



Campaign for Science & Engineering Monthly update – 4th August 2008

What we are working on

- **Engineering in Government:** CaSE will be responding to the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Select Committee inquiry that includes a case study on Engineering in Government (closes 19th September). We are particularly interested in gathering information on the use of engineering advice in Government policy making and project delivery, including examples of policy decisions or project delivery that have been or will be taken with or without engineering advice. Please contact us if you would like to provide us with some information on this. For more information, see http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius/ius_020708a.cfm
- **Science in Society:** CaSE will be responding to this consultation, particularly on how to increase participation of science and diversity in it, and on how best to improve interaction between academics and policy makers. Please contact CaSE with any comments that you wish us to consider – it closes on October 17th. See <http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/>
- **Single Equality Scheme:** CaSE will be responding to the DIUS consultation on this topic today. See <http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/>
- **Secondary School results:** CaSE will be responding to the release of GCSE, A level and Highers results during August.

July Diary

22/07/08 CaSE Director Nick Dusic today met with Colin Brown from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE).

21/07/08 Concerns over mathematics teaching

New figures announced by the teachers Training and Development Agency (TDA) illustrate the continued rise in degree class for new teachers. However, these data fail to take into account the corresponding rise in degree class in general – there is little to suggest that teaching is attracting a more academically capable slice of the graduate pie. An average of 58% of secondary school trainee teachers had attained a 2.1 or 1st degree class, but the corresponding figure was 49% for the sciences and 40% for mathematics. This represents a rise of 1% in the sciences from last year, but a worrying decline of 2% in mathematics. Furthermore, 15% of mathematics trainees had just a 3rd or pass grade (compared to 10% in science). Mathematics also saw the greatest drop out from teacher training, of 18.5%, compared with 15.7% in science and 15% overall. At a time when secondary student interest in mathematics is increasing it is vital that the right teachers are in place. Currently, only 74% of mathematics teacher have a post-A level mathematics qualification. The Government target is for 95% of mathematics lessons to be delivered by a mathematics specialist, but this was

only the case in 84% of lessons in 2007, down from 88% in 2002, with large variation depending on school-type. While the Government has introduced many new policies to address teaching shortages, none are having the scale of impact necessary to actually improve the situation in schools. In fact, it is clearly worsening. More effective initiatives must be introduced to make teaching a more attractive option to skilled mathematics graduates who are often lured to more lucrative work in the financial sector.

18/07/08 DIUS Consultation

CaSE welcomed the launch of the DIUS consultation on "Science and Society" and will be responding to it, particularly on how to increase participation of science and diversity in it, and on how best to improve interaction between academics and policy makers.

16/07/08 Nick Dusic and David Hawksett met with a representative from LandRover

15/07/08 Meeting with Bill Rammell MP

CaSE met with Bill Rammell, Minister for Further and Higher Education. It was an interesting and constructive meeting and CaSE was able to bring the concerns of our members to his attention, particularly in the areas of international work, higher education and liaison with the Department of Children, Schools, and Families. CaSE outlined the key issues raised at the recent Opinion Forum on International Scientists and Engineers, particularly regarding the new points based visas systems, before the Minister went on to meet colleagues at the Home Office later in the day. The Minister requested more information on some of CaSE's suggestions for incentives to increase uptake of STEM subjects, namely a targeted system of bursaries to schools with low input into higher education and awarding additional UCAS points for STEM subjects.

14/07/08 Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry

Drawing on the views communicated directly to CaSE, and those voiced at the Opinion Forum on International Scientists and Engineers, CaSE submitted evidence to The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee inquiry on 'Managing Migration: the Points-Based System'.

14/07/2008 Nick Dusic met with Simon Denegri of the Association of Medical Research Charities to discuss common concerns.

09/07/08 Science Diplomas

Hilary Leever participated in a workshop organised by the Science Diploma Development Partnership (SDDP). CaSE admires the goals of the diploma: to provide a broad based understanding of science with a core of mathematics, engaging students by teaching in relevant contexts, and to eliminate the current division between vocational and academic qualifications. However, we are seriously concerned at some of the practical issues – the tight timetable, the organisational complexity, the collaborative requirements, its unclear status for university entrance, and, especially, the additional pressures that it will put on already over-stretched science and mathematics teachers.

09/07/08 CaSE met with a representative from BT Group.

08/07/08 HM Treasury

CaSE attended the Treasury's summer party. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's

speech mentioned the importance of science and the Government's doubling of the science budget. Commenting CaSE's Director, Nick Dusic, said "it is critical that government and industry continues its investment in science and engineering during economic downturns, as it is critical for long-term economic prosperity."

08/07/08 CaSE's Executive Committee met today.

07/07/08 **Science Budget Allocations**

CaSE sent a briefing to MPs in advance of the Science Budget Allocations debate in the House of Commons. Phil Willis MP, chair of the IUSS Committee, mentioned CaSE in his speech regarding the application of the Haldane Principle. CaSE is campaigning to ensure that Haldane Principle, which supports the independence of Research Councils, is upheld and that the Government takes responsibility for its decisions.

[read the briefing](#)

07/07/08 **International Scientists and Engineers**

CaSE held its 9th Opinion Forum, which was on *Attracting, Educating and Collaborating with International Scientists and Engineers*. This project is being sponsored by the British Council. The keynote speech was delivered by Phil Willis MP, chair of the IUSS Committee. Other speakers were from DIUS, the British Council, Universities UK, the Work Foundation and Research Councils UK. CaSE will be writing a policy document on the subject over the summer, which will incorporate input from the meeting.

[find out more and view the presentations](#)

04/07/08 CaSE held a strategy day to discuss the results of a recent membership survey and plan for the future.

03/07/00 **European Research Area**

CaSE attended a Nesta meeting on the European Research Area. Commenting, Nick Dusic, said "CaSE supports the Government's proposal to increase the proportion of the European budget going to research. However, it is critical that the national and European funding complement each other. CaSE will examine proposed changes to European research to ensure that it supports science and engineering in the UK."

02/07/08 CaSE met with a representative from IBM.

01/07/08 CaSE's Director, Nick Dusic, met with Willie Rennie MP.