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## University College London: Leveraging the Civic Capacity of 'London's Global University'

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University College London: leveraging the civic capacity of 'London's Global University'

**Jean-Paul D. Addie and James Paskins**

## ABOUT UCL

University College London (UCL) is a leading multidisciplinary public research university located in central London. Originally founded on 11 February 1826 as London University, UCL adopted its present moniker in 1836 when working with King's College to inaugurate the federated University of London. While not directly involved in founding UCL (as often attributed), the utilitarian principles of philosopher Jeremy Bentham strongly inspired the University's progressive values and inclusive orientation. The radical founding belief that the university should not be an ivory tower but an institution enabling open educational opportunity was inspired in many ways by UCL's urban context and stood in contrast to the practices of the ancient, religious universities of Cambridge and Oxford. UCL was the first university in England to accept students regardless of their race, class background or religious beliefs, and excluded religious instruction from its syllabus. In 1878, it became the first English university to establish gender equity when accepting students (Harte and North, 2004). The legacy of this inclusive philosophy continues to resonate. Upon being appointed as UCL Vice-Provost (International) in March 2014, Dame Nicole Brewer spoke of her pleasure 'to be coming to the first university in England to admit women on equal terms with men' (Fourniol, 2014).

Following a merger with the Institute of Education in November 2014, UCL is currently organised into 11 constituent faculties that host more than 100 departments, institutes and research centres. The University's decentralised institutional structure facilitates a high degree of departmental autonomy while opening multiple points of interface for its 983 professors and more than 6000 academic and research staff. In 2013–14, the student body totalled 28 859, 46 per cent of whom were pursuing postgraduate degrees. International students constitute over a third of the student body and are drawn from more than 150 countries, with 45 per cent originating from Asia, 30 per cent from within the European Union (EU) and 10 per cent from North America. UCL is the largest employer in the London Borough of Camden.<sup>1</sup> In mid-2013 Camden was estimated to have a population of 229 700, making it broadly comparable to mid-size United Kingdom (UK) cities such as Southampton and Newcastle, as well as the cities of Tampere and Groningen.

UCL's historic main campus is located in the Bloomsbury district of central London, with a number of institutes and teaching hospitals located throughout the city. University College Hospital, a major teaching hospital closely affiliated with UCL since the University's inception, sits adjacent to the central campus. UCL's location affords proximity to loci of political power at City Hall, Whitehall and Westminster. There are further linkages to the global financial hub of The City and ready access to cultural facilities including the British Library and British Museum. Unparalleled transport links connect the University to the metropolitan area, nation and beyond. UCL opened satellite campuses in Adelaide, Australia in 2010 and Doha, Qatar in 2011, with an agreement for teaching programmes to be based at Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan reached in 2010. That status of these overseas projects, however, has been revised during the development of the University's current Global Engagement Strategy during 2014–16.<sup>2</sup>

## UCL IN THE LONDON CITY-REGION

UCL's base in London is vitally important for the University, the city, and for forging improved relations between the two. London is a primary global city, home to 8.2 million people spread through an extended regional metropolis with deep infrastructural and functional connectivity across south-east England. As the capital of the UK, it concentrates political and financial power into a densely networked and multi-scalar decision-making centre. London is a major international draw for finance and cultural capital, as well as research and development across numerous high-end industries.

The higher education sector plays a fundamental role in driving and sustaining this activity. London hosts a major cluster of higher education institutions (HEIs) ranging from large multi-faculty and multi-campus comprehensive universities to niche, highly specialised colleges. Indicative of the scale and variety of London's university sector, the University of London now incorporates 18 colleges, ten research institutes and several central bodies within a federation of semi-independent schools, including UCL, Birkbeck, King's College, the London School of Economics (LSE), Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, SOAS and, until 2007, Imperial College. London Higher (2010), an umbrella body representing more than 40 publicly funded universities and higher education colleges in London, reports that the capital's higher education sector contributes in the region of £17 billion annually in goods and services, including a direct economic impact of £4.85 billion, while supporting 163 000 jobs across all skill levels.

This should not be surprising. Knowledge capital has tended to agglomerate in key nodes in the world economy and recent critical reviews demonstrate overlap between the geographies of global city and university rankings (Jöns and Hoyer, 2013).<sup>3</sup> However, the scale of the capital's higher education system, combined with the metropolitan area's complexity as a global city-region, has led many researchers to consciously exclude London from studies examining the geography and politics of higher education in the United Kingdom: London 'represents a fundamentally different case' (Goddard and Vallance, 2013, p. 182).<sup>4</sup> As a result, although there has been a growing interest in university engagement and impact, relatively little has been said about the significance of HEIs in and on globally connected city-regions (for an exception, see Wood and Lawton Smith, 2015). 'Town and gown' relationships, which can be negotiated on more personal levels in smaller single-university cities, are fundamentally more complicated here. While there are opportunities for HEIs to collaborate, share facilities and foster knowledge exchange through regional networks, they are engaged in an ongoing competitive struggle to attract the best students, faculty and grants. Moreover, London's HEIs need to negotiate and sustain a potentially fractious set of relationships to access governmental agencies, industry and local communities for research and engagement purposes.

London internalises a strikingly diverse and multifaceted civil society spread over an extensive urban agglomeration that has been dramatically reconfigured and reimaged as a post-industrial global centre (Hamnett, 2003; Massey, 2007). The emergence of new territorial and network-based relations within and across Greater London raises important questions for university leaders as to how they should adapt their institutional infrastructures, pedagogical practices and ways of operating to accommodate the realities of global urban connectivity (Addie et al., 2015; Balducci and Fedeli, 2014). The leadership challenges facing HEIs in London are in this sense more directly comparable to those in New York, Paris, Hong Kong and Toronto, rather than other smaller British or European cities (London Higher, 2006).<sup>5</sup> While there are distinct challenges for HEIs operating in such urban landscapes, London's command and control functions, multiscalar connectivity, social

diversity and cultural amenities open a myriad of possibilities for an engaged and civically minded university. UCL, for its part, is involved with local engagement strategies at the borough level, as well as through the Mayor's Office and broader levels of government driving national activities. Given ongoing plans to develop a new campus in East London, this chapter deviates somewhat from the other cases presented in this volume to devote concerted attention to the concrete leadership challenges, internal tensions and lessons that have emerged around this unprecedented expansion process.

#### THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION: UCL 2034

The current juncture marks a key moment for UCL. The arrival of new president and provost Michael Arthur in September 2013 catalysed a major review and assessment of the University's institutional mission and strategic orientation. The culmination of this process, 'UCL 2034: A New 20-Year Strategy for UCL', was approved by the Provost's Senior Management Team on 17 July 2014. The 2034 strategic plan's mission statement asserts the vision of UCL as:

a diverse intellectual community, engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better; recognised for our radical and critical thinking and its widespread influence; with an outstanding ability to integrate our education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity. (University College London, 2014a, p. 4)

This framing reasserts a commitment to public purposes and societal betterment at the centre of UCL's purpose. Notably, though, UCL does not define, nor explicitly refer to, itself as a 'civic university'. Rather, it stresses innovation and enterprise (alongside teaching and research) at the core of its institutional mission. It does so in a manner that contrasts with the notion of 'enterprise' central to the current conceptualisations of the 'entrepreneurial university' (e.g. Etzkowitz, 2013; see critiques by Fayolle and Redford, 2014; Taylor, 2014). More than pointing to the increasing commercialisation of university outputs, UCL's discursive deployment of enterprise draws from its origins to appeal to a broader concern with social enterprise, research innovation and knowledge mobilisation. Establishing a clear lineage from Bentham, UCL has internalised a foundational commitment to addressing contemporary challenges. In its early days this commitment was demonstrated by incorporating diverse modern disciplines, from engineering to modern languages, into the curriculum. Today, it is expressed in an emphasis on developing useful, but radically innovative, knowledge that can be deployed across the globe.

UCL 2034 is supported by six 'principal themes' that promote: (1) the mobilisation of grounded intellectual excellence through cross-disciplinary approaches to pressing global challenges; and (2) the realisation of lasting impact at the local, regional and global scales (see Figure 13.1). The integration of the University's teaching, research and impact is central here. The 'UCL Grand Challenges' arose from a strategic decision to leverage the expertise, connections and cutting-edge knowledge present in a large research-intensive university to address key global issues. The 2011 UCL research strategy recognised the critical importance of leadership and excellence within disciplines, but also that 'collective subject-specific knowledge can be made greater than the sum of its parts' (University College London, 2011). The four Grand Challenges: 'Global Health', 'Sustainable Cities', 'Intercultural Interaction', and 'Human Wellbeing' are 'the mechanisms through

which expertise from across UCL and beyond can be brought together to address the world's key problems' (UCL Grand Challenges, 2014). As well as providing a clear indication of an institutional desire for cross-disciplinary collaborations, the programmes provide a strategic framework (including internal funding) to initiate and support them. For instance, an annual 'small grants' call provides a bottom-up route for collaborative work. Other mechanisms include funding and support for commissions and research prize workshops. Pressing global issues often require a problem-focused approach informed by a wide range of disciplinary expertise, but they also necessitate wider engagement. The Grand Challenges have worked with local and national governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, health-service providers, funding agencies and the general public to provide this key element.

<INSERT FIGURE 13.1 HERE>

The 2034 plan includes areas that are seen as fundamental for future development, but have not been sufficiently leveraged in the past. Among the most significant are improving the student experience (notably supporting quality interactions between academic staff and students) and investing in new facilities and estates. UCL has a legacy of architectural innovation, including a number of Grade I and Grade II listed buildings. However, this can present challenges in terms of functionality, environmental performance and aesthetic quality. As we discuss further, UCL's Bloomsbury campus has been built out, leaving the University unable to expand its central London footprint.

Although it sets out a bold vision to reshape the parameters of the twenty-first-century global university, UCL 2034 also represents a continuation and crystallisation of previous ways of operating. UCL's leadership draws on the University's formative radical core values; being willing to change and innovate but in an evolutionary manner that builds on its established foundations and existing, if underutilised, capacities. Here, it is worth noting that UCL's strategic vision discloses a bold confidence regarding the University's stability that supports long-term strategic visioning. The 20-year strategy represents an extended timeframe for such institutional processes but brings UCL's temporal horizons broadly in line with the 'London Plan', which sets out an integrated vision of economic, environmental, infrastructure and social development for the year 2031 (Greater London Authority, 2011). However, other local authorities and governmental agencies may be operating over alternative timeframes. Despite this apparent synergy, it is important to stress that HEIs and cities (from local neighbourhoods to regional authorities) are negotiating complex relationships and interact as self-interested actors whose strategic goals do not necessarily align (Addie et al., 2015). It remains to be seen how UCL's long-term strategy will synchronise with other institutions' development agendas.

#### BECOMING 'LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY'

The UCL 2034 process incorporated a period of consultation where students, staff, council members, alumni and friends of UCL were given the opportunity to provide feedback on draft versions of the plan via an online platform. This exercise garnered two central and largely interrelated concerns. First, there was a request to strengthen the plan's emphasis on widening participation and the diversity of the student population; a goal that had been somewhat marginalised by the initial draft's discursive centring on international recruiting. Second, concern was raised regarding the problematic of scaling the University's mission. UCL has at once doubled

down on its branding as 'London's Global University' and stated its intention to be 'in London, of London and for London':

UCL is committed to becoming a global leader in knowledge exchange, enterprise and open innovation. Our relationship to London is central to this commitment. We will bring our profile as London's Global University and our international connectivity to bear on establishing UCL at the centre of a cluster of organisations that are able to make London the premier destination for higher education, research and innovation in the world. (University College London, 2014a, p. 10)

University leadership sees UCL as a global institution embedded within a global capital. But can the global university hold a civic institutional mission? If it is to do so, the potentially conflicting demands of the local (prioritising UCL's position in London) and the global (being 'London's Global University') need to be effectively marshalled in planning and practice. The provost responded to these concerns by clarifying his understanding of 'the global' within UCL 2034:

a global university needs to have the very highest intellectual and academic performance in education, research, innovation and enterprise that measures up against the world's best. It also needs a significant number of staff and students from all over the world and a proud history of international collaboration with significant international activities and partnerships with many different types of organisation from across the world – including other universities, governments, ministries, non-profit organisations, corporations and business. A global university also needs to prepare all of its students (home/EU and international) for an ever more globalising world. We tick all of those boxes and it is our intention to bring all of that to bear on, ultimately, making London and our world a better place for all. (Arthur, 2014)

Still, such discursive manoeuvres will remain an exercise in semantics if the institutional mechanisms to mobilise this agenda and spatial strategy are not effectively put in place. Consequently, UCL's London Agenda is to be concretely grounded through an effective engagement with all key agencies in the city and the development of long-term global and local strategic alliances that enhance social and economic value for London. The University's reputation, locally and internationally, place it in the enviable position of being able to strategically select organisations to partner with. In this context, the challenges of forging external engagement centre on managing internal resources rather than struggling to compete for attention in a crowded market. Partnerships consequently tend to emerge from a combination of timing and an alignment of strategic interests. Interpersonal relationships are important but these must extend beyond individuals in leadership positions to establish deep, institutionalised collaborations based on commonalities of view between entities. UCL has several engagement offices and public interface points through which it aims to be an 'open, honest, transparent, professional and generous' partner (University College London, 2014a, p. 10). These include:

- UCL Enterprise provides the University's primary interface for engaging industry for commercial and social purposes through a centre for entrepreneurship (UCL Advances), a technology transfer office

(UCL Business plc) and a centre supporting academic consulting and access to UCL researchers and facilities (UCL Consultants Ltd). The Vice-Provost Office (Enterprise) oversees strategic visioning and leadership.

- UCL Partners is the largest academic health science centre in the world and generates a turnover of £2 billion annually. Founded in 2009, its mission ‘is to translate cutting-edge research and innovation into measurable health and wealth gains for patients and populations – in London, across the UK and globally’ (UCL Partners, 2014). UCL’s ‘Ed & Med’ agenda is furthered through the MedCity collaboration between UCL Partners, the National Health Service (NHS) and governmental bodies, which intends to catalyse the growth of the South East of England as a world-leading life sciences cluster.
- UCL Public and Cultural Engagement oversees community and cultural outreach programmes and runs the Bloomsbury Theatre. Within this remit, the UCL Public Engagement Unit supports activities that encourage cross-sectoral conversations with groups outside the University. They provide networking and funding to foster the co-production of knowledge, disseminate University research and enable communities to leverage UCL expertise. For example, Creating Connections networking events are a primary forum through which UCL staff and postgraduates can come together with London’s community and voluntary sectors.
- UCL Public Policy leverages knowledge and evidence from across disciplines to deliver policy impact on globally significant and locally relevant issues. Working closely with UCL Grand Challenges, it provides an interface for researchers and policymakers, facilitates routes for engagement between research and public policy, supports the translation of research into policy-focused outputs, and promotes dialogue and debate on key public policy questions.
- Educational Outreach: in September 2012, UCL opened UCL Academy, a secondary school in London’s Swiss Cottage neighbourhood. Echoing a central theme of UCL’s strategic agenda, the school mission is to provide ‘education for global citizenship’, and it places languages, mathematics and science at the core of the curriculum (UCL Academy, 2014). UCL’s merger with the Institute of Education has further enhanced its educational teaching and research capacity while providing access to a global network of established partnerships and outreach programmes with a commitment to social justice.

## CORRALLING THE ‘ACTUALLY EXISTING’ UNIVERSITY

The diversity of UCL’s engagement interfaces is indicative of its decentred structure. However, the University’s size and departmental autonomy mean that it is difficult to manage and mobilise the institution’s strategic direction effectively from the grassroots. Rather, internal processes and strategic agendas are predominantly forged in a top-down manner, albeit through a process that opens space for consultation and engagement across the University community. UCL’s leadership team – the provost and vice-provosts for Research, Education and Student Affairs, International, Health, and Enterprise – are responsible for establishing the institution’s vision and direction. Strategies for mobilising this agenda (for example, UCL 2034 and UCL Grand Challenges) are then proposed and refined by the senior management team before going through various leadership forums and draft consultations, with feedback informing the overall strategic agenda (to varying degrees). Tensions, when

they emerge, are mediated through discussion and consultation exercises. All such discussions are open and can be brought to the Academic Board; a governance body made up of the UCL professoriate, deans of faculty, faculty tutors and other elected and appointed members.

This top-down approach establishes the means to facilitate and direct strong institutional leadership, understood as providing vision, communication, motivation, energy, a multiscalar understanding of threats and opportunities, academic and public credibility, and respect for staff. There are spaces for faculty-led initiatives to be introduced, but these tend to focus on issues surrounding implementation. The provost is responsible for convincing faculty members to embrace strategic objectives (for example, the current drive to emphasise research-led teaching) rather than directing faculty to toe the company line. This approach seeks to reflect that University staff engage with strategic visioning and programmes in different – and necessarily partial – ways. The Grand Challenges themes, for instance, may provide an institutional drive, but not everyone has to participate. There is a need to balance institutionalisation with the chaotic functioning of the ‘actually existing’ university in order to enable it to become more than the sum of its parts. The UCL leadership suggest that because the University’s reputation is driven by its overall perception by those outside, even people who are not directly involved will be swept along by the institution’s broad direction. Still, there are a number of internal institutional mechanisms to encourage engagement. Cross-disciplinarity is promoted through the Provost’s Discretionary Fund, a pot of money allocated in support of the University’s strategic objectives. Similarly, promotion and appraisals now include criteria to assess a staff member’s support – or ‘enablement’ – of such goals. It is important to note that since UCL envisions itself as a global university there are currently no processes in place to encourage or reward explicitly local forms of civic engagement.

UCL’s decentred structure does not lend itself to strong or rigid management. Indeed, the University’s limited management infrastructure facilitates departmental autonomy and individual entrepreneurialism (in the broad sense). However, the relative lack of structured internal governance and limited management tools present challenges for information capture, leading the University to miss out on some research, collaboration and financial opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, potential issues of non-compliance can arise in important areas of strategy. For example, UCL staff can do up to 40 days of paid consulting work but this is not always monitored, and consequently the impact of this activity cannot be fully captured.

## UCL EAST: THE INTERNAL TENSIONS AND CIVIC CHALLENGES OF CAMPUS EXPANSION

The challenges of leading and managing UCL as an entrepreneurially engaged HEI have been central considerations during the development of a new UCL campus in East London, catalysed in response to an initial proposition by Newham Borough Council. The estate presents a major challenge. Student numbers have steadily increased over the past decade at a rate that has clearly outpaced the growth of university facilities. While the Bloomsbury campus’s central location affords a number of benefits, its compact and densely built-out facilities provide little to no room for expansion. Moreover, the inward-facing design of the campus’s historic built form and the piecemeal nature of its subsequent growth do not engender significant public interaction, nor foster open and vibrant street life (see Farrells, 2006). By the early 2010s, UCL’s estates strategy had crystallised around campus development beyond Bloomsbury. The establishment of UCL and its Bloomsbury base in the nineteenth century facilitated the redevelopment of a Regency brownfield site, transformed a previously unsavoury quarter of the city into a prosperous living environment, and challenged notions of the purpose and practice of the



university at foundational level. Nearly two centuries later, the prospect of building a new campus in East London offers a comparable opportunity to reshape the urban fabric of London and reimagine the physical, social and institutional dimensions of a university campus in, of and for the city.

### **Plans for the Carpenters Estate**

UCL entered into talks with the Borough of Newham in October 2012 to develop a £1 billion campus at the Carpenters Estate in Stratford, an area earmarked for redevelopment by the Borough Council since 2001. UCL's Stratford proposition envisioned the development of 140 000m<sup>2</sup> to 280 000m<sup>2</sup> of teaching, research and residential facilities to form a campus of equal size and standing to the University's Bloomsbury base. By leveraging the already significant investment made for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, the project proposed the creation of 'a physical development of the highest architectural quality, an academic gateway to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park'. Moreover, it explicitly articulated the desire to position 'London alongside New York as a global city whose future fortunes and employment will come not only from the financial services but equally from science, medicine, technology and healthcare' (UCL Stratford, 2012, p. 3). In particular, ties to Stratford would link UCL to the Tech City initiative in Shoreditch (where the University has a presence in the IDEALondon programme) and support then Mayor Boris Johnson's vision of the East London emerging as a rival to Silicon Valley. As such, UCL's leadership viewed 'UCL Stratford' as representing a long-term commitment by the University and Newham Council: 'UCL Stratford is not envisaged to be an east London satellite to our historic Bloomsbury campus, but a new internationally recognised research-led hub' (then Provost Malcolm Grant; University College London, 2012).

The £1 billion investment, it was suggested, would not only bring an increase in construction jobs and local spending but also enhance confidence in Stratford as a business location by forging a regional innovation system catalysed by new technology start-ups spinning off from the campus. University leadership also saw an opportunity to drive urban transformation in the heart of Stratford to 'provide maximum intellectual, financial, political and social opportunities for all' (UCL Stratford, 2012, p. 1). Indeed, major investment in Stratford opened the potential for UCL to take on a leadership role in a historically peripheral area of Greater London. The Borough of Newham experienced amongst the highest rates of population growth across London between 2001 and 2011 – adding to its significant ethnic and racial diversity – yet the area remains among the poorest in the city-region. UCL could potentially serve as both a progressive anchor for the massive urban regeneration programme currently being rolled out in Stratford and open emancipatory access to educational opportunities for low-income and non-traditional students tied to place by financial constraints, personal commitments, family responsibilities and lifestyle choices.

### **UCL Against Itself**

The concept of the civic university invokes the notion that such institutions ought to pursue altruistic agendas of urban improvement while opening space to facilitate public participation in the production and dissemination of knowledge. Yet university leaders are often as inclined to operate as self-interested members of urban growth machines (Addie et al., 2015). Despite the civic potential of embedding UCL in the social fabric of East London, University leadership proceeded bullishly on the estate issue. Overtures were made, suggesting that the University and Council would engage local residents and community groups during the campus design process

and support efforts to rehouse displaced residents (University College London, 2012). However, little community or internal consultation materialised. Persistent questions surrounded the eviction of 318 households necessitated by the plan.

UCL's alliance with Newham Council over the Carpenters Estate both highlighted the dangers HEIs face when they become (even unwittingly) involved in local politics, and disclosed a key challenge for questioning and understanding the societal role of the contemporary university. Indeed, it presented something of an existential crisis for the institution itself as UCL attempted to mediate internal tensions and antagonisms. When residents of the Carpenters Estate, fearing the dismantling of their local community, organised against UCL management, they were joined by strong representation from the UCL Student Union and the UCL Urban Laboratory, a cross-faculty centre for interdisciplinary teaching and research on cities and urbanisation. UCL academics, notably those affiliated with the Urban Laboratory, were among the most prominent voices arguing that those driving the UCL Stratford proposition had failed to adequately consult local residents or account for the displacement and gentrification likely engendered by the development. Perhaps more troubling, the extant relevant academic, practical and planning expertise of UCL scholars on social housing, regeneration and community engagement had not been consulted or integrated into the UCL Stratford planning process. In an open letter to the UCL Council on 22 November 2012, 47 urban scholars declared:

We are united in our view that UCL should not go ahead with a project in which it becomes the replacement use for what has been the home of a settled community with 700 housing units. The dispossession of council estates in London is now a widespread phenomenon. We see this as an aggressive and unethical process, and a major contributing factor to the UK's severe housing crisis, which is concentrated in Newham. UCL cannot legitimately hide behind Newham Council by arguing that the estate was already going to be cleared, or that if it does not go ahead another developer will. If it does proceed without changing direction the College will be operating in a way that contradicts its stated values, and runs counter to the findings of its own researchers, past and present. Severe reputational damage will be inevitable, with UCL being seen as a powerful but destructive external force, with actions that contradict the principles it articulates. (Urban Laboratory and Development Planning Unit, 2012)

While asserting that there was still the chance for UCL leadership to rethink its approach and to work more closely and creatively with local residents, the letter pointedly raised ongoing questions regarding the type of institutional knowledge and expertise that are valued in the current era and, more specifically, when divergent institutional interests are brought into direct conflict (also see Gorodnitski, 2012). UCL is still wrestling with the practical and philosophical implications of this internal contradiction across leadership and academic communities.

### **Learning Lessons: UCL East**

The Carpenters Estate proposition fell though in May 2013 in the face of community opposition, the lack of appropriate housing options worked into the plan, and the failure of UCL and Newham Council to agree contractual terms. Both UCL and Newham Council, though, expressed a strong interest in establishing a major

UCL presence somewhere in Stratford. On 8 May 2013 (a day after the proposal collapsed) Mayor Boris Johnson and the owners of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) began to court UCL to build an East End campus on the QEOP grounds, adjacent to the Carpenters Estate. UCL's interest in campus expansion in the Stratford area has remained a key component of the University's strategic focus on London under the leadership of Provost Arthur. Embracing the Mayor's interest and the UK government's 2013 National Infrastructure Plan, UCL 2034 calls for the University to engage stakeholders to develop an 'innovative educational and cultural hub' at the QEOP; incorporating a noted shift away from negative associations with UCL Stratford (University College London, 2014a, p. 10). The University's previous experiences with the Carpenters Estate proposition provide an important chance to learn the lessons as it looks to develop revised plans for a new university quarter in East London.

On 3 December 2013, UCL confirmed its commitment to creating a new higher education cluster on the QEOP, working in collaboration with the London Legacy Development Corporation, the Greater London Authority, the Mayor of London's Office, the Smithsonian Institute and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) (see Figure 13.2). Phase One of the project proposes the establishment of a 50 000 m<sup>2</sup> start-up campus, with academic buildings and 12 000 m<sup>2</sup> of 'innovative' staff and student housing to attract top global talent, opening in 2018. Phase Two will double the campus footprint. The vision of an 'open connected campus' intends to 'break down the conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration ... [and] attract and facilitate interactions between large international corporations, small businesses and universities' (Caddick, 2014).

<INSERT FIGURE 13.2 HERE>

The science, technology and (especially) engineering focus of the UCL's interest in an East London campus remains, yet the collaboration with the V&A and other heritage partners also frames the development of cultural facilities as an integral element of the educational and entrepreneurial (in the narrow sense) dimensions of the revised East London strategy. Two themes, design (making and fabricating a material world) and heritage (managing material culture from the past for the future) guide the collaboration and broader plans for a Museum of the Future and a Culture Hub. Areas for collaboration, research and engagement will include specific foci on topics including smart futures and energy, heritage for the future, film production and housing experimentation and urban regeneration. On the last topic, the question of integrating scholars from the Urban Laboratory is an on-going concern that involves negotiating thorny and fractious political terrains for both University leadership and progressive elements of the academic community.

UCL seems to have taken on board several lessons from the failed UCL Stratford proposition. It now emphasises the desire to work in collaboration with other universities at the site: an issue previously overlooked as UCL's expansionist manoeuvres in East London antagonised other HEIs such as Birkbeck and the University of East London which were already established in the area. Since 2012, UCL Public Engagement's Creating Connections networking programme has adopted a progressively more visible and important role in increasing UCL's presence in East London, while UCL Partners has driven the establishment of the Guttman Academic Partnership. Discussions to establish an office for the Centre for Access to Social Justice at the site – an institutional outreach interface staffed by UCL Law staff and students designed to provide legal education and

pro bono advice for vulnerable communities – is indicative of the type of progressive engagement opportunities that UCL East can foster. Indeed, there is potential in-house to place the social infrastructure of campus development at the heart of the project. The UCL Engineering Exchange offers a forum that can enable local communities to access and utilize the University’s technical expertise and may be incisively reoriented to Stratford (UCL Engineering Exchange, 2014). Such initiatives open experimentation in engineering practice as much as large-fabrication and prototyping facilities.

Yet the fact that campus expansion plans remain at the core driven by UCL’s need to resolve its estates issues cannot be overlooked. Balancing the need for improved physical infrastructure to support the research and teaching activities of a world-class university with the social infrastructure and community outreach necessary to foster lasting, sustainable and integrated expansion is a central challenge for the University leadership, their development partners, local residents and the wider academic community. Here, UCL – understood as a heterogeneous institution host to inherently contradictory interests – must square its broad ambitions to be ‘London’s Global University’ with sensitivity towards the local social and physical context in which the University operates. The type of community engagement programmes being re-centred within the QEOP plans are important, yet the University, perhaps unavoidably, is likely to be seen as acting as an agent of gentrification that will stimulate profound social and spatial transformation within the local area and the wider London city-region. Of course, the future of UCL East’s campus and outreach mechanisms remains an open question, and one whose impacts will be determined by a variety of actors and events beyond the University administration.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PATHWAYS

The tensions evinced by UCL East shine a light on the challenges and opportunities facing UCL, as it looks to achieve its ambitions as ‘London’s Global University’. The University’s standards of research excellence look secure – UCL is the top-rated university in the UK for research strength, by a measure of average research score multiplied by staff numbers, submitted in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (University College London, 2014b) – but, returning to the institution’s founding principles, such accolades are largely redundant if this research is not effectively mobilised for the public good. The neoliberal restructuring of higher education has transformed the rules of the game for HEIs and shifted the landscape within which it is carried out. Global competitive aspirations have emerged as an assumed element of HEIs’ strategic mission and orientation. Developing cutting-edge facilities to attract global talent is a clear goal of UCL East, but such physical investments must not overshadow the significance of civic engagement and interpersonal relations forged by research institutes and individual faculty, students and researchers on a day-to-day ground-up basis. These multifaceted social relations and soft infrastructures are the foundations upon which lasting and mutually beneficial relationships between universities and their urban communities can, and ought to, be built in global city-regions like London (Addie and Keil, 2014). In other words, this is the terrain over which the civic dimension of the University’s mission will likely be realised.

As an institution embedded in a global capital, UCL is vulnerable to threats to London’s continued viability as a leading national, continental and international hub. The UK’s vote to leave the European Union in June 2016 presents a significant challenge to UCL’s continued prosperity. The full ramifications of Britain’s withdrawal are unclear in the immediate aftermath of the referendum but UCL leadership has sought to reassure EU staff and students over their standing at the university and in the country. Early indications suggest

uncertainty surrounding the prospects for long-term research engagement that threaten the stability of, and access to, research funding streams – including those available through the highly competitive Horizon2020 programme – for all British HEIs (Arthur, 2016).

Internally, national policy frameworks aimed at supporting the growth of northern urban centres risks rebalancing the UK's regional agenda to the determinant of the capital. London's global connectivity and vibrant immigrant populations also make the city more susceptible to the impacts of regressive immigration policies compared to the rest of the country. At the same time, increasing flows of global capital into real estate speculation in the city increase the challenge of ensuring staff, faculty and students have access to affordable housing. UCL, therefore, has a central role to play in supporting and sustaining London's reputation and ability to attract inward investment. In addition to working with agencies such as London Higher and the London Development Authority to strengthen London's educational brand (including the establishment of London's Knowledge Quarter in late 2014), the University is working to grow the city's cultural and heritage sectors while mobilising institutional expertise to the major infrastructure challenges facing the twenty-first-century global capital. In December 2014, UCL appointed a new vice-provost for London, placing London at the heart of the University's leadership portfolio. Funding is also in place for an office to support UCL's engagement in, with and for London. This institutional space has not existed previously. When it comes online in 2016–17, it will set the stage (alongside UCL's London Agenda) for an adaptive, innovative, and radically civic platform for UCL's future.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Greater London is divided into 33 administrative units: 32 boroughs and the City of London (the 'square mile').

<sup>2</sup> Following Dame Brewer's arrival, there is now a clear sense among University leadership that an international strategy concentrated on increasing the University's global footprint through operating research-intensive overseas campuses focused on niche postgraduate education is not optimising the time and financial investment they require (Brewer, 2014). As a result, teaching activities in Kazakhstan were concluded in 2015. UCL Australia was shifted to the Faculty of Engineering Sciences in 2014, and the campus is likely to be wound up in 2017 once the university has met its commitment to enrolled students, and research deals with industry partners Santos and BHP Billiton are concluded (Grove, 2015). These moves intend to align UCL's international strategy with the 2034 strategy and evince a desire to mobilise the Grand Challenges themes globally through new 'partnerships of equivalence'.

<sup>3</sup> University rankings provoke a healthy scepticism among university leaders and higher education scholars, but their disciplinary governmentality remains highly significant (Hazelkorn, 2011). The 2014/2015 QS World University Rankings (2014) place UCL joint fifth (with Oxford University), while third-place Imperial College and sixteenth-place King's College mean that three of their top 20 global universities are located in central London.

<sup>4</sup> London's political and economic primacy casts a long shadow over the rest of the UK's higher education sector and significantly influences the spatial strategies of many universities outside the capital (Cochrane and Williams, 2013; Harrison et al., 2015).

<sup>5</sup> National policy frameworks continue to be a noteworthy structuring factor here (see Chapter 5 in this volume).

<sup>6</sup> This is unfortunately evident in this chapter, as the editors' civic university baseline survey failed to yield a large enough response to generate statistically significant data.

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# UCL 2034

A new 20-year strategy for UCL



## Our vision for 2034

Our distinctive approach to research, education and innovation will further inspire our community of staff, students and partners to transform how the world is understood, how knowledge is created and shared and the way that global problems are solved.



## Our mission

London's Global University: a diverse intellectual community, engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better; recognised for our radical and critical thinking and its widespread influence; with an outstanding ability to integrate our education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity.



## Principal themes

- Academic leadership grounded in intellectual excellence
- An accessible, publicly-engaged organisation that fosters a lifelong community
- A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience
- London's Global University: in London, of London and for London
- Addressing global challenges through our disciplinary excellence and distinctive cross-disciplinary approach
- Delivering global impact through a network of innovative international activities, collaborations and partnerships



## Key enablers

- Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities
- Delivering excellent systems and processes in support of UCL's vision
- Valuing our staff and delivering on equality and diversity
- Maintaining a sustainable estate to meet our aspirations
- Financing our ambitions
- Communicating and engaging effectively with the world



## Founding principles

This strategy is formulated within the context of our proud history and our values.

Figure 13.1





Figure 13.2