

## Report from the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services)

### 1. Crisis Management in UCL Library Services during the Covid-19 crisis

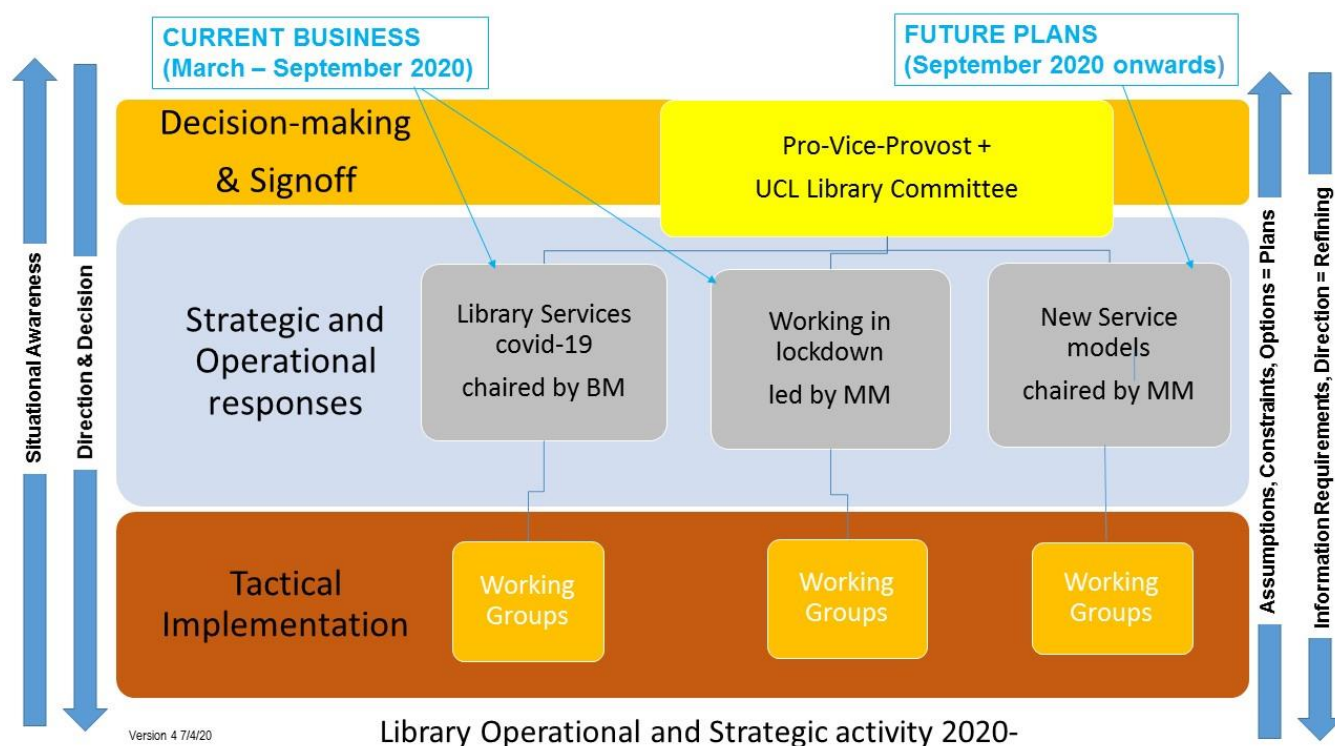


Figure 1: Library's crisis management committee structure

The coronavirus crisis led to lockdown in UCL Library Services, with closure of library sites beginning on 17 March. With Library staff working remotely from UCL, I created a command structure for the Library to see the service through the sudden changes required as a result of lockdown. Two key committees were established as part of Strategic and Operational responses (above). The covid-19 group, chaired by Ben Meunier, consisted of SMT members (without the Pro-Vice-Provost). Its remit was health and safety, HR issues and the successful lockdown of Library estate. Two groups were chaired by Martin Moyle – one to look at service delivery during lockdown and the second to take a longer-term view of new service models in a post-covid world.

For the New Service models Working Group, 6 topics were agreed to be priorities:

1. Electronic-led resource provision to support research and education
2. Digitally-delivered teaching and skills support
3. Fully digital enquiry services, which require a proper enquiry management platform

4. Open Science as the model for research, education, evaluation, reward and engagement
5. Optimization of learning space
6. Research collection strategy in a digital era

All these groups could be fed by Working Groups. Top-level decisions were confirmed by me as Pro-Vice-Provost, drawing on advice and guidance (as necessary) from the Chair of Library Committee.

This structure has been remarkably successful in confirming a team-based approach to discussion and decision making. It allowed decisions to be made quickly, decisions which were informed by expert individual input and relevant data.

The Library also nominated members of Library staff to sit on committees in the Gold-Silver-Bronze command structure established by the Provost. As of 20 April, this representation was as follows for the short-term (Aquamarine) and longer-term Sapphire groupings:

#### **Paul Ayris**

- Aquamarine Silver 4 – Research. Chaired by Professor Alan Thompson (Dean of Brain Sciences)
- Sapphire Silver 3E – Estates, Infrastructure and Place. Chaired by Paola Lettieri and Kevin Argent
- Sapphire Silver 2 – Education. Chaired by Professor Piet Eechout (Dean of Laws)
- Sapphire Bronze 3 – Education Infrastructure. Chaired by Professor Ivan Parkin (Dean of MAPS)
- The Gold Integration Centre (GIC): Blue Team. The ‘Blue Team’, led by Fiona Ryland and Tom Rowson, has been created to ensure that developing plans are tested against a broad range of professional skills and experience. The ‘Red Team’ has been setup to provide additional tension and challenge, always considering other options and approaches.
  - The ‘Blue Team’ will not normally meet formally and/or regularly; instead it will be up to the chairs to engage when a particular piece of work would benefit from review or a professional view point

#### **June Hedges**

- Aquamarine Silver 2 – Remote Teaching Term 3. Chaired by Professor Nora Colton (UCL Arena Centre) – Now stood down
- Sapphire Bronze 2 – Education delivery. Chaired by Norbert Pachler, Pro-Vice-Provost
- Sapphire Bronze 1 – Education. Workstream: Teaching Resources. Chairs: Jo Stroud and Sam Smidt

#### **Peter Dennison**

- Sapphire Bronze – Business Continuity Planning – Students

## **2. New crisis management structure**

As of 8 June, UCL stood the Gold-Silver-Bronze command structure down and replaced it with a crisis management structure geared towards service delivery for the new academic year. 2 key committees, in terms of delivery, are the Education & Operations Delivery Group, and the Research & External Engagement Delivery Group. As Pro-Vice-Provost, I have been made a member of both Delivery Groups. These Groups are being supported by Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups. Two important research groupings will be Research Operations (old Aquamarine Silver 4), chaired by Professor Alan Thompson;

and Research Strategy (old Silver Sapphire 3), chaired by Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker. At the time of writing, further Working Groups are being planned.

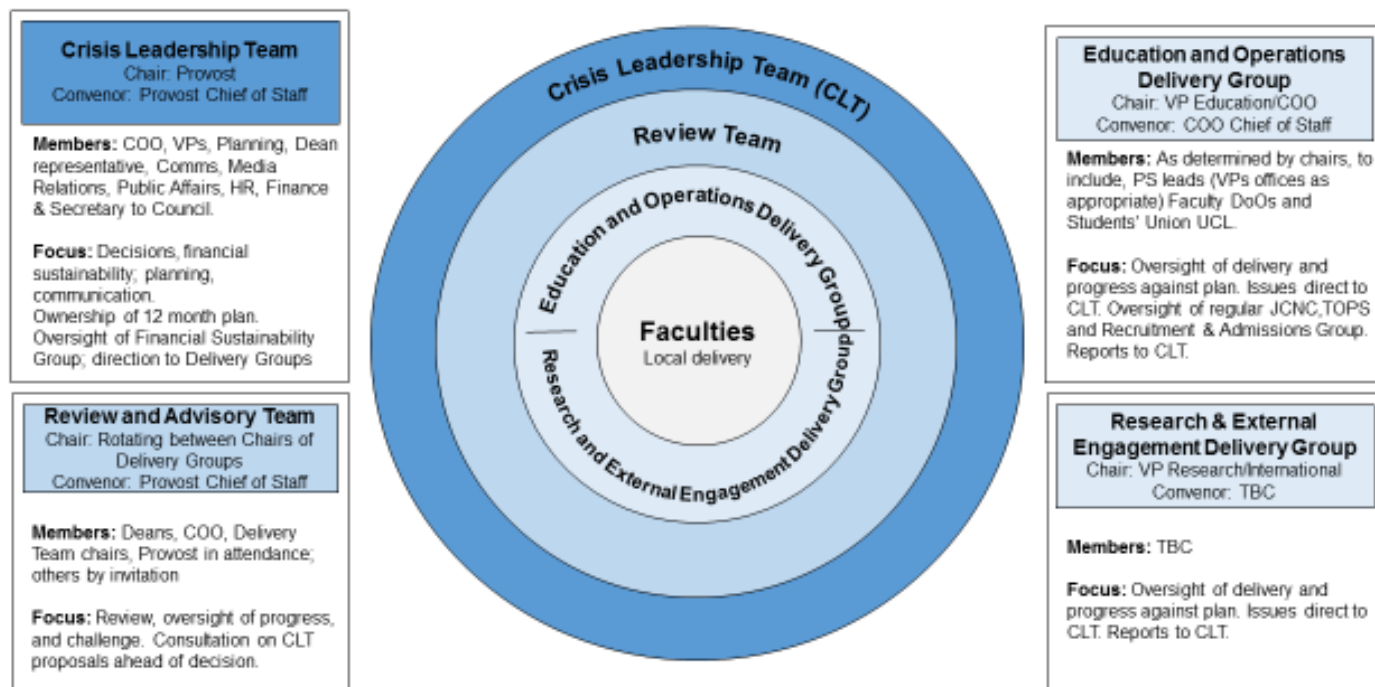


Figure 2: UCL's Crisis Command structure (June 8-)

Report, using the Key Performance Areas of the Library Strategy

### 3. User Experience (contributed by Paul Ayris and Martin Moyle)

#### *Physical Library closures*

Due to the restrictions of the UK-wide lockdown, all physical library sites were closed in March. All sites, except the Student Centre and the Main and Science Libraries were at 17.00 on 17 March. The Main and Science Libraries were closed on 20 March. The Student Centre was closed on 23 March at 23.00.

#### *UCL's Teaching Statement*

An important decision taken by the Gold-Silver-Bronze command structure was the publication of a statement to explain what teaching arrangements will be in place for the new academic year, available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/jun/preparing-new-academic-year>.

This statement stresses that libraries will be open, but this would include digital services and physical opening only where health and safety regulations, and Government rulings, allow it.

Since it is likely that much teaching will be undertaken remotely in Term 1, June Hedges and her teams will be working hard over the summer to ensure that take up of ReadingLists@UCL with as close to 100% of all modules as possible registered in Portico..

#### *UCL Student Centre*

On 3 June, relaxations to lockdown allowed UCL to re-open the Student Centre, but under strict conditions for health and safety, and social distancing. For the Library, this work was led by Amad Uddin. Amad has shared with me feedback from our users on the controlled opening of the Student Centre. I share it with you all here:

"Better than home"

"Change of scenery good for me"

"It's quiet and calm working in this building"

"I can do my conference calls in peace"

"It's nice having the building to myself"

Amad spoke to one user who has given him permission to use the picture (above) and quote:



*"Thank you for the arrangement, it allows me to be more productive due to the space and it being quiet. I came from Singapore in December and was in my small flat working all this time. It's hard working in the flat as it's confined. Working in the Student Centre has enabled me to get more done and lifted my mood, thanks for the support to UCL"*

Professor Zongyi Deng

Professor of Curriculum and Pedagogy

UCL Institute of Education

#### *Book loans and returns*

- All book loans have been extended, currently as far ahead as 30 September. All Library members with outstanding loans were notified by email.
- Recalls, reminders and fines have been suspended.

- Books may be returned in person by drop-off at the Front Lodge; postal returns will also be accepted; but public statements reassure students that books need not currently be returned, and fines are not being charged.
- As part of UCL's phased reopening, a 'Click and collect' service has been devised, to enable books from to be ordered through the Library catalogue for collection in person. The service will initially be available for books held in the Main and Science libraries. It is designed to be extensible to other UCL libraries as the UCL re-opening programme progresses.

#### *Online guidance*

- A guide to making the most of online Library Services was compiled within a few days of lockdown: [Library essentials for students and staff during Covid-19](#) (2,448 pageviews at 09 June 2020).
- This was supplemented ahead of Term 3 with a new guide to online library resources for dissertations and research, aimed at postgraduates and final year undergraduates: [Support for dissertations and research projects](#) (3,303 pageviews at 09 June 2020).
- A new guide highlighting service continuity to our six partner NHS Trusts was created. This included details of an interim service to supply digital copies of journal articles and book chapters from UCL's online collections that would normally require a visit to a physical library, helping to ensure that busy NHS staff are not deprived of access to timely, up-to-date knowledge.

#### *Teaching, skills and outreach*

- All Library training and teaching is being delivered online
- Face-to-face skills programmes are being converted for digital delivery
- Online, interactive induction programme being developed for Term 1
- Special Collections outreach to local schools being delivered through online video (feedback from a Stratford teacher: "...really fantastic... I will be sharing it with some of my colleagues as an example of great virtual teaching practice!")

### **4. Staff, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

#### *Furlough*

In order to protect jobs and to help UCL conserve its cash reserves, the Library contributed to the opportunity for staff (whose jobs had been affected by the lockdown) to be temporarily furloughed. 86 Library staff have been furloughed. The process was managed with great sensitivity by line managers and the Library's crisis management structures.

#### *Communication*

The Library has issued a daily *Newsletter* on weekdays to keep Library colleagues informed of developments and the Pro-Vice-Provost contributes a column each Monday. In Microsoft TEAMS, there is also a chat room with a variety of social activities, such as quizzes. There is also a weekly *Newsletter* sent

to all members of Library staff, which uses Microsoft Sway. As of 5 June, there had been 10 issues of the *Newsletter*.

### *Customer Service Excellence*

The Library has received some excellent news about its Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation. Peter Dennison (supported ably by Kate Cheney, Jonathan Fowles and Bethan Smith) recently underwent the annual CSE 'surveillance' exercise. Informal information from the assessor was that Library Services emerged with full accreditation confirmed, and with the new award of 'Compliance Plus' status in three areas. Compliance Plus is recognition of really outstanding customer-orientated work – in the Library's case:

- Work on supporting disabled users
- Work undertaken on Alma reporting about customer activity, and applying this to service decisions
- Work which the Library has put into improving communication with its customers and developing services during the Covid pandemic.

Formal confirmation is expected soon, which will allow a wider piece of comms activity to inform UCL.

### *EDI issues*

The [UCL statement](#) on 2 June on the terrible issues surrounding the death of George Floyd in the USA has caused some unhappiness amongst Library colleagues. The Provost himself acknowledged that more needed to be done by UCL in his article in [The Provost's View](#) on 9 June. Senior Library staff are reaching out to the whole Library staff to address concerns that have been raised in a series of communications outlining both what the Library is doing to promote EDI and what it hopes to do in the longer term. As the Provost has said: 'While we have made some progress, we recognise that we must go further and have a responsibility to listen and to act'.

## **5. Finance and Management Information**

### *E-textbooks*

To support all teaching in Term 1 which will be undertaken online, the Library has submitted a bid to UCL for extra investment in electronic textbooks, initially with a bid for £1.38m for 2020/21. UCL is poorly supplied with e-textbooks because the prices are so very high. Every year, the Library's book budget allows it to pass 20,000 paper books to the catalogue. Using pricing for Chemistry e-textbooks paid for by the Department, the Library's book budget would allow the purchase of less than 100 e-textbooks. The paper also identified how the bulk of the funding could be found, by using monies saved from VAT on e-resources after VAT was removed from such products on 1 May. The Library still awaits the outcome of this bid.

## 6. Systems, Collections and Processes

### *Online learning resources*

- All uncommitted book monies were dedicated to digital purchasing in support of connected learning, primarily on term 3 teaching and Summer PGT needs.
- A Reading List Enhancement Project is under way, to ensure that, as a minimum, all term 1 modules for 2020/21 are supported by an online reading list which delivers essential digital readings in full text.
- The Library E-Resources team worked with publishers to provide UCL members with access to an additional 157 platforms and databases – some of considerable size, such as the ProQuest platform, which aggregates full text material from more than 50 publishers.

### *New collecting initiatives*

- UCL Press has established a public platform bringing together all UCL publications on Covid-19
- The Records office is scoping a project to collect and retain UCL material created in response to the pandemic, in terms of processes, procedures and formal guidance, for the benefit of future researchers.

### *Click-and-collect*

From 15 June, a click-and-collect service will be available for material from the Main and Science to enable users to order books in advance, to collect them at the Main Library, and to issue them to themselves using the self-issue machines. Reading rooms themselves will **not** be open. It is hoped that the click-and-collect service will particularly support staff and students in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences who have not been able to use the Library's paper bookstock since UCL's libraries closed in March.

### *Digital Library enquiry management system*

Library Services has procured a service-wide licence for LibAnswers, an enquiry management system that will vastly improve our capabilities for handling customer enquiries. It will allow the Library to filter and refer queries to other teams more easily, provide an FAQ database to assist customers with everyday queries, and statistically examine the types and volumes of enquiries received. This information, in particular the methodical collection of customer feedback, will play a vital role in helping to target service improvements in the future and to monitor and plan for peak times. As part of this new software launch, the Library is also aiming to make use of the LibChat chat service available within LibAnswers. It is hoped to have this in place relatively soon to allow customers to interact with the Library in real time – an important feature as UCL continues to work remotely as part of the gradual, phased return to campus. The aim is to have a working platform in place for the new term, with additional elements rolled out in stages.

## 7. Sustainable Estate

### *Green Impact*

UCL Library Services entered 19 entries to the Green Impact Scheme for 2020, out of 42 for UCL as a whole. That points to the leadership Library colleagues are showing within the university in sustainability matters, an important component of the Library Strategy.

Particular thanks are due to the Library's Green Champions, who compiled the submissions and are the driving force behind the Library's success in Green Impact year after year. We are hopeful and await the official announcement of results at UCL's virtual Sustainable Awards event on the 15th July.

### *Closure of the Ear Institute Library*

The Ear Institute Library closed for the last time as a separate UCL library on 17 March. The Ear Institute site is being re-developed and there will be no space for the collections within the Institute building. Long-term plans to refurbish the Ear Institute may provide opportunities to recreate learning space.

Initially, most of the collections will be moved to the Library's Store at Wickford over the Summer. Ultimately,

- A small number of items will be added to the UCL **Cruciform Hub** collection. The Cruciform will become the home library for the UCL Ear Institute, and it is also the home library for healthcare staff and students at the University College Hospital campus. Some audiology books will be added to the **LaSS** (Language and Speech Science) collection due to subject crossover
- Archives (mostly part of Action on Hearing Loss) will be relocated to **Special Collections at the National Archives at Kew**

Two member of staff chose Early Retirement/Termination following the closure of the Ear Institute Library.

## 8. Communication, Outreach & Open Science

These topics are covered in a separate Report on the Library Committee agenda.

PA

10.6.20



## Sapphire Bronze 3E: Digital Spaces for Research and Study

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### Summary:

The \*draft\* paper sets out the direction for a programme of work by Sapphire Bronze 3E in improving Digital Spaces for Research and Study in UCL. The goal is to provide guidance and access to improved facilities that allows research to thrive in a physical and virtual environment (during and after the COVID-19 lockdown) that is in tune with the UCL estate and that supports the increasing adoption of *in silico* research techniques.

The goal is to help ensure that the post-covid return to campus can be a better experience for staff and research students.

### Action required for Silver Sapphire 3

This paper doesn't have any costed proposals. Instead, we ask for feedback/guidance and support on the ideas and plans given before working up forward plans.

### Author/Proponent:

Prof Paola Lettieri, Director for UCL East and Chair of Sapphire Bronze 3E

Prof Yvonne Rogers, Dept of Computer Science

Prof Alexi Marmot, The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment

Dr Paul Ayris, Pro-Vice-Provost, UCL Library Services

Dr James McCafferty, Director of Research IT, ISD

## Introduction

Sapphire Bronze 3E ('Physical and Digital Places for Research') has a remit to think long-term about getting the right physical and virtual environments for UCL researchers.

UCL is already seeing a significant growth in computationally-based research techniques. This short paper pulls together ideas to help support that transition,

especially given that the COVID-19 lockdown has accelerated the adoption of remote online working.

### **Combining the best of Digital and Physical Spaces**

Digital tools and infrastructure are constantly evolving to become cheaper, more omnipresent, and more powerful substitutes or complements for physical co-presence. Digital tools for academic research and innovation can relieve the need for some journeys, with consequent saving of precious time, energy, and carbon emissions, contributing to a more efficient and sustainable university. Yet the physical co-presence of other people remains desirable, powerful, and compelling, perhaps explained by our evolved human biology, our need for nurture, for socially grouped experiences, and for collaboration.

Our physical libraries too need to be re-thought. Historically, they serve as collection spaces. In the brave new world, they have additional roles – as student- and researcher-centric study places, and as the site for collaborations and engagement with new communities. Physical spaces and collections, nonetheless, continue to be an important complement to digital information sources. The best of them convey a sense of respect for learning and thinking, inspiring people to work alongside others even without any direct communication. And they provide the warehouse of unique objects, specialist books and physical archives, preserved under the right conditions for future generations to respect and cherish.

Our physical spaces should provide environments for quiet pursuit of specialisms, for concentration, for secure equipment, for omnipresent digital connectivity. Where possible they can also reveal what they contain. Like the best of museums and art galleries, spaces can utilise the power of physical place to offer glimpses of people working with different tools, in different laboratories, workshops, and maker spaces, thus stimulating curiosity and perhaps inspiring innovation. Physical spaces and tools can be devised to attract people to engage in chance encounters and conversations, to scribble their thoughts and responses on blackboards, whiteboards, smartboards or scraps of paper on noticeboards, or to chat around a well located water fountain, coffee point, or sofa. By utilising spatial design intelligence, routes, transparency vs enclosure, different materials and environmental qualities, physical space can be used consciously to encourage future research and innovation.

It is worth emphasising the opportunity and importance of creating ‘digital twins’ of the campus buildings and outside spaces and the consequent sensor networks and data

processing capacity needed for this. This is important for teaching, research and for estates.

### **Exciting opportunities for collaboration in the digital world**

There have been many digital technologies developed to support remote conversations, working and socialising.

A variety of 'media spaces' were experimented with in the 80s, where audio, video, and computer systems were combined to extend the world of desks, chairs, walls and ceilings. These included the VideoWindow (Bellcore, 1989) that enabled people in different locations to socialize as they would do if they were drinking coffee together in the same room - connected by two 3x5 foot video windows.

Since, a variety of telepresence systems have appeared, including the commercial Beam robot, that enable remote people to attend events and communicate with others by controlling their robot from their own homes. They see the remote place through moving their robot's camera's 'eyes' giving them a better sense of presence. A successful use of telepresence robots has been to enable students who are in hospital to attend school by controlling their assigned robot to roam around the classroom.

VR and AR have also been developed to enable remote people to socialize through moving their 3D avatars in virtual spaces. Online office software, such as Sococo, provide a digital 2D spatial metaphor of a physical space that can be customized to represent someone's lab, classrooms, lecture theatres and so on. Invited people can create a work group; each person that joins is represented by a coloured icon that sits and moves around in this space. Increasing the level of ambience in this way provides a form of 'social translucence' (also called social awareness) where virtual participants and their activities are made visible to one another.

For example, a Sococo-type experience allows each individual to navigate a built environment, visiting colleagues, keeping appointments with tutors, or just hanging out in social spaces. Each person-to-person (or people-to-people) interaction initiates a live video call.



One can easily envisage modelling key UCL locations in this way to facilitate 'signposting' and encouraging interactions, especially when not everyone is on campus. Equally, remote students 'entering' a specific lecture theatre can enjoy the online lecture experience, eg with Moodle and Lecturecast.

For each new innovation the goal is to see if it is possible for people distributed over space and sometimes different time zones, to interact with one another as if they were actually physically present.

## New services from Libraries

The new role of libraries also enables a number of new developments in UCL:

- Re-think the large number of smaller, departmentally-based collections and think of Faculty-based collection and learning hubs where collections can be concentrated, with enhanced opening times as services as a result; use released space for locally-based digital learning and research spaces, which the Library could manage (as it does the Student Centre)
- Develop existing services such as UCL Press to become global services. UCL Press is cutting edge in its Open Access approach – with over 3 million downloads in 243 countries and territories across the globe, sharing UCL's knowledge and wisdom across the globe.

- Underline the unique cultural nature of the 7 kilometres of material in UCL Special Collections and the 80,000+ objects curated by UCL Culture. These are all unique. Digital representations do *not* replace them; rather they complement them and open the user up to a unique cultural experience of handling, say, George Orwell's surviving MSS (a designated UNESCO World Heritage collection). That is research-based learning.

## **Immediate opportunities**

Discussions in the Sapphire Bronze 3E group, have highlighted a number of practical steps which can be taken to support researchers and research groups. This includes:

- Offering digital alternatives/tools to those who would normally (ie not under lockdown) be in the lab or doing field work. And training researchers to get the best out of the digital tools and repositories available.
- Enhancing UCL's research IT facilities (eg High-Performance-Computing, Data Science, AI/Machine Learning, Data Repositories, Render Farms etc.), and proactively sharing facilities wherever possible across UCL.
- Encouraging and on-boarding new UCL disciplines/communities, through training and providing open platforms for the UCL community, eg AI, Data Science, HPC
- Providing/recommending digital tools and online environments to encourage and support collaboration within research groups, eg 'virtual labs'.
- Establishing shared digital spaces for research to enable collaboration across disciplines and institutions. Reaching out to other institutions (eg in London) to set up similar shared collaboration spaces.
- Develop new services, such as pan-UCL curation services for digital objects, film, video and audiovisual materials. A book on a shelf will be available in 100 years time. We cannot (yet) say the same about the digital objects we collect, and to which we give access.
- Continue the development of UCL Press as a leading global OA publisher with an enhanced offering to raise still further the UCL brand across the world.
- Co-ordinate and embed Citizen Science across UCL as a new means of reaching out to the lay citizen to re-define the role of Universities in Society.
- Levelling up – collaborating with smaller institutions to encourage learning and adoption of advanced techniques.

## **Recommendations**

Given the above, the Sapphire Bronze 3E group are keen to progress a number of workpackages.

**Better sharing of digital facilities:** We want to undertake a survey of UCL's existing digital research facilities, across all faculties, identifying UCL-wide needs/gaps. We already have a list of High-Performance Computing facilities, but there will be others (eg digital repositories, render farms, etc) that we should include. We can then start to build communities of 'owners' of similar facilities, providing them with tools to support sharing eg managing access, timeslots, recharging etc.

**Continuing to invest in research IT facilities and digital resources:** COVID-19 is likely to put significant strain on UCL finances, and that may impact investment in UCL's research IT (similar to the recent impacts of the MyHR project on research IT investment) and the purchase of research resources such as e-journals and e-books. UCL needs to secure other sources of investment for its research IT and digital resources, e.g. applying directly for UKRI's forthcoming eInfrastructure awards. It is hoped that the 'Advanced Research Computing' plan recently signed off at SMT will enable that.

**Establishing preferred collaboration tools:** We want to conduct a quick survey of available online tools so we can make recommendations to PIs and research groups on remaining in touch and supporting interworking. (There are many potential tools available eg walkabout, wurkr, pragli, Sococo, Miro, Collaborate, MS Teams apps, electronic research notebooks, Jupyter Notebooks etc). As well as identifying a canonical set, it may then be appropriate to purchase enterprise-wide licences, and configure appropriately. Using a common toolset will also help collaboration across research groups too. We hope to work with the Bartlett (eg 'The Landing' initiative) on options for modelling real buildings in a 'digital world'. We should also work with other G/S/B groups seeking to establish student 'virtual common room' facilities.

**Inputting into UCL's Estates Strategy:** UCL is likely to revisit its Estates strategy and plans given the *new-normals* of the post-COVID world. This represents an opportunity to help shape the 'SMART Campus' agenda with UCL's estates strategy and ensure that digital enablement figures significantly in UCL's estates plans. It will also enable UCL to think about the concentration of library collections into a smaller number of Faculty Hubs with enhanced services, releasing space locally for digitally-enabled learning and research spaces which the Library could manage (as they do the Student Centre). It also provides an opportunity to identify how the unique cultural materials that are housed in UCL are showcased and opened up.

**Experimenting with combined physical/digital research spaces:** The Student Centre is a model space for taught-course students and immensely popular. Before lockdown, UCL Library Services was projecting 5 million visits in the current academic year, making it easily the most-heavily used university library in the UK. UCL does not have an equivalent model for research spaces for PGRs and academic colleagues. The

Senate House Hub would be a prime candidate for a project to test some of the new models mentioned above for research spaces in a digital and physical environment.

***And something special too:*** We do have opportunities to think broader eg UCL East Artists in residence could be invited to explore this area. Remote / automated lab equipment and practices could be an option too: using robots to automate lab and academic support practices works best for activities which are routine, but is more challenging when creating new techniques. We also have an option to hire some Beam-Plus mobile robots to generate and attract interest at the beginning of term.