SERVICE PRESSE ET COMMUNICATION – **Université catholique de Louvain**
Isabelle Decoster, attachée de presse > **www.uclouvain.be/presse**
Téléphone (32 **10**) **47 88 70** > GSM (32) **486 42 62 20** > E-mail : isabelle.decoster@uclouvain.be
LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE I BRUXELLES WOLUWE I MONS I TOURNAI I BRUXELLES SAINT-GILLES I CHARLEROI

UCL Université catholique de Louvain

Communiqué de presse

Louvain-la-Neuve, 7 March 2017

UCL education

Mission to Mars 2017: UCL Crew 178 en route to Mars via the Utah desert

Mission to Mars Crew 178 is composed of **seven UCL students** and **mentored by Frank De Winne**, a Belgian astronaut and the first European commander of the International Space Station. This is the ninth UCL crew to take part in the adventure, which for them will entail **15 days of simulated life on Mars and seven scientific experiments.**

The goal is to **simulate a scientific mission on Mars** via a base in the Utah desert. Six students will conduct experiments for testing equipment and procedures in conditions that could occur during Martian exploration. The project's main goal is to **identify difficulties scientists might have to overcome** to successfully carry out their experiments on the red planet.

Crew 178 is the ninth crew to take part under the name of 'UCL Mission to Mars', and includes a bioengineer, five engineers, an astrophysicist and a biologist.

Mission experiments:

- Mobile telecommunication relay: testing an innovative solution based on using relay drones.
- Using x-ray diffraction to characterise soil hydration: using x-ray diffraction to characterise rock hydration.
- Analysing photosynthesis oxygen replenishment: testing an oxygen replenishment process in a closed loop.
- Using seismic refraction to characterise soils: assessing the value of seismic refraction.
- Assessing Mars mission crew muscle loss: testing the effectiveness of training exercises and strength tests, in tandem with using a cuff.
- Muon detection: detecting muons in 'Martian conditions', using a portable muon detector provided by the *Université catholique de Louvain.*
- Drone-assisted mapping and surveying of base surroundings: characterising base surroundings using a drone.

Calogero Montedoro, vice commander and press officer : **+32 476 84 65 30,**
calogero.montedoro@uclouvain.be ;
Aurian d'Avernas, first officer : **+32 498 29 81 15**, contact@ucltomars.org.
Infos : www.ucltomars.org