

Director's view: July 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. We have been honoured to be awarded [£5m from The Sigrid Rausing Trust](#), one of the UK's largest philanthropic foundations to create a new Neurogenetic Therapies Programme to build on advances in understanding the genetic basis of neurodegenerative diseases, and significantly speed up their translation into effective treatments.

We installed a [State of the Art 7 Telsa MRI scanner](#) at the Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging on the 25th May, the culmination of years of planning at the Centre.

We set-up the UCL Queen Square Motor Neuron Disease Centre, which brings together world-leading research groups spanning the spectrum of basic discovery science, translational and experimental medicine and clinical research. Our aim is to be a leading international centre for MND, engaging with national and international partners and the UK's leading centre for multidisciplinary training of basic and clinical scientists in MND. The Centre will be officially launched at its Inaugural Symposium on 6th September.

We continue the detailed planning for our new state of the art ION/DRI Building at Gray's Inn road. We are now well into RIBA Stage 4 planning. Updates on progress can be found on our dedicated [building pages](#), including the latest Architect's impressions and a 3D virtual fly-through of the proposed new building: check it out!

Last but not least, huge congratulations on [this year's successful promotion candidates](#). We now have six new Professors, one new Associate Professor, and three new Principal Research Fellows. 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, [Academic Careers Framework](#) and [Early Career promotions \(grades 7 & 8\)](#).

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. This is why we thought our newsletter this month should focus on [Wellbeing](#) and [Dignity at Work](#).

As an Institute we take pride in fostering a positive cultural climate where all staff and students can flourish and be their authentic selves. Unfortunately where unacceptable behaviour does exist, it can have a real impact, and it can be difficult to know how to challenge it. The Institute is proud to join UCL in asking our community to come together and say Full Stop.

We hope you have an enjoyable summer break,

Michael & Hélène

[**UCL research into genetic therapies for dementia boosted by donation from The Sigrid Rausing Trust**](#)

“Driving promising ideas through the development process and into clinical trials as quickly as possible is absolutely vital if we are to deliver much-needed advances against dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases. I am very excited that this new funding will enable us to expand and accelerate the translation from lab to clinic.” Professor Michael Hanna

[**State of the Art 7 Telsa MRI scanner installed at the Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging**](#)

On 25th May, an ultra-high field magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner was delivered to the Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging (WCHN),

the culmination of years of planning at the Centre.



Senior Academic, Research and Teaching Fellow 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 encourage all Academic, Teaching and Research staff to consult the [Academic Careers Framework](#) and [Early Career promotions \(grades 7 & 8\)](#) to build their CV and track record towards applying for promotions; speak to your Head of Research Department and your line manager. If you don't try, you don't get! We will circulate further details on the applications process nearer the time.

The following promotions are effective from 1st October 2019.

Professors:

- Dr Parashkev Nachev, Professor of Neurology
- Dr Rohan De Silva, Professor of Molecular Neuroscience
- Dr Michael Lunn, Professor of Clinical Neurology
- Dr Rickie Patani, Professor of Human Stem Cells and Regenerative Neurology
- Dr Helene Plun-Favreau, Professor of Cellular Neurodegeneration
- Dr Rosaline Quinlivan, Professor of Neuromuscular Disease

Associate Professor:

- Dr Pedro Machado

Principal Research Fellows:

- Dr James Jepson
- Dr Emma Matthews
- Dr Robert Pitceathly

Focus - Dignity at Work



The Institute fosters a positive cultural climate where all staff and students can flourish and be their authentic selves

The Executive Committee have undertaken the "Taking the Lead" training; some research departments and ION Central Administration have had "Where do you draw the line" training, which will be rolled out to all remaining IoN research departments. Our students have had the Zero Tolerance training as part of their induction week. Further Taking the Lead training will also be rolled out to senior investigators in due course.

Check out our [DAW Poster](#) which can be printed and signposted in all common areas. Further information:

- [UCL Full Stop Campaign](#)
- [Report and support tool](#)
- [Dignity at Work webpages](#)

Focus - Professional Services awards



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

- **Personal Excellence Award:** Helene Crutzen
- **Outstanding individual contribution to achieving our mission:**
Alex Addo

- **Outstanding team contribution to achieving our mission:**
- Distance Learning in Clinical Neurology (Anna Foakes, Sophie MacLeod, Tim Young, Amit Batla);
- Academic Model Project (Secondees) (David Blundred);
- ION-DRI New Building (Kully Sunner and Lee Stanyer);

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

ESRC

Professor Sebastian Crutch (Department of Neurodegenerative Diseases) awarded a grant of £3,436,003 over 60 months from 1st January 2019 for a project entitled “The impact of multicomponent support groups for those living with rare dementias”.

Medical Research Council

- **Dr Marc Busche (Department of Neurodegenerative Diseases)** awarded a grant of £1,185,199 over 48 months from 1st May 2019 for a project entitled “Cellular and circuit mechanisms of Alzheimer’s disease”.
- **Dr Helene Plun-Favreau (Department of Neurodegenerative Diseases)** awarded a grant of £850,581 from 1st July 2019 for 36 months for a project entitled ‘Elucidating early stage ALS pathomechanisms that drive mitochondrial dysfunction’.
- **Dr Ahmed Toosy (Department of Neuroinflammation)** has been awarded £708,222 for ‘A 5 year prospective follow-up clinical and imaging investigation of demyelinating clinically isolated syndrome (CIS)’ from 1st June 2019 over 48 months.
- **Professor Mike Hanna (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases)** has been awarded a MRC Strategic Award ‘to establish an International Centre for Genomic Medicine in Neuromuscular Diseases’ totalling £3,214,179 from 1st June 2019 over 60 months.

The Sigrid Rausing Trust

Professor Nick Fox, Professor Michael Hanna and Dr Adrian Ivinson awarded £5,000,000 from 1st August 2019 over 60 months to establish new gene targeting Centre.

UK DRI Ltd

- **Professor Bart De Strooper (UK Dementia Research Institute)** awarded a grant of £628,000 by DRI Ltd from 1 April 2019 for 12 months.
- **Professor Karen Duff (UK DRI UCL, Associate Director)** has been awarded a grant of £5,115,000 as part of the DRI Core Award to the Hub at UCL from 1st September 2019 over 60 months.

Wellcome Trust

Dr Parashkev Nachev (Brain Repair & Rehabilitation Department) awarded £4,557,665 for a ‘Programme for High Dimensional Translation in Neurology’ for 48 months from 1st June 2019.

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:



[Professor Ray Dolan wins Royal Society award](#)

Professor Ray Dolan has been awarded the Ferrier Medal and Lecture, which is given for distinguished contributions on the structure and function of the nervous system. Professor Dolan, who won the €1m Brain Prize in 2017, has been awarded the medal for his work charting the brain activity related to fundamental aspects of human motivation and behaviour.



[Professor Rothman elected Fellow of the Royal Society](#)

Three UCL researchers and an honorary professor have been elected Fellows of the Royal Society in recognition of their outstanding contributions to science.



[Professor Michael Hanna and Professor Rob Brownstone join prestigious academy fellowship](#)

Seven UCL researchers, including two from UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, are among 50 new Fellows elected to the Academy of Medical Sciences in recognition of their outstanding contributions to medical science.



[Dr Marc Aurel Busche named as Future Leaders Fellow](#)

Five UCL academics, including Dr Marc Aurel Busche, UK Dementia Research Institute at UCL, UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, have been named as future leaders in science and research



[BPS honours researcher into how the brain becomes self-aware](#)

Sir Henry Dale Fellow at UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, Dr Stephen Fleming, is set to receive the 2019 Spearman Medal, the British Psychological Society's (BPS) premier early-career award for researchers.



Professor Giampietro Schiavo elected member of the Venetian Institute of Science Literature and Art

We are pleased to announce that Professor Giampietro Schiavo (Department of Neuromuscular Diseases, UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology) has been elected a foreign member of the Venetian Institute of Science Literature and Art



Royal College of Physicians Excellence in Patient Care Awards 2019

- The Distance Learning Clinical Neurology Team were shortlisted for the Medical education and training award
- Aberrant intron retention in ALS (AIRiALS) team were shortlisted for the *The Lancet* research award

Bogue Fellowship awarded to Ms Nazish

Ms Nazish, a PhD Student at Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences and Reta Lila Weston Institute working with Dr Rina Bandopadhyay, Dr Jennifer Pocock and Prof John Hardy, is a recipient of the prestigious Bogue Fellowship. The fellowship, awarded in May 2019, will fund Iqra a 2-month trip to NIH in the laboratory of Dr Mark Cookson to work on her PhD project on LRRK2 and immune cell functioning. Iqra will be spending her time at NIH from 7th October to 6th December 2019.



"UCL has provided me with a unique opportunity to pursue my passion for neuroscience at the Institute of Neurology under the excellent guidance of my supervisors, Dr. Rina Bandopadhyay and Prof. John Hardy. I am very excited to be granted this Bogue Fellowship which has opened new doors for me to broaden my research into Parkinson's disease in another internationally renowned centre, National Institute of Health USA, and contribute to new discoveries."

Sustainability awards

The following teams received awards at a ceremony on 18th July.

- IoN admin - Office Bronze
- DRC - Office Bronze
- HPF Labs - Labs Silver
- 4th floor IoN Labs - Labs Bronze
- Neuromuscular Diseases (Brownstone, Greensmith and Schiavo) - Labs Gold
- DRI Labs Cruciform - Labs Bronze
- Cortexlab - Labs and Office Silver



UCL Innovation and Enterprise awards

[Kalgera](#) Founder Dr Dexter Penn received special commendation from UCL Vice Provost Dr Celia Caulcott at the Awards Ceremony on 5th June 2019.

[Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging Public Engagement awards](#)

WCHN's first ever annual Public Engagement Awards took place on 12th April to celebrate the centre's public engagement activity over the past year & name those who have been especially instrumental.



The Education Team would also like to highlight the following [Teaching Awards 2019](#)

[See more IoN news](#)

New Starters and staffing news

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

Miss Abda Bibi; Miss Ione Karney; Mrs Lindsay Hemsley; Mr Luiz Fernando Almeida Silva; Miss Aberami Chandrakumar; Mr Paul Sharp; Dr Liam Mason; Miss Gabrielle Sheehan; Mr Yu Yan; Miss Storm Anderson; Miss Yue Wu; Mr Adam Keeler; Dr Julie Vallortigara; Dr Zehra Yilmaz; Mrs Malgorzata Murray; Mr Prasanth Sivakumar; Miss Flora Lee; Miss Hanya Benotmane; Dr Reza Maroofian; Mrs Amarjit Sagoo; Mrs Dolapo Anifowoshe; Mr David Orme; Miss Hannah Kelly; Miss Helen Rice; Miss Tamar Freiburger; Miss Demelza Smeeth; Dr Yael Hacohen; Miss Amber Strang; Dr Ariana Gatt; Miss Barbara Frias Garrido; Mr Le Zhang; Dr Samuel Harris; Dr Ludovica Zaccagnini; Miss Orjona Taso; Ms Elena Ghirardello; Dr Eoin Mulroy; Dr Anna Latorre; Ms Sara Javidnia

New IoN Lab operations manager

We're delighted to announce that Stephanie Csiezo joins us on 1st August 2019.

Shihan Jayasuriya, Institute Officer retirement

After 28 years at ION and 30+ years at UCL, we say goodbye to Shihan, who will be retiring in August.

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

TOPS update

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

[Please see IoN Vacancies for opportunities at IoN](#)

Recent Queen Square Events

Queen Square Inaugural Lectures
Monday 17th June 2019

- **Professor Jeremy Chataway** (Department of Neuroinflammation) *Accelerating drug discovery for multiple sclerosis*
- **Professor Raj Kapoor** (Department of Neuroinflammation) *Trialling Multiple Sclerosis*



- [Inaugural lecture news item](#)

[20th annual Queen Square Symposium 2019](#)

The 20th annual Queen Square Symposium took place on Friday May 29th 2019 in UCL Institute of Education. Over 50 students showcased their exciting research projects in the fields of clinical neuroscience, cognitive and behavioural neuroscience, imaging, electrophysiology as well as molecular neuroscience.



[Reta Lila Weston Institute 50th Anniversary Symposium](#)

A special symposium was held on 10th June 2019 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Reta Lila Weston Institute of Neurological Studies. This celebrated the achievements and staff of the Institute since its opening in 1969, and highlighted future research directions.



[Wolfson Closing Symposium: Intervening in Neurodegeneration, 19th June 2019](#)

This event celebrated the achievements of the Leonard Wolfson Experimental Neurology Centre (LWENC) research programme. Although the overall programme comes to an end this year, the LWENC Clinical Research Facility has been adopted by the BRC, the Fluid Biomarkers Lab by the DRI, and the PhD programme by Eisai and a continuing donation from the Wolfson Foundation. We look forward to seeing what the next phase of these projects brings and are immensely thankful to the Wolfson Foundation for their extremely generous award which made all this possible.

You can watch the Symposium at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=calqGP4wzAk>



Queen Square Summer Concert 28th June 2019

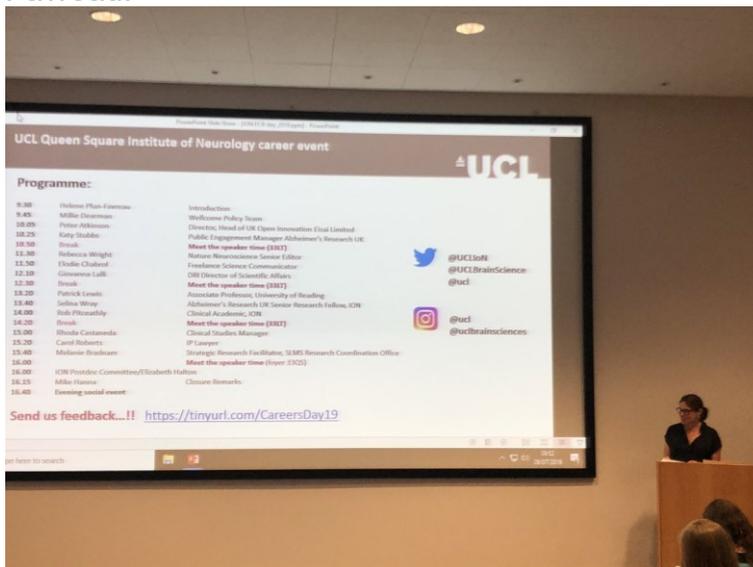
An evening of music sponsored by Queen Square Imaging Centre held in the Art Workers Guild, including a piano recital by Shihan Jayasuriya, followed by a reception with drinks & canapés hosted by Queen Square Imaging Centre. All proceeds went to the Ladies Samaritan Society.



[Careers event for IoN early career researchers and PhD students, 9th July 2019](#)

This was an opportunity to hear from a range of speakers working in different sectors including; charity, industry, academia and scientific writing, and find out about their career trajectories. The day was introduced by Helene Plun

Favreau.



The sessions are now available on a [YouTube webstream](#)

[Annual Director's summer drinks](#)

Another enjoyable drinks evening was held on Thursday 11th July 2019 in the Courtyard, Mary Ward House Conference and Exhibition Centre



[Queen Square Advances in Mitochondrial Medicine 2019](#)

We are delighted to announce that we livestreamed our one day course on 16th July 2019 providing an update on Queen Square NHS England Rare Mitochondrial Disorders Service. Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcyahi6R3LvU4vwoTdSFcmg>



Upcoming 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

[Programme and registration](#)

Institute's Annual Address

“Antisense technology makes sense for neurological diseases” by Dr C. Frank Bennett, PhD, Senior Vice President, Research & Neurology Franchise Leader, IONIS Pharmaceuticals Inc, USA

Tuesday 1st October 2019 at 5.30 pm.

33 Queen Square Lecture Theatre followed by a reception.

RSVP to qsioneventsrsvp@ucl.ac.uk by 30 August.

Mary Sweeney Memorial Lecture

Thursday 17th October 2019, from 5pm

Professor Sir Doug Turnbull (Newcastle University)

[See more IoN events](#)



[Email to give your feedback on IoN newsletter](#)