

# DUAL Dilemma

■ ASHISH RATHI, NIDHI SHANBHAG, ROHAN SABLAY, RUSHABH SHETH, SOURABH BISWAS

## ARE DDS GIVEN A RAW DEAL COMPARED TO B. TECHS WITH RESPECT TO INTERNSHIPS? ARE ANY SOLUTIONS POSSIBLE? INSIGHT EXPLORES.

### Why Internships?

Studies have consistently shown in the last few years that the sheer value of summer internships in an undergraduate's career — both from the student's personal growth perspective and the industry perspective — is immense. This is especially true for an environment like IIT wherein we are exposed to a gamut of options. The options available to a student have never been this varied and confusing. In such a scenario, an internship is invaluable in helping students explore their interests and aids the transition between theoretical knowledge and industry experience. It exposes students to real industry expectations and helps him form opinions about various career options. Imperative soft skills such as work ethics, teamwork, interpersonal skills are honed. Working in a company and meeting deadlines with limited resources inculcates a sense of responsibility. Successfully completing your internship leaves you with a sense of accomplishment and in rare cases, with a Pre-Placement Offer (PPO)

Previously internships/ industry experience was mandatory in IIT-B. This system was revamped in 2009 with internships being omitted from the curriculum. This was accompanied by the formation of the PT cell under the GSAA, which today is instrumental in securing some of the best internships for 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduates. Considering how valuable these internships are during placements, a disparity among students has the potential to snowball into widespread discontent.

### What's the problem?

Every year, hundreds of students register for the PT cell in the hopes of securing a coveted internship. Presently, the PT cell caters mainly to 3<sup>rd</sup> year UGs.

As the accompanying stats clearly show, most companies that come to campus for internships do not open for 3<sup>rd</sup> year dual degree students. This is because they prefer 'pre-final year' students whom they can subsequently offer pre-placement offers (PPOs) to, and since 3<sup>rd</sup> DDs aren't in their 'pre-final' year, they are not eligible. This means that while B.Techs get a chance to have a go at the whole pie, DDs are left with very limited opportunities which they still have to share with B.Techs. A staggering 63% of companies open solely for B.Techs,

and it is left to DDs to fight it out with B.Techs for the remaining 37%.

Also, comparing success ratios for DDs vs. B.Techs, we see that the conversion rate in B.Techs is 61%, while for DDs it is lesser at 51%. This may be attributed to the above fact, that opportunities for an average DD are much lesser than those for an average B.Tech.

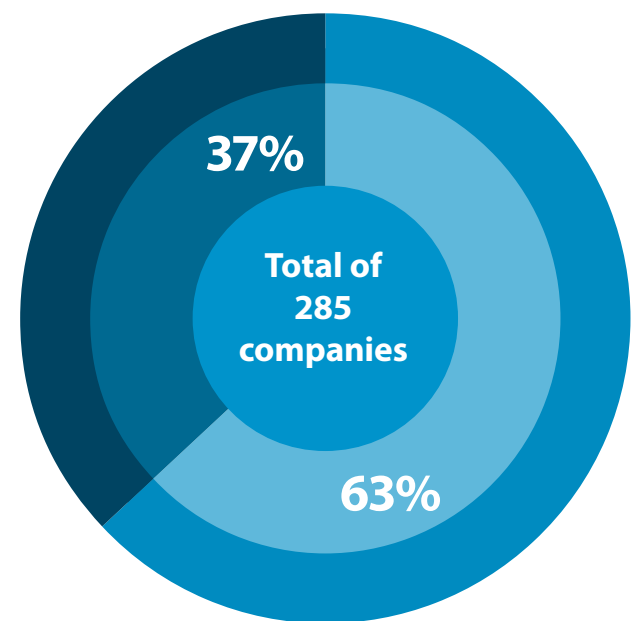
Since Dual Degree students form a sizeable chunk of the undergraduate population, many students are left to literally fend for themselves. Scouting for an internship on your own is an art in itself — mailing, cold-calling, canvassing family and friends' networks and above all-lots of luck. Even those who do manage to secure an internship — they usually find themselves stuck in sub-standard work-conditions and non-existent projects. This trend has caused great discontent among the DD students, as they feel virtually locked out of several respectable companies that offer coveted internships, despite having comparable credentials.

### The Problem Continues

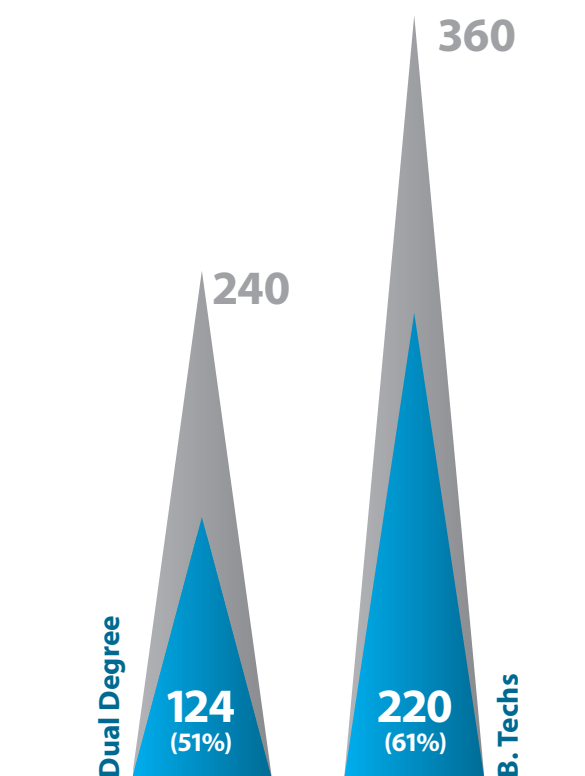
These woes don't end however, when Dual Degree students do finally become pre-final year students in their 4<sup>th</sup> year and hence eligible for the internships that they missed out on the previous year, the PT cell doesn't allow them to register. The main reason for this is that the summer of the DD 4<sup>th</sup> year is reserved for the Dual Degree Project.

DDs still stand a small chance of doing an internship if his/her guide is willing to allow it; that is on the back of the assumption that he/she has secured one on his own. Guides prefer that students pursue an internship related to their dual degree project (if at all). Even if your DDP guide permits you to take up the internship, it doesn't necessarily imply that you will be allowed to pursue it. Internships related to the DD project will get an NOC from the institute, but if the internship is unrelated to the project, then an NOC application may be rejected. Moreover, DDP guides are decided late in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester, and in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester for some departments, making it virtually impossible to get these permissions in time to be able to apply to companies — via the PT cell or otherwise, as most companies are done with their recruitment cycles for internships by then.

Last year, 4<sup>th</sup> year DD students were allowed to submit their resumes to the PT cell during registration. But as they were unable to get permissions in time for PT cell registration, no JAFs opened for them. This year once again, 4<sup>th</sup> year DDs have been kept out of the PT cell.



■ Companies open for B. Techs only ■ Companies open for both B. Techs and DDs



■ No. of students who secured internships ■ Total no. of students registered

In summation, DDs are denied several PT cell internship opportunities for major companies in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year due to company policies and in the 4<sup>th</sup> year due to the academic policies.

### Possible Solutions

A rumour that made the rounds last year was that when the student body moved the Senate to accommodate DD internships, it had rejected this motion. This is not entirely true. Last year, the student body had planned to pursue the case of allowing internships for fourth year DDs in the Senate (hence, fourth year DDs were preemptively told to submit their resumes in case the motion was successful). But, the issue was not taken up with the senate at that time because of the general opinion that more groundwork was needed and professors' and students' expectations had to be aligned before putting it up for deliberation. Hence there might still be some hope for DDs if viable solutions are presented to the Senate.

We have tried to come out with 2 possible solutions: **Allocation of all DDP guides early in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester:** This would enable students to be able to plan out their DDPs well ahead in time, understand their guide's expectations and perhaps compensate for the time they would lose in the summers due to an internship, by working on his/her DD Project beforehand. This would also leave sufficient time to obtain an NOC and secure an internship via the PT cell or otherwise.

According to the GSAA, Ramanjit Singh Anand, this is already being implemented this year onwards – the institute plans to ensure the allotment of guides by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> semester to give enough time for the DDP.

### Splitting the DDP into more stages:

The DDP project could be made more flexible by breaking it into more number of stages and allowing the students to complete one stage in the 8th semester itself without reducing the effective number of months of the DDP. The students can then be officially allowed to pursue any internship in the summer. This has a 2-fold advantage of possibly improving DDP qualities via regular evaluation and greater accountability, and at the same time giving DDs an opportunity to be a part of the PT cell just like their B.Tech counterparts albeit in the 4th year. Multiple evaluations and gaps in the DDP may cause some problems, but if a new structure is implemented that grants credits to the work done before summers, we could end up with better quality projects.

Another solution worth exploring may be to have a blanket policy for all companies that come via the PT Cell that forces them to open for both B.Techs and DDs in the 3rd year itself. This may not be a viable solution as companies may simply refuse to follow these terms and we may lose out on internship opportunities.

### Professors' Perspectives:

Having said all this, it is important for us to understand the institute's perspective. Although DDs and B.Techs both enter IIT via the JEE and are considered equal by the larger student community, they are mutually independent in their core philosophies if viewed from the Institute's perspective- the institute perceives B.Techs as UG students to be given freedom, but DDs as potential researchers. A recurrent theme during our interaction with professors showed a general disappointment in the quality

of DDPs by students. The reduction in DDP credits was a result of this lack of quality of DDPs. However, since the institute doesn't see a DDP in the same light as a course, the usual course-credit proportionality doesn't exist for the DDP. As a result of this, even though the DDP credits were reduced, the time period wasn't. The internship is presently viewed by the institute as an extra-curricular activity pursued in vacations – and not something to be accommodated if it means compromising on academics.

This disparity in students' and faculty's expectations is slowly but surely leading to many departments phasing out their DD programme, with Aerospace, Civil and Computer Science departments leading the pack. More changes are expected after the DDP review being conducted under the guidance of Prof. Nithyanand Prabhu is submitted.

### Conclusion

This issue is a rather complex one, with many stakeholders – DD students, the PT cell, the Institute and recruiting companies. Although, our analysis substantiates the perception among DD students that they are bereft of equal opportunities and have been handed the short end of the stick, finding a solution that satisfies all the stake holders is far from easy. Perhaps that is the reason why a viable solution has not been found already. The solutions that we have proposed may not be fool-proof but they can initiate discussion and dialogue, which might go a long way in reconciling everyone's expectations and enabling more students to make the best of the Dual Degree Programme while at the same time providing equal opportunities. ■

## PRATHAM no more

■ ANTARIKSH BOTHALE, MANU SAHAY, YOHAN MATHEW



As of today, India's first student satellite project, the aptly named Pratham, has been 4 years in the making at IIT Bombay. Started at a point in time when the institute had no background in space technology, the project today has a dedicated laboratory, an MoU with ISRO for the launch, a tie-up with a French university for data collection, and 16 ground stations around the globe – 15 in colleges across the country and one in France. Once successfully in orbit, Pratham will record the electron count of the ionosphere, which can be used for tsunami alerts and also to increase the accuracy of Global Positioning System in India.

The IIT Bombay Pratham team signed an MoU with ISRO a couple of years back to get a launch date. As per the MoU, the team is supposed to hand over the integrated model of the satellite and ISRO would carry out the vibration and thermo-vacuum tests at their end. The MoU expires soon, and hence work goes on at war footing in the satellite lab located on the ground floor of the Aerospace Department. The team has been working through the summers to get the flight model boards and sensors ready.

Presently, the project is nearing its end with the final tests being carried out at IITB. The students are busy testing the electrical hardware under simulated space like conditions before doing integration of the flight model boards. With the integration of qualification model completed, the team is confident that after finishing the simulated testing they can integrate the flight model in a span of 3 days. The team plans to finish the electrical testing soon and then go to ISRO

for getting the necessary approvals. The integration of solar panels and the structure will start once the electrical integration is approved by ISRO.

Though this was the first student satellite project to be started in the country, it will not be the first to be launched successfully, as it has been plagued by several glitches. IIT Bombay's emphasis on creating a knowledge base for future missions, rather than putting any satellite in space by hook or crook, meant that the spirit behind the process always remained cautious and methodical rather than swift and slapdash. Furthermore, unlike other institutes, IIT Bombay also had a social goal associated with the project which has enabled the team to collaborate with 15 other universities across India and France. Pratham has also developed virtual labs in collaboration with the Government of India to help students learn the basics of Satellite technology. The project, thus, has made an impact globally but all this has had a bearing on the timeline of the project.

According to Project Manager Jhonny Jha, the team has been hampered by a lack of team strength over the years, as well as numerous delays in procurement of space grade components as a result of shipping and customs constraints. In the face of these various hurdles, IIT Bombay's Satellite Team has been smartly prudent, without ever imposing itself on ISRO or getting into a 'space race'. Hopefully, this would imply a glitch-free launch within the next few months, something that even NASA does not always achieve, that inspires and sets the standard for student satellites across the country, even the world. ■

## Kya aap paanchvi pass se tez hain?

### ■ LEISURE CORNER

As our reporters went around the campus looking for news, we found some confused souls who were looking for the answer to life, universe and everything. Well, nobody was able to provide a satisfactory answer to most of these questions pertaining to the sophisticated and myriad mysteries of the freshman kind, but the questions themselves pose food for thought, coming from the brightest minds this country has to offer. To keep matters interesting, we have mixed the real questions with some fake ones to see how well you understand the complex processes that befuddle the freshie mind. Of the following, 6 are actually true questions freshies had posed to seniors (yes, you read that right, 6!), while 4 are fake. Can you separate the real ones from the fake ones? If yes, send us your answers at insight@iitb.ac.in with 'Freshie Mysteries 101' as the subject and the winner will be felicitated at the coffee shack with a cold coffee and a plate of Bonda, without chutney of course. So the bottom-line is – 'Kya aap paanchvi pass se tez hain?'

- Aap mere saath shorts khareedne chaloge kya?
- Bhaiyya mera bistar ka kona toot gaya, aur mattress uneven hai, aap kuch kar sakte ho?
- Can I buy a single room somewhere in the institute? I'm very rich.
- Ab jab main IITian ban chuka hoo, bandi kab milegi?
- Gullu main butter roti order karu kya?
- Yahan ka daru scene kaisa hai?
- Bhaiyya, H4 ka baap kaun hai?
- Saathi orientation miss ho gaya. Kya karun?
- Can I get a gas stove in my room?
- Bhaiyya, bathroom me flush nahi chal raha. Aap theek karwa sakte ho kya? ■

# Skewed CPI

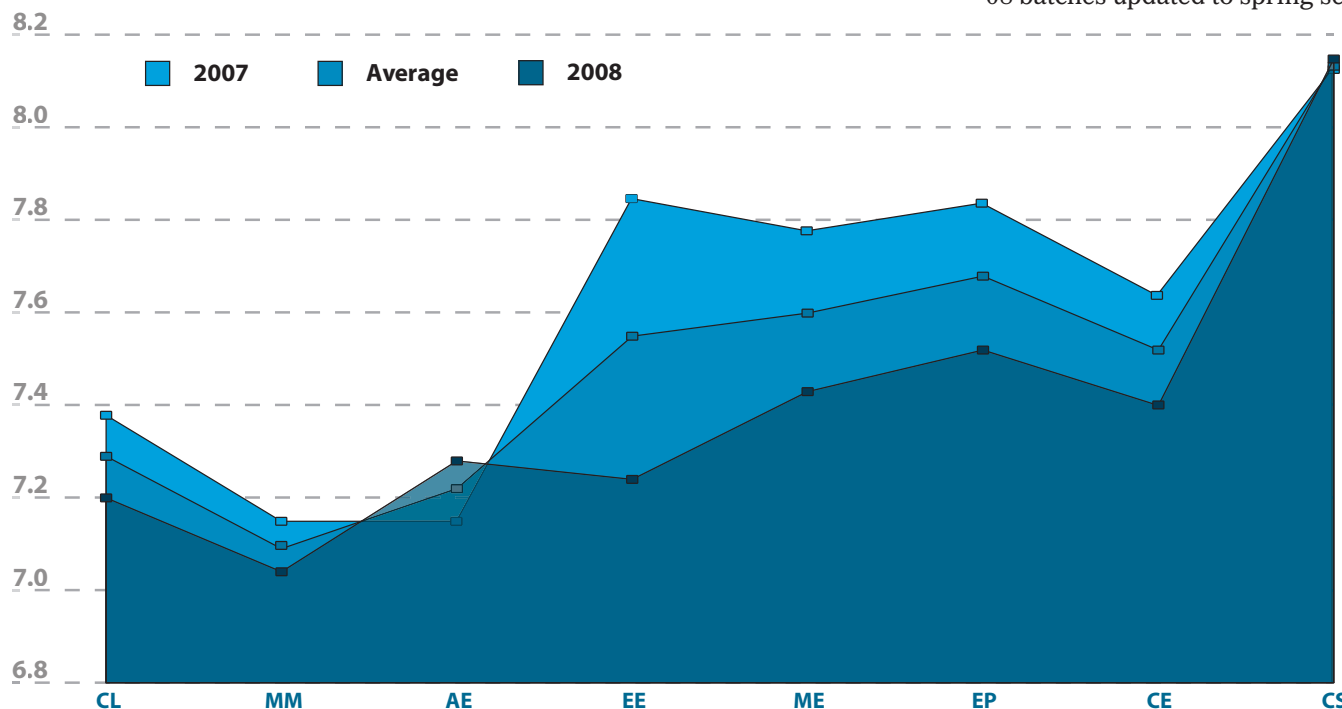
ACHIN JINDAL, ANUBHAV MANGAL, TANUSHREE PRASAD, UTTAM BHAT

## ARE YOU IN THE IDEAL DEPARTMENT TO SCORE A HIGH CPI? INSIGHT ANALYZES THE CPI DISTRIBUTION ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Departments in IITB have evolved to follow distinct philosophies leading to the manifestation of a number of department specific trends with respect to attendance, grading, quizzes et al.

Though it's justified that departments have sufficient autonomy and freedom to formulate their own guidelines, at least an iota of stress needs to be laid to ensure that CPI remains an objective standard across the institute.

In this article, we present an analysis of the CPI distribution of the first two post-Biswas-curriculum batches to highlight some department trends. The data used here includes department-wise individual anonymous CPIs of students of '07 and '08 batches updated to spring semester 2011.



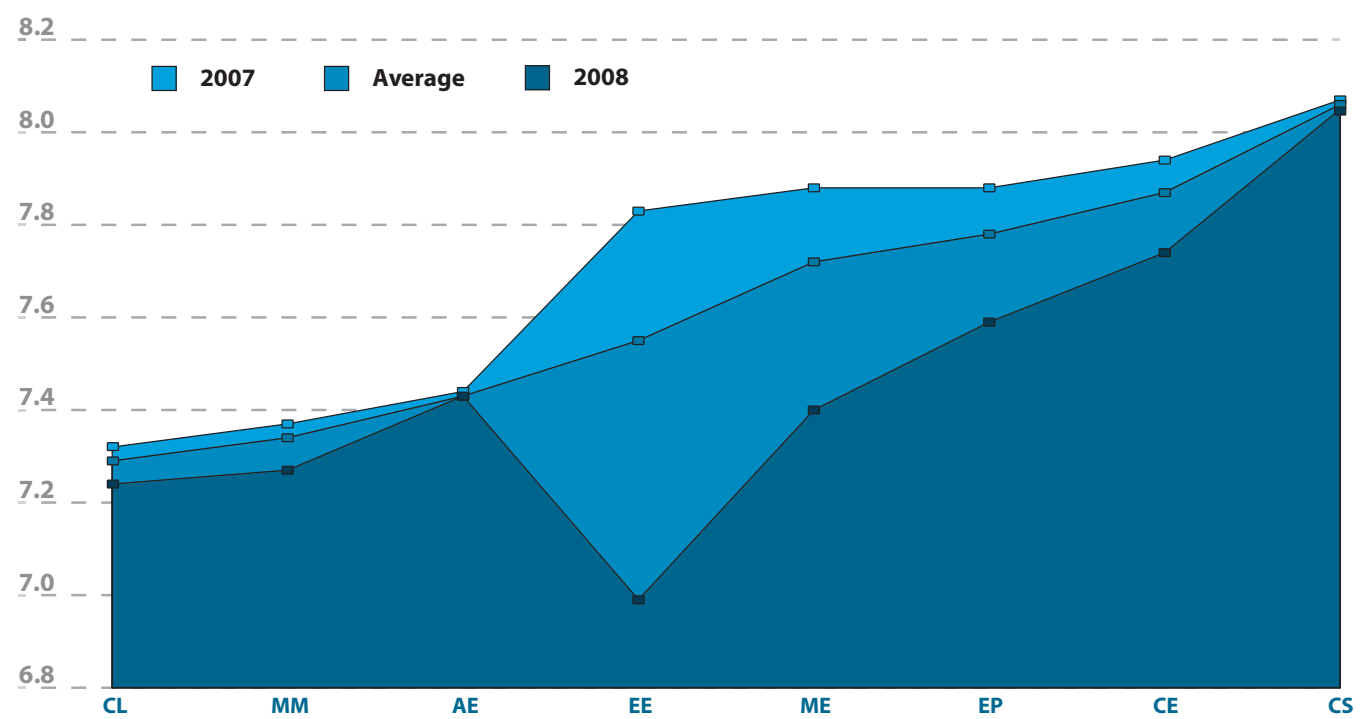
### Department wise current CPI distribution

Graph 1 shows department-wise variation of the average actual CPI of the 2007 and 2008 batches (as of July 2011)

## Average SPI awarded by respective departments (discounting 1<sup>st</sup> year grades)

Graph 2 shows the variation of the average SPI awarded by various departments, calculated by using the actual CPI of the students and discounting from that their CPI at the end of the first year.

The third plot in the graph 2 i.e. the "average" plot has been calculated as the weighted average of the 2007 and 2008 batches in the ratio of the semesters completed till the time when the CPI was calculated (3:2). Graph 2 yields that in four out of eight departments, the average CPI for both batches is almost concurrent, and that there is a substantial difference between the average CPI in the other four.

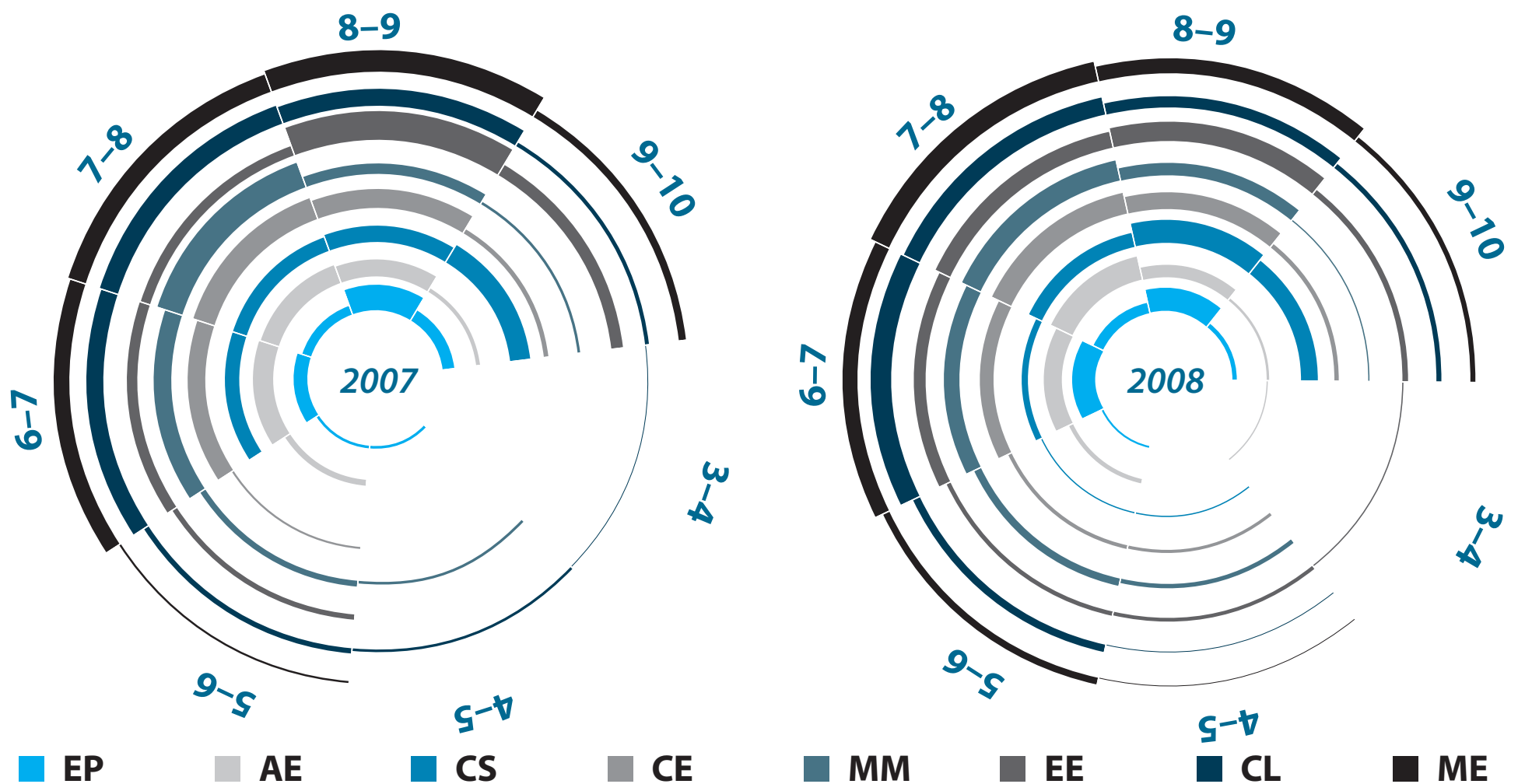


## Average CPI at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year

	2007			2008		
	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> year	End of 4 <sup>th</sup> year	Difference	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> year	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Difference
AE	6.30	7.15	0.85	6.98	7.28	0.30
CL	7.55	7.38	-0.18	7.14	7.20	0.06
CE	6.76	7.64	0.88	6.73	7.40	0.67
CS	8.31	8.13	-0.18	8.34	8.15	-0.19
EE	7.90	7.85	-0.05	7.74	7.24	-0.50
ME	7.46	7.78	0.32	7.48	7.43	-0.05
MM	6.47	7.15	0.68	6.58	7.04	0.46
EP	7.70	7.84	0.14	7.40	7.52	0.12
EN	-	-	-	7.36	7.38	0.02

A cursory analysis of the average freshmen year CPI (of both the batches above) yields that the department average CPI is aligned with the JEE rank cut-off for the branches. After department-wise segregation in the second year, the students are going to be judged with people who are closer in calibre to them than was the case in the first year. This means that it can be expected that it gets more difficult for people in departments like CS and easier for people in departments like MEMS to get good grades as they enter their second year. Thus, a rise in average CPI in departments lower down the JEE rank order (such as CE, MEMS) and a fall in those perched above (CS, EE) can be expected.





It can be seen from Graph 2 that CS and CE dole out grades considerably higher than average and CL and MM are not as generous as others. Though the variation in average CPI might not be major concern by itself but when coupled with the amount of efforts that students are required to put in, the concerns of some students regarding CPI being far from an objective standard become understandable.

It is felt among students that Civil Engineering department does not ask much of its students in terms of effort and still they end up with high CPIs whereas departments like CS require that you put effort and since the students respond positively, they

have high average grades. Some departments like Chemical endow their students with a slew of assignments, quizzes etc and yet don't reward them in a commensurate manner (low average CPI); a reason to complain for many in the department.

During our interaction with students as groundwork for this article, many conjectured that some statistical method of normalization might be a possible solution. Whether it will be better than our current system or not one cannot say but we feel that, in essence, it is not a plausible solution for reasons same as those for which we don't follow a purely relative grading system in the institute. Normalisation would not take

the "Hard work" factor into account and thus, unfair to those to actually deserve it.

These shortcomings have major impact, such as in Minor-allocation and future career avenues (be it campus placements or when applying to universities). The injustice becomes more palpable when companies that come for campus placements implement a CPI cut-off irrespective of the student's department. This biased distribution of CPI makes it harder for the students to get equal opportunities in terms of potential and hard work and thus, unfair. We'd urge the authorities to look into the matter and build a uniform and consistent system across the institute. ■

## STAB merger ■ ABHI SURI, ADWAITVEDANT MATHKAR, ANTARIKSH BOTHALE

From the dissolution of Technic to change in the Tech GC format, the STAB (Students' Technical Activities Body) constitution has undergone many significant changes this year. The objectives were to have well defined duties for each member, greater synergies between various clubs and increased interaction between team members. InsiGHT brings to you the salient points of the new constitution.

### The Merger

- Technic and Science Club have been merged into a single body, headed by a Tech OC as opposed to the old model where Technic had 2 OCs and SC had 1 OC
- Robotics club has been introduced
- Number of institute posts have been cut down from 33 to 17
- STAB has shifted to 3<sup>rd</sup> year managers as against 2<sup>nd</sup> year conveners for individual clubs
- Tech GCs will now be one of high preparation, medium preparation and low preparation events each, and will be conducted by individual clubs

### The positives

On the administrative side, having all the clubs under a single hierarchy facilitates greater coordination between clubs. Having a common head (Tech OC) implies quicker decision-making and an efficient interface between the body and institute administration. Having third year managers also leads to the involvement of a larger fraction of the sophie population, as exemplified by the success of Electronics club last year.

On the activity side, GCs being conducted by different clubs expands the competition's base from just Tech

to 'Science and Tech'. The extensive commitment, monetary as well as in terms of time, required to participate in GCs is a turnoff for many students. Low preparation GCs are thereby introduced, to encourage participation from all the tech enthusiasts.

It is the opinion of a few senior students that having a large number of GCs will kill the enthusiasm of people thereby defeating the purpose of introducing them. However, the policy makers feel that the system has its merits – having a wider variety of GCs would draw in greater participation compared to the previous system where involvement in GCs was mostly restricted to the Tech Secy and a couple of seniors. We feel that the new format is at least as good as the old one, and mostly better. This was demonstrated in the first GC, a low-prep event called 'Electric Jhatka', which saw a large participation from students who hadn't shown up for Tech GCs earlier.

### STAB as a Closed Electorate

Even in the new constitution, the Tech OC can be elected and impeached by the STAB members alone. The current Tech OC is ideologically opposed to general elections because STAB doesn't oversee all technical activities in the institute – case in point, Pratham, Biosynth, FSAE etc. He is therefore opposed to the position of having a GS Technical Affairs. "STAB envisages being a body which aims to promote technical activities as a hobby. At the same time we wish to give other teams such as Robocon, FSAE full autonomy while aiding them with administrative issues. In essence STAB is an umbrella body for hobby clubs", says Chiraag Juvekar, the current Tech OC. ■

## Increases in SMA and Hostel Subsidy

■ SESHADRI G.

Early May saw an increase in both the semester mess advance (SMA) and the hostel subsidy for all students. The increase was primarily because of the increased food and labour costs in the messes. All hostels, irrespective of whether the messes were privately or government run faced this increase.

An increase of Rs. 2000 to Rs. 10000 in the SMA was made since it was found that uniformly in all hostels, the prices of raw materials had gone up and the mess bill of students was more than the earlier mess advance of Rs. 8000.

Hostel subsidies were increased from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 6000. For govt. hostels this money is used to pay 70% of the mess workers' salaries and 30% of the same is borne by the institute. The last hike in hostel subsidy was made some years back while mess workers' salaries were constantly increased; hence there was a sudden increase in hostel subsidy. As for private messes, this amount of Rs. 6000 is credited back to the SMA in bulk. Since, an increase of fees must be uniform across hostels; a uniform increase was made in the hostel subsidy for all students. ■

# The De-Registration Saga

■ AYUSH MISRA, RAHUL LAKHMANI, VAIBHAV PITTIE, YOHAN MATHEW

## What actually happened

Somewhere in the first week of April, as we shuffled between elections, selections, treats, PAF meets, valfi profiles and end-semester exam study sessions (if any such exist), an inconspicuous mail was circulated on Student Notices by our then newly instated Dean of Academic Programmes with the following message:  
*Compulsory attendance for students from the beginning of the semester*  
 "... Students are expected to attend classes right from the first day of instruction in every semester. It has also been decided in this meeting, that students are liable to be de-registered from courses if they do not attend classes in the first week of the semester..."

Given the fact that many students had scored 'official' internships through the PT Cell that violated the conditions of the mail, and the lack of precedence for such a rule, the message came across as extremely non-intuitive and confusing. Due to the ambiguous nature of the mail, and the general chaos that characterizes April in IIT Bombay, this issue went largely unnoticed by most of the student community. Hence, it came as a real jolt in May when another mail was sent from the Dean AP's office reiterating that students who missed even a single class would be de-registered from the semester. Suddenly, there was a scramble to prepone the internship dates and adjust tickets, many of those at a high cost, at least monetarily.

Throughout the months of June and July, the GSAA was stuck seeking clarifications on behalf of students and trying to reconcile student pains with the apparently immovable instructions from the Dean. Somewhere in early July, another mail was sent which stated that a student would not be de-registered if he missed the two days as long as he could prove that he was indeed working during that period.

Forward to a few weeks into the semester. A mail was sent by the Dean AP containing the names of 79 students reported to have bunked lectures during the first week. Everyone on the list was asked to go to the Dean's office and give a reason for their absence. A few days later, another mail was sent, asking the Academic Office to de-register 10 students. Later, we discovered that no one was de-registered this semester, but the 10 students on the final list were given a warning that they would be de-registered indefinitely if they failed to attend the first week of classes next semester.

## Why it happened

While the implementation ultimately wasn't as dire as the imperative threatened, this rule caused a lot of worry and confusion in the minds of a large number of students. To figure out the evolution of this saga of chaos, we spoke with the Dean AP, Prof. Shiva Prasad.

### InsIghT: What was the reason for the inception of the rule in the first place?

Dean AP: Many professors were unhappy with the fact that students would end up missing the first week of a course, which, in their opinion, was a major reason for the lack of interest shown in the subject. They felt that, given the way that they had designed their courses, the first week was an integral part of understanding what the course was about.

### I: Why was such a harsh punishment decided for a relatively mundane issue as this?

D: There was a Senate meeting held where the punishment was decided as De-registration for a semester, but the issue of re-registration of the student was not discussed. If the students and professors are ready to sit down and discuss modifications for this rule, I am more than willing.



### I: This seems like a problem that would have been present for a long time now. Why was it brought into the limelight recently?

D: This year, Techfest was moved from the later part of January to the first week, which coincided with the first week of classes. The professors noticed a marked drop of students attending the first week as compared to the previous semesters. It came to their notice that freshmen were being asked to bunk classes to work for Techfest. Looking at their peers, many others also decided to skip classes.

### I: Couldn't anything have been done about the timings of Techfest, rather than apply this rule?

D: There was a suggestion to fit both Techfest and MI into the winter vacations, but this was rejected by the IBs, citing logistical and staffing reasons, since this would mean conducting Inter-IIT, Techfest as well as MI in a span of less than 30 days.

## Why it shouldn't have happened

The institute has the power and responsibility to maintain a healthy educational environment. Some of the criteria for legislation to be considered fair are:

**Need:** A strong rule must either prevent great harm or achieve significant benefits. While professors are justified in criticizing students that miss the first week purely on the basis that much won't be taught, exceptions could be made for students that end up missing the first week to spend more time at home or to complete an internship. A more nuanced stance recognizing the different motives, and penalizing them respectively is what is required, rather than a "one-size fits-all policy."

**Proportionality:** The punishment should be a morally acceptable response to the crime. De-registration, either from a course or the semester, as the case may be, can cause a great deal of stress resulting from backlogs, with the effects spilling over to other semesters.

**Temperance:** One must ask question as to why this rule was implemented retrospectively, often at great cost to students who secured interns without the aid of the PT cell. Retrospective action tends to be reserved for extremely severe crimes and the overall effects of this rule on students should definitely have been looked at more closely.

**Epistemic Modesty (Open-mindedness):** The institute should make space for differing definitions of a healthy academic environment. Internships often supplement coursework, and even if not, they contribute to all-round development by teaching things outside one's core competency. Furthermore, foreign universities have differing academic calendars which cause projects to spill over into the start of the semester, which may become a deal breaker for students wanting research projects in the future. In such a scenario, the institute ends up penalizing students who are enthusiastic about research by denying them availability to resources and equipment that IIT may not be able to provide in the foreseeable future.

## What should have happened

The primary reason that so many students were unhappy with the rule was because it was announced too late. Ideally, the rule should have been announced during the odd semester, where interns, etc. hadn't been decided and tickets hadn't been booked yet. If the inception of the rule occurred in the spring semester, it should have been applied only from the subsequent semester/year onwards, to avoid the disruption of any plans of students.

The other aspect of the rule that didn't make sense to most was the magnitude of the penalty. The punishment for ragging, which could be the cause for major psychological impact, is a Rs. 10000 fine. While the rule was instituted to enhance academic interest in students, de-registration is, ironically, a move that hampers academic progress, where added stress is a minimum in terms of effect on the student, and even an extension of the degree is not impossible. Even if we look only among the systems in place currently for alternatives, community service, for example, seems like a much better alternative.

And finally, while we may want to punish students that don't turn up in time, alongside this, we should be looking at the various ways in which the student population can be made to understand the importance of attendance, with some emphasis particularly on the first week of classes. This would, if nothing else, provide perspective to many students, and it would be quite likely that at least a few would inculcate the message. After all, isn't prevention better than cure? ■



## Hidden treasures- Amenities Account

■ ANUBHAV MANGAL, SUMAN RAO

With the winds of transparency blowing through the nation, maybe a few answers should be sought closer to home. The ten thousand rupees each student pays as Semester Mess Advance (SMA), how exactly is it used? Who pays for the new projector in the hostel, and who pays for the water cooler maintenance? Why do some hostels have a projector, and some don't? More importantly, who decides this- your G.Sec? Maybe not.

Every hostel has two separate accounts – a main account and an amenities account. The SMA goes into the main account and is used to pay for the mess bill; the entire surplus from this account is refunded back to the student every semester. What most people might not be aware of is that a pre-decided overhead of around Rs 100 (which varies depending on your hostel) is charged additionally per student per month which is debited from the main account into the hostel's amenities account. All capital expenditure, maintenance, servicing and running costs for cultural, sports, technical and social activities is drawn from the amenities account (contrary to a popular misconception that the institute pays for our hostel sports and cult budgets). This account is paid for by students and exists for their collective benefit.

The Institute provides 3.25 lakhs in addition to the SMA that students pay, out of which 1.25 lakhs is used for non-planned expenditure (AMCs, salaries, etc) and 2 lakhs are to be used for planned expenditure (washing machines, projector, etc) This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year that the institute will be providing this additional fund to each hostel.

In some hostels, due to a higher inflow than outflow year on year, funds have accumulated in the amenities account, to the tune of tens of lakhs. How much balance lies idle in these accounts is privy only to the Warden and the Hall manager, in some cases even Hostel G.Secs are unaware of this. Such opaqueness regarding the hostel's coffers essentially means that council's look towards external sources to meet pressing needs. Be it the purchase of additional washing machines or water coolers, we wait (and a long wait it is, at times) for the institute to provide funds for these essential activities, when such pressing matters could be taken care of by the existing funds of the hostel, if they are present.

Also, the budget for the year is decided by the hostel council without knowledge of the hostel accounts' current balances. Budget proposals are made (to the warden) by striking a balance between the hostel's current needs and the budget which the previous council managed to get sanctioned by the warden. Whether the hostel deserves say a new projector or not becomes contingent on the Warden's value judgement of the same, without the council knowing whether the hostel has the extra funds to buy one.

All these issues can only be clarified if hostels themselves disclose balances of their respective amenities accounts. This will also help streamline the exact amount that the hostels draw as overhead so as to ensure that the inflow roughly matches requirements rather than grossly exceeding them, which will prevent an accumulation of funds in the future, as is the case now.

Clearly, unknown sums of money lying blatantly unused in hostel accounts benefit no one. The lack of transparency is especially counter-intuitive when the account in question is paid for solely by students and exists purely for their benefit. ■

# Mid Term Analysis:



Abhishek Agrawal

## hostel

■ MAYANK AGRAWAL

### Completed

- Brewberry cafe set-up; signed a Rs 8 lakhs in-kind deal with "Coke" which will sponsor refreshments in institute events
- Constituted Maintenance and Mess committees to channelize working of hostel councilors; a voluntary Special task force working to track inordinate expenditure and identify loopholes in the system
- Dustbins put up across the institute; LED street-lights installed to remove dark patches
- Temporary rain shelters were set up at all tum-tum stops; registered the student welfare society (a non profitable society) to manage tum-tum service

### In the Pipeline

- New food stalls to come at the Juice Centre/ Ice-Cream parlour, Srusti Dhaba near H1, Coffee Shack and near the H12, 13 and 14 area (For more details refer to the "Food for Thought" snippet)
- Six new tum-tum purchase order sent, will be operational by December
- Installation of Biometric system in hostel mess; usage based model to be implemented for both Govt. and Private Mess

### To be Done

- Acquiring of roti-making machines in hostels to improve quality of food served
- Centralized online complaint management system for hostel related issues to increase accountability
- Open house sessions to commence after midsems; Hostel Affairs website to be re-launched

## Enthusied Yet?

■ MANU SAHAY

Enthuse is a combined initiative by students, faculty and Dean R&D that seeks to promote the spirit of research amongst students of IIT B by providing them more opportunities to enter into research early on during their stay here. In the academic year 2010-11, there were 3 major initiatives carried out under Enthuse – Open Lab visits, Technovation and Human Powered Vehicle. Also, hostel visits were organized wherein professors would elaborate upon their research.

### Last year

**Open lab visits:** In this initiative, 3-4 labs from each department were opened up in slots for student visits. The chief target groups were freshers and sophomores, who gained immensely from these presentations.

**Technovation:** It was an initiative taken with the support of IITB's Technical Council. The main purpose here was to involve students with robotics and



Kunal Mittal

## cult

■ NEHA INNANJE

### Completed

- The IIT Bombay Campus Video, the online video platform for all student activities, has been launched along with Inslght
- New Cultural website launched with online notice board; a fully functional page with Club descriptions will be done by September end
- A deal for purchasing musical instruments has been done with Musician's Mall; likely to be extended to Furtados & Sons
- Fine Art Classes along with cheaper music classes have started; numerous professionals like Anurag Kashyap, Mayur Puri, Ratna Patak Shah etc. delivered workshops

### In the Pipeline

- The SAC library is going to start soon, after removal of the extra material kept in the room
- Information has been collected about half the freshers' cultural inclinations
- The council has compiled the description and rules for all the GCs happening this semester; under discussion on the Institute Cult Comm group

### To be Done

- The Bi-annual magazine is still in the very early stages of development
- Institute Recording Studio not completed yet - expected by November end
- The 'Hall of Fame', which would be having the chronicles of GC and PAF winners, still doesn't have the required infrastructure

technical projects while they still have the curiosity and enthusiasm. By providing pre-internship learning opportunities and open challenges, they sought to encourage freshers and sophomores to make a presentable product which could, in turn be used elsewhere.

**Human Powered Vehicle:** The problem statement was to develop a vehicle that runs solely on human power. The competition was organized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and was held in Bozeman, Montana this year from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of May. A team of 7 students participated in the event for the first time from IIT Bombay. Our vehicle successfully cleared all the technical and safety inspections during the competition, completed all the three race events (sprint, speed-endurance and utility-endurance) and secured 8th position overall, which was commendable as only 25% of the funding was borne by the institute.

### Plans for this year

After an enthusiastic orientation for freshers, faculty visits and talks were conducted in the hostels. An overwhelming response was received during the

# G. Secs Work Review\*



Ameya Sahasrabudhe

## sports

■ BHAVNA GUPTA

### Completed

- Set up a sport equipments outlet for students , enabled Freshies NSO needs purchasing equipment available at reasonable rates
- Part time coaches for TT, Cricket, Volleyball, Badminton, Athletics and Water Polo have been appointed for a 2 month period to facilitate Inter IIT training
- The Sports TA-ship program has been approved by the Deputy Director. Remuneration will be given after the "Coaching" term begins next sem
- The Events schedule (GCs, open events, training camps) has been finalized and is available on the website; Facebook pages launched to increase approachability

### In the Pipeline

- A google information bot and TXTWEB Mobile messaging to quickly answer queries regarding slots/timings/GC schedule, much like txtweb will be up soon
- A room in the New Indoor SAC complex shall be used as the Board Games with provision of Billiards, carrom boards, chess board and foosball table
- Weekend for sports with freshman and mixed events to be conducted next semester along with Institute Sports Night

### To be Done

- Proposal to set up a skating club is on the cards; may be set up at the end of the skating camp (late Oct); no venue for a skating rink has been decided upon
- Availability of Sports equipment (earlier subject to personal possession) on I-card has not been facilitated till now



Ramanjit Singh Anand

## acads (ug)

■ ROHIT NIJHAWAN

### Completed

- The proposed Facad Registration Booklet successfully materialised; eased the registration process
- Additional minor courses were started; write-ups for minors, created for the placement brochure, were made accessible
- Implemented the electronic help desk management system in Dean AP's office; sends e-mail (or SMS) notification to a student when his query is addressed
- Launched the career cell; fundae session on Banking was conducted on 1<sup>st</sup> September

### In the Pipeline

- URA sessions were organized in each department; the app-ing cell database is being prepared
- A proposal for reviving FF grade for final year students, having 1 or 2 backlogs, has been taken up
- A research portal has been structured and the post graduate fraternity is slowly being added to the cloud

### To be Done

- The proposal for online approval portal for all faculty advisers, instructors and HOD's wasn't successfully passed
- Existing PT cell interface still awaits the infra-structural face lift that was promised
- The proposed academic website containing exhaustive academics information has not been launched (Tentative deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> September)



Surinder Pal Singh

## acads (pg)

■ SESHADRI G.

### Completed

- Initiated the Student Companion Programme to assist incoming PG's and PhD freshmen with academic and non-academic difficulties
- Restructuring of the HS-699 course on Technical Research Communication which is underway this semester; course made more practical and application based
- Conducted an Open Session to address the issues (researchers pay, conference expenditure etc) of PG Students
- Concerns of female PhD students allotted single-person-room on twin sharing basis, was raised to the Director; married scholars concerns raised with the HCU Chairman

### In the Pipeline

- Technology Consulting Cell is currently under favourable reviews of the PGPC
- Proposal for Internships is under discussion in the the PGPC; informal discussions with firms have started
- Steps have been taken to increase the number of Awards for research at the Masters students; facing problems because it has been felt that exclusivity is needed for excellent research

### To be Done

- Corporate Relations and Sponsorship Team, to improve corporate relations, is yet to be selected
- TechConnect, which serves to bring ongoing research into the limelight is yet to be re-initiated
- Restructuring of the PG curriculum is yet to take place; will happen after the current PhD review and preliminary work has been started with the help of student representatives

\* As on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2011

program from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July. Post-midsems, another series of open faculty talks are being planned wherein the professors would talk about how one can pursue research in his desired field of interest. These would be followed by the open lab visits.

A research portal has also been setup which can be found at <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~researchbook/>. It aims at being the one-point source for accessing information about student research interests, current working area, publications, patents, contact details and any other relevant details. The portal will also be linked with the project vacancies and the students will be given positions to work in various labs during the next semester and summers thereafter. ■

## Food for Thought

■ SESHADRI G.

Bored of the mess food but don't want to travel far? Institute food joints will come to your rescue. Over the

course of this semester and the next, all the familiar eateries in the institute will be given new avatars. InsIghT digs in.

- Brewberry has already begun in H8 in place of the old Coffee Day Express outlet. Brewberry serves coffee, smoothies, pizzas, burgers, sandwiches and cakes and will soon start serving sandwiches similar to subway.
- By December end, Amul Ice Cream parlour and Ganesh juice centre will be combined into one place. This will have a mini food court with external seating and will serve juices, chaat, sandwiches, parathas, frankies, south-indian etc.
- H13 can expect to see a couple of food stalls which will be serving a range of beverages and pre-processed food as well as fast food options, by the end of November
- The Shrusti Dhaba, opposite H1 will have a new vendor by the end of November and a paved seating for around 40 people.
- The Coffee Shack will be revamped and is expected to serve more options like fruits, sandwiches, pre-processed foods and juices in addition to the

existing food and beverages by February.

In addition to this, all hostel canteens are also going to be re-vamped depending on the decision of individual hostels. The initiative was taken by the Dean SA and the HCU Chairman after a food poisoning case in H3 canteen. According to Abhishek Agarwal (Monty), GS Hostel Affairs, "This is being done because the canteen models are very old and with time, we have increased the menu to such a level where with the current kind of vendors, it is a big failure in terms of hygiene and professionalism. No general solution has been decided for implementation but the HGSC is working towards it. In the long term, a 24-hour food court will come up near H12, 13 and 14 which will have around 6 outlets but would take 3-4 years for completion. The plan in the long run is to centralize the canteens to form two food courts." The quality of food being served currently is being compromised because of the low pricing and no competition for the canteen caterers. Perhaps this new move will improve food quality at the cost of 'Raghu', an increased canteen bill and more items on the menu. ■



# The Student Mentor Selection Saga

■ HARSHAD KUNTE, SAIDEEP SUDI, URMIL SHAH AND INPUTS BY MAHESH TIKONE, ROHAN VADGAONKAR



Illustration by Arpit Agarwal

The Institute Student Mentorship Programme was started with the objective of enabling constructive and positive interaction and mentorship of freshmen, by their seniors. Simply, mentors are people who have been there, done that and now it is their duty to help freshmen settle into their new surroundings.

We interviewed Jhonny Jha, one of the two Mentor Heads of the ISMP in to throw some light on the mentor selection procedure.

## Pre-interview

Process commences with the ex-mentors submitting recommendations of juniors capable of being good mentors in their opinion. After this, nominations are invited from interested third and fourth year students. The applicants are required to submit an SOP and answer a few other questions such as their past experience with mentoring and the qualities that they feel are essential for a mentor.

## Reviews and Interview

Begin phase 2, a comprehensive review process is carried out. Reviews are taken from people from different groups that the candidate is a part of. Usually, all persons who have worked closely with and/or interact frequently with the candidate are reviewed.

During the interview, candidates are also asked for a review of their peers that have applied. Almost all of the candidates that apply to become mentors are interviewed. Only cases that have received significantly poor reviews from most sources are screened out before the interview stage.

The interview mainly comprises questions based on responses to questions in the nomination form and a few case discussions. It's aimed at gauging the candidate communication skills, empathy, attitude and behavioural traits.

## Selection

Finally based on 3 factors – the reviews, application and interview, each person is awarded a score. The ISMP heads along with their faculty coordinator decide a suitable cut-off score required to be satisfied of selection.

If and only if the number of third year candidates that get screened through falls short of the required number, the sophomores are selected as mentors.

Sophomore candidates are considered for interview only on recommendation by an ex-mentor. Free nominations are not invited.

For 2<sup>nd</sup> time mentors, fresh reviews are taken from co-mentors, peers and mentees, however there is no interview. There have been instances where a mentor has not been re-appointed for a second time.

## Right to Information

Details of this entire selection procedure are available with the ISMP faculty co-ordinator – Professor Prabhu, and can be reviewed by any student. For obvious reasons the student reviews are not open to public perusal.

## VIEW-COUNTERVIEW

**VIEW:** I believe that the selection procedure for Institute Student Mentors is quite fundamentally flawed. A lot of good people have not become mentors without any obviously glaring reasons.

**COUNTERVIEW:** At a fundamental level, every candidate is 'good' but there are certain traits which are valued more than others while selecting a mentor. This by no means undermines the goodness of those not selected.

Besides, the selection procedure is open for all to see. 'Your' thinking that some 'good' person is 'deserving', without actually comparing with others, does not make him or her a suitable candidate.

## I am entitled to a view, aren't I?

Yes, but most importantly, notwithstanding what Mentor Coordinators or you think, the impression of a candidate amongst his peers and at a larger level, the institute determines if he will be respected by his to be mentees. We have to understand that ISMP is like a glass house. Even if a single mentor, who is not respected by his peers, is a part of the organization, then there is a fair chance that his mentees would not respect him and in turn the mentor program.

## Anyway, what skills do you think a decent mentor must possess?

Qualities such as empathy, good ethics, and an accessible and multi-faceted personality are definitely are most essential. That apart, a blemish free record, without any disciplinary action, behavioral problems and habits, is a must. There is no CPI criterion; however an inclination towards academics is favorable.

I have two basic doubts

- Are you stating that no past mentor has ever had any questionable habits ever in his life?
- What exactly is inclination towards academics, if it is not to be judged by an individual's CPI?

- To the best of our knowledge – YES
- The CPI is undoubtedly one of the ways to judge a person's academic inclination. In addition- a person's attitude in lectures, his or her class interaction and attendance also are an important indication of how academically inclined a person is. Undoubtedly, peer reviews will give a very accurate opinion on all of the above. We believe that unless a mentor is himself academically inclined he/she will never truly emphasize on the importance of the above practices.

I do not believe the answer to (a) is true, but that is something I believe and cannot prove to you. So let us put things into perspective. As strikingly evident as it is from the description you have given me about your selection procedure, I see a lot of emphasis is being imposed upon the entire "Peer-Review" procedure. Yeah, obviously! You cannot get to know an individual in just half hour of an interview, right? He can easily con you; we want people whose peers have a good image of him, not just the ability to smooth talk his way through an interview.

Rest assured that even if you are someone who doesn't interact much with anyone (seemingly not accessible or multi-faceted), but have maintained a good academic standing, you will most likely be interviewed. However, we expect a mentor to be approachable and outgoing in order to deal with 20 inquisitive freshmen and an even greater number of anxious parents and hence qualify as a suitable mentor candidate.

But, we do not disqualify you on the basis of poor reviews from other interviewed candidates. For people who are known to be an introvert, efforts are made to talk to his best friends, roommates, wing mates, lab batch mates and get to know more about them before a decision is made.

I have a genuine concern – the diverse set of people that you so confidently harp on about may not be as diverse as you think! You are telling me that the entire "reviews are taken from people from different groups that the candidate may be a part of" has in essence boiled down to some seniors who barely know me and a bunch of my so called peers who



might not actually know what I am like as a person. Your claim that enough people have been asked about me, may or may not be entirely true, as you may have spoken to people that you “thought” represents a diverse enough set but in reality, do not.

Apart from this, I believe this process might lead to aggregation of mentors in some specific hostels and restricted to people with common interests. Why do I believe so, you might ask? It is because my hostel did not have as many seniors as mentors already, hence lesser people from that hostel were recommended initially.

Aah! Quite contrary to what the general perception is, the list of peers that is reviewed is much more diverse than you could imagine. So let me detail it out for you.

The first step is to ask ex-mentors to send in recommendations of juniors they think could serve as mentors along with a reason. The application process is thrown open at the same time. This goes on for a month after which the applications are screened. Now, candidates are assorted department wise and hostel wise and their applications are reviewed. People who have not shown enthusiasm in filling in the application or who have blatantly copied the application from other sources are removed from the process.

Clarifying your second point, not getting recommended by any senior mentor does not put you on any lower a pedestal as compared to someone who has been. Both of these candidates will anyway be reviewed by the rest of their peers. This is just another reference point.

The review stage starts with the senior mentors being asked about feedback of people who they have

known personally in some context. The next stage is to ask his department mates about his behavior and involvement in the department. The same procedure is followed for hostel mates, wing mates, colleagues in IBs, partners in technical projects, first year mentors, first year wing mates, current roommate(s), and friends, seniors/juniors/batch mates who know you through cultural activities/technical activities / other extra-curricular or co-curricular activities. So eventually, there is a set of at least 30–40 reviews for each candidate before a decision is taken.

For instance, if a particular senior brands you as “involved in questionable behavioral activities guy”, it is not the final verdict. We do not consider it in our opinion of the candidate till we verify the same behavior from multiple sources. If the review from multiple sources hold true, then you are the “involved in questionable behavioral activities guy” at least for mentor selection purposes. If the reviews are conflicting, we call you in person and try to figure out the reality.

Regarding your doubt that those being asked for reviews, might not be your chums – there is a very small chance that that might happen as the coordinators make sure that the reviews of your best friends, roommates and the group you hang out with are also taken to make the process fair and to get the best positive side of the applicant forward. Unless over 75% of those peers have a bad opinion about you, you will be called for an interview. Those that do not know you well enough are trusted to say so, hence in that way, not affecting your chances of becoming mentor in any way.

Well, I know cases wherein the peers who the applicant actually hung out with, weren't asked for his

reviews. Hence I stress on the point that – reviews may not always be as diverse or as sacrosanct as you paint them to be.

Also, I know several people who weren't even called for the interview, and I find it extremely hard to believe that half the people who applied, all got poor reviews from multiple sources.

As evident from the discussion, the apparent fairness to an individual in the selection procedure depends on the faith he has in the extensive implementation of the peer review system. Maybe to believe in this system one really has to take a leap of faith in the people selecting the mentors. This “leap of faith” is not for me, especially since I do not buy some of the arguments you have put forth. Let us just agree to disagree then.

Well, you cannot possibly know whether reviews were collected from the group he/she hangs out with as they are extremely confidential and people would not like to discuss it with the candidate or with you. Again, I would like to stress that the reviews focus on certain traits and not the inherent goodness of the candidate. So it might be the case that a person did not get good reviews from his peers on the traits that were required.

With such an elaborate and fair procedure, I doubt that leap will be too long. Also, that leap of faith would involve not only the people part of the ISMP but the institute populace in general, as at the end of the day they are an active member of the entire process. ■

Do you agree with these views, Send us your thoughts at [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in) and we will try to get a response.

## The new kid on the Block: **Brewberrys**

■ ANTARIKSH BOTHALE



### RATING

Food	★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆
Pricing	★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆
Service	★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆
Ambience	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Although I missed the free cappuccino that Brewberrys was offering everyone on the inaugural day of their outlet at H8, I was quite eager to try the new place out, and so went there at the first available opportunity. Between that day and today, I have been there several times and my opinion of the place has mellowed somewhat; I am glad that I am writing about it right now rather than back then.

### The Good

While the menu can't be called extensive, it is pretty decent. They have sandwiches, burgers, pizzas, pastas, various kinds of hot/iced coffees, frappés and a few more things like garlic bread and Aloo Tikki. The good thing is that everything is freshly prepared, right in front of you (if you care to look inside or manage to stand there). The pizza is worth the money, I would almost rate it at par with the kind you get at Garcia's or Smoking Joe's, though they are not that authentic. The cheese garlic bread is in fact one of the best selling items here, and at ~40 bucks, it's pretty

affordable and quite filling as well. The Burgers are decent as well, if just a tad bit expensive.

Tea, Coffee and their hot avatars are good value for money. I like my espresso shots and they're fairly inexpensive. So is the iced tea.

### The Bad

I didn't find the sandwiches very great taste-wise, but they were filling enough, which is more than what can be said about their pastas. The fries are as good/bad as they are across most food joints – McDonalds is the only place where I find fries worth the money, but your mileage may vary. In general, the portions are quite small – this includes drinks and foodstuff like pasta, which, though moderately tasty, doesn't quite justify its price tag given how little they serve. As for non-veg dishes, the pieces of chicken are tiny and hard to find.

Another major peeve I have is their high serving time – everything is freshly prepared, so I can understand the high preparation time, but the operations seem to be rather lazy. The guy taking the order doesn't seem to register anything unless told twice, and there's a lot of slacking. The attitude's too laid-back for a food joint where you expect some amount of briskness. Twice, my non-veg order was delivered without chicken! Burnt pizzas have been served to me a few times, and have been replaced promptly free of cost.

The various kinds of frappés and mojitos don't seem worth the cash at all – too watery and not enough Value for Money for something that costs around 45 bucks. The server claims that there are 2 scoops of ice cream in each frappé; the taste seemed to suggest otherwise.

Although the chocolate mousse is good, the other pastries leave a lot to be desired – they seem a bit



Illustration by Mayuresh Patole

tasteless and dry, especially since the previous CCD outlet used to serve awesome dutch truffles at the same rate.

### The Verdict

The ambience will hopefully be better as the rainy season passes – right now, it's just water and mosquitoes. All in all, it looks like a fairly good place to spend some time at or have a small meeting or grab a snack or drink. It offers a definite respite from mess food, canteens and GJC, in fact it is the only place on campus where these foodstuffs can be purchased, but I won't be looking at it for a serious meal till they improve certain items and reduce some prices. ■

This review is the writer's personal opinion

All reviews are done anonymously and paid for by the reviewer

### Future Plans

They plan on introducing WiFi to ease waiting times! They have already introduced combos that significantly bring down costs of beverages when ordered along with food. Also in the works are low cost items (like a cheaper frappé/burger). Subway styled sandwiches and non-grilled sandwiches are soon to be introduced. Also a 24X7 surveillance system will also be set up in the premises.

## MERIT cum MEANS: a matter of ethics

■ ARVIND SINGH, DWARKANATH PRABHU, SIBAPRASAD MOHANTY

IITs welcome students from all backgrounds. There are students who live in mansions and ride fancy cars but at the other end of the spectrum, there are students who cannot afford the fees. Since the latter are equally eligible for IIT education, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the institute itself have instituted various scholarships. The most popular perhaps is the Merit-cum-means or MCM scholarship. It is given to assist students from lesser backgrounds.

Prof. Alok Goyal, Convener, Scholarship Committee says, "Till 2009, the income cap for MCM eligibility was 2 lakhs and the maximum number of scholarships that could be given was 25% of the batch. There were more scholarships available than the number of students below the income cap. So, everyone who applied got the scholarship. This was open only to first year students. The income limit was increased last year to 4.5 lakhs keeping the maximum number of scholarships same. As a result, more students were eligible for MCM and there were scholarships available. So, it was opened up for seniors as well."

It has been observed that students from affluent backgrounds also enjoy the benefits of MCM. On being asked if students forge documents to get a scholarship, Prof. Alok Goyal said, "We ask for Form 16 which is the proof of Income Tax or an Affidavit declaring one's parents income. It would be sad if students indulge in such malpractices to gain a monetary advantage. The aim of MCM is to help students from poor backgrounds. We even allow for a document signed by a village Tehsildar as proof of

income. We would not like to look at students, who are asking for help, as fraudsters. The students who deserve to get a scholarship do get it."

Merit-cum-Means scholarship is awarded @ Rs. 1000/- per month with benefit of free tuition fee (Rs. 25,000/- per semester). In an ideal situation, everyone who needs a scholarship would receive one. But due to the 25% limit and the additional constraint of dodgy applications, some might miss out. To this Prof. Alok Goyal said, "If we feel that a deserving student is missing out then additional funds may be released to accommodate him. He should approach us." But ideally this shouldn't be necessary.

The MCM scholarship scheme is a very noble initiative which has consistently helped thousands of bright students who are not economically well endowed. A factor in the success of the scheme is also the hassle free and lenient procedure of income verification. Sadly, there have been cases of gross misuse of the latitude awarded to the students in terms of checks imposed on their income proofs, due to which a lot of genuine cases have suffered. Not only does this misuse deprive the truly deserving student from availing of what is his right, but it also puts the existence of this entire program in jeopardy. The institute and the government anyway subsidises our education to a great extent and we don't need to unjustly milk the system further when we are in a position to pay, specially at the behest of someone else. We appeal to the good sense and consciousness of the defaulters, if any, and to the student community in general not to indulge in such practices. We owe this to common decency, if nothing else. ■

### Catch 'em if you can

#### How People Defraud the System

1. False IT certificate – Forging/falsification of an IT certificate is easier, and more often done, than you'd think. Sadly, there is no way around this as people who indulge in this practice are committing a far more serious crime punishable under the IPC. This we believe, should be deterrent enough.
2. False affidavit/declaration of income as village tehsildar – This is easier to accomplish as the affidavit is just a self declaration and a village tehsildar is not known to be high on scrutiny either.
 

Hence these documents could be removed from the list of valid documents, but the institute is of the opinion (and rightly so) that this will hurt people who genuinely deserve MCM but come from a rural background and/or don't file returns.
3. Another loophole in the system is that the institute asks for the income proof of only one parent which in the present scenario is not always adequate as the number of parents with both parents as earning members is increasing steadily.

The rationale behind keeping the current system is that the institute would rather have rules that allow all deserving candidates to avail of the scholarship even at the cost of a few cases of abuse, rather than having stringent rules that may harm even some of the genuine cases, which is a sensible argument.

## Perils of Being an Inter-IIT Player ■ MANU SAHAY

The Table Tennis GC was won by Hostel 2 this year, a feat which they accomplished by beating Hostel 12 in the finals. Business as usual, you may think, considering that they have the maximum number of Inter-IIT and Inter-IIT camp players. However, things were spiced up by last-minute restrictions being imposed on the number of Inter-IIT players that could participate from each hostel, a change which left the favourites fuming, the competition salivating and gave us a GC to remember.

A brief overview of the format- In the past years, the TT GC was a free-for-all knockout tournament, wherein each player played for himself, not unlike Wimbledon. Points were awarded for clearing each round. However, this year, in order to promote team spirit over individual achievement, the format was changed. The hostels were divided into groups, (Davis cup style) and each hostel had to play 5 matches (Singles-S-Doubles-S-D) against each of the other hostels in the group. The top 2 teams from each group would qualify for the quarterfinals. These matches would be knockouts, wherein each hostel would again play 5 matches against the other (S-S-D-S-D), and the hostel which won 3 or more of the matches would progress.

Initially, the rule regarding inter IIT participation was to allow one player (who played at the 2010 Inter-IIT competition at IIT Delhi) to participate per team. This had been agreed to in the meeting with the sport Co's. However, on the eve of the TT GC, the sport Co's of the hostels which did not have inter-IIT players registered their protest against the new rule. They proposed that the restriction should be imposed on all players who had ever represented the institute in any Inter-IIT championship or reached the Inter-IIT camp. Their argument being that any Inter-IIT/camp player would inherently be better than a non-inter IIT/camp

player, and would thus grossly disadvantage any hostel not having Inter-IIT players. They also stated that this would diminish the enthusiasm of their players, and argued that even sustained practice could not match the talent of an Inter-IIT player.

As 6 out of the 8 UG hostels teamed up against hostels 2 and 8 (the only UG hostels having more than 1 Inter-IIT/camp player), the GS Sport and the Insti TT secy were compelled to change the rule to – "In the 6 member team list to be submitted, a hostel can have a maximum of 2 Inter IIT/camp players who have ever attended Inter-IIT/camp. Out of these 2, the hostel may play only ONE PLAYER in one match while the other restricted player will have to be the non-playing 6th man. The playing Inter-IIT/camp player, however, may play ONE singles and ONE doubles match"

This rule change, imposed one night before the GC, was met with stiff opposition from hostels 2 and 8, as it virtually ensured that 2 of their best players would not get the opportunity to showcase their talent in the GC. Furthermore, this new rule completely overlooked the blurry boundaries between Inter-IIT/camp players and players who were almost as good as these, but had not qualified for the camp. Several players who were almost at the Inter-IIT level were allowed to play without any restriction, thereby severely hampering those hostels which had a couple of inter-IIT players, but could field only one of them due to the restrictions brought about by the 'Inter-IIT/camp' tag.

After the 1<sup>st</sup> day of play, it was evident that the invincibility of the Inter-IIT players had been grossly over-estimated, with Kshitij, a very good player, losing his doubles match. Based on the closeness of the matches, and the absence of a yawning gap in quality between the Inter-IIT/camp player and a normal player, the GS and The TT secy acquiesced to

the new majority view of allowing a second Inter-IIT/camp player in the knockout rounds. This player could only play one doubles match, and not with the other Inter-IIT/camp player. This format was followed in the knockouts.

The last-minute restrictions had raised some pertinent questions regarding fairness, as, prima-facie it appeared that a player was being punished for being more gifted/ talented than the others by not being allowed to represent his hostel in the GC. Also, if someone had made the Inter-IIT camp but not further, and was not the best player in his hostel, his chances of competitive play would be severely depleted as he was not good enough for Inter-IIT and these rules forced him out of the GC.

This could have had serious repercussions in other sports, wherein hostels without Inter-IIT players could gang-up against those with Inter-IIT players to force rule changes in an attempt to provide 'equal opportunities' to all. However, the GS Sport asserted that the only reason why these restrictions had been implemented was because of the radical changes in the format of the TT GC this year. He further assured that no such last-minute changes would be implemented in any other sport this year, other than water polo, swimming and athletics, where such a cap was already in place from before.

All in all, the GC was a huge success, with tremendous participation from all the hostels. The group format helped build team and hostel spirit, and unprecedented cheering squads were seen throughout the GC, till late at night. It also helped spice up the competition, with a few unheralded teams getting the better of established favourites, thereby increasing the excitement quotient; the only blight being the hasty implementation of a rule that hadn't been given due thought. ■



# Accommodation Impossible

■ ANISH GUPTA, EKANSH BANSAL, NIKUNJ JHA, ROHIT GHOSH

Our Institute is going through a very complex and knotty problem of accommodation shortage which will take at least two years to stabilise. This issue arose because of the reservation rule that came into effect three years ago which led to an increase in the intake of students to accommodate 27% reservation for OBCs without reducing the general category seats. This coupled with the introduction of UG program in the Energy Sciences department has led to the UG intake increasing from approximately 570 in 2007 to over 875 now, without the necessary increase in infrastructure. Insight went on a fact finding mission to delve into the history and investigate the future action plan that was formulated to deal with this shortage.

## Look back

**What was the initial plan 3 years ago to deal with the increase in students? Was doubling fourthies a part of the plan?**

The plans to lay out the new hostels had been a constant concern and in fact, the upcoming hostels 15 and 16 were planned immediately after the reservation policy was announced, but it took 2 years before the construction actually started.

General Secretary of Hostel Affairs, Abhishek Agarwal (Monty) says, "The approval for construction of H15 and 16 was overlooked till very late. Thereafter, the tenders were floated and construction began early this year." He says that the institute had the foresight to realise that if no new hostels come up till the next year there will be no space at all to fit in everyone, yet it took two years before the go-ahead was given. Even after the go-ahead was given, construction started very late. The reason cited for the delays is that the BMC had not approved the felling of trees at the hostel site, without which the project could not move forward.

**Wasn't the problem with girl's accommodation foreseen 3 years ago? If yes, what was the action plan? What happened that such a shortage resulted?**

The girls' accommodation had always been sufficient in IIT and it only became a problem since the last 2-3 years because the percentage of females taking admissions increased disproportionately. As a result, the institute was caught unaware when the problem struck.

## Situation in other IITs

IITs	No. of newly constructed boys hostels	No. of newly constructed girls hostel	Year in which students get single rooms	No. of hostels under construction
IIT-B	1	1 girls hostel extension was built	Final year students	2
IIT-D	0	1 new 7 story hostel completed	4 <sup>th</sup> year onwards	2 boys hostel
IIT-K	1 hostel of capacity 500.	0	Some thirdies are doubled but all 4 <sup>th</sup> years are single.	1 girls hostel & 1 boys hostel of capacity 500 each.
IIT-Kgp	New blocks in 4 hostels & 2 new hostels	Converted a PG boys hostel to a PG girls hostel	Some thirdies are doubled but all 4 <sup>th</sup> years are single.	-
IIT-R	1 hostel	0	Mostly in the 1 <sup>st</sup> year itself	0
IIT-G	2 new hostels without mess and canteen	0	Everyone except 1 <sup>st</sup> year girls	A new girls wing of 60 capacity

## Current Issues

**What is the current scenario of accommodation?**

Currently all the UGs are doubled except for 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Tech and 5<sup>th</sup> year DD students. Special thanks must go to Prof. Anindya Dutta (Chairman, Hostel Coordinating Unit) for going out of his way to ensure single rooms for 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Tech students (as stipulated by the GSHA), which was a very tough task. Among the PGs, all the Ph.D. students are given single rooms from their very first year, typically in Hostel 12, 13 and 14. All the Master's students (M.Tech, M.Phil, SOM etc.) are given double rooms in their 1<sup>st</sup> year and single rooms in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

The situation is far worse when it comes to girls. All UG girls live doubled up, except for 5<sup>th</sup> year DD students. Fortunately, the new building in H10 has big double occupancy rooms, so it's not as problematic as it is for boys. The real issue is that 36 students are living triple in H10 and 17 are living in groups of 4 when the rooms are meant for double occupancy! Moreover, most 2<sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D. students and 2<sup>nd</sup> year master's students have to live double in girls' hostels unlike their male counterparts.

**What is being done currently to deal with the accommodation issues of boys?**

Currently, the construction of Hostels 15 and 16 is on and if one of the hostels is completed by next year,

most of the issues will be resolved. They will have 500 double occupancy rooms each and one will be for UGs while the other for PGs. PG accommodation next year for boys is not a big issue as there are already buffer rooms in 12, 13 and 14.

**What has been done to alleviate the problems of girls? What is going to happen with respect to girls' accommodation next year?**

Temporary rooms have been made available in the old Hostel 10 mess area which is accommodating 36 girls right now. Most PG fresher girls have been doubled in H10 and the vacated rooms of H11. Also, 42 rooms (168 possible seats) in QIP quarters, currently under construction, will be allotted to girl students by January 2012 which will ease the situation a lot. These will continue to be allotted to PG girls until H10's old building has been reconstructed. Girls have been promised 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the rooms in H15 and H16 which will house them temporarily. This will allow demolition and reconstruction of old H10 to create single rooms for girl students (UG+PG) before December 2013 (1.5 years is the projected construction time, after relocation of occupants of old H10 wing to H15/H16). After this, girls will be shifted back from H15/H16 to the reconstructed old H10.

**When will H11 girls be moved out of H8? What is the strategy for that?**

It is completely uncertain right now and depends highly on the status of Hostel 15 and 16 next year. Since, old H10 needs to be vacated for reconstruction, these girls have to be shifted to H15 and 16 and PGs to QIP quarters. Depending on their strength, H8 rooms may be vacated next year if there is enough space for girls. However, if the proposed demolition and reconstruction of H8, after completion of Hostel 15 and 16, is agreed upon, then there will be no need to reclaim the old H8 wing from H11 and it may or may not be retained as a part of H11.

**How much work is left in H15 and 16? What factors will decide the completion of H15 and H16 on time?**

Major construction is left in both the cases and the work is running significantly behind schedule. The progress was marred by the onslaught of monsoons which wasn't really taken into account earlier. The GSHA, Abhishek says, "As of now, the possibility of completion of H15 and 16 by June next year is rather bleak. We are going to come up with an alternate plan of accommodation for next year very soon in case it doesn't get done." With H14, we had learned painfully that contractors may leave associated amenities like lifts, toilets, wiring etc. unfinished till the last moment, which makes living there impossible. If H15 and 16 are only partially completed, he was of the opinion that we may be unable to occupy them.



Illustration by Arpit Agarwal



**The Future****What is the long term action plan for resolution of all issues?**

The institute is considering a variety of options. Once 15 and 16 are done third year students will be able to get single rooms. Thereafter, one wing in the new hostels will be given to girls so that the old building of H10 can be vacated and demolished. It will then be replaced by a multi-story building like the new H10 and will eventually solve all the problems of female accommodation. After the completion of H15 and H16, the institute may consider construction of hostels 17 and 18. On the other hand, Prof. Anindya Dutta (Chairman, Hostel Co-ordinating Unit) and the GSHA are of the opinion that new hostels are not needed. Instead, they propose that older hostels starting from Hostel 8 be demolished and replaced with new multi-story buildings one-by-one. However, the final call on this will be taken only by the end of October.

**Case Scenarios of 2012**

With the increasing intake, the current accommodation is completely exhausted, and if –

- Hostels 15 and 16 get completed by the next year, which is an improbable situation, all freshers will

be sent to these hostels including the old wing H-10 girls. Moreover, there will be the possibility of even sophomores getting a single room.

- At least one of the hostels is completed, then also all freshmen will be shifted to H15 and all the third year students will get a single room. Moreover, the expected time of completion of H16 is only 2–3 months after H15 is completed. So once that is done, old H10 will be vacated and a new building will be constructed in its place. As soon as both the hostels are occupied the institute will be able to provide single rooms to sophomores as well.
- If both hostels are partially completed, then Institute will try to get three floors done in each of these buildings. However, it is unlikely that people will be able to shift in a partially completed hostel because all the associated amenities will not be in place and we may have to wait till completion for relief. Moreover, all fourth year students will be doubled up till then as there are 300 extra UG freshers coming in next year over and above the number of UGs leaving. Similarly, freshers will have to be tripled for at least a semester till the construction is completed. ■

**Shout by Ishan Shrivastava Against Accommodation Apathy**

When reservations were announced, it was promised that the total number of general seats will not be touched. This required an increase in the total number of seats, which Arjun Singh mandated, but unfortunately the infrastructure could not keep pace with these reforms. 3 years down the line, we 4<sup>th</sup> year DD students are still doubled up in rooms initially meant for single occupancy! Even after 3 years in this institute, we shall be forced to share a room, suffering a lack of space and privacy, whereas previous batches have been given single rooms in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Now, I understand that our batch is the worst hit and the situation will only get better, but the question begs to be asked – Why was there such a huge delay in the construction for H15 and 16 actually beginning, when the institute knew 3 years ago about the incremental increase in intake? Why was there so much lethargy from the institute's side with respect to student accommodation? Why are we forced to stay double in our 4<sup>th</sup> year in this hallowed institution whereas all our peers in other IITs are much better off? Could this unfortunate situation have been prevented had the authorities worked in tandem and with sufficient urgency to prevent delays that are so symptomatic of any government work? ■

## Shout by Akhil Srivatsan Against Placement Policies

This year, every student who applied to be a part of the placement process was forced to attend a Value Inc Session to improve his/her communication skills. To make matters worse, students had to pay Rs. 200 to attend the session. Once again, it was compulsory for every student who wanted to get a job to attend this session, i.e. non-attendance meant getting debarred from placements. What are the problems with this? Firstly, the institute must allow for a choice in the matter; what if I don't want to sit for the session in the first place? Secondly, and more importantly, making a paid session compulsory goes against rationality and morality. Why? Because paying for something that I rationally believe won't help me, should not be made a prerequisite for my placement.

But there are other harms attached to this as well. The sheer bulk of the batch of students getting placed is making the process highly inefficient. Students were asked for their preferred dates and many stated Friday as the only day they could make it. Bad luck, said the placement team, and kept their sessions on Monday. Sessions went on till 2 A.M., a time most unsuitable for any form of communication. But worst of all is the time lag between the session and the results. I gave my test more than a month ago and I still haven't got my results. This means that when I finally get my results, I won't be in a position to match the feedback with what I had said. I'd like to reiterate that if there weren't so many people giving the test, then this problem wouldn't have existed in the first place.

The argument for keeping the session compulsory was this - it was only Rs. 200 if the whole batch took the test, it would have been Rs. 500 if only a few people took it. To this I have the following responses. Firstly, I don't see anything wrong with that. If it's a service that costs Rs. 500, then those who want to avail of it must be willing to pay for it. It is unfair to tax those who don't want the service just to make it cheaper for those who do. Secondly, making it compulsory for everyone only makes the process more inefficient and ensures that those who really needed this service can't attain the full benefits of it. So, while the amount paid is lesser, so is the quality of the product. And on a side note, knowing my batch, I honestly believe a lot of people would've applied for the session even if it wasn't compulsory, resulting in the possibility of the session costing less than Rs. 500 even if it wasn't made compulsory.

Unfortunately, I believe that the above case is

only a symptom of a larger issue. On several occasions, incentive points are attached to sessions only to ensure attendance. Now if the session was really useful to students, they would've attended it anyway; the incentive of getting valuable information for a better placement would be enough. The only reason to artificially incentivise them would be that the session itself isn't inherently useful. Why is this a problem? Because the number of incentive points one has is very important. It gives a student more opportunities to apply to a variety of companies once he/she has been placed, resulting in more choice. My freedom to choose which company I get placed in should not be contingent upon the number of the aforementioned sessions I attend. This is especially problematic when incentive points are attached to paid sessions, for instance the TIME session this year which had incentive points even though one had to pay to attend it.

In conclusion, these are my views entirely and are not by any means absolute truths. But, in a campus that has recently been bitten by the democracy bug, it is important that decisions like these are democratised. How? Such that every student can get the most from the placement process. Democracy means freer choice for all. And that, in my opinion, is something the placement team has to gun for.

**Reply from Prof. Ravi Sinha**

The placement process has been designed to provide the best possible opportunity to match recruiter expectations with student capabilities, so that the largest possible number of students can secure jobs. The recruiter expectations are not limited to only technical knowledge among our students but several other skills. During past years, recruiters have observed that language skill, which is accorded very strong emphasis by the corporate world, is not adequately developed among a vast majority of our students. It was also observed that most students are not fully aware of their level of proficiency and the specific attributes that require improvement.

Value Inc. has expertise in assessing language skill, and their proficiency was assessed among the graduating students who were still unplaced after the first round of placement in 2010. These students were very satisfied with the evaluation and found the assessment report very useful in identifying specific aspects requiring improvement. Since even students who are placed during the first phase in December often get lower-trajectory jobs due to inadequate language skill, it was decided to

make the assessment compulsory for all students participating in campus placement. Each student will thus have the necessary baseline information and suggestions for improvement. Most aspects of language skills cannot be improved in the short-term and the Institute expects the students to continue with the improvement process even after their graduation.

However, the students don't have to wait for Value Inc. assessment report to initiate improvement of their language skills. With advice from Value Inc., a list with links to a large number of online language skills improvement modules has been compiled and is available on the placement blog. All students are encouraged to make use of these resources to improve their language skills.

The TIME program is being organized by other Institute entities. We have evaluated the program content and find it beneficial to the graduating students. For this reason, incentive points have been assigned as per Placement Policy. ■

## Leisure Corner

■ ILLUSTRATION BY ADITYA PATIL  
CONCEPT BY MUKUND MADHAV

The recent Anna Hazare rally gave us several innovative chants. This is InsIghT's take on some of the more adventurous ones. ■







**Pappu Fighterwaala**  
Meta roxxx  
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Roll No.: 0800-CALL ME  
UG Fourth Year  
(B.Tech.)  
DOB: 10 Jan 1985

Examination	University	Year	CPI
Graduation	IIT Bombay	2011	4.99

#### SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- Secured an All India Rank of 2297 in IIT-JEE for 2 consecutive years (top 99.25334433%)
- Selected for a Summer Course in EE 101 (1 out of 15 students)
- Awarded a seat in P2 Batch, Bansal Classes; felicitated by Garg Classes for the same
- Active member of "Ma iQ iZz MoRe DaN 80!!!" community; garnered maximum likes on posts

#### POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Campus Ambassador, India ka Samay** (Apr '11 – Present)
  - Nominated by a panel of elite journalists for unidirectional transfer of information from the campus
  - Established, led, motivated, mentored and supervised a 2 tier team of 10 dogs and 6 cows for undercover reporting, a y-o-y growth of 100%
  - Initiated installation of state of the art microphones and camera inside the dogs and cows
  - Instituted a Paid Membership Program; paying students to join different groups to report on the happenings
  - Edited more than .0005 billion posts by students on social media; articles printed on front page
  - Awarded a Post Placement Offer (PPO) for my exemplary performance

#### D00D, Dean of Online Downloads

- Spearheaded the movement of kicking of leechers and under-age campus schools students (Apr '10 – Mar'11)
- Conceptualized and implemented an On-Demand Portal to cater to different needs of users
- Invited for the Pirate Bay Conference; presented a paper: 'Segmented Downloading: Boon or Bane?'
- Selected to lead the Organizational Awards Committee; awarded Organizational Color

#### Campaign Manager, General Secretary Cultural Affairs Runner-Up

- Organized tri-lingual practice campaigns for the candidate with an audience of more than 20 each (Aug'08 – Mar'11)
- Collaborated with 6 election campaigns; increased PR by 70.42%
- Pioneered novel marketing techniques to influence enthusiastic and ambitious junior students
- Mentored 30 freshmen for targeted calling, using appropriate names, departments and accents
- Performance Metric: Candidate Achieved 2<sup>nd</sup> position; went on to become Wing Social Secretary

#### WORK EXPERIENCE / PRACTICAL TRAINING

##### Bin Laden Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd.

- Designed a model for flow of materials from the supplier vehicle to the site of construction (May'11 – Jul'11)
- Implemented flow of materials from the supplier vehicle to the site of construction
- Project resulted in the cementing of a half-basketball ground in H16

##### Computrix

- Co-founded an enterprise for selling of computer accessories to IIT Bombay start-ups selling computer accessories to IIT Bombay students; first year turnover: INR 0.02 million

##### Social Internship

- Supplied water to malnourished undergraduate students of the wing (Aug '09 – Apr'10)

#### KEY ACADEMIC PROJECTS

- Database Search Portal, C++ [Guide: Prof. X]** (Oct'08)
  - Implemented a portal for searching individuals on Orkut; was widely appreciated by fellow students
- Khayega Kela?, Industrial Design Centre [Self-guided]** (Oct '09)
  - Re-invented a cult-classic, 'Gunda' with a 3 minutes 22 seconds stop-motion animation video

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

##### Sports

- Selected for an 8 months long football training program by National Sports Organization for 2 consecutive years
- Adjudged Best Defender, Inter-Room Wing Football Championship for 4 consecutive years

##### Cultural

- Participated in more than 200 events in inter-collegiate festivals and institute open events
- Trained 30 freshmen boys in Salsa; 2 trainees were awarded Best Couple at the end of the workshop

**INTERESTS:** Avid Collector of t-shirts of different organizations; wine connoisseur

PROOFREAD BY ISHAN SHRIVASTAVA

Leisure Corner

## Violence on Campus

ANTARIKSH BOTHALE, ANUBHAV MANGAL, ANIMESH SWAIN, SUMAN RAO, RUSHINA SHAH

### Love gone sour\*

Piyush, a second year student from Hostel 3 taught at a coaching class for JEE aspirants, where he met a female student. As they got to know each other, they started frequently corresponding with each other. When the girl's father, Ramesh, found out about this, he told Piyush to stop contacting her. Ramesh also changed his daughter's contact number. Three months later, she re-initiated contact and they began conversing again.

Only this time when Ramesh found out, he had his daughter call Piyush to South Bombay and had him physically beaten up. Later, using his status as the legal guardian of Shyam, another resident of H3, Ramesh entered the campus accompanied with a few goons. They then called Piyush to a room, where they beat both Piyush as well as his roommate up pretty badly. Meanwhile, Shyam stood outside the room, making sure no one went inside the room and interrupted them.

### Implications

After the incident was over, a formal police complaint against Ramesh was filed. The institute also imposed a DAC on Shyam, following which he was suspended for a semester. The moral issue that is brought up here is that as students, we live in a community. While the security of the institute is assigned with the responsibility of the safety of the students, it can only go so far. After that, we as students are responsible for each other. But in this case, we see a fellow student actively abetting a crime against his peers, while he should have, no matter what his constraints, tried to prevent such an event from actually happening! Such abhorrent actions need to be publicly condemned so as to prevent a repeat.

### Drunken fiasco in Study Room

One February evening, Pranjal, a B. Tech student of Engineering Physics department, saw a commotion in front of the study room. He found out that some people were beating some students up in the study room. By the time Pranjal could get any security to the study room, the perpetrators had absconded on their Pulsar. He later found out that those people had beat up the students and vandalised the study room on the little provocation of being told to stay quiet in the study room.

After rigorously following up the incident with the DoSA, Pranjal found that action against them had been delayed because they were technically not part of the institute. They were related to some of the staff (security) on campus. 6 months after the incident, he found out that the only punishment meted out to them was that they were banned from entering the academic area.

### Implications

After such a grievous offence, why is it that the action taken against the culprits took so long. Also, when they were finally punished, why was their punishment so meagre? The security of the campus is assigned the task of looking after the safety of all the students, then when such blatant violations occur, why is their response so uninspiring? The security office claims that they did not have direct jurisdiction over the miscreants, but such light punishment begs the question- is it a lapse on their part, or does it have to do with the fact that the culprits were related to some security personnel? ■

\*Names changed to protect identities.

**SJMSOM** offers a two years, full-time programme leading to the Master of Management (M. Mgt) degree. This program is being offered since 1995 and had last undergone a revision in 2005. Facilitated by the increased faculty strength, and in response to the dynamic global environment, the curriculum was revised again for the academic year 2010-11, keeping the following factors in mind:

- Increasing importance of sustainable development in economic activities:** With increasing business complexity and depleting natural resources, business organizations are expected to be more responsive to societal and environmental needs. The new course structure is aimed at preparing the students to be sensitive and responsive to these changes.
- Balanced inputs to the students:** A judicious mix of the courses with the objective of knowledge building, perspective giving and skill building in the field of management.
- To increase interoperability for existing program and future programs:** In general, the trend in professional education seems to be towards greater variety and diversity with regard to course and programme offerings.
- Alignment with the Institute slot system:** The existing 4 credit structure makes it difficult for the SJMSOM students to take courses in IIT B and vice-versa due to slot clashes. The revised program structure mostly offers 3 and 6 credit courses to align with the institute slot system.

### Summary of New Credit Structure

- Total minimum credit requirement is 153 credits
- Core courses have 84 credits, electives courses have a total of 48-54 credits
- A significant addition is that of a compulsory collaborative practicum of 21 credits which spans over the second year
- Majority of the 4-credit courses have now been converted to 3 or 6 credit courses to align the SJMSOM with the institute slot system. There has been rationalization of the course contents while doing this credit structure change
- No existing course in the core structure has been being eliminated. Au contraire, a few courses have been introduced like Business and Sustainable Development, Business Ethics
- Four new courses in lab format have also been introduced to hone self awareness and interpersonal skills, business research skills, quantitative skills and communication skills

Courses taught in a business management post graduate program are aimed at building functional knowledge and giving an overall perspective of different business management streams, while developing a skill set which is imperative for business world success. The new course aims to achieve the said objectives via a diverse mix of teaching methods like case study, lecture and discussion, simulation games, collaborative and experiential learning. ■

— MANU SAHAY

**Pitch It!** is an 'Idea Validation and Mentoring Platform' for the students of IIT Bombay launched by E-Cell.

The best 'Pitch It!' entry will qualify directly for the semi-finals of Eureka! This will significantly boost their chances of winning the 'Best IIT Bombay entry' and also for an all-expense paid trip to E-Bootcamp including a trip to Silicon Valley, organised by BASES, Stanford University, California!

Entries will benefit greatly from mentorship by professionals. The first step is to submit your idea at [www.ecell.in/enbclub/pitchit](http://www.ecell.in/enbclub/pitchit) from 8<sup>th</sup> Oct-22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2011. On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011, each entry will be allotted 20 minutes (initial 10 minutes for presenting your idea and remaining time for interaction with the expert panel) ■

# Shout by Ayush Misra Against Biased Room Allocation

■ **INPUTS BY ABHI SURI, ANUBHAV MANGAL**

The charm of the General Championship (GC) lies in the unpredictability of its outcome. This unpredictability comes from a level playing field. The moment this field is tampered with, the charm is lost!

The task of hostel allocation for sophomores has been carried out by the GSHA and his council for many years now. It is expected of them that this process be carried out smoothly and in an unbiased manner. The whole procedure should be independent of factors such as elections and the GSHA's relations with the General Secretaries of other hostels. However there is no system in place to ensure that the process is indeed carried out independent of these factors. The need for such a system can be seen from the allotment that was done last year. Some hostels believed that the allotment was biased and favoured the fresher hostels. The G.Sec of one hostel even wrote a letter to the authorities explaining to them why he thought the allotment was biased and should be redone.

This year we decided to get some facts and figures regarding the allotment last year in order to find out if there was indeed any weight to the G.Sec's claim. We first met the current GSHA who provided us the hostel-wise sophomore room allotment list for 2011. It was clear from the list that no concrete trend was followed. To give you an example, room no. 70-91 from Hostel 2 lie in the same wing. The allocation of the rooms for this wing was as follows:

**70-71 sent to H7**

**72-75 retained in H2**

**76-80 sent to H9**

**81-89 retained in H2**

**90-91 sent to H9**

The following trend was not repeated for any other wing. The interesting fact about the allotment trend for this wing was that they sent the initial 2 rooms and retained the next 4. These rooms were occupied by students who were good at lit/debate/tech. Rooms 76 to 80 (having no Inter-IIT camp/lit/music/dram students in them) were again sent to some other hostel. The next 10 rooms were retained and again these rooms housed students who had taken part in the inter IIT camp, tech and dram events. This is

## Out of the 13 freshmen who were selected for Inter IIT, 11 were retained in their respective hostels.

just one of many other such cases where the rooms occupied by Inter-IIT/ cult/ tech students have been retained by following a trend that was tailor-made just for that particular wing!

Furthermore, the hostel wise allotment data for all the Inter IIT freshmen (a copy of which is with us), just showed how obvious and blatant the bias was last year.

Out of the 13 freshmen who were selected for Inter-IIT, 11 were retained in their respective hostels.

This trend is not restricted to just sports. The hostel wise allocation data for freshmen who were actively involved in the cultural scene last year, given to us by the GS-Cultural Affairs re-emphasizes the bias. The list includes the conveners of various clubs, people who were part of the IIT Bombay contingent at other college festivals like Malhar and Chaos and freshmen who had enthusiastically participated in the various cultural events that were organized in the institute last year.

In cultural activities too, 41 out of 59 students were retained by their respective hostels.

Another interesting fact that we can see from this data is the reluctance of the freshmen to leave their fresher hostels. When we spoke to the HCU chairman – Prof. Anindya Dutta about this, he told us that they receive around 150 applications every year requesting for a hostel change. Most of these applications are for a switch from the allotted hostel to the fresher hostel. This clearly shows that there is a general perception among the freshers created by the hostel seniors that fresher hostels are superior to other hostels, which may be aided by the fact that freshers who are good at sports/cult/tech are retained.

### GSHA Speaks

When we asked the current GSHA about the guidelines they follow while making the allotment, he said that the only criteria that are supposed to be taken into consideration are the following:

1. DD and B.Tech students should be evenly distributed in a particular hostel
2. Maximum no. of departments should be present in a hostel
3. First year wings should not be broken

## In cultural activities too, 41 out of 59 students were retained by their respective hostels.

Further when we asked him about what measures he would take in order to stop such a biased allotment from taking place in the future, he said "The room allocation for the current first year students has been done giving importance to the interaction among the batch right in the freshmen year. Students from all the departments are accommodated in all the freshmen hostels to foster inter-department interaction. In general 6-8 rooms in a row are allotted to a department and even within that the roll numbers are not in serial order. This has been done to facilitate interaction across different regions as the roll numbers are formed according to the JEE Center of the student. By doing so, we have been quite successful in promoting interaction amongst the batch. This would allow for easy allocation (after first year) as whole wing of 12-14 rooms can be allotted hostels together as we have merged students in the first year itself. To ensure transparency, this year onwards the allocation will be done in the Hostel General Secretaries Committee (HGSC) on a broader level unlike previous years when it was only a GSHA affair. This will prevent any bias creeping in, as the HGSC will have a say in the final allotment"

Once the new hostels (H15 and H16) are constructed, retention won't play a role, as H15 will be completely a first year hostel and there won't be any question of retention. Let's hope the new reforms taken by the GSHA and the HCU prevent any bias or favouritism from creeping into future allotments! ■

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**Exchange Blog** Have you ever wondered what it would be like to study abroad, maybe in the US, maybe Singapore?

We have recently launched the Exchange Blog on our website. Hardik Mehta, a 4<sup>th</sup> year Electrical Engineering student is currently on exchange at National University of Singapore. He has written posts that describe the application procedure, the general life there, as well as about the academic scenario. He will continue to write about his experiences; follow his exciting journey @ [www.insightiitb.org](http://www.insightiitb.org)