Faculty Focus - March 2020

Spotlight on....

Professor Gaetana Laricchia

Gaetana Laricchia is a Professor of Physics, and Head of the Positron and Positronium Scattering group, in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at UCL.

Professor Laricchia has a long association with UCL. Born in Apulia, Italy, not far from Cannae (the site where Hannibal inflicted a major defeat to the Roman army in 216 BC), Gaetana has spent around 2/3 of her life in London and 40 years at UCL where she was both an undergraduate and a postgraduate student, obtaining a PhD in 1986.

Read Gaetana's full profile here.

News, Announcements and Updates

Sun explorer spacecraft launches successfully

The European Space Agency's Solar Orbiter, which carries instruments proposed, designed and built at UCL, launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida.
MAPS academic helps launch All Party Parliamentary Group
Professor Lucie Green (MSSL) has helped to establish a new All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) aiming to influence policy on light pollution in order to improve the quality of our night skies and reduce the negative effect on our communities and wildlife.

Reminder - Change of Bank Holiday
This year, the May Bank Holiday will take place on Friday 8th May, instead of the first Monday in May as usual. This is to coincide with the 75th Anniversary of VE day. Make sure to update your calendars!

Three UCL academics appointed to UK Research and Innovation council
Professor Hiranya Peiris (UCL Physics & Astronomy), Dr Lasana Harris (UCL Psychology & Language Sciences) and Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock (UCL Physics & Astronomy) are three of the 16 new council members appointed by UKRI.
Faculty Highlights

MAPS professors commemorate 200th anniversary of the Royal Astronomical Society
Professors Hiranya Peiris and Andrew Pontzen appeared on the RAS's new monthly podcast, discussing event horizons, the creation of black holes, and the mystery of dark matter.

[Read more on the Cosmoparticle website.]

Faculty Postgraduate Prize winners announced.
Many congratulations to Luke Pratley, winner of the 2019 Faculty Postgraduate Research Prize, and to Hayley Goold, winner of the 2019 Faculty Postgraduate Taught Prize.

[Read the full story on the MAPS website.]

MAPS in the Media

Artificial virus to attack antibiotic-resistant infections
An artificial virus capable of attacking superbugs infections resistant to antibiotics has been bioengineered by a team of researchers including PhD student Katharine Hammond and Professor Bart Hoogenboom (UCL Physics & Astronomy), reports the Daily Express.

[Image of Daily Express]

UK not prepared for a pandemic
Public Health England would be overrun if the COVID-19 coronavirus reached pandemic levels, especially as most factories for crucial supplies are in China or Southeast Asia, explains Dr Gordon Woo (UCL Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction) in The Times (£). [Image of The Times]
Female astronaut’s record vital for space travel beyond the moon

Dr Francisco Diego (UCL Physics & Astronomy) explains to ITV News that the record 328 days in space set by Christina Koch “is very important, we need to gain experience in long-term duration in space, in low gravity, because that’s what will happen when we go beyond the moon.”

Events

Game-changing Women of Colour at UCL
30th March

Women’s Higher Education Network has collaborated with colleagues at UCL to bring together all self-identifying women and non-binary staff members from across the university to share experiences, and to build networks for support.

It is open to WHEN members who are employed by UCL. If you are not a member, join us today!

Full event details

Women in STEM Wikithon
2nd March

As part of International Women’s Week we will be hosting a Wikithon to increase the presence of female and underrepresented groups in our research fields.

The Wikithon will be run/hosted by Alice White, The Digital Editor of the Wellcome Trust Collection, and Jess Wade, who was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to gender diversity in science.

Register to take part via Eventbrite here
Your Universe Festival
6 March (A level pupils), 7 March (public)

This Friday and Saturday, UCL Physics and Astronomy will run their 'Your Universe' festival, celebrating 30 years of the Hubble Space Telescope. Friday is reserved for school students, but Saturday is open to the public and will include stalls, activities and talks.

Find more details, and register, here

Do you have an upcoming event you'd like to see listed here? email for details

UCL UG Open Days
Fri 19 & Sat 20 June
More information to follow.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

On Friday 27 March 2020, UCL MAPS and Engineering Science Faculties will hold a discussion forum on Challenging power dynamics in academia.

The event will be open to all staff - from senior academics to professional services and post-docs - and is a joint endeavour between the MAPS and Engineering faculties. Research also shows that within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields, different forms of harassment and bullying have gone unchallenged for too long, resulting in a detrimental effect on the careers and lives of members of our communities, mostly women and colleagues from ethnic minorities.

In this event, we aim to generate an open and constructive conversation on the power dynamics that foster unacceptable behaviours in our academic and work environments within our Faculties and in the wider STEM communities, and what we can do about it.

For full information, and to reserve a space, visit the Eventbrite page here

Enterprise

Innovation and Enterprise events

We are pleased to announce a new call for applications to the EPSRC and STFC IAA schemes opening on 6 March, with a closing date of 20 March.
For details of the funding schemes, visit
the UCL Innovation and Enterprise page here.

Training and Development

Courses for Consultants.
UCLC is now running internal courses for academic and professional services staff, regarding carrying out consultancies at UCL. Sessions cover Financial Awareness, Stakeholder management, client engagement and more.

Find more details on the UCLC website.

UCL LinkedIn Learning
A huge range of video tutorials supporting learning in software, creative and business skills – all free to UCL staff and currently enrolled students. UCL has now migrated Lynda.com content to the LinkedIn Learning platform. You can find out more on the Digital Education blog.

Submit your news: what would you like to hear about?
If you have any upcoming events that you like to be promoted to MAPS Faculty staff please let us know.

Feedback on the faculty newsletter
Thanks to those who completed the UCL MAPS Internal Communications Survey. We have tried to take your comments on board when putting this newsletter together.
We are keen to make sure that this addresses your needs so please let us know how we can continue to improve.