



Director's view: December 2019

Message from the Director and Manager

Welcome to the latest edition of the Institute's termly newsletter, which is an update and highlights some of the many excellent activities at the Institute.

There have been many recent significant Institute achievements, some attracting major media attention (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/news>) , too many to mention all of them, so please scroll down for all of our termly updates.

Here are some of the key highlights from the past 3 months:

New world-leading facility for UCL Neuroscience gains planning approval

UCL is delighted to announce that conditional planning permission has been granted for a new [£281.6m state-of-the-art facility, which will be home to UCL Neuroscience](#).

The plans will transform the site at 256 Gray's Inn Road, London, bringing together research scientists, clinicians and patients to create a world-leading hub for dementia and neurological disease research. Take a look at our [What's new](#) pages on the IoN intranet for the latest 3D virtual fly-through and artist's impressions of the new building.

Launch of the UCL Queen Square Motor Neuron Disease Centre

The new [UCL QS Motor Neuron Disease Centre](#) brings together world-leading research groups spanning the spectrum of basic discovery science, translational and experimental medicine and clinical research

Early Career promotions

Huge congratulations to [this year's successful promotion candidates](#). We now have 12 new Senior Research Fellows and one Senior Teaching Fellow effective October 1, 2019. The success of our staff represents the huge amount of talent they share and their commitment to furthering the field of brain sciences. Successful promotion at UCL is a major achievement. Please scroll down for further details about the promotions process

All of these achievements have been realised by your collective hard work, which is critical in enabling the Institute to continue to be highly successful across its full range of activities including education, basic science and translational science.

The Institute is completely dependent on all your fantastic ideas, innovation and hard work. Wellbeing, work-life balance and Dignity at Work are crucial aspects of maintaining our high productivity and performance.

We hope you have an enjoyable and well-deserved break and a happy new year!

Michael & Hélène

Launch of the UCL Queen Square Motor Neuron Disease Centre



ION Executive away day

The Annual IoN Executive Away Day was held on 5th November 2019 at the Academy of Medical Sciences: highlighting the achievements of Clinical Divisions and Departments, and our partnership working with colleagues across UCL, UCLH and beyond.



Professor Olga Ciccarelli is appointed as the Head of the Department of Neuroinflammation



Olga took up the position on 1st November 2019. Olga will continue to lead the successful programmes in MS research. In addition she will work with colleagues across IoN and UCL to develop a new strategic plan to enable the development of new neuro-immunology science programmes that will cut across neurological diseases.

New Associate Director of UK DRI at UCL

We're pleased to announce that Professor Karen Duff has been appointed the new Associate Director of the UK DRI Centre at UCL.

Professor Jonathan Schott named ARUK's first Chief Medical Officer

National dementia research charity Alzheimer's Research UK (ARUK) has appointed Professor Jonathan Schott as the charity's first ever Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

New fellowship/PhD programme

[Academic Neurorehabilitation PhD programme](#): UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology and the Wellington Hospital are delighted to provide a new fellowship scheme for junior doctors.

[Director's Update meeting: September 2019](#)

An opportunity to hear Professor Michael Hanna give an overview of recent developments, followed by Q&A session with Heads of Departments, and view exhibition boards of the new ION-DRI building.

[View the boards and presentations from the Director's update meeting September 2019](#)



Early career promotions announced for 2018-19

Huge congratulations to the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology staff who have been awarded a promotion in this year's promotions round. We now have 12 new Senior Research Fellows and one Senior Teaching Fellow effective October 1, 2019.

Senior Teaching Fellows

- Saiful Islam - IoN Central Administration

Senior Research Fellows

- Charles Arber (Neurodegenerative Disease)
- Dan Bang (Imaging Neuroscience)
- Elliott Bayle (Neuromuscular Disease)
- Andrej Bicanski (Clinical & Experimental Epilepsy)
- James Bisby (Clinical & Experimental Epilepsy)
- James Butler (Clinical & Movement Neuroscience)
- Philip Coen (Neuromuscular Disease)
- Noemi Gallego (Clinical & Movement Neuroscience)
- Louise-Ann Leyland (Neurodegenerative Disease)
- Vincent Magloire (Clinical & Experimental Epilepsy)
- Marina Papoutsaki (Neurodegenerative Disease)
- Marc Soutar (Neurodegenerative Disease)

Important UCL wide announcements



MyHR project is on track to go-live on 5 February 2020

In order to prepare for the launch of MyHR, there will be a MyFinance outage from 3pm on **22 January to 5 February** inclusive. There will also be a change freeze from **16 November to 28 February**. All forms including one-off payments for January payroll have to be submitted to HR Services by the **17 December 2019**.

[Training will be running from November-January.](#)

Please take a look at the [MyHR webpage](#) which outlines key information about the outage, dates and deadlines

REF

The [UCL REF website](#) has been relaunched and is the main resource for UCL REF resources including our internal timetable and FAQ's specific to UCL

- [REF2021 newsletter November 2019](#)

Recent highlights :

- All research staff on grade 7 and above will be contacted about the process to assess the eligibility of UCL research staff for submission to REF2021: staff are encouraged to consult [UCL's Independent Researchers webpage](#) and [Code of Practice](#) for further details
- Individual REF assessment modules for each Unit of Assessment are being migrated into a single module in RPS. The REF team will arrange training on the updated system for appropriate stakeholders following roll-out.

Focus: AthenaSWAN



Senior Promotions

UCL 2019-2020 Academic, Research and Teaching Promotions (Grades 9 & 10) launched on the 22nd October 2019. Detailed UCL timelines are published [online](#) on the UCL HR website. A guide to Early Career promotions is available on the [Faculty website](#)

ION organised a workshop in October 2019 on senior promotions at IoN, delivered by Prof Linda Greensmith. This will be followed in the Spring 2020 by workshops to support junior promotions.

We encourage all Academic, Teaching and Research staff to consult the [Academic Careers Framework](#) and [academic promotions processes](#) to build their CV and track record towards applying for promotions.

Career resources and events

are on the [IoN intranet](#) including:

- [ECR portal](#)
- [Careers event for IoN early career researchers and PhD students: news item and video](#)
- [Recording From Academia to Industry: A Lunchtime Conversation](#)

Women in Queen Square

We have developed [some new webpages celebrating Women in Queen Square](#), and their achievements, including numerous honours and awards in recent years.

Following last year's exhibition: [Women in Queen Square: Celebrating the centenary of Votes for Women in the UK](#)

New look Nature: tribute to Anita Harding

Nature celebrated its 150th anniversary with a new typeface called Harding, named in memory of Professor Anita Harding (joint winner of the Women in Queen Square exhibition vote in 2018).

Anita Harding was an inspirational professor at UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology who made important contributions to neurogenetics before her death at the age of just 42. [Nature website](#)



Our AthenaSWAN Silver application renewal was submitted on 11th December 2019.

Focus: Health & Safety & Lab Operations

New Lab Operations Manager:

Steffy Czieso started in August 2019 and her role includes:

- Management of Health & Safety at IoN
- Support for technical issues, facilities and maintenance
- Lab operations management and support for the ION

Health and Safety:

Keep an eye on the [UCL safety website](#) for general H&S information or the [IoN Intranet safety section](#) where you can also view the H&S committee meeting minutes. Intranet safety pages will be updated with additional information soon.

- IoN is in the final stages of completion of the T100 baseline level
- Reminder - All Risk Assessments have to be recorded on [RiskNet](#)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the SafetyNET website. At the top, there's a banner with the title 'SafetyNET - health and safety at UCL'. Below the banner, there's a text block about UCL's overall objective to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for its staff, students, people we work with and for those who visit. It also mentions that safety is an integral part of UCL's culture and is managed in the way in which UCL's activities are managed and conducted.

On the right side of the page, there are several links and icons:

- Use RiskNET**: An icon of a wrench.
- Find out more about RiskNET tool**
- Safety Alerts**: An icon of a person inside a circle.
- A-Z of UCL safety guidance**
- Time4Safety**

On the left side, there are two images: one showing a group of people outdoors and another showing a close-up of a hand holding a tool.

Recent Lab Operations activities

- PAT testing of electrical equipment and inspection/calibration of gas monitoring systems in QSH and 1WS are currently being carried out.
- A Technical Managers Team has been set up at IoN. The team will meet monthly to discuss lab and safety related topics.
- An IoN green LAB team has been set up and we are still looking for more green lab champions from each department.

If you have any safety related questions or would like to join the Technical Managers group or the ION green LAB team please email s.czieso@ucl.ac.uk

Focus: Professional Services awards



Congratulations to staff who were nominated. You're all winners to us!

The finalists have been shortlisted by a panel of internal UCL judges and the winners were revealed at a ceremony on 10 December.

Further information: [UCL Professional Services awards](#)

Focus: Wellbeing

- Think outside the inbox - [Take the challenge](#)
- [Yoga at IoN](#)
- [New Economics Foundation](#): Five ways to improve your wellbeing
- [Every Mind Matters quiz](#)
- [Let's talk about loneliness 18th December 2019](#)
- [UCL Krav Manga classes](#)



IoN wellbeing champions (L-R): Jacky Bauer, Linda Taib, Jenny Lange

- [IoN Intranet wellbeing pages](#)

Newly awarded grants over £500k

Alzheimer's Association

- **Professor Schott (Department of Neurodegenerative Disease)** awarded £5,465.44 for a project "UK Birth Cohort, Harnessing seven decades of prospective data collection to understand the causes of cognitive decline and dementia: a deep phenotyping study of the British 1946 birth cohort" starting 1st October 2019 for 48 months

Apollo Therapeutics LLP

- **Professor Rohan de Silva (Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences)** awarded £732,918.00 for a project "Exploiting MAPT-AS1 natural antisense transcripts for therapeutic reduction of tau" starting 1st December 2019 for 24 months.

European Commission

- **Dr Dominic Bach (Department of Imaging Neuroscience)** awarded 1,998.750 euros for a project "ActionContraThreat" starting 1st October 2019 for 60 months.

Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

- **Dr Kin Mok (Department of Neurodegenerative Disease)** awarded £1,034,265 for a project on 'Fox Genetic Diversity in PD Program: Genome wide Association Study in Parkinson's Disease among East Asian' commencing on 1st September 2019 over 24 months.
- **Professor Henry Houlden (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded £701,592.02 commencing on 1st July 2019 for 36 months.

MRC

- **Dr Andrea Cortese (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded £1,263,901.62 for a project “The AAGGG repeat expansion in RFC1 associated with late-onset ataxia and sensory neuropathy: from genetic cause to defining the functional mechanism” starting 1st August 2019 for 48 months.

NIH

- **Professor Mary Reilly (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded \$5,373,267 million, approx. \$1,059,982 million to UCL for a project “Accelerate Clinical Trials in CMT” starting 1st May 2019 for 60 months.
- **Professor Mary Reilly (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded approx. \$5 million, \$1,199 million to UCL “Inherited Neuropathy Rare disease Consortium” starting 1st September 2019 for 60 months.

UK Dementia Research Institute

- **Dr Frances Wiseman (UK Dementia Research Institute)** awarded £1,310,100 as part of the “DRI Core Award” commencing on 19th August 2019 for 60 months.
- **Professor Karen Duff (UK Dementia Research Institute)** awarded £5,115,000.00 as part of the “DRI Core Award” commencing on 1 September 2019 for 60 months.

UK Dementia Research Institute Limited via King’s College London

- **Dr Jonathan Rohrer (Department of Neurodegenerative Diseases)** awarded £381,000 for a project “Developing biomarkers for a clinical trial of AAV9-GRN patients” started 1st January 2019 for 36 months.

Wellcome Trust

- **Professor Elizabeth Fisher (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded £2,444.366 for a project “Synaptic, Cellular and Neural Circuit Dysfunction in Down Syndrome” starting 1st October 2019 for 60 months.
- **Professors Ule and Luscombe (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** awarded £2,273,712 for a project ‘RNA-scaffolded RNP condensation, its physiologic regulation, and therapeutic modulation’ starting 1st January 2020 for 60 months.
- **Sir Henry Date Fellowship, Wellcome Trust**
Dr Peter Kok (Department of Imaging Neuroscience) awarded £1,098,771 -‘How expectation shapes perception: from cortical layers to brain-wide networks’ starting 1st January 2020 for 60 months.

Funding opportunities :

[Major Research Funders](#) including [Wellcome](#) and [MRC Internally Managed Calls](#) [Internal Funding Schemes](#)

Congratulations!

We're pleased to announce the following recent prizes and awards:



Annual Education prizes 2019: announced at the Annual Address.

- Miss Helene Marie (Nina) El-Bacha, MSc Clinical Neuroscience, Haymon Gorlov Prize
- Dr Karen Suetterlin, MRC Clinical Training Fellow, receiving the Queen Square Essay Prize 2019 from Professor Michael Hanna (left hand image top)
- Dr Sabhat Iqbal, MSc in Clinical Neurology, receiving the Hugo James Ross Prize 2019 from Professor Michael Hanna (left hand image below)
- [Annual Address news item](#)



Co-Heads of Department awarded Alexander Morison medal in successive years



Congratulations to Professor Sarah Tabrizi, who has been awarded the Alexander Morison medal from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE).

This is the first time the medal has been awarded to colleagues from not only the same institute, but co-leaders of the same department, following Professor Nick Fox's award last year.



[Professor Sarah Tabrizi receives Yahr award at World Congress of Neurology 2019](#)

Professor Sarah Tabrizi was presented with the award for her contribution to Huntington's disease (HD) research after giving the 2019 Yahr Award Lecture.



[Professor Michael Hanna elected to Council of Academy of Medical Sciences](#)

We are delighted to announce that Professor Michael Hanna (Director, UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology) has been elected to the Academy of Medical Sciences Council



[UCL supported startup Kalgera awarded £100k by Nesta and joins the Open Up 2020 Challenge](#)

Kalgera, a personal finance platform for older or vulnerable people developed by Dr Dexter Penn (UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology), is a finalist in The Open Up 2020 Challenge run by Nesta Challenges in partnership with Open Banking Limited



[Dr Rimona Weil awarded Vera Down grant to assist research into neurological disorders](#)

Dr Rimona Weil's project will use a multimodal approach to identify markers of disease activity in Dementia with Lewy Bodies. A critical gap is the lack of quantitative metrics of disease activity that will be vital for new clinical trials as they emerge. She will use advanced neuroimaging and blood biomarkers combined with clinical metrics.



EDMOND J. SAFRA
PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION

[UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology chooses Eoin Mulroy for Class of 2022 Edmond J. Safra Fellow](#)

The Michael J. Fox Foundation's Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders has selected five neurology physicians for the Class of 2022, the programme's fifth class, from top neurology programmes across the world.

[Dr Mina Kim receives MS Society's Innovative Award to translate research into early diagnosis of MS](#)



We're delighted to announce that Dr Mina Kim (Senior Research Associate, UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology) has received the MS Society's Innovative Award to translate research into early diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis

Innovative Award is dedicated to assist highly innovative, high-risk, high-reward research which, if successful, can make a real difference to the lives of people with MS

[IoN academics cited in global list of influential researchers](#)

Forty-five academics are included in Clarivate's 'Highly Cited Researchers 2019' list, which recognises authors of the most influential research papers around the world, including several researchers from UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology

[Professor Rickie Patani profiled in Lancet Neurology](#)



The profile emphasises the importance of family, public engagement, and improving the public understanding of research, including his Lab's work on human-induced pluripotent stem cell models.

#MadeAtUCL campaign: vote for UCL discoveries

UCL has launched the public phase of its major new campaign #MadeAtUCL to celebrate over 100 disruptive discoveries pioneered by some of the university's leading researchers.



Examples of discoveries at UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology which are impacting on people's lives every day include:

- [Can old drugs perform new tricks?](#)
- [Silencing the Huntington's disease gene](#)
- ['Join Dementia Research' – getting the public involved](#)
- [UCL behavioural therapy transforms lives of stroke victims by helping them to read again](#)
- [Making technology widely available to understand how our brain works](#)
- [Using innovative technology to protect older adults' finances](#)

Winners of the vote and celebratory activities will be announced in January 2020.

[See more IoN news](#)

New Starters and staffing news

Welcome to the following staff who joined ION in the past 3 months:

Dr Luigi Agro, Mr Oliver Vikbladh, Mr Lucas Souza Franca, Dr Marta Perez Gonzalez, Mr Benito Maffei, Dr Gloria Romagnoli, Miss Elizabeth Arram, Dr Chris Foulon, Dr Joni Petteri Teikari, Mr Henry Watkins, Dr Fotios Foukalas, Dr Alberto Calvi, Miss Ilinca Ureche-Angelescu, Ms Vasilisa Skvortsova, Mr Nadim Atiya, Ms Nadine Dijkstra, Miss Letitia Maria Schneider, Miss Danielle Trout, Dr Catharina Zich, Ms Alyssa Costantini, Miss Hana Heid, Miss Sian Aggett, Dr Patrick Cullinane,

Miss Marte Theilmann Jensen, Miss Shania Ibarra, Dr Hamish Crerar, Dr Yau Mun Lim, Miss Olivia Attrebi, Ms Eszter Katona, Mr Scott Wilson, Miss Naomi Hannaway, Dr Dominik Bach, Dr Javier Rueda-Carrasco, Dr Kathleen Penicud, Dr Stephanie Fowler, Dr Aoife Kiely, Dr Cara Croft

Academic retirements: Professor Martin Brown, Professor Simon Shorvon

Shihan Jayasuriya, Institute Officer retirement

After 28 years at IoN and 30+ years at UCL, we said goodbye to Shihan, who retired in August.



Welcome to our new Institute Executive Officer: Sandra Porteous, who joined us from MRC Prion Unit at UCL.

We wish our colleagues who have recently left IoN all the very best for the future.

TOPS update

- [TOPS newsletters](#)
- [TOPS Faculty update](#)
- [TOPS Faculty blueprint](#)

Please see IoN Vacancies for opportunities at IoN

Recent Queen Square Events

Inaugural UCL Queen Square Annual Motor Neuron Disease Symposium and the Launch of the UCL Queen Square Motor Neuron Disease Centre 6th September 2019:

The Symposium was heavily oversubscribed, with over 200 attendees, including representatives from major charities (including the MND Association), the MRC, Journal Editors, the MHRA, as well as several Industrial companies, many of which

generously sponsored the event. Attendees came from across the UK, as well Europe (Italy, Denmark, Netherlands) and the USA.



[IoN news item](#)

Institute's Annual Address 1st October 2019

This year's annual address, held on 1st October 2019, began with a review of the year's successes presented by Professor Michael Hanna, Director of UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology.

Professor Hanna showcased wide-ranging examples of IoN's research impact, from the launch of a new high-dose aphasia service and research into microbleeds and anti-coagulation in stroke, to gene therapy in epilepsy, MS-STAT2 trial and MRI in MS prognosis, anti-sense studies at LWENC, work with Genomics England, and the 1946 cohort study in dementia

- [Infographic 2019 highlighting key data of the Institute](#)



“Antisense technology makes sense for neurological diseases”

Dr C Frank Bennett delivered this year's annual address on antisense oligonucleotide-based therapy (ASO) in neurological diseases. Dr C Frank Bennett is Senior Vice President, Research & Neurology Franchise Leader, IONIS Pharmaceuticals Inc and is co-recipient of the 2019 Breakthrough Prize for Life Sciences and recipient of the 2019 Leslie Gehry Brenner Prize for Innovation in Science.

- News item and slides: · [Annual Address: October 2019](#)



Mary Sweeney Memorial Lecture 17th October 2019

We are delighted to report on a successful Inaugural Mary Sweeney Lecture. Introduced by Professor Michael Hanna, Professor Sir Doug Turnbull, Director of the Wellcome Centre for Mitochondrial Research, Newcastle University, gave a lecture to a packed auditorium entitled “The Complex Neurogenetics of Mitochondrial Disease”.

- [IoN news item](#)



[UCL World Stroke Day Forum 29th October 2019](#)

This World Stroke Day, we invite Stroke Survivors to the UCL World Stroke Day Forum: a free half-day event of interactive workshops, discussion groups and talks centred on the latest developments in Stroke Research and Rehabilitation.



Please see our [Public Engagement pages](#) for other recent events

10th anniversary symposium for MRC Centre for Neuromuscular Diseases at Royal College Physicians, 8th November 2019



[Institute of Sensorimotor Neuroscience \(ISMN\) inaugural lecture: Professor Marc Schieber 14th November 2019](#)

We are pleased to launch the new Institute of Sensorimotor Neuroscience (ISMN), a cross-departmental virtual network of sensory and motor neuroscientists at UCL.

[General Neurology for the Specialist: UCL Queen Square Division of Clinical Neurology Away afternoon](#)



The UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology's Division of Clinical Neurology is the academic home for both ION academic neurologists and NHNN neurologists. The division aims to promote academic research and teaching and provide ongoing education for all neurologists. To achieve the latter aim the division runs the very popular weekly Gowers round and a yearly half day meeting on "General Neurology for the Specialist". The most recent one was held on 28th November 2019.

Sir Victor Horsley Lecture 2019 - Professor Christopher Honey 5th December 2019
"Challenging neurosurgical dogma: neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and a new disease."

Annual Director's Christmas drinks, 11th December 2019

Another enjoyable drinks evening was held in the Courtyard, Mary Ward House Conference and Exhibition Centre



Upcoming Queen Square events

[UCL IoN Movement Disorders Centre Inaugural Symposium: Launch of the UCL Movement Disorders Centre](#)

9am to 6pm, 11 March 2020

Queen Square Inaugural Lectures

Venue: Basement Lecture Theatre, 33 Queen Square

First lecture at 5pm and the second at 6pm followed by a wine reception

Please RSVP to qsioneventsrsvp@ucl.ac.uk

- **Tuesday 25th February 2020**, from 5pm:
 - Professor James Kilner (Professor of Human Motor Neuroscience, Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences): title tbc
 - Professor Ludvic Zrinzo (Professor of Functional Neurosurgery, Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences): title tbc
- **Tuesday 10th March 2020**, from 5pm:
 - Professor David Choi (Professor of Neurosurgery, Department of Brain Repair and Rehabilitation): title tbc
 - Professor Parashkev Nachev (Professor of Neurology, Department of Brain Repair and Rehabilitation): title tbc

[See more IoN events](#)