1. Rachel Brown, PhD student

Rachel has recently been awarded her PhD on Batten disease. She joined the LMCB in October 2012 and left in September 2015 to take up a full-time position at the Academy of Medical Sciences.

‘I joined the LMCB after rotating around a number of different labs in UCL, and was immediately drawn to the department by its friendly and inclusive atmosphere. I was also struck by the extent to which the department encouraged their students (and staff) to engage in public engagement activities and supported us to use our scientific skills and knowledge in other avenues. I became a founder member of the LMCB Skills Exchange. I am particularly grateful for the flexibility and support offered by my supervisor (Sara Mole) and the wider LMCB community to allow me to take 3 months out of my PhD research to engage in a medical science policy internship. I was also appreciative of their keeping in touch with me, their interest in my experience upon my return, and their ongoing support to help me settle back into academia following my brief, albeit intense, placement in a policy environment. I am one of several students in my immediate cohort who have taken different types of internship. This opportunity has been instrumental for my career - I now work as a policy officer in the same organisation.’

2. Rob de Bruin, Group Leader, UCL Senior Lecturer; ASG Co-Chair

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lmb/users/rob-de-bruin

Rob is a Molecular Cancer Biologist whose research focuses on the role of transcription in oncogene-induced replication stress. Rob joined the Department in 2009 as a MRC Career Development Fellow, and secured a proleptic appointment as a Senior lecturer in 2012, which he took up in 2014. With the support of the Director he was able to bridge fund his research until a six year CRUK Programme Foundation Award in 2015. He is married with four young children and lives in Cambridge.

“Juggling work and family life with four young children is enormously challenging. My long commute (>2 hours per day), which could be seen as a disadvantage, actually provides me with a couple of hours of peace and quiet to finish most of my work, which is acknowledged by the department. I work flexibly, and usually leave at 16.22 (every minute counts) unless there is a
regular (e.g. Monday seminar) or occasional special activity that requires me to stay later. This is viewed as such normal behaviour that when I do stay late for a special event, it is commented on. In addition, the supportive and collegiate atmosphere at the LMCB creates a dynamic environment that allows me to optimise the time I spend at work. The value of a sabbatical is appreciated and I have twice benefitted from sabbaticals to California. This allowed me to maintain strong collaborations with scientists based in the USA, and my best publications are a direct result of these periods. I have also appreciated the support of the Director and others as I prepared my documents for the current UCL Senior Promotion round, results will be announced in the summer. Overall the flexible working arrangements have enabled me to be productive at work whilst maintaining a healthy work-life balance.”
4. Yanlan Mao, Group Leader, ASG

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lmcb/users/yanlan-mao

Yanlan is a biologist studying the effects of mechanical forces on tissue growth and repair. Yanlan was encouraged to apply to the LMCB and supported by a 3 year UCL Excellence Fellowship from 2013 before being awarded an independent 5-year MRC Career Development Award Fellowship in March 2014. She has taken maternity leave (7 months) and has recently returned to work full time.

'I am so grateful for the encouragement and support given to me that enabled me to establish my lab at the LMCB. As an independent fellow, I was concerned about how having a child would affect my productivity. Although I took an official leave of 7 months, I chose to work from home the whole time, keeping up with paper revisions, data progress from my lab members, etc. 3 months into my maternity leave, I started returning to work 1 day a week, using my 10 ‘Keeping in Touch’ days. Mark (Director) has been very supportive throughout, which has made the process much easier. My daughter is at UCL’s nursery now I have returned to work full time. I appreciate the convenience of this onsite facility and the continued flexible working that the LMCB provides to keep up with the pace of science.’