



28 June 2005

CaSE PR 05/09

Strategic Science needs serious commitment

The Campaign for Science & Engineering today welcomed the fact that the Higher Education Funding Council was taking steps to address the provision of science and engineering in English universities, but warned that unless disastrous funding decisions are reversed, serious problems will remain.

“Increasing student demand is important, and it’s all very well trying to improve communication between the Government and struggling university departments, but the fact remains that university science is underfunded,” said Dr Peter Cotgreave, Director of CaSE.

“Last year, HEFCE changed the funding system for higher education, so that a smaller proportion of the money going into the universities is attributed to the sciences. That makes it look as if science and engineering departments are losing more money than the arts and humanities, so Vice Chancellors are struggling to keep courses open, even in places where plenty of students want to study the sciences or engineering.”

CaSE has repeatedly called on HEFCE to reverse this decision, which was based on inadequate information. HEFCE even accepted in its own documentation that “there would be merit” in doing things differently because its method of determining the balance of funding was “inappropriate”. But it has missed today’s opportunity to put right its previous mistake.

“The whole system of university science is underfunded, and departments simply cannot cope with this additional unnecessary difficulty,” said Dr Peter Cotgreave.

For further information, contact Peter Cotgreave on 07958 570591.