

# Measurements and Simulations of Ultra-Low Emittance and Ultra-Short Electron Beams in the Linac Coherent Light Source\*

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## Abstract

The Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS) is an x-ray Free-Electron Laser (FEL) project presently in a commissioning phase at SLAC. We report here on very low emittance measurements made at low bunch charge, and a few femtosecond bunch length produced by the LCLS bunch compressors. Start-to-end simulations associated with these beam parameters show the possibilities of generating hundreds of GW at 1.5 Å x-ray wavelength and nearly a single longitudinally spike at 1.5 nm with 2-fs duration.

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Free-electron lasers (FELs) hold great promise as tunable, high-power, coherent sources for short-wavelength radiation. Several x-ray FEL projects are being developed worldwide as next-generation light sources [1–3]. A key requirement in realizing x-ray FELs is a high-brightness electron beam that possesses high peak current and very low transverse emittance. The design of these advanced light sources typically assumes a bunch charge of  $\sim 1$  nC in order to reach sufficient peak current to drive an x-ray FEL. However, due to the strong interaction of the bunch self-field throughout the accelerator, creating and preserving a low-emittance bunch at such a high charge is a tremendous challenge. In this paper, we experimentally demonstrate the generation of ultra-low emittance and ultra-short electron beams when operating the LCLS injector and accelerator in a low-charge mode. Although the bunch charge used in these experiments ( $\sim 20$  pC) is much lower than the standard case of 1 nC, the final bunch length is compressed to  $\sim 1$   $\mu\text{m}$  by magnetic bunch compression, resulting in an ultra-short bunch with beam brightness higher than the conventional design at 1 nC charge. Simulations suggest such a bunch is capable of generating intense x-rays in the LCLS undulator with a few femtosecond pulse duration and hence may open up new parameter regimes for the LCLS and other x-ray FEL projects under consideration. A similar operating mode, although at a much lower bunch charge of  $\sim 1$  pC, has also been suggested in Ref. [4], and efforts are underway at the Paul Scherrer Institute to develop an ultra-low emittance source at low bunch charge [5].

The LCLS accelerator has been operating since April of 2007. The injector [6] and main linac [7] have been fully commissioned and have already produced an electron beam with adequate brightness to drive the x-ray FEL. The high-brightness electron beam will be transported into the FEL undulator starting in early 2009. During the 2008 commissioning phase, the electron bunch was fully characterized at several different operating points, including a high charge mode (1 nC), a more routine setting (0.25 nC), and also a very low charge

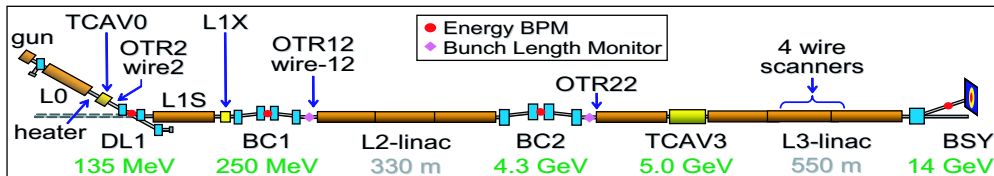


FIG. 1: LCLS 1-km accelerator layout showing gun, off-axis injector, BC1 and BC2 compressors, and various linac segments. The undulator (not shown) is 400 m off scale at right.

level (0.02 nC). Although the machine operates well at 0.25 nC with a transverse normalized emittance of  $<1 \mu\text{m}$ , there is also growing interest in a much lower bunch charge, where femtosecond pulses may be possible and injector emittance levels down to  $0.14 \mu\text{m}$  have recently been observed at LCLS (see Table I).

TABLE I: Measured LCLS parameters for 20-pC and 250-pC bunch charge.

Parameter	20 pC	250 pC	unit
UV laser energy on cathode	1.5	20	$\mu\text{J}$
UV spot diameter on cathode	0.6	1.2	mm
UV pulse duration (full)	4.0	6.5	ps
Injector bunch length (rms)	1.3	2.5	ps
Initial peak current	5	30	A
Injector slice norm. emittance	0.14	0.6	$\mu\text{m}$
Injector proj. emittance	0.20	0.7	$\mu\text{m}$
Final bunch length (rms)	$\sim 3$	$\sim 30$	fs
Final peak current	$\sim 3$	$\sim 3$	kA
Final proj. norm. emittance	0.4	1.0	$\mu\text{m}$

The emittance measurements are made using an intercepting  $1\text{-}\mu\text{m}$  thick aluminum screen located about 14 meters downstream of the gun, after acceleration to 135 MeV (“OTR2” in Fig. 1), where the transverse electron beam size is measured using optical transition radiation (OTR) to image the spot onto a digital camera. The field of an upstream quadrupole focusing magnet is varied over several settings while the horizontal beam size is measured on the OTR screen, following the common ‘quad-scan’ method of analyzing the transverse emittance. In addition, an S-band (2856 MHz) RF deflector cavity upstream of the screen (see “TCAV0” in Fig. 1) is used to streak the beam vertically across the screen in order to time-resolve the horizontal emittance as it varies along the 1-2 ps rms bunch length. The horizontal emittance is then sliced up in time and plotted versus the bunch length time coordinate in Fig. 2. The central core of this ‘time-sliced’ emittance is then measured at a constant 20-pC bunch charge as a function of the rms UV laser spot size on the cathode (1/4 of its diameter for a uniform distribution) and plotted in Fig. 3.

The thermal emittance is taken from the core time-sliced emittance measurements at

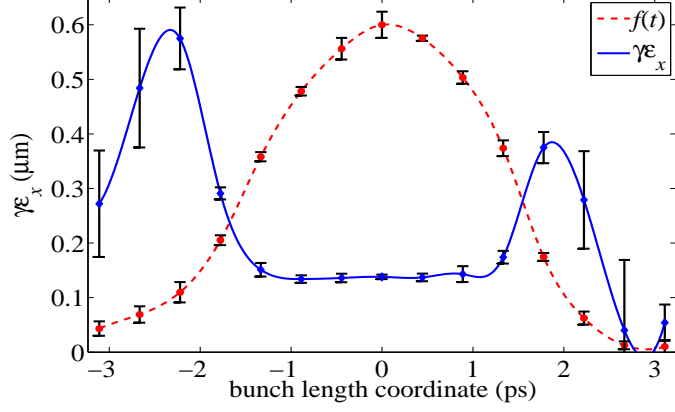


FIG. 2: Time-sliced horizontal emittance along the length of the bunch at a charge of 20 pC and cathode UV spot diameter of 0.6 mm (0.15 mm rms). Smooth curves aid the eye and  $f(t)$  is the bunch temporal distribution on an arbitrary scale.

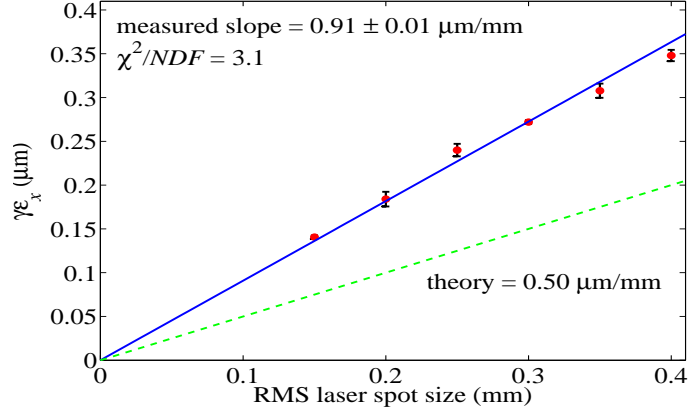


FIG. 3: Measured core time-sliced emittance at 135 MeV versus rms UV laser spot size (diameter/4) on the cathode with a constant bunch charge of 20 pC (red points). The data is fitted to a single parameter: a linear slope with no offset (blue, solid line). The fit gives a slope of  $0.91 \mu\text{m}/\text{mm}$  while the theoretical thermal emittance is significantly less and shown in green (dashed) at  $0.50 \mu\text{m}/\text{mm}$ .

20 pC as a function of laser diameter, assuming space charge forces and external field aberrations can be ignored. The space charge contribution is minimized by measuring at low charge and also by time-slicing the emittance.

Figure 3 shows measurements of the core time-sliced emittance vs. the laser rms spot size at a constant 20 pC charge summarizing the thermal emittance characteristics of the copper cathode in the LCLS gun. The measured thermal emittance is given as the slope of

the data (0.91  $\mu\text{m}/\text{mm}$ ) and a theoretical slope (see below) is also shown.

The normalized thermal emittance for photoemission from a metal can be shown to be [8]

$$\gamma\epsilon_{thermal} = \sigma_x \sqrt{\frac{\hbar\omega - \phi_{eff}}{3mc^2}}, \quad (1)$$

where  $\sigma_x$  is the transverse rms laser beam size on the cathode,  $\hbar\omega$  is the UV laser photon energy (4.90 eV),  $\phi_{eff}$  is the effective work function of the metal, and  $mc^2$  is the electron rest mass energy. With a measured quantum efficiency of  $6 \times 10^{-5}$  the effective work function is 4.52 eV. Eq. (1) then gives an expected thermal emittance of 0.50  $\mu\text{m}/\text{mm}$ , as shown in Fig. 3. This is approximately half the level of the measured thermal emittance, which may be due to cathode non-uniformity as well as a small contribution from space charge. This result is consistent with previous measurements using RF guns performed at BNL [9]. It is interesting to note that recent measurements made with a DC gun [10] are in much better agreement with Eq. (1). Work is in progress to understand these differences.

The low charge electron bunch of 20 pC, with laser set for a 0.6-mm diameter, has also been accelerated in the SLAC linac to 13.6 GeV and compressed in length through the BC1 and BC2 magnetic chicanes (see Fig. 1). The emittance is measured at an energy of about 10 GeV in the last 200 m of the linac using four wire-scanners (see Fig. 1). Each 20- $\mu\text{m}$  diameter Tungsten wire is stepped through the electron beam over 20-30 pulses at a bunch repetition rate of 30 Hz and a downstream ion chamber records the intercepted beam signal as a function of wire position in order to reconstruct the averaged transverse beam profile at each of the four wire-scanners. The ‘time-projected’ emittance is then calculated based on the four measured beam sizes using the known electron optics between scanners. The emittance is then measured at each setting of the L2-linac (see Fig. 1) RF phase, as shown in Fig. 4, which varies the energy chirp along the electron bunch and thus varies the final bunch length after the BC2 compressor chicane.

At nearly the same time, the signal from a photodiode, with bandwidth 1.0-2.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , is measured at each L2-linac RF phase setting. The photodiode is illuminated by the coherent optical transition radiation (COTR) of another OTR screen located just downstream of BC2 (see “OTR22” in Fig. 1), where the extremely short bunch passes through the OTR foil radiating coherently at wavelengths longer than the bunch length. The photodiode signal is plotted in Fig. 5 as a function of the L2-linac RF phase indicating that the bunch is compressed to its minimum length, or maximum COTR power, at  $-34.5^\circ$  (maximum

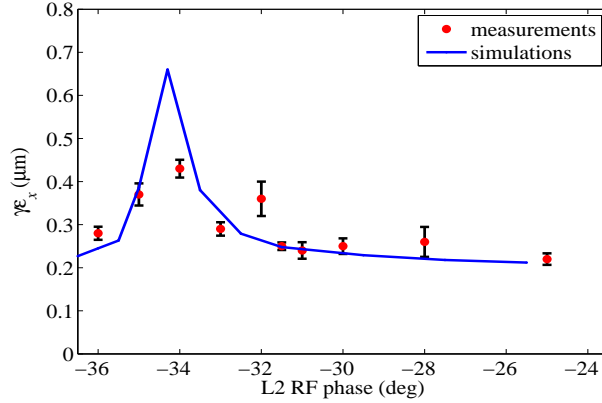


FIG. 4: Measured and simulated projected emittance at 10 GeV versus L2-linac RF phase with a bunch charge of 20 pC.

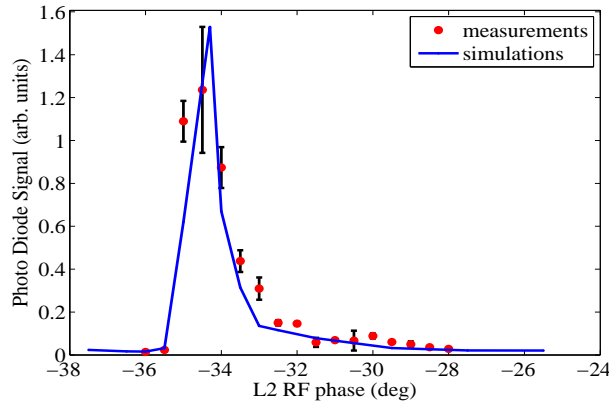


FIG. 5: Measured and simulated photo-diode OTR signals just downstream of BC2, versus the L2-linac RF phase with a bunch charge of 20 pC. Minimum bunch compression occurs at about  $-34.5^\circ$ .

acceleration at crest phase of zero).

Start-to-end computer simulations were carried out from the photocathode to the entrance of the undulator using *IMPACT-T* [11] and *Elegant* [12] with 1 million macroparticles. *IMPACT-T* tracks the particles from the photocathode to “OTR2”, including 3D space charge force. The initial distribution is based on the measured laser shape, which was longitudinally Gaussian and transversely uniform in these low charge conditions (Table I). A thermal emittance of  $0.14 \mu\text{m}$  is adopted according to the measurements. The simulated slice emittance at “OTR2” agrees well with the measurement shown in Fig. 2, especially in the core part of the bunch.

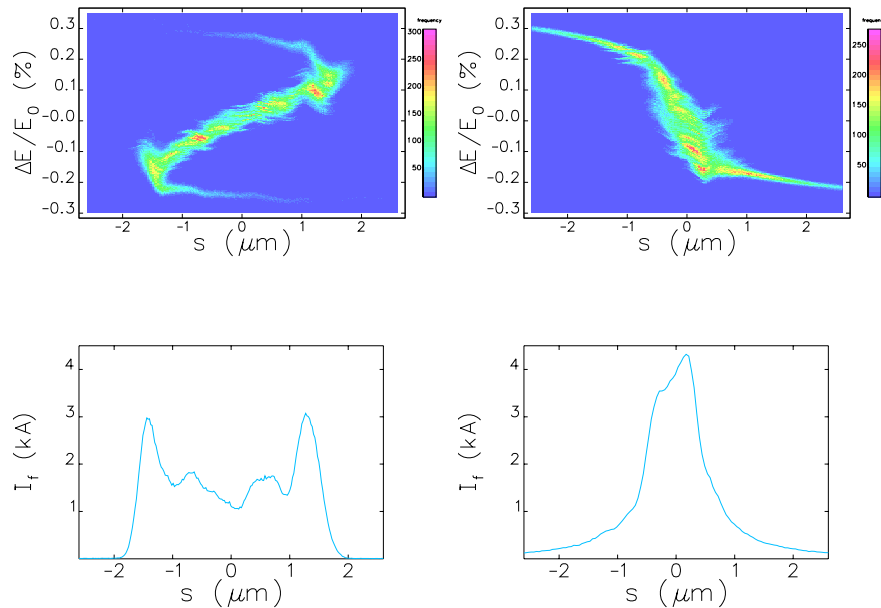


FIG. 6: Longitudinal phase space at OTR22 after under-compression (top left) and over-compression (top right), and the corresponding current profiles below. The L2 RF phases for the two compression modes are at  $-33.5^\circ$  and  $-35^\circ$ . The bunch head is to the left.

The output particles from *IMPACT-T* are smoothed in the longitudinal phase space to reduce high-frequency numerical noise for subsequent *Elegant* simulations. These particles are then tracked through DL1, linacs, BC1, BC2, and the Linac-To-Undulator transport beamline to the entrance of the undulator. *Elegant* simulations include linear and nonlinear transport effects, a 1-D transient model of CSR, and longitudinal space charge effects, as well as geometric and resistive wake fields in the accelerator. The horizontal emittances from simulations at 10 GeV are shown in Fig. 4, with an rf phase shift of  $-1.5^\circ$  to fit the experimental data. This phase shift may come from rf drift during the few hour measurement session, where feedback loops are not operable at the very low charge setting. A particle truncation of 6% was applied to the bunch tails to obtain projected emittance values in simulation which are comparable to measurement methods. These simulations confirm that the transverse emittance is reasonably well preserved, even at maximum bunch compression. This mild emittance growth at full compression is quite different from the sharp emittance growth observed at 250 pC charge [13], presumably due to the much lower charge.

Since the compressed bunch length is not directly measurable at a  $1\text{-}\mu\text{m}$  level, we compare

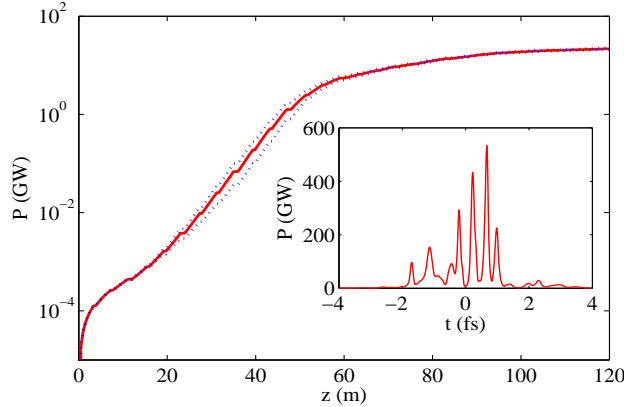


FIG. 7: *Genesis* simulation at 1.5 Å. The average FEL power (solid line) and the rms fluctuation (dashed lines) along the undulator. The inset plot shows a snapshot of a typical 2-fs FEL pulse at 100 m. The RF phase of L2-linac is  $-35^\circ$  in simulations.

the photodiode signal with the integrated bunch form factor over the detector wavelength range (1 to 2.5  $\mu\text{m}$ ) from the simulated particle distribution at “OTR22”. The simulation results are scaled vertically to fit the detector signal (see Fig. 5). The same phase shift of  $-1.5^\circ$  is also applied to the simulation results. As shown in Fig. 6, when the bunch is under-compressed (phase  $> -34.5^\circ$ ), the current distribution shows sharp spikes at bunch head and tail. When the bunch is over-compressed (phase  $< -34.5^\circ$ ), the head-tail spikes disappear, forming a more Gaussian bunch, and the coherent signal drops sharply. These different temporal shapes lead to the asymmetry of the photo diode signal in Fig. 5. The reasonable agreement between measurements and simulations for these OTR signals show that the minimum bunch length may be below 1  $\mu\text{m}$  for this very low charge scenario.

The macro-particles dumped from *Elegant* are used as an input for the *Genesis*1.3 [14] FEL code to evaluate the FEL performance. The longitudinal wakefield in the undulator is negligible at this low charge and is not included in these simulations.

In order to generate very short x-ray pulses, it is advantageous to operate BC2 in the over-compression mode where the current is higher in the central part of the bunch instead of the double-horn current profile from an under-compressed bunch. This can be achieved when operating L2-linac at  $-35^\circ$  (hereafter the phase represents the experimental phase, which is  $-1.5^\circ$  shifted from simulations). At this phase, *Elegant* tracking shows that a fwhm bunch length of about 1  $\mu\text{m}$  with a peak current above 3 kA can be expected at the undulator entrance. The horizontal emittance in the high-current bunch core is increased to  $\sim 0.5 \mu\text{m}$



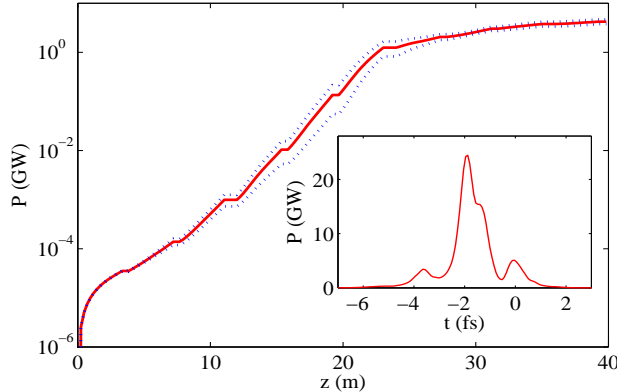


FIG. 8: *Genesis* simulation at 15 Å. The average FEL power (solid line) and the rms fluctuation (dashed lines) along the undulator. The inset plot shows a snapshot of a typical 2-fs FEL pulse at 25 m (inset). The RF phase of L2-linac is  $-35.5^\circ$  and L3-linac is switched off in simulations.

due to CSR when this ultra-short bunch transports through the Linac-To-Undulator (LTU) beamline, while the vertical emittance (not measured here) remains at the  $0.2 \mu\text{m}$  level. As shown in Fig. 7, the x-ray power at  $1.5 \text{ \AA}$  saturates at about 60 m of undulator length, well within the LCLS total undulator length (132 m). The inset plot also shows a typical FEL power profile near the end of the LCLS undulator approaching 500 GW with a fwhm x-ray pulse duration of about 2 fs. The integrated photon flux is about  $3 \times 10^{11}$  for this 2-fs x-ray pulse with 3% statistical fluctuation. This fluctuation has its origin in shot noise startup and does not take into account machine jitters. The x-ray pulse length can be varied by adjusting L2-linac rf phase (*e.g.*, operating at  $-35.5^\circ$  instead of  $-35^\circ$ ), the simulated x-ray pulse is then about 5-fs with almost the same number of photons.

When the LCLS is operated at a beam energy of 4.3 GeV (turning off L3-linac), soft x-ray photons of 800 eV (1.5 nm in wavelength) will be produced. Due to this longer radiation wavelength and hence stronger slippage effect in the undulator, a single x-ray spike with full longitudinal coherence may be expected. In the over-compression mode, with the L2-linac phase setting at  $-35.5^\circ$ , the *Genesis* simulation in Fig. 8 shows the 1.5 nm FEL may reach saturation at  $z = 25 \text{ m}$  with a nearly single longitudinal spike of 2 fs duration. The integrated photon flux is about  $2.4 \times 10^{11}$  with 20% statistical fluctuation at this saturation point.

In summary, we have shown the extraordinary brightness of a low charge bunch produced by the LCLS injector and accelerator. FEL simulations indicate such a bunch may generate

hundreds of GW of hard x-ray power at 1.5 Å and nearly a single longitudinal spike of 2 fs at 1.5-nm wavelength. Such high-power, ultrashort x-ray pulses may open up new applications in many areas of science. In addition, the achieved beam brightness may enable a more compact design of a future hard x-ray FEL facility, where a much lower-energy linac than the LCLS and a shorter-period undulator can be envisioned to drive a hard x-ray FEL.

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