

2 Student Exchange and Summer School Programs

3 Guest House Report Senate Editorial

4 Student Alumni And Relation Cell Review

6 Science Clubs Review

7 Placement Policy Critique

8 IIT Hospital Review SAC Recording room Update

11 Green Campus Initiative

12 H8 Update Hack Society Concept

## The Placement Renaissance: No Loose Ends?

Every year, the placement team tries new ways and policies to ensure maximum fairness and minimum loopholes. This year has seen a somewhat drastic and yet commendable overhaul in system and policy. Some of the added features in the system ensure that the process is more airtight rather than functioning on good faith. InsIghT explores some fundamental issues and the Placement Team's clarification on each of them.

### Changing CPI

Members of the PT had access to change the CPI present on any resume uploaded with the Placement Cell. A possible misuse here was that a student could increase his CPI for a short while just before a company downloaded his resume and change it back later. This feature was included to change CPI in cases where the ASC was delaying the update, e.g. in updating the CPI of DDs. Needless to say, it is best if such a power rests with the ASC only and not with any student.

In September '10, the power to change CPI was withdrawn from all the CCs and DPCs, after the issue was brought to the notice of Dean SA and now rests only with the 6 Placement Managers. This significantly reduces the chance of any abuse as any wrongdoing can be traced back to a very limited number of people. However, whether this power should be possessed by students at all is debatable, as this year CPIs have been automatically updated from ASC.

### Lack of an Activity Log

There is a lack of an effective activity log on the placement interface which can track and monitor activity and changes. Given that a number of people (DPCs)

have the power to edit any resume if they wish to, such a log is necessary to catch discrepancies. The activity log available currently is unreadable and will hardly be of any value in checking malpractices. It is also suggested that such a log be checked independently from time to time by the GSAA or people nominated by GSAA to ensure transparency. However, Professor in Charge and Placement Officer are known to run random inspections of student accounts for keeping a tab on their movements.

### Account Misuse

According to 2 members of last year's placement team (names withheld on request), it was for them to edit company shortlists at their own behest and to sign/un-sign any company's JAF on behalf of other students. The shortlists were sent directly to DPCs by the company who could have added/subtracted any names. There should be a more direct interface available to the company for shortlists rather than sending it to a student middleman.

The PT confirmed that as the shortlists are sent to them, and there is a possibility that a CC or PM could change the list before displaying it on the blog. However, they further clarified that now companies send their shortlists to two email ids, one maintained by the Prof. In charge and the other accessible to the entire Placement Team. Thus any inconsistencies can easily be caught. Although this system is not infallible, it offers a good deterrent against abuse. The most welcome change made in the placement procedure has been removal of the team's power to sign/un-sign a student's JAF. Although, this was helpful for somebody who was unable to sign a JAF due to genuine reasons, it left open the possibility of unauthorized un-signing of a JAF.

### The Selection Process

As of now, the selection of the present team is done entirely by the passing out team without any external intervention. Till last year, the GSAA was also made a part of the selection panel, but his participation in the interview panel now stands discontinued. Also, majority of the powers of DPCs, who are elected representatives, were abolished this year resulting in all power resting with nominated members now. Given this post concerns a good chunk of the final year students in the institute and over 1000 students register for placements every year, some representation must be sought through institute elected representatives, if not an election in itself for the placement team.

### Alternatives

A study of the placement models at some prominent Indian colleges threw up a range of alternatives, each with its own pros and cons.

### Team Selection

In IIT Kharagpur the placement team consists entirely of pre-final year students (e.g. 4<sup>th</sup> year DD). Alternatively, in UICT, Mumbai the placement team is composed completely of final year students who want to go for higher studies who will not be sitting for placements. The motive is to eliminate any biases companies might feel towards the students they are in touch with for the recruitment process. These students can remain better focused on the task at hand without worrying about their own placement. One concern with this model is that pre-final year students can later use company contacts in their final year for their own benefit.

*Continued on Page 9*

## RTI: The Power is Yours!

The Right to Information (RTI) is a national legislation that empowers the masses against red tapism by giving them the right to demand any information from any public authority.

### What Can be Asked?

Under the RTI, you may get any information from the authority without giving a reason. You can use it to obtain copies of any official document and ask for reasons behind administrative decisions. Specific to IIT, the RTI has been used before to probe into the

The Accounts department told Amit Jariwala, M.Tech student in 2006, that his stipend was delayed because attendance sheets had not reached them. On filing an RTI to know the procedure for stipend payment, Amit learnt that there was no time limit set for its payment. He also found that IIT Kanpur used to give an advance stipend and the IRCC had computerised their accounting system. He submitted both the models to the institute. A proposal was then sent to ASC to design a 'time bound software' with the help of the Deputy Dean and Registrar.

reason for stipend delays to felling of campus trees. One may also ask for marks or grading scheme of a particular course. However, RTI must be invoked only when you cannot obtain the information by directly asking for it. Incidentally, the JEE fraud exposed in IIT Kharagpur this year was through examination of answer sheets obtained via RTI.

### How to File RTI?

At a fee of Rs. 10, submit an application addressed to the Public Information Officer (PIO), or fill the RTI form available in the Registrar Office (2<sup>nd</sup> floor, MB), enlisting the details of the information required. The application may be submitted or sent via post to the Registrar Office. <http://www.iitb.ac.in/legal/index.html> details the various departmental PIOs. For example, an estate office related query, must be addressed to the PIO concerning it.

The RTI Act prescribes a time limit of 30 days from the date of receipt of form within which the information would be dispatched to you, failing which, the PIO may be fined up to Rs. 250 per day subject to a maximum

of Rs. 25000 upon appeal. In case you are not satisfied with the information received, you can make an appeal to the First Appellate Authority (FAA) listed on the IITB website, or even file a complaint to the State or Central Information Commission complaining against the PIO or the FAA.

### Things to Keep In Mind

- Be specific about the information you need. For example, asking "Why is my stipend delayed" won't be as effective as asking for a day to day report of the status of your stipend application to pinpoint where it is held up. No officer would want to take the blame on paper and the stipend would be cleared right away.
- A fee of Rs. 2 per page provided is charged under the Act. You may therefore ask only to inspect the documents, on the office premises. Inspection is free of cost for the first hour and chargeable at Rs. 5 per hour thereafter.
- Officials sometimes try to bury the relevant information under a huge pile of unrelated information. Be cautious as to what you are paying for. ■

# The Path Less Taken: To Foreign Land

As an IITian, opportunities for alternate learning paths are plenty. **InsighT** brings you some of the choices the world offers you.

**T**ired of spamming for a foreign summer internship? Want to get a taste of the education system abroad? If yes, summer schools and student exchange programmes are the answer.

## Student Exchange Programme

**The Concept:** An SEP arranges for a student of the institute to spend 1 semester abroad in another university, pursuing similar courses to those required for his degree. IITB has signed MoUs with some universities to facilitate SEPs – details of which may be found at <http://www.ir.iitb.ac.in/Affiliations.htm>

Other than the multicultural exposure, the practical approach to courses followed abroad gives a more 'hands-on', experimental experience to students as compared to courses at IIT. Murtaza Bootwala (Northwestern University, Sem 7) says, "The first thing that hit me about the academic scene there was the flexibility on offer. Other than diversity in courses, even the engineering major stream is not decided until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of grad school!" Additionally, the experience of a foreign university helps the student decide whether he/she would want to pursue an MS. Vimit Gandhi (Purdue, Sem 7) believes that personality development is another aspect of the experience and it helped him grow a lot as a person.

**How to shortlist Universities:** As one has to pursue courses similar to those dropped in the exchange semester, finding a university which offers courses that match is tricky! One has to look up webpages of the universities and find matching courses offered.

**When and how to apply**

- Get the proposed curriculum approved by your faculty advisor, department DUGC and Academic Section.
- Send a formal application to the DUGC describing the courses you wish to take at the foreign university with the assurance that you will fulfil your degree requirements.

**Scholarship and Funding:** Since the tuition fee of the foreign university is waived for SEP, you need only travel and living expenses. A few universities (such as Brown, Bogazici and Northeastern Univ.) also provide free on-campus housing. Another option to cover expenses is to take up a funded project in the same university parallel to the SEP, as Rejin Varghese (ETH Zurich, Sem 7) has done. One could also take up a part-time job during the semester. Some universities also have scholarship programmes for Exchange students, especially German universities to which exchange can be centrally funded through DAAD.

**The Flip Side:** SEP is an expensive affair and funding can be tough to arrange. Accommodation and food hassles, language barriers, having to do daily chores and harsh climate can make it a challenge for many. Also, as Rejin says, exchange students miss the campus activity and of course their wing, hostel and friends.

## Summer School

Summer schools are programmes which run annually at institutes across the world – crash courses of sorts, which acquaint participants with select subjects. Summer Schools are majorly of 2 kinds - management and technical.

### Management Summer Schools

Management Summer Schools such as Stanford, London School of Economics (LSE), etc provide global exposure, interaction with a wide spectrum of students, and the opportunity to learn extensively on business topics with reputed faculty members.

**How to shortlist universities:** It is essential for a student to shortlist the university which offer courses adhering to his/her interests and also be an asset to his future career. Ashwath Kirthyvasan, who attended LSE comments on his choice as being the best for economics and additionally, much cheaper than the US Summer Schools!

**When and How to Apply:** Application process is very arduous and varies across schools, but typically requires essays on the specified topics, along with at least 2 recommendations. Recommendations are preferred from one's internship advisor or a faculty member (academic/non-academic) whom you have worked with. As these schools look for a diverse pool of students and professionals for their programmes, the essays should portray one's personality, experience and aspirations in a convincing way.

**Scholarships and Funding:** Unlike SEPs, tuition fees need to be paid for. Harsh Jhaveri, who was at Stanford, says, "The colossal expense is a good investment in human capital for a student deeply interested in business". Another tried avenue for funding is taking up of a paid summer project independently, to help cover expenses for the summer school. Mridul Joshi, who was accepted for a project by Cornell, was able to cover her living expenses at Stanford Summer School using its funding, while the Pepsico scholarship covered her tuition fees.

**The Flip Side:** The major deterrent for students is the monstrous expense involved. Though scholarships

are provided in a few schools, they are difficult to get, considering competition from more experienced international counterparts. Besides, application process being cumbersome, most students apply only to a few schools. Lastly, if a student also wishes to pursue an internship over the summer, it becomes imperative to plan the summer so as to accommodate both. "Which is why the summer after 2<sup>nd</sup> year, when internships are tougher to get, would be a good time to apply" believes Vipul Hirani, who was at LSE.

"Summer school is useful for students who have a business bent of mind and the experience would certainly give an insight to the MBA programme abroad. Additionally, it's a great opportunity to build an international network for your future endeavours."  
–Mridul Joshi

### Technical Summer Schools

Technical summer schools are mostly analogous to management summer schools except differences in the application process and duration. An applicant for these should have 2–3 strong recommendation from professors or project mentors and should discuss at length, their research interests along with a statement of purpose. A research-inclined student would draw the best out of a technical school and the summer after 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year would be an ideal time.

Tejal Bhamre, who interned at CERN's summer school, says "It was an enriching experience because I got to participate in the work going on at LHC, in addition to interaction with many eminent scientists and international students through lectures and seminars."

## Other Options

Though SEP and summer schools are common; there do exist other options such as semester-long internships, year-long exchange, etc. Mehul Jain, CSE 4<sup>th</sup> year BTech student, who was offered a company internship in Paris for a duration of 5 months, had to adjust courses of his 7<sup>th</sup> semester into his 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semester, while Dhruv Joshi of M. Sc. Chemistry is spending his entire 4<sup>th</sup> year at EPFL, Switzerland.

Students say that these experiences have been enriching irrespective of whether they use the skills acquired in their professional lives. Having said that, a student should make sure that he is up to the challenge of living abroad before taking the international plunge. ■

For further details contact Shrey Jain, Shreya Mishra and Tarun Reddy at [shreyjain@iitb.ac.in](mailto:shreyjain@iitb.ac.in), [shreya.mishra@iitb.ac.in](mailto:shreya.mishra@iitb.ac.in) and [tarun.reddy@iitb.ac.in](mailto:tarun.reddy@iitb.ac.in) respectively.



## SHOUTbox

On 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 all the H14 residents received following mail from the council.

"This is regarding the fact that installation of cellular tower on hostel rooftop has been approved by IIT administration. The council has been asked to give the opinion of hostel inmates on this. Kindly provide your views on whether the tower should get installed or not?"

Within two days, 55 people responded to the mail. Out of these 33 were against the tower installation (confirmed by a council member). Mainly radiation hazards<sup>[1]</sup> were cited as a cause of opposition to the tower.

Despite this, the council had to say "Yes" to the authorities when it was told that GSHA had conducted a survey few months back in which majority of students opted in the favour of a cell tower in the campus. The survey can be seen here - <http://bit.ly/cugPaU>. Detailed statement by the GSHA on July 24, 2010 as posted on **InsighT** Facebook page was "The survey identified the major

cellphone networks whose quality needs to be improved. Vodafone, Airtel, Idea and Docomo have sought permission to install BTS on the three buildings; hostel 10 new, Tansa and hostel 12/13 which will cover the hostels. Once permission is obtained (which will be sometime this week) it is a 40-day job"

The HCU Chairman had this to say when HCU was requested by a student to reconsider the installation decision (Date October 6, 2010) "The HCU is not party to the decision of installation of the tower in H14. Please refrain from taking uninformed potshots."

Incidentally, the GSHA has not responded to the email queries by hostel inmates regarding this matter. As more and more H14 inmates started speaking up on the issue, another voting was conducted by H14 GSec. This time as the awareness had increased a large number of inmates participated in the vote. The summary of responses can be seen here – [goo.gl/E5hb](http://goo.gl/E5hb)

As can be seen about 88% inmates do not want the tower on Hostel 14. It should be noted that a few people have voted twice, but even if such cases were accounted for, the

mandate is clear. To read the actual views expressed by the hostel inmates during the vote, read on [goo.gl/28Zb](http://goo.gl/28Zb). While some students staunchly oppose the installation, a few demand radiation measurements under normal operating conditions of the tower. It now remains to be seen what happens in such a situation. ■

## REFERENCES

[1] Health hazards due to cell radiations- Ppt prepared by Prof. Girish Kumar (EE dept, IITB) [goo.gl/VpNI](http://goo.gl/VpNI)

News Reports related to cell towers in Mumbai: Link: ([goo.gl/g9LKC](http://goo.gl/g9LKC))

[1] Cellphone transmission towers must not be located near or atop hospitals, schools and colleges. To set up a mobile transmission tower on the terrace of a building, the company would have to take permission from a majority constituted by two-third (67%) members of a housing society.

**Note by the writers:** This document is written for the sake of chronicling the current situation. Any views (except those quoted) expressed here are personal. All the original emails can be made available on request to **InsighT**.



## Guest House: A Student's Bane?

The IIT Bombay campus guesthouse, though an asset to the institute, poses a fair share of problems to students wanting to book rooms.

### A Tedious Procedure

The procedure for booking a room in the guesthouse involves a fair bit of running around. The booking form is available online or can be collected from either the Guesthouse or the department office. Any booking application requires the approval of your Head of Department/ Warden/Asst Warden. The HoD may require a "Faculty Introduction Letter" in case s/he does not know the student. Mr. Dabholkar, Guesthouse In-charge, says, "This procedure is in place to stop students from misusing the facilities of the guesthouse". Under this scheme, the HoD takes responsibility for the authenticity of reason for booking a room and confirms the relation of the student with the guest.

### Who Comes First?

The guesthouse does not have any student or faculty quota in place. The preference order for room allocation is:

**Category I:** Institute guests (visiting professors, guest lecturers, JEE/GATE committee members, Faculty position candidates etc)

**Category II:** Official guests (Department visitors, Ex-Faculty members/Officers, Parents/Guardians, Other university students)

**Category III:** Guests of Faculty, Staff, Guests of students, IITB Alumni and family

Rooms are to be allotted strictly on a first come first serve basis. However, several students alleged in

our online survey that it helps to route your booking application through a student who knows the Guesthouse authorities — such as those on MI/TF teams or Hostel Affairs Council — who have interacted with guesthouse authorities previously.

Mr. Dabholkar and GSHA Devashish Sethia deny these accusations and suggest that students should refer to 'occupancy charts' available with booking clerk in the guesthouse office to check the availability of rooms.

### Fighting for Breath

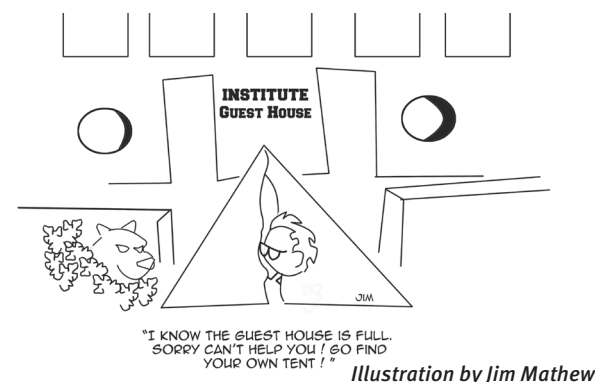
The guesthouse has also been party to the infrastructural crunch the institute is facing. Despite Jal Vihar and Van Vihar together having a good 74 rooms, it is difficult to confirm a booking even 3–4 weeks in advance.

According to Mr. Dabholkar, "The infrastructure of the guesthouse has gone down in the last 3 years. The staff hostel besides Hostel 11 was a backup in case of a lack of space in Jal Vihar and Van Vihar. As the staff hostel has been a temporary shelter for Hostel 11 girls for the past one and half year, our capacity has reduced by 22 rooms."

Also, new faculty members are housed in the guesthouse, along with the visiting faculty; till such time that the institute can provide quarters. To add to the 16 visiting Faculty members already residing in the guesthouse, the Institute is expecting another 25, thus occupying more than half the rooms.

A new Guesthouse with an additional capacity of 100 rooms and 50 suites is being constructed near the old Director's bungalow. There are also plans to convert the staff hostel into residential quarters to increase the number of houses for the faculty members.

In the meantime, Mr. Dabholkar is trying to negotiate deals with hotels around Powai to offer rooms at discounted rates to guests, the details of which shall be made public soon. Institute students can avail a



similar discount at hotels in Delhi. The details of these hotels in Delhi have already been posted on student notices.

### Hopes on the Horizon

As of now a full-fledged website is being constructed for the guesthouse, with a host of add on features. The new interface would not only allow for checking the availability of the rooms but also help the guesthouse in managing inventory, room service, material management, dining facility etc.

However, an online interface for booking and checking the availability of rooms has been a manifesto point of the previous 2 GSHAs but has still not materialized. Previously 2 students had begun work on such an interface but were unable to complete it.

Mr. Dabholkar has received clearance to make the online interface and is in the process of offering tenders for implementing it. He hopes that the forum shall be launched by March next semester.

Following our efforts to highlight students' issues, Mr. Dabholkar has also agreed to propose including faculty advisors in the list of those authorised to validate applications which now extends the list to HoD, Faculty Advisor, Warden and Asst. Warden. ■

For further details contact Vipul Hirani, Rohan Sablay and Ankur Mour at [vipulhirani@iitb.ac.in](mailto:vipulhirani@iitb.ac.in), [rohansablay@iitb.ac.in](mailto:rohansablay@iitb.ac.in) and [08001013@iitb.ac.in](mailto:08001013@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

## The New PORs in Town

One of the most happening events this semester was the proposal of a new student senate hitting our inboxes on a warm October day. Instantly, it became a subject of aimless discussions in hostel wings, earning the propaganda of a few and skepticism of others. However, the proposal for the senate was put on hold by the SAC Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 for lack of student backing. Only 450 students had filled the senate survey out of a possible 7500. That and the vehement opposition to the policy from IBs who do not want any control over their independence killed the proposal.

Leaving aside the current proposal of senate, let us ponder over the basic need for it. The vast student community of IITB comprises of, arguably, intelligent and practical students. Yet, students have never had a say in the policy matters here. One would think, in an institute where a students play a big role in governance and bear substantial effects of the policies, isn't it fair that students have a say in what is good for them or not? Is it acceptable that professors make all our decisions for us? True we have been blessed with reasonable administrators who have been receptive to student interests. But then, once in a while comes along a policy which students are opposed to, yet have no power over. And as tradition has groomed us, we adjust to whatever is thrust upon us. For example, the institute has banned the right to hold student protests held to force the hand of authority (refer to the document which you sign as a freshman). Recent examples would be the ban on student gatherings at certain places or restriction on

entry of alumni after 11 PM. The senate as an idea represents the promise of students having some say in the matters which affect them.

You may say we paint a rosy picture and a senate will not be able to achieve all this. Yes, for a few years, it could well be ineffective, but it will evolve. It is our responsibility as students to make it progress. Every student body ever initiated in the institute, has undergone changes over the years to evolve in order to fulfill its intended goal. If the intended purpose is sound, we can trust our successors to build mechanisms to achieve smooth execution. One might argue that we have General Secretaries for policy making purposes and to an extent, this is true. However, with the responsibilities of day to day execution matters of their portfolio they have very little time and energy to pursue policy matters whole-heartedly.

Let us come to the current proposal then. Indeed, it is peppered with many flaws. But, as with every new venture, they can only be dealt with in time and not while the senate is merely a hypothesis. That aside, there are some very sound mandates in it. Right now, there is no practical way to impeach a General Secretary in case of laxness in work. The senate lays down a formal procedure for the same. It also calls for inclusion of IBs under the senate. While IB heads consider this as treading on their liberty, the larger purpose of the senate – to allow students a say – must not be lost amidst all the hostility.

A strong objection to the proposal is that senate proposes new PORs to control existing ones and that it will require even more PORs to control these new PORs. However, the idea here is to establish a circular relationship. First set of PORs keeps tab on the second set and the second keeps check on the first. We are thus separating the legislative from the executive, a protocol followed in all governances over the world. A valid concern is that the senate may not be able to effect any real changes. However, we should really give the senate a chance to mature and then gauge its impact. Besides, in the worst case scenario, if the senate fails, we would be back to zero, with a new system just as ineffective as our present one.

In the end, it is important we keep in mind the recent developments in institute policy, and decide whether the changes, even if triggered by complaints, are moves we want to accept. We have institute policy restricting our freedom and we don't even have the right to protest! Maybe we can even accept them today, but what will the institute be like 5 years from now? Our institute is increasingly becoming a British Raj, with people who have no stake in the policy dictating it. What is disturbing is that many of us don't find anything wrong with it. The Student Senate may be a weak concept with cracks as of now, but rejecting the idea itself would be stifling the small chance we have to remedy our state of affairs. Let's not make that mistake. ■

The views expressed are personal opinions of the editors of *Insight* who may be reached at [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in)

# SARC: The Silent Crusaders

InsighT takes a look at silent roles the alumni and SARC are now playing in the progress of the student community at IIT Bombay.

Until a few years ago, there was a large disconnect between students and the high-flying alumni, with no mechanisms to tap IITB's immense alumni wealth. However, with the emergence and expansion of SARC over the last few years, IIT Bombay has seen a new burst of activity to strengthen the student-alumni relationship.

## Institute Alumni Scene

There are essentially 4 bodies involved with alumni:

- IIT Bombay Alumni Association (IITBAA)
- IIT Bombay Heritage Fund (IITBHF)
- Dean ACR Office
- SARC

The first 3 have existed for quite some time; the student role emerged only with establishment of SARC in 2007. Founded by Deepak Sevta and Prashant Khandelwal, it began with Phonathons, the initial idea being to raise funds from alumni. It was reasonably successful, raising about US\$ 30,000 in the first session. Since then, the basic focus of SARC has shifted from raising money to contacting alumni to complete their database and facilitate holistic use of alumni wealth. Considering that the IIT Bombay Alumni database consists of only 13000 contacts out of a possible 37000, SARC has also launched the 'Lost Soul Search Drive' (LSSD) initiative in June 2010, to facilitate database building by Googling, LinkedIn searches and Phonathons.

## Present Day Status

Today, the main portfolios of SARC are:

### Alumni Interaction (formerly known as Lecture Series)

This is further subdivided into:

**Interactive Sessions:** These are aimed at helping students gain a larger perspective of the life and opportunities outside IIT, also doubling up as lectures. Last year, Mr. Girish Gaitonde, Mr. Satish Agnihotri and Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni covered their respective journeys to success in the lecture series 'Trailblazers'. This year SARC held a much appreciated interactive session on public speaking skills by Prof. Jayant Kanitkar. Scouting for interested alumni and providing details is done by IITBAA or HF, and SARC limits its participation to organization of the lecture.

**Department Industrial Perspective (DIP):** This program aims to provide a learned perspective to students on the industrial scene through sessions with alumni having at least 5 years of industrial experience. A DIP program was carried out in the CSE department on 7<sup>th</sup> October by Mr. Vinay Kulkarni. Similar sessions are to be held in Civil, Electrical and Metallurgy Departments soon.

**Buddy Talks:** A number of informal sessions have been conducted jointly by Institute Placement Team and SARC, inviting alumni (most with 2–3 years of experience) to have an informal session with the students applying for placements to discuss industries, options and companies. The discussion highlights work culture, rising opportunities, pay scales and anything else the students want to ask.

Although these lectures are still not as popular as envisaged, SARC has succeeded in bringing in eminent alumni to provide much needed perspective on extremely relevant topics. A new interactive event held by SARC this year was the 'Alumni-Student Sports Meet' on 9<sup>th</sup> October, which involved a series of games between the alumni and the students, and is to be developed into a 2-day event next year onwards.

### Phonathons

In this program, the students call up alumni over a few days to seek information for the completion of alumni database. Though it was initially started as a fund-raising exercise, today fund raising only comes into the agenda if the HF so demands. According to Mr. Rajiv Deshpande, the only take away for alumni in Phonathons is the chance to give back to the institute and have a conversation with someone who they can easily connect to. To give the calling a structure, BPO employees from Centel were called in 2008 to train the volunteers and prepare a script. However, it is still the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> year students who do the calling and with a success rate of only 25–30% (calls answered) it becomes a time-consuming exercise.

### Alumni-Student Mentorship Program

Launched last year, ASMP aims at providing alumni mentors to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students, to listen to their queries and give career advice. Armed with the experience of years and worldly wisdom, the alumni provide perspective on various things, ranging from their mentees' CVs to the ideas fostering in their young minds. Last year, 134 alumni and 473 students registered for this program, out of which 66 alumni were allotted 175 mentees. Most of the alumni in this program held very distinguished posts, hence the interaction with their mentees is limited to around 2–3 mails each month. In this respect, it is more advisory and less mentoring, as mentoring is a serious commitment and the dedication it requires is lacking from both sides. Unfortunately, a lot of students who initially registered have been unwilling to respond to their mentors and were looking for more immediate gains from alumni. However, those who do value the opportunity have had very positive experiences.

### Hostel Level Alumni Scene

"Hostel is where heart is", an unlikely axiom, but that is what motivated Hemant Patel and Suhas Pai, two alumni, to come up with the idea of the Hostel Alumni Team Stewardship program (HATS), which was started in 2006 with H7, and initiated in 2009 in H4 by Bakul Desai. HATS is mainly aimed at

1. Improving hostel infrastructure and facilities
2. Assisting mess workers
3. Increasing alumni-student interaction

There are 2 major initiatives in the pipeline related to the HATS program:

**'Make hostel my home':** This program is aimed to facilitate better cleanliness and maintenance of the hostel corridors, wings and toilets. The hostel alumni secretaries are to conduct periodic audits of the hostel facilities to develop a feasible correction plan and put up notices and photos on the internet for full visibility, as well as sending reports to the alumni, who will forward it to the relevant authorities for expediting the necessary work. With the help of the institute and hostel student bodies, the alumni would establish a rotating trophy and collectively award it to the best hostel on campus based on the cleanliness and facilities. However, the audit has been done only in H10 so far.

**STARS (Student achievements in academics and research scholarship):** This initiative seeks to provide funding for student projects, once they are approved by the concerned faculty member. It will be initiated on a pilot basis in H7 and H4 shortly.

HATS as a program has huge potential as the figures say. Thanks to HATS, H7 has a surplus of Rs. 27 lakh in its kitty. 3–4 lakh have also come to H4 in the last year. However, it is still in a very nascent stage in other hostels considering it has been 2–3 years since H7 started reaping the

benefits. However, other hostels should not get disheartened, as SARC aims to launch the program in all hostels by the end of this year.

The Legacy Projects, initiated with the help of the GSHA, have batches pledging to give back to the institute during their silver jubilee reunion. The batch of 84 pledged Rs. 3 lakh towards the 'Young Faculty Awards', initiated a Retired Professors' Insurance scheme and financed the Sunehri Baug area. This year, the '85 batch has promised contribution for a Eureka event, continuation with the YFA and setting up of a student's loan through the Alumni Association.

## Conclusion

Though SARC has done a lot of work in a short span of time, the task ahead is monumental. SARC has no office yet, and there is no solution in sight, as getting office space in the institute has become difficult these days. Without a well defined budget, they are at the mercy of the Dean ACR Office to allocate funds, and the Alumni Association to provide the funding.

Being a nascent body, SARC has no well defined structure, or sufficient manpower, and is planning on adding more core divisions to face the challenges head on. Unfortunately, their efforts are often hampered by the students who are uninterested in the alumni scene. Further, the hostel and department alumni secretaries are under dual authority (the SARC OC and their respective GSecs) leading to a clash of interests, hampering work. However, with a determined core team, and an enthusiastic support team, we can surely look forward to SARC taking the student-alumni relationship to the next plane. ■

For further details contact Siddharth Shukla, Neha Rambhia, Manu Sahay, and Ishank Gupta at [siddharth\\_1234@iitb.ac.in](mailto:siddharth_1234@iitb.ac.in), [neharambhia@iitb.ac.in](mailto:neharambhia@iitb.ac.in), [manusahay@iitb.ac.in](mailto:manusahay@iitb.ac.in) and [ishank\\_gupta@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ishank_gupta@iitb.ac.in) respectively.



Sir,  
This is in reference to the article "The Registration Breakdown" in the previous issue of insight. I am a student of the Chemical Engineering Department of the 2008 batch and I was extremely disturbed to see our Faculty Advisors being portrayed in a distasteful manner. I was one of the thirteen students having the problem quoted in the article and through all my interactions with the Faculty Advisors, they have been extremely sympathetic and understanding. Their statements were quoted out of context which made them sound as absurd as they did in the aforementioned article. If a student gets an FR while having a normal work load, the assumption that he will face some trouble in an over loaded semester is not at all preposterous, which was the only point the Faculty Advisors wanted to drive home. They have always been available for all my problems and have tried to work out the best possible solutions, within the rules of the Institute.

All statements above are my own and I'm willing to be quoted in print if necessary.

Regards  
Anoop Verma, Department of Chemical Engineering

### Response from editors

The article did not intend to discredit any faculty advisor and refrained from taking their names. All the facts stated were accurate although the context may have been missed given the students were disrespectful towards the FacAds. We sincerely apologize for the same.



## Faculty Retreat: Teaching and Learning at UG level

September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 saw a strange incident - close to a hundred professors of the institute were nowhere to be found - vanished without a trace. Investigations revealed that they had retreated to an undisclosed location. As it turns out, they were not out to concoct some sinister design to world domination, but were brainstorming to create an identifiable process into what ails the UG program and UG students at IITB.

The brainchild of Prof.K. Sudhakar of Aerospace, Prof. Viren Sethi of CSE, Prof. Ashish Pandey of SOM, Prof. Agashe of Electrical and Prof. Patankar of Biosciences, the idea germinated into a 2-day retreat, a reflection session to gauge professors' perception about level and quality of teaching and students' performance and response at UG level.

### Pre-Processing

The genesis of this initiative can be traced to informal discussions where experienced faculty members shared their concerns over level of motivation, ethical standards, subject knowledge, employability etc. of the institute's UG students. The challenge was getting a hundred professors involved in the discussion and come up with an identifiable process. The philosophy was that a method of appreciative inquiry needs to be used to make any organization better. As Prof. Pandey quite eloquently puts it, "If you keep on solving a problem, you always need the problem."

### Processing

The entire process was carried out in 4 steps:

**Discovery:** The stakeholders in the discussion were identified to be students and faculty who were further subdivided into young and old in case of

faculty, and new and old in case of students, since each had their own unique set of issues.

The participating professors were initially put in pairs to talk about their vision for the institute, following which they shared their ideas with larger groups so as to debate on the ideas generated and also touch base with reality regarding their feasibility and relevance.

**Dreaming:** The second phase was to think up possibilities for a vision for the institute as a whole and betterment of the academic system. It involved visualising what the institute should be when professor and student attitudes, ambience and class sizes have changed.

**Design:** The next step was to design systems and processes to implement and execute these ideas. A heuristic model was developed to assess an idea: the WOW or NOW method. An idea was evaluated on to two parameters, the WOW (its immediate impact and acceptance) and the NOW (its feasibility). Eighteen action points were decided upon, which were further condensed to 8 solid ideas, after removing overlaps and redundancies.

**Delivery:** The last phase is of course, the implementation of the ideas. This is an ongoing process, and will take a considerable amount of time to execute. The first step would be to compile feedback, from the all stakeholders, including students, administration and faculty senate, following which the institute bodies would have to take responsibility for execution.

The rest of the retreat involved interactive workshops for the professors, including TED Talks and

Some tentative action points that were zeroed upon were:

- Better planned students' orientation in the beginning
- Making the logic of sequence of the courses clear in students' mind
- Better connection between real life challenges and things being discussed in the class
- Rationalizing the role of FacAds
- Reduction of administrative burden on faculty
- Faculty mentoring
- Ethical standards and priorities of students
- Structured inputs on personal effectiveness and leadership

poster presentations on faculty expectations and ambitions for the future of teaching.

Given that this initiative was taken up in fully collegiate spirit by some interested faculty members and aimed at involving as many faculty members and other members of the institute as possible to make it inclusive, integrative and broad based, the organizers were pleased with the success of the retreat. The faculty noted that a surprisingly large number (110) registered for the event, nearly all of whom were ready and willing to affect a change, even within themselves, for the sake of the common goal. Depending on the success of the implementation, there might even be more retreats conducted in the future. ■

For further details contact Siddharth Shanbhag and Arvind Singh at [siddharth.shan@iitb.ac.in](mailto:siddharth.shan@iitb.ac.in) and [arvind.singh@iitb.ac.in](mailto:arvind.singh@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

## In Holy Matrimony, on IIT Campus

Surprisingly invisible to the campus, married research students have their own lifestyle

Cutting across the different categories of full time PhD students is a group of students, namely the married researchers – who, with their families on campus make a unique community, probably, in their life-style, social relations, their involvement in cultural and other activities and their interaction with other students. Insight spoke to some of them and realised, that despite the challenges, most do a wonderful job of making the best of both worlds.

### Campus Facilities

Married researchers are quite content with the facilities that IITB provides, except for the long delays and uncertainties in the allotment of family-quarters. Prafull Patidar from Chemical Engineering faced a peculiar situation when his accommodation was provided to him three months later than expected. Not able to find a flat to rent for just 2–3 months in Powai, Prafull's son ended up skipping classes for three months at the campus' KG school. "But, now my son greatly enjoys the campus life and I am glad we live on the campus", asserts Prafull. Married researchers feel quite blessed to raise a family on the campus, rich in the recreational activities it offers, in terms of infrastructure and student effort. His family enjoys the festive aura around events like Mood Indigo and loves to attend student shows like AIDS and Surbahar. The most comforting thing, according to him, for the campus residents is the safety with which children can move around in the campus. The natural setting of the campus makes it an enriching environment for a family and strolls along the lakeside are much cherished.

However, those living outside do not get the same benefits. "We miss out on many things that happen

in the campus, especially the musical and dance shows that both of us would love to attend" says Naveen Nair of CSE, who stays in a rented flat across the main gate with his spouse. Apart from the occasional financial hardship, he often finds himself in a tight spot when it comes to his work, as he has only limited access to campus network after leaving the campus every evening.

### On the Institute Scene

The involvement of married researchers in various student bodies and their interaction with UGs and

#### Accommodation Woes Strike Quarters too

The growing influx of PhD students during the past few years has caused a subsequent rise in the number of full-time married researchers. This, in turn, resulted in severe shortage of on-campus accommodation for married students. A married scholar can apply for quarters only after obtaining his/her first semester grade-sheet, whereas in several other IITs application for married accommodation is accepted immediately after joining. At present, there are 57 quarters made available (Type 1 and 'Tulsi' combined) for married researchers with separate waitlists for Type 1 and 'Tulsi'. Type 1 building (17 quarters in total) is where a student is allotted quarter initially. After a few months, based on the waitlist, he/she is expected to get a quarter in 'Tulsi'. Currently, there are about 67 families on the waitlist for 'Tulsi'. In this scenario, assuming that one-third of the quarters would be vacated every year (quarters are allotted for a period of 3 years on an average), by the time a student who is waitlist number 60 gets a quarter in 'Tulsi', he /she would be nearing completion of his/ her PhD!

Masters is usually minimal, though Vinay Amte who in the final year of his PhD has a different story to tell. After holding positions such as Chemical Engineering Representative and Public Relations Manager with RSF, he is currently a part of the institute PhD placement team. He also had an opportunity to work with M. Tech. and undergraduate students on his research, an experience that he rates as wonderful. Through such interactions, students on their part, gain from interacting with a senior in the field and get some much appreciated academic advice. On the cultural scene, students have often enjoyed Amit Prabhakar's spirited performances at Surbahar year after year.

### Work-Life Balance

Contrary to the belief that staying with family may restrain one's focus on research, all married researchers we spoke to felt that family is a source of inspiration and moral support for them. The hope that the sacrifices they make now would pay rich dividends in the future motivates them to put up with the constraints. "The youngsters here spend a lot of time having fun. But as you grow older your priorities change", quips Naveen who quit a government job to join for PhD. For Prafull, staying with family helps lead a more disciplined life. Though the expectations from supervisors are high, they find the work culture at IITB congenial and the faculty, in general, friendly and understanding.

In such an environment, these scholars are able to enjoy their campus and family life, with a plethora of opportunities open to them and their families. ■

For further details contact Rojers P Joseph and Sourabh Biswas at [rojpos@iitb.ac.in](mailto:rojpos@iitb.ac.in) and [sourabhbiswas@iitb.ac.in](mailto:sourabhbiswas@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

# Science Clubs – A Review

Despite having a huge mixture of tech bodies and activities one feels that they receive less attention from students. We found out why...

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay – the name suggests that the Science and Technology scene here would be thriving. It is this period in students' lives that scientific creativity is at its peak because of two factors. One, it marks the culmination of the more theoretical 'school-studies' and the entry into a practical environment, and second, after enrolling for higher studies, they narrow down their interests making this the phase of experimentation and exploration.

We have five clubs, under the Science Club of IITB – Aeromodelling, Electronics, Krittika (Astronomy), Math & Physics and the Web & Coding Club. Although these clubs operate independently hosting their individual events, being under the roof of Science Club aims to enable them to conduct bigger, collaborative events.

Let us look at the various club activities and plans and explore the underlying problem. Going one step ahead **InsIghT** also tries to suggest initiatives to elevate the status of tech activities.

## Web and Coding Club

Stemming from the widespread student interest in web and coding, this club began during in autumn 2009. The club aims to provide a discussion and collaboration forum to web enthusiasts and promote open source.

In the past the club has organized:

- Practice sessions for popular and coveted programming contests like ACM-ICPC etc
- 'Weekend Enigmas' – a set of contests exclusively for freshies.
- Regular workshops on Image Processing and Web Designing including Dreamweaver, PHP, Python and JavaScript.
- Ubuntu Release party – In just 2 years, the club has built a close-knit community of students interested in web and coding, all the while guiding other students to develop their interest in this field, with a strongly interactive google group culture.

### Suggestions/Recommendations

- Outsourcing of student body websites as projects for the club members – a win-win for both
- Projects regarding development of apps and interfaces for benefit of IIT students
- Incubation and mentoring of web based startups in long term
- Coding intras and competitions with mentoring from professors

## Electronics Club

It promotes, coordinates and facilitates electronics hobby activities amongst the students. Various sessions are arranged for freshmen and seniors to give them a head-start in the field which include:

- Electrified Sessions introducing freshers to electronics.
- Mentoring and financing advanced projects in electronics. With TechniC, Electronics club summer projects had over 100 students working during summers followed by an exhibition in SAC.
- Image processing workshops, a few competitions, tinkering sessions and work visits.
- Hobby room is being renovated to enable students to pursue individual projects. The Electronics club has soared in the past few years in its popularity. They have provided a veritable platform for projects, which offers flexibility in working and accentuates the 'fun' and 'hobby' element, in contrast to working under a professor. With the

introduction of Technovation, it has now diverted its attention to the seniors too giving them opportunities to display their mettle.

### Suggestions/Recommendations

- Advanced workshops and lectures for seniors
- Intras and workshops as preparation of Techfest problem statements.

## Krittika – Astronomy club

The ideology of the club is to increase the students' interest in astronomy.

In the past the club has organized:

- Special observation sessions – eclipses, stargazing, etc, on campus and outside
- Lectures from notable astronomers from TIFR and ISRO and IIT faculty
- Astro-photography session in collaboration with Pixels, the Photography club, last year.
- Lectures, workshops and competitions during Zephyr and Techfest.
- The club has 3 telescopes made entirely by the students. The observation sessions during Techfest are hugely popular. Also, round the year activity isn't seen chiefly due to sky conditions being averse for star gazing during rainy season. As of now, the club is merely a hobby club and needs to explore more.

### Suggestions/Recommendations

- More projects like the telescopes in collaboration with other clubs
- Higher frequency and number of lectures
- More hands on sessions on diverse topics
- Astronomy exhibitions including pictures from astro-photography workshop

## Math and Physics

The ideology of the group is to promote interest in maths and physics and give students a platform to share their ideas and innovations. The club has evolved from 'Papers Club' in 2007, it is meant for people who study maths and physics for the beauty of it.

Club events see a host of audience including PGs, dominated however by freshmen and sophomores. It should diversify its activities further to enthuse seniors given the popularity of maths and logic amongst IITians.

In the past the club has organized:

- Question-of-the-day competitions for the freshmen
- Lectures and talks on frontiers in physics and maths
- Quiz competition
- Rubik's Cube workshop

### Suggestions/Recommendations

- Challenging logic and physics competitions like treasure hunt, puzzle championship etc.
- Workshops on new topics other than Rubik's Cube to interest more seniors
- Demonstration of live exciting projects and exciting exhibitions on physics
- Hands on sessions in physics labs, lab tours

## Aeromodelling Club

Aeromodelling Club seeks to promote aviation technology on campus and has a huge scope for amateur activities. With strong support from the department, the club has seen a substantial rise in activities in the past 2 years.

In the past the club has organized:

- Talks and lectures on aviation and fighter jets etc.
- Informal sessions like kite flying.
- Helps in the organization of Zephyr. Excellent mentoring was provided to all the teams that participated in RC Plane competition last year.

They have faced problems due to lack of funding for projects and venue problems for flying sessions since Gymkhana grounds are out of bounds after 5 PM due to NSO. Even as a hobby club their activities are few in number and limited to freshmen. However, to develop as a club, it will need to hold more sessions where enthusiasts can come together for an activity of common interest.

### Suggestions/Recommendations

- Flight simulator and other hands on sessions round the year
- Regular competitions like RC plane, Hang Gliders etc.
- Intras and workshops as preparation for Techfest.

## Overview

As of now, there are very few people who stick with these clubs. They are mainly comprised of first years and senior involvement in the clubs is low. It is possible that the popularity of the science clubs is compromised compared to cultural or sports activities owing to their proximity to academics. The difference may also be attributed to the lack of 'glamour' in tech activities and less scope for showmanship as is with cultural activities. The clubs may take a leaf out of TechniC/Electronics' Club's book and provide platforms for showcase of technical achievements such as exhibitions and demonstrations. This will also go a long way in inspiring the students.

Additionally, a club's visibility and activity is strongly affected by the conveners' enthusiasm and zest. Most of the clubs have a sophomore serving as a convener except WnCC and Electronics. Although in most cases year doesn't make a big difference, a convener from a senior year (3<sup>rd</sup> year) could incorporate a large fraction of sophie population in the Club, as is nicely exemplified by the Electronics Club.

Having strong relations with the related academic department can be an aid in a number of ways. Professors' support in various projects and sessions enabling solid mentoring and support add a lot of value to the student.

Students participating in Science club activities see a 'low reward' in terms of the encouragement the activity provides. Essentially, tech/science activities require a lot of investment of time and resources, with prolonged single-minded focus. The current team has taken a number of steps like introduction of Technovation to remedy the situation. We hope that it can go the distance in aiding the smaller clubs to rise to their true potential. ■

For further details contact Tanushree prasad, Uttam Bhatt, Adwaitvedant Mathkar, Shashwat Shukla and Sushil Reddy at [tanushree@iitb.ac.in](mailto:tanushree@iitb.ac.in), [uttambhat13@iitb.ac.in](mailto:uttambhat13@iitb.ac.in), [adwaitvedant@ee.iitb.ac.in](mailto:adwaitvedant@ee.iitb.ac.in), [shukla.shashwat@iitb.ac.in](mailto:shukla.shashwat@iitb.ac.in) and [sushilr25@iitb.ac.in](mailto:sushilr25@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

For more information about Tech activities visit: <http://stab-iitb.org/>



# Placement Policy 2010: No Easy Game

The new clauses in the Placement Policy for 2010–2011 were cause for confusion and concern amongst many students. InsightT takes a look at what evoked these reactions and suggests some alternatives:

## Objective

The objective of the Placement Cell is to “maximize the number of students who get a job of their choice”, as put by Company Coordinator Prateek Vidya. This is why students who score an on-campus job or a PPO are further allowed to apply for more companies. He also iterates that every rule within and every imposition outside of the policy is made keeping in mind student interests. The IPT believes that the new policy, the result of iterations over many years will substantially help achieve this goal.

## Punish or Reward

A major addition in the policy this year is the ‘punish or reward’. This was done to counter:

- Low communication skills of students (therefore, prepare them adequately)
- Inappropriate attitude in pre-placement talks, placement process (ensure discipline)

However, without announcing the repercussions of ‘punish’ points, the new system was put into effect for the students. Although students knew that there would be associated penalties for these violations, not knowing the exact nature of penalty made the policy unfair. The same holds for incentive points too. However, the Placement Team is applying the

incentive points for sessions held before the release of placement policy in selected departments whose DPC had hinted about the policy to students.

The penalty structure, although existent in last year’s policy as well, has been made stricter this year. Improper dressing (sleeveless, three-fourths) to disrupting a presentation – all invite penalty, with inexcusable ‘dark violations’ being dealt case-by-case. Alarming, if a student accrues 15 penalty points, the next few companies the student applies to will be conveyed this: “Imposition of Penalty Points due to repeated violation of the Institute placement policy. Penalty Points are awarded for unethical and/or serious improper conduct of the student. Your organization may wish to also consider this information about the student in assessing his/her suitability for the job opening.” Surprisingly though, the company would not be informed of the ‘crimes’ which led to the imposition of penalty points. It should ideally be the company’s call whether the student’s violations are serious enough to reject his application which cannot happen unless applicant’s offences are also stated. Without this, something small may be taken as rather serious by the company and it poses a question mark on the student-friendliness of the policy.

A large number of workshops, buddy talks etc. have been organized so far to prepare students and to prevent the repetition of last year’s fiasco where 20 companies went back empty handed, disappointed with the candidates. Students earn reward points by attending these and in get to sign extra JAFs if they accumulate 15 points. However, the number of activities being held varies greatly across departments thereby presenting unequal opportunities to students of different departments. In reply, Mihir Mogre, M.Sc. Placement Manager says, “Students are supposed to push their DPCs to get more activities organized for earning points. Consequently, DPCs will work well and students will get their fair share of preparation.” The Placement Team holds that despite the mismatch in departments, everyone will still get a fair shot at the 15 points mark.

## Off Campus

A revised rule from last year states that no student can apply to any company that has come or is expected to come on campus till 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 unless permitted by the Placement Office. (Keep in mind that B. Tech. students are supposed to vacate

the campus by 10<sup>th</sup> May and their I-cards lapse on 15 May). Last year, one could apply off campus starting 30<sup>th</sup> April. Students who want to apply to a particular company have to inform their DPC so that the company may be officially invited to campus. If the company cannot come to campus, then off campus applications will be permitted at the discretion of the placement office. To the students who don’t secure a job by April, the extension of 2 months in the date becomes unduly harsh.

However, the Placement Cell feels that barring off-campus applications means an equal chance to compete to all students registered with the Cell, and all the options being made available to the company. More importantly, HR officials of recruiting companies often demand that there should be no off-campus applications reaching their mailbox. The Placement Cell justifies the policy hence.

## Can you Give the Policy a Miss?

The policy states that “The placement policy is applicable to all students registered for the 2010–‘11 campus placements of IIT Bombay (including the ones who may deregister)”. This rule is in place to deter deregistered students from contacting already contacted companies. However, a standing instruction to such companies to ignore all external requests would work just fine. Why should a deregistered student be forcefully brought under campus placement policy? Given that at least 20–30% of the students don’t secure a job in campus placements, this clause goes on to hamper their chances of getting a job outside too.

## Resume Editing

In IIM Bangalore and IIT Kanpur, students get a detailed version of their resume verified which is cut and rearranged before sending to companies. Here also verification is needed only once and students get much more flexibility to tailor their resume to suit each company. Alternatively, a 2 day resume editing window may be opened for students at regular intervals (say once a month), when the students have to come to the placement office along with the proof for the new resume points and get it verified and incorporated then and there. Although this will mean some extra effort for the Placement Team, it could go a long way in increasing the student-friendly nature of the policy.

Continued on Page 10



Illustration by Jim Mathew

## PG Updates

### HSS 699, Reloaded

To improve communication skills and scientific writing style of students, the institute runs a compulsory course, Communication Skills (HSS 699) for Master’s and PhD students. Over the years, the course served the student community well by focusing on elements of traditional humanities and social sciences such as the process of communication, oral and written communication, reception skills, audio-visual aids for academic and professional presentations, among others.

However, due to the ever-changing nature of academic documentation and larger batch sizes, there has been a growing demand among the PG students for the re-structuring of this course. A recent survey by the Institute Academic Council (PG) conveyed that of the 482 participants:

- Over 50% students felt that the course needed a complete overhaul
- Only 35% of the students felt that

the course helped improve their technical writing skills

The survey points out that large class size (around 700 in Spring ‘09) and no monitoring of weak students are the roadblocks in making the course efficient. (Detailed survey results are available at <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~academics/pgacademics/docs/>).

Accordingly, the General Secretary Academic Affairs (GSAA-PG), V.S.K. Murthy Balijepalli and his team have proposed a set of recommendations to the Post Graduate Programs Committee (PGPC) to improve the course quality such that it actually realizes its aims. The PGPC will be appointing a Restructuring Committee, comprised of Director nominated professors and GSAA-PG, and hopefully, the course will be redesigned to serve its initial purposes.

### TA duty Update

The Teaching Assistant (TA) culture in

the Institute has been on the rise. Larger batch size and introduction of new courses means a need for more TAs. Traditionally, TAs come from three streams - M. Tech., PhD and DD students.

The TA acts as a bridge between the faculty and students and hence she/he needs to train and develop some basic skills of human interaction. The patience, consideration for students’ learning needs, humility of character, impartiality, and remarkable organisation required from a good TA are no meagre demands and we would do well to streamline the TA allocation process to ensure that the best fits between people and roles are made.

The allotment and appraisal of TA duties across different departments is a topic of debate. V.S.K. Murthy Balijepalli (GSAA-PG) informs that “heterogenous nature of courses, non-academic TA duties and allotment of TA duties in different years of

study are some of the concern areas. After proposals by my team to the Post Graduate Programs Committee (PGPC), several steps are being taken to streamline the process of TAs.” Some of the proposals are:

1. Preferential TA allotment procedure has been recommended to be implemented by all the Departments wherein allotment of the TAs shall be on the basis of preferences given by the student. In case of a clash, the Course Instructor’s recommendation and the student CPI (applicable after first semester) shall serve as the deciding factor.
2. From next semester “TA awards” have been proposed which will be solely based on the feedback from the students. “It is hoped that these measures will help in the realization of the true intent of TAs.”

Contact Manu Tiwari ([munnadt@iitb.ac.in](mailto:munnadt@iitb.ac.in)) and Pranav Jawale for more details.

# IIT HOSPITAL: Avoidance is Better Than Cure?

With a rising discontent among the campus residents about the medical facilities and competency of treatment provided, InsIghT conducted an online survey among students to gauge the sentiments about the facilities and the results spoke for themselves.

## Survey Results

The most common complaints of the students were those of inefficient or wrong diagnosis. The doctors tend to fit in symptoms with diseases without much consideration. Cases of googling symptoms to find out the illness have also been reported. Even common diseases like typhoid, malaria, jaundice, measles, and ligament or bone fractures have been confused with one or the other in the past. In most of these cases, the patient was either cured, and/or saved complications after the second or third diagnosis at the hospital or when (s)he consulted external doctors. It is a matter of concern that such cases are not exceptions but repeatedly reported.

Worse, the medication for wrong diagnosis has complicated matters for some. While such cases were seldom officially reported earlier, unofficial complaints from students have been ignored and declared baseless. Such cases are not new. Prof. Sudha Shastri of HSS department recalls her case in which, cold and a mild fever along with fatigue were diagnosed by a doctor at the hospital as tuberculosis. The doctor also concluded that the professor must have contracted TB from her housemaid, although there was no evidence for the same. The blood test report later came out to be negative. The real ailment was only hypoglycaemia.

Dr. Nisha Shah says most cases of misdiagnosis are of fever which is usually a manifestation of some disease, and the cause is not apparent in the first time. In fact, she says that the IITB hospital is unique in following a recognized fever protocol. Nowadays, Blood Tests and Serology allow better detection of diseases, but it is not recommended before 2 or 3 days of fever. Adding to that, Dr. Shah said that having worked at several government hospitals across the country, she assures that

conditions here are among the best.

## Registering Complaints

Written complaints, anonymous or not, are to be directed to the Senior Medical Officer at the hospital along with proof. If that does not have the desired effect, the student can voice his/her grievance to the Hospital Management Committee through the student representative – usually an ISHA or the GSHA. The committee comprises of the 3 professors, 1 representative from NASA, 1 representative from the administrative block and the student representative. Prof. P.S.V. Nataraj who is a member of the committee ensures us that very soon an online feedback system will also be put into place.

## Why the Woes?

As regards the incompetency of the doctors, it was suggested that low salary coupled with restrictions against practising outside, even part-time, are the major deterrents for good doctors to join. Usually, doctors at other government hospitals are free to practice at private clinics, unlike here. The specialists are permitted external consulting, and they often tend to go missing for days at a stretch, forcing students to consult an external doctor.

For treating campus outbreaks, while the doctors and the hospital staff had worked hard to vaccinate against H1N1 prevention this year, no precautionary or informatory notices for the recent epidemics of Conjunctivitis and Dengue were issued, and no special effort was seen to combat the epidemics. A lack of even a basic blood group database of students was also surprising, given that we are asked to fill our blood groups in the initial forms.

Another major problem is the excess load with over 500 patients visiting the OPD daily, which is significantly higher than any other private hospital. It was found from the survey that more than 50% of students have been made to wait for 15–30 minutes, while a third had to wait more than 30 minutes on occasions. The hospital is understaffed and matters are made worse by students adding to the load waiting for fake pink slips. The doctors tend to be

wary of such cases and sometimes genuine cases are also turned down without a pink slip.

Besides demand for better doctors, tie-ups with the nearby hospitals have been suggested so that students could be recommended there in case of emergency or increased load. Unavailability of doctors on weekends and night shifts and sub-standard medication are other unaddressed issues. The infrastructure upgrade in terms of better testing facilities is also desired especially following rising cases of unsuccessful tests.

## Road Ahead

We raised these issues with Prof. P S V Nataraj, a recent appointment to the hospital committee and presented the survey results. Prof Nataraj explained he was contemplating taking student feedback himself, and assured action on the survey results in the future. He is pushing for recruitment of two more doctors, other staff and a Senior Medical Officer, but is constrained by the central government directive limiting the staff to faculty ratio in IIT. Another issue is the non-existence of professional reviews of doctors at the hospital to identify the weak links and he intends to initiate it in the near future.

All these factors have led to a feeling of mistrust in the students and campus residents and they visit the hospital only for minor ailments. However, the picture is not as bleak, with a commendable ambulance service, respectable pool of visiting specialists, and good emergency first-aid facilities. The issues raised in this article were also voiced by student representatives in October's SAC meeting and will be taken up with them. Hopefully, better medical aid is on the cards for students. ■

Write to us at [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in) to tell us how you feel we, the students can improve this state of affairs.

For further details contact Ankur Tulsian, Srinath Ranya, Mayank Boob and Neha Innanje at [ankurtulsian@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ankurtulsian@iitb.ac.in), [srinath.r@iitb.ac.in](mailto:srinath.r@iitb.ac.in), [09002009@iitb.ac.in](mailto:09002009@iitb.ac.in) and [neha.innanje@iitb.ac.in](mailto:neha.innanje@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

## Comparison across IITs

	Bombay	Delhi	Kanpur	Kharagpur	Madras	Roorkee
Allopathy OPD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Homeopathy OPD	X*	✓	X	X	X	✓
Ambulance & 24 x 7 Emergency Ward	✓	✓	✓	✓†	✓	✓
Radiology	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Ultrasound Testing Equipments	✓	✓	X¶	✓	✓	✓
Operation Theatre	✓†	X	X¶	✓	✓	✓
Optometry/Ophthalmic facility	X	X	X¶	✓	✓	X
Dental Care	✓	X	X¶	✓	✓	✓

\* OPD, specialist visits thrice a week

† But only minor operations are performed

¶ Ties with external hospitals

‡ Repaired after successive complaints

## SAC Recording Room Woes

The SAC Recording Room is to be definitively complete by the end of this semester, circa 2010. We should be glad that finally a long-standing manifesto point comes to life. But, what delayed the completion of the project to the end of the current semester?

The Recording Room has been a dream of the students and professors for over 8 years. The project has been delayed to the extent that old contracts have expired (but thankfully still held valid by the respective companies). A professional sound consultant X refused

to take up any further work due to preposterous delays in payments. The furnishing professionals A “ditched” work for more lucrative offers, and even for personal reasons. Moreover, quite recently, A refused to work till grills for the air conditioners had been installed by another outfit B who had got a delayed delivery of grills. People have given up begging for cooperation from authorities and have had to resort to extreme measures, like threatening to resign multiple times to ensure papers move around with the appropriate velocity.

So we have to ask – Why are we so servile to policies and standard procedures of working? The student body has lost

its bite, whatever little it previously had. For more than a decade we have read newsletter articles, manifestos and promises but have done nothing than to gear up for celebrating when the job is done. However, we still have a chance to redeem ourselves. The maintenance and possible upgrading of the recording room shall soon be the task at hand. So let us hope that the student body will shake off its apathy and make its voice heard. All is well, says Rancho an alumnus of IIT. ■

For further details contact Ankit Baraskar and Saitesh Mohapatra at [ankit\\_baraskar@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ankit_baraskar@iitb.ac.in) and [saitesh.mohapatra@iitb.ac.in](mailto:saitesh.mohapatra@iitb.ac.in) respectively.



# The Placement Renaissance: No Loose Ends?

■ Continued from Page 1

BITS Pilani appoints two volunteers from the placement team for each company coming to campus. It is also ensured that the placement volunteers are from branches different from what the company is looking for to remove biases.

At ISB, placements are handled by Career Advancement Services (CAS) Office which is run by professionals and acts as a liaison between the Placement Volunteers and recruiters. Job postings are uploaded by the recruiter on the ISB placement portal and companies forward the shortlist to the CAS office. In almost all the above cases the batch sitting for placements has the power to impeach Placement team members, if they are unhappy with them.

In US universities such as MIT, CMU etc. the placement model is quite different from that in India. The universities organize career fairs where various companies have stands/ stalls on the university campus. Students appear at the stalls with their resumes and register their details and credentials. If the company is interested in pursuing the process, the student is offered an interview sometime later in the semester. There is also a university job portal where companies post openings and give a chance to post your resume online. Contrary to IIT Bombay's rigid and honourable resume verification procedure, there is no similar concept and the students themselves are responsible for facts in their resume. However, fraud, if caught by the companies or university

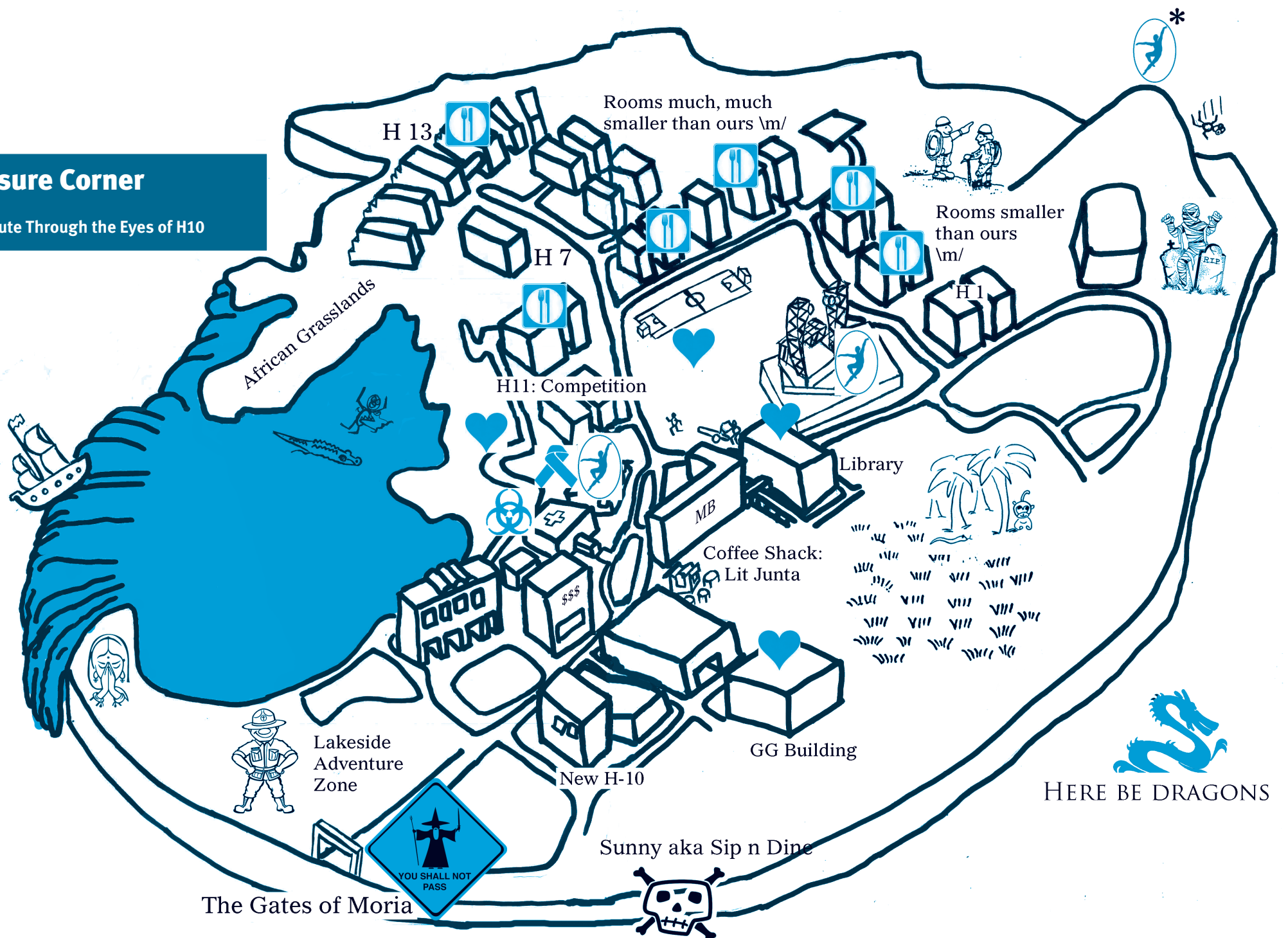
would mean at least a semester drop.

Though beyond a point, the placement system has to work on good faith – it is reasonable to question why such powers must even be granted in the first place. Many changes this year are welcome moves but we hope that this chain of positive changes continues. While the PT is working hard to ensure a smooth placement process this year and a strong foundation for future years, we as students, we must be aware of the possibilities so that as a community we may thwart any misuses. ■

For further details contact Rajat Chakravarty, Pranav Jawale, and Shrayank Gupta at [rajatc@iitb.ac.in](mailto:rajatc@iitb.ac.in), [pranavj@iitb.ac.in](mailto:pranavj@iitb.ac.in) and [shrayank\\_gupta@iitb.ac.in](mailto:shrayank_gupta@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

## Leisure Corner

Institute Through the Eyes of H10



♥ The 'you-know-what' spots

\* Source: Unconfirmed

⚠ Biomedical Hazard

💃 Here we Salsa!

🍴 Eateries - Free Parathas After Salsa \m/

Blame this on Mukul Gupta and Pushkar Pandit.

Also, inputs from Rushabh Shah, Aditya Prasad, Arvind Singh and Siddharth Shanbhag.

# IB Update: Bring On the Festivities

It's November, and soon enough, quite literally, sparks are going to fly! With Mood Indigo scheduled for 20–23 December, and Techfest from 7–9 January, and E-Summit on 6 February, we urge you to gear up to make the most of these scintillating events – because we took a look at what they have lined up, and it DOES look good!

## Mood Indigo

Come 21<sup>st</sup> December night, the stage of OAT will be set on fire by the Swedish metal band Katatonia who will be preceded by Indus Creed. Also, the musical diva, Asha Bhosle will be gracing the Mood Indigo stage after 29 years! MI has decided to replace classical night with a more student appealing genre this year.

The preliminary stages of Livewire, one of the biggest English rock competitions in India, are being held at 4 cities across India. The addition of Gangtok as one of the cities is a novel initiative to bring the budding North Eastern rock talent to such a platform. Livewire CDs which contain the audio tracks of past Livewire winners have been released and distributed through the Rolling Stone magazine as a part of their October issue.

A Times of India exhibition of historical newspaper archives dating back to 1850s is on the cards. Besides, Sumo wrestling, which has already made waves in the institute with its simple Amul Sumo scoop publicity campaign, Firewhipcracker Adam Winrich, a music show by Muntaner, a Spanish Guitarist duo and a professional fashion show by designer Wendell Rodricks are events that are to look out for this MI.

In recognition of the quizzing culture in the institute, Omniscience, a two day quiz-fest will be held during Mood Indigo. Also Aagaaz, a street play competition, with eliminations at Ahmedabad, Mumbai and New Delhi and finals during Mood Indigo is a big venture. Sitaaron-ke-sang will be a first of its kind singing competition at any college fest, where the finalists would be mentored by professional playback singers and would get an opportunity to perform a duet with them in the final rounds.

To counter the massive infrastructural crunch, MI has decided to take many of its events online, so that those unable to obtain accommodation can still get a flavour of the Desi Tadka. Photography competitions, mobile movie-making, digital arts genres have been moved online and online treasure hunt and even an online beauty pageant is on the cards. Most Informals events have eliminated paper registrations this year with an aim to maximize their reach and with a large variety of them in store, a fun-filled atmosphere throughout the festival can be expected.

## Techfest

Techfest has taken several initiatives this year – and added interesting angles to previous ones.

**Initiatives:** The India Unmute campaign, which centres about a Diary travelling across 65 colleges in India has seen a successful run, with over 80 entries from each college visited till now.

The IIT Energy GC, held previously at an inter-hostel level, has gone a step forward to the PAN-IIT level. The concept was well received, with IIT Delhi even starting its own Inter-Hostel Energy GC to give them a competitive edge in the inter-IIT EGC. IIT Kharagpur went to the extent of an institute wide blackout to save energy and increase consciousness among their students.

Techfest has planned an extensive campaign to reduce water consumption in hostels through installation of low-flow shower heads, taps and set up of a Grey water recycling plant. Permissions have been

sought and these will be implemented once clearance is given from the Estate Office. Notebooks made from recycled tetra-pak packages have been introduced at the Co-operative store and in the hostels.

**Lecture Series:** The lecture series at Techfest will feature Micheal Jones – CTA, Google, Founder Google Earth, William Baker – Chief Structural Engineer, Burj Khalifa (the tallest building in the world), Yevgeny Kaspersky – Founder Kaspersky Lab, and David Griffiths (author of PH 103 Electromagnetism textbook). IIT Bombay is also going to witness its first live lecture by a Nobel laureate with a talk by Sir Harold Walter Kroto, discoverer of Buckminster Fullerene (C60).

**Exhibitions:** Look forward to exhibits from MIT Media Labs (USA) and EPFL Laboratory of Intelligent Systems (Switzerland), AI Laboratory (Zurich, Switzerland) as part of the exhibitions at Techfest 2011. Exhibitions in this edition of Techfest will also feature a section of interactive media arts exhibits offering a blend of art and technology.

**Events:** A new segment “cross-roads” will feature performances by international artists across the 3 days of the festival. Ozone will feature competitions and on-the-spot games like wi-fi sport, stop motion animation, junkyard wars, conspiracy theory etc. Techfest has diversified the spectrum of competitions through introduction of a competition based on social entrepreneurship, one on hydraulic mechanism design, one on design of a vertical habitat and another on line following.

**Technoholix:** Technoholix presents a Double Dutch performance by the group DDF (performers from the famous video “Rise up” by Yves Larock). The other shows for Technoholix are yet to be finalized.

## E-Cell

With its newly adopted survey approach, E-Cell intends to solicit the statistics of the Opiniat study launching its 2<sup>nd</sup> version E-Garage. The survey requested the students to give their opinion on the various preferred career options and surprisingly, 55% students preferred their own startups! Most wanted to dabble in the green sector or take up a social cause. A senior faculty member quoted “It is good to see our students turning into employment providers, instead of being employees”. As a follow up to their study, E-Cell plans to hold all institute activities under the banner of E-Garage from here on. Some events to look forward to include:

**Pitch it!:** A forum for the students on campus who either intend to or have already launched start-up ventures to validate their ideas and obtain mentors, funding and networking. The shortlisting of startups would be done by a group of corporate judges and select ideas shall receive mentors in the coming month along with an invite to a session in December to help them with their concerns.

**The Virtual Stock Market,** which has made its mark in the previous years, continues to go strong this year, delivering business entertainment and knowledge through a simulation of the Stock Market.

**Vulture's Nest:** From the success and participation it had received last year, E-Cell intends to continue its reality TV Show, Vulture's nest, January onwards. The show is currently in talks with 2 business news channels and hopefully the redesigned structure will deliver much more drama, entertainment and learning this year.

Impressed by their ideology, approach and execution statement, the alumni of the '85 batch offered a generous donation to E-Cell along with the provision of various intellectual resources and an award of INR

75,000 to the best entry from IIT Bombay in Eureka! 2010. A decade into its conception, Eureka! 2010 offers much more intrinsic help now, through its refined mentorship process which focuses on delivering successful mentors pertaining to the same region as that of the participants.

Also, E-Cell's collaboration with SINE and the Confederation of Indian Industry into conducting the Indian Innovation Initiative on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September saw a wide participation from both the student and faculty bodies. The expo contained various potential technical innovations including a three phase air cooled multi user welding machine, an air powered electricity generator, wireless electricity transfer using magnetic resonance. The organization has also been invited to the PAN IIT conference in Noida and is looking at sending a good number of coordinators to help them evolve and learn hands-on.

E-Cell intends to conclude the year with a 2-day E-Summit contrary to its conventional 1-day structure with the inclusion of various competitions, targeting the institute student and faculty needs.

Here's looking forward to a brilliant year ahead! ■

*For further details contact Sagar Sambrani, Rahul, Mubeen Masudi, Manoj Tirukoti and Poorna Chandra at [ssagar@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ssagar@iitb.ac.in), [rahulpramod@iitb.ac.in](mailto:rahulpramod@iitb.ac.in), [mubeen\\_masudi@iitb.ac.in](mailto:mubeen_masudi@iitb.ac.in), [manoj.cartman@iitb.ac.in](mailto:manoj.cartman@iitb.ac.in) and [poorna.chandra@iitb.ac.in](mailto:poorna.chandra@iitb.ac.in) respectively.*

(Continued from Page 7)

## Placement Policy 2010: No Easy Game

### Other IITs?

A comparison of our policy to those of some of the other IITs (Madras, Kanpur and Kharagpur) brings out its relative complexity. Madras freely allows off-campus applications, while Kharagpur does not even have a formal policy in place. Kanpur's policy, stricter than ours, has a similar penalty structure. How is it then, that other IITs manage their respective placements with much simpler policies? Placement Managers Shobhit Gupta and Nishant Kachawa say, “These IITs, indeed, do run the risk of offending companies and thereby affecting placements.”

Prof. Ravi Sinha, Professor-in-charge of Placement, expects that the phenomenal change in our institute approach towards placements, owing to this company-centric policy, will boost campus placements. That the placement policy may have hit its mark is suggested by the comments of HR personnel of a consulting firm, “This year, students were quite well behaved and came up with good, meaningful questions.”

### To Sum Up

Much of the discontent regarding the policy stemmed from its late release coupled with the fact that penalties and incentive points were to be given retrospectively. While the Placement Cell has decided to not impose penalty points retroactively, some students are still troubled by the harshness of it.

It is, however, unfortunate that the Placement team has had to resort to this juvenile method to ensure appropriate conduct and a presentable skill set of the candidates. The blame here also rests with the indifference of the students. That said, let us hope that this policy succeeds in catering to the society's as well as the individual's interests and does not end up pitting the two against each other. ■

*For further details contact Achin Jindal, Ritika Goyal, Nihal Sarawgi, Yohan Matthew and Neeta Dixit at [08011013@iitb.ac.in](mailto:08011013@iitb.ac.in), [ritika\\_goyal@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ritika_goyal@iitb.ac.in), [nihal\\_sarawgi@iitb.ac.in](mailto:nihal_sarawgi@iitb.ac.in), [yohan@iitb.ac.in](mailto:yohan@iitb.ac.in) and [neetadixit@iitb.ac.in](mailto:neetadixit@iitb.ac.in) respectively.*



# Go Green: Green Campus Initiative

With sizeable efforts being taken by bodies like Techfest, Sustainability Club, and hostels to sensitize IITians about the environmental issues in IIT, the 'Green Revolution' seems to have made its mark in the campus. In line with this, we bring you more about the challenges that the institute is facing and suggestions to combat the situation,

## The Green Campus Initiative Committee

The Green Campus Initiative (GCI) committee, appointed by the Director in February this year, analyses the environmental issues faced by the campus and proposes its recommendations on dealing with them. Headed by Prof M.B. Patil, it is composed of professors from different departments along with Executive Engineer (Electrical) and the Public Health officer. Here's what they recommend –

### Water

A lot of plans are on the table for water conservation:

- Water-metering at places other than just Main Gate and use of nozzle-sprays in place of taps. (Proposed by Techfest)
- Xeriscape the IIT area to reduce need for supplemental watering of lawns and gardens.
- *Water Recycling Committee*: Water recycling is done currently in C-type quarters near K.V and is being planned in buildings like Ananta. Sustainability Cell has also submitted a proposal to implement it in the hostels.
- Techfest is trying out an experimental low-flow, shower-head and pressure-reduction apparatus for taps in Hostel 5, expected to bring consumption to 5–6 litres/hr from the normal 15–16 litres/hr. If these prove effective, they will be installed in other hostels.
- Prof. H.S. Shankar's technology, the "Soil Biotech plant", already used by BMC, is to be implemented in IIT soon, to enable grey water harvesting.
- A report on a rain water harvesting plan for the campus (by Prof. V. Jyothiprakash) has been submitted to Dean IPS. Further work is required for cost estimation and implementation.

### Solid Waste

Currently, composting of wet garbage from some of the hostels is being carried out near H4, while it should be done as per BMC guidelines. Vermiculture, alternatively, can be used to treat wet garbage generating manure or bio-gas as side products. We need to prioritize the repair of the two existing biogas plants of the campus, NISARGUNA and ARTI so as to draw the most out of the solid waste generated.

The Energy Audit of 2008 showed that around 450 Kg food (= 900 people) was wasted per day in hostel messes. "So, we've suggested the use of biogas plant for collecting the wasted food and converting it into fuel supply. This, in turn, will reduce LPG usage," said Mel George, an M. Tech. student involved in the audit.

### E-Waste

E-waste is a new cause of worry with a huge amount of computer hardware accumulated in departments and no mechanism to dispose it. Recently, the Sustainability Cell had presented a research report on E-waste management with recommendations sent to the Computer Centre. CC is using it to formulate a new E-waste management policy for the campus.

### Geothermal Energy

According to Prof. Chandrashekharam of Earth Sciences department, geothermal energy has huge potential for use in cooling. Cost of installing one such heat pump which can cool equivalent to 3 air conditioners is estimated to be 5–6 lakhs. It will save almost 30% in energy and cut down on emissions!

### Recycling

- Bicycles which are abandoned by graduating students should be made available to new students at discounted prices.



By Ben Heine from DeviantArt

- Techfest, in collaboration with Daman Ganga, is procuring dustbins made from recycled tetra-pack for the institute. Expect to see these dustbins in hostel canteens soon.

### Campus Ecology

Trivial though it may sound, saplings can provide cover from heavy construction activity in IITB. If the area around a building remains devoid of trees, significant effect can be seen on its temperature. In many places large areas are cleared of vegetation for construction worker camps. We need to ensure that required norms are followed during construction.

The upcoming Energy Sciences building will be the first green building on campus. Based on this experience, new buildings should be designed to incorporate solar power, natural light and ventilation and rain water harvesting for saving energy.

### Alumni Efforts

Even our alumni are concerned about IITB's environmental issues. The '80 batch funded the beautification of Lakeside road with gardens, boat club and jogging track, through their Legacy Project.

Similarly, the '84 batch has taken up Soneri Baug Project to develop a 10 acre stretch sandwiched along H8, Guest House and Powai Lake, as a nature preserve. Owing to the rich biodiversity of the area, the development will be guided by WWF.

Also, the '85 batch is promoting the Green Campus Initiative by installing Solar Water Heaters in hostels, which is expected to reduce the average annual operating cost per hostel from Rs. 4 lakh/yr. to Rs. 50 thousand/yr. Capital cost of installation is about Rs. 20 lakhs per hostel, with a payback period of 6 years.

### Hostels

- Prof. Milind Rane (Mechanical Dept.) says that soon, in some hostels, heat generated by ACs in the computer lab will be used to heat the water.
- Hostel 14 is the first hostel with efficient 'electronic choke' tube lights installed rather than electromagnetic ones. The electronic chokes have been shown to produce no audible noise, no detectable light flicker and require 30–40% less energy for the same light output.
- Mechanical timers for geysers are to be soon implemented in H1 to control heating.
- Hostel 5 organized its own Vanmahotsav on 25<sup>th</sup> September, planting approximately 80 trees and shrubs. Prof MB Patil, the Chief Guest, lauded the event and promised free saplings from IIT Nursery to other interested hostels.

### It's Your Call – Insight survey

We got plenty of interesting answers to our survey

– seems like we do care, after all. Most people were peeved with wingies who leave fans and computers on when they go out. Motion sensors for rooms and bathrooms seem to be a popular suggestion, given they are already installed in IIT Delhi.

### Suggestions From the Survey

*"Print all reports and assignments double-sided, encourage professors to allow the same."*

*"Next time you see that water is being wasted by leakage from your hostel water-cooler, don't ignore it. Contact the maintenance secretary and get it fixed."*

*"Do not keep the fan ON for the whole day to dry your clothes. Take some effort to dry them outside."*

*"Spend less on publicity stickers on every door, while it gives you visibility, what is the carbon footprint? Is it less than what we save through the campaign?"*

*"Inter Departmental Electricity competition with an incentive such as a vending machine for the winner!"*

*"Keep some stickers (titled 'ENERGY SHAITAN') in each wing of the hostel. When anyone violates basic rules, there will definitely be someone in the wing who would gladly award the offender a sticker."*

### How Much Money can be Saved?

Energy GC in hostels	Rs 3.74 Lakh/yr
If every computer in academic area uses power settings (i.e. turn off monitor after 10 min)	Rs. 31.1 Lakh/yr
If each of the 300 ACs are turned off 15 minutes prior to leaving the office	Rs. 2.5 Lakh/yr

### It's in Your Head

According to a report published by American Psychological Association, we cannot subscribe to 'knowledge alone will cause a rational action in humans'. Some of the structural barriers (barriers exceeding personal influence) to such action are -

- *Split incentives*: The person/organization paying for the change may not get the visible benefits (someone a few generations down would)
- *Physical environment*: One cannot make old buildings energy efficient or stop personal vehicle use. These are constraints hard to overcome!
- *Economic barriers*: Green products are too expensive for households and small businesses.

### Psychological barriers

- *Ignorance*: "I'm not sure what to do."
- *Uncertainty*: "Are you sure that's a problem?"
- *Denial*: "It's not happening."
- *Technofix Mentality*: "Technology will solve it"
- *Social Comparison*: "What are others doing?"
- *Priority*: "Not high on my priority list. Please."
- *Habit*: "Impossible for a person of my lifestyle"
- *Wait and Watch*: "That's a problem of future."
- *Give-up*: "We can't stop it anyway."

Of the numerous solutions proposed in this article, some are technical improvements, others social, some under progress, some wishful thinking, and some up to us to pull through. We urge you to do your bit to ensure that we're not exploiting the place we live in. Look at every constructive suggestion above as potential projects you may take up – authorities will welcome the contribution. The energy audit of 2008 suggested that with the implementation of its recommendations we can bring about a total saving of around Rs 1.75 crore/yr. Let us do our bit. ■

Pranav Jawale, Anupam Chatterjee and Sushil Reddy at pranavj@iitb.ac.in, anupam.chatterjee@iitb.ac.in and sushilr25@iitb.ac.in respectively.



## H8: No Man's Land?

Faced with the challenge of increased student strength, the institute has had to accommodate 70 girls in H11 TV rooms and lounges this year. The temporary solution of converting the D Wing of H8 into a girls' wing created waves while it lasted. We look at things as they stand now.

Initially, complete conversion of H8 into a girl's hostel was being considered till the new wing of H10 is built, after shifting the current inmates to H14. On opposition from H8, the proposal was revised to conversion of D wing into a girls' wing, to accommodate 50 girls from H11, with more to follow after the PhD intake in December. H8 D wing inmates will be given rooms in H8 presently occupied by M. Tech. first year students, who would be shifted to H14. A wall would separate the girls' wing from the rest of the hostel and a connecting path to H11 would be built. The girls would use all facilities of H11 and their wing would be under the jurisdiction of the H11 Council.

However, due to several problems plaguing H14 rooms, ranging from no water supply, LAN and lifts, the first year M. Tech students have finally moved to the D wing of H12. Girls from H11 are scheduled to move in after the endsems. This proposal has presented H8 with a myriad of problems. D wing inmates were opposed to shifting to poorly maintained ground floor rooms. Some people wanted to force sophomores to move to the ground floor, even if this entailed breaking up their wings. However, the rooms have been painted since and the students have been convinced to shift to ground floor. Also, the council faces a much increased mess bill per person (as the fixed costs remain same) and a much reduced hostel fund to tap into (as hostel funds are allocated on the basis of the number of inmates). All this is over and above the fact that H8 has very few students left and is composed of only two and a half wings now.

Moving forward, the authorities have decided to dismantle old H10 in a phased manner. They will start by demolishing the 'Utopia' wing of H10 by

Sept. '11 which has been unoccupied for quite some time. With better foresight from the authorities, the plans for the re-construction of old H10 could have been passed earlier. Also, if plans for the D wing conversion had been passed in the summer, M. Techs would have been allotted H12 directly and the girls could have been shifted to H8 earlier. If plans for the conversion of H8 go through in the future, H8 alumni and inmates are in danger of being robbed of their cherished hostel life memories, and the institute may miss out on donations by these same alumni.

The new wing of H10 would take approximately four to five months followed by a minimum of one and a half years of reconstruction. The earliest we can expect the new wing to be ready is the start of the academic year of 2013-14, and more realistically by 2014-15, accounting for delays. Hopefully this would be followed by H8 reclaiming the D wing. ■

For further details contact Archit Kejriwal at [archk19@iitb.ac.in](mailto:archk19@iitb.ac.in).

## A Hacker's Delight

A look at the hacks of the other kind and how it is a whole new approach to recreation!

So what is a "hack"? The term, made (in)famous by the 'geeks' over at MIT, refers to a harmless, ethical, practical joke performed for the amusement and delight of the general public. Contrary to Internet hacking, it is almost never done with any malicious intent, and certainly not for money. It could be a great feat of engineering, an expression of freedom, an innovative way to stick it to the Man, or just a distraction from the ennui of the daily life of an engineering student.

Other than the entertainment they provide, these hacks are an innovative form of recreation for the creative, restless minds. From the casual to the spectacular, MIT's hacks have spanned the entire gamut of 'coolness', some even attracting international media attention. Some celebrate scientific anniversaries while others hack internal events like Residence/Orientation week. Apart from this, many-a-time, the hacks are just a friendly and wicked game of one-upmanship between rival universities. Of note in this regard are the Caltech and MIT Hack Societies which regularly play pranks on each others' students in order to prove their superiority.

### The Tradition

The Great Dome, which is a central building in MIT much like our Convocation hall, has in fact featured in many of the most famous hacks. For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of humans setting foot on the moon, hackers placed a half-scale replica of the Apollo Lunar Module on the Great Dome of their Main building. In 1999, on the eve of the premiere of the Star Wars: Phantom Menace, the Dome was converted into an oversized version of the droid R2D2!

A special feature of the hacks is the ingenuity and cleverness of the plan which make them unmatched. In 2006, hackers placed a whole fire truck on top of the Dome, to commemorate

the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11. Needless to say, everyone was amazed at the impossibility of scaling the dome and it received widespread media attention. Some of the best hacks in history include pranks on other colleges, like the heist of the iconic Fleming Cannon from Caltech's Fleming House. The 130 year old, 1.7 ton Fleming House cannon was transported to MIT overnight by a crew of "movers", presenting phony work orders to the Caltech security guards who challenged them as they were removing it.



Even faculty aren't spared, as former MIT President Charles Vest found out; on his first day on the job, hackers made his office disappear, by hiding the entrance behind a bulletin board. A bottle of champagne had also been installed inside the office: the hackers of MIT had welcomed Vest in their own 'official' style.

### So Who's Behind These Hacks?

Sources say there exist many secretive Hack Societies on campus, each one vying to pull off the best and boldest hacks. But why do they do it? For one thing, hackers love the challenge of performing a great engineering feat, and bunking classes and avoiding homework is just an added bonus. Most of the time no one knows who pulls off a hack, even long after it is done, unless some society claims responsibility. It is rumoured that sometimes university staff are involved too!

### The IIT Hack Society?

Closer home, tales of small scale pranks and classroom mischief abound the IITs, but we have never really witnessed

hacks of this magnitude. Is it fear of official backlash that restrains us, or are we just not enterprising enough?

A few incidents have come close though. The notices in H12 and H13 announcing the 'H11 v/s Rest of the Institute gaali fight', organized by the 'Institute Cult Council' received their fair share of attention. The then GS-Cult Rahul Gaur had a tough time explaining to the H11 Cult Co. that it was all a hoax, and a lot of hopeful students were turned away disappointed. Or the time a bunch of students decided the IDC pencil needed a little protection, and proceeded to give it just that; in the form of condom rolled over its tip! Some H4 alumni from 1985 reveal a case when a hostel secretary got a rubber stamp made which said "H3 Bh\*\*\*\*\*ka" and stamped all posters going out to other hostels with it. College folklore abounds with stories from a time when student-faculty interaction was a lot less formal and professors' shared the jokes; even prank-calling the DoSA at all hours of the night was taken in good spirit then. (Do not try now!)

Hacks can go wrong too, especially if they violate certain standards of ethics. IITB lore tells of an incident four years ago, when an official looking circular was put up in fresher hostels asking freshers to supply original copies of school-leaving and other certificates before appearing for their first set of midsems, which were to start two days hence. The circular sent freshies into a tizzy and frantic calls were made to parents back home, asking them to courier the relevant papers!

With this, we leave open the idea for a tradition of hacking to germinate in IITs. They're fun, exciting and just about cheeky enough to tear us away from our laptop screens in our free time. They might even help bring back the old campus culture of yore, back before computers and the LAN. In fact, why not have a

Hacking GC being added to the institute calendar!? Wannabe GSs and Tech Noms, are you listening? ■

For further details contact Siddharth Shanbhag and Pranav Jawale at [siddharth.shan@iitb.ac.in](mailto:siddharth.shan@iitb.ac.in) and [pranavj@iitb.ac.in](mailto:pranavj@iitb.ac.in) respectively.

## The Insight Team

<b>Chief Executive Editor</b>	Ritika Goyal
Nikunj Jha	Rohan Sablay
	Rohit Kiran
<b>Chief Editor</b>	Rojers P Joseph
Nupur Joshi	Sagar Sambrani
	Sailesh M.
<b>The Execution Panel</b>	Satwik Pradhan
Achin Jindal	Seshadri G.
Adwaitvedant M.	Shashwat Shukla
Akhil Srivatsan	Shrayank Gupta
Anasuya Mandal	Shrey Jain
Ankit Baraskar	Shreya Mishra
Ankur Mour	Siddharth Shanbhag
Ankur Tulsian	Siddharth Shukla
Antariksh Bothale	Smeet Bhatt
Anubhav Mangal	Sourabh Biswas
Anupam C.	Sushil Reddy
Archit Kejriwal	Srinath Ranya
Arvind Singh	Tanushree Prasad
Ashwath K.	Tarun Reddy
Ayush Baheti	Uttam Bhat
Bodhi Vani	Vipul Hirani
Himanshu Dixit	Vishal Khatri
Ishank Gupta	Yohan Matthew
Janki Sheth	
Manoj Tirukoti	<b>Design &amp; Layout</b>
Manu Sahay	Mustafa Saifee
Mayank Boob	
Mubeen Masudi	<b>Illustrations</b>
Mukul Gupta	Jim Mathew
Neeraj Jain	Pushkar Pandit
Neeta Dixit	
Neha Innanje	<b>Photojournalists</b>
Neha Rambhia	Abhey Grewal
Nidhi Shanbhag	Ankush Agarwal
Nihal Sarawagi	Rahul Lakhmani
Poorna Chandra	
Pranav Jawale	<b>Web</b>
Rajat Chakravarty	Joyjeet Sarkar