

Discerning the SAC

A report on the Student Affairs Council meeting

In this article, we discuss some of the agenda items discussed in the SAC Committee Meeting, held on 11th November 2011, and present a critique based on the opinions derived from a survey that Insight conducted with over 550 participants.

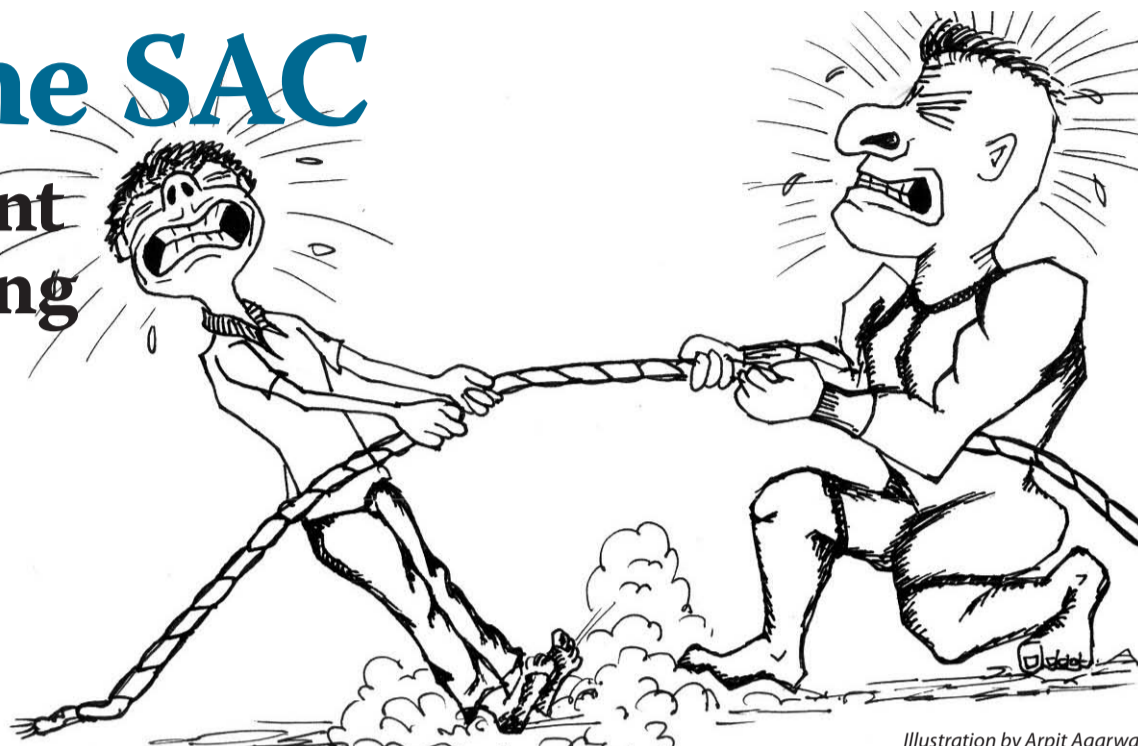


Illustration by Arpit Agarwal

■ ALANKAR JAIN, ARVIND SINGH, NIKUNJ JHA, SESHADRI GOWRISHANKAR, SWAPNIL CHICHANI

Elections for Overall Coordinators of Independent Bodies

Until last year, the selection of the Overall Coordinator(s) for IBs was done on the basis of an internal selection within the team. However, last year, significant changes were made to this election process. In last year's SAC meeting, it was concluded that there was a need for 'democratization' of the independent bodies. Last year, elections were held for the post of the Overall Coordinator of the IBs where the post was open to elections for the entire institute based on the number of students contesting from within the IB.

SAC Meeting

A change in this election procedure was brought up by the student representatives, because they were of the opinion that the entire student community was not in favour of having a general election for the post of OCs. They felt that such posts were handled better when the selection procedure was by nomination rather than by a general election. At the end of the meeting, the committee decided that the system of election of OCs should continue in a similar manner for the next three years. They felt that the need for election of OCs for independent bodies was established in last year's SAC meeting, where the institute functionaries felt that there was a need for a democratic process in order to elect these student representatives.

Survey

In the survey which we conducted, out of a total of 559 responses for the question, we found that 58% of the institute did not want elections by the entire electorate while 36% did. Though a majority feels that that selection of OCs should not be by elections, it is not an overwhelming one. When we then asked the question, "If elections were to be held for the post of OC, should the post be up for contention to people from outside of the core team?" 67% of those who answered the question felt that the post should be open only to people from within the team.

Independent Body Review

In this section of the meeting, the idea of having an open review/feedback for all independent bodies in the institute including the ISMP, Placement Cell, IBs, etc was discussed. These reviews could be on the lines of an open house or GBMs similar to that held for General Secretaries, or on the lines of an online forum for evaluation which is visible to all.

SAC Meeting

The committee felt that the ISMP and Placement Cell are not independent bodies and do not need to obtain feedback about their activities. The committee suggested that in case of any irregularity or grievance relating to the ISMP/SCP and the placement cell, they may be reported to the Faculty In-charge directly. The committee also felt that bodies like the ISMP have done remarkable work in the past few years, and too much student review could hamper the progress of these bodies. However Mood Indigo, Techfest, Ecell & media bodies may use any system to obtain feedback.

The student representatives felt that a review by students or faculty of the functioning of cells such as the Placement Cell was imperative for the effective functioning of these bodies. It was felt that without these checks, the benefits of these bodies on the student community could potentially be diluted. Since these cells exist for the betterment of the student community, it made sense to have either an open house or an online publicly visible forum for redressal.

Survey

Considering the suggestion made by the committee that students should approach the Faculty In-charge of independent bodies, we posed a question to students in our survey on whether they would approach a Faculty In-charge if they had a problem with the functioning of a certain independent body. We found that only 18% of the students would approach the Faculty In-charge while the remaining either didn't know that a Faculty In-charge existed who could be approached, or simply wouldn't go up to a Faculty In-charge with a problem as they were uncomfortable going to professors with student issues.

We also asked whether students would prefer an online or an open house for these independent bodies, in order to point out any issues they may have with that particular organization. An overwhelming 91% of the students who took the survey felt that there was a need for a complaint redressal forum and a majority of these people wanted both an online and an offline feedback forum.

Restructuring of voting for Institute Secretaries

The voting for institute secretaries in cultural/sports for opposed candidates has always had the entire institute as the electorate. However, the type

What is SAC?

The SAC comprises of institute functionaries and select student representatives. The institute functionaries present in the meeting include the Director, the Deputy Directors, the Dean AP, Associate Dean AP, the Dean of Student Affairs, HCU Chairman, Cultural Chairman, and Sports Chairman. The student representatives present in the meeting are the General Secretaries of Academics (UG and PG), Cultural, Sports and Hostel Affairs, 3 Department General Secs, 3 Hostel General Secretaries and the Heads of the Institute Student Mentorship Program. Other members are invited depending on the agenda of the meeting. The SAC meets at least once a semester.

How does this concern you?

The SAC meeting discusses policies pertaining to student affairs in the institute. Important policy formulations for student welfare are often discussed at the SAC meeting, with the student representatives raising their concerns with the institute authorities. Policy decisions with regards to selection criteria, extra-curricular activities, etc are often taken up at such meetings.

of voting to be followed, for institute secretaries who were unopposed has been the mandate of the election committee. Last year, for the first time, the voting for unopposed institute secretaries was a 'yes/no' vote by the entire institute. In this section of the SAC meeting, the committee discussed changes to this current structure of voting for institute secretaries.

SAC Meeting

The student representatives in the meeting felt that voting for institute secretaries, whether they were opposed or unopposed, was a laborious task for the electorate. To vote for 30 posts, with maybe twice the number of candidates, would dilute the purpose of the general elections. They felt that for the institute secretaries, a closed electorate would serve the purpose of an election better. However, the committee concluded that a democratic process to elect the opposed institute secretaries would be better for the students. The committee at the end of the meeting felt

that while having elections for opposed candidates was essential, the election procedure for unopposed candidates need not be so, and it was left to the discretion of the election committee to decide the mode of election of unopposed institute secretaries. The election committee later decided that the electorate for unopposed candidates be a closed electorate comprising of Institute General Secretaries, Hostel General Secretaries, Institute Council (Cult Council for Cult Secretaries; Sports Council for Sports Secretaries), Hostel Councilors (Cult Councilors for Cult Secretaries; Sports Councilors for Sports Secretaries).

Survey

In the survey we conducted, we asked students what they felt about the current closed electorate system for unopposed institute secretaries, and about the proposal of having a closed electorate for all institute secretary elections. With regard to the current electorate for unopposed institute secretaries, the survey results were equally split, with no clear majority for either of the two proposals. Some people commented on the possibility of including club members in this electorate. Abhishek Agarwal, GSHA, responds to this by saying that ‘a club member is not defined’ and this may lead to malpractices since no objective criterion exists. Hence only current, official post holders can form the electorate.

However, with regard to a closed electorate for all institute secretaries (opposed as well as unopposed), the survey results showed that a 63% majority of the students in the institute felt that it was not a good idea.

Other Items Discussed in the Meeting

The election dates were revised, and the elections will be held between 15th Jan and 15th Feb every year. This was done because the committee felt that the earlier system of election disrupted the midsems and hence the academic schedule of the contesting candidates. It was also agreed that a gap of one week would be kept between the date of polling and the first midsem exam. The elections for IBs (MI, Techfest and ECell) would be held in the second phase, post midsems, in March. The tenure of all Gymkhana post holders would still run from April 1st to March 31st.

A proposal for restructuring the Institute Color and Special Mention organisational awards was raised and passed. Till last year, these awards were decided by a central committee comprising of general secretaries and other nominees. Now, Special Mentions have been abolished while Colors have been distributed between various councils as follows: a maximum of 2 each for the cultural council,

sports council, hostel affairs council, academic council (1 UG + 1 PG), Mood Indigo, Techfest, E-Cell and Placement Team respectively. These councils include all functionaries at the institute and hostel level. The heads (at the institute level) of these councils will not be eligible for organisational colors and the onus to decide the distribution of these awards rests upon the respective council committees. The primary reason cited for this change was the fact that the councils themselves are best aware of the capabilities and work done by their members. This step should help in doing away with the controversies and objections in award distribution that have come up in the past.

A proposal for free entry of alumni into the campus round the clock and to draft new entry rules and procedures was raised. The committee deferred the discussion, saying that this can be taken up by the Dean SA in consultation with the HCU Chairman, CSO and GSHA.

Conclusions

We find that there is a disconnect in some cases between the perception in the SAC meeting, and the student opinion we find in our survey. In addition to this, it is also felt at times that the SAC fails to respond to the growing student demand for more transparency and accountability in the functioning of independent entities like the Placement Cell, ISMP,

etc, and this is probably necessary for the growth of these bodies in the long run. Perhaps the discontent amongst students for some of SAC decisions is based on the fact that the reasons for the decisions taken in the meeting remain unclear, and therefore are based on rumour. As of now the minutes of SAC meet are not publicised. If someone wants to, he may obtain a copy of the minutes from the Dean, SA on request. ■

Pay for What you Eat ■ NEHA INNANJE, RAHUL PRAMOD, SAIDEEP SUDI

Are you the kind of guy who never speaks of his mess in a complimentary manner? Can't remember the last time you ate in the mess? GSHA, Abhishek Agarwal, initiated the implementation of Biometric Systems in messes to tackle these problems and more. Hostel 5 has had this mechanism in place since the previous semester; there were teething issues with its implementation but they have since been overcome

Usage Based Model – An Analysis*

As per status quo, all students end up paying for all the meals in our messes even if we don't eat any. A Biometric System eases the task of keeping track of a student's activity in his mess. Is it justified then, to charge someone for a meal he hasn't even had? Below, we analyze whether a Usage Based Model could be implemented and why it is even morally correct to do so.

Currently each individual pays Rs. 80 per day, for the 4 meals he is offered, at Hostel 8 whereas the cost for the same is actually Rs. 130. The only reason that the caterer agrees to charge Rs. 80 and not Rs. 130, is that several people don't eat in the mess and so the caterer can charge lesser. In fact, it can be understood that people who do not eat in the mess regularly, end up subsidizing the amount for people who do.

We took up this issue with 'Leaf and Loaf' caterers. As of now there are 287 students who are enrolled for messing facilities in Hostel 8. For the pilot project, 100 students would be given an opportunity to shift to the 'Usage-Based' Model, if they wish and approximately 200 people would be a part of the traditional 'Lump-Sum' scheme. The option could be given to everyone without a cap but that can be done only after a trial pilot scheme is completed.

For an individual who wishes to switch to the Usage-Based Model there are 2 important considerations:

1. The charge per meal would be higher and could go up to Rs. 120 (lesser than 130 but more than 90) per day if he eats all 4 meals in the mess. Also, there is a basic fixed cost of Rs. 30 (included in the 120) that he would pay daily, irrespective of whether he eats or not.

Why is a Biometric System preferred over a Card Based System?

Ease in Billing: Providing the Mess Council with data regarding a student's mess usage in an Excel sheet format, it makes the task of compiling expenses incurred by a student, incredibly simplistic since data no longer needs to be fed into computers manually. Introducing transparency in the system, rebates can be offered easily too.

Reduction of Wastage: Having access to information regarding the number of people usually availing mess facilities, a better estimate is

provided to the caterers regarding the amount to be cooked on a certain day. Thus, reducing wastage which otherwise may not have been possible.

Negotiating deals with Mess Contractors: Armed with this data, when council members approach a new caterer or re-negotiate contracts, they would be able to provide him with a more precise estimate of average number of people eating each meal. Hence, providing them with stronger bargaining power compared to status quo.

2. When he eats outside the mess, the burden on his pocket could rise substantially.

So, even though the person gets the right to pay for what he eats in the mess, that right will have to be exercised by him after due thought and diligence, else he could end up paying more than before.

There would be a marginal increase in the cost borne by people who enroll in the Lump-Sum scheme. They would get all 4 meals at an increase of Rs. 10 per day (from the earlier Rs.80). It is imperative to note that these people would still be getting an overall discount as the food that they eat still costs Rs. 130 (and the cost borne by them is Rs. 90). Since the people who avail of the Usage-Based scheme pay a higher amount per meal, the contractor would end up with the same amount that he is getting now.

Another consideration is that the contractor will have to now use lesser raw materials as food consumption will likely go down. This results in a win-win situation as students get the right to pay for what they eat, the contractor gets the same amount of money with lesser costs and there is only a marginal increase in the price of the Lump-Sum scheme. The one downside that could occur is if food runs out on certain days when everyone exercises their right to eat in the mess; the contractor would not be to blame.

Right v/s Wrong

What we have here is a trade-off between community

based and usage based models. In the community based model, although the costs borne by certain individuals are less, it is literally at the expense of individuals who end up missing their meals. To reduce the extent of victimization of these individuals, a usage based model comes to the rescue, where one is charged based on his consumption. There needs to be a correlation between consumption and expenditure for the system to remain fair. Lower costs for the Lump-Sum scheme should not come at the cost of your right to pay only for what you eat. Precedence for this already exists – IIM A and IIM C, for example, also give students an option between the Lump Sum Scheme and the Usage Based Scheme, IITB should consider doing so too.

What's the way ahead?

There are certain benefits of Biometric Systems that cannot be ignored; the cost for implementation too is not prohibitive. Additional benefits include shifting to usage based models and maybe in the near future, one could be allowed to exit the messing facility completely and/or join another hostel's mess if he so desires (which is not possible without a biometric system). It is up to the respective Mess Councils to negotiate with mess contractors to get the best rates for both schemes and provide this option as a right to the students. ■

* The analysis has been done under the assumption that same rates will prevail next year as well. The calculations have been corroborated by the Leaf and Loaf contractor (serves H5 and H8)



MI from the Eyes of

A Fresher

Rewa Mehta – First year student, IIT Bombay

Being a fresher, I could feel the organisers' demand everywhere but I failed to find my contribution significant. I hated 'come for frisking' calls and ignored 'get the lunch' errands. What I wanted was real decision making jobs. Eventually, as the fest went along, I didn't get much time to think- mornings were spent working and nights were spent chatting with friends. Somehow, the campus looked so much more alive due to the immense crowds. Mood I passed by like a dream. The day it got over and there was time to delve into the past few days, I realised something beautiful had happened- now no work seemed too menial to me and none of it felt insignificant. I could tell how important frisking is and how all of us helped pull off an amazing festival.

Contingent Leaders

Ankita Das – CL, Symbiosis Law College, Pune

MoodI was definitely worth the wait. My favourite was Karnivool which caused us to get sprained necks and sore throats. We embarrassed ourselves at the Baraat Dance, screamed our lungs out during Mood I's Most Wackiest and got cheap thrills from entering a quiz drunk! Whatever it was, it was always fun. MoodI was always bustling with energy and it was a brilliant experience.

The negatives – There was a long drawn accommodation process regardless of the fact that some of us had made payments in advance. The bulls attacking people's luggage was quite a sight. Further, the promises with regards to the prizes were not kept and there were issues with the time of handing over the prizes.

Hailey Turakhia – CL, St. Xaviers College

MoodI for me has made memories through the best four days of my life. The competitions, informals and proshows, all were brilliantly conceptualized. Even with all the running around that a CL has to do, I could find time enough to get a sneak peek into most events. We did not face any problems while registering but judgement in a few competitions raised questions and some kind prizes promised on the website were not delivered. LT events could have had better lights and sound handling and security should have been better managed on some venues. My favourite moment was when on Day 4, we went to the OAT for prize distribution. Inside our hearts, honestly we felt, it was all worth it, it was worth the effort. I think it is commendable that everyone associated with the team could put up an absolutely exceptional and dazzling MoodI, which had something for everyone to take home.

A Senior

Rushabh Shah – Institute Literary Arts Secretary

This year, MI for me was much more about watching rather than taking part. The International Music Festival was great this year with a lot of interesting performances. The Pronites and the Afternites were really well executed and had great performances. However, what I did not like at MI this year was the Competitions, in particular Omniscience, the quizzing festival. A lot was expected from the General Quiz based on the event last year, though it turned out to be a major disappointment with boring questions even though the quiz-master was the same. The filler quizzes were poorly timed and organized and ended up being a farce. The only positive thing was the Entertainment Quiz which was truly entertaining. Although I did not take part in any Informals event, I rue that decision after hearing the prizes that were given out. Though personally I did not feel that giving out such large prizes was justified for such random events (case in point: Foosball winners were awarded Rs. 6,000 each), I guess the organizers had a valid reason for this. Overall, it was a better MI for me than last year and it achieved the aim of promoting various cultures through exhibitions.

■ ADITI JAIN, ARCHANA DAS, AYUSH MISRA, PALASH KULKARNI

Mood Indigo, the cultural festival of IIT Bombay entered its 41st edition this year. Held from 18th to 21st December, MI '11 succeeded in creating a huge buzz among the colleges across the country. The official Facebook page, with about 34000 'likes' stands a testimony to its intensive online publicity. In the days leading up to the fest, MI, themed on 'The Wild West', was publicized with biggies like Karnivool, KK and Akcent. A user friendly website was set up based on the theme, providing all the necessary information about the festival. A new initiative, Worldfest, was conceptualized where colleges from Indonesia, Turkey, Spain and Poland participated, with a vision of cultural exchange.

But did the actual event match up to the hype? An extensive survey conducted involving the general public of the fest and the contingent leaders of the participating colleges, answers the impending question. Please note that the ratings have been derived solely from the survey.

Horizons ★★★★★

Horizons 2011 will be remembered for pushing the envelope. It pulled off a winner with Night Arena, a post-Afternights event, which happened for the first time and was embraced by everyone alike for its ambiance and spirit. It was also for the first time that MI witnessed three Afternights and all of them were appreciated. While IMF and Vogue saw jam-packed venues, Workshops and Exhibitions had ambivalent responses. Worldfest, a new initiative, lacked in execution. Nevertheless, it was lauded for its sheer concept and ideology.

Competitions ★★☆☆☆

Competitions this year received a mixed bag response. Where performing arts events saw good participation, literary arts competitions failed to make a mark. Expectations were running high for the general quiz after its success last year. However, it turned

out to be a major disappointment even with the same quiz-master. High preparation events like footloose and MI Idol were well organized and saw high quality of participation but questions were raised over the lack of prizes that were allotted to these events. The 'Choreo nite' saw the finals of 'X-tacy' and 'Save the Last dance' being held inside a packed OAT.

Informals ★★☆☆☆

Informals this year crossed boundaries by getting electronic music sensation *Akcent*, who for many was the highlight of this year's MI. The location of the venue, the long queues and the duration of the performance, however, raised a few eyebrows. Other informal competitions such as corporate, MIMW, spy games and new events like live Angry Birds were creative and received a positive feedback from the participants. Hot Air Balloon, a fun event, received a fairly lukewarm response due to the odd timings of operation, owing to safety concerns. The 'MI squad' which went around the campus playing pranks on the crowd was another interesting introduction this year.

Pronites ★★☆☆☆

The Pronites, albeit one less, succeeded in connecting with the audience and were 'worth the two hour long wait' in queues. After a rather feeble Katatonia last year, Karnivool proved to be worth every penny spent and were highly appreciated by progressive rock lovers. Agnee and Raghu Dixit took turns in enthralling the swelling crowd of the fusion night and both took it to perfection. KK's performance was by far the most anticipated among all age groups, with the number of people inside the OAT reaching figures that are projected by the MI team. KK lived up to its billing of a Popular Night with fireworks providing the perfect finale. The Global Battle Of the Bands-Livewire was a milestone achievement for Pronites wherein the winners of the competition were given a prize money Rs.70,000 in cash and a chance to represent India at the GBOB world finals in Romania. ■

OCs SPEAK

All in all, Mood Indigo this year quite successfully materialized the objectives of promoting culture, art forms and interaction amongst the youth. We put up an entertaining festival with lots of variety to look forward to and a lot of new things being tried which set it apart and quite importantly a very focused execution. Karnivool, Akcent, Worldfest, Choreonite were hugely lauded along with all the afternites and the festival atmosphere, ambiance and interaction which prevailed on the streets.

Few problems regarding prize distribution arose due to misinformation and certain anomalies with one

or two sponsors (who sponsored kind prizes) with respect to the exact nature of the prizes. However, all of them have been resolved after the fest got over. The festival drew large participation from North India this time. There were no major security concerns reported during the entire festival. In an overall picture, it seems the team effectively managed pulling off a balance of showcase of culture in its various forms (both national and International), interaction, and a fun filled experience in a well executed manner during all the four days that has left good memories with all of the participants and audiences.

Placements 2012: Readers' take

■ ABHI SURI, ARVIND SINGH, NIDHI SHANBHAG, NIKUNJ JHA, RAVI BHORASKAR

Placement season is one of the most emotional times of the year, with the ecstasy and anguish of fervent preparations, running around between interviews, impulsive decisions and of course the incessant attack on the F5 key to refresh the placement blog. With an increasing pool of candidates to be placed and the growing infrastructure crunch, the Placement Team (PT) does have its work cut out for it – with around 1400 students' careers hanging in the balance.

InslghT surveyed about 200 students who were registered for placements this year and solicited their responses on the work of the PT. Some of the numbers backed up our instincts while others took us by surprise. This article in every sense, is completely written by the candidates; these are their opinions and their comments.

POLICY AND EXECUTION

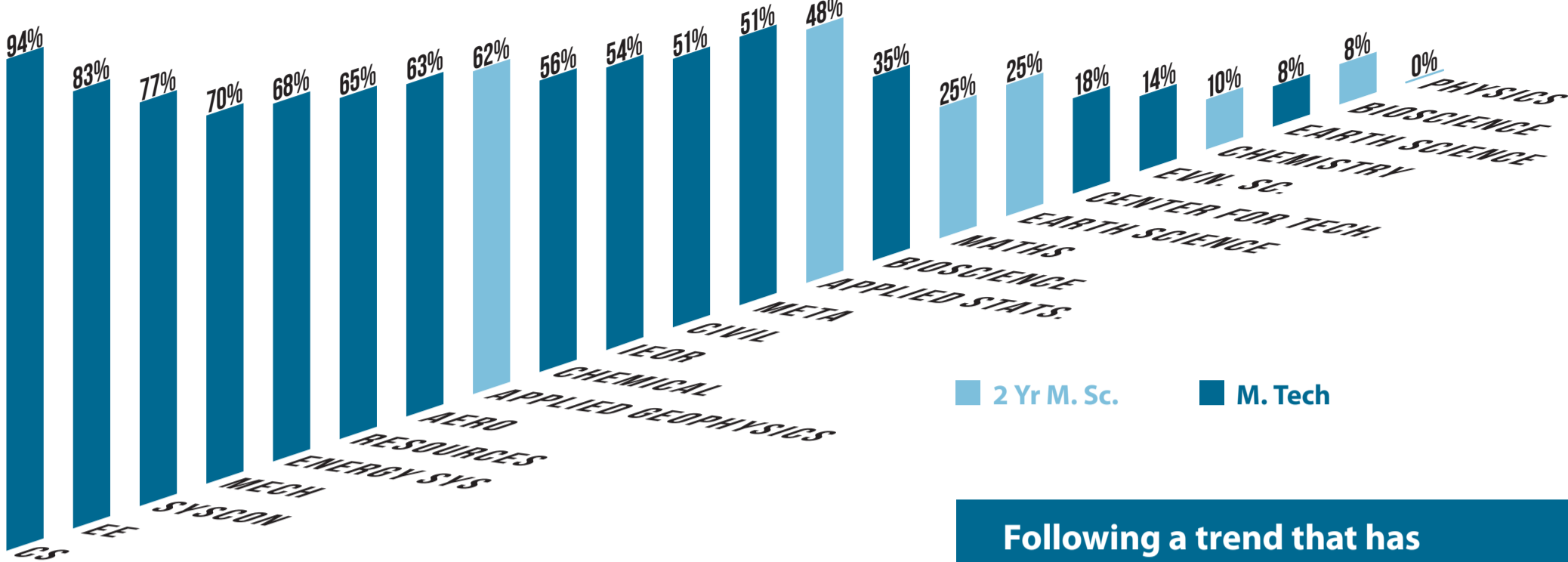
Largely, people seem happy with the execution of the placement process, with 67% of the respondents rating it 3 and above on a scale of 5 for November, and 61% rating it 3 and above for December. However, on scratching the surface, there were a number of problems that respondents commented about repeatedly.

TESTS	<p>In terms of execution, tests, in particular, seemed to be a major bone of contention for students with a majority of the respondents commenting poorly on their execution and scheduling both in November and December.</p> <p>The major complaints were 'inconvenience due to inadequate net connections for the online test procedure' which was heavily followed this year leading to some students unable to give tests properly and the</p>	<p>packed schedule of tests during some crunch days. In addition to the scheduling, students also feel that more stringent steps are necessary to curb malpractices during tests by better invigilation, which they felt might have hampered their chances.</p> <p>The ratio of unhappy students was significantly high on the first 5 days with 55% of respondents being unhappy with tests in December, and fell sharply to fewer than 30% after day 6.</p>
SLOTING	<p>A huge source of discontent for students was the slots assigned to the companies. These were seen as arbitrary, and often contrary to student opinion. For example, this year, two companies – Pocket Gems, a mobile game development company, and HUL, a reputed FMCG company – decided to withdraw from</p>	<p>the placement process after not being given the slots of their choice. "Company A shortlisted 12 people and B shortlisted 25. A poll was conducted for only the shortlisted candidates. Company B then got Day 1 in spite of having a lower reputation and lower package than Company A. How is this fair?" asks one student.</p>
VOLUNTEERS	<p>Candidates were largely impressed with the work of the volunteers with over 58% people being satisfied with their role in conducting the process smoothly and ensuring students were informed and facilitated. Still, 25% people felt that they are sometimes unable</p>	<p>to perform their tasks to the fullest because they are not sufficiently empowered. Surprisingly, a few students also complained about the unavailability of volunteers during the interview timings.</p>
INFORMATION	<p>On the matter of availability of information through website, blog and volunteers approximately 45% of the people felt that the information was readily available.</p> <p>Several people complained that the blog for the whole of Day 1 was not updated till 5:30 AM after Day 1 Slot 2 got over earlier at around 3 AM. Even companies had not informed selected candidates, which meant that those who did not find their names</p>	<p>in the list at 5:30 AM had to report for interviews again by 8 AM including a few people who were selected in Day 1 Slot 2 who ended up reporting on Day 2 due to errors on the blog. In a particular case, a student was erroneously slotted as placed on the blog, leading to his automatic disqualification from other companies and a lot of anguish. Similarly, a number of people also complained about their names missing from shortlists and GD lists.</p>
SCHEDULE	<p>Delayed scheduling: Students commented that on the jam-packed Day 1, sometimes even volunteers did not know where a student was supposed to be at a particular time, causing delay and mishaps. Things were worsened by the two venues LCH and H4 being far off for people who had to shuttle between the two for multiple interviews on Day 1.</p> <p>Inaccurate and conflicting schedules: Problems like missing interviews due to miscommunication,</p>	<p>clashing of GDs with tests were reported. "I had to miss my EnY GD due to a Paypal test at the same time, as the PT asked me to do so. EnY still refused to entertain any request from me", said one student.</p> <p>Schedule not followed: Nearly a third of respondents said that the declared schedule was often not followed, leading to chaos: students missing out on interviews, students having to choose between companies when they shouldn't have had to.</p>

Note: This article reflect the opinions of the polled respondents alone and can only be indicative of those of the whole student body

PG Placement Stats

Placement data as of first week of February



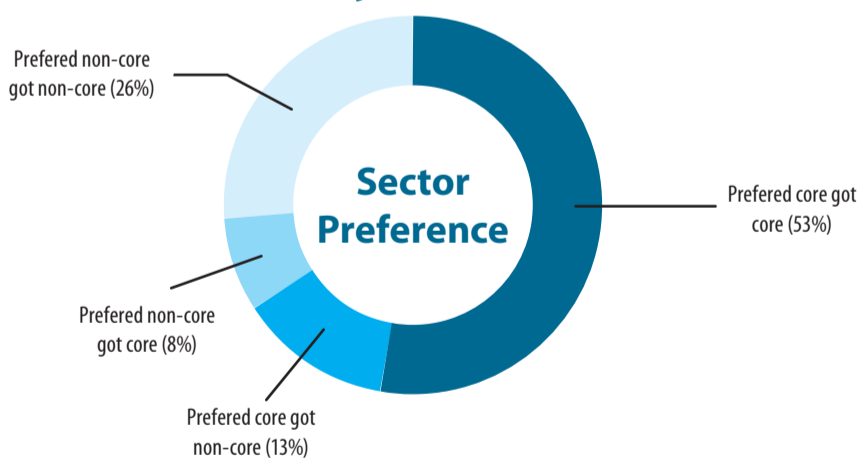
UG Placement Stats

Placement data as of first week of February

Department	B. Tech	DD
Aero	70%	89.47%
Chem	65.38%	85.71%
Civil	65.75%	86.36%
CS	98.27%	100%
EE	73.68%	87.5%
Mech	82.22%	85.71%
Meta	63.26%	66.66%
EP	65%	33.33%
Msc. Chem		71.42%

Following a trend that has continued for a few years now, the DDs amongst the UGs and the M.Techs amongst the PGs were generally better placed, with the CS department having near perfect placements for both UGs and PGs.

Student Psyche



Core v/s Non-core

In an overwhelmingly positive trend, that would make our tax-payers happy, 66% of respondents suggested that they preferred core jobs from their department over non-core jobs such as consulting, finance, marketing, etc. But around 20% of these candidates had to settle for non-core jobs because of perhaps the unavailability of core profiles or because they decided to hedge their options by sitting for companies as and when they came or perhaps because of lucrative pay-packages.

In fact, 66% of these students would consider applying (hypothetically) to lesser paying core companies if they came on Day 0 rather than take the first non-core company that comes their way.

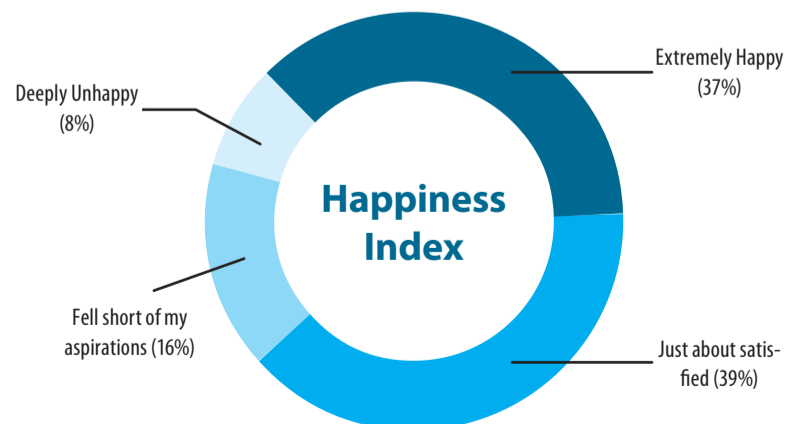
66% of students would consider applying (hypothetically) to lesser paying core companies if they came on day 0	34% of students would not consider
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Job Happiness

In terms of job happiness, both UGs and PGs of the CS and Electrical Engineering departments reported highest levels of job satisfaction with over 70% being satisfied to extremely happy with their placements while the Engineering Physics department with only 26 students registered for placements reported 62% of the respondents unhappy with their jobs.

Predictably people's happiness was also related with their day of placements with 85% of respondents who got placed from day 1-5 were satisfied a number which dropped to 53% day 6 onwards.

But with 76% of respondents overall being happy with the way they have been placed, the PT does seem to have spread plenty of joy this placement season.



All in all, this placement season is turning out to be rather eventful. While students wrote in to appreciate the work done by the placement team in terms of the improved policy, the preparatory activities and the initiative to boost entrepreneurship in the institute, they also felt that in terms of execution and in terms of curbing unethical practices fostered by companies, students and even the placement team, itself there certainly is progress to be made.

Know your Candidates: Gene

GS Cult



**Koustoobh
Pandey**

It is my experience of working in an Independent Body and the Hostel Cultural Council, which gives me a lot of practical knowledge and confidence to effect a change in the organization of cultural events. I am also tremendously passionate about several cultural genres in our institute, having been proactively involved in dramatics, dance and music. It is this passion that drives me to take the cultural scene to a whole new level.



**Poorna
Chandra**

It is important for the GS to have had a good exposure to how things work at a hostel level, at a club level and at an institute level as far as cultural activities are concerned. Such a ground reality is possible if one has spent enough time in cultural activities himself. The awards the institute and hostel has bestowed on me for having involved myself in cultural activities can prove this. And as organizer too, have held positions at a hostel, dept. and most importantly at an institute level.

GSAA



**Ishan
Shrivastava
(UG)**

My manifesto caters to the different academic needs of the students. I have stressed more upon the fundamental reforms and initiatives, solving issues that I came across during my extensive groundwork .

Through the diverse set of organizational and leadership experiences I have had during my stay in IITB, I believe I am in a position to take up this role and leave a lasting impact.



**Sarjan
Satra
(UG)**

Upon reading both manifestos I hope you will agree that mine is more creative and ambitious. I truly believe in my vision, and the same is highlighted by the fact that a lot of the goals I have set will have far reaching effects even beyond my tenure. I have also been a TA twice, and it has given me an insight into how the academic system functions which is something my opponent again lacks.

GSHA



**Chandra
Mouli**

As part of the current council (as an ISHA), I have demonstrated that I can set goals and accomplish them. My dedication towards my work and my ambition are my biggest credentials and I believe that I can make a difference in whatever I do.



**Mayank
Mundhra**

Several contestants write their manifesto keeping in mind to attract the students so as to become the General Secretary. The other candidates have all been part of this system before and will repeat the routine as they have seen it, whereas I intend to achieve new targets with a fresher perspective but at the same time not forgetting the basic duties expected from a GSHA.

GS Sports



**Rajesh
Ghusinga**

Besides pointing out the fallacies in my opponent's manifesto, it is best to justify why the electorate should vote for me. All the points in my manifesto have been written after sufficient groundwork and are aimed at fulfilling my vision of involving more students in sports and elevating the institute sports facilities. This is my motivation and I can whole heartedly work for it the entire year if I am appointed as the GSSA.



**Somay
Munde**

I bring a different perspective and fresh thought into the system. Having spent a major part of my life in different military and boarding schools, I have seen the positives and negatives of the sports cultures in all of them. An experience of 10 years of school/college level sports and exposure to almost all games sets me apart.

General Elections 2012



**Uttam
Sikkaria**

I bring to the table a unique mixture of perspective and experience. I have had the opportunity to witness the cultural scene at different levels - as a freshman, as convener, as an institute secretary, and finally as a "cult-enthu" senior, which has imbibed in me the understanding of the nuances of the cultural genres. I have a detailed knowledge of the workings of the council and my organizational skills have been felicitated by an organizational colour.



**Bandana
Singha
(PG)**

Since the candidate is unopposed we asked her a different question

What is the ideology behind your manifesto?

I want to see IITB as the leader in research and technology output in Asia. This drives me to go beyond my personal academic and research requirements and step up for my colleagues and fellow researchers to improve the current academic and research in IIT. I envision IITB as the thought leader in economic and social well-being of the society by being at forefront of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.



**Nayan
Jha**

I believe that the institute will benefit from the ideology that I would bring to this office and the changes I will be able to make. Also, I have a proven record of excelling in the same field with an Institute Organisational Colour for my work as Institute Secretary, Hostel Affairs (ISHA) (2010-11).



**Rishabh
Agrawal**

Because I have work experience. I did a lot of work in the hostel as the hostel General Secretary (H7). Past experience of your work helps, and my vision again will help me to achieve the same

We asked a common set of questions to all the candidates standing for various General Secretary posts. These are their answers to one of the questions –

Why do you think the electorate will vote for you over your opponent(s)?

The Sixth Sense

■ MADHU KIRAN, NIKUNJ JHA, SIBAPRASAD MOHANTY

Insight takes a look at the newest energy saving innovation in campus and the unexpected results it is throwing up.

With so many renovations going on in the campus, institute has taken a step forward to conserve energy. A few months back an initiative was taken to install a motion sensor in each bathroom and toilet of all hostels. This was done, keeping in mind the huge energy consumption due to inefficient usage of lights. The sensor detects when one enters a bathroom and sends a signal to the tube-lights to turn on. When there is no motion it turns off the supply to the tube-lights after twenty minutes.

At the principle level the idea is perfectly sound, as it saves energy while compared to having lights left on all night long. But there are certain aspects that are problematic due to its implementation:

Placement of the sensors: In some hostels the sensors were located too far from the door which led to a time lag between a person entering the bathroom and the switching on of the lights, where as in some other hostels sensors were so close to the door that whenever someone passes by in the corridor the lights turn on.

Absence of manual override: In some hostels, the lights don't have a manual override, so they work during the day as well. This puts a question mark on the basic assumption that this method is saving power! Also in some hostels these sensors have already started malfunctioning, because of which the bathroom remains dark at nights till it is fixed.

One way detection and time: The sensors detect the motion once and remains on till twenty minutes. This time is too long for some and not enough for others.

Neither the hostels nor the student bodies have a say over this. And no student body, not even the current GSHA (General Secretary Hostel Affairs), was involved in the decision making process. It was a decision taken by the Office of Dean IPS and Electrical Maintenance Unit (EMU).

Meanwhile the EMU is already receiving complains after installation of these sensors and is aware of all the problems. Their plan of action is to install the sensors in all the hostels and then decide what changes have to be done. This will definitely take some time as they have to consolidate all the problems faced and then plan the way out. Till then it's better to get all things done in the bathroom before twenty minutes are up! ■

For the complete interviews do log on to:
www.insightiitb.org



TECHFEST REVISITED

ANIMESH SWAIN, ROHIT NIJHAWAN, SAIDEEP SUDI, SIBAPRASAD MOHANTY

The 15th edition of Techfest, Asia's largest annual science and technology festival which has also been patronized by UNESCO, was held from 6th to 8th January 2012. Initiatives like Ummeed-e-Milaap and WAVE India were undertaken by Techfest for greater outreach and to make its presence felt in the months leading up to the actual event.

For this review, we'd floated a survey, which received over 250 responses. For 4 specific departments, Lecture Series, Technoholix, Ozone and Exhibitions, we have a star-rating associated with them, drawn solely from the survey. It can be concluded from the survey that this year's Techfest would be remembered as the one with long spiraling queues and bland Technoholix nights.

Competitions

Competitions, this year attracted participants from over a 600 colleges all across the country. IIT Bombay, usually a mute spectator, participated in relatively better numbers owing to Winter Help Sessions organized by STAB. A team from IIT Bombay won the Canyon Cross having built a meter long Popsicle stick bridge that could withstand over 250 kgs of load. Flagship events like Robowars and Full Throttle attracted large crowds as usual. Code 'em Poker- an innovative event tailored for coders and game theory enthusiasts- was well appreciated. The problem statement dictated individuals to develop codes to play the game of poker with each other. In another event, Appsurd, participants were expected to develop an Android app which was subsequently launched in the market. Hydranoid: Ascent faced the wrath of participants who were of the opinion that the problem statement was impossible to solve.

Ideate

With the vision of inviting ideas to reshape the world, events at Ideate addressed the problems in modern day health care system along with finding sustainable solutions for predicaments faced by people in rural India. Issues regarding social and economic needs of society as well as generating greener technological solutions were also dealt with. Teams were provided with mentors to guide them on the technical and financial aspects.

Workshops

Workshops, an integral part of Techfest, attracted participation in excess of 1500, apart from the Nexus outreach programs conducted in 8 cities across the country. Hugely successful, the participants went back home with a smiling face and loads of technical knowledge. The variety in workshops ranges from those technically involved like Hawk-Eye, Self-balancing Bot to others like Street photography and Automotive sketching. Most of the workshops sailed smoothly, however a few did get delayed due to some organizational hassles. Android App making was regarded as a grand success by several participants.

Ozone ★★☆☆☆

Focusing on events which were more varied, Ozone was well received this year. Lazer Tag, Paintball and Gaming Zone managed to attract people in huge numbers. Several on-the-spot competitions like Bluffmaster, Su-Do-Ku and Politik proved highly entertaining. People appreciated them for their innovative ideas and the ease with which they were pulled

Initiatives

Ummeed-e-Milaap

First student initiative of its kind, Ummeed-e-Milaap strove to reach out to the youth and focus on the similarities in life across the borders. This two phased initiative consisted of a diary campaign, receiving over two thousand entries including one by Sashi Tharoor. Secondly, it promoted inter college competitions at Karachi in collaboration with AIESEC Karachi and other similar organizations. As a part of this initiative there was a robot in an event

off. Some participants were unhappy being rewarded with keyboards for events which stretched out over a couple of days. Complaints were raised by several people who found the elimination and final rounds of Bluffmaster to be grossly disconnected. 'All In' the poker tournament attracted hordes of people. Entertaining artists roaming the streets proved to be a fun watch. The popular Sci Tech quiz this year was replaced by a National Open Quiz whose eliminations were held across several colleges. The ideology behind this change was 'to attract non-technical students', the Techfest OC - Vishu Mahajan said. In its entirety, a fun-filled Ozone experience for the people.

Lecture Series ★★☆☆☆

This year, the Techfest team not only gathered distinguished individuals but successfully handled huge crowds effortlessly. Eminent personalities like Nobel laureate Sir. Venki Ramakrishnan, David Griffiths and K Bradenburg (Co-inventor of .mp3) attracted huge crowds. Owing to limited seats at PCSA, David Griffiths was asked to lecture twice on the same day, which he did. Space crunch was a major issue faced at several lectures. The range of topics on which lectures were delivered this year was commendable. From Secure Electronic Money Transfer, Lucid Dreaming, Fermat's Last Theorem to issues pertaining with Bio-Technology, the lecture series catered to people with interests as varied as possible.

Exhibitions ★★☆☆☆

Long, spiraling queues and a tiring wait seems to have put off a lot of people at this year's Exhibitions. The exhibits themselves were rather interesting and varied across different fields of science and technology. Apart from the traditional exhibits under the canopy, the Japanese Media Art Festival showcasing Japanese comics, art, Animation and Manga was a good initiative. Automated and humanoid Robots from different countries were at display this year. Amalgamation of science and art was aptly delivered by the exhibits from C-Lab. High-Rank 3D, a 3D display system, developed by MIT media labs also entertained curious souls. Street exhibits apart from the usual DRDO stall, included the Di-Wheel employing the latest drive by wire technology and a self balancing Unicycle. Bikes like Suzuki Hayabusa and a vintage Royal Enfield kept the passersby entertained.

Technoholix ★★☆☆☆

The selection of performers at this year's Techfest was really disappointing. The Techfest team failed to do justice to the expectations people had from them. A short and average performance coupled with a long wait in queues did not go down well with a lot of people. When enquired regarding the quality of performers, Vishu had the following to say: "The

at Pakistan with an Indian flag atop it. Moreover, almost 15 delegates from Pakistan are expected at IIT Bombay in February.

Wave India

With this initiative Techfest took the onus upon itself to spread awareness regarding electric vehicles across India. Providing sustainable and non-polluting solutions, these vehicles travelled over 2500 kms of Indian countryside road in less than 15 days.

performers this year were selected after long deliberations. We had to strike a balance between popular genres and new shows. People have been seeing fire and laser shows for years. We tried our best to match these expectations by introducing some new genres."

Scintillations and Afternites

Failing to attract crowds on the first night and being cancelled on the second one due to certain technical glitches at the venue, Scintillations this year went unnoticed by most people.

Pep Bou, the bubble artist from Spain, managed to entertain people gathered in the Convocation Hall. Several people were heard regarding this event as the best event at this year's Techfest. However, the Japanese Media Art festival, on the second night, was a flop with the crowds and received paltry viewership.

To report the performances held this year, there was Lichtfaktor who called themselves light-painters and aimed at creating stunning images on stage. Apex Parkour was a bunch of enthusiastic folks jumping around on stage to heights twice their own height. Trampoline consisted of men jumping all over the stage using a trampoline apparently in sync with the music. Copenhagen Drummers was a band of 6 men playing drums with UV sticks, later replaced by sticks lit on fire, in coordination with electronic music being played in the background.

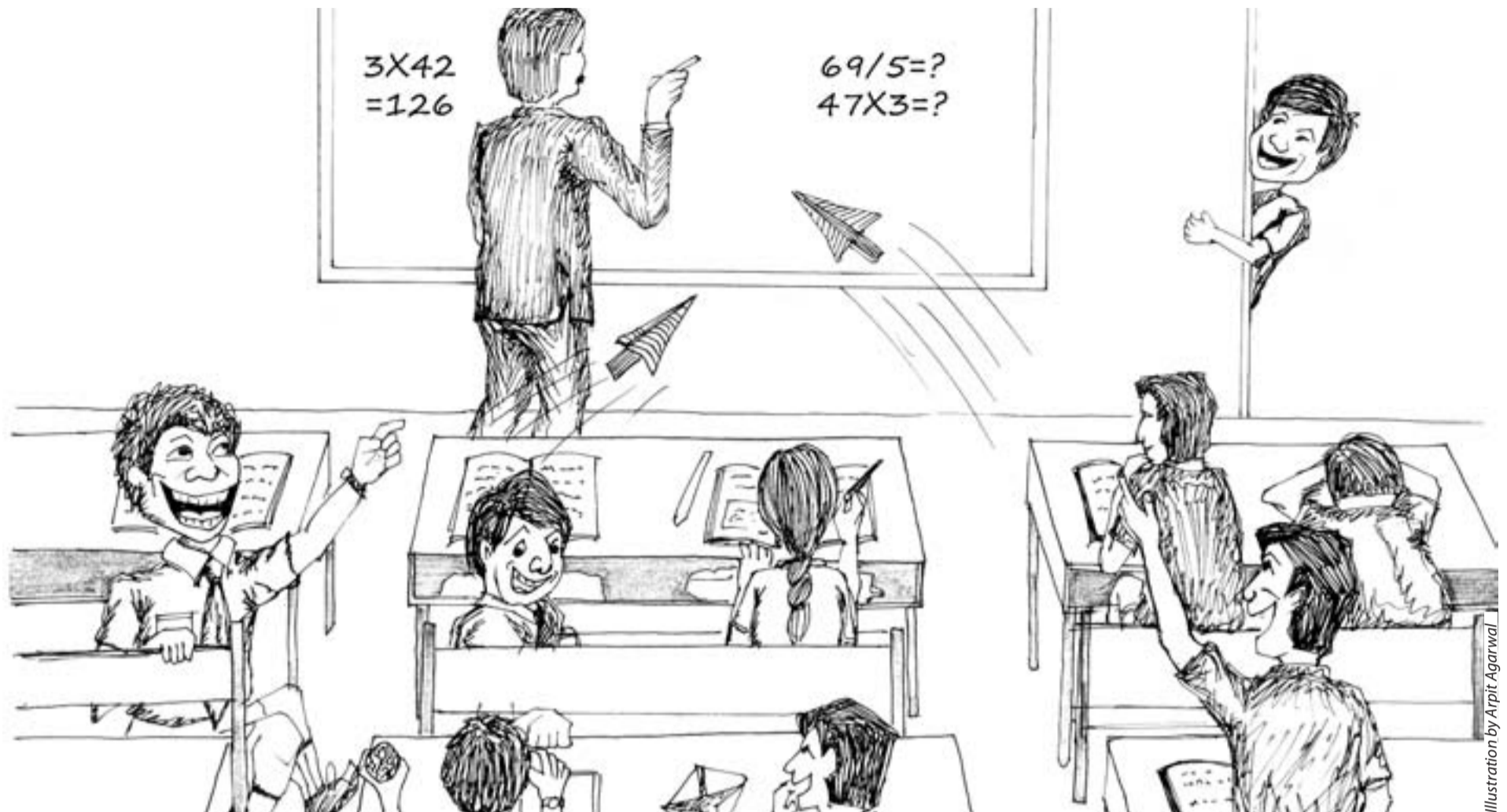
Good initiatives, coupled with excellent marketing strategies, Techfest 2012 made sure that it did not go unnoticed. With varied events catering to different kinds of people, the Techfest team managed to attract people from all over. How successful were they in providing them with a fun-filled experience though, is certainly questionable. Techfest, being Asia's largest technology festival, needs to look into the several glitches it faced this year more carefully. Delaying of events or in some cases even cancellations, gives a bad vibe with regards to the festival. To sum it up, a more polished delivery of events is expected from Techfest in years to come. ■

OC SPEAKS

We received tremendous help from the student community as well as the administration in the organization of the festival and on behalf of the core team, I am really thankful for that. Regarding participation though, I feel we can do a much better job. We wait to see a day when all the competitions are won by IITB students. The feedback has been really valuable and we will try our best to incorporate all suggestions in the coming years.

Teach for India: A Unique Experience

■ ASHWIN KRISHNAN, ALUMNUS OF 2011



TFI is an extraordinary programme wherein TFI Fellows are placed as full-time class teachers in low-income schools for a two-year paid assignment.

Why I Chose to Do it

Mine was an extremely impulsive decision, which in hindsight, looks like an extremely good one. Basically, I had two options in my final year - study abroad or apply for a job through the campus placement process.

Although when I entered IIT, even my aim was to do an MS/PhD in a prestigious university in the US of A, the four years spent here exposed me to the ugly side of the world. I felt that most of the research being done was to publish papers in journals just for the sake of it. I want to add here that I don't want to offend anyone who is actually doing or intends to do serious and meaningful research; all due respect to them, but then, that was my opinion based on what I saw around me.

Now for work- my main motive was to work in an organisation where there are truly diverse people and where the work truly puts you out of your comfort zone. Although many companies which come to recruit from campus claim to have the first quality, all those so-called "diverse" people turn out to be IITians or engineers. And we can never deny the fact that even if we choose an extremely random sample of IITians/engineers, they will still think alike and have a very similar perspective on issues. Contrary to that, I could see that people in TFI came from really diverse backgrounds- writers, activists, engineers, bankers, dancers, theatre artists and so on. And as far as the comfort zone part is concerned, it dawned upon me during an internship experience with TFI during my second year. I taught in a classroom for a month and that was enough to show me that teaching was not an easy job, reinforcing my decision to apply.

What I Do

I am currently placed as a full time teacher for a period of two years at a low income private school - Ja'fari English High School, situated in Shivaji Nagar, Govandi, Mumbai. I am responsible for teaching all subjects except Hindi and Marathi to a group of 32 fourth grade students. By the design of the Teach for India fellowship, I am accountable for bringing at least 1.5 years of academic growth in each student, as measured by standardised TFI tests.

A Typical Day

For me the day begins at around 9 AM, where I review my lesson plans and prepare lesson charts for the day's class. Although school starts at around 1 pm, I leave for school at 11 AM to conduct extra classes for lower performing kids. I teach continuously from 1 PM to 6 PM (as I am responsible for all subjects). Then, I have an hour's class for higher performing kids for their accelerated growth. This is sometimes followed by a community visit to a child's house trying to invest the parent or keep him/her updated. Then, back home, I prepare the next day's plans till around 8:30 pm and my day ends there technically. The school is open for five days a week though some TFI schools run for 6 days.

Why it is Different

It is different because it is a full commitment for two years, unlike other volunteering positions for the same cause. Furthermore, there is a definite target set for you to achieve every year - a minimum of 1.5 years of academic growth - because we believe that if the educational inequity is to be bridged at some point, a single year's growth in 1 year won't suffice. And above all - it is extremely demanding in terms of dedication and hard-work; not like your typical 9 to 5 job.

Why Should YOU Apply?

There are plenty of reasons for the reader to give serious thought towards applying for this fellowship, some of which I enlist below, in no particular order:

- Teach for India is not your just-formed NGO which is struggling to make ends meet and is based in some obscure place. It is a brand in itself and has influential stakeholders - Chairmen and CEOs of India's top companies - on its board. In a nutshell, it is a very stable organisation with plans of rapid expansion. We are already present in five cities now in just 3 years - Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai. It is also a part of the 'Teach for All' network which comprises of similar organisations in 26 other countries.
- The fellowship experience called the Teaching as Leadership framework has been proven to be successful in the USA as part of the Teach for America program for over 20 years and in India for the past 2 years. If they can do it, it is obviously not rocket science for you. Thus, there is no reason for you to be sceptical about whether you can teach or not. Be sure, you can.

- It helps you develop a lot of soft skills which are essential for you irrespective of your career path. No profession would enhance your communication skills as much as teaching English to a bunch of kids, none of whom have any clue about what language you are talking in. Further, your role is not restricted to that of a regular teacher, whose job is to just teach. Your skills of convincing are put to real test every day, whether you try to convince orthodox families to send their kid to school or school authorities to give a new bench to your class. Your organisation and time management skills will be in real demand when you have just 30 minutes to teach a lesson to kids with varying abilities and competencies. And it is these soft skills, not the technical skills that make you irreplaceable at any organisation you work in.
- And if you are thinking about your opportunities post the two year fellowship, you may apply to graduate school, work in the corporate/ non-profit sector, or work in TFI in a staff role or venture into social entrepreneurship. Teach for India has tie-ups with various schools for MBA, LAW or MS degrees. It also has its own placement process, akin to IITBs campus placement procedure, where companies come and recruit TFI Fellows for various leadership roles.

The idea is that whatever roles you get into, you become a leader in that role and advocate for the cause TFI is devoted to. And last, but not the least, instead of cribbing about the ills that are plaguing our nation, this is your opportunity to directly attack the problem at its root - education. ■

For more information on TFI, visit: www.teachforindia.org
To help Ashwin's cause: www.giveindia.org/igive-TFIashwin

Also engaged in teaching activities are the NGOs:
Vidya (near the YP gate): www.vidya-india.org/
Abhyasika: jigar.sura@gmail.com
Cell For Human Values, IIT-B: Contact Vidya M. Kulkarni
Akanksha: www.akanksha.org
Pankhudi: www.pankhudifoundation.org

InsIghT urges the reader to consider these options and contribute to society by teaching at these NGOs, either throughout the year or during vacations.



■ ARVIND SINGH, MEGHNA SRINIVASAN, NIDHI SHANBHAG, NINAD KULKARNI, SIDDHARTH SHANBHAG, TEAM AMAN-KE-LIYE IITB, YASH TAMBAWALA

Three year old Aman was one of the brightest, naughtiest, most popular kids in his peer group. The son of construction workers working on campus, he often accompanied his parents to the work site. On the 5th of January, his 5-month pregnant mother was assigned to work on the 5th floor of the L4 building of the new Biomedical school, despite repeated appeals, and he followed his mother there as usual. It was while playing there that he fell through an open window, to the ground below. He was rushed to the hospital, but sadly succumbed to his injuries.

This tragic incident which could have easily been avoided, highlighted the desperate need for a crèche or day-care centre for these workers' kids – which is in fact their legal entitlement. A group of students, who had already been interacting with the labourers' children, came together with concerned faculty members to address this need, forming the team Aman Ke Liye IITB, named in his memory. This is their story.

The State of Construction Workers on Campus

Presently, there are several construction sites on campus, and as many as 50 children of construction workers live here. These construction workers are often not provided with any safety equipment like gloves, footwear, helmets etc. They also have no access to toilets or potable drinking water at the work site, and are forced to live in tiny tin sheds which are vulnerable to both rain and cold. However, the worst sufferers are undoubtedly their children. Without a day-care centre, the parents have no choice but to take their children along with them to the construction sites where they can keep an eye on them. There, they are left to play in dust and grime, without any care and supervision. Legally, construction companies are contractually obligated to provide a day care centre if there are more than 50 female labourers employed with them (see box). However, this rule is routinely flouted by contractors, having never been questioned by the institute for not fulfilling their obligation to set up these facilities for the labourers. Time and again a few concerned faculty members have questioned

A Legal Right

The Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 stipulates that in every place wherein, more than fifty female building workers are ordinarily employed, there shall be provided and maintained a suitable room or rooms for the use of children under the age of six years of such female workers [Section 35(1)]. The Act details that such rooms shall:

- provide adequate accommodation;
- be adequately lighted and ventilated;
- be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition;
- be under the charge of women trained in the care of children and infants.

such blatant human rights violation in the campus, and striven to bring this to the notice of the concerned authorities, but no action of any kind has ever been initiated by IITB, who, as principal employer is duty-bound to ensure protection of labour rights.

In an institute that can safely claim to be one of the most enlightened employers in our country today, it is deplorable that we are largely unaware and apathetic to the rights of these workers and the deplorable conditions they work in.

Why a Day Care Centre is Needed in IIT-B

While a day care centre is undoubtedly an essential amenity for any child of working parents for its balanced, healthy development, it is even more pertinent to have such a facility in the case of the construction workers' children. With the unsafe working conditions prevalent at construction sites, children who play at these sites are highly susceptible to infection, wounds, dust allergies, suffocation; they are also prone to the risk of accidentally swallowing dangerous objects. These children are often left uncared for, unfed and unsupervised. Elder children are often burdened with the duty of taking care of the younger ones. Thus elder kids are also deprived of formal education and become child labourers; finally they end up as labourers in the unorganised sector just like their parents and remain in poverty forever. Unless this vicious cycle is broken there is no hope for a construction worker's child.

A day care centre not only safeguards the interests and security of children but also empowers women as it enables them to participate in economic activities and retain their independence.

A day care centre is also essential to encourage these working class parents to send their children to primary school after the completion of pre-school thereby allowing them to envision better futures for their children.

A quick estimate of the infrastructural work in the institute assures us that there will be labourers on the institute for at least 10 years if not more. In fact, a lot of the labour on campus at the moment has already been here for 2–4 years. Thus, in all respects it is essential and makes sense to have a permanent day care centre for the construction workers' children.

The Aman-ke-Liye-IITB Movement:

A few students of Team Aman movement had been interacting with the labourers even before the unfortunate accident on the 5th of January, 2012. It was through this interaction that they became aware of the accident that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. While they had been contemplating moving the authorities to establish a day care centre even before the episode, the accident further galvanized their resolve to improve the conditions and the future of these children. The

Timeline: Campaign Trail

- 05/1 The Accident
- 06/1 Visit to Aman's house
- 07/1 The Signature campaign starts
- 09/1 Meeting with DoSA & Dean IPS
Launch of Google Group
Meeting with Colin Gonsalves, Sr.
Advocate Supreme Court of India
- 19/1 Open house to draft the proposal
attended by faculty and students
- 26/1 Meeting with the Director at the
Republic Day Celebrations
Identifying of locations for setting up of
the temporary centres
- 27/1 Submission of detailed report and
proposal to the Dean IPS & Estate officer
- 31/1 Submission of Mumbai Mobile Crèche's
proposal to the Director
- 03/2 Success: Handover of the key to the com-
munity hall
- 07/2 Aman Day Care Centre run by Mumbai
Mobile Creche starts operation temporar-
ily from Lake Side Community Hall

team set about mobilizing student support by means of a signature campaign in most of the hostels, managing to collect close to 1800 signatures. They created a Google-group on which the over 100 member strong Team Aman comprising of both students and over 25 faculty members would be updated on the progress of the movement. Many faculty members lent themselves wholeheartedly to the cause and it was their involvement that gave the movement the much-needed support to be taken seriously by the authorities.

Soon after, they held an open house that was attended by very few students but by several members of the faculty. Here, Team Aman presented their appraisal of the situation and a tentative proposal. The issue was hotly debated and several alternatives were considered, before a consensus was reached.

It was finally decided to approach the Director and Dean IPS with a proposal for action:

- To allot space for a temporary day care centre, set up by the NGO Mobile Creché

- To identify a suitable location and begin construction of a permanent day-care centre, run by professionals, for the children.
- The operation costs for this centre would be borne by the contractor, regardless of the number of women employed by them, thus ensuring that women with children are not denied employment.
- To ensure that Aman's family is adequately compensated for their loss.
- That IIT Bombay should honour its legal responsibility to check for any violations on the part of the contractors with regard to the rights of the construction workers.

Temporary Day Care Centre at Lake Side Community Hall: A Victory for Aman!

On Republic Day, after nearly a month of struggle, the members of Team *Aman-Ke-Liye*-IITB including some faculty members finally approached the Director with the proposal. The Director agreed to commit the lakeside community hall behind the guest house for the temporary day care centre. Acknowledging its importance, he promised that the day care centre would be run by IITB and the expenses would be recovered from the contractor. To deter contractors from dropping women workers, he accepted the suggestion to deduct money from payables to the contractor irrespective of whether workers use the day care centre or not.

How You Can Contribute?

Join the google group – by sending a request to amankeliye.iitb@gmail.com

Volunteer to teach the construction worker children

Spend time with kids @ Aman Day Care centre

Help Mumbai Mobile Creche run the Aman Day Care Centre

Additionally, the Dean IPS has promised to initiate the process for the identification of site and construction of the permanent day care centre.

Though the temporary day care centre marks a major mile stone, Team *Aman-Ke-Liye*-IITB, considers this victory as a beginning only, and will not rest until IITB delivers on its promised permanent space and structure for the day care centre. The struggle is long and the campaign needs the solidarity of the campus to get to the very end.

A time to Introspect?

Ours is an institute where apathy and indifference have become a way of life. How many of us walked

down the infinite corridor over the last few years and saw dust-covered children playing with animals and accepted it as a way of life? How many of us even chose to give it a second thought? Over 1800 students signed the petition when these students came up to us and narrated the sorry state of affairs. Yet barely 10 showed up at the open-house where our numbers would have strengthened the cause of helping these children. In an institute where we pride ourselves on having opinions and enlightened views on issues from across the globe, a little child's untimely demise in our own backyard failed to stir us. Fortunately, it seems all hope isn't lost. For the multitudes of us who chose to look away, there still are a few like the students of Aman-ke-liye-IITB who empathised with Aman and struggled to ensure that his death wouldn't be in vain. They could have chosen to stage an ostentatious flash-in-the-pan demonstration as we recently witnessed on our campus for a certain national issue and even possibly created a media circus. Instead, they persevered and followed what was undoubtedly an arduous path.

As a student body, we truly need to take a moment and introspect to truly understand what the "Aman Day-Care Centre" as they have chosen to christen it, will mean for our society – is this just another article that you will read before you move on or will we perhaps consider moving towards a more humane, more aware and more empathetic collective consciousness? ■

Commuter Woes: A Tum-Tum Report

■ KUNAL MEHTA, ROHIT NIJHAWAN, SESHADRI GOWRISHANKAR

Towards the beginning of this academic year, the Student Welfare Society (SWS) was set up to better manage and run the Tum-Tum service in the institute. The SWS is headed by the Dean of Student Affairs and also comprises of the HCU Chairman, the CSO, the GSHA and the GSAA-PG. It is currently being administered by Mr. Sethu Madhavan (ex-H2 Hall manager) and Mr. Vijaykumar (ex-CSO).

The SWS has managed to increase the cash inflow over the last year. This has been done by making the service a community service, meaning that as a student of the institute, Rs 500 is charged for your use of this service and Rs 500 is paid on your behalf by the institute. The SWS has also utilized money from the DoSA fine account, leading you to wonder what really drives our tum-tums!

While 6 new tum-tums running in the institute by the end of February may seem rosy news to many of you, our problems with the tum-tum services will not end there. In this article, we look at some of the problems faced by tum-tums, and what is being done to curtail the problems.

Contract Drivers

Currently, the number of tum-tums plying in the institute is 13 and the number of drivers being employed by the institute is 24. While the current number of drivers in the institute is sufficient, since these drivers are being employed in a temporary manner, a shortage of drivers sometimes arises due to attrition. This results in some drivers performing double the number of shifts they are allotted for that day. The drivers are also known to change their jobs often because of the nature of their employment, and this has led to shortage problems in the past. The advent of 6 new tum-tums will only serve to augment the problem, and the effective management of these new drivers will become increasingly difficult. When we spoke to the GSHA–Abhishek Agarwal (Monty), he said that he hopes to make the employment of drivers on a contract basis, similar to what is being followed by the housekeeping services. The tender for this has been prepared, and the process would take around 2 months after it is approved in SWS meeting, scheduled in the end of February. He hopes that this move would make the management of these



drivers more effective and reliable, even though the cost incurred by the SWS may go up.

New Stops and Timings

If you live in H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H8 or H11, you may feel cheated because all the tum-tums you get in the morning are often full. With the coming of the new tum-tums, this will hopefully change. The GSHA spoke optimistically about the setting up of a tum-tum terminal near H4, from where the buses can start. This move will make the tum-tum facility more accessible to these hostels. However, the current administrator of the SWS, Sethu Madhavan, told us that this move was still in the pipeline, and the logistics of this move were still to be planned out, and until this happens, we cannot be sure it will come through.

In addition to this, the SWS plans to run the service round-the-clock. In the night, the buses would run from the academic area to the hostel area in a time-bound manner, making the academic area easily accessible to students in the night.

The GSHA also plans to introduce a proposal to make the tum-tum service a hop-on service. This would make the service accessible to everyone- including all campus residents, rendering the coupon system unnecessary. However, it seems that this move will be feasible only if the institute were to provide some

subsidy on behalf of the staff and their families.

Maintenance Issues

The tum-tums in the institute are carrying a load which is far greater than their prescribed capacity and the tum-tums which were procured earlier are running in a dilapidated state. Since the demand for the tum-tums is high, these buses continue to run. However, with the coming of the new buses, the older buses would be put to rest for most of the time, barring the peak times when they would be plying. Thus, the 50% increase of the number of tum-tums may not effectively be that much. We can only hope that by increasing the number of buses, the maintenance cost of these buses would drop, making them last longer.

Timetable

The GSHA hopes that after the new tum-tums come in and the drivers become systematized, the tum-tum schedule can be put up at every stop. However, the administrators felt that this could pose to be a huge problem owing to the number of tum-tums plying in certain stops, and the frequency at which they run, a single delay could wreck the timetable for that day. The GSHA also hopes that there can be a complaint number, through which a student can find out if and why a particular tum-tum is late. While this proposal looks good, as students, all we probably want is probably just enough space to get on the bus! ■

LAN Port Issues

■ ANISH GUPTA, ANUBHAV MANGAL, MANU SAHAY, NEHA INNANJE

Recently we have received several complaints regarding LAN port problems where students have had to go on without any internet for extended periods of time. With the internet being an indispensable part of IIT life, the student community wonders why the repair of LAN ports is such a slow process. However is it really so slow a process? CC stats show that most complaints are dealt with in two to three days. InsIghT finds out.

The current contract came into existence when a lot of problems became apparent with its predecessor, the Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC). Under that contract, the contractor would visit thrice a month. Initially there were five vendors distributed among the hostels out of which two were working sincerely, but the other three were slack, and faced several complaints from the student community. Consequently, the system was changed to have two vendors based on the rate-contract system, wherein the vendor visit would be scheduled on a need-based criteria by the CC, based on the complaints forwarded to them by the SysAds via the MLC.

As informed by the CC, there are 3 major problems which may arise in the LAN ports

- 1. Input/Output Box Broken:** The old boxes were not designed to withstand the way they are handled by the students. However, new network I/O boxes have been installed, made of Molex, which are of excellent quality.
- 2. Rat Bites:** These arise when a rat snaps the connecting cable between your room and the wing box. Particularly prevalent in H3, 4 and 5.
- 3. Power Outages:** This is beyond the control of CC. It last occurred in the server room outside H8 a few months back.

GSHA (Abhishek Agarwal) speaks

There has been a drastic rise in the number of LAN related issues within the institute on account of the large number of infrastructural changes. Currently, the contractor takes about Rs 750 per visit, and usually stays within the institute for about 3–4 hours. He has a record about all the reported problems and he goes to all those rooms. Any materials that he may require need to be provided by the CC.

The GSHA feels that the current system, for all its faults, is still the best system that can be run under the circumstances. Other systems had been tried in the past, albeit unsuccessfully. A government contractor will be even more inefficient than the current private contractor, and separate contractors for separate hostels would be a lot more expensive for the institute to fund.

The Middle Layers Committee's (MLC's) view

Currently, all the complaints that are to be reported are in the hands of the System Administrator (SysAd). He then forwards these complaints to the MLC, who then wait for the complaints to build up to around 15–20 following which they send a request to the CC

for the vendor. In case the number of complaints does not reach a sufficient total, but a large number of days have passed, the MLC does send the vendor for repairs. This takes approximately 20 days. However, such situations are fairly rare.

Complaints in the academic area are given preference over individual room complaints in hostels. To ensure that the vendors do their job (they almost never correct the hardware problems in the first visit), the CC is planning to send CC staff along with the vendor. However, there are only 13 people in the CC to take care of the problems. The MLC feels that there is need for more staff in the CC. They also feel that more workshops should be conducted to train the SysAds and the Comp Secys.

CC Head (Prof. D. Manjunath) Speaks

The CC head believes that delays are often exaggerated by students, and he stated that there is never any 'real' delay in repairing LAN ports, with all complaints being solved within a day or two. In spite of several infrastructural changes in the institute, they've worked hard to ensure that delays are at a minimum.

Regarding the lack of technical skill among the MLC members, and the need for workshops, the CC head felt that MLC matters are more administrative than technical in nature, and so the issue of training for the job doesn't really arise. He further opined that the MLC appreciates the CC's concerns and problems. On the issue of hiring more staff, he refused to comment.

CC Staff's View

Following the contrasting views of the MLC and the CC on certain issues, we contacted we contacted Mr. Ashish M. Nagwekar, a staff in the CC and the person responsible for scheduling the vendor visits. He had some interesting insights on the issue-

The gymkhana website for registering complaints (<http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~network/complaint/index.php>) is rarely used to schedule vendor visits, due to lack of awareness among the student community. Occasionally, there is irregularity on the MLC's part in forwarding the complaints, and following up, which adds to the delays. Also, the gnats website (where complaints pertaining to help.cc@iitb.ac.in come in) is not used for scheduling, as most of the hostels are still following the SysAd complaint model. Another reason for not using gnats is that it is difficult to respond to each query individually. He further suggested that students should put complaints on these websites only if the concerned SysAds are following up on them.

The CC are dependent on the complaints sent by the SysAds for scheduling the vendor visits. Based on the data available from CC, it generally takes them two to five days to respond to the complaints forwarded by the SysAds. Occasionally, there are greater delays, but this happens due to the difficulty in matching the vendor availability to the SysAd availability (as the SysAds have classes during the weekdays, and sometimes find it difficult to accommodate a vendor visit). Another point that he highlighted was that out of the four companies listed in the rate contract, only one is doing the job efficiently, which adds to the delays.

Conclusion

With the current lack of communication between the MLC and the CC, students invariably end up as the losers. Numerous incidents are reported where students have to wait for extremely long periods of time for repairs. The CC and MLC have taken steps to improve the situation, which has led to a decrease in delays, but there is still scope for more work to be done. Better co-ordination amongst the principals would surely go a long way in resolving the issue and helping the student community. ■

Why can't students take matters into their own hands?

We learnt from several quarters that almost 75% of the lan-port issues could be resolved quite trivially and quickly by 'crimping' – a process of manually tweezing the wires and connecting them. This can

easily be carried out by the student community representatives, using the requisite machine, and will cut down on the delays drastically. We asked the MLC and the CC why this was not being implemented-

CC Head's take on crimping

The CC head feels that the will to take responsibility to solve problems is lacking in the student community. The CC is happy giving responsibility to students. Furthermore, the crimping tool is not very expensive, thereby making it possible for the hostels to purchase it. He further said that the SysAds had been given the option of using crimping tools, but most of them were reluctant to take up this responsibility. He feels that as budding engineers, we should take it upon ourselves to solve trivial issues like crimping and, in most cases there isn't any great difference in the technical expertise of the vendor and the student community.

MLC's take on crimping

The MLC had proposed for a workshop to be conducted by the CC for the SysAds to give them the necessary knowledge to fix such issues by themselves. However, the CC was hesitant as they felt that the students may misuse their power. They also believed the incidents of theft would go up. The MLC stated that the process of crimping is difficult and cannot be learnt in a simple workshop. Furthermore, the MLC felt that since students paid their fees, it was the CC's responsibility to perform the repairs.

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IIT-BBC

We started off a new segment this semester- IITBBC Spotlight. Our first interview was with Raghu 'Canteenwala'. Catch it on www.insightiitb.org

With this issue, we finish our tenure. We hope you've enjoyed InsIghT as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you. Among the new things we've introduced this year- an Editorial Board, IITBBC, a radically re-designed layout, a fully revamped website with regular updates, a workshop on Journalism and several more. We couldn't have done it without the help of our very enthusiastic team and of course, you the readers- thank you! Your feedback has helped shape InsIghT this year and we look forward to your continued support over the years.

Archit & Ayush