

Full STEM ahead for the Scottish Space School



From 2002 to 2010 over 1200 pupils from secondary schools in every local authority area in Scotland, attended space camp in Houston, or a residential summer school at Strathclyde University. Two Hundred students have now graduated and are employed in well paid jobs with prospects in science and technology. The Space School has always been well supported by NASA and the wider international space community.



Scottish Space School at Strathclyde – Class of 2010.



Saturn V Rocket.

Apollo Mission Control with astronaut Bill McArthur, a Doctor of the University of Strathclyde.

In November this year, 12 young people from high schools across Scotland, visited the Johnson Space Centre in Houston on a week-long learning journey, a well deserved prize for being judged the outstanding students at the Scottish Space School 2010.

The visit took place exactly ten years since the idea for a Scottish Space School was first conceived, following a meeting at Johnson Space Centre with its Director, George Abbey, and members of a small study group from Scotland representing the education and business communities.

The objectives of the Space School are the same today as they were then:

- ▶ Provide inspiration, increase motivation and raise aspirations of young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM);
- ▶ Encourage more students to study science related courses at school and University;
- ▶ Promote the wide range of career opportunities in science and technology;
- ▶ Increase self-confidence through the development of high quality communication, team-building and problem solving skills.



This is the STS-116 Crew Portrait including Nicolas Patrick who the students met during the visit. (front row from left) William Oefelein, Pilot; Joan Higginbotham, Mission Specialist; and Mark Polansky, Commander.(back row from left) Robert Curbeam, Nicholas Patrick, Sunita Williams, and the European Space Agency's Christer Fuglesang, all mission specialists (Photo Courtesy NASA Marshall Space Flight Centre (NASA-MSFC))

The Scottish Space School is now managed and delivered by the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde and is open to year S 5 pupils in all Scottish schools, who are studying maths and science subjects at Higher Grade. The year after attending Space School, one in six students enrolls at Strathclyde on an undergraduate degree course, 80 per cent in Engineering.

The 2010 Space School was by some distance the most successful ever. Over 90 per cent of the 120

pupils who attended, rated the overall experience as 'excellent', with 'An Evening with NASA' and the Rocket Launch at Ross Priory receiving an excellent average score, on the standard 1-5 evaluation scale, of 4.95 and 4.93 respectively.

For the vast majority of pupils this was a life changing experience, with 'inspirational' the most frequently used word in the evaluation forms. This inspiration was in no small part the result of NASA astronaut, Nicholas Patrick, and space suit engineer, Heather Paul, spending

most of the week with the students, much of it in small informal groups where lots of questions could be asked and expert advice sought.

In taking the Space School into its second decade, the university is keen to work closely with key industry sectors, particularly Aerospace, and would welcome any approaches from interested parties to discuss the various options. The Scottish model could easily be replicated in other UK regions and nations, and with industry support an AeroSpace Academy could be developed along the same lines as the successful Power Academy.



Mission Control Centre.

To capture the flavour of the Scottish Space School in Strathclyde in 2010 visit the website at:

www.scottishspaceschool.org.uk