

# Mars Rover's Robotic Arm

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April 19th, 2022

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# **Executive Summary**

A light-weight strong four axis robotic manipulator for use on other celestial bodies was re-designed for mass manufacturability (approximately 100,000 units). The estimated unit price decreased by 28% or \$216.75 due to subassembly design changes. The practical assembly efficiency was increased by 16%. To achieve this water jet cutting metal plate was replaced with investment casting. A high volume, high capital cost process was used to manufacture complex components for a lower part count easier to assemble lower cost Aluminum arm. Self-locating features for easy assembly are now present throughout these redesigned cast parts. Features and sites for components was decreased by integrating parts into existing custom components. Parts that otherwise would have had to be purchased at an inflated price and assembled. Notably two custom FDM 3D printed pneumatically actuated flexible Thermoplastic Polyurethane (TPU) gripper components replaced an 11-component conventional mechanical gripper assembly. Finite element analysis and simulation was done in ABAQUS 2021 and a test plan for gripper actuation was made to see the accuracy and precision of bending. The concepting and redesigning of this assembly have been noted in this report.

# Introduction

Space robotics has been an up-and-coming field for the last few decades between the interest in space exploration and satellite data collection. Being that large corporations such as SpaceX and numerous start jobs have spoken on the potential of travel to Mars, there has been a potential market to open for having autonomous equipment on other planets. This project has been inspired by the Mars Rover Challenge, which is a yearly competition between universities for data collection and sample retrieval in the deserted area of Utah, USA. Out of the 99 teams that have applied to compete in the 2022 University Rover Challenge, only 36 teams have been accepted to travel out to Utah, USA to compete.

Our team is developing this manufacturing report to understand the fabrication complexities that will be included in developing a robotic arm for CU Rover's robotic assembly. The development of this report will allow the CU Rover team to understand the cost and measure of the manufacturing decisions that will be included for fabrication with hopes to compete in June of 2023. For course purposes, our team's economic analysis will make economic decisions that will test a market of sale for 100,000 assemblies sold nationwide. This assembly represents a practical robotic arm that our team could see for applications in hazardous environments for emergency responders and household uses for disabled communities. In refining this design, our group has taken a material analysis and DFA approach to studying this assembly.

# **Product Description**

Currently, there are other universities working toward developing Mars Rovers for this university competition. This year the University of Colorado Rover team is new to this campus and developing its first robotic arm assembly. The robotic arm shown below has four degrees of freedom at the base, elbow joint, wrist joint, and gripper to the arm. Most robotic arms in this competition have one gripper to complete the tasks that will be done on a spacecraft mission. Our team has developed a soft robotic gripper that is a modular subassembly to the rest of the arm. The ideation is that multiple gripper configurations could be used on this robotic arm for completing various tasks. The soft robotic actuator has been selected as the primary gripper in this report in an enthusiastic approach of having an original and novel design to the competition since soft robotics is a new and upcoming research study at CU Boulder.



Figure 1: Redesigned Robotic Arm Assembly

# Black Box Diagram

The black box model is a simple illustration of the fundamental signals of energy, commands, and material input and output for the device of interest, a soft gripper robotic arm. This insight helps our team understand the fundamentals of our device and gain perspective on overall functionality.



Figure 2: Black Box Diagram of the Mechanical Pneumatic Robotic Arm

# **Glass Box Diagram**

Displayed below is a glass box diagram that describes the physical acts of nature that occur between the mechanical system and the pneumatic system. The mechanical system receives motor controls and power to command the stepper motors to maneuver the robot. This results in displacement in the position of the linkage. The pneumatic system receives pneumatic commands from the regulator and actuator. This is what actuates the soft gripper fingers to grab and move components around the robot.



Figure 3: Glass Box Diagram of the Robotic Arm Mechanical and Pneumatic Assemblies

# Gantt Chart

To schedule and be mindful of our design time, our group developed a Gantt chart to list out tasking throughout the semester. This chart can view here:

TASK NAME	START DATE	TOTAL DAYS FROM START	END DATE	DURATION* (WORK DAYS)	DAYS COMPLETE*	DAYS REMAINING*	PERCENT COMPLETE
DFM of Mars Rover Arm							
Concept Idea for a DFM Project	3/15	0	3/16	2	2	0	100%
Research Standard Parts	3/17	2	3/18	2	2	0	100%
Categorize the assembly into sub assemblies	3/18	3	3/19	2	2	0	100%
Inspect Part Number and Interfaces	3/20	5	4/12	24	24	0	100%
Model Redesigned Assembly	3/21	6	4/13	24	24	0	100%
Develop Engineering Drawings for each part	4/7	23	4/14	8	8	0	100%
Go through DFA Analysis	4/12	28	4/19	8	8	0	100%
Manufacturing and Material Analysis	4/12	28	4/19	8	8	0	100%
Develop Patent Search	4/18	34	4/19	2	2	0	100%
Economic Analysis of Products	4/18	34	4/19	2	2	0	100%
Due Date of Final Report	4/19	35	4/19	1	0	1	

Figure 4: Spring 2022 Gantt Chart- DFM Robotic Arm

# Fishbone Diagram

The fishbone diagram decomposes the Rover Robotic arm into four major subassemblies connected to the main body. The robotic arm itself is shown at the head of the fish with a horizontal line connecting the four angles' lines. Each of these angled lines represents a subassembly with shorter horizontal lines denoting individual components within that subassembly. The parts in black will be purchased off-shelf from various vendors. The parts indicated in red are custom investment-casted and the one in purple is 3D printed.



Figure 5: Fishbone Diagram of the Robotic Arm Assembly

# Patent Search

While an initial design was created for the rover robotic arm, a patent search needed to be performed for the redesign. The purpose of this search was to accomplish two things. First, by looking at other ideas available in patents, it became possible to get more ideas on potential design iterations to the initial design to make it more robust, compliant, versatile and user friendly. Additionally, it was important to perform a patent search to understand what products and ideas already exist to make sure that no patent infringement occurs.

(1) The first patent we found was US 11,045,959 B2 published on Jun 29, 2021, titled, "End of Arm Tools for Soft Robotic Systems" as shown in Fig6.



Figure 6: US 11,045,959 B2

In this patent, a soft robotic grasping system for grasping an article includes a gripper hub and a finger actuator that applies a first pressure change. A plurality of soft robotic fingers each include an elastomeric outer surface surrounding an internal void, and each is configured to curl in a first degree of freedom when the finger actuator applies the pressure change within the internal voids. The finger actuator applies the pressure change to the interior of the hub, and the pressure change is transmitted via the linkage fluid seals and fluid passage tubes to the soft robotic fingers. Additionally, the system includes a suction actuator that applies a second pressure change, and a suction cup configured to apply a suction force according to the second pressure change. This patent gave us the idea of using a soft gripper instead of stepper motors and the traditional end effectors made of Aluminum. This will reduce part count as well as overall weight and increase the efficiency of managing various payloads. The basic idea behind this is that soft pneumatic actuators include a hollow interior that can be filled with a fluid such as air, water, or saline to pressurize, inflate and/or actuate the actuator.

Upon actuation, the shape or profile of the actuator changes. In the case of an accordionstyle actuator, actuation may cause the actuator to curve or straighten into a predetermined target shape. Interestingly, the actuator may be actuated using a vacuum to remove inflation fluid from the actuator and thereby change the degree to which the actuator bends, twists and/or extends. This makes the grasping more robust, inherently compliant, and inexpensive as this actuator has high behavioral diversity, large degrees of freedom, continuum topology and low weight.



Figure 7: Pneumatic Actuation

The second patent we found was US #4,806,066 titled "Robotic Arm" which includes a robotic arm and control system comprising a multi-axis open loop system of coupled structural members, wherein each structural member is pivotally coupled to one another to form several joints, wherein position calibration is provided by way of position sensors disposed at each joint, and controls for manipulating each joint in a predetermined manner. Here, each of the structural members are controlled by one or more separate motors. The motor is coupled to the structural member by way of a cable/pulley drive train. This provides position calibration of the various structural members with respect to one another by providing drive signals to each of the motor/cable/pulley drive arrangements in response to the output states of the position sensors.



Figure 8: US #4,806,066

We have incorporated a similar motor and pulley drive system that drive all the links of the wrist, shoulder, and arm of the robot. This arrangement provides an apparatus and method for securing and routing the various drive cables to the pulley structures so that a more positive coupling between the motors and the structural members can be obtained.

# Hand Sketches of Original Design and Design Changes

#### General Concept of Robotic Arm

The team initially started with the concept of implementing a simple, but functional, robotic arm. Below is a sketch from the ideation process which started with visualizing the pulley-belt system for the proximal bar linkage. In the beginning, our team set out to try to make the arm as symmetrical as possible, limiting the number of unique parts.



Figure 9: Robotic Arm Concept Sketch

### System Redesign Sketch- Assigning Subassemblies

After conceptualizing the robotic arm, the original CAD design of the robot is presented below. The robot can be broken down into three segments: the wrist, elbow, and shoulder. The initial design had a large plate and two large pillow blocks. Initially, this base consisted of a lot of material that was not used in the most efficient way. One of the first redesign tasks was to reduce the amount of unused material and parts. The initial CAD was made of four separate linkage bars that connected the three segments together. Although this design is lightweight, the team aimed to reduce the number of parts and provide stability and support for the mechanical pulleys. The final major redesign included changing the gripper subassembly. The gripper initially presented the greatest number of unique parts throughout the entire assembly. The finger initially required three planar gears to mechanically extend and flex the fingers. Using our team's background in advanced engineering robotics, the goal was to implement a simpler mechanism for finger actuation.



### Base Plate Redesign Sketch

The first sketch for the base plate included creating a large bracket shape with holes for the linkage arms. The team explored a variety of material and manufacturing methods including using aluminum sheet metal or CNC machining. With each of these methods, there are limitations to how small or large the dimensions may be.



Figure 11: Base Plate Redesign Sketch

Motor Mounting Fixture Redesign Sketch

The stepper motors were initially not well constrained on the assembly. The task of the final design was to design a sturdy robotic arm that could mechanically maneuver. In the redesign, mounting fixtures or creating a clamp shape was explored for securing the motor on the shaft.

Mounting Fixtures for Steppers >× OUSIN

Figure 12: Motor Mounting Fixture Redesign Sketch

### Bar Linkage Redesign Sketch

The bar linkage original design consisted of four identical parts. Although these parts are going to be made of lightweight aluminum, we attempted to reduce the bar linkage to two parts with additional hardware to allow the same degree of freedom. Below is a sketch of the team's design ideas before settling on the bottom right sketch that is presented in the final.



Figure 13: Bar Linkage Redesign Sketch

# DFA Analysis and Comparison

### **DFA Overview Summary**

The Design for Assembly (DFA) Analysis matrix tool was used to compare the original to the redesign of the robotic arm. This process methodically reveals opportunities to minimize the number of extraneous or unnecessary parts, standardizing when possible, and simplifying the assembly for the manufacturer. The DFA analysis proposed several problematic areas which the team focused on addressing in the revised robotic arm design. A summary table of the the key metrics and change, ( $\Delta$ ), is presented below. These metrics were then further analyzed in more detail regarding the reasoning for the change.

DFA Metrics	Original	Revised	Delta (Δ)			
DFA Complexity	80.28	75.31	-4.97			
Theoretical Efficiency (%)	29.2	39.6%	+ 11.5%			
Practical Efficiency (%)	27.7%	43.4%	+16.7%			
Error Proofing	0.47	0.05	-0.42			
Handling	0.00	0.05	+0.05			
Insertion	1.32	0.86	-0.46			
Secondary Operations	0.63	0.38	-0.25			

#### Table 1: DFA Analysis Summary

# **DFA** Complexity

The DFA complexity provides an overall understanding of the number of parts and number of interfaces. A comparison of the original and redesign complexity analysis is presented below.

Part Name	Number of Parts (Np)	Number of Interfaces (Ni)		mber of Parts (Np)	mber of Interfaces (Ni)
Base Assembly			Part Name	R	R
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	1	7	Base Assembly		
Shaft Collar	2	2	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	1	6
Set Screw Shaft Collar	2	1	Shoulder Mount	1	10
Bearing	2	2	Shaft Collar ID 1"	1	3
DC Stepper Motor	1	2	Ball Bearing	4	2
Pullv Belt	1	2	DC Control Stepper motor	1	7
Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch lo	8	1	Pully Belt 1/4" thick	1	2
Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	1	2	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	4	3
Pully Gear (shaft mount)	1	2	Hex Nut	4	2
Linkage Assembly			Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	1	3
Bar Linkages	4	5	Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	1	2
Shaft Collar	2	2	Bar Linkage Assembly		-
Bearing	2	4	Provimal Bar Linkage		12
Pullv Gears	2	2	Distal Bar Linkago	1	0
Pullv Belt	1	1	Shaft Collar ID 1"	4	2
DC Stepper Motor	1	3	Ball Bearing	5	2
Linkage Shaft	1	7	Pully Gear (her holt Pattern)	2	2
Wrist Assembly			Pully Belt	2	3
Mounting Joint	1	7	DC Control Stepper Motor	2	1
Wrist Motor Shaft	1	2	Elbow Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	2	5
Gripper Pivot Shaft	1	6	Elbow Motor Adapter	2	2
Shaft Collar	2	1	Wriet Accembly	~	-
DC Control Motor	1	1	Whist laint		
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	1	1	Wrist Shoft Adaptes OD 4"	1	4
Gripper Assembly			Wrist Mater Shaft	1	0
Distal Gripper Finders	2	5	Whist Wolder Shall	1	2
Proximal Gripper Fingers	2	7	Putter Head Can Saraus 1/4" 29 (vinch land) Mater	1	6
Medial Grinner Finger	2	5	Button Head Cab Screws 1/4 -20 (X Inch Iond) -Motor	4	2
Finder	2	4	Gripper Assembly		
Mounting Plate	1	10	Regulator	1	1
Large Planar Gear	2	5	Finder Mounting Plate	1	5
Small Planar Gear	1	2	Pressure Tubes	1	1
1/4" Screws	12	7	Gripper Finders	2	1
5/16" Screws	2	3	Totals	53	107
Totals	65	99			
Design for Assembly Metrics 80.21845		845174	Design for Assembly Metrics	75.3	0604225

Figure 14: DFA Complexity Comparison

The original robotic arm assembly had 65 parts total, with almost 50% of the parts being purchased hardware. One of the main goals of this project was to reduce the number of hardware parts in the assembly. This ultimately led to a decrease in the number of total parts and manufacturer secondary operations. The number of interfaces increased mainly in the base and bar linkage subassemblies. Condensing the shoulder mount increased the intricacy of the design in the base sub assembly. In addition, the proximal bar linkage became one of the most integral parts of the assembly because of the many interfaces in the shoulder assembly and close connection with the distal linkage.

The gripper assembly alone was reduced from 26 to 5 parts by implementing the pneumatic actuation technique. The original mechanical actuation method was greatly improved because the fingers are now able to be controlled more precisely and do not require the additional time and effort to assemble many small parts.

### **Theoretical & Practical Efficiency**

Theoretical and practical efficiency was calculated to determine the efficiency of each part by considering the theoretical and practical minimum number of parts. The standardization of these parts was also explored to increase the utility of the same part. A comparison of the original and redesign matrix for this area is shown below.

Part Name	Part Can Be Standardized (if not already standard)	Cost (Low/Medium/Hi gh)	Practical Minimum Part	500 TO	oretical Minimum Part	Part Can Be dardized (if not sady standard)	Cost //Medium/High)	tical Minimum Part
Base Assembly				Part Name	her	alre	N	rac
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	0	0	1	raitivaille	-	S	-	۰.
Shaft Collar	1	Ő	1	Base Assembly				
Set Screw Shaft Collar	1	Ő	Ó	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	1	1	0	1
Bearing	1	Ő	1	Shoulder Mount	1	0	0	1
DC Stepper Motor	1	1	1	Shaft Collar ID 1"	1	1	0	1
Pully Belt	1	Ó	1	Ball Bearing	1	1	0	1
Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28"	1	Ō	Ó	DC Control Stepper motor	1	1	1	1
Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	1	0	1	Pully Belt 1/4" thick	1	1	0	1
Pully Gear (shaft mount)	1	Õ	1	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	1	ĩ	0	1
Linkage Assembly				Hex Nut	1	1	0	1
Bar Linkages	0	0	1	Pully Gear (hex holt Pattern)	1	î	0	î
Shaft Collar	1	0	-	Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	Ô	Ô.	ő	1
Bearing		ő	1	Partickee Assembly		0	0	
Pully Goars	1	ő	1	Dar Linkage Assembly	220	1211	121	
Pully Bolt	1	ő	4	Proximal Bar Linkade	1	0	0	1
DC Stepper Motor	1	1	1	Distal Bar Linkage	1	0	0	1
Linkage Shaft	1	ò	1	Shaft Collar ID 1"	1	1	0	1
Malet Assembly				Ball Bearing	1	1	0	1
Wrist Assembly				Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	1	1	0	1
Mounting Joint	0	0	1	Pullv Belt	1	1	0	1
Wrist Motor Shatt	0	0	1	DC Control Stepper Motor	1	1	1	1
Gripper Pivot Shatt	0	0	1	Elbow Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	1	1	0	1
Shaft Collar	1	0	1	Elbow Motor Adapter	0	0	0	1
DC Control Motor	1	1	1	Wrist Assembly				
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	1	0	0	Wrist Joint	1	0	0	1
Gripper Assembly				Wrist Shaft Adaptor OD 1"	-	1	0	1
Distal Gripper Finders	0	0	0	Wrist Motor Shaft	1	1	0	1
Proximal Gripper Finders	0	0	1	DC Control Stonnor Motor	1	1	0	1
Medial Gripper Finger	0	0	1	Dutten Head Can Servin 1/4" 29 (vinab lang) Mater	1	1	1	1
Finder	0	0	0	Dullon nead Gab Screws 1/4 -20 (X Inch Iond) -Motor	1	1	0	1
Mounting Plate	0	0	1	Gripper Assembly				
Large Planar Gear	1	0	0	Regulator	1	1	1	1
Small Planar Gear	1	0	0	Finder Mounting Plate	1	0	0	1
1/4" Screws	1	0	0	Pressure Tubes	1	1	0	1
5/16" Screws	1	0	0	Gripper Fingers	1	0	0	1
Totals	14	2	18	Totals	21	15	3	23
Design for Assembly Metrics	-Theor. Effy	ffy. Pract. .→	27.7%	Design for Assembly Metrics	39.6%	←Theor. Ef	fy. Pract. →	43.4%

Figure 15: Theoretical and Practical Efficiency Comparison

Overall, our team successfully increased both efficiency measures in the redesign. The theoretical and practical number of parts increased in the redesign because of the intricacy of the design. By optimizing the functionality of each part and reducing the total number of parts, our team was able to almost double the efficiency measures. The number of standardized parts remained roughly the same at about 15 parts. This is because of the number of off-shelf hardware parts in the assembly.

# **Error Proofing**

To better understand how easy, the parts will be assembled, error proofing was considered for the original and redesigned parts. The purpose of this category is to better understand how many parts could be assembled in an incorrect orientation or could be completely omitted from the product. By factoring this

Part Name	Assemble Wrong Part/ Omit Part	Assemble Part Wrong Uby Anound		mble Wrong Part/ Omit Part	mble Part Wrong Way Around
Base Assembly			Part Name	ssel	sse
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	0	0	raitivame	-c	- <b>E</b>
Shaft Collar	0	0	Base Assembly		
Set Screw Shaft Collar	0	0	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	0
Bearing	0	0	Shoulder Mount	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0
Pully Belt	0	0	Ball Bearing	0	0
Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28"	0	0	DC Control Stepper motor	0	0
Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	1	0	Pully Belt 1/4" thick	0	0
Pully Gear (shaft mount)	1	0	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	0	0
Linkage Assembly			Hex Nut	0	0
Bar Linkages	0	1	Pully Gear (hey holt Pattern)	0	1
Shaft Collar	0	0	Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	0	0
Bearing	0	0	Partickers Assembly		
Pully Gears	0	0	bar Linkage Assembly	-	
Pully Belt	0	0	Proximal Bar Linkage	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	Distal Bar Linkage	0	0
Linkage Shaft	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0
Wrist Assembly			Ball Bearing	0	0
Mounting Joint	0	0	Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0
Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0	Pullv Belt	0	0
Gripper Pivot Shaft	0	0	DC Control Stepper Motor	0	0
Shaft Collar	0	0	Elbow Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	0
DC Control Motor	0	0	Elbow Motor Adapter	0	0
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	0	0	Wrist Assembly		
Gripper Assembly			Wrist Joint	0	0
Distal Grinner Fingers	1	1	Wrist Shaft Adapter OD 1"	0	0
Proximal Gripper Fingers	1	1	Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0
Medial Gripper Finger	1	1	DC Control Stopper Motor	0	0
Finger	0	0	Button Hoad Can Scrows 1/4" 29 (vinch long) Motor	0	0
Mounting Plate	0	0	DUILOIT FIEldu Cab Screws 1/4 -20 1X IIICH IOHU) -MOIOI		- V
Large Planar Gear	0	0	Gripper Assembly		
Small Planar Gear	0	0	Regulator	0	0
1/4" Screws	0	0	Finder Mounting Plate	0	0
5/16" Screws	0	0	Pressure Tubes	0	0
Totals	5	4	Gripper Fingers	0	0
			Totals	0	1
Design for Assembly Metrics	0.	47	Design for Assembly Metrics	0.	05

Figure 16: Error Proofing Redesign Matrix

For error proofing, the index was reduced because of the reduction of the number of complex parts on the gripper assembly. The original mechanical finger actuation method had many parts that could easily be assembled incorrectly. Furthermore, the base assembly had two different pulley gears that could be assembled incorrectly. One of the goals of the redesign was to standardize the gears to avoid confusion on the assembly line.

# Handling

Handling was determined by analyzing the difficulty for a manufacturer to grab a single component. By looking at the potential difficulty and hazards of handling of the components, this metric was analyzed comparing the original to the redesign as shown below.

	ngle, Nest, or tick Together	exible, Fragile, arp or Slippery	iers, Tweezers, r Magnifying Slass Needed		, Nest, or Stick Fogether	le, Fragile, or Slippery	Tweezers, or ifying Glass Veeded
Part Name	E N	ΞŶ	100		ele le	dix d	agn
Base Assembly				Part Name	La	Fle	Ξ
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	0	0	0	Base Assembly	100		1000
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	Dase Assembly			
Set Screw Shaft Collar	0	0	0	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	0	0
Bearing	0	0	0	Shoulder Mount	0	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0	0
Pully Belt	0	0	0	Ball Bearing	0	0	0
Button Head Cap Screws 1/4 -28	0	0	0	DC Control Stepper motor	0	0	0
Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0	Pully Belt 1/4" thick	0	0	0
Puliv Gear (shaft mount)	0	0	0	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	0	0	0
Linkage Assembly				Hex Nut	0	0	0
Bar Linkades	0	0	0	Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	0	0	0
Bearing	0	0	0	Par Linkage Assembly			
Pullv Gears	0	0	0	Dar Linkage Assembly			
Pullv Belt	0	0	0	Proximal Bar Linkade	0	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	0	Distal Bar Linkage	0	0	0
Linkage Shaft	0	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0	0
Wrist Assembly				Ball Bearing	0	0	0
Mounting Joint	0	0	0	Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0
Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0	0	Pully Belt	0	0	0
Gripper Pivot Shaft	0	0	0	DC Control Stepper Motor	0	0	0
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	Elbow Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	0	0
DC Control Motor	0	0	0	Elbow Motor Adapter	0	0	0
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	0	0	0	Wrist Assembly			
Gripper Assembly				Wrist Joint	0	0	0
Distal Gripper Fingers	0	0	0	Wrist Shaft Adapter OD 1"	0	0	0
Proximal Gripper Fingers	0	0	0	Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0	0
Medial Gripper Finger	0	0	0	DC Control Stopper Motor	0	0	0
Finger	0	0	0	Button Hoad Con Scrows 1/4" 29 (vinch long) Motor	0	0	0
Mounting Plate	0	0	0	Duttori nead Cab Screws 1/4 -201X Inci 10101 - Wotor	~		
Large Planar Gear	0	0	0	Gripper Assembly			
Small Planar Gear	0	0	0	Regulator	0	0	0
1/4" Screws	0	0	0	Finger Mounting Plate	0	0	0
5/16" Screws	0	0	0	Pressure Tubes	1	0	0
Totals	0	0	0	Gripper Fingers	0	0	0
				Totals	1	0	0
Design for Assembly Metrics		0.00		Design for Assembly Metrics		0.05	

Figure 17: Handling Metric Comparison

For the original design a handling index of 0.00 was calculated and increased to 0.05. The original design did not present any handling issues. All the parts are robust and easy to handle for the assembler. There was a slight increase in this metric due to the redesign in the gripper assembly by including the potential tangling of the pressure tubes.

### Insertion

Insertion is a DFA metric that explores the difficulty of assembly of the components. Some key considerations in this section are alignment, holding down the part for assembly, part insertion resistance, and potential obstruction or access to key features. A table comparing the original to the redesign of the robotic arm is shown below.

Part Name	Difficult to Align/ Locate	Holding Down Required	Resistance to Insertion	Obstructed Access/ Visibility		ficult to Align/ Locate	lding Down Required	istance to nsertion	structed Access/ Visibility
Base Assembly					Part Name	Ë	로	- 8°	ð
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	0	1	0	0	Base Assembly				
Shaft Collar	1	0	0	0	Chaulder Motion Adoptor Chaft OD 4"	- 1	0	0	0
Set Screw Shaft Collar	1	0	0	1	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1	1	1	0	0
Bearing	1	0	0	1	Shoulder Mount	1	1	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1	1	0	0	0
Pully Belt	0	0	0	0	Ball Bearing	1	0	1	0
Bullon Head Cab Screws 1/4 -28	0	0	0	0	DC Control Stepper motor	0	0	0	0
Pully Gear (nex boil Pattern)	0	0	0	0	Pully Belt 1/4" thick	0	0	0	0
			0		Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	0	0	0	0
Linkage Assembly					Hex Nut	0	0	0	0
Bar Linkages	1	1	1	0	Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	1	1
Shart Collar	1	0	0		Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	0	0	0	0
Dearing Bully Coord	1	0	0	0	Bar Linkage Assembly				
Pully Bolt	0	0	0	0	Proximal Bar Linkage	0	1	1	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	0	0	Distal Bar Linkage	0	1	1	0
Linkage Shaft	1	0	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	1	0	0	0
Malet Assembly					Ball Bearing	1	0	0	0
whist Assembly					Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0	0
Mounting Joint	0	0	0	0	Pully Belt	0	0	0	0
Origner Divet Sheft	0	0	1		DC Control Stepper Motor	0	0	1	0
Shoft Coller	0	0	0	0	Elbow Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	0	1	0
DC Control Motor	0	1	0	1	Elbow Motor Adapter	0	0	1	0
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	1	0	0	0	Wriet Assembly				
Cripper Accembly					Whist laist	0	0	0	0
Distal Origner Fingers				0	Whist Chaft Adaptes OD 4"	0	0	0	0
Distal Gripper Finders	1	1	1	0	Whist Shall Adabler OD 1	0	0	0	0
Modial Grippor Einger	1	1	1	0	Whist Motor Shalt	0	0	0	0
Finger	1	1	1	0	DC Control Stepper Motor	0	0	1	1
Mounting Plate	0	1	0	0	Button Head Cab Screws 1/4"-28 (X Inch Iond) -Motor	1	0	1	1
l arge Planar Gear	1	0	0	0	Gripper Assembly				
Small Planar Gear	1	0	0	0	Regulator	0	1	0	1
1/4" Screws	1	0	0	0	Finder Mounting Plate	0	0	0	0
5/16" Screws	1	0	0	0	Pressure Tubes	0	0	0	0
Totals	10	7	6	2	Gripper Fingers	0	0	0	0
					Totals	3	3	8	4
Design for Assembly Metrics		1	32		Design for Assembly Metrics		0.	86	

Figure 18: Insertion DFA Metric Comparison

The insertion index was reduced from 1.32 to 0.82. This was largely due to the potential alignment issues in the gripper assembly including the various finger joints. By removing the mechanical finger assembly, our team was also able to decrease the amount of holding required and resistance to insertion of the screws in the assembly. The redesign did pose some obstruction issues with the motor at the wrist. The motor is positioned inside the wrist joint which would be more difficult to assemble than if the motor was freely outside the wrist joint on the linkage.

### **Secondary Operations**

The final subcategory of the DFA analysis is secondary operations which includes the number of times the workpiece must be orientated, and whether the parts may need a secondary operation for securing the assembly. The results of the original and redesign are shown in the figure below.

Part Name	Re-orient Workpiece	Screw, Drill, Twist, Rivet, Bend, or Crimp	Weld, Solder, or Glue	Paint, Lube, Heat, Apply Liquid or Gas	Test, Measure or Adjust		orient Workpiece	rew, Drill, Twist, t. Bend. or Crimp	d, Solder, or Glue	nt, Lube, Heat, ly Liquid or Gas	, Measure or Adjust
Base Assembly						Part Name	-	Scr	Sel.	pai d	est
Mounting plate with pillow blocks	0	1	0	0	0			<u>a</u>	^	- 4	-
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	0	0	Base Assembly					
Set Screw Shaft Collar	0	0	0	0	0	Shoulder Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	0	1	0	0	0
Bearing	0	0	1	0	0	Shoulder Mount	0	0	0	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	1	0	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0	0	0	0
Pully Belt	0	0	0	0	0	Ball Bearing	0	0	0	0	0
Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28"	0	1	0	0	0	DC Control Stepper motor	0	1	0	0	0
Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0	0	0	Pullv Belt 1/4" thick	0	0	0	0	0
Pully Gear (shaft mount)	0	0	0	0	0	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	0	1	0	0	0
Linkage Assembly						Hex Nut	0	1	0	0	0
Bar Linkages	1	0	0	0	0	Pully Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	0	0	0	0	0
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	0	0	Pully Gear Wrist Motor Adapter	0	0	0	0	0
Bearing	0	0	0	0	0	Bar Linkage Assembly					
Pully Gears	0	0	0	0	0	Provimal Bar Linkage	0	0	0	0	0
Pully Belt	0	0	0	0	0	Distal Bar Linkage	0	0	0	0	0
DC Stepper Motor	0	0	1	0	0	Shaft Collar ID 1"	0	0	0	0	0
Linkade Shart	U	0		0	0	Ball Boaring	0	0	0	0	0
Wrist Assembly						Pully Coar (box bolt Pattern)	n i	0	0	0	0
Mountina Joint	0	0	0	0	0	Pully Geal mex boil Fallenn	- o	0	0	0	0
Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0	0	0	0	Pully Dell DC Centrel Stenner Meter	0	0	0	0	0
Gripper Pivot Shaft	0	0	0	0	0	Elbow Motion Adoptor Shoft OD 1"	0		0	0	0
Shaft Collar	0	0	0	0	0	Elbow Motion Adapter Shalt OD 1	0		0	0	0
DC Control Motor	1	1	0	0	0	Elbow Motor Adabter	0	0	0	0	U
DC Control Motor Mounting 5/32" Screw	1	1	0	0	0	Wrist Assembly					
Gripper Assembly						Wrist Joint	0	0	0	0	0
Distal Gripper Fingers	0	1	0	0	0	Wrist Shaft Adapter OD 1"	0	0	0	0	0
Proximal Gripper Finders	0	1	0	0	0	Wrist Motor Shaft	0	0	0	0	0
Medial Gripper Finder	0	1	0	0	0	DC Control Stepper Motor	0	1	0	0	0
Finder Mounting Dista	0	1	0	0	0	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	0	1	0	0	0
Mounting Plate	0	1	0	0	0	Gripper Assembly					
Carle Planar Gear	0	0	0	0	0	Regulator	1	0	1	0	0
1/4" Scrows	0	1	0	0	0	Einger Mounting Plate	0	0	0	0	0
5/16" Scrowe	0	1	0	0	0	Proceuro Tubos	0	1	0	0	0
Totale	3	8	1	ő	0	Crippor Eingors	0	0	1	ő	0
Iotais	-	÷	-		-	Chober Finders	1	5	2	0	0
						Iotais				~	J
Design for Assembly Metrics			0.63			Design for Assembly Metrics	4				.38

Figure 19: Secondary Operations DFA Metric Comparison

Overall, the redesign metric decreased by 0.25 in this category. This is largely due to the reduction of screw operations in the gripper subassembly. The redesign does present an additional adhesive step for the regulator and gripper fingers. The final redesign also includes merging the pulley with the linkage into one part in the linkage subassembly. This part reduction also reduced the number of secondary operations for securing the stepper motors.

# **Initial Design Concepts**

# Gripper in Drum Concept

To concept an early idea for the gripper, the CU Rover Team had developed a cad model for an inexpensive cost robotic arm of stepper motors that are belt driven with a gripper for grasping objects. This concept had been to show how the gripper would be two-pronged and actuate based on one motor. This is revealed by the motor housing through the transparent image of this gripper shown.



Figure 20: Gripper in Drum Concept

# Gripper in Rigid Finger Concept

To develop a gripper with well weight distribution, our team implemented this rigid finger concept into the design. The gripper that is shown is driven by one stepper motor with two meshing gears. The two gears actuate the gripper to perform at an identical rotational speed. This gripper configuration has a modular fitting to have a gripper for multiple different functions.



Figure 21: Gripper in Rigid Finger Concept

# Solid Linkage

A final concept is to switch from double linkages to solid linkages. Having one linkage to be secure onto both sides of a shaft will increase the structural integrity of this assembly. This thickened linkage can support the stepper motors within the assembly as shown.



Figure 22: Solid Linkage's Concept

### Rigid Vs. Soft Gripper

When dealing with a robotic arm for Mars missions, there is a chance of collecting fragile objects. Therefore, our team has designed this gripper to be modular and developed a soft robotic actuator/soft gripper. The image on the right is this soft gripper displayed. The two ends of the gripper of soft fingers with multiple air channels. These channels fill to a certain pressure and allow the gripper to flex. When in the fully flexed position, this gripper will be able to grab fragile objects that could be stored as samples for the Rover missions.



Figure 23: Gripper Assembly: Original Design (left), Redesign (right)

### Motor Pockets in Linkages

In a careful evaluation of fasteners and fixtures for the stepper motors, it has been ideated to develop linkages with pockets for the motors to be held fixed along the center of the links. This idea has allowed our team to have stepper motors at all desired degrees of freedom in adding an additional stepper motor to the top linkage. With this pocket concept, the wrist is now able to rotate on the shaft connecting to the upper linkage without concern of accounting for large metrics for the moment of inertia with respect to the position of the stepper motors attached.



Figure 24: Bar Linkage Assembly: Original Design (left), Redesign (right)

### Size Reduction in Base Mount

The base mount had been completely redesigned from the original idea. On the left is an assembly of the base mount with two pillow blocks to mount bearings that are fastened to the base plate. Due to the position of the pillow blocks, the original belt-motor drive has to be extended a distance away front the shaft. In careful evaluation, our team decided that extended belts will result in more complications and errors in assembly. With a high rate of failure. Therefore, the base mount had been redesigned into one investment cast component for the assembly. The redesign resulted in a short distance between pulleys. Have fixed distances between the pulleys between errors in installing rubber belts to actuate the arm. The new base mount also has stepper mounting features built in and self-locating features added for assembly. Room to press fit bearings into the new base mount is also included.



Figure 25: Base Assembly: Original Design (left), Redesign (right)

# **Testing Plan**

### Manipulation

The Arm Assembly will be tested with respect to the mission that it will complete the University Rover Challenge (URC). The URC will take on four missions: the Science, Extreme Retrieval and Delivery, Equipment Servicing, and Autonomous Navigation missions. Three out of the four will have their own individual challenges that will integrate the use of the robotic arm.

#### Science Mission:

This mission will take on data collection and test sampling of material found at the location site of the challenge, which is an open desert. The robotic arm must be able to grab samples of rock and debris to set into a data collection box to be evaluated to indicate material properties. Samples will have to be well controlled and placed items into the data collection box to be understood. For testing purposes, the arm will practice grasping objects and placing them into a container for trial.

#### **Extreme Retrieval and Delivery:**

Within this mission, there will be objects that will have to be carried to a separate location zone. Objects will be rocks and objects connected to the rope to deliver. Our arm assembly must have good structural integrity to be able to deliver objects and displace them to a secure location. Prior to the competition at CU, our team will test by having weights on a rope and attempting to drag them over a certain distance of rough terrain (grass and sand).

#### **Equipment Servicing:**

The final mission for the arm assembly is to use tools for disassembling a mechanical system. The objective is to push buttons, flip switches and turn knobs. Our gripper will need to grasp and control tooling, as screwdrivers and hammers, to complete parts of this mission. Within the Idea Forge/ITLL our team would practice rotations of a screwdriver and the use of hammers to test applications of repairing a mechanical system.

#### **Autonomous Navigation:**

(This mission will not have robotic arm applications).

### Gripper Simulation and Testing

To close the loop on any actuator-controller configuration, sensors must be used to provide feedback data to the controller. In our testing, the actuator will be fabricated via FDM 3D printing on the MakerGear M3 printer platform available in our university. We will use a 0.4mm nozzle to distribute 95A shore hardness TPU. This filament material exhibits increased print reliability yet obtains deflection characteristics like other 80A shore hardness TPU filaments for our given actuator geometry.

Once we have 3D printed our gripper finger, we will test the accuracy of grasping by validating the bending of the actuator with our FEA results given below. We can measure the bending through analog values using a data acquisition setup like Lab Jack. With the well-defined material properties, it is possible to predict the current state of the actuator geometry using node locations, and predictions of the intermediary space between nodes using the lowest energy states of the material. A pressure transducer will be required that will interface with the DAQ and the actuator and give us plots in MATLAB. This will help us build a relationship between the input pressure of the actuator (pressure output for transducer) and degrees of flexion sustained within the actuator.

### **Finite Element Method**

**Modeling and Meshing:** The soft gripper finger has 10 inner gas chambers and a channel through one end through the last chamber in which pressurized air is supplied through

the pressure regulator attached below the mounting plate. Because of this pneumatic design (Fig26), the actuation causes the gripper to bend just like we bend a human finger. The bellows in the figure shown below are analogous to our knuckles and allow the gripper to grasp objects efficiently. The design was imported from SolidWorks to ABAQUS CAE viewport. Meshing was done using tetrahedral elements for non-linear geometry (hyper elastic material) (Fig27).



Figure 26: Soft Gripper ABAQUS CAE viewport





The material model for TPU used here was Yeoh with the following coefficients (Fig28). The Yeoh hyper elastic material model is a phenomenological model for the nearly incompressible and non-linear elastic materials. The model is based on Rivlin's observation that elastic properties of rubber may be described using a strain energy density function which is a power series for the strain invariants  $I_1$ ,  $I_2$ ,  $I_3$ . Based on previous research [X], the NinjaFlex material (TPU in our case) is more suitable to the Yeoh model (units are in GPa):

C10	C20	C30	D1
0.11	0.02	0	0

#### Figure 28: Material Constants

**Results:** Since it is made of a hyper elastic material, it has large deflection (Fig29(a)) and there is bulging/inflation of the bellows because of increase in pressure inside the chambers (Fig29(b)).



Figure 29: Deflection

As you can see from Fig30, the bending angle increases with increase in pressure and the actuator bends in a circular trajectory. As pressure increased from 10000 Pa to 90000 Pa, the displacement of the monitor edge in both x-axis and y-axis decreased. As the pressure increases, the displacement in x direction still decreases. However, the displacement in y direction increases since the bending actuator starts becoming a circle.





Figure 30: Bending at different pressures

Fig31 shows the angular displacement (theta) with time and stress along the length of the actuator just below the bellows. As we can see, the angular displacement is nonlinearly increasing and after a certain saturation point increases again as the actuator hits the semicircle. The stress however is linearly decreasing as we move away from the Encastre point at which the channel starts since the path chosen is just below the center of pressure line (with zero deflection and stress). As we move away from the COP, the more non-linear the stress curve will become.



Figure 31: Results of Angular Displacement and Stress Along Actuator

# Materials and Manufacturing Analysis

### **Material Analysis**

There are two rolls we need materials to fill for custom parts in this product. First is structural. The second is a flexible material for the gripper actuator.

### Structural Material Selection

We consider structural materials from a cost to weight ratio and from a cost per volume perspective. We considered cost to weight because we assume our device will be launched from earth to mars, secondly, we consider cost per unit volume because the device must be affordable. The previous rover team had not decided on its material selection however we will assume aluminum as a starting material.



Figure 32: Failure Strength vs Material Density Selected Material Aluminum (Green Triangle)

Here we can see that Aluminum (green triangle) is a good material choice only beat out significantly by composites for this metric. However, we also should consider the viability of composites for custom manufacturability and cost of material.



Figure 33: Failure Strength vs Material Cost per Volume Selected Material Aluminum (Green Triangle)

We are going to be optimistic and say that if we are selling 100,000 units of this robotic arm that the cost of lifting mass to mars is significantly more affordable than it is today. Therefore, we must consider the relative cost of the material as a relevant factor. Here we can see that despite composites beating out aluminum in strength vs density it loses when it comes to cost per unit volume. In addition, composites are not as compatible with complex geometry manufacturing methods that we would like to utilize to reduce part count and improve ease of assembly. Therefore, for the structural and mounting components this team selected an aluminum alloy, for its strength density and relative cost. There is myriad of other reasons to pick aluminum over composites like its retention of strength under large temperature changes and its fracture toughness; however, we will not get too deep into that here.

### Flexible Gripper Actuator Material Selection



Figure 34: Young's modulus vs Density Selected Material TPU (Green Triangle)

Inspired by biology, researchers aim to develop soft bodied programmable motion to combine natural compliance with controllable actuation. One of the long-standing challenges has been the lack of easily processed robust soft actuators with high strain density. We have used thermoplastic polyurethane, commercially available as NinjaFlex (NinjaTek, USA) to 3D print our soft gripper finger. This material combines a high strain (up to 900%) and correspondingly high stress (up to 80-150MPa) with low density (1.005 g/cm3), as we can see from the Ashby Chart. It can lift and grasp high payloads of 5-7kg. For our simulation, we have used the Yeoh coefficients from previous research that matches this Ashby chart. The density for our ABAQUS model is 1.049 g/cm3 and the coefficients C10 and C20 are 110MPa and 20 MPa respectively.

### **Process Selection**

The team decided to use Investment casting for all the custom metal components for this product. There are several reasons. Firstly, the components are relatively complex. They include built in pulley gears, self-locating mounting geometry, and structural components. We selected investment casting over other forms of casting because the high degree of dimensional accuracy was desirable to be able to press fitting bearings without significant secondary

manufacturing processes. Several screw holes to mount the stepper motors were also needed and these also needed to have relatively high tolerancing. The device also needed to be relatively strong and lightweight, which necessitated Metal construction which helped us eliminate many other processes. We eliminated reductive processes such as milling because of the material waste involved and the additional man hours required for this method. We estimated some parts could cost as much as double if we had used a reductive process.

The thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) Fingers for the gripper were surprisingly FDM 3D printed. It turned out that to create this geometry it was helpful to 3D print it and shockingly the capital cost per printer while slow was so low and required an operator for only a fraction of the operating time. This all meant that FDM 3D printing, while possibly not the most affordable method, was relatively affordable and did not contribute a large percentage to the final product's cost, each finger coming in at just \$2 USD.

# **Economic Analysis of Product**

# **Custom Parts**

An in-depth economic analysis was carried out for all custom components that could not be bought off the shelf for this device. We assumed a target production quantity of 100,000 units. The analysis shows that most of the cost for the metal components is composed of material and labor costs. The labor is largely spent on cleaning the plaster molds off the finished details of the metal pieces like from the pulley gear cavities and mounting holes for the motors. It is notable that the capital cost per unit is low due to the high unit count. All the tables below can be found in their full form in the appendix.

The TPU polymer pneumatic fingers were modeled with FDM 3D printing. We assumed each 3D printer would cost \$150 and take five hours to produce a pair of TPU pneumatic gripper fingers but that only a fraction of that load factor time would require the intervention of a laborer, scraping the parts off the build plates and checking for failed prints.

A sanity check for calculated part manufacturing costs is included in all summary tables at the bottom in blue using the 1:3:9 rule of thumb. We see that the calculated costs are relatively like the rule of thumb values. See the Appendix for these values.

			Part Name:			
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Mounting Plate	Bar Linkages (Plate)	Wrist Joint	Proximal Finger
Total Unit Cost (USD)			8.12	10.36	8.64	1.78
Qb Units Produced to Break E	ven		471.90	3160.39	7954.83	4978.00

Table 2: Original Design Custom Part Manufacturing Economic Analysis Summary (part 1)

#### Table 3: Original Design Custom Part Manufacturing Economic Analysis Summary (part 2)

			Part Name:		
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Medial Finger	Distal Finger	Mounting Plate (grippers)
Total Unit Cost (USD)			1.72	2.12	3.21
Qb Units Produced to Break Even			5626.89	3046.04	1362.96

#### Table 4: Redesigned Custom Part Manufacturing Economic Analysis Summary (part 1)

			Part Name:				
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Shoulder Mounting Plate	Bar Linkage	Wrist Joint	Shoulder Mount	
Total Unit Cost (USD)			7.50	15.03	8.16	7.89	
Qb Units Produced to Break Ev	/en		10136.66	2710.78	8181.41	8517.32	

#### Table 5: Redesigned Custom Part Manufacturing Economic Analysis Summary (part 2)

			Part Name:		
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Gripper Fingers	Wrist Motor Shaft	Motor Adaptor
Total Unit Cost (USD)		2.61	5.72	5.97	
Qb Units Produced to Break Even			164.28	28728.89	22905.73

#### Table 6: Redesign Mfg. Process Comparison Summary Milling(right) vs Investment Casting (left)

			Part Name:		
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Wrist Joint (Investment Cast)	Wrist Joint (milling)	
Total Unit Cost (USD)			8.16	11.36	
Qb Units Produced to Break Even			8181.41	1261.48	

In the table above we can see a comparison between CNC milling and investment casting. We can see for the milling most of the increased cost comes from increased material requirements and the increased labor time per part. More starting material is needed for the milling since material must be cut away. However, the resale of those waste materials was not considered.

# Purchased and Custom Parts

Many the components in the robotic arm are purchased off the shelf. The difference in required purchased components is outlined below. The total cost of all custom components and purchased components is also considered.

#### Table 7: Original Design All Part Cost Economic Summary

Original Design Off the Shelf Parts				
Purchased Parts Total Cost per Unit	708.88			
Original Design Custom Parts				
Custom Parts Total Cost per Unit	76.09			
	Unit Price	784.97		

Table 8: Redesign All Part Cost Economic Summary

Re-Design Off the Shelf Parts					
Purchased Parts Total Cos	485.77				
Re-Design Custom Parts					
Custom Parts Total Cost p	Custom Parts Total Cost per Unit				
	Unit P	rice 568.22			

If we compare the two tables above for the redesign and original design summary where the original design used reductive manufacturing processes to cut material out of aluminum plate to fabricate parts, we can see that the custom unique part count and cost are similar. However, the updated custom parts allow us to eliminate many expensive purchased parts which lead to a reduction in calculated cost of \$216.75 or about 28%.

# Discussion of Professional, Ethical, and Safety Issues

Being that this is an electromechanical assembly, there will be wiring and high voltage in place for the stepper motors and air regulator attachments. To have a careful understanding of the safety measures in place, our team has assembled this listing to make sure the technicians working on this assembly know the concerns prior to assembly.

#### Stepper Motors

When any motor is implemented into a system, the voltage and weight must be consistent for a measure of safety. The location of our stepper motors is fastened in a position to consider the wiring that will have to be positioned. Instead of directly driven stepper motors,

there are belt and gear attachments. The belts along these voltages to be insulated for the assembly's connecting gears.

These stepper motors can be up to five pounds of weight, which allows for a large moment of inertia when positioned improperly. To account for the large displacement of inertia, our team had redesigned the linkage assembly to have pocket fittings for our components. The pocket feature for these stepper motors is along the centerline of the linkage assembly, therefore is along the centroid axis to eliminate the concern for the assembly to rotate onto its side when in operation.



Figure 35: Create Pocketed Stepper Motor

#### Air Regulator

Beneath the soft robotic gripper is an air regulator to actuate the soft robotic fingers of the assembly. Attached to this regulator are tubes for air flow. There is a concern of the tubes getting tangled along the gripper in reaching a constrained flow, then at maximum pressure to burn out the regulator. To prevent damage to the gripper assembly's air regulator, the component will be fastened in place to the mounting plate of the gripper. When the tubes will be fixed in place, this eliminates the safety concern of a burned-out regulator or any burst in the tubing.



Figure 36: Pneumatic Tubing on Redesign

#### Selection of Rubber Belts over Bicycle Chains

In selecting the drive systems for the actuating elements, a couple of ideas had been inspired. A range from direct driven design to modified bicycle chains have been discussed. The decision for the bicycle chain would've allowed for a robust design. The component decision of bicycle chains would require sprockets to be in place. In the application of mass production, our team's technicians would constantly have to work with sharp metal components. The selection of rubber adds a metric of safety and decreased measure of secondary operation to our DFA study.



Figure 37: Rubber Belt on Redesign

# Discussion of the Redesign

The goal of this redesign was to reduce part count, improve ease of assembly and reconsider material selection which is discussed above. Many components, even purchased components, were merged with custom parts. Reducing part count makes assembly easier. There were a couple of parts that the team wanted to eliminate due to the complexity of their assembly.

### Linkage Arm

Two of the pulley gears were integrated into the cast arms to eliminate the screws it would have taken to connect them to the arm and reduce the manufacturing time that it would have taken to remove the plaster from the internal screw hole features. It also eliminated the need to assemble three nuts, three screws, a pulley, and an arm into one assembly. The redesign also integrated previously absent stepper motor mounts into self-locating pockets. It is apparent that the new arm is easier to assemble since each link is composed of just one arm, not two which would need to be aligned and threaded onto multiple shafts. Pockets for bearings to be press-fit into were also added which were absent from the original design. The merged pulley can just be seen at the bottom right of the right image in green.



Figure 38: Old Linkage Arm (left) New linkage arm (right)

### Shoulder Mount

The shoulder mount part integrated the screws and pillow blocks of the original design by simply adding pockets for bearings to be press fit into. Again, this was done to eliminate parts, and reduce assembly complexity. A self-locating feature in the form of a diagonal brace was also added to make it easier to locate the stepper motor into the assembly. A small pocket in the base of the plate is present to reduce the material required to fabricate the part while a protruded rim remains to offer stiffness. Enough room between the bearing mounts to fit the pulley which is now part of the arm, the arm, and a collar was allowed for. This eliminated the need for a second collar as originally this assembly required two collars. Unfortunately, this assembly still requires screws to mount the motor to it and there is still room for improvement.



Figure 39: Old Shoulder Plate (left) New Shoulder Plate (right)

# Gripper

The gripper underwent a radical redesign. We replaced the rigid linkage-based gripper and gear system with a soft flexible TPU gripper and pneumatic actuation system. This eliminated many parts which made assembly much easier and reduced the cost as the new material was both more affordable and eliminated a large number of expensive purchased components.



Figure 40: Mechanical Gripper (left) Flexible Gripper (right)

# Conclusion

Multiple improvements have been advanced since the evaluation of manufacturability has begun. The original idea would have not been able to support the 5kg masses that would have been required to deliver in the University Rover Challenge. A range of design improvements from the gripper, linkages, and base assembly has been revised for ease of manufacturing. These improvements have allowed for a major decrease in part count, cost, and DFA complexity.

The part count of assembly had an overall decrease of 65 to 53 parts. This part count decrease had resulted in a lower DFA complexity metric to go from 80.22 to 75.31. An initial objective for our team had been to decrease the overall complexity and part count to result in a simplified assembly of a robotic arm. A decrease of 4.97 in complexity number allows our team to know that this is a simplified assembly for this group's hired technician in the case of mass production to 100,000 units.

Soon, there can be a case where these robotic arms will be mass produced and sold to the public, where our team completed an economic analysis of this product when sold at a quantity of 100,000 units. From the original design, there had been a unit price of \$784.97. After complete redesigns, the new assembly had been listed at a final unit price of \$568.22. Through this study, our team had increased the affordability of this assembly by \$216.75.

The study of manufacturability for this robotic arm has decreased complexity and increased cost-effectiveness for our users. In doing so, our team believes that one day it would be affordable for people and companies to be interested in purchasing our cost-effective assembly for a wide range of practical uses in the robotic industry.

# References

Charbel Tawk, Geoffrey M Spinks, Gursel Alici, "3D Printable Linear Soft Vacuum Actuators: Their Modeling, Performance Quantification and Application in Soft Robotic Systems", <u>https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8788588</u>

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Guy W.Rhodes, John W.Hill, Clement M.Smith "US Patent 4,806,066", <u>https://patents.google.com/patent/US4806066A/en</u>

Material property charts, https://www.grantadesign.com/education/students/charts/

ABAQUS tutorial video, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwhjfwHjYnQ&t=617s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwhjfwHjYnQ&t=617s</a>

ABAQUS User Manual Guide, http://130.149.89.49:2080/v6.14/books/usb/default.htm

# Appendix

# Redesign Bill of Materials (BOM)

Part Number	Name	Quantity	Part in Assembly	Subassembly
1.01, 2.08, 3.02	Motion Adapter Shaft OD 1"	3		Base, Linkage, Wrist
1.02	Shoulder Mount	1	0.0	Base
1.03, 2.03	Shaft Collar ID 1"	5		Base, Linkage
1.04, 2.04	Ball Bearing	9		Base, Linkage

Part Number	Name	Quantity	Part in Assembly	Subassembly
1.05, 2.07, 3.04	DC Control Stepper Motor	3		Base, Linkage, Wrist
1.06	Puley Belt ¼" thick- short	1		Base
2.06	Pulley Belt 1/4" thick- long	2	$\mathbf{O}$	Linkage
1.07, 3.05	Button Head Cap Screws 1/4"-28 (x inch long) -Motor	8		Base, Wrist
1.08	Hex Nut	4		Base
1.09, 2.05	Pulley Gear (hex bolt Pattern)	3		Base, Linkage

Part Number	Name	Quantity	Part in Assembly	Subassembly
1.1, 2.09	Motor Adapter	3		Base, Linkage
2.01, 2.02	Proximal/Distal Bar Linkage	2		Linkage
3.01	Wrist Joint	1		Wrist
3.03	Wrist Motor Shaft	1	0	Wrist
4.01	Regulator	1	10.05 pi	Gripper

Part Number	Name	Quantity	Part in Assembly	Subassembly
				Gripper
4.02	Finger Mounting Plate	1		
4 03	Pressure Tubes	1	$\mathbb{C}$	Gripper
		I		Gripper
4.04	Gripper Fingers	2		

# Economic Analysis Supporting Material

			Part Name:		
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Mounting Joint (Investment Casting)	Mounting Joint (milling)	
Material Cost	cm	USD/lb	1.48	1.48	
Material Waste Fraction	f	fraction	0.05	0.5	
Mass of part	m	lb	2.0	2	
Cm Unit Cost of Material	Cm	USD	3.09	5.92	
Labor Cost	cw	USD/hr	25	25	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	6	
CL Unit Cost of Labor	CL	USD	2.50	4.17	
Tooling cost	ct	USD/set	218000	55000	
Tool Production Run	n	units	100000	100000	
Tooling Life	nt	units	300000	200000	
Number of Machines	nm		1	1	
Sets of Tooling Required	k	sets	1	1	
Unit Cost of Tooling	СТ	USD	2.18	0.55	
Capital Equipment Cost (all)	ce	USD	20000	10000	
Capital Write Off Time	two	yrs	5	5	
Hours/ yr Equipment is Operated	Hyr	hr/yr	2000	2000	
Load Fraction	L	fraction	1	1	
Load Sharing Fraction	q	fraction	0.250	1.000	
Unit Cost of Capital Equipment	Ce	USD	0.05	0.17	
Factory Overhead	cOH	USD/hr	3.33	3.33	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	6	
Unit Cost of Factory Overhead	СОН	USD	0.33	0.56	
Total Unit Cost (USD)		8.16	11.36		
Qb Units Produced to Break Even		8181.41	1261.48		
	Material	1	3.09	5.92	
1:3:9 Sanity Check	Mfg.	3	9.28	17.76	
	Price	9	27.85	53.28	

Economic Analysis of Investment Casting vs Milling for a 100,000 Unit Production Volume

			Part Name:				
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Shoulder Mounting Plate	Bar Linkage	Wrist Joint	Shoulder Mount	
Material Cost	cm	USD/lb	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	
Material Waste Fraction	f	fraction	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.08	
Mass of part	m	lb	1.56	6.4	2.0	1.84	
Cm Unit Cost of Material	Cm	USD	2.44	9.97	3.09	2.96	
Labor Cost	cw	USD/hr	25	25	25	25	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10	10	
CL Unit Cost of Labor	CL	USD	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	
Tooling cost	ct	USD/set	218000	218000	218000	218000	
Tool Production Run	n	units	100000	100000	100000	100000	
Tooling Life	nt	units	300000	300000	300000	300000	
Number of Machines	nm		1	1	1	1	
Sets of Tooling Required	k	sets	1	1	1	1	
Unit Cost of Tooling	СТ	USD	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	
Capital Equipment Cost (all)	се	USD	20000	20000	20000	20000	
Capital Write Off Time	two	yrs	5	5	5	5	
Hours/ yr Equipment is Operated	Hyr	hr/yr	2000	2000	2000	2000	
Load Fraction	L	fraction	1	1	1	1	
Load Sharing Fraction	q	fraction	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	
Unit Cost of Capital Equipment	Ce	USD	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	
Factory Overhead	cOH	USD/hr	3.33	3.33	3.33	2	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10	10	
Unit Cost of Factory Overhead	СОН	USD	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.20	
Total Unit Cost (USD)			7.50	15.03	8.16	7.89	
Qb Units Produced to Break Even			10136.66	2710.78	8181.41	8517.32	
	Material	1	2.44	9.97	3.09	2.96	
1:3:9 Sanity Check	Mfg.	3	7.31	29.91	9.28	8.88	
	Price	9	21.94	89.73	27.85	26.64	

#### Economic Analysis of Redesign (part 1)

			Part Name:		
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Gripper Fingers	Wrist Motor Shaft	Motor Adaptor
Material Cost	cm	USD/lb	1.36	1.48	1.48
Material Waste Fraction	f	fraction	0.05	0.1	0.1
Mass of part	m	lb	0.48	0.40	0.55
Cm Unit Cost of Material	Cm	USD	0.69	0.66	0.90
Labor Cost	CW	USD/hr	15	25	25
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10
CL Unit Cost of Labor	CL	USD	1.50	2.50	2.50
Tooling cost	ct	USD/set	150	218000	218000
Tool Production Run	n	units	100000	100000	100000
Tooling Life	nt	units	100000	300000	300000
Number of Machines	nm		50	1	1
Sets of Tooling Required	k	sets	1	1	1
Unit Cost of Tooling	СТ	USD	0.08	2.18	2.18
Capital Equipment Cost (all)	се	USD	1000	20000	20000
Capital Write Off Time	two	yrs	5	5	5
Hours/ yr Equipment is Operated	Hyr	hr/yr	2000	2000	2000
Load Fraction	L	fraction	1	1	1
Load Sharing Fraction	q	fraction	1.000	0.250	0.250
Unit Cost of Capital Equipment	Се	USD	0.01	0.05	0.05
Factory Overhead	cOH	USD/hr	3.33	3.33	3.33
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10
Unit Cost of Factory Overhead	СОН	USD	0.33	0.33	0.33
Total Unit Cost (USD)			2.61 5.72 5.9		5.97
Qb Units Produced to Break Ev	en		164.28 28728.89 22905		
	Material	1	0.69	0.66	0.90
1:3:9 Sanity Check	Mfg.	3	2.06	1.97	2.71
	Price	9	6.19	5.92	8.14

### Economic Analysis of Redesign (part 2)

			Part Name:			
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Mounting Plate	Bar Linkages (Plate)	Wrist Joint	Proximal Finger
Material Cost	cm	USD/lb	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48
Material Waste Fraction	f	fraction	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Mass of part	m	lb	3.20	3.1	2.2	0.28
Cm Unit Cost of Material	Cm	USD	4.99	4.83	3.43	0.44
Labor Cost	cw	USD/hr	25	25	25	25
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10	30
CL Unit Cost of Labor	CL	USD	2.50	2.50	2.50	0.83
Tooling cost	ct	USD/set	10000	130000	218000	19520
Tool Production Run	n	units	100000	100000	100000	100000
Tooling Life	nt	units	50000	50000	300000	50000
Number of Machines	nm		1	1	1	1
Sets of Tooling Required	k	sets	2	2	1	2
Unit Cost of Tooling	СТ	USD	0.20	2.60	2.18	0.39
Capital Equipment Cost (all)	се	USD	10000	10000	20000	2000
Capital Write Off Time	two	yrs	5	5	5	5
Hours/ yr Equipment is Operated	Hyr	hr/yr	2000	2000	2000	2000
Load Fraction	L	fraction	1	1	1	1
Load Sharing Fraction	q	fraction	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Unit Cost of Capital Equipment	Ce	USD	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.01
Factory Overhead	cOH	USD/hr	3.33	3.33	3.33	3.33
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	10	10	10	30
Unit Cost of Factory Overhead	СОН	USD	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.11
Total Unit Cost (USD)			8.12 10.36 8.64			
Qb Units Produced to Break Ev	en		471.90 3160.39 7954.83 4978			4978.00
	Material	1	4.99	4.83	3.43	0.44
1:3:9 Sanity Check	Mfg.	3	14.96	14.49	10.28	1.31
	Price	9	44.87	43.47	30.85	3.93

### Economic Analysis of Original Design (part 1)

			Part Name:			
Cost Element	Symbol	Unit	Medial Finger	Distal Finger	Mounting Plate (grippers)	
Material Cost	cm	USD/lb	1.48	1.48	1.48	
Material Waste Fraction	f	fraction	0.05	0.05	0.05	
Mass of part	m	lb	0.24	0.50	1.20	
Cm Unit Cost of Material	Cm	USD	0.37	0.78	1.87	
Labor Cost	cw	USD/hr	25	25	25	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	30	30	30	
CL Unit Cost of Labor	CL	USD	0.83	0.83	0.83	
Tooling cost	ct	USD/set	19520	19520	19520	
Tool Production Run	n	units	100000	100000	100000	
Tooling Life	nt	units	50000	50000	50000	
Number of Machines	nm		1	1	1	
Sets of Tooling Required	k	sets	2	2	2	
Unit Cost of Tooling	СТ	USD	0.39	0.39	0.39	
Capital Equipment Cost (all)	се	USD	2000	2000	2000	
Capital Write Off Time	two	yrs	5	5	5	
Hours/ yr Equipment is Operated	Hyr	hr/yr	2000	2000	2000	
Load Fraction	L	fraction	1	1	1	
Load Sharing Fraction	q	fraction	1.000	1.000	1.000	
Unit Cost of Capital Equipment	Се	USD	0.01	0.01	0.01	
Factory Overhead	cOH	USD/hr	3.33	3.33	3.33	
Production Rate	n dot	unit/hr	30	30	30	
Unit Cost of Factory Overhead	СОН	USD	0.11	0.11	0.11	
Total Unit Cost (USD)			1.72	2.12	3.21	
Qb Units Produced to Break Even			5626.89	3046.04	1362.96	
	Material	1	0.37	0.78	1.87	
1:3:9 Sanity Check	Mfg.	3	1.12	2.34	5.61	
	Price	9	3.37	7.01	16.83	

### Economic Analysis of Original Design (part 2)

Original Design Off the Shelf Parts						
Part	Quantity	Price	Total			
Belt	3	16.58	49.74			
Pully gear	6	13.99	83.94			
Stepper motor	3	74.81	224.43			
DC motor	1	12.78	12.78			
1 inch shaft	5	4.34	21.68			
Collar	12	2.93	35.16			
Ball Bearing	12	8.02	96.24			
1/4 in Screw	25	0.33	8.33			
1/4 in Nut	25	0.32	8.00			
Pressure Reg.	1	22.5	22.50			
Pillow Block	2	13	26.00			
Planar gear	4	30.02	120.08			
Purchased Parts Total Cost	per Unit		708.88			
Orig	inal Design Cus	tom Parts				
Part	Quantity	Price	Total			
Mounting Plate	1	8.12	8.12			
Bar Linkages (Plate)	4	10.36	41.44			
Wrist Joint	1	8.64	8.64			
Proximal Finger	2	1.78	3.56			
Medial Finger	4	1.72	6.88			
Distal Finger	2	2.12	4.24			
Mounting Plate (Grippers)	1	3.21	3.21			
Custom Parts Total Cost pe	r Unit		76.09			
		Unit Price	784.97			

Total Cost Economic Analysis of Original Design Including Purchased Parts and Considering Unique Part Quantity per Robotic Arm

Re-Design Off the Shelf Parts							
Part	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price				
Belt	3	16.58	49.74				
Pully gear	3	13.99	41.97				
Stepper motor	3	74.46	223.37				
DC motor	1	12.78	12.78				
1 inch shaft	3	4.34	13.01				
Collar	5	2.93	14.65				
Ball Bearing	12	8.02	96.24				
1/4 in Screw	16	0.33	5.33				
1/4 in Nut	16	0.32	5.12				
Pressure Tubing (1ft.)	2	0.53	1.06				
Pressure Reg.	1	22.5	22.50				
Purchased Parts Total Cos	st per Unit		485.77				
	Re-Design Cust	om Parts					
Part	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price				
Shoulder Mounting Plate	1	7.50	7.50				
Bar Linkage	2	15.03	30.07				
Wrist Joint	1	8.16	8.16				
Shoulder Mount	1	7.89	7.89				
Gripper Fingers	2	2.61	5.21				
Wrist Motor Shaft	1	5.72	5.72				
Motor Adaptor	3	5.97	17.90				
Custom Parts Total Cost p	er Unit		82.45				
		Unit Price	568.22				

Total Cost Economic Analysis of Redesign Including Purchased Parts and Considering Unique Part Quantity per Robotic Arm

# Assembly Drawings of Product

Attached are the assembly drawings of the product listed in the table below in the following order. All drawings have been updated including dimensions and GD&T.

Drawing Assembly	Revision
Arm	В
Base	В
Bar Linkage	В
Wrist	В
Gripper	В

Drawings	by	Subassembly

# Dimensioned Orthographic Drawings for Custom Parts

The custom parts each have dimensioned orthographic drawings. The table below is a list of the drawings in order. Each drawing is updated with proper dimensions and GD&T.

Drawing Component	Revision
Motor Adapter	В
Bar Linkage	В
Wrist Joint	В
Wrist Motor Shaft	В
Mounting Plate for Gripper	В
Gripper	В

Redesign:	Custom	Drawing	List

REV. DESCRIPTION DATE ITEM NO. QTY.	
	PART NUMBER
A INITIAL RELEASE 04/15/2022 1 1	BASE ASSEMBLY
BCHANGE TO SUBASSEMBLIES04/18/202221	BAR LINKAGE ASSEMBLY
	WRIST ASSEMBLY
$A \qquad \qquad$	GRIPPER ASSEMBLY
C ISOMETRIC VIE	ĒW
	MARS ROVER'S ROBOTIC ARM UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO MCEN 5045
MICHAEL DECAPUA CHECKED BY	
PROPRIETARY AND THE INFORMATIO	A A
6 5 4 3 2	ION IN PART OR AS A WHOLE WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.







REV.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
А	INITIAL RELEASE	15-04-2022
В	SOFT GRIPPER MODULE HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED	19-04-2022

ITEM NO.	PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QTY.
1	4.01	PRESSURE REGULATOR	1
2	4.02	MOUNTING PLATE	2
3	4.03	SOFT GRIPPER FINGER	1
4	4.04	PRESSURE TUBE	2





**ISOMETRIC VIEW** 

### NOTES:

- 1. ITEM 3 IS PLACED ONTO THE BASE OF ITEM 1 USING AHDESIVES
- 2. ITEM 2 IS CONNECTED WITH ITEM3 USING ITEM 4 (PRESSURE TUBES).



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