



**Campaign for Science &  
Engineering  
Monthly E-Bulletin  
April 2009**

### What we are working on

- **Budget:** We are working with other members of the science and engineering community in the run up to the 22<sup>nd</sup> April Budget to try to raise the importance of STEM research and skills. We will respond to the Budget announcement in the media.
- **IUSS Committee inquiry:** We will be responding to the [committee's call for evidence](#) on Lord Drayson's proposal to focus research funding. CaSE suggested that the Committee may wish to investigate this issue, so we are keen to respond by 17 April.
- **European Elections:** We will be producing a short policy report prior to the European parliamentary elections. We will also be engaging the main political parties.
- **Forthcoming meetings:** Key scheduled policy meetings in April are with Research Councils UK, advisers to the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills and Adam Afriyie MP, shadow science minister.

### News

- **New Member:** National Farmers' Union
- **CaSE News - [March 2009](#)**

### March Diary

#### 31/03/09 **STEM Skills in Wales**

Nick Dusic took part in the Welsh Assembly's Science and Technology Group meeting on STEM skills. CaSE and other group members will be working with the AM's to raise issues regarding STEM education, outreach and diversity within the Assembly.

#### 31/03/09 **CaSE met with Royal Holloway University**

#### 30/03/09 **Nick Dusic attended the Science Policy Board of the Institute of Biology**

#### 27/03/09 **Ofqual Reports on Science, Physics and Mathematics Standards**

Ofqual raised serious concerns over the new GCSE science, rolled out after only limited piloting. In fact, Ofqual demanded immediate action to make tests more challenging this summer with new criteria to be introduced for 2011 along with a limit of just one resit for each unit. The physics GCSE had become easier from 2002-7 with some critical topics, such as Boyle's Law, making way for discussion about the application of science, like the societal implications of new technologies. This syllabus had already been replaced. Physics A level was acceptable although there were some inconsistencies across exam boards. A level and GCSE mathematics were appropriate although there should be more opportunities for students to show their full knowledge in the GCSE. Back in

September 2007, CaSE welcomed the announcement of a new body to bring independence to the monitoring of exam standards. CaSE has long expressed concerns that the new GCSEs were teaching students *about science* rather than *the science itself*. While it is disappointing that these problems were identified, it is good that they will be remedied and that Ofqual has proved itself effective. Biology and chemistry GCSEs will be reviewed this year.

[Read the Ofqual reports](#)

#### **27/03/09 Engineering Advice in Government**

CaSE welcomed the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills committee report on engineering. CaSE contributed written advice to the main inquiry and its case-study into engineering advice in government. Commenting on the report Nick Dusic said, "Engineering is critical to achieving many of the government's policy ambitions. The government needs to take on board the committee's recommendations to strengthen engineering policy advice."

[Read the report](#)

#### **25/03/09 CaSE met with Toshiba**

#### **24/03/09 CaSE met with Johnson Matthey**

23/03/09 **CaSE met with NESTA** to discuss the importance of science and engineering when pushing forward the innovation agenda.

#### **19/03/09 Science for Scotland**

CaSE welcomed the debate in the Scottish Parliament on the new science strategy. CaSE provided a briefing for MSPs and many of our points were raised during the debate, particularly about the resourcing of the strategy.

[Read the briefing](#)

#### **19/03/09 CaSE met with Pfizer R&D**

#### **19/03/09 CaSE took part in the Royal Society of Chemistry's Parliamentary Affairs Committee meeting**

#### **18/03/09 Education Reform**

CaSE Assistant Director, Dr Hilary Leever, attended a Reform breakfast with Estelle Morris, Baroness Morris of Yardley, on "The future of education".

#### **18/03/09 CaSE's Executive Committee met**

#### **17/03/09 Today Programme interview**

Nick Dusic was interviewed on the Today Programme about the need for the government to increase its investment in science and engineering through the economic downturn. He said that this was especially important now that the US had boosted its investment in R&D by \$21.5 billion.

[Listen to the interview](#)

[Read the BBC article](#)

#### **16/03/09 IUSS Committee Evidence Session**

Nick Dusic, CaSE Director, gave oral evidence to the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee for their inquiry into putting science and engineering at the heart of government policy. There was discussion about the government's plans to focus research funding. Nick Dusic commented that it was hard to determine exactly what the government intends but that it should understand that the breadth of research excellence is a core strength of the UK's research base. He also argued that other countries were thinking big in their responses to the recession and that it is vital that the UK does what it can to attract and retain excellent scientists and engineers. He also discussed the importance of the Science Minister's role in convincing his Cabinet colleagues about the importance of prioritising R&D in their budgets.

[Watch the evidence session](#)

[View the inquiry memoranda of evidence](#)

**11/03/09 House of Lords Committee**

Nick Dusic, Director of CaSE, and Professor Hugh Griffiths, FEng, Chair of CaSE's Executive committee, attended a reception to celebrate the 30th year of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee.

**11/03/09 Women in SET**

Hilary Leever attended the launch of the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology 'Women of Outstanding Achievement' photographic exhibition. Among the winners, Professor Linda Partridge, member of CaSE Advisory Council, was recognised for SET discovery, innovation and entrepreneurship.

**11/03/09 Nick Dusic met with Baroness Sharp, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Innovation, Universities and Skills**

**10/03/09 Voice of the Future**

CaSE today attended (and co-sponsored) the Voice of the Future event in parliament, organized by the RSC. The event aims to involve more young people in science.

**05/03/09 HEFCE protects STEM**

Support for science and engineering was announced today in the HEFCE grants for 2009-10. Following guidance from the Secretary of State to protect funding for science, engineering, medicine and mathematics, their share of the quality-related research funding has at least been maintained. This is in addition to the permanent £25 million annual support for critically important but expensive laboratory subjects announced in January. Dr Hilary Leever, CaSE Assistant Director, commented "This is good news and is consistent with Government emphasis on the importance of science and engineering to the economic future of the UK. We hope that the Government will continue to examine all its policies, particularly the budgetary ones, to ensure that the maximum support is given to science and engineering teaching and research in order to ride out the recession and build a basis for recovery. This is especially important given the level of commitment shown by the US."

**04/03/09 Honouring Lord May**

Hilary Leever attended the lecture given by Professor Lord May on receipt of the Royal Society of Chemistry Lord Lewis Prize for contributions to both science and science policy. Lord May, who is a member of the CaSE Advisory Council, gave an entertaining and thought-provoking speech highlighting the importance of clear guidelines in giving scientific advice to government. He also discussed the clarity and frankness necessary from scientists in explaining what they do and do not know in order to enable informed debate.

**04/03/09 Policy Exchange**

CaSE met with the education team from the thinktank Policy Exchange to talk about their upcoming work on STEM skills.

## CaSE in the Media

To view all of CaSE's recent appearances in the media please follow [this link](#)

**For more information on our activities go to our website [www.sciencecampaign.org.uk](http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk)**

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