



02 November 2010

To Whom It May Concern

Flagship FuturICT

As Vice-Provost (Research) at UCL, I am pleased to confirm UCL's great interest in and strong support for the FuturICT proposal for a FET flagship.

UCL's founders sought not merely to create a great institution for research and teaching across a broad range of disciplines; inspired by Bentham, they also believed that universities could be a major force for social change. In its current incarnation this ambition is embodied by the centrality within our research strategy of our Grand Challenges: Global Health, Sustainable Cities, Intercultural Interactions and Human Wellbeing. These are global problems that must be addressed if future generations are to have the opportunity to flourish. However, their scope lies beyond any single academic discipline or activity. Fortunately, UCL has always had a strong culture of interdisciplinary collaboration across its broad spectrum of academic excellence. Hence, we are in a unique position to be able to link research activities and outputs in order to help make a difference on these global issues. For more details on our activities, see www.ucl.ac.uk/grand-challenges.

Obviously, given this agenda, we are delighted by the ideals of FuturICT in seeking to provide new ways to combine knowledge and information for social good, addressing all these challenges and others besides. It has grand aims, but we believe that progress on these is both possible and essential to the pursuit of a better society for all humanity through the application of knowledge. We are proud of the leadership that Professor Steve Bishop of the UCL Department of Mathematics has shown in both the Global System Dynamics and Policies project and now the FET Flagship consortium.

FuturICT brings together computer science and social sciences with a mix of complexity science. UCL has numerous activities within these domains that could link in, but to cite just a few with which Professor Bishop has already developed projects:

- The Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) has a global reputation for applying complexity science techniques to understand space, location and the built environment.
- The UCL Energy Institute has a particular focus on energy demand reduction and modelling future energy use, including the application of advanced modelling and data analysis techniques.
- The UK PhD Centre in Financial Computing (joint with LSE and LBS) is a unique collaboration between the financial services industry and academia seeking to apply cutting edge computer science techniques to the emerging challenges of modern finance.

All of these activities have UK government funding of more than £1M pa secured over the next few years, so we are confident that there will be a substantial base of excellent research at UCL with which FuturICT can engage.

Unsurprisingly, given this huge potential for links, two of UCL's faculties (Engineering Sciences and Mathematical and Physical Sciences) have already made significant investment to support meetings and a research assistant to help prepare the bid. We are already discussing with Professor Bishop the possibility of expanding this support, potentially to the scale of establishing a new UCL Institute for Global System Dynamics (or similar) that provided a physical home for these activities at UCL and could serve as a major long-term hub for FuturICT activities more generally. In the nearer term, we will look to support further activities, such as meetings and small projects, linking FuturICT to the UCL Grand Challenges.

In conclusion, UCL is strongly committed to FuturICT, and hopes to have the opportunity to extend that commitment as the programme develops. We hope others will share our excitement at the opportunities offered.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D J Price', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

PROFESSOR G DAVID PRICE
UCL Vice-Provost (Research)