Dear Alumni,

Many changes may have taken place since your time with us at UCL, both in university life and in the wider world and I hope you'll enjoy reading about some of them here. I also hope you'll be able to come to a Computer Science department Alumni Dinner that we are planning for November 2011. We shall write again with more details after the summer.

**Our work is on-going – but we like to remember past people and events which have shaped the department**

I am sure that many of you have fond memories of the events, places and people that excited and inspired you during your time with us. A favourite lecturer; a memorable seminar; or that great moment when you finally submitted your final year project or thesis. I do appreciate hearing news from our alumni – emails, fabulous letters and photographs from when you were here - we’re always thrilled to hear from you. If you would like to get in touch with us, but are unsure whether the staff you remember are still here, please email Steve Marchant s.marchant@cs.ucl.ac.uk

**Computer Science 30th Anniversary**

Last year, we celebrated the department’s 30th Anniversary and had a splendid dinner party at the Russell Hotel in the summer. Computer Science came to UCL in the early 1970s when it was linked with the Department of Statistics. Then in 1980 the independent Department of Computer Science was formed with Professor Peter Kirstein as its first Head. I am very pleased to say that Peter still has close links and active research projects in the department.

The photograph below was taken in the early summer 2011 – do you recognise any of us? A larger version can be found here
Staff news

I have been very pleased to welcome a number of new academic staff to the department over the past year. **Mark Harman** (Professor of Computer Science) and his colleagues **David Clark, Nicolas Gold** and **Jens Krinke** joined us in August 2010, bringing their expertise in Empirical Software Engineering, Evolutionary Computation, Code Provenance, Quantified Information Flow, Security, Software Testing, Program Slicing and Search Based Software Engineering. We also welcomed **William Shaw** (Professor of Mathematics and Computation of Risk, who joined us in January 2011) and **Srinil Srinivasan** (Professor of Haptics, in December 2010).

I look forward to having further staff join us later this year, including **Niloy Mitra** (Senior Lecturer in Virtual Environments and Computer Graphics from August 2011), and **Yvonne Rogers** (Professor of Interaction Design, who joins us in September 2011).

It is always sad to say goodbye to colleagues, and this past year has seen several academic staff leave for pastures new:

**Simon Prince** (Reader in Vision and Imaging Science). Simon joined us in September 2005 and, although now based largely in Toronto, retains close links with us via his research. **David Rosenblum** (Professor or Software Systems Engineering). David joined us in January 2004 and was instrumental in setting up our MSc Software Engineering. We wish him and his family all the very best for their new life in Singapore. **Anthony Finkelstein** (Professor of Software Systems Engineering, and also Head of Department from 2002 to 2010) has become Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences at UCL, taking over from **Bernard Buxton** (Professor of Information Processing, from 1994 until his retirement in 2010). Last but by no means least, **Soren Sorensen** (Senior Lecturer in the Networks Group) retired after 34 years at UCL, from 1976-2010.

Teaching news

Computer Science teaching goes from strength to strength. In addition to our BSc and MEng programmes in Computer Science, we are planning to offer a new MEng in Mathematical Computation from October 2011. We are also looking forward to some exciting new project-based and problem-solving teaching on our undergraduate programmes next year. In particular, 1st year students will develop their programming skills via a new 'program a robot' module. The picture below shows the prototype.
Students will write code to drive the robot around an obstacle course, culminating in a competition day where a prize will be awarded to the team whose robot performs the best around a maze.

Left is a prototype robot being operated by Professor Mark Handley for our new ‘program a robot’ module.

Computer Science Department Climbs Four Places in Survey

The Complete University Guide, which has been publishing league tables online since 2007, now ranks UCL-CS 4th behind Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial College. The ranking is based on student satisfaction, entry standards, research assessment and graduate prospects. The raw data for the League Table all come from sources in the public domain including; the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

Student news

It is always a pleasure to celebrate student successes, and I was particularly delighted to see the Microsoft Banking Science Algorithmic Trading prize awarded in March 2011 to our 2nd year PhD student Mohammed Ayub Hanif. A news item on our website here shows Mr Hanif receiving his £10,000 prize cheque from Professor Andrew Herbert, Chairman of Microsoft Research in Europe.

New book by Peter J Bentley

Our Honorary Reader, Dr Peter J Bentley is working on another book to add to his string of successes. This time, it’s a popular science book is commissioned by the department. It has the working title ‘Digital Lives’. It’s about computer science and its impact on society and will be on the shelves early 2012. You can follow Peter’s progress via his blog at http://apps.peterjbentley.com/Blog/

***Computer Science Shop – customize your own CS products!***

Buy your own CS clothing and accessories online!

Students design the products and can spend the income in association with the Staff Student Consultative Committee.

Well worth a look here!
Research

Research is vital to the department, and we are very fortunate in having so many world-class computer scientists in the department. Their successes are probably too numerous to mention here, but as a taster, I would like to highlight in particular:

**Neal Lathia** (Software Systems Engineering) has been discovering the habits of Londoners on the move – and has found commuters in London are spending £200m more than necessary on their regular commute. The research analysed data from Oyster payment cards, which many Londoners use for travel on buses, trains and tube. The results show that most commuters’ journeys are predictable and that many Londoners do not buy the cheapest ticket. For example, many use Oyster Pay As You Go when perhaps a seven-day travel card would be cheaper.

Neal has helped to produce a “decision tree” to demonstrate how complicated the fare structure is and how machine learning techniques could be used to help people automatically.

The research was featured on BBC News.

**Peter Bentley** (Intelligent Systems) has developed an iStethoscope iphone app, developed in collaboration with cardiologists, and has received worldwide media attention. He is now creating a challenge for the machine learning community, asking whether machine learning can automatically classify heart sounds to enable patients with heart conditions to be identified more quickly. He is collaborating with a medical device company to exploit the work in a medical device available to all.

And finally...
I’d just like to emphasise how much we appreciate hearing from you, and if you want to keep up to date with news from the department, please visit our website (www.cs.ucl.ac.uk) or email Steve Marchant (s.marchant@cs.ucl.ac.uk)

You can also follow us on Facebook here.

Kind regards,

John Shawe-Taylor
Head of Department
Professor of Computational Statistics and Machine Learning
Director, Centre for Computational Statistics and Machine Learning