



Campaign for Science & Engineering Monthly update – February 2009

What we are working on

- **Impact of the Science and Engineering Research Base:** CaSE is now writing up its policy report on our latest Opinion Forum which examined the social and economic impact of publicly-funded research. The presentations can be viewed on the CaSE website.
<http://sciencecampaign.org.uk/members/meetings.htm>
- **Economic Downturn:** CaSE is developing its policy and media work to address the risks and opportunities posed that economic downturn. In particular, we will be engaging in the debate initiated by Lord Drayson on the proposal to focus research funding on a few key areas to give the UK's economy a boost.
- **Science and Society:** CaSE is following up on its response to DIUS' consultation on science and society as a number of our policy proposals were highlighted in the summary of responses.
- **Science Diplomas:** CaSE will be responding to the next stage of the Diploma in Science Online Consultations. If you would like to contribute, you can do so directly from 9 – 27 February 2009 at the Diploma website.
http://www.sciencediploma.co.uk/online_consultations.aspx

CaSE News

- **CaSE Strategy:** At the CaSE AGM we launched our new strategy for the next five years. The document sets out CaSE's mission and objectives for the period 2009-2014.
<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/documents/2009/CaSEstrategyweb.pdf>

January Diary

30/01/09 Meeting with the Scottish Chief Scientific Adviser

CaSE's director, Nick Dusic, met today with Professor Anne Glover to discuss Scottish science policy. They discussed the publication of the recent Science for Scotland strategy, science engagement and the importance of dialogue between the scientists and policymakers.

29/01/2009 University funding in England

HEFCE today published its response to the Secretary of State's guidance letter on university funding. It included confirmation that STEM subjects would get an additional £25 million boost for teaching and that HEFCE would safeguard the share of funding for science, engineering, maths and medicine research. Commenting Nick Dusic said, "HEFCE has put some measures in place to protect STEM subjects in the UK. However, the boost for lab based subjects should have been done through changing the funding formula rather than the £25 million top-up. It is great that there is the extra money, but in real terms the funds will be worth less and less when we want student numbers in STEM to go up."

29/01/2009 Meeting with David Willetts MP

CaSE had a productive meeting with David Willetts MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and his Chief of Staff. We discussed a range of science and engineering policy issues from proposals to improve STEM education and skills to higher education funding.

28/01/2009 CaSE AGM and Strategy

CaSE's AGM was held on the 28th January at the Wellcome Trust. CaSE also launched its strategy for the next five years. Its focus is to keep science and engineering up the political agenda during a time of political and economic uncertainty. The CaSE Distinguished Lecture with Lord Drayson has had to be rescheduled to a later date.

28/01/2009 DIUS Science Campaign

CaSE welcomed the Government's campaign to promote science (So What? So everything), but urged it to back of the adverts with real action on the ground. DIUS also published the summary of responses to its science and society strategy consultation, which highlighted many of CaSE's proposals, including the STEM diversity bursary, extending UKRC model and database to other under-represented groups, and targeting specialist science teachers to where they are most needed. Commenting Nick Dusic said, "The government needs to back up today's campaign launch with real action to break down barriers to science and engineering. Chatting with celebrities about science in Number 10 is no substitute for getting kids doing science in schools."

26/01/2009 Science Question Time

CaSE welcomed the first Science Question Time, which brought Lord Drayson in front of the IUSS Committee. During the evidence session Lord Drayson spoke of the need to focus Britain's scientific energy towards a few key areas. He did say that this idea should be debated as he recognised the impact of curiosity driven and the benefits of having a strong research base across the breadth of disciplines. Commenting Nick Dusic said, "Lord Drayson needs to be clear about where this proposal for a science strategy is going and to engage the science and engineering community in a discussion about it. The UK is a world leader in many areas of science and engineering and that breadth of excellence is one of the nation's core strengths. It should not be undermined."

26/01/2009 CaSE FOI Request for Allocation Letters

As part of CaSE's ongoing work on the Science Budget Allocation process we have lodged a Freedom of Information request for the Allocations Letters from DIUS to the seven research councils. The letters would inform the debate about the degree to which the Government is guiding research councils. DIUS has refused the request by stating the release would prejudice policy formulation and commercial confidentiality. CaSE has provided the information to the IUSS committee which probed Lord Drayson during their inquiry into science and engineering policy.

26/01/2009 R&D Scoreboard

DIUS published the annual R&D Scoreboard showing corporate R&D investment in the UK. It found that the 88 leading companies increased their R&D investment by 10.3% since last year. However, the rest of the 850 most research active companies only increased their spending by 1.2%. Commenting Nick Dusic said, "The government needs to work with industry to ensure that the UK doesn't lose corporate investment in R&D during the economic downturn. Once it is stopped it rarely is restarted and the nation's innovation potential is greatly diminished."

22/01/2009 Denham letter to HEFCE

Today the Secretary of State sent his annual letter regarding higher education funding. Denham's expectations for HEFCE included the continued promotion of science, engineering and mathematics subjects and to recognise their high costs and national importance when allocating research funding. Commenting Nick Dusic said "HEFCE needs to follow though on the Secretary of State's guidance and appropriately fund science and engineering research and education".

21/01/2009 Scottish Science Engagement

Nick Dusic participated in a workshop to discuss the future direction of science engagement in Scotland. The meeting was organised by the Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Anne Glover.

21/01/2009 Engineering Inquiry

Hilary Leever observed the the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee evidence session with the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State, Department for Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills, and Professor John Beddington, Government Chief Scientific Adviser.

20/01/2009 CaSE Advisory Council Dinner

Members of CaSE's Advisory Council and others gathered for a dinner at the House of Lords kindly hosted by Baroness Sharp, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Innovation, Universities and Skills. Over the course of the evening, key arguments were formulated for supporting science and engineering in the current economic climate. CaSE will now work to get these messages across to those in Government, Parliament and beyond.

20/01/2009 Inauguration of President Obama

In today's inauguration speech President Obama said that he would restore the US's standing in science. Commenting Nick Dusic, said "President Obama has put the rest of the world on alert that the US is going recommit itself to science and engineering. This will bring benefits to the US and globally. The UK has gained in recent years from the US having tougher immigration laws for foreign scientists and engineers and banning federal funding of stem cell research, for example. The Government needs to ensure that through investment and the right policies that the UK can compete for international talent with the US in the future."

19/01/2009 Brian Iddon MP

CaSE met with Brian Iddon MP to consider science policy developments. Many of the concerns raised in the CaSE report on international scientists and engineers were discussed along with EPSRC's funding strategies.

19/01/2009 Schools Minister

Hilary Leever, CaSE Assistant Director, met Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Learners. She discussed key issues in science and mathematics education with him including the need for primary schools to have teachers confident and skilled in science and mathematics. This is especially important given recent research suggesting that children start to form their attitudes to STEM subjects and careers in the final years of primary education.

15/01/2009 The British Science Association

CaSE's director Nick Dusic attended a parliamentary reception to announce the rebranding of the British Association for the Advancement of Science to the British Science Association. The next President of the British Science Association will be Lord May, a member of CaSE's Advisory Council.

13/01/2009 Wales Science and Technology Group

CaSE's director Nick Dusic participated in the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Assembly's Science and Technology Group. The Assembly Members leading the Group are Huw Lewis AM, Alun Cairns AM, Gareth Jones AM and Kirsty Williams AM. The Group is now developing plans to raise the profile of science and technology issues within the Assembly.

12/01/2009 CaSE Opinion Forum

CaSE today held its Opinion Forum on The Impact of the Science and Engineering Research Base, sponsored by IBM and the Institute of Physics. The wide range of speakers, including Professor Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith (Chair of ITER and SESAME Councils), Dr Aileen Allsop (AstraZeneca), Dr Graeme Reid (DIUS) and Professor Philip Esler (Chief Executive of AHRC and Economic Impact Champion), delivered a broad perspective on the issues which were then considered further in

break-out groups. It was a lively and interactive day in which participants worked constructively to understand the many benefits of the research base and consider what might sensibly facilitate them. CaSE will now develop the ideas from the event into a policy report.

CaSE in the media

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/press/inthemedial/index.htm>

For more information on our activities go to our website

www.sciencecampaign.org.uk

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