

## Academic Rehabilitation Programme: A Second Lease of Life

■ NIVVEDAN, SABAREESH, YASH TAMBAWALA

**Insight expounds the core philosophy of ARP which revolutionized the functioning of academics in IITB through a more compassionate approach towards academically weak students.**

The life of a student at IIT-Bombay is ridden with several issues and affairs, be it a financial crunch in between the semester, cluelessness regarding one's future or that midsummer night's existential crisis. However, the hardships worsen when problems start creeping up in the sphere of academics. Academic Rehabilitation Programme, hereafter referred to as ARP, has been set up to help out students with severe academic complications. ARP was instituted in December 2007 under the guidance of Prof. Biswas and Prof. H. Narayanan. Since then, it has helped out students with varied academic woes. In this article, we trace back the history of ARP, the role played by faculty members and students in its functioning and lastly we try to understand where the program is headed in future.

### Framework Prior to ARP

Before ARP was in place, students with more than a certain number of backlogs were dealt with in a rigid fashion. Early termination of a student's stay at IIT Bombay was based on a set of rules. The Academic Rulebook states the following regarding this issue: *'Given that some of the best talents in the country take admission at this Institute, it is expected that all of them perform very well, and fully utilize the various opportunities provided for their academic advancement. However, in a few cases, students are unable to cope with the studies here. This may often be due to a lack of aptitude or a mismatch between the student's interest and what the programmes provide. Early recognition of this tendency permits corrective action to be taken in time, and the students to pursue their careers elsewhere. Undergraduate Academic Performance Evaluation Committee therefore, will recommend early termination of studentship if a student has accumulated more than five backlogs in the first 2 years of his stay at IIT Bombay or more than 7 backlogs beyond his 3<sup>rd</sup> year'*. However, discussions concerning recommendations being provided to academically weak students were time consuming and caused huge delays.

Between this phase of kicking-out students based on the stipulated rules and the ARP was the period when the Qualifying Test was introduced. As part of this system a student whose stay at IIT Bombay was terminated early had to give a Qualifying Test post a semester break, which consisted of 4 different exams, before he was inducted back into IIT Bombay based on his performance in the test. However, discontinuity from academics at IIT Bombay and lack of access to services like library facilities grossly affected the performance of students in the Qualifying Tests. Recognizing the flaws existing in the Qualifying Test, a committee headed by Prof. H. Narayanan suggested setting up of the ARP in its current form.

### What is ARP?

The essence of ARP lies in structuring a mechanism which integrates academically weak students with the existing academic framework by improving the

### Personal Account

**Rohit Dhingra**, a 5<sup>th</sup> Year M. Sc. Chemistry student has been an outstanding performer in and after ARP. Owing to medical reasons and a general lackadaisical attitude, he ended up being an ARP student after a dropped semester. With a CPI of 5.4 when he dropped a semester, he was to astound and impress everyone with a steep increase in his CPI to 7.7, and his consequent taking home an Institutional Academic Award.

He modestly attributes his entire success to the able guidance of Prof. H. Narayanan. Under the aegis of Prof. H. Narayanan and ARP, Rohit was able to realise his inner potential and regain his lost confidence.

Says Rohit, "Everyone is capable of everything. It just takes a good guide to show them the direction". And the guide is ARP.

After having been advised to drop a semester, Rohit was initially disillusioned, but constant mentoring by Prof. H. Narayanan personally and via mail helped him find his place in the society, and he has been an exceptionally good student ever since.

His morale was further boosted in his ARP semester, where he was suggested a reduced load, and this, he says, helped him focus better on what to study and how to study.

He commends ARP for its insistence on the maintaining of a diary by the students that outlines every activity they have been indulging in. Further, he says, the basic purpose of ARP is defeated if students fail to meet the ARP heads twice a week and produce their diary. The valuable insights they receive on how better to reschedule their activities, he believes, is very beneficial.

dedication, sincerity, motivation levels and self-image of the individuals under concern. When a student enters the ARP, for that specific semester the student takes up 24 credits worth of courses. These courses could also involve those which the student has already cleared in his previous semesters. No extra credits/improvisation is provided for such courses though. During the course of his stay in ARP, the student works in close coordination with a faculty member. Based on his performance in the concerned semester, the student is integrated back with the normal academic framework. However, if the student does not clear all his courses while being under the ARP, the faculty member may recommend him to continue the next semester under ARP or take a semester drop and suggest him to get involved in activities which improve his confidence and dedication.

### Mentoring in ARP

The role of a mentor primarily lies in identifying 'problem cases' and communicating them to the respective authorities. With this objective in mind, D-AMP mentors from each department are assigned mentees who have, owing to psychological problems or otherwise, failed to perform well academically and are on the verge of entering the ARP.

Once a student is in the ARP, his mentor finds himself in a role that requires as much, if not more, monitoring as mentoring, and the mentor's primary duties are often relegated to bridging the gap between the ARP heads and the students. This, a mentor goes about by interacting with the mentee very frequently, developing a strong bond, and in certain cases, where the intensity of the issue is so high that the discreet nature of D-AMP mentoring of an ARP student may be compromised with, coordinating with the peer group to learn more about the problems faced by the students.

A D-AMP mentor, under the guidance of the ARP heads, may also mentor an ARP student, always keeping in mind that the case at hand is sensitive and calls for extreme delicacy in handling, if he has managed to strike a good mentor-mentee interaction. This, however, is rare, and generally uncalled for, unless the mentee himself desires so.

When the mentee is known to be addicted to something which might pose a danger to his persona, it becomes the D-AMP mentor's imminent responsibility to acquaint the ARP heads with the situation.

The mentor also assists the student in realizing the gravity of the situation, and persuades him to abide by the rules of ARP as closely as possible.

### Role of Faculty in ARP

Primarily acting as an agent of change in the student's behavior, a faculty member has the responsibility of steering the academic needs of each student and mentoring the student to boost his morale. Professors overseeing ARP cater to the requirements of ARP students on a case-by-case basis based on the capability of the student and his determination to succeed. A primary reason for not having a central policy for the ARP is to provide justice to the needs and requirements of each student involved which are hugely varied.

In such an environment of non-formalized rules, the role of professors is heightened. Usually, the interaction between faculty and students is limited to a weekly basis. In these meetings the faculty member enquires about the activities the student has been pursuing over the past week. This helps them in gauging the student's progress and sincerity. Unfortunately, a few students misinterpret such inquiries into their schedule and even consider it as a form of intrusion into their daily affairs. However, authorities have no malign intentions or intend to appear as intimidating figures. They envision a future where no student would be in need of a programme like ARP.

### Future Plans

We enquired Prof. H. Narayanan regarding the changes he has proposed for the ARP in coming years. With regard to this Prof. H. Narayanan believes in decentralizing the ARP to a department level. As a part of this system, each department would consist of two faculty coordinators who would be responsible for dealing with each of the ARP students on a weekly basis. The D-AMP mentors are expected to build the bridge between faculty coordinators and the ARP students. With this system in place it is expected that ARP will perform much better and be more fruitful in future. ■

# Don't Worry Be Happy ■ AKHIL SRIVATSAN

The journey through college can often be daunting for students. Thousands of students enter IITB each year, many of whom are away from home for the first time in their lives. Once in IITB, they're often faced with tough choices both on the academic and the extra-curricular front. The importance of these choices only increases as the years go by and students often find less-than-perfect ways to cope with the mounting stress. Thankfully, there are mechanisms in place – in the form of student mentors, academic guides and a counsellor – to guide students through these decisions. The purpose of this article is not to question the adequacy of the methods applied by the institute authorities. Neither is it the intention of the writer to imply that the aforementioned methods are in any way insufficient. The primary goal of this article is to publish and analyse the results of an institute-wide survey that attempted to measure the

happiness of students. It is also the desire of the writer that this article provide an impetus to honest discussion on the mental health of the students of IITB, a subject of great importance.

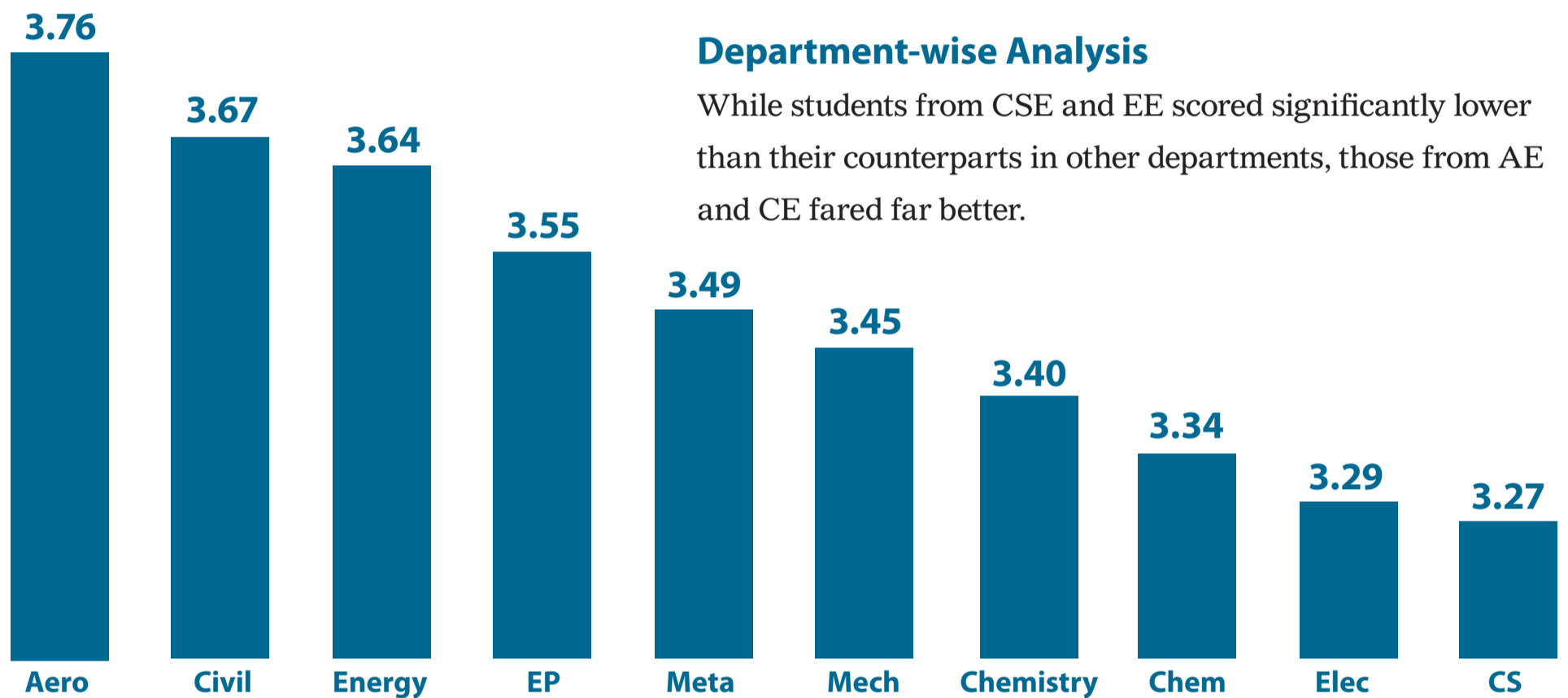
### The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (henceforth referred to as OHQ) was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University as a compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being. After its introduction, it has been used to determine the level of happiness in populations across the world – from old-age homes in the UK to rural Iran. Though no survey is without inherent harms and biases, the OHQ has been shown to be the most accurate measure of happiness currently available that works on a simple Likert Scale – the one most placement junta has seen in psychometric tests.

The average individual usually receives a score of 4.3. People with scores below that are adjudged as unhappier than average and those with scores above it are adjudged happier.

### The Results

The survey had more than two-hundred respondents. On averaging individual scores, it was possible to obtain the required result. The average score found on analysis was 3.43, which is significantly lower than the average score observed in other cases of testing. Females scored marginally better than males with an average score of 3.44 versus 3.34. On further analysis, several interesting results popped up. While the inferences one could draw from these statistics could be many, ranging from academic pressure to an inability to cope with extra-curricular activities, it is important that these inferences are looked into in the future.

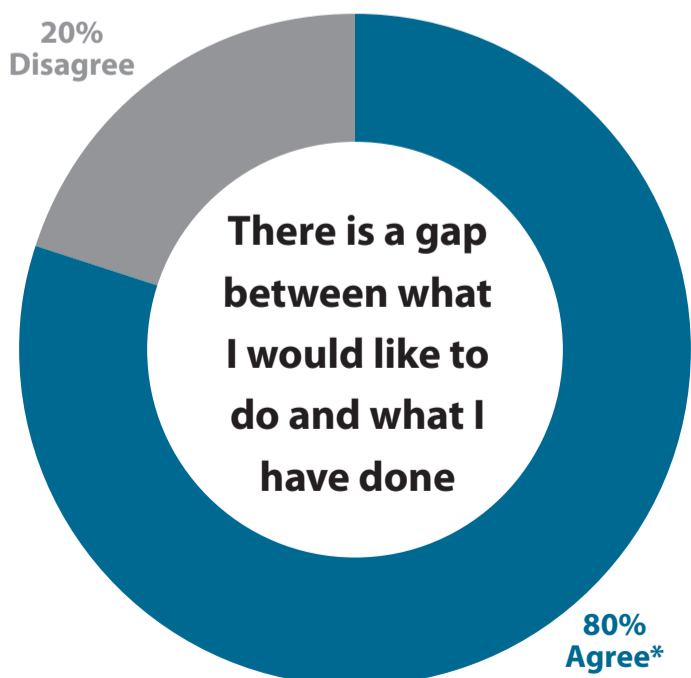
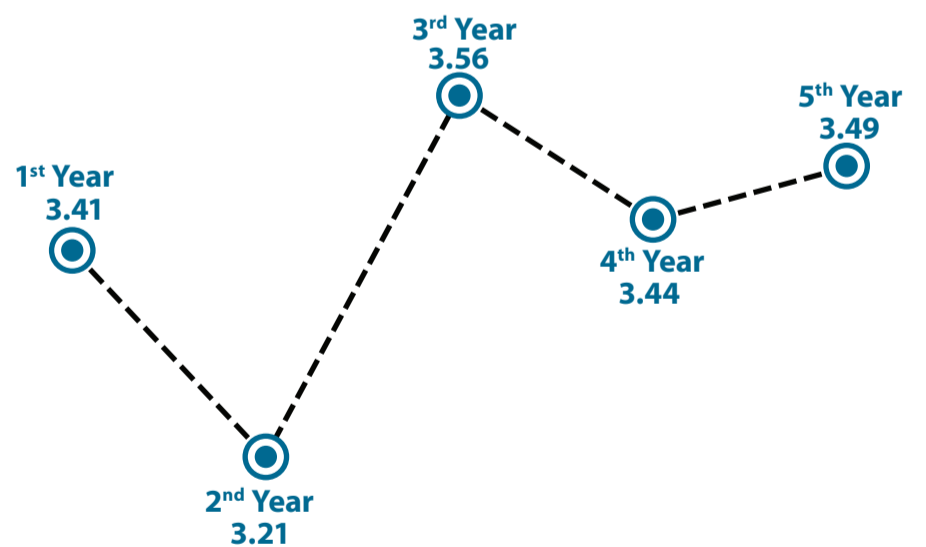


## Department-wise Analysis

While students from CSE and EE scored significantly lower than their counterparts in other departments, those from AE and CE fared far better.

## Year-wise Analysis

The 72 second year undergraduate students who filled the survey scored an average of 3.21, which is significantly lower than any other demographic surveyed.



## Conclusion

A true assessment of the quality of education received by students in our campus is incomplete without an analysis of the general psychological well-being of the student community. It is both difficult and presumptuous to attribute the above results to specific factors within the institute, especially in an article written by a student. It is the intention of the writer to bring to the attention of both students and the authorities that the statistics paint a less-than-favourable picture of the general happiness of the student body and efforts must be made by the community on the whole to solve this problem. That said the picture isn't entirely dark. When asked if they felt optimistic about their future, most students in the 4th and 5th year of their UG courses responded in the affirmative. Keeping this in mind, we must, as a community, make our campus a happier place for students. ■

\*Ranging from slight to strong agreement levels and vice-versa

# The Big Fat IIT Valfi

As the tears and laughs (mainly laughs) observed in every hostel during the Valfi season finally begin to subside, InsighT brings you a brief analysis of the phenomenon that is the Valfi in 3 unique snapshots



## Oye! Khaana Kahan Hai? ■ ANTARIKSH BOTHALE

For many a junior, free dinner is one of the most looked forward to things of the Valfi season. It wasn't entirely uncommon for freshies and sophies to estimate the worth of their 'senior network' based on how many hostels they had managed to have free Valfi dinners in.

If there was one thing that used to characterize Valfi dinners apart from the fancy water fountains and marriage-reception-esque setup, it was their monotony. Across years and hostels, you could expect your trusty *Chicken Angara* and *Roomali Roti*, with long queues around the *Aamras* counter. Dinners also meant that Valfi profiles invariably got delayed until 10 P.M. This year's arrangement then, where most hostels did away with the Valfi dinner entirely and instead served starters through the night, was a welcome change. The monotony remained though, because most hostels served similar Veg/Non-Veg mixes — *hara-bhara* kabab, chicken lollypop and spring rolls. H3 featured a unique preparation — whole boiled eggs dipped in batter and lightly fried — but it lost in appeal what it won in exclusivity. Most

food counters had mounds and mounds of those lying untouched, waiting for someone to pick them up and eat them. Very few did. On my part, I was famished and had little energy left to fight my way to other stuff, and grudgingly gobbled down a couple.

On the plus side, Valfi profiles could start around 9 P.M., and the continuous flux of starters meant that people had something to feed themselves throughout the night. The sorry part was that this supply invariably dwindled to zero in the wee hours of the morning, exactly when the first pangs of hunger begin to hit you after a night-out. It is strongly recommended that there is some arrangement for food around 6 – 8 A.M., when the sun starts bearing upon you and your stomach begins to rumble.

As always, the new setup was also an amusing reminder of the fact that IITians value (free) food over everything else. Whether it be raucous laughter during a profile reading session or solemn nods during 'senti', everything paused at regular intervals in deference to the arrival of food, especially *aamras*. ■

## Through a Freshie's Eyes ■ ANSHUL AVASTHI

When one thinks of 'Valedictory Functions', one thinks of bouquets and other mementos being handed out to seniors out of sheer respect by their peers and juniors who've constantly lived in awe of them. It is probably primarily for this reason that Valedictory Functions at IIT Bombay are called 'Valfis' instead.

Having received Valfi invites with disclaimers asserting that most of the content would be fictional and doctored purely for the purpose of entertainment, I was naturally curious and decided to attend a few Valfis this year, though I didn't know these people personally. Having been warned earlier about the uproarious nature of the event, I wasn't really surprised by the content of the anecdotes shared which generally ranged from lewd to... lewd. Not really knowing any of the seniors there, I happily made my way towards the real reason most freshies were there — the food counters. Call me indulgent, but as a good journalist, I had to personally attest to all aspects of the function. Ignoring the compassionate pleas of "Junta, Valfi starting in..." on one side of

the field and unprintable speeches on the other, your humble narrator immersed himself in slightly more important worldly pleasures.

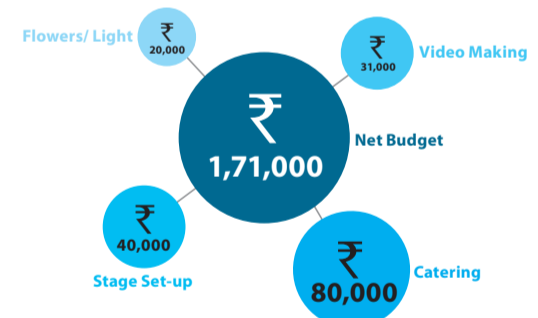
Meanwhile, I was taken aback by the scale at which the function was being conducted. Quite honestly, naive as it may seem in hindsight, I expected a slightly scaled-up version of a GBM wherein four years of a senior's life would be discussed as opposed to a year of a Mess Secy's, with Rasna qualifying as beverages for the night. What I did not expect, however, was a hostel decked out with enough lights and décor to convince an unsuspecting observer of its habitability.

Finally, I've got this theory about the importance of events. On a scale of 1 to 100, 100 implying infinite importance, you can calculate the importance of an event by noting the percentage of people wearing jeans/full pants. While lectures get great scores of 20, MoodI and Techfest manage excellent scores of 40. The H14 Valfi, on the other hand had a mind-boggling score of  $\approx 99.7$  (I was wearing shorts). ■

## Valfinomics

■ ANSHUL AVASTHI, ANUBHAV MANGAL, PARTH LOYA

When all's said and done, what remains is a bunch of statistics. The general expenditure on the smaller hostel Valfis ranged from Rs. 1.5 – 2 lakhs. A large fraction (nearly Rs. 80,000) was spent solely on the food. About Rs. 40,000 was spent on renting/transporting stage equipment, projectors, lights etc. Rs. 20,000 went into buying decorative material for the general hostel ambience. Around Rs. 30,000 went into the video-making process and other miscellaneous activities.



Meanwhile, hostels 12, 13 and 14 retained the coupon system and offered full-fledged dinners, taking their expenses up to about Rs. 2.5 – 3 lakhs. At H13, for instance, the seniors had to pay Rs. 260 for every coupon they purchased for their guests, and Rs. 50 were paid collectively by all the inmates of the hostel. Meanwhile, at most hostels, all inmates had to pay nearly Rs. 200 each. This new system, whilst saving a large amount of money for the seniors, caused the hostel residents to pay for the dinner of external guests.

Nearly all Valfis ended up hiring about 40 – 60 workers. Here too, the distribution was nearly the same as that of the money, with a major chunk belonging to the caterers.

Considering that fourth-year students had to pay for their guests' dinner themselves in hostels 5 and 8, a slight decrease in the number of valfis conducted was expected. Though most hostels saw the (Valfis conducted/No. of fourthies) ratio range all the way from 50 – 90%, (with 50 out of 53 fourthies conducting Valfis in H 10), just 35 were carried out in Hostel 8, out of 73 residents. But when one considers that only 26 Valfis were conducted in Hostel 9 (which distributed the food costs equally among all inmates, unlike H8) out of a possible 74, it seems that money isn't the primary determinant. ■

# PAF: THR

■ ARCHANA DAS, AYUSH BAHETI, NIKUNJ JHA, ROHIT NIJHAWAN with inputs from LAKESIDEY and

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Batches have come and gone but the institution of PAF has endured. Changed, transformed, yet still familiar enough that an alumnus walking into a PAF after a decade is transported back to the good old days.

Here, then, are some anecdotes from days of yore – harking back to the time when PAFs happened in Convo rather than OAT, when English was often the lingua franca, and 'social themes' were as unheard of as 'social networking'.

*Disclaimer: Some of these anecdotes, especially the ones from 90s, have been passed down by word of mouth, in the rich oral tradition of Indian storytelling, and therefore their accuracy cannot be guaranteed.*

PAF in the 80s was called 'Entertainment Program' and the 10 hostels then were divided in 5 pairs of 2 each with one performance taking place every Wednesday over 5 weeks. 10% weightage in those days was given to publicity and each hostel tried to outdo the other in conceptualizing most awe-inspiring and shocking publicity stunts to build up a buzz. All was fair then in love and the war that was PAF. So, there were instances of people hanging posters on cows of the campus and a poor freshie hanging from a noose (supported by invisible straps on his back) in front of Convo, 8 feet from the ground from morning till evening with a poster on his torso. But, if you think this was extreme, read on to be surprised.

## • The Great Dictator @ IITB

Another instance of publicity saw H4 inmates fooling the IIT registrar to rent them the IIT car reserved for VIP guests for 'hostel purposes'. They then transformed the car by pasting swastika signs and all kinds of Nazi emblems with a Hitler lookalike inside and carried out a motorcade in IIT to publicize their upcoming EP on 'Mein Kampf'. What happened later, when the authorities realized their folly is only imaginable.

EPs in those days were also a noisy affair with a lot of booing and anti-cheering employed by rival hostels to drown the dialogues of the actors. In one such performance, H7 and H10 antagonized by the rowdy H4 inmates took revenge by throwing eggs and rotten tomatoes at H4 performers on the stage. However, Manohar Parrikar, the current CM of Goa and an H4 inmate then, had anticipated this move and he had his own bunch of H4 inmates in the back row ready with their own eggs and tomatoes. So they began pelting H7 and H10 inmates with their arsenal from the back rows and the whole Convo was immersed in commotion. The result – the DoSA had to arrive to settle the matter with GS Cult in attendance and the H4 performance was left unfinished.

## • Locomotivation (H8 - H9)

**The One Where They Escaped Unskat**  
An old steam engine, replaced by a fast smarmy electric engine, prays for a chance to reclaim his lost glory. God hears his prayers and grants him a chance to challenge the u... and after a thrilling, heartstopping race, he wins. A clichéd story, right?

The catch? The trains were played by insanely skilled roller skaters, that became a (transient) fad of the day. Ramps led from the convo stage to the aisles between rows of seats, and the final race involved the trains zooming off stage, up the aisles to the foyer and then back down the aisles at high speed (an insanely dangerous manoeuvre by anybody's standards).

Definitely one of those PAFs which should be left with a "these stunts have been performed by experts, do not attempt to replicate" warning. But one which is still remembered by many as the first great PAF, to be spoken of in the same breath as Abhimanyu, Al Qasas and D...

## ANCIENT ERA

### • A Tale of Mafias and Elephants

H10 was paired with H4 and they were doing a PAF called 'The Court of Crimson King'. The publicity idea was to have a procession on an elephant through IIT streets with the lead actors sitting on it as king and queen. The only problem – where to find an elephant? Bakul Desai was put in charge of finding the elephant. Over the next fortnight, he made dozens of round trips to temples, police stations and film-studios to find one but all he got was barrages of choice expletives and threats of being thrown into jail. He did manage to get addresses of temples in Kerela which had an elephant and even a live one in Byculla Zoo which would not get out of its cage.

Just 2 days before the publicity day, he was sitting exasperated in a bar, drowning his misery in alcohol when he glanced at the photograph of an elephant in a Tamil newspaper. He caught hold of a Tamil friend and called the editor post midnight to enquire about the man in the photo. The man was Varda of Antop Hill and the editor insisted that one does not need an address to reach him. The next day, the duo made a trip to Antop Hill and true to the word every person knew the house of Varda. At his house, he listened to their request as he played a game of carrom while a dozen well built men stood menacing about them. For 5 minutes, there was a pin drop silence in the room... and then Varda laughed – it was maniacal laughter matched only by the Bollywood villains. Turns out, he was a big mafia leader – involved in drug racketeering, prostitution, extortion and what not. He laughed at their request, amused by the fact that people came to him to borrow money, to pay him to carry out a killing, to ask for protection and almost everything else except for an elephant. He promptly gave them an elephant and H4 finally had its procession as planned.

### • Moonstone (H6 - H9, 1991)

**The One With the Moon-Walking Fail**  
A highly ambitious PAF by all accounts, Moonstone was ahead of its time. One of the earliest attempts at a sci-fi storyline, some of the most ambitious prod ever seen, yet it turned into a fiasco.

The very first scene set the (s)tone for the PAF. Imagine this: a spotlight illuminates the convo entrance. In strides a strapping lad, carrying the eponymous Moonstone – a softly glowing prod marvel that holds all spellbound. Until the bearer trips, with the moonstone shattering.

Or picture this, if you will: a group of dancers perform to propitiate the Gods. Naturally, said Gods are pleased as punch and decide to shower flowers and coins upon them. But the prod team, despite a desperate effort, haven't got nearly enough coins for the shower scene. The night before the PAF, in one of those flashes of brilliance which can only occur after 3 sleepless nights, someone says "cold-drink bottle-caps!" No one thinks to inform the dancers though, so when the Gods shower them with coins on the stage, they find themselves dancing on bottlecaps. Barefoot.

# ROUGH THE AGES

MADHOUSE published by WESTLAND

(1993)

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Deja Vu.

## • Sarhad (H3 - H4, 2000)

### **The One That had Everybody in Splits**

The concept was stupendous. A giant curtain splitting the OAT in half; depicting two different scenes - set in India and Pakistan - with one set of dialogues. After 20 minutes, the scene reverses so everyone gets to see both parts. Brilliant idea, right?

The execution, though, was horrendous. Late in the day they realised that they lacked the manpower to do a good job on both sides. So they seated the judges on one side and concentrated on putting on one half of an impressive show. The "bad side" got to see prod wobbling, an arc-light toppling, an actor goofing his lines, and (rumour has it) a small accidental fire - earning the nickname "Sardard". The "good" side went smoothly enough to win second place after the excellent Al Qasas (H5 - H8).

## Afterword

And so, we come to the modern day and while PAF in essence has remained the same, yet, there is a monotony that has crept in. All our PAFs are modelled on social issues with rarely an entertainer being envisioned. When genres such as comedy and sci-fi were once abundant in PAFs, we no longer see them nor do we see English PAFs. Terrorism and corruption rule the themes year after year. Where are the brilliant minds who dreamt of Sarhad and Locomotivation?

The major difference in the outlook of then and now seems to be a certain apprehension in trying out bold and innovative scripts, ploys and presentation methods. People seemed to be bound by the pervading perceptions of 'PAFability' and anything out-of-the-box must be rejected lest we expose ourselves to the risk of failure and worse - not being able to pull it off.

Another major difference is the absence of people of every cult genre in PAF. Whereas, earlier the literary arts and debating people had an equally important role to play in scripting and voiceover, these days the task is restricted to dramatics club members. But, we live in times of stereotyping and no effort is made to bring about all kinds of people together for this purpose. The literary arts people have a snobbish attitude towards PAF, while the dramatics people have the arrogance to believe that their scripts cannot be improved by contribution from English writers. Why, if one were to convince the debating club members for voiceovers, one will most definitely have enough people for voiceovers for an English PAF. But the debating club members remain aloof from the PAF owing to the 'attitude' issues; whereas, the dramatics club people monopolize script and voiceover. The result is the same old script ideas rehashed time and again, presented with a new skin of prod, dialogues, characters and elements.

## MIDDLE AGES

### • In Love and War (H2 - H5, 1997)

#### **The One Which Disproved "Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar"**

PAF run-throughs usually happen about three hours before the actual; a day earlier the script-writers are often still frantically scribbling away. 'In Love and War', a tale of (what else!) love and war in the time of Alexander and Porus, was in the run-through stage almost 2 days in advance. The prod, attributed to PGs from IDC, was so good that folks from 2 and 5 invited their friends to PAF to see it, such was their confidence of victory.

There was a script full of clever quips and sheer pathos, thunderous and resonant voiceovers, and near-flawless execution. There was a 2D prod so magical that it looked 3D, and myriad imaginative little flourishes that stood out. The only other serious contender was the team of H6 and H8 with their adaptation of Asimov's "Nightfall", a solid but unspectacular performance that no one seriously expected to win. And it didn't.

But neither did "In Love and War". In an upset comparable to Bangladesh v/s Ireland a decade later, an unheralded PAF of modest execution was adjudged victorious (apparently because the judges liked its "social" theme - the repercussions of that decision are still felt in every script-deciding meeting to this day). The result, announced as it was just after midnight on April 1<sup>st</sup>, was assumed by many to be a tasteless April Fool's joke, but the joke was on H2, who would have completed a PAF hat-trick of their own had they won.

## MODERN TIMES

## PAF JUDGEMENT

**The results of this year's PAF year left many surprised and shocked, and happy. It sure was a time to remember and celebrate for Hostels 1,3, 11 and 13 which had won the PAF.**

**We talked to the judges about their views on PAF and how they came up with the results.**

**Talking about their general view about PAF, they stressed on students taking this event more like a sports match rather than as a performance based competition. The judges were quite impressed by the puppet dance in PAF 1, and the beautiful but strong voice-overs in all the PAFs. However, they emphasized on the fact that art education is necessary for students out here as PAF should combine aestheticism rather than technicalities in the backdrop. Related to prod-work, they also said being an engineering institution, students could engineer eco-friendly materials to be used in the building of the set; the ever increasing filth outside the SAC after every PAF being a very disappointing sight. Also, with respect to music, they asked for incorporation of more Indian instruments rather than drums and electric guitars.**

**According to the judges what made the third PAF the winning PAF was a combination of factors. The starting of the PAF by sand art was exquisite. The amount of research and efforts put in, to write the dialogues in Marwari was commendable. The 'Ghumar' dance was amazing and was one of the few choreos that did perfectly fit into the theme of the PAF. Also, PAF 3 used art rather than tech-based prod in their PAF. The judges were of the view that given the theme, the presentation of PAF 3 could've been sombre, but it ended up being delightful to watch. They thoroughly enjoyed all the PAFs and were very impressed by the brilliant genre that Performing Arts Festival is.**

# E-Cell Review

■ ADITI JAIN, AYUSH MISRA, CHIRAG CHADHA, SURYA KAZIPETA



The Entrepreneurship Cell (E-Cell) of IIT-Bombay, now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, completed a successful session this year. Led by a team of 21 managers and 2 overall co-ordinators, E-Cell this year brought about noteworthy changes like the 2 day E-Summit and the announcement of the Deferred Placement Program (DPP). Eureka, Asia's largest Business Plan competition got even bigger with the winners being awarded a trip to Stanford University's E-Bootcamp, including a trip to the Silicon Valley. At the same time, competitions like Pitch-it provided an idea validation and mentoring platform to the students of IIT Bombay. The two day long E-Summit saw increased participation this year and was conducted smoothly. Events like the Networking Arena kept the corporates busy while the students were engaged in Business Quizzes and sessions with highly coveted speakers. E-Cell also conducted the much talked about, Virtual Stockmarket Game, which saw a staggering participation of around 20,000 people.

## Eureka

Eureka, E-Cell's headline event, got bigger than ever before. The stakes were high with the total prize money being increased to 13.25 lakhs along with a trip to Stanford University for the E-Bootcamp this year. The event was divided under two tracks namely business and social. Special prizes for the best team from IIT was announced to encourage participation from the institute. In addition to this, 'Eureka! Social' was launched to develop specialised focus on social businesses.

When Inslght spoke to a few participants, they sounded extremely satisfied with the competition. Although, there were a few questions marks about the manner in which the winners were chosen, the participants were thoroughly impressed by the hospitality given to them during their stay at IIT Bombay. Participants appreciated the feedback and guidance given to them by knowledgeable Eureka! mentors and judges.

With the number of teams increasing from 2000 last year to 3600 this year including 400 international teams, it was a very proud moment for EduEdge, a team from IIT Bombay when they were declared joint winners of the Business Track along with 'PingTech'. 'Greenway Grameen Infra' were all smiles after being declared winners in the Social Track.

"In May 2011, 4 of us from IIT Bombay and IIT Kanpur (Shreya Mishra, Neeraj Jain, Prithika Vaageswaran, Sourav Poddar) launched our first start-up, Education Edge – a monthly magazine for school students from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> standard. With limited hope we decided to participate in Eureka last year. It was truly a joy ride, every step in the competition made us think about where we are headed and gave us plenty of opportunities to validate our direction. The mentor provided to us by E-Cell took genuine interest in our start-up and we are happy to now have him as a mentor for life. Eureka opened many gates for us, we have received an offer from a leading company in Education sector, Mexus education for a distribution partnership and also a VC funding from a renowned investor. Winning Eureka has given us the credibility that every startup takes 2–3 years to establish. We are glad to have participated and truly cherish the experience."

*Shreya Mishra, Team Member, EduEdge*

## E-Summit

The Summit was expanded to a 2-day event this year with equal focus on formal and informal activities. E-Cell made its presence felt by doing pre-event publicity in multiple colleges across Mumbai to promote student participation in the event. Multiple workshops were organised with speakers both from India and abroad. A massive increase was seen in the number of workshops being conducted this year as compared to last year. The highly anticipated, Virtual Stock Market, lived up to the hype. Organised on a national scale this year, it saw significant changes to the code so as to closely simulate a real stock exchange. In addition to this a number of student focused events like The Biz Quiz, Ignite, Ideastorm, Nokia Adventures, Business Simulation Game, INCEPT Case Study Competition and Pehal were added to attract student participants. As a result, the overall footfall increased from 1200 last year to 2000.

## E-n-B Club

The 'Entrepreneurship and Business' club, which aims at nurturing innovative ideas and converting them into successful business ventures, conducted expert and informal sessions which were received enthusiastically by the institute student community. Sessions

by eminent personalities like Werner Vogels, CTO, Amazon.com and Nandini Vaidyanathan were deeply enlightening.

## Pitch It!

Pitch It! provided an Idea Validation and Mentoring platform for the students of IIT Bombay. The ideas were validated and mentored by Expert Panel featuring alumni, successful entrepreneurs, investors and SINE. During the week following the validation sessions, ideas with potential were allotted an individual mentor who would guide them through a journey of an idea to a startup. The best 'Pitch It!' team: "Smartsheets" was given a direct entry into the semi-finals of Eureka.

## Business Simulation Game

Business Simulation game helped model the realities of the business world by simulating basic business theories and practices in controlled game environments. The game created an effective simulated model of the real business world that helped the players learn, grow, and achieve.

## Deferred Placement Program (DPP)

Deferred Placement Program (DPP) is a unique policy being introduced by E-Cell in association with the Placement Cell, SINE and the academic council, to provide a helping hand to the aspiring entrepreneurs in the campus.

According to the DPP, students who form a startup will be given the freedom to not appear for the placements of that year and instead pursue their startup. However, if they fail in their pursuit they can sit for placements 2 years later. That is, if a student skips placements in 2012, then he/she can come back and sit for placements in 2014. The students who registers for DPP program will have to validate their ideas from the DPP panel of experts. The DPP panel shall appraise the students' groundwork; if they determine that the idea is worth exploring and has potential for revenue generation, they shall qualify the candidates for the DPP.

The project is still in the pipeline but once it is implemented, the DPP will be a huge step in the direction of institute's policy to encourage entrepreneurial activities in the campus. ■

## Biased Room Allocation: Follow-up ■ ANUBHAV MANGAL

InsIghT revisits the issue of 'Biased room allocation' that it raised in its issue 14.1 based on a reader's shout and is pleased to find a complete revamp.

It's a well known belief among students that if one was active in Cult or Sports in their 1<sup>st</sup> year, then one has a greater chance of being retained in their own freshie hostel. To confirm this bias — in one of the previous issues — InsIghT ran a story where we showed that indeed such a bias did exist, and that a disproportionate number of 'machaxx freshies' were retained. We also showed how this practice had affected the freshie mind to view freshie hostels as superior to other hostels. In response to InsIghT's article, the allotment of rooms this time was greatly altered, thanks to the then GSHA Abhishek Agrawal (Monty). InsIghT now explores these changes, and checks whether they were effective in inducing random allotment of hostel rooms for freshers.

### The Revamped Procedure

(Based on an interview with Abhishek Agarwal (Monty), Ex-GSHA)

This time, the allotment list was not made by the GSHA alone. The allotment for freshies was decided in a meeting of the Hostel General Secretaries Committee (HGSC) which consists of the GSHA and the General Secretary of each hostel. The committee was shown a chart which had all the blocks of 6–8 rooms randomly coloured to differentiate departments and

4/5 year programme but these details were not visible to the G. Secs. The wings were not broken during allotment in most of the cases. The GSHA ensured inclusion of maximum number of departments and a similar ratio of B. Tech. and 5 year programme in every hostel. The inclusion of Hostel G. Secs in the process ensured that any bias that could be brought about by the GSHA favouring one hostel over another was under scrutiny. This was done over and above the random allocation of rooms to freshies at the beginning of their 1<sup>st</sup> year, to ensure as random a procedure as possible.

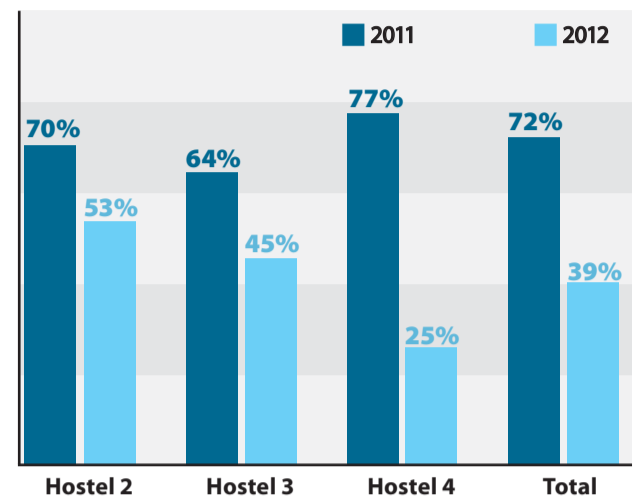
### Focus Groups for the Analysis

To estimate whether a bias had existed in allocation of rooms this time as well, InsIghT implemented the same parameters as were used the last time for recognizing the 'machaxx freshies'. In sports, those that went for Inter-IIT were considered. In cult, the parameter was a little harder to define. So InsIghT limited its search to conveners of the various groups and a few others that were viewed as enthusiastic and regular in the clubs activities by the respective secretaries.

### Results

A comparison of the retention figures tells us a story in itself. This year, the total percentage of 'Cult machaxx' freshies that were retained was around 41%, as opposed to 70% last year. The percentage went to as low as 27% in Hostel 4 this time around. But the real story is in the retention of Inter-IIT freshies. This year, only 20% of freshies that went

### COMPARISON OF FOCUS GROUP RETENTION IN 2011 AND 2012



for Inter-IIT were retained. Last year, out of 13 freshies that went for Inter-IIT, a staggering 84% of them were retained. This year, out of a total of 61 so called 'machaxx freshies' (including both Sports and Cult), only 39% of them were retained, which is incredibly low as compared to last year's 72%.

With the huge difference in numbers for this year and last, it seems that this year's allocation has been a success. Whether this will help in levelling the ground for the General Championships in cult and sports is something we must wait and see. But for now, it no longer seems that the freshie hostels will hold an edge over others. ■

## On the Counsellor's Couch ■ ADITYA PRASAD, RAVI BHORASKAR, VAIBHAV PITTIE

Life at IIT Bombay can be wildly exciting for some, but a bitter challenge for others depending on how well one adjusts. In course of this article we explore one of the most essential sources of help, the Counsellor. Important questions regarding peer pressure, sexuality issues and PoR concerns have been dealt with. We also discuss ways to alleviate the stigma of going to the counsellor.

### Shifting Counsellor's Office

As a construct of the Indian mentality the counsellor is not just any doctor; she is the doctor you go to if you have 'problems' or 'issues'. Being seen going to a counsellor is a form of public acknowledgement of the existence of a problem, which would imply that you are weak and have crumbled under the pressure that so many others thrive in. It is not unexpected of others to boil up rumors, gossip, guess and discuss that you are having relationship issues, or doubts about your sexual orientation or some other life altering experience.

If society was not enough of a deterrent, then surely placing the counsellor across the DoSA would serve the purpose. The intimidating location of the counsellor's office, opposite the DoSA's cabin, might make it difficult for individuals to walk into that room. We could not help but notice that a steady stream of students is always around the common room shared by the DoSA's and counsellor's office. The presence of General Secretaries, MI, E-Cell and Techfest team members is enough to violate any surety of privacy one needs to visit a counsellor. One could imagine that the proximity to the DoSA might ward off cases of drug and alcohol abuse. But it also adds to the fear that your parents or the authorities will be informed. The counsellor has clarified unequivocally that cases of drug abuse are dealt with sympathetically, however a fine is imposed on wrong-doers. Confidentiality of the individual is a priority nevertheless. The question is not what truly happens or what standard operating procedures are, but one of perception. You need to make people feel comfortable enough to approach you and give them the benefit of the doubt.

We believe moving the counsellor's office to a location which is not frequented by students and the authorities might be a better idea. We could also change the current office like interiors to make them more relaxing. After the recent suicide on its campus, IIT Madras has not only shifted the counsellor's office but also has set up a counseling unit with a tele-counseling facility to offer these services on an anonymous basis around the clock.

**Counsellor's take:** "Taboo is a problem in India, but when the student wants help, he doesn't care about the taboo. There is enough word of mouth publicity, and students are saying great things about this office. Location near DoSAs office is a good thing, since it makes my job easier as they can easily help me out."

### Tête-à-Tête with the Counsellor

**InsIghT (I):** What are the common problems that people approach the counsellor for?

**Counsellor (C):** Students generally approach me for issuing relating to academics, adjustment and relationships. Students typically come for two to four sessions, based on the degree of problem. For more for deep rooted problems, sometimes family counseling is adopted.

Adjusting to the IIT life is difficult for those who were forced into giving JEE by peer and parental pressure, although they don't really want to do engineering or come to IIT, hence they feel like misfits on campus. Many students feel that the job is done once they are here after 2 years of slogging for JEE. Life is actually beginning now! But the students have already got burnt out at coaching classes by one track mechanical studying. The first beating a student takes is the realization that he is just an average student here, whereas he was the brightest in school.

**I: Typically, how many students visit you every semester?**

**C:** The flow of students is high towards the start of

semester, ebbs in the middle and rises again near end semesters. Mostly, juniors end up visiting me often. Earlier (15 years ago) only freshmen used to come; nowadays even some 3<sup>rd</sup> year students have started coming. There has been a decline in the interaction with seniors, since first years are not mixed with others in terms of room allocation. Due to this, adjustment issues crop up in 2<sup>nd</sup> year too. Sitting in the rooms with laptops is a problem. Technology has reduced personal interaction. This also affects academics, since seniors don't help out juniors as much (with notes, doubts etc.). Ragging rules are necessary since it had become a menace, but interaction is also necessary.

**I: In the online form we received a lot of responses about stress caused by a PoR. What is your take on the issue?**

**C:** Students should focus on academics first and personality development later. Students get involved in these activities and lose discipline. Consequently, attendance and grades drop. The coupling of PoR's with future expectations results in low self esteem for the individuals who could not make it.

**I: For cases of substance and alcohol abuse do you feel that doctor patient confidentiality should be maintained with regard to parents and authorities?**

**C:** Substance and alcohol abuse are dealt with differently. Drug addiction is dealt with in an exceedingly sympathetic fashion. Fine is imposed on individuals who are found guilty. Rehabilitation is recommended. Parents are involved to administer the whole detoxification process. Alcohol isn't addictive, getting over it is more about willpower. Alcohol won't damage you as much as drugs. Visits to the Alcoholics Anonymous group are suggested.

**I: How are cases involving homosexuality dealt with?**

**C:** I try and help boys to come to terms with their sexuality. I help them realize if they are truly homosexuals or whether it was just a phase and now if they believe that it is wrong or unnatural for them to harbor such feelings. ■

# Campus Hub: New Kid on the Block

■ ANTARIKSH BOTHALE with inputs from ABHI SURI, KUNAL MEHTA

Inslght reporters hog themselves silly to tell you what they think is the best and worst of IITB's latest eatery.

The T-intersection next to Hostel 5 has played host to a variety of food stalls since my freshie year. First came everyone's beloved BJC (Bhawani Juice Center), with its name punned to JBC—Jawaani Booze Center. BJC was distinguished by being the first of its kind, at least in the recent past, and quickly earned lots of patrons. Sara Ice-cream Parlour and Shri Ganesh Juice & Fast Food Centre (GJC) soon replaced BJC, and garnered rather good following amongst the student community.

Campus Hub, the new kid on the junction is a refreshing change. Open from around 8:30 A.M. to around 11 P.M. (to be extended), this place seems ideal for that lazy morning brunch or an evening hang-out session with some decent meals on the menu.

## Food and Menu

Most of the stuff on the menu is fairly tasty, freshly prepared and served piping hot. They're slowly rolling out more and more food items. The rolls are pretty tasty, neatly cut in 4 bite-sized pieces that help drive in the fact that the portions are rather small. The *Paav Bhaaji* was thoroughly disappointing—stale *paav* served with a *bhaaji* that I call uninspiring, merely out of general respect for food. The fruit shakes are certainly value for money, and the juices, albeit a bit watery, are fairly decent.

I liked the *Chhole-Bhatoore* and *Rajma-Chawal* too. *Parathas* were good, but there is high variability in quality. The tomato rice is rather insipid—mine didn't even have salt in it, but I assume that was a one-off error. All in all, it is fairly tasty food, and after years of eating bland and tasteless vegetable maggi in the mess, I was pleasantly surprised to taste Campus Hub's version of the same. I wish they had more varieties of *chutneys*, though; right now, they serve a rather boring green *chutney* with everything.

I've been told that they'll introduce South Indian fare in some time. *Chaat* is on the cards too. I hope these additions happen soon since I don't exactly find myself spoilt for choice. Right now, the menu is in some kind of limbo between tiffin and dinner. And, by the way, everything's vegetarian. I heard they offer even Jain *Bhaaji*.

On the plus side, everything looks clean and hygienic, people wear gloves, tables are wiped regularly—it's certainly reassuring after the utter chaos and squalor that was GJC.

## Ambience

There's certainly much more space than there was before, but unless you are sitting near the left entrance, it still feels a bit cramped. I found fewer mosquitoes than at Brewberry's, so that's certainly

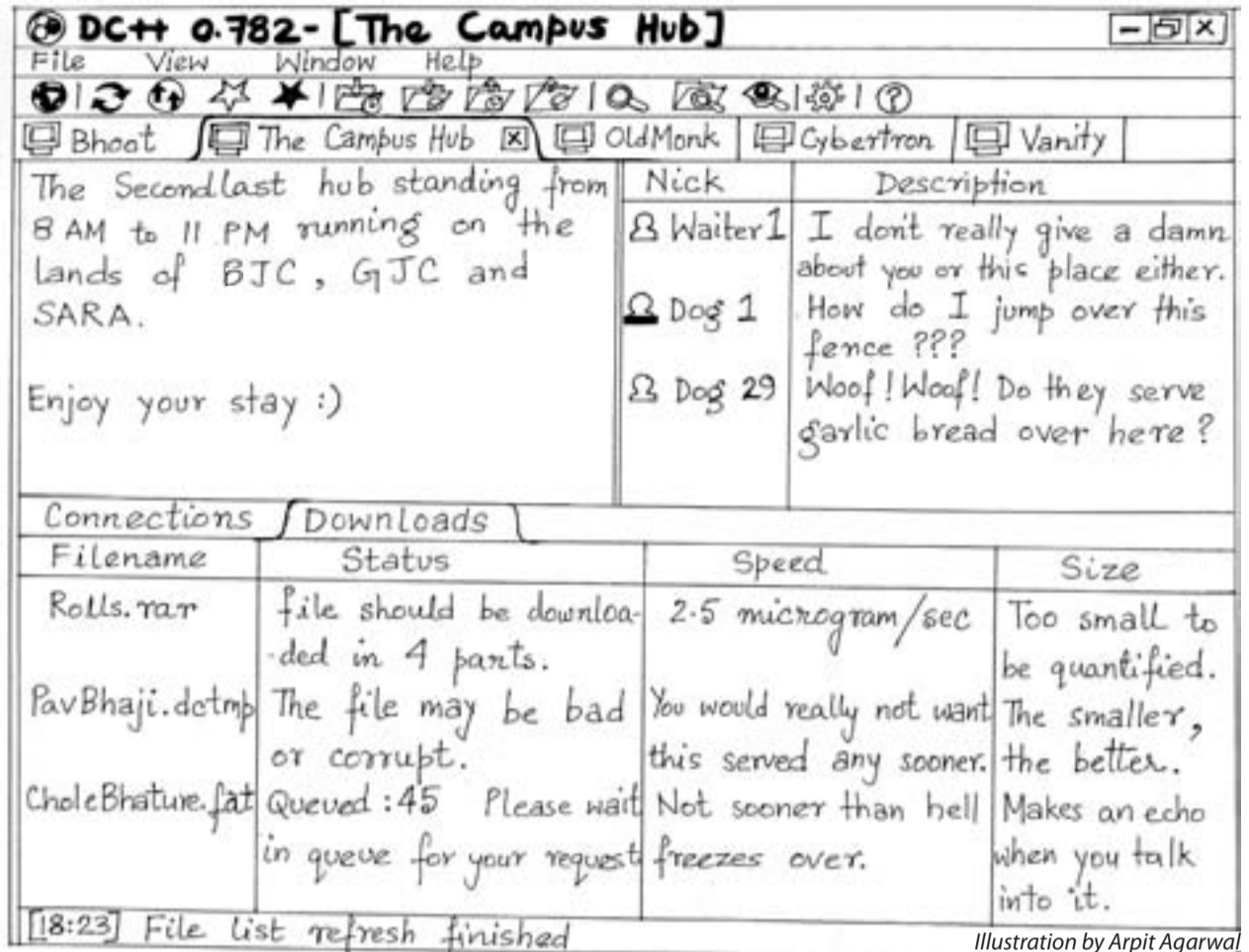


Illustration by Arpit Agarwal

a plus point. I have other problems with the place though. The layout is such that it's not possible to queue up without blocking everyone's movement. If you form a straight line, people on the other side can't go and pick their food up. If you choose to queue along the counter, the ice-cream and juice bar becomes inaccessible. It's a veritable mess, and I don't know how they will manage it.

## Pricing

Sara and GJC have been replaced by a joint that's costlier and slower than both of them. While hygiene and cleanliness are obviously important, I am sure there comes a point where the scales start tipping in favour of giving people affordable food. The ice-creams are more expensive than at Sara. You end up spending at least 40–50 bucks, and you don't even begin to get full.

## Service

Apart from having the same owner as Brewberry's, Campus Hub has inherited Brewberry's slow service and the staff's annoyingly lackadaisical, devil-may-care attitude. The long preparation times are still excusable because nothing is prepared in advance, but the sheer indolence of the cash counter is so frustrating that I cringe at the thought of having to go through the ordeal every time I have to order. There is no queue management at all—the cashier entertains people who've clearly jumped the queue while ignoring those who've been standing for a long time waving their money in desperation. Counter management is

almost as bad as Shakti's. But unlike Shakti, which is understaffed and underpriced, Campus Hub seems to be teeming with employees with apparently little work in their hands. They sometimes take minutes to clear just a couple of people.

I see the staff languidly floating about the place, and there is none of the briskness you'd expect in any fast food joint that rides on the word professional.

While I used to often stop at Sara/GJC for a quick ice-cream/juice before rushing off to wherever I was headed to, I find that virtually impossible at Campus Hub/Brewberry's because of the way they run these places. However, I am pleased that they have been introducing menu items in a phased manner instead of announcing everything and then defaulting on it the way Brewberry's used to do.

All in all, the Campus Hub is a fairly good addition to the landscape, but not without its problems. If only the prices were a bit lower, the menu more expansive and the service considerably faster, we'd have an undisputed winner. ■

Note: All ratings are based on field surveys of 30 randomly selected customers over 2–3 days. For excerpts from an interview with the outgoing GSHA regarding Campus Hub and the Sunrise Dhaba watch-out for our article on our website—[www.insightiitb.org](http://www.insightiitb.org)

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## Our 1<sup>st</sup> Print Issue!

And with this edition we present to you the last print issue of Inslght for this semester. In the next year, we promise to deliver more comprehensive journalism and strive to become more effective in addressing student issues through better reportage, quality videos, and prompt dissemination of news & analyses. We envision that in the next year, Inslght will become a holistic media body through our print, web and IITBC as we strive to become the definitive voice of the student body. Please send in your feedback/suggestions to [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in)

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Nidhi & Saideep