

## Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, including Food Manufacturing and related Industrial Chemistry



### STEM: To Infinity and Beyond

5<sup>th</sup> March 2009

**A Top American Astronaut** winged into Bradford this week to present with WYLLN staff how to inspire children to embrace STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Major-General Charles Bolden Jnr, who has experienced more than 680 hours in space during four space shuttle missions and is tipped to be made the boss of Nasa by US President Barack Obama, was the keynote speaker at the University of Bradford.



The conference, held at the University's Norcroft Building and entitled '*STEM: To Infinity and Beyond*', kicked off a week of activities and workshops at the start of National Science and Engineering Week. With an opening introduction provided by Trevor Mason, Chief Executive of Careers Bradford, further presentations by WYLLN staff on STEM Innovation, were delivered by Joanne Crowther of Bradford University's School of Engineering, Design and Technology; and Dr Paul Denton, AEMFC Sector Officer from The University of Huddersfield's, School of Computing and Engineering.

Presenting to an audience of around 70 local school teachers and pupils, the former US Marine said blasting off into space did not even occupy his dreams as a boy and that he was "goaded" into a career as an astronaut. 'Charlie', now retired, said: "When I was growing up in South Carolina, I was really interested in science but I didn't want to be an astronaut. I thought I wanted to be an engineer but when I went to the Naval Academy at 17, then the Marines, and the opportunity arose, I didn't need to go back and study science."

All the presenters then joined a roundtable question and answer discussion, with Trevor commenting, "We want to get the message out to young people about the worth of pursuing a career in science, technology and engineering".

Paul viewed, "the decline of STEM is an issue of national prestige and career aspiration". This was supported fully by Charles, "Children should study everything, but science and maths open doors". Joanne added, "People who go on to get degrees in these fields tend to find themselves in a secure career."



Councillor Adrian Naylor, concluded: "West Yorkshire has one of the fastest growing population of young people outside of London and if we are going to attract investment in terms of businesses and creating jobs, we need to give our children those medium level skills to get them into university."