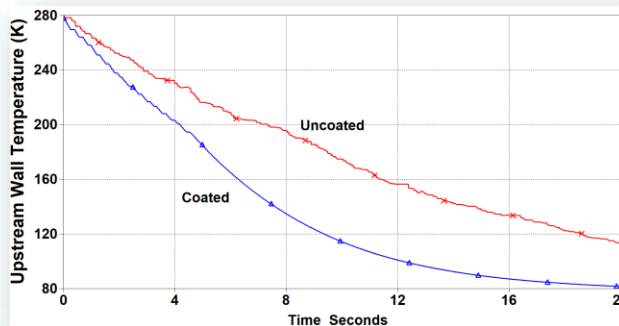
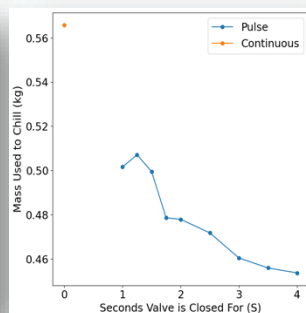
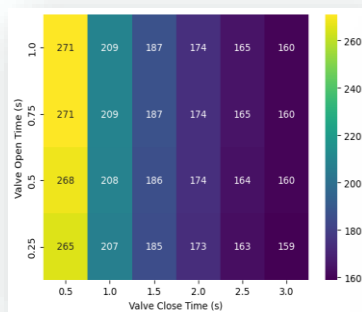


**Suborbital & Parabolic Test
Flights**



- Two estimates were created used NASA Instrument Cost Model
 - Uses mass and power-driven cost estimation relationships (CERs) based on heritage instrument development
- Lower bound:** \$21.4 million
- Higher bound:** \$28.6 million





Proposed pulsed flow optimized with respect to heat efficiency and hydraulic shock

Developed a micro-film GFSSP modeling technique

Created a novel 2-phase flow regime measurement technique

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Michael Milowski | Sebastian Moreno | Zahi Rahman
Sebastian Rojas | Anna Rudenko | Nate Vattana

**Table 1**

Dielectric constant of the materials used for the EFA simulations (* respective values [38]).

Material	State	ϵ	Material	State	ϵ
Nitrogen	Gas	1.000547	Hydrogen	Liquid	1.23
Oxygen	Gas	1.000494	Silicone oil	Liquid	2.17
Hydrogen	Gas	1.000272	Water	Liquid	80
Air	Gas	1.000536	PMMA	Solid	3.0
Nitrogen	Liquid	1.45	PTFE	Solid	2.1
Oxygen	Liquid	1.51	Alumina	Solid	9.9

- S = electrodes surface area
- d = distance between the electrodes
- k = dimensionless number that depends on distance between electrodes

$$C = \epsilon_0 \epsilon \frac{S}{d} [F]$$

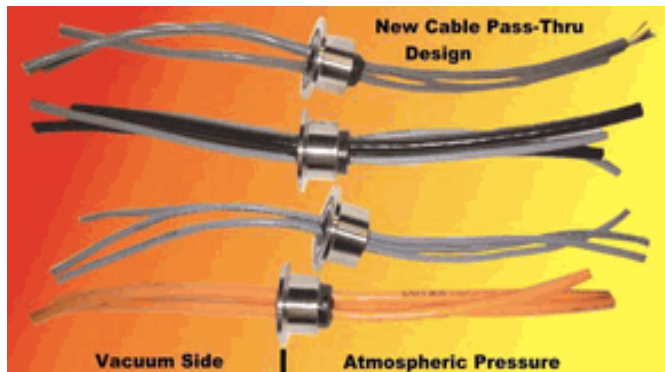
$$\alpha_{linear} = \frac{C_L - C_M}{C_L - C_G} \times 100[\%]$$

$$\alpha_{correct} = k\alpha_{linear}^2 + (1 - 100k)\alpha_{linear} [\%]$$



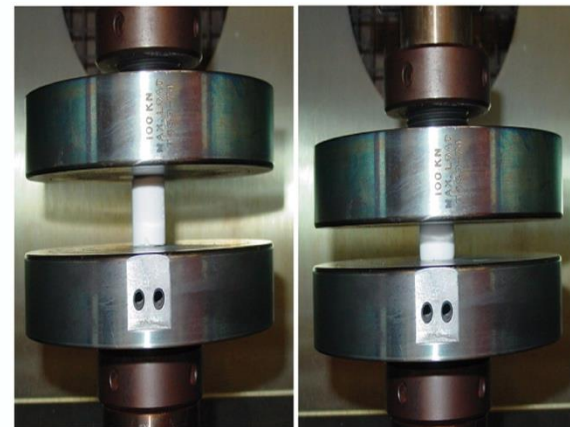
Signal through vacuum:

- Hermetic Feedthroughs
 - Preserves vacuum integrity
 - Highly tested
 - Industry standard



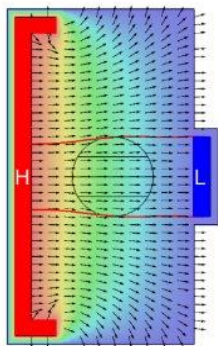
Insulator Material:

- Aerogel Insulator (X-aerogel)
 - Ultra-lightweight
 - Effective thermal & electrical insulators
 - Previously implemented in space

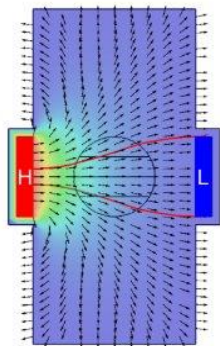




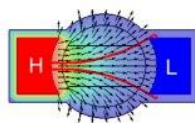
- Asymmetrical
 - Reduced electric field curvature compared to other geometries
 - Higher accuracy because of stronger correlation between EFA and experimental capacitance-void fraction measurements



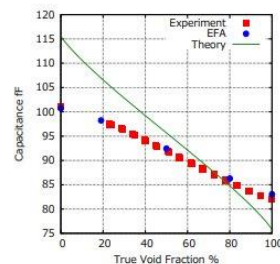
(a) Asymmetrical



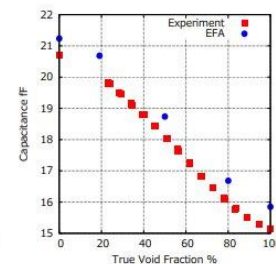
(b) Flat



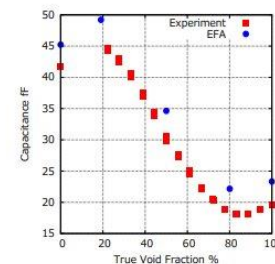
(c) Concave



(a) Asymmetrical



(b) Flat

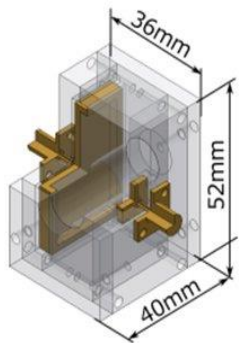


(c) Concave

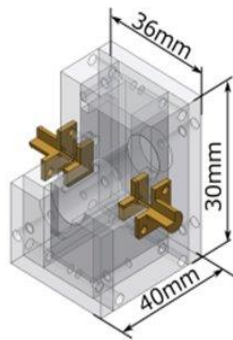
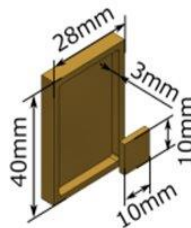
Asymmetrical capacitance sensor leads to higher accuracy



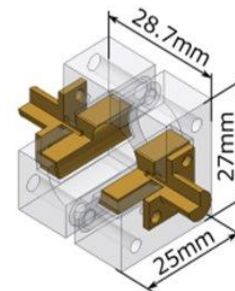
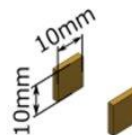
CAD models comparing each sensor type



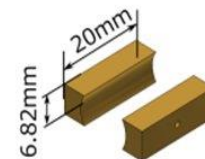
(a) Asymmetrical

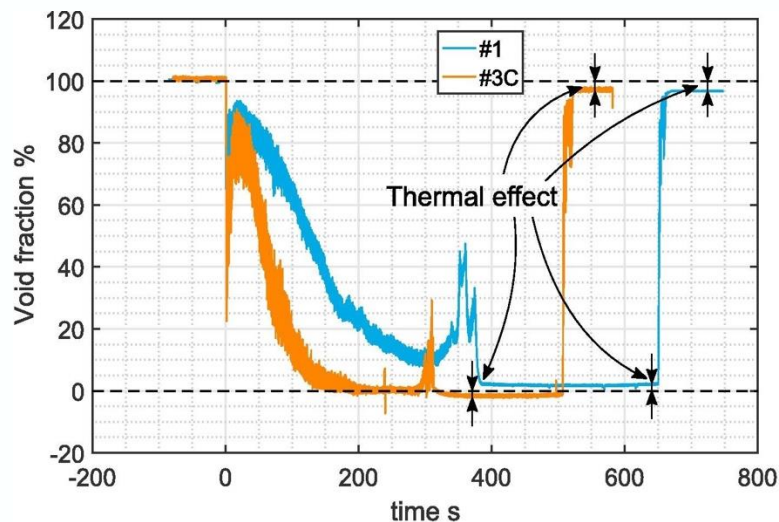


(b) Flat

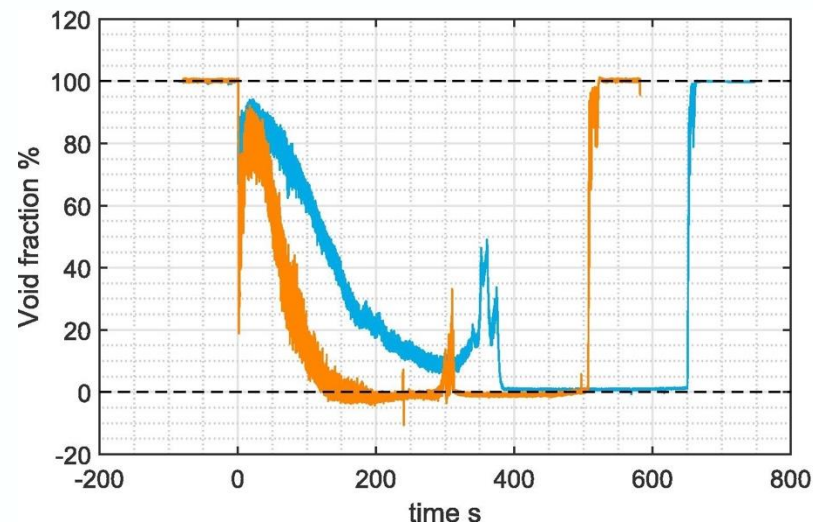


(c) Concave





(a)



(b)

Fig. 9. Test #1 and Test #3C void fraction time histories before (a) and after (b) the “thermal effect” correction.

Accounting for thermal component shrinkage with new equations



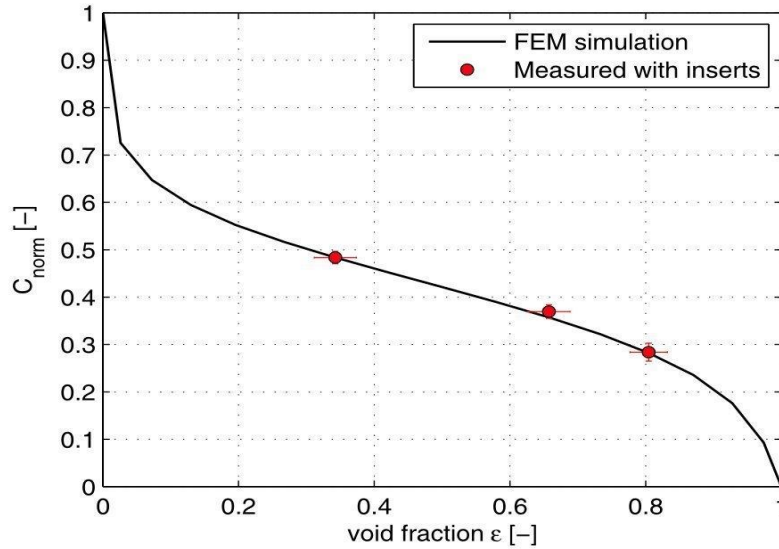
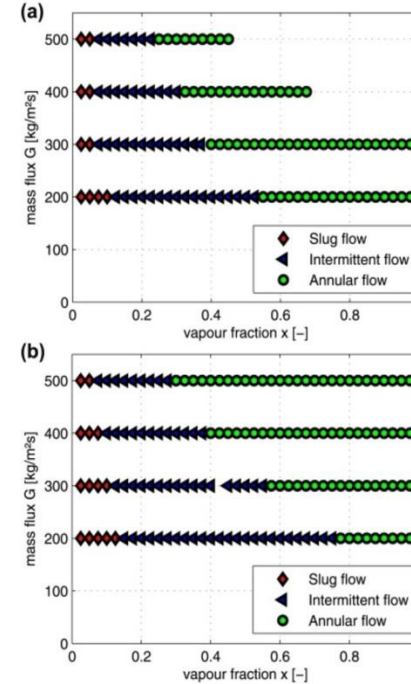


Fig. 3. Comparison of the capacitances measured for the inserts and the ones predicted by the FEM simulation.

$$\varepsilon_{\text{intermittent}} = \frac{(1 - F95) \cdot \mu \cdot \sigma \cdot \varepsilon_{\text{slug}} + (1 - \mu) \cdot (1 - \sigma) \cdot F95 \cdot \varepsilon_{\text{annular}}}{(1 - F95) \cdot \mu \cdot \sigma + (1 - \mu) \cdot (1 - \sigma) \cdot F95} \quad (2)$$



[Download: Download full-size image](#)

Fig. 5. Result of the flow mapping technique of Canière et al. [12] for the used dataset (a) R134a (b) R410A.



Material	Ceramic Fiber	Alumina	Aerogel	X-Aerogel
Cost (\$/lb)	12.64	5.93	23,000	18,000
Density (kg/m^3)	96	3600	0.075	50
Thermal Insulation (R-value)	3.75	12	10.3	20
Dielectric constant	3.55	9.4	1	1.4
Compressive Strength (PSI)	78	296,000	23	30,000
MRL	10	10	9	6

Unweighted

Criterion	Weight	Ceramic Fiber	Alumina	Aerogel	X-Aerogel
Cost	-0.10	0.0005	0.0002	1	0.78
Density	-0.10	0.027	1	0.00002	0.014
Thermal Insulation	0.20	0.18	0.6	0.52	1
Dielectric Constant	-0.10	0.38	1	0.11	0.15
Compressive Strength	0.15	0.0002	1	0.00007	0.10
MRL	0.10	1	1	0.9	0.6
Total		0.0952	0.170	0.0830	0.1806

Weighted



Criterion	Aluminum	Copper
Cost (\$/lb)	1.12	4.32
Density (kg m^{-3})	2 700	8 920
Skin Depth @ 1 MHz (μm)	82	65
Electrical Conductivity (% IACS)	59	100
Specific Strength ($\text{MPa}\cdot\text{cm}^3/\text{g}$)	115	25
Corrosion Rating (1–10)	8	6
Machinability Index (% B1112)	270	20

Unweighted

Criterion	Weight	Aluminum	Copper
Cost	-0.12	0.26	1.00
Density	-0.14	0.30	1.00
Skin Depth	-0.20	1.00	0.79
Electrical Conductivity	0.35	0.59	1.00
Specific Strength	0.15	1.00	0.22
Corrosion Rating	0.10	1.00	0.75
Machinability Index	0.10	1.00	0.07
Total		0.283	0.047

Weighted





Mesh Configuration

- **227,561 nodes / 971,603** (near student license limit)
- Swept mesh with free-seed face (quadrilateral/triangular elements extruded axially)
- No inflation layers but adaptable for future wall resolution improvements.

Solver & Model Settings

- Transient pressure-based solver (Eulerian multiphase model)
- Phases: **Oxygen gas** (primary) / **liquid oxygen** (secondary)
- Lee model for phase change (evaporation/condensation)
- SST k-omega turbulence model with mixture properties.

Material Properties

- Liquid/gaseous oxygen properties sourced from ANSYS database.
- Future preference: Model oxygen gas as **incompressible ideal gas** for operational realism.





Boundary Conditions

- No-slip walls / Velocity inlet (liquid oxygen: 1 m/s, 300 K)
- Liquid oxygen inlet volume fraction: 1 (pure liquid entry)
- Aluminum pipe walls with **0 W/m² heat flux** (adiabatic).

Solution Controls & Outputs

- Time step: **0.01 s** / Total steps: 990 (adjustable for transient resolution)
- Outputs: **Phase volume fraction** data, fluid domain axis animations.

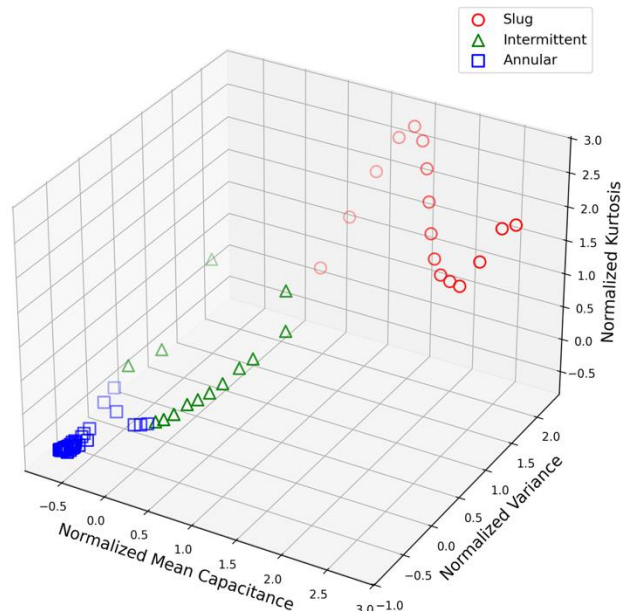
Key Note

- Framework designed for future upgrades (pressure inlet, heat transfer analysis)

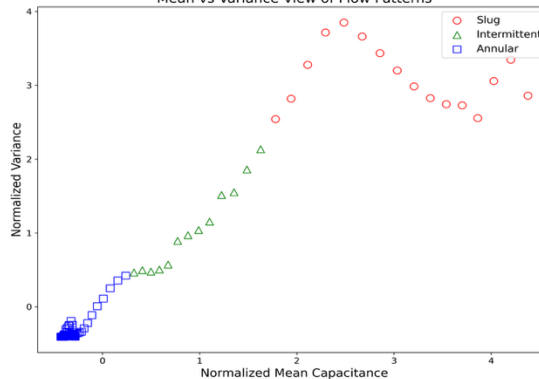




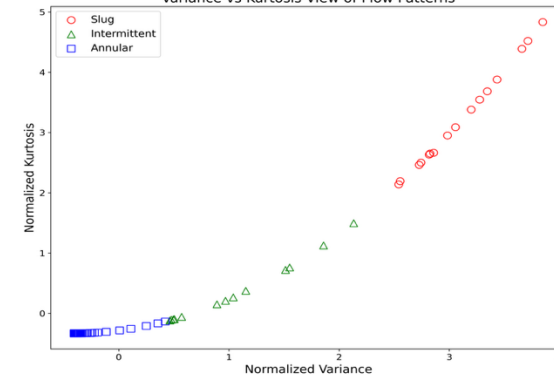
3D View of Flow Patterns



Mean vs Variance View of Flow Patterns



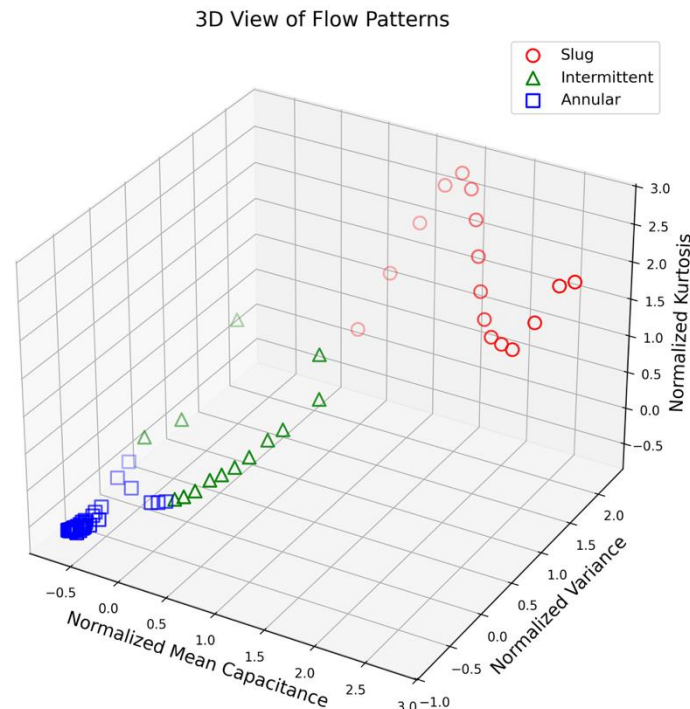
Variance vs Kurtosis View of Flow Patterns

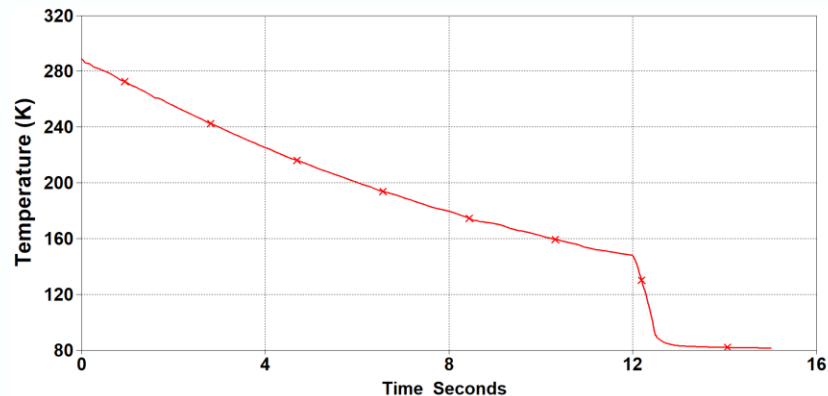
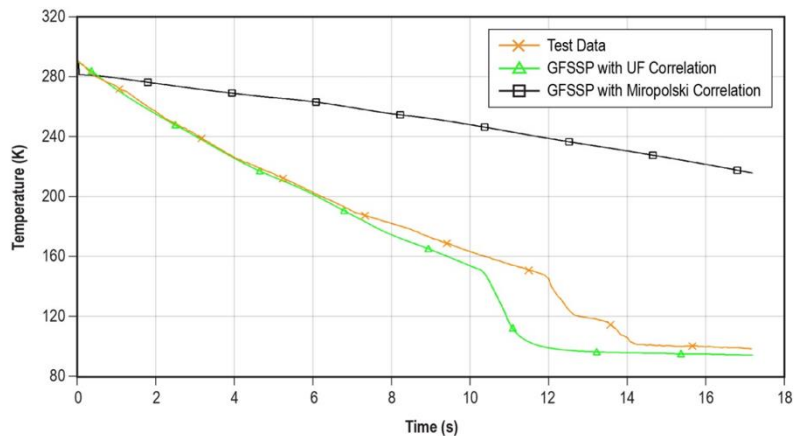




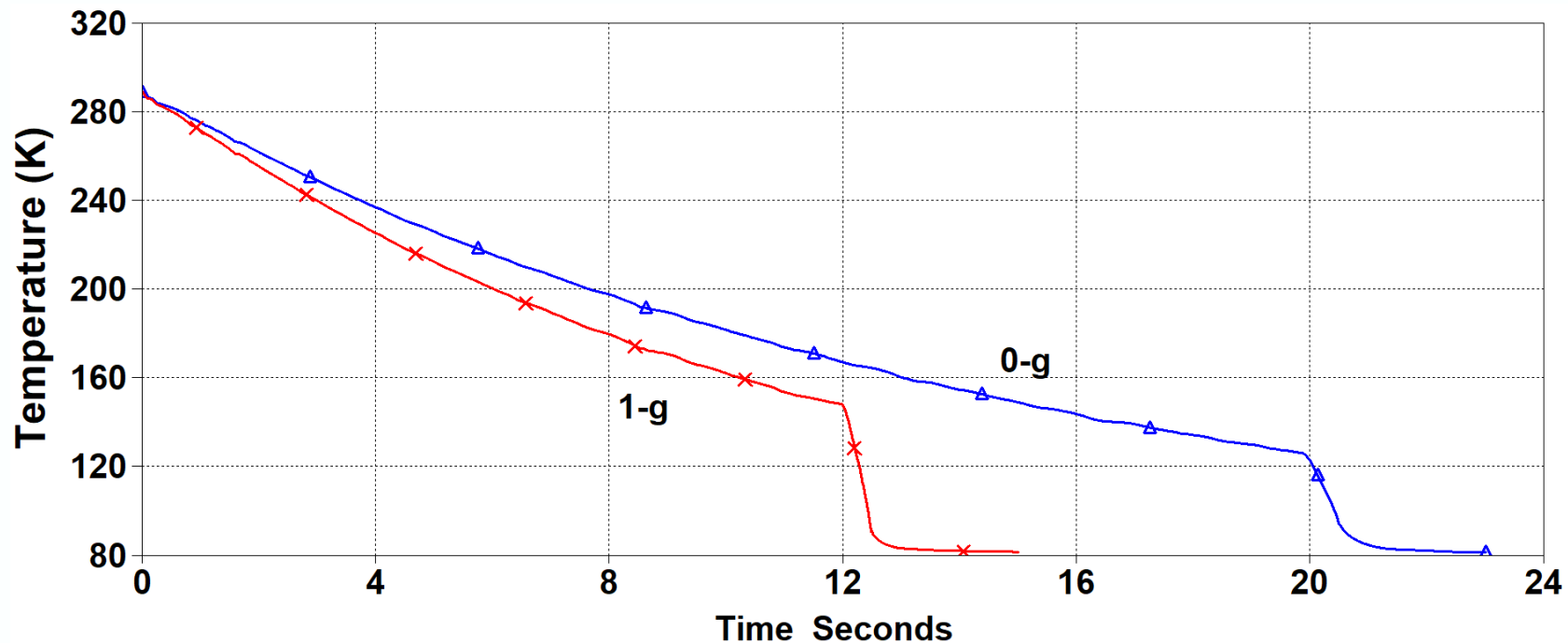
- Three statistical parameters (mean, variance, and kurtosis) distinguish different flow regimes
- Interpolate data using Gaussian Process Regression for even distribution of points per flow regime

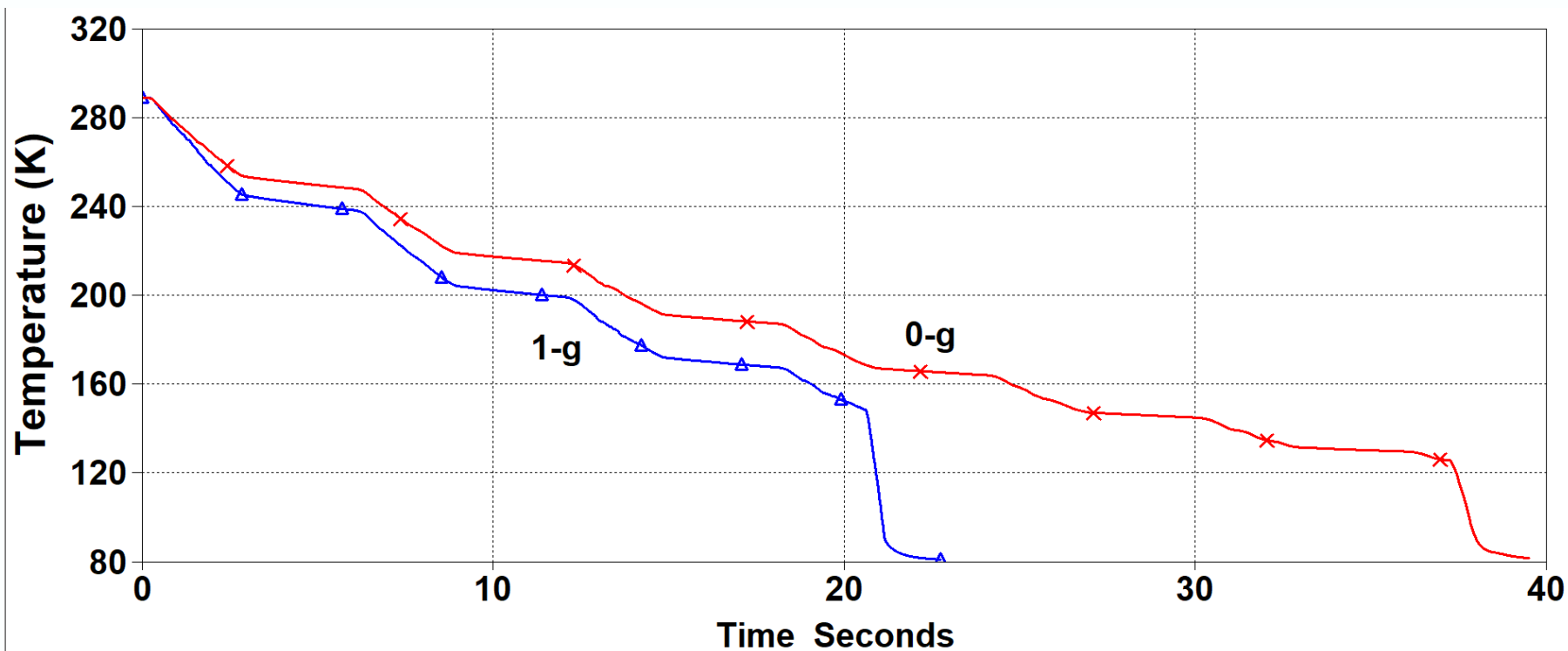
Enables: Real time flow regime identification by matching measured parameters using map

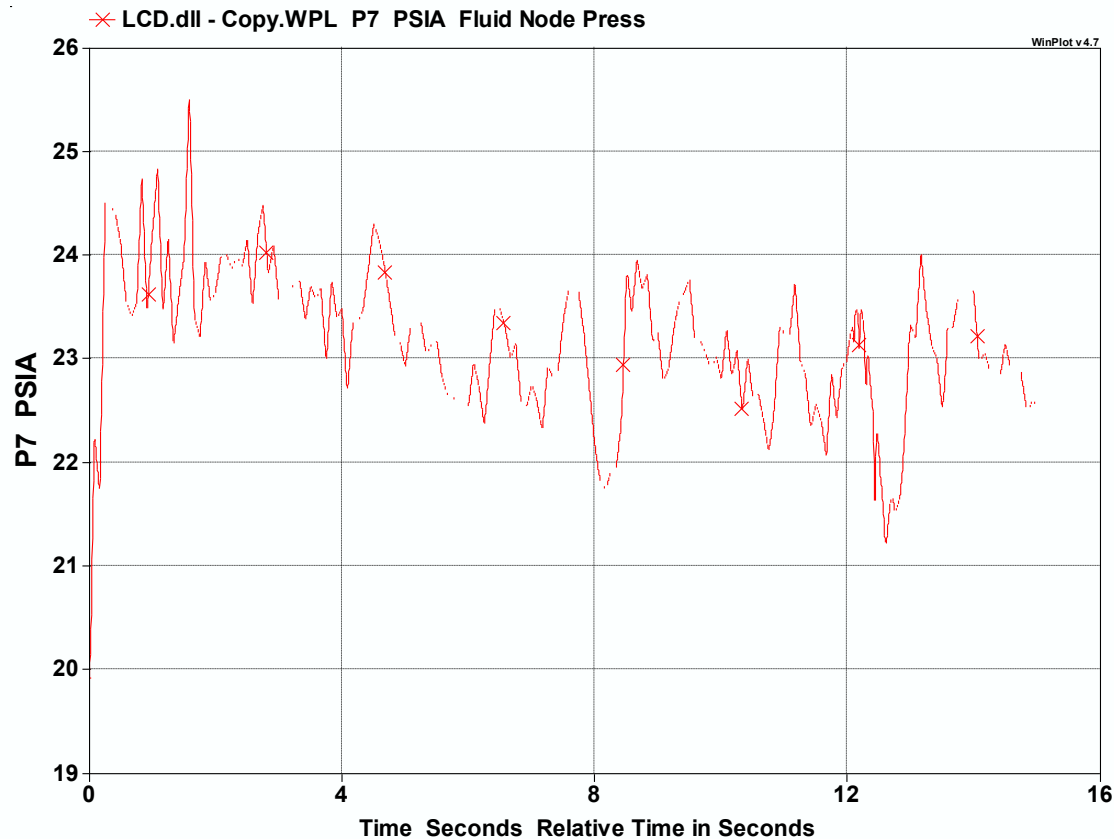


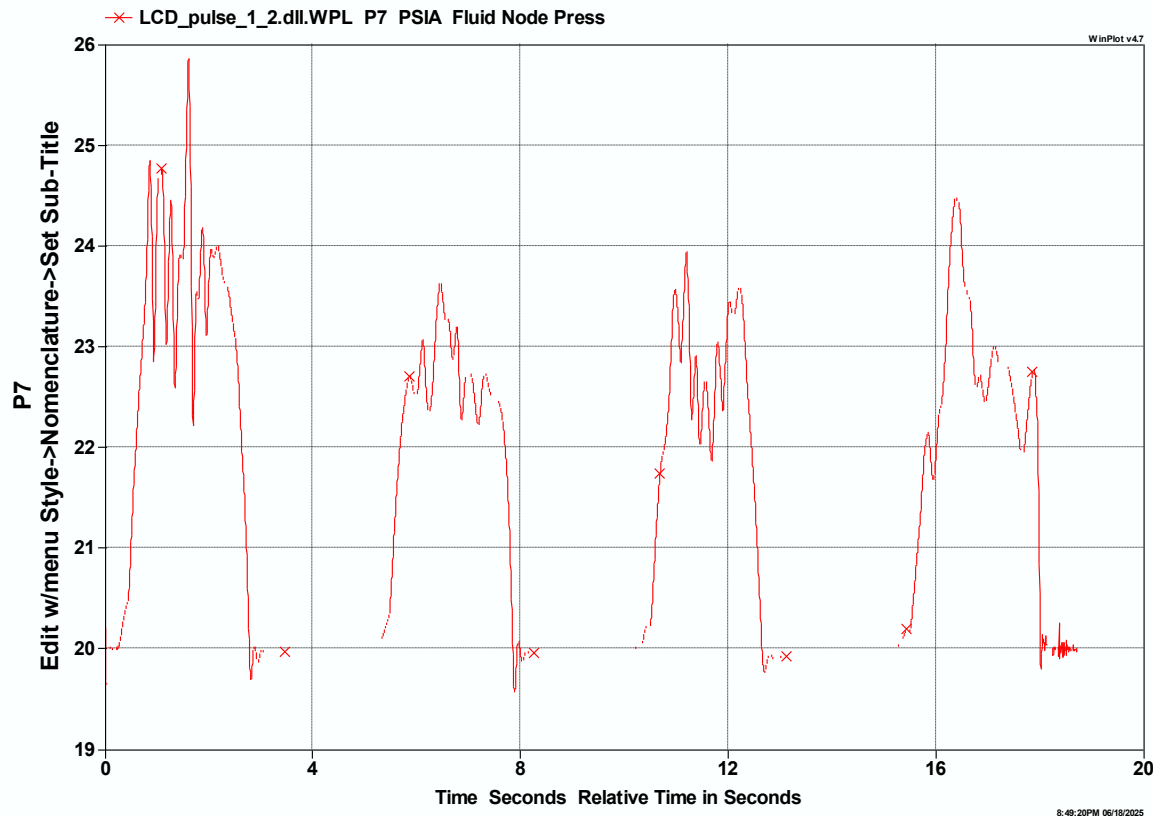


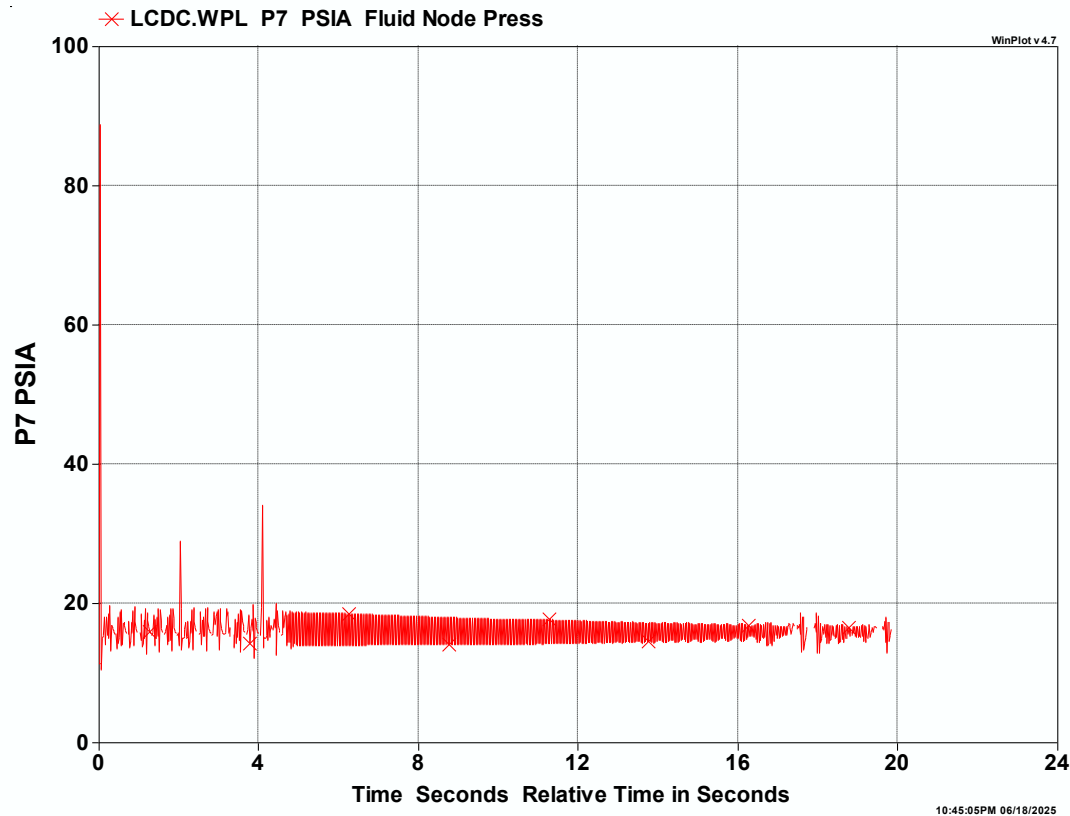
Mean Re ~68000 and Mean Re 41000

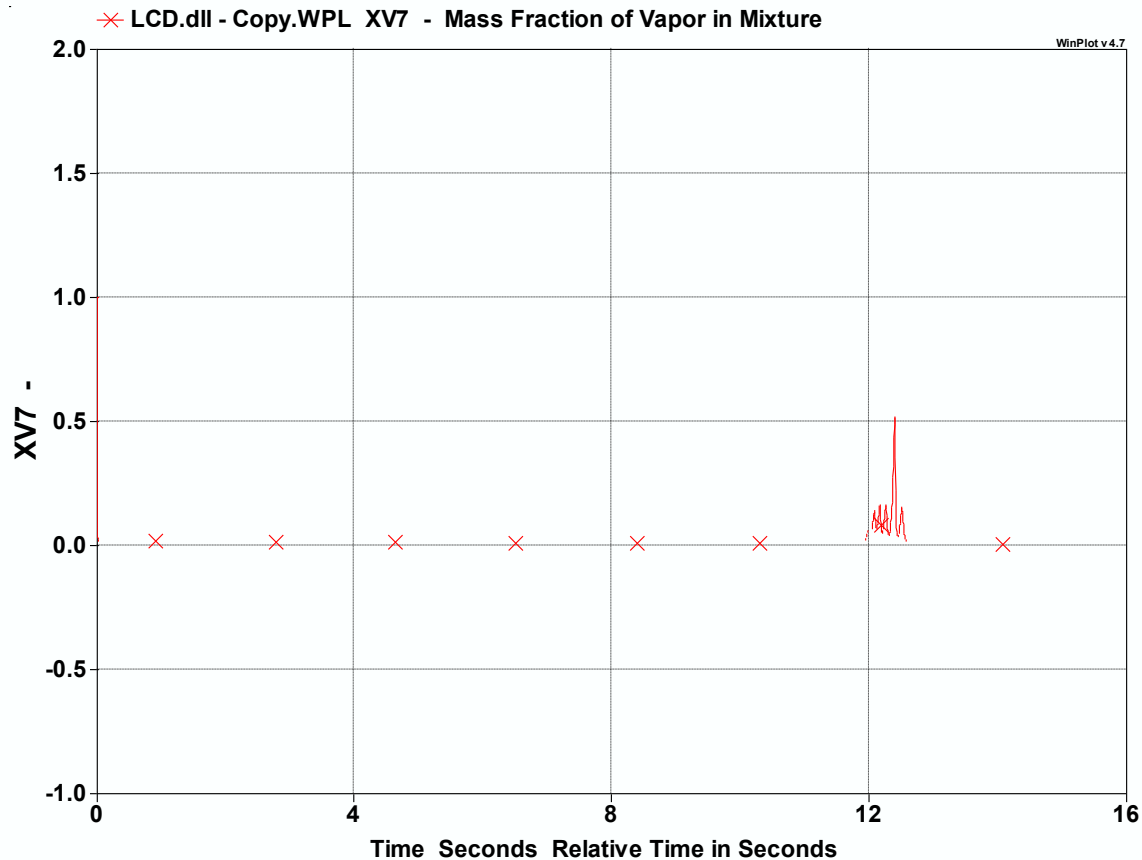


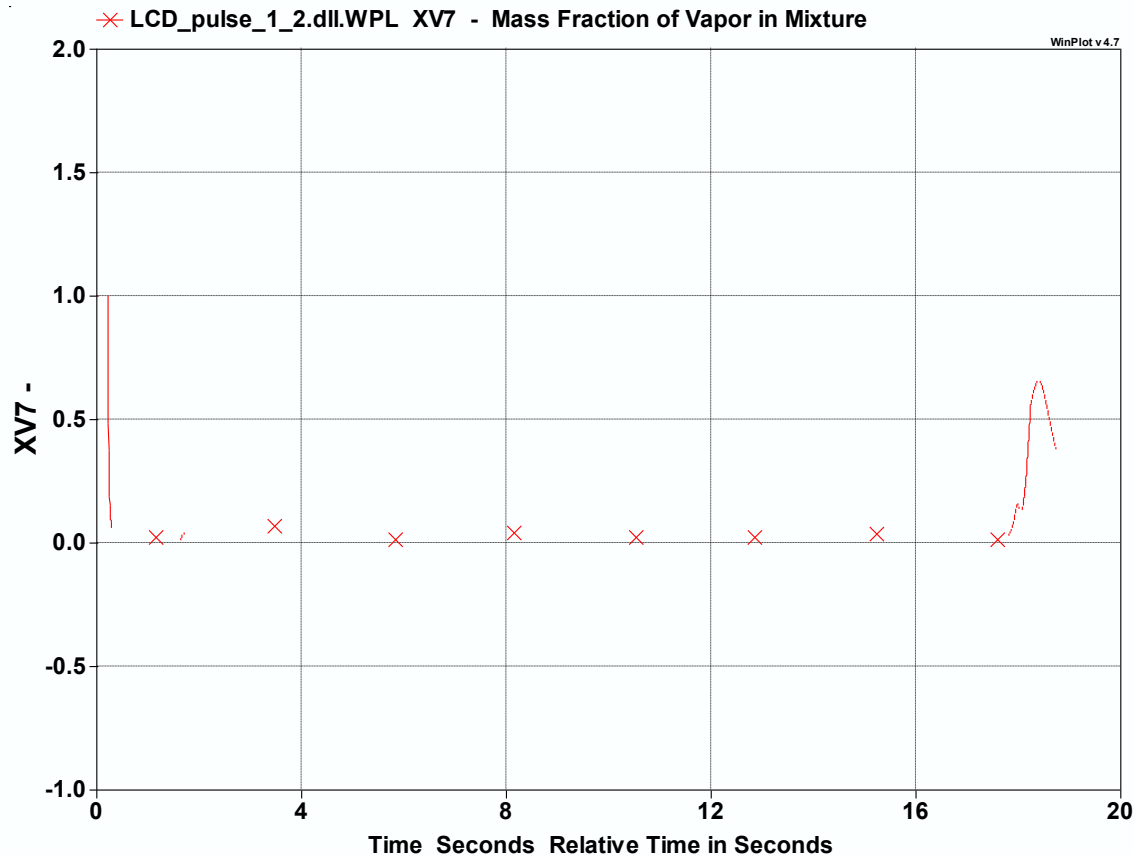


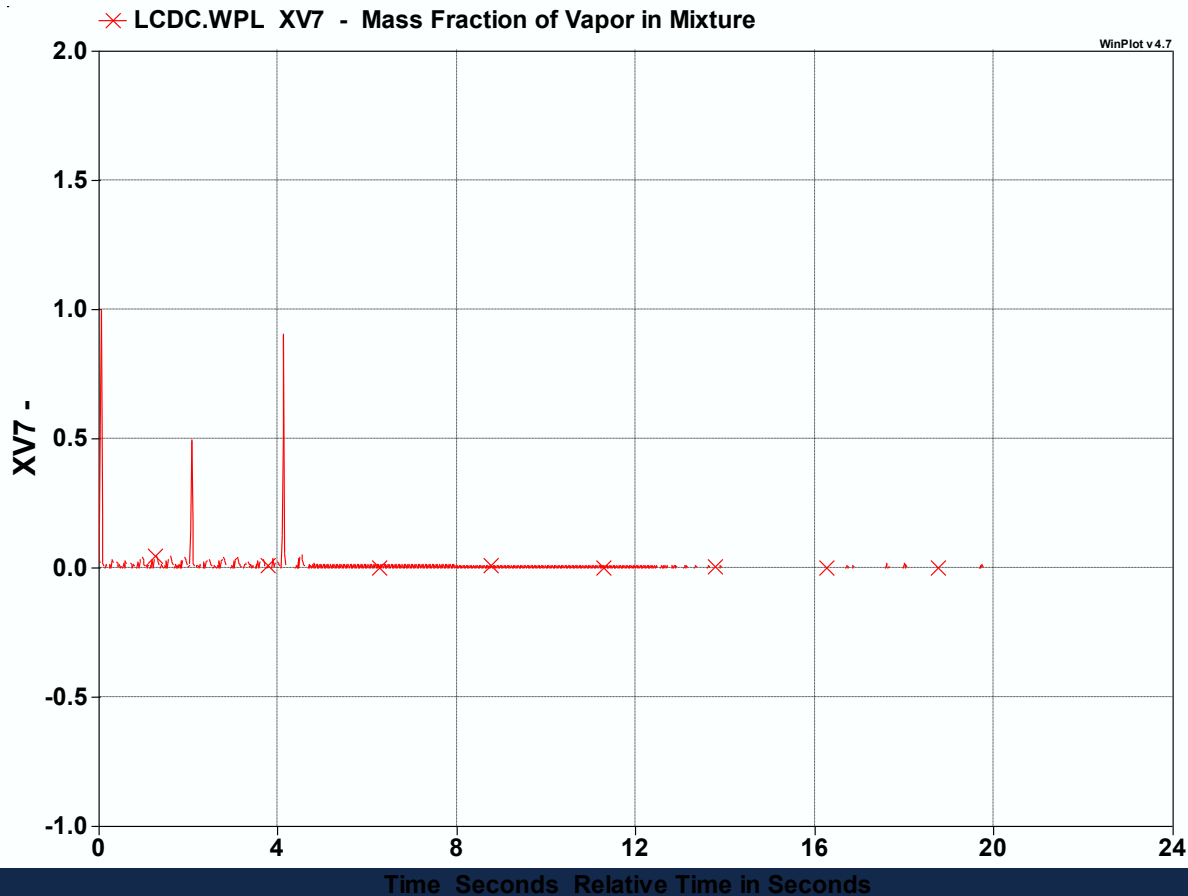


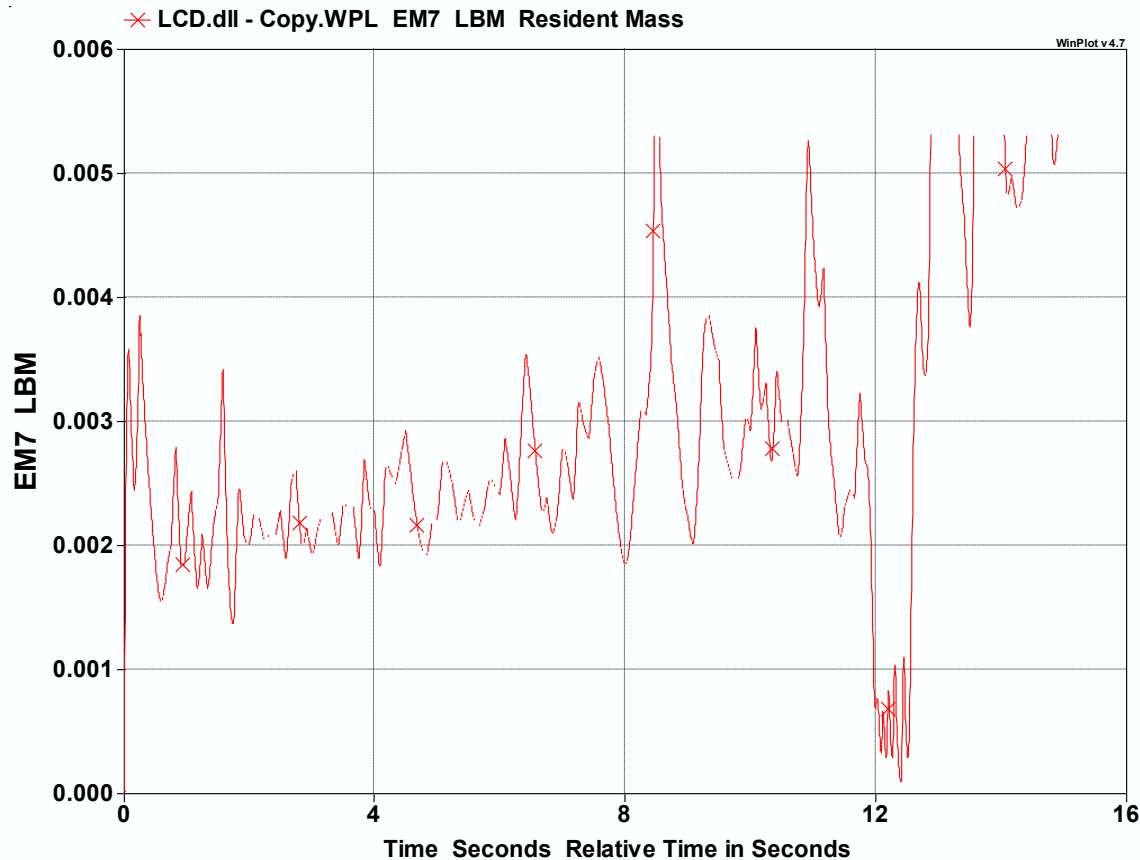


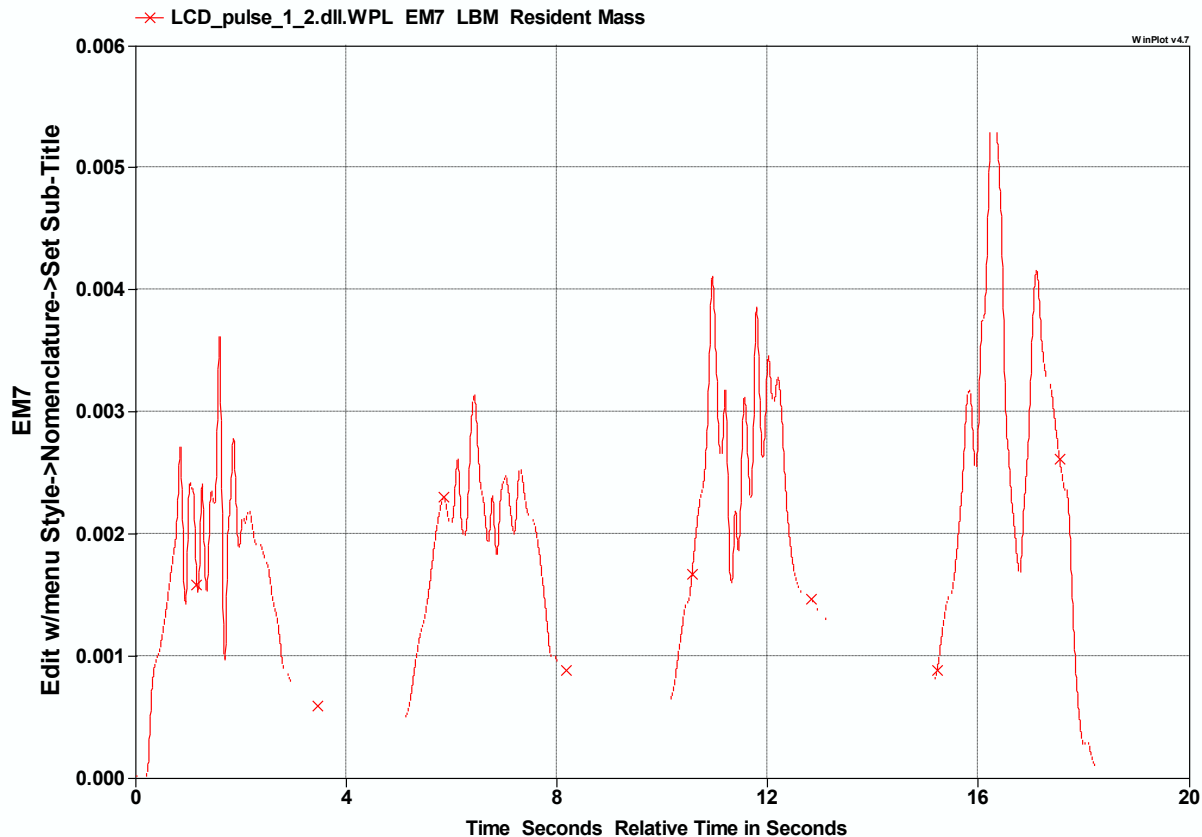


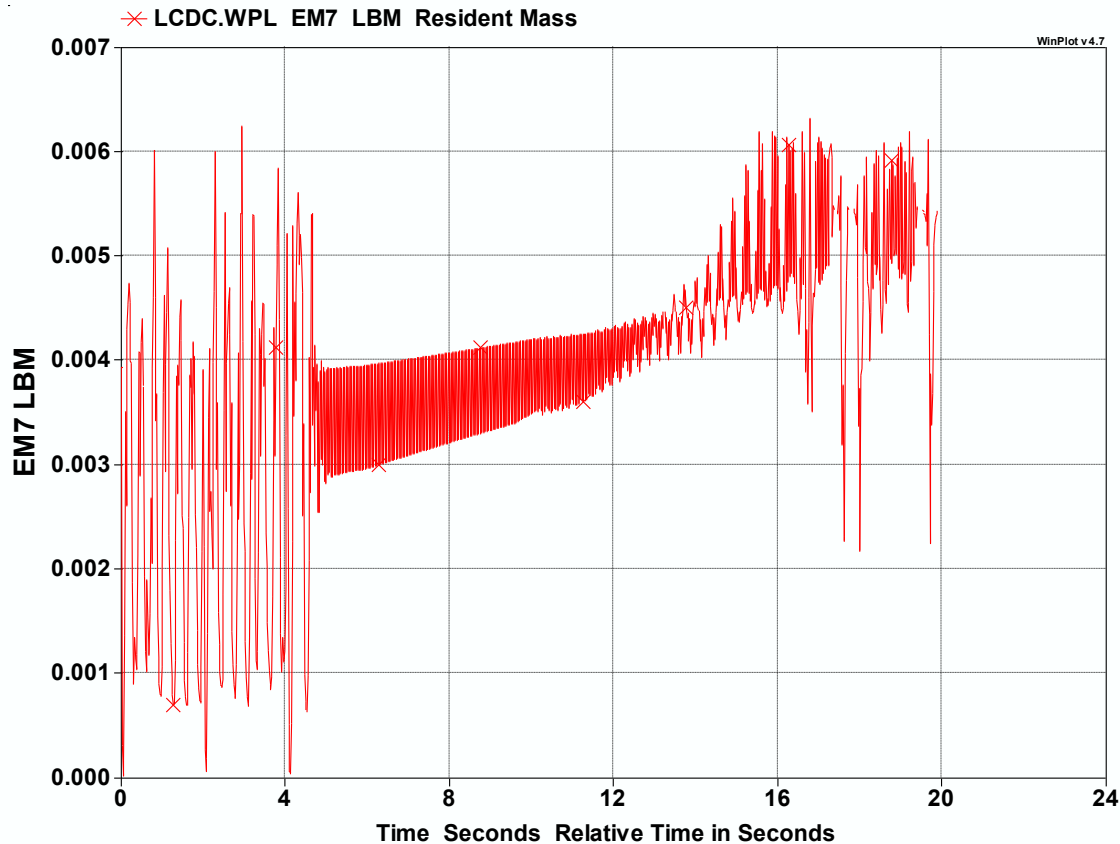


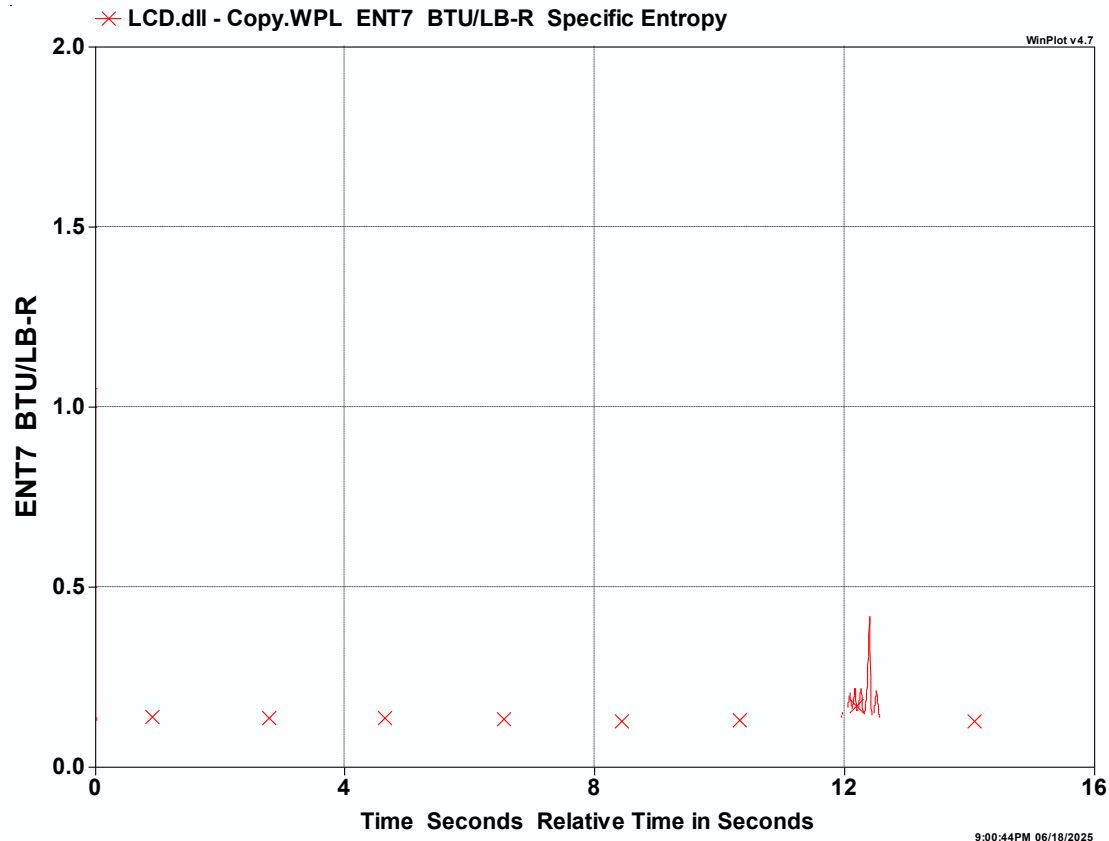


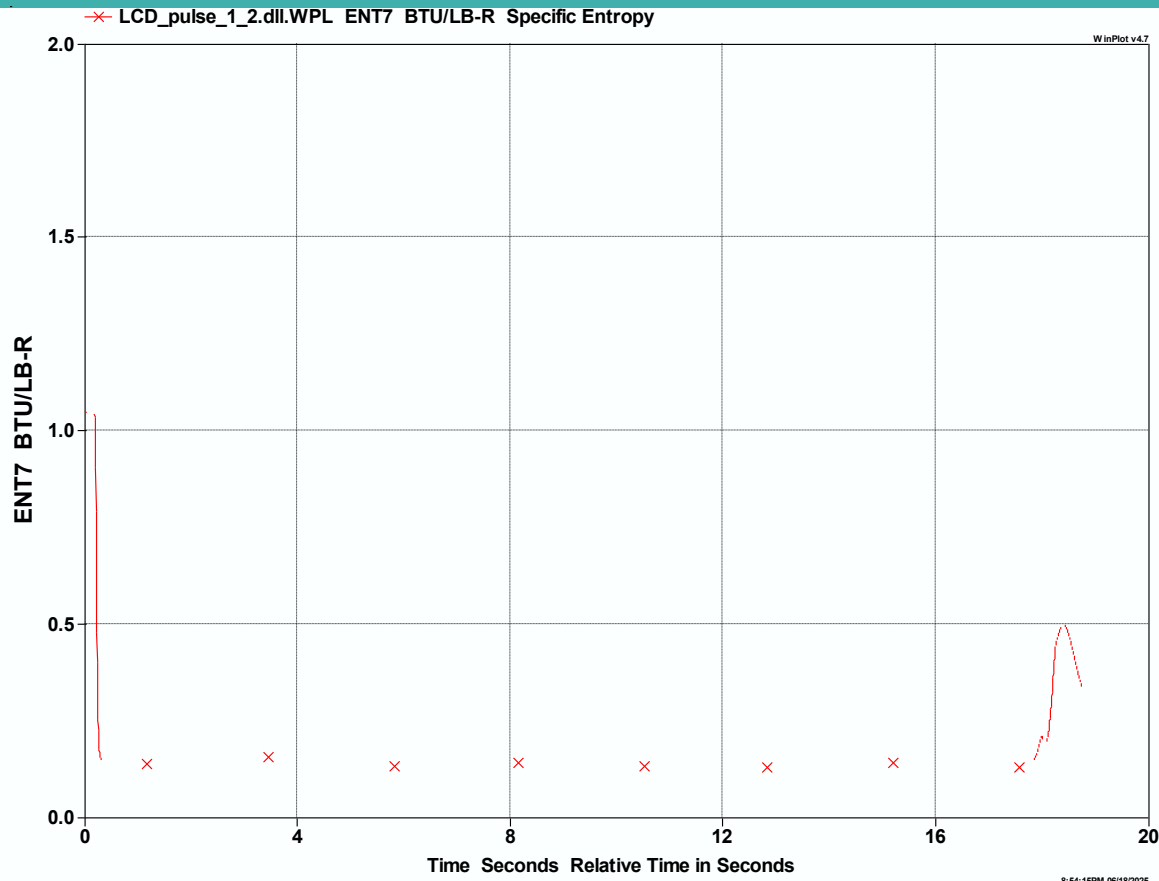


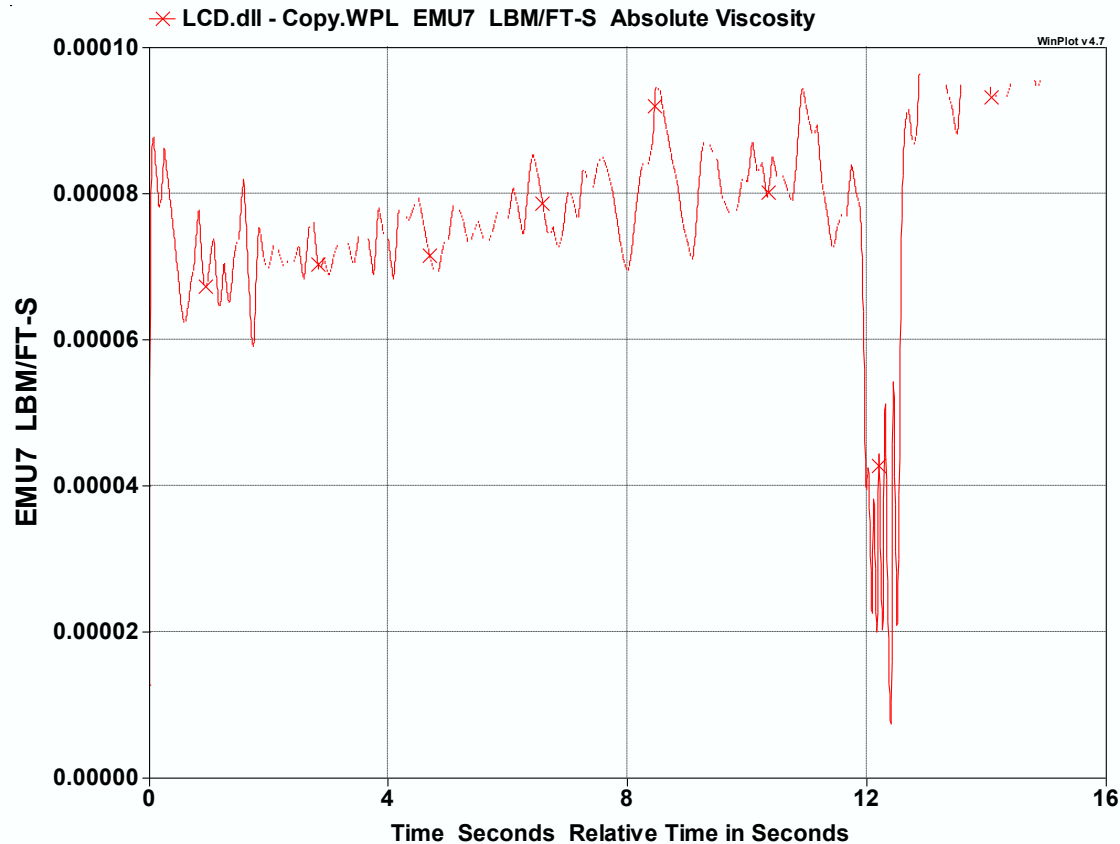


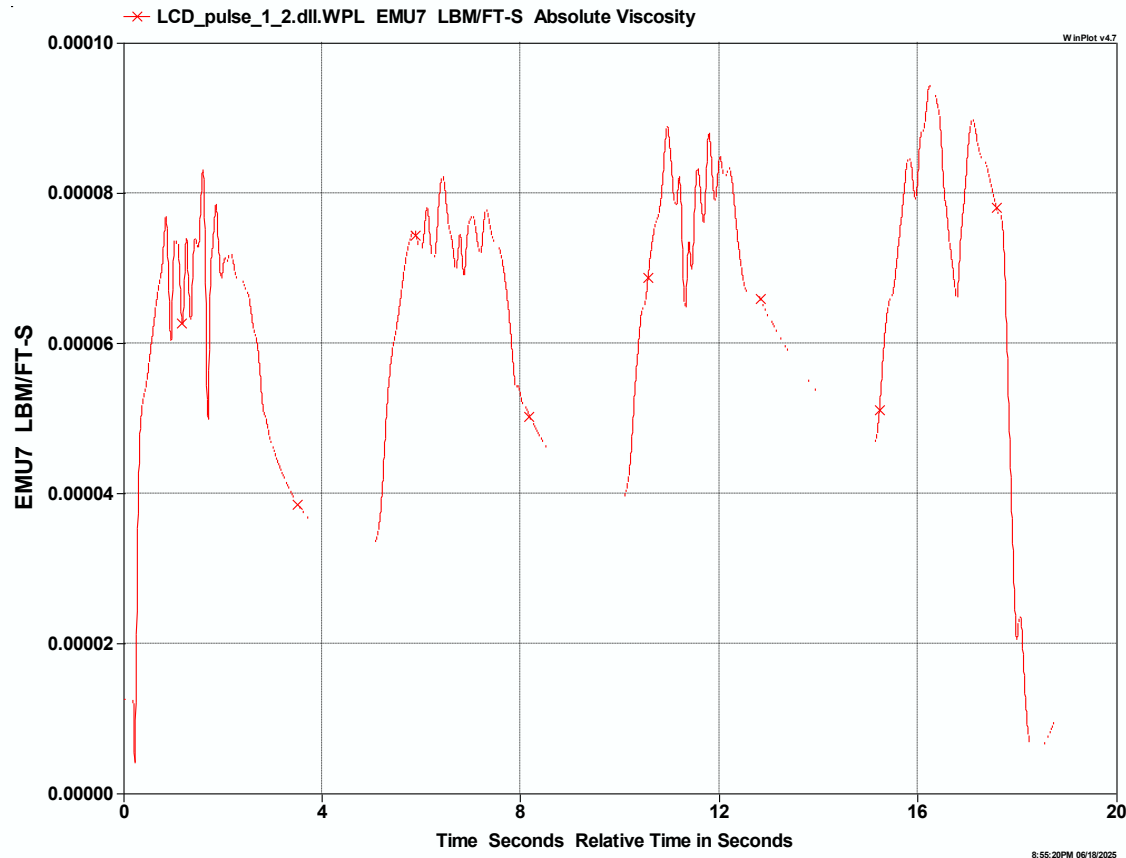


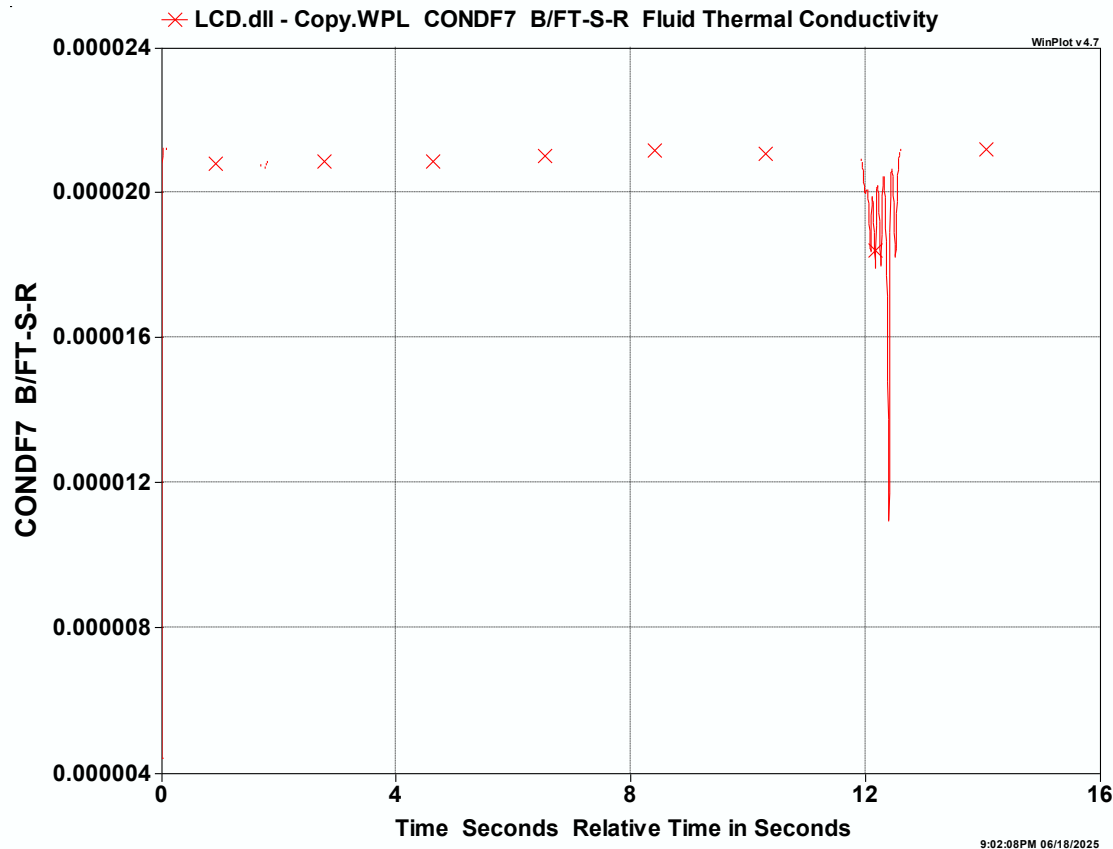


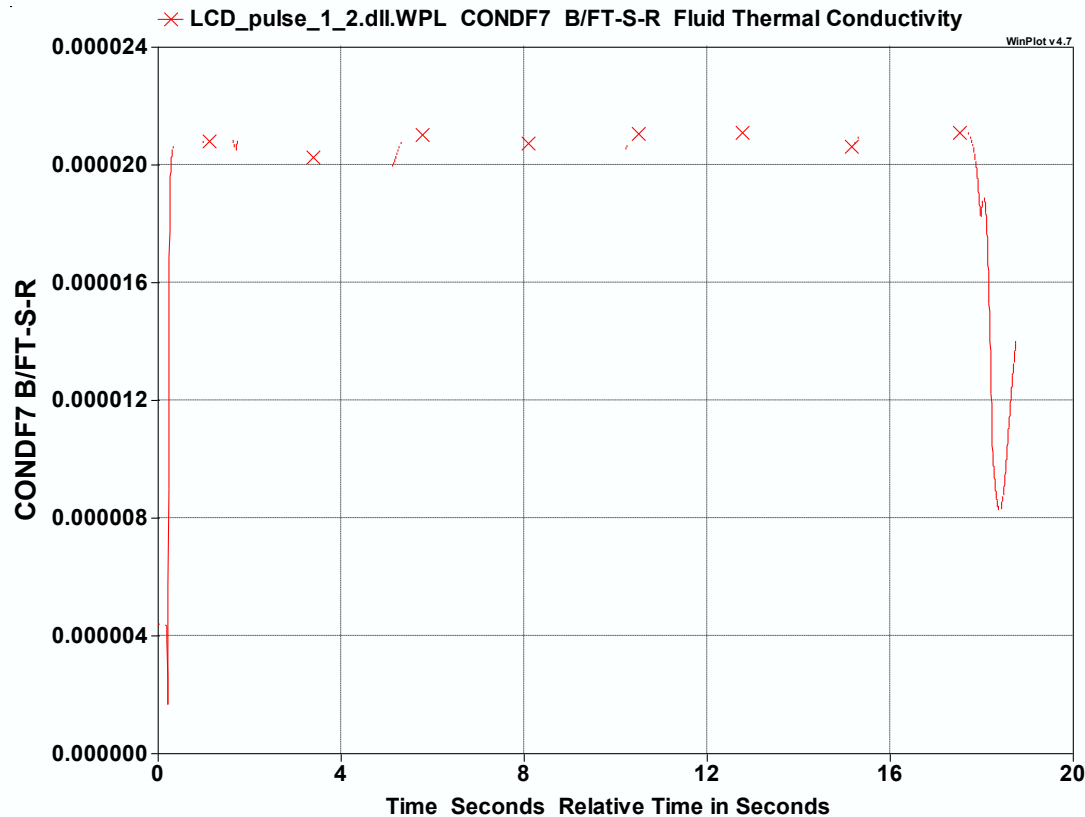


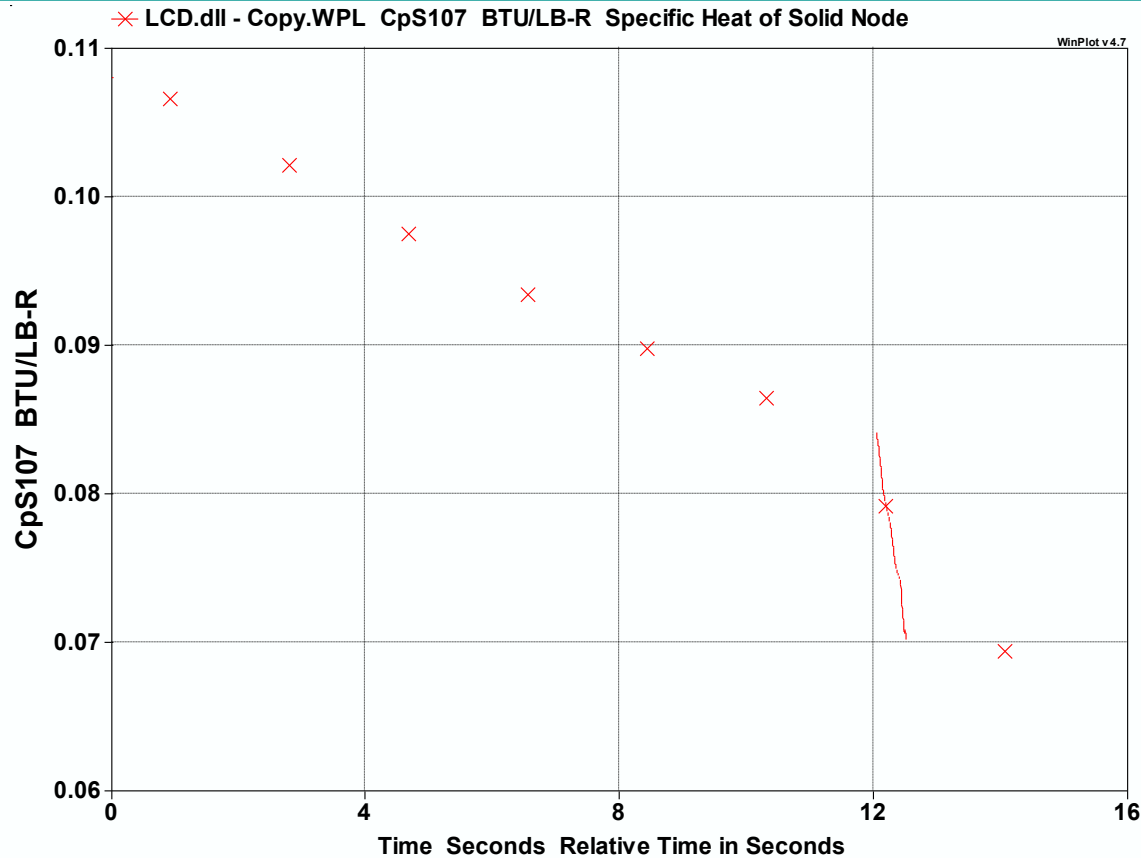


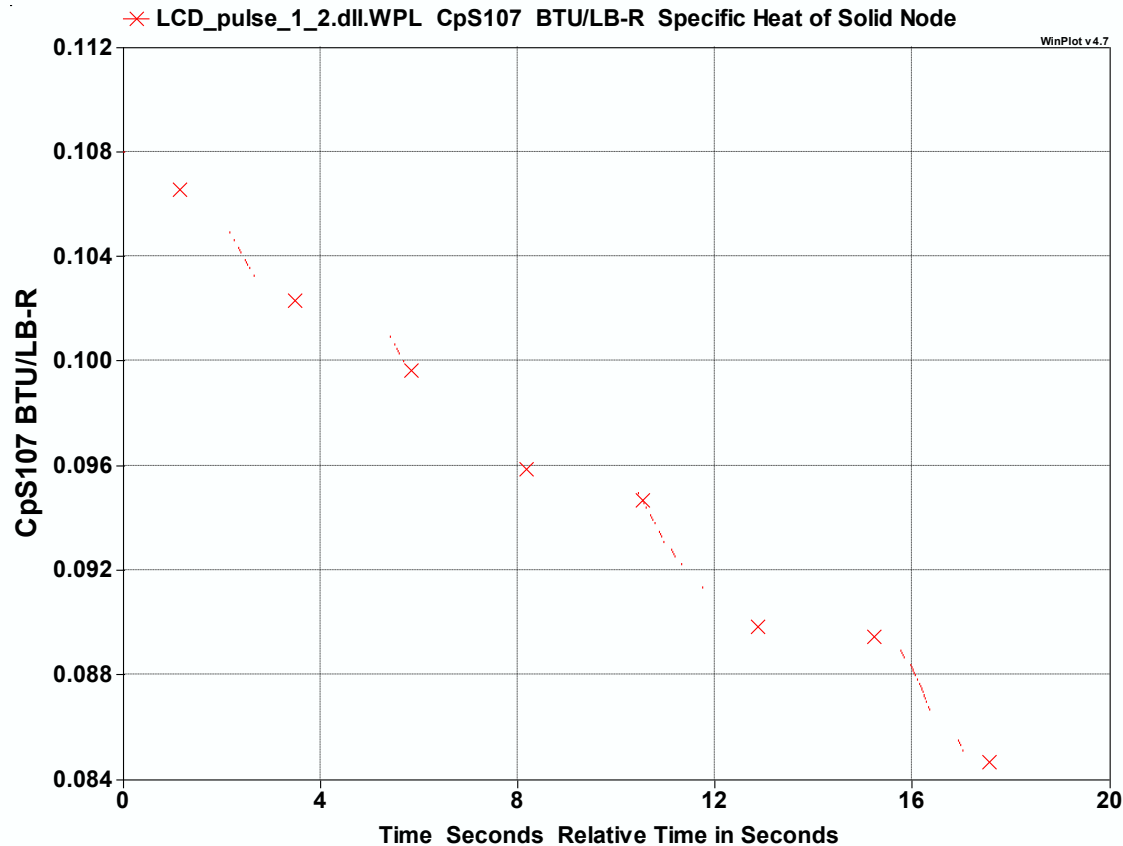


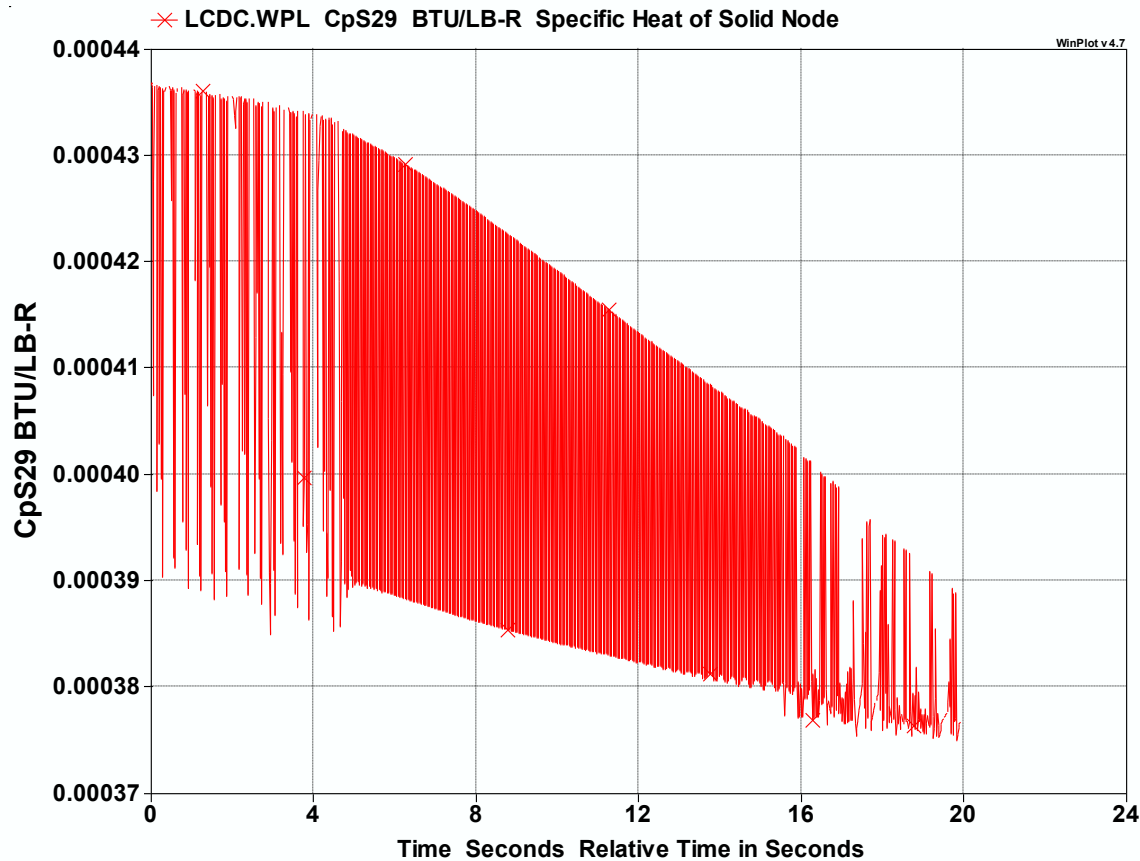


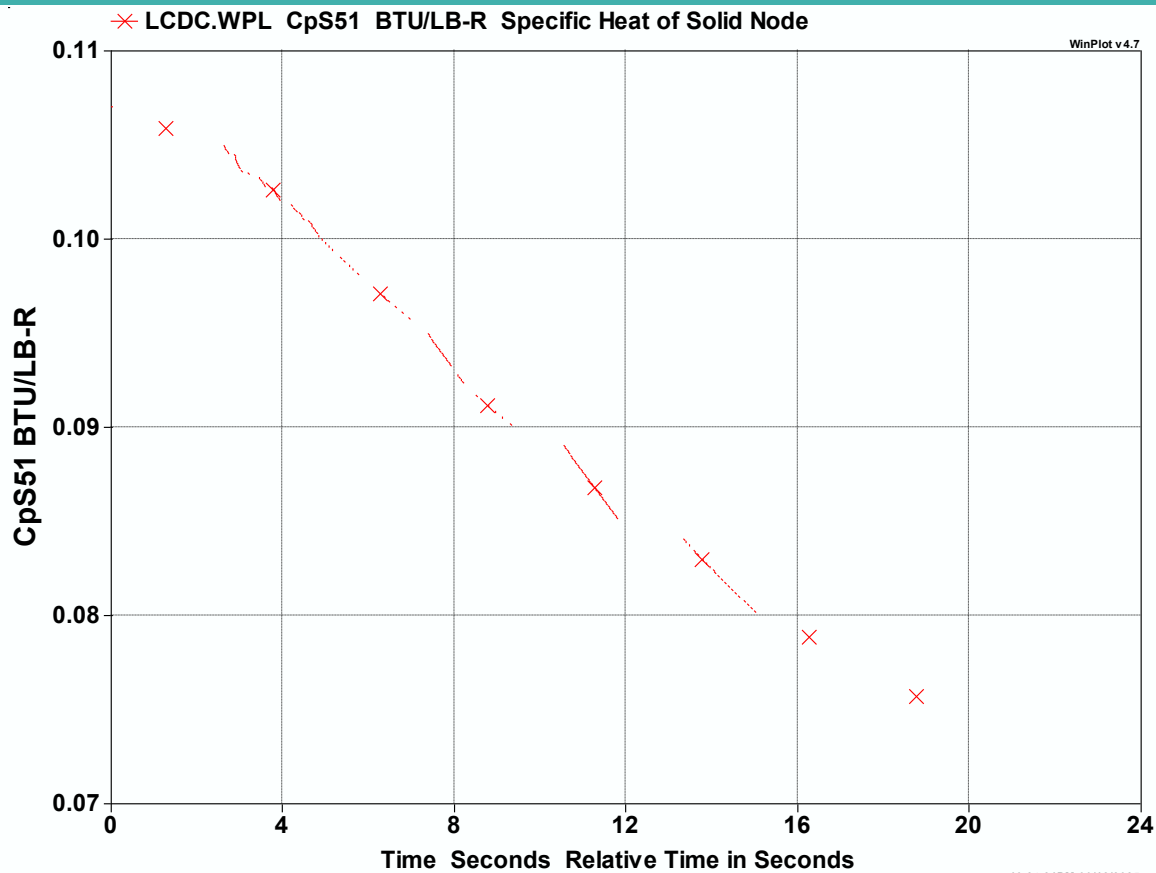


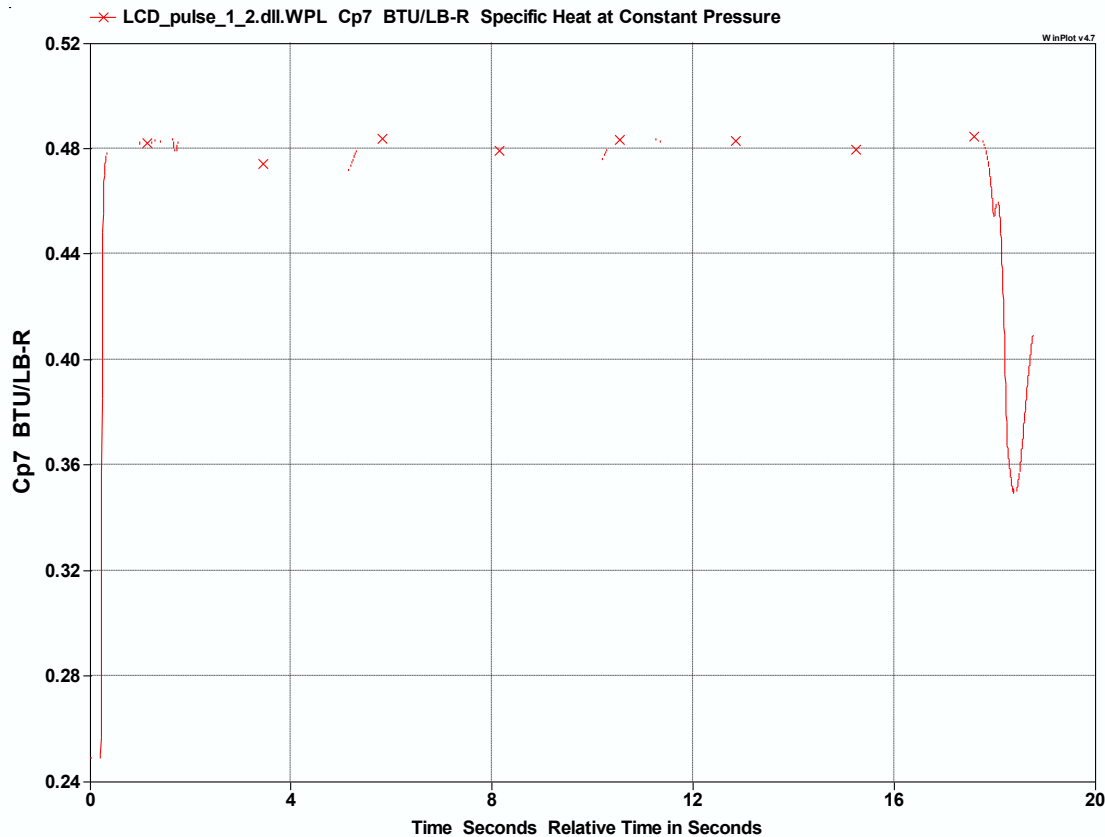


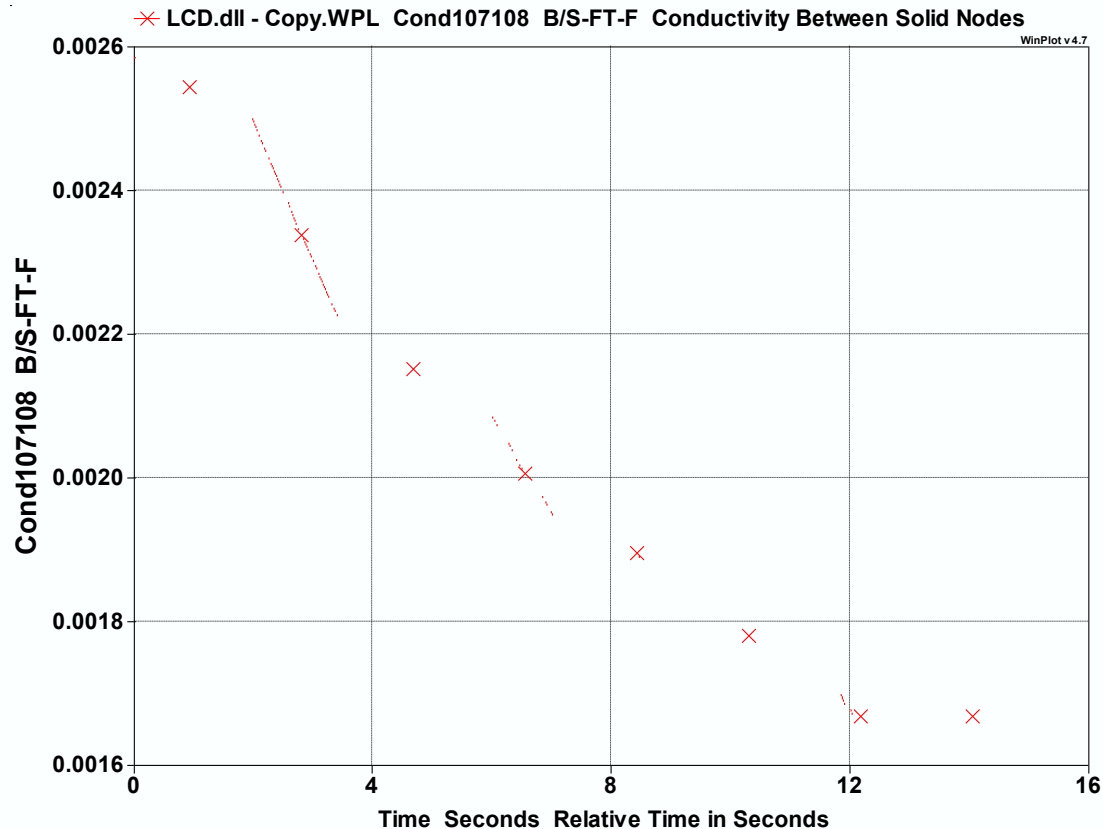


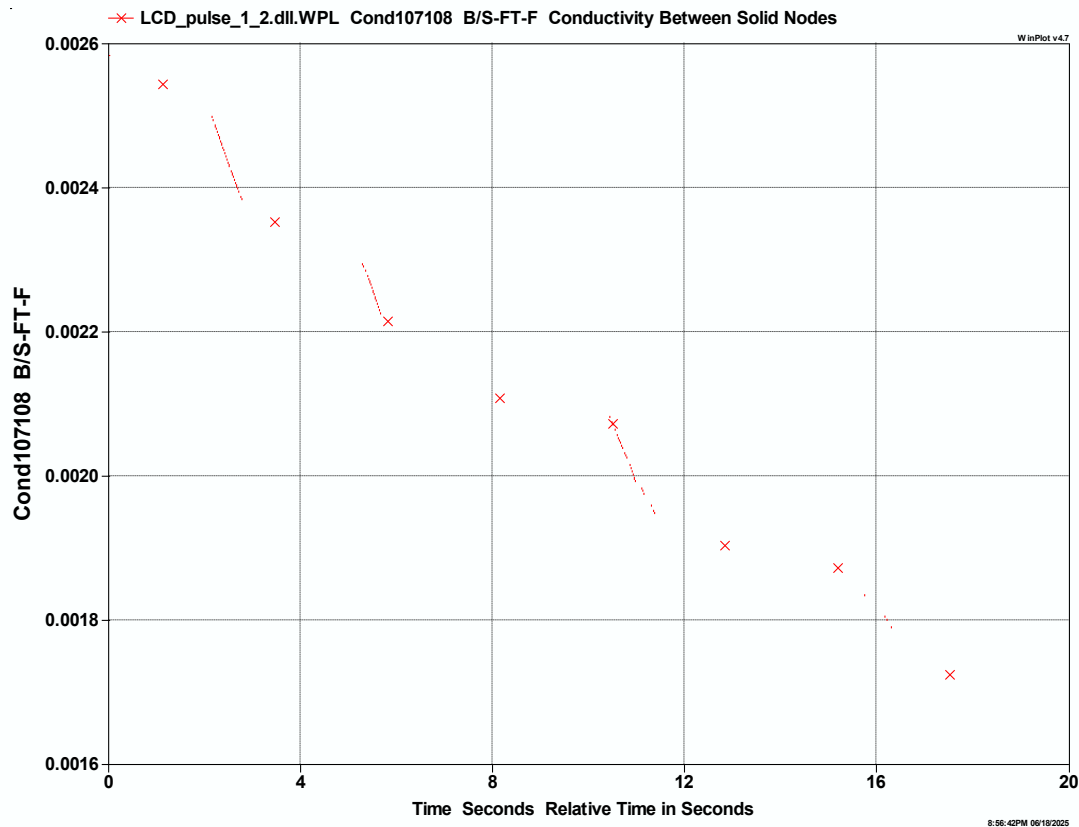


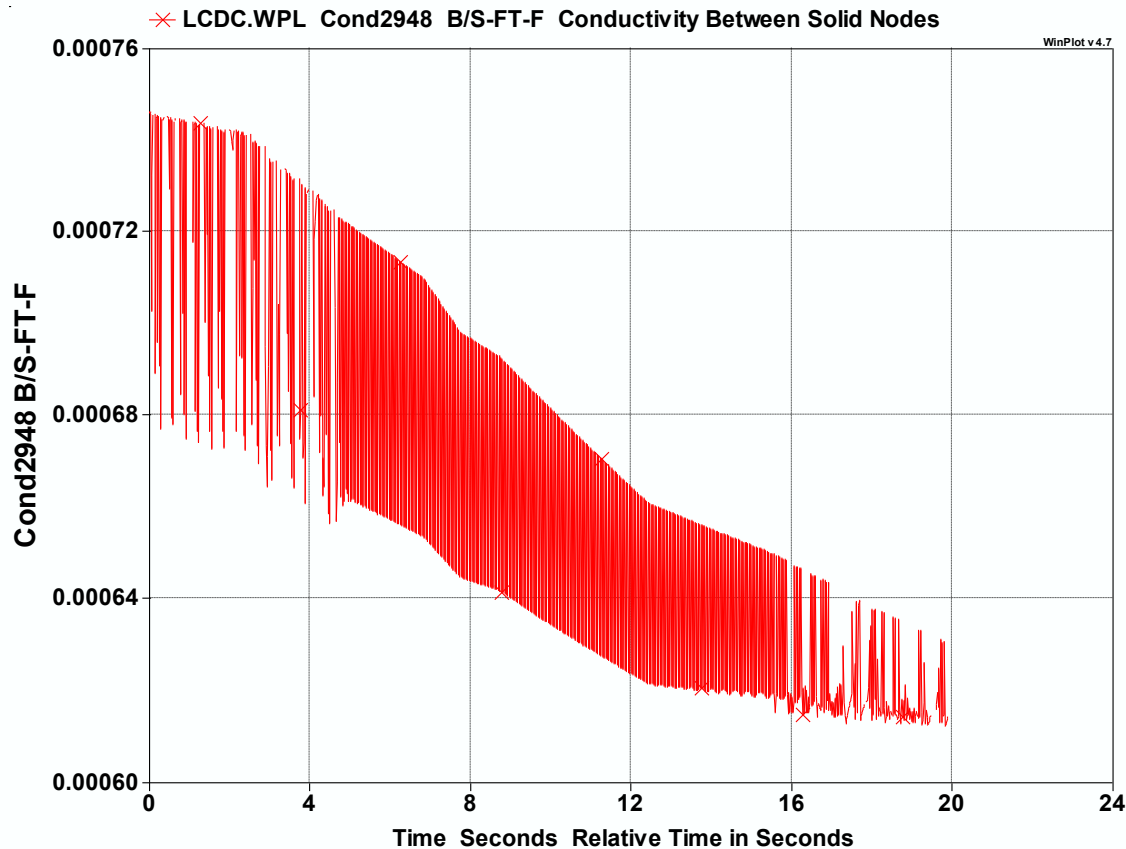


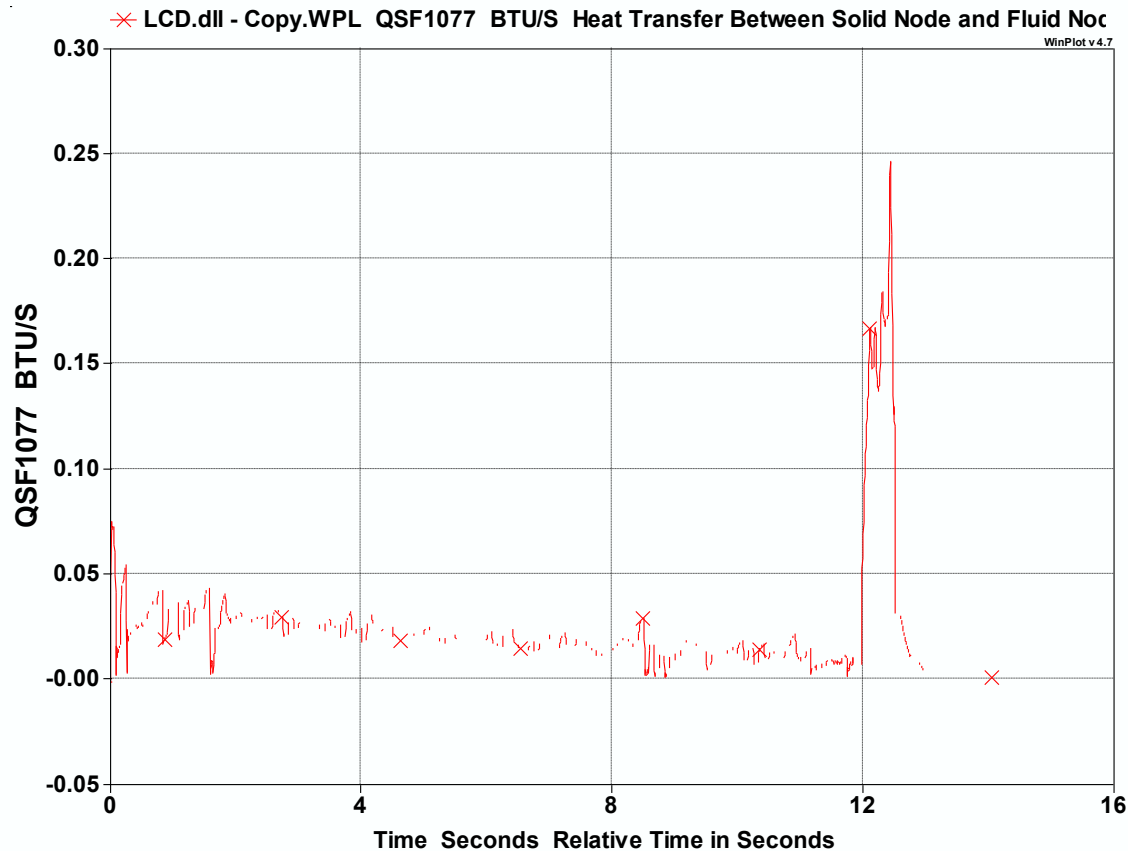


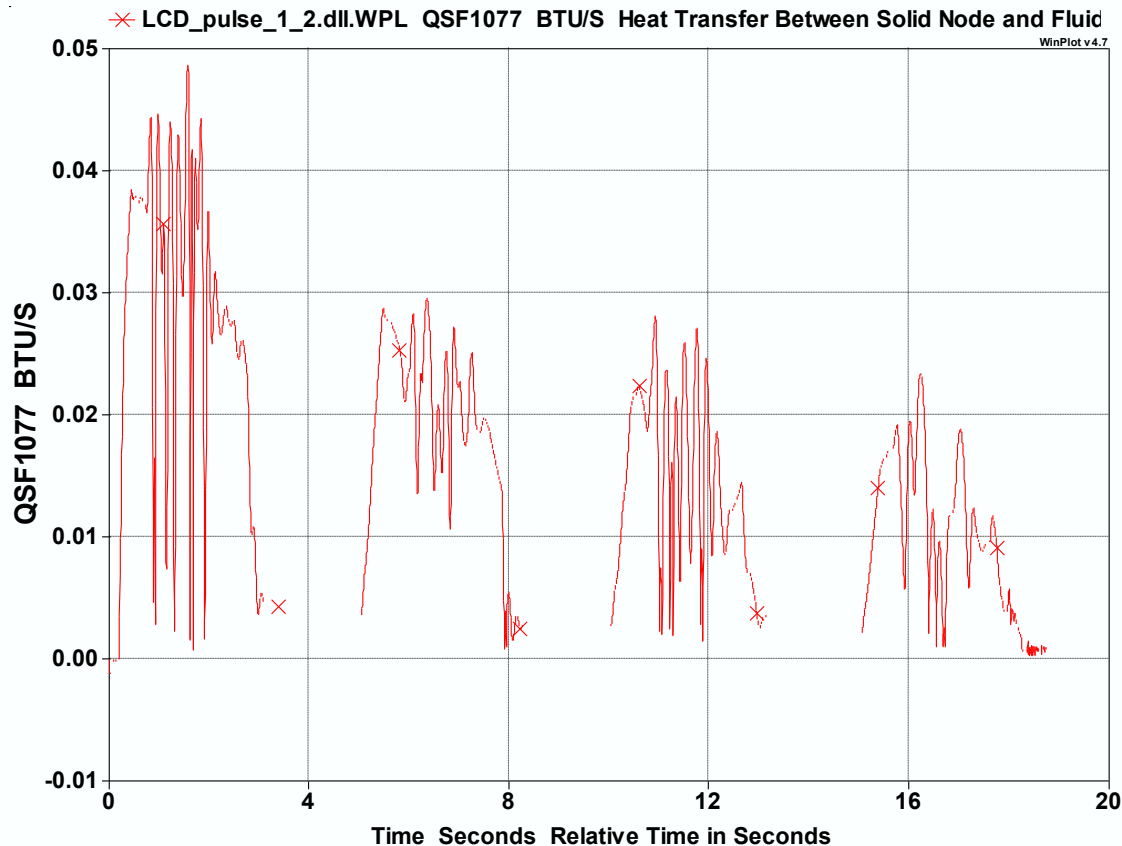


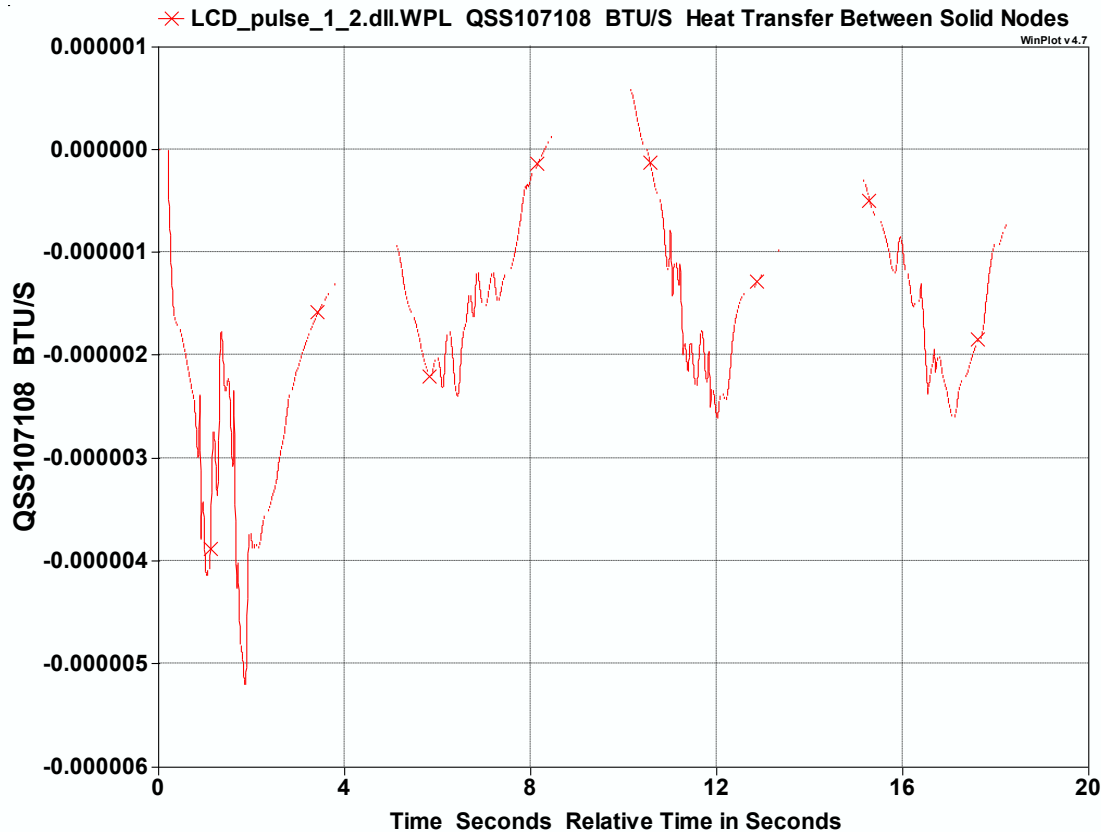


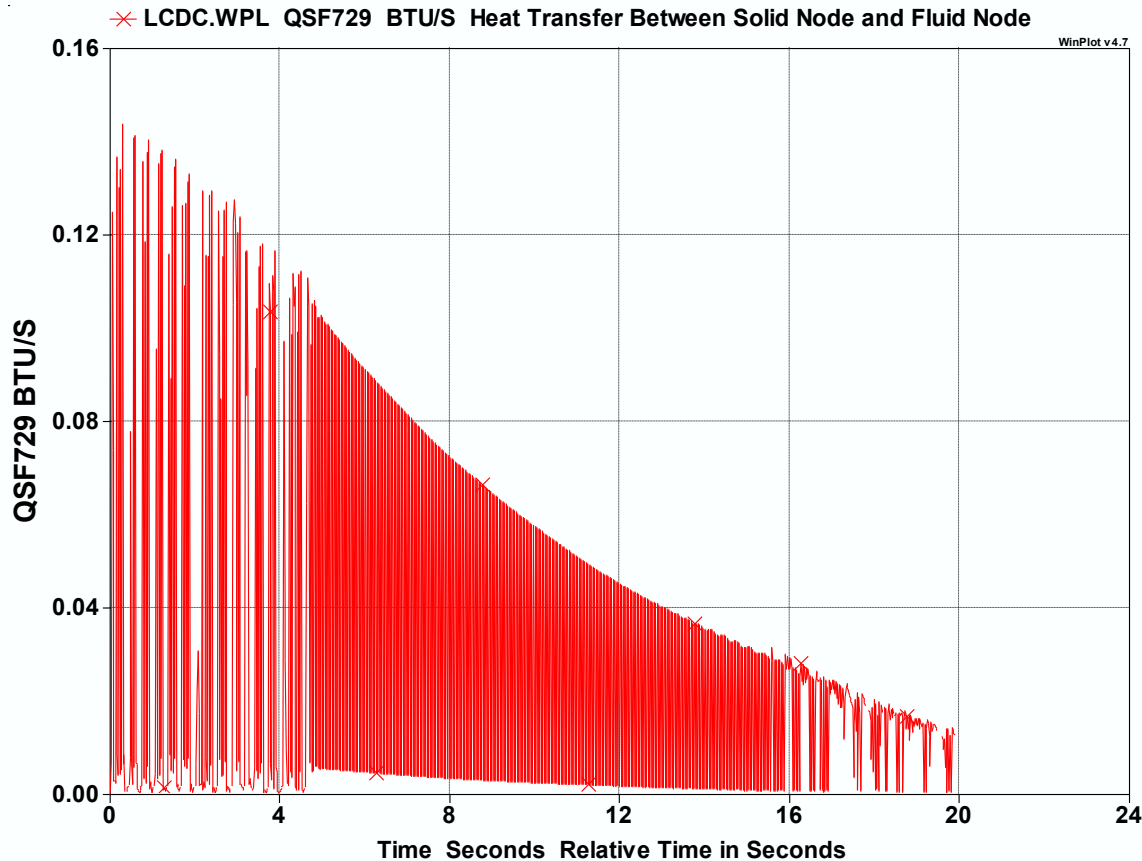


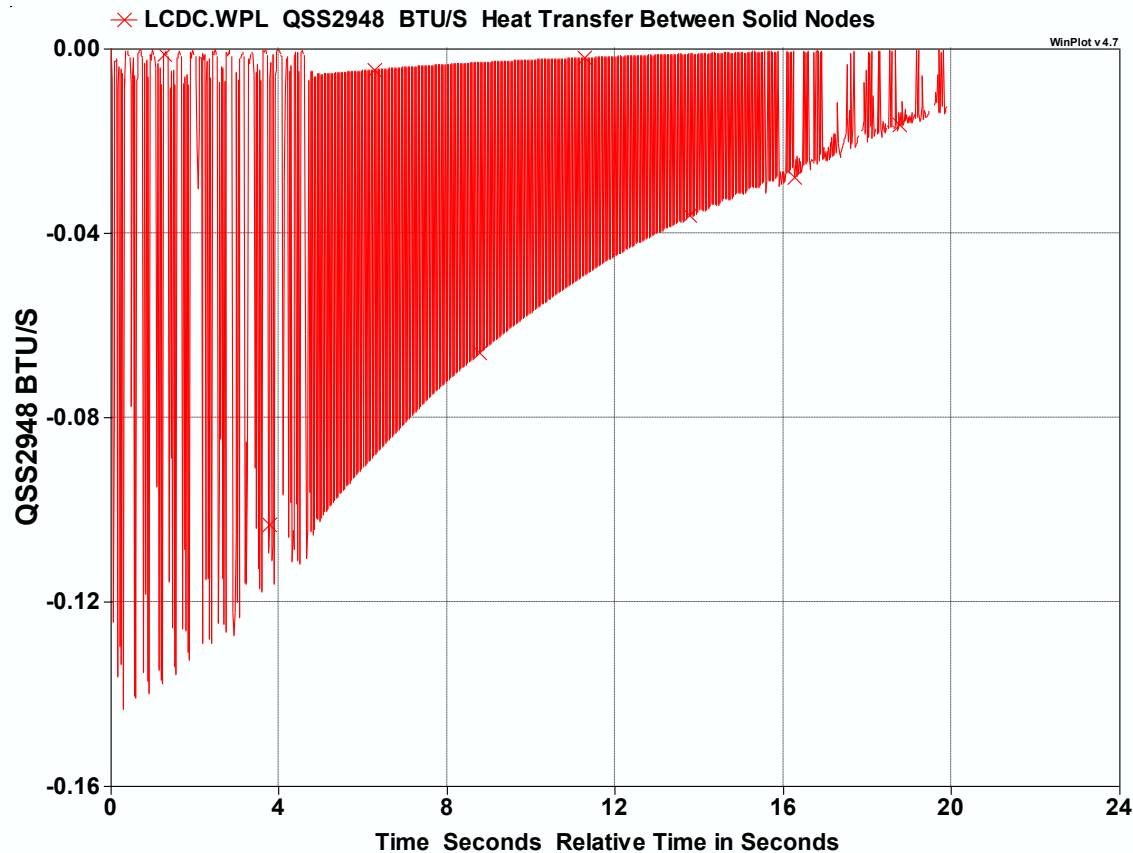


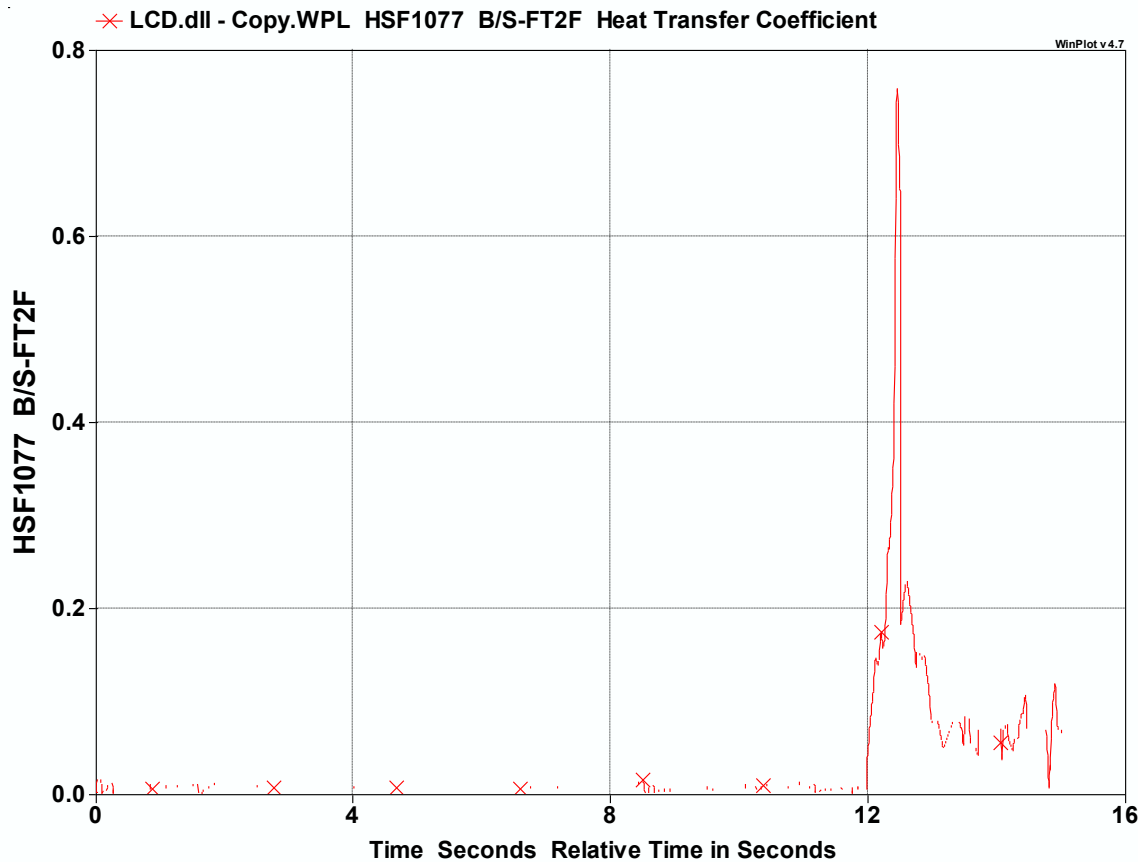


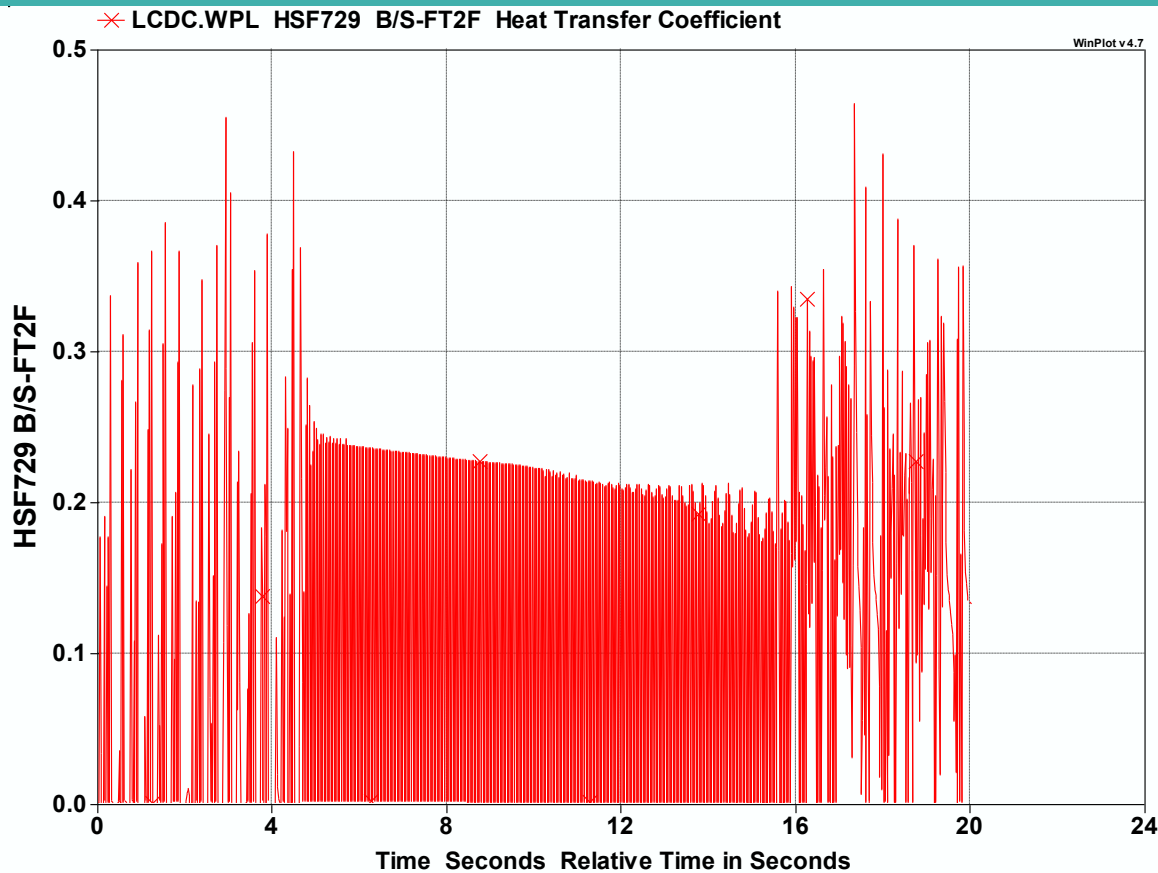


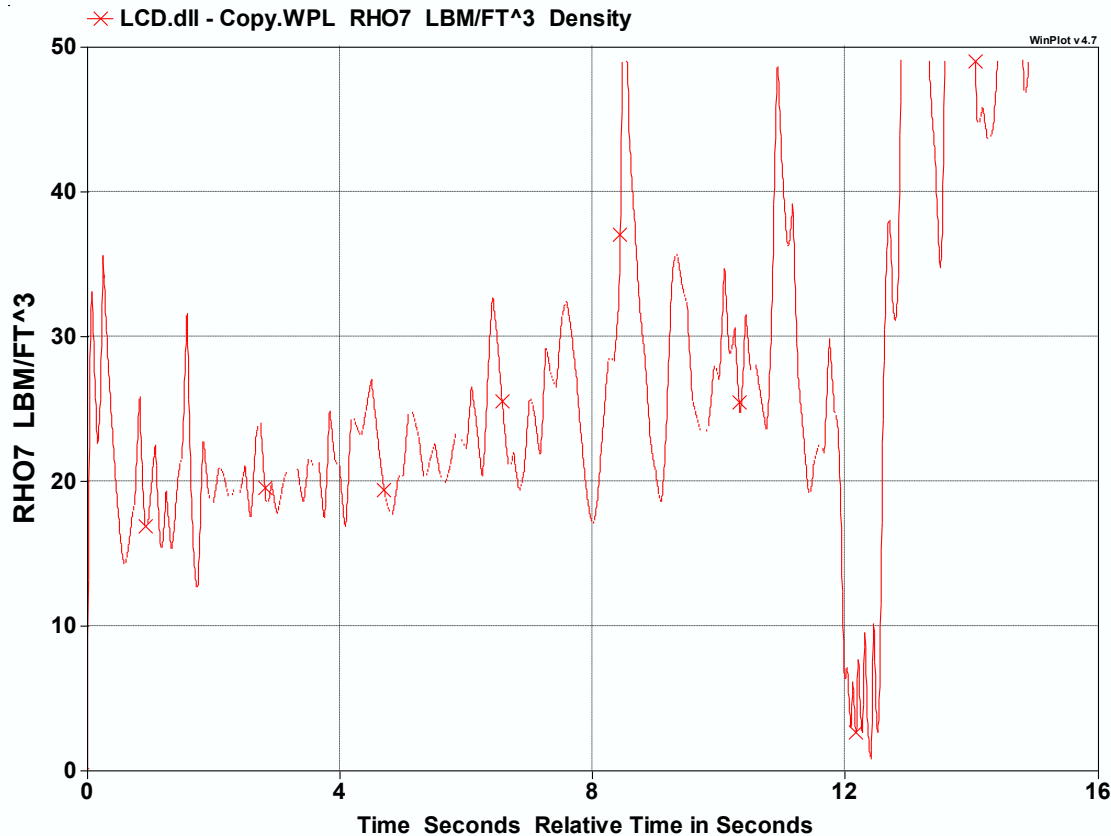












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