

Volume XII Issue IV  
Students' Gymkhana IIT Bombay

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### Placements Stats:

A comparative analysis shows us how we're  
faring currently:

**IIT Bombay (at the time of printing)**  
Total Students Registered - 1143  
Total B.Techs Placed - 190/318  
Total DDs Placed - 149/201  
Total M.Sc Placed - 33/111  
Total M.Techs Placed - 217/439  
Total Ph.Ds Placed - 5/74

**IIT Delhi**  
Total Students Registered - 990  
Total Placed till now - 500  
Total B.Techs - 500  
Total B.Techs Placed - 390

**IIT Roorkee**  
B.Techs Placed - 302  
B.Tech IDDs Placed - 61  
M.Techs Placed - 91  
Ph.Ds Placed - 1

**IIT Guwahati**  
Total Students Registered - 610  
Total Placed till now - 251



## Placements Season 2009-10: ALL THAT MATTERS!

Recruiters, Alumni and Placement junta. Sector-wise, we present their take on what could enhance your chances

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I  
— I took the one less traveled by.*

But wait! That's not what we are talking about. We are talking about the road most taken i.e. Placements. To digress from our usual article on placements, this time around, we present a trend analysis of what matters and what does not, straight from the horse's mouth.

**Disclaimer:** This article is purely meant to highlight various factors that recruiters usually look for in candidates. However, this does not imply that these are the only things that will help you get a job of your choice. At the same time, this article does not suggest that Placements are the only option after graduation. We shall be covering other career options in the subsequent issues.

### METHODOLOGY

We have categorized the companies according to their work profiles as follows.

1. **Management Consulting:** These companies provide management and strategy advice to their clients belonging to various industries. Eg. McKinsey & Co.
2. **FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods):** These companies manufacture, supply and distribute consumer goods. Eg. ITC, Proctor & Gamble etc.
3. **Analytics:** These companies provide analytical solutions to businesses using statistical tools and data mining. Eg. Inductis, Opera Solutions etc
4. **Finance:** These companies deal with the management of money. Eg. Deutsche Bank, Credit Suisse, etc.
5. **Coding/ Quantitative modeling:** These companies build software for web applications, financial trading, etc. Eg. Microsoft, Tower Research.
6. **Oil and Gas:** These companies provide oil production and refinement services. Eg. Schlumberger, Shell, etc.
7. **Department Core/Technical consulting:** These companies apply engineering concepts. Eg. Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, etc.
8. **Others:** Eg. Teach for India, Coaching Classes and Universities, etc.

### THE PROCESS:

We have contacted several alumni currently working in representative companies to gain an insight into their selection process. Their responses are presented below.

#### 1. Management Consulting:

For the short-listing process, these companies usually give prime importance to CPI. This is because, in their opinion, CPI is the most definite indicator of your consistency and sincerity over the last 4/5 years, rather than intelligence. They believe that most applicants already have the required level of intelligence. At the same time, they look for people with interests besides academics. A high level of proficiency in these pursuits is always appreciated. As a result of their familiarity with the IIT system, companies who have been regular recruiters tend to look at well-known internships and positions of responsibility (PORs) while short-listing. Furthermore, descriptions of PORs are seldom read in completion. As a result, a student with experience in a less reputed organization or a non-traditional background may lose out.

For the interviews, preparation for case studies is

of utmost importance as most of the work done on the job. Secondly, you must be able to explain all the points in your resume to the greatest detail and justify your choices. Also, it is essential to understand the company's work culture and demonstrate your fit. You must come off as calm, confident and presentable. Needless to say, good communication skills are a pre-requisite.

#### 2. FMCG:

Short-listing takes into account both academic performance and PORs. The weights for each of these varies from company to company. Some companies also use a psychometric test to gauge fit of the candidate with the company's culture. Internships and projects that have a direct connection with the company's work are given due importance. It is important to be clear about your resume points and to present them concisely. Non-traditional experiences may be considered depending on the company's vision.

In the interviews, the candidate is tested on his/her technical fundamentals and his/her ability to apply these concepts in real life. These companies lay a lot of stress on the candidate's fit with the positions they are hiring for. They have often found that candidates are ill prepared, particularly with regard to their technical knowledge. A good idea to approach this would be to make sure your fundamentals are crystal clear.

#### 3. Analytics:

Short-listing is primarily done on the basis of an aptitude test. CPI is also given significant weightage. They look for aptitude in problem solving and data analysis over subject expertise, as these are the core functions in this job.

During the interview, they grill you on your internships and projects since they want to gauge if you can come up with "smart solutions" rather than if you have specific extra-curricular and/or organizational skills. Prior work experience in this sector is considered favorably. They also check if the candidate's aspirations are in line with the firm's expectations, especially given the high attrition rates in this sector. In the past, companies have felt that candidates weren't well prepared for their interviews, so it's good to be prepared.

#### 4. Finance:

The most important criterion for short-listing here is prior exposure and interest in the financial sector. Exposure can be in the form of internships, projects or course-work. Some companies use an aptitude test to gauge the candidate's interest in finance. Secondly, PORs are important, as they are indicative of your ability to work in teams and under stress, which are common in this sector. The "scale of responsibility" tends to supersede the actual work done. A decent CPI is also required. A non-traditional experience may not help in the short-listing process but prove to be valuable in the interview.

Interview questions generally grill you on your motivation towards a career in finance. Puzzles and general financial awareness form an integral part of interview where they test your ability to think on the spot. Of course, standard questions based on your resume are expected.

#### 5. Coding/Quantitative Modeling:

These companies short-list on the basis of a test that gauges the candidate's analytical skills. Sometimes, they also test basic programming knowl-

edge. But these aptitude tests aren't the only criteria – companies also look at CPI and performance in technical and programming contests while short-listing.

Most of the questions in the interview are technical in nature. Depending on the work of the company, they may focus on testing the candidate's thinking process through algorithmic questions or on checking the candidate's proficiency in core computer science or mathematics concepts. Their primary purpose is to evaluate the interviewee's attitude towards solving problems. Communication skills are important as far as you can clearly present your ideas. Companies have experienced that M.Techs are much better prepared than B.Techs. Hence, it's important to revise your fundamentals before the tests and interview.

#### 6. Oil and Gas:

These companies seek candidates who are able to work in inhospitable conditions. Physical fitness is important given that most of the work happens in and around oil rigs.

#### 7. Department Core/Technical Consulting:

For most companies in this category, you must be well versed in what you have learnt over the last 3/4 years at IIT, as the questions in the short-listing tests and interviews are based on these concepts. Most of the work done on the job uses specific engineering knowledge pertaining to the company's field of expertise. Internships in core engineering companies or universities in your field of specialization also matter in getting short-listed. These companies also present a great opportunity to people without great CPIs as they generally look for people who would want to stay long in the company. Hence a low CPI can be offset by good work done in projects and internships.

As far as the interviews are concerned, subject matter knowledge is extremely important and precious little importance is given to extra-curricular activities and PORs. Usually students are found inadequately prepared, so it's good to brush up on your concepts before the D-Day.

#### 8. Others:

This sector presents a lot of opportunities. Hence, as an example, we would cover the recruitment process of Teach For India (TFI). TFI is a leadership program where you are recruited for two years and are placed in a low-income school in Mumbai or Pune. Along with the regular teaching work, you are supposed to undertake a community development project. The work involves skills such as good communication skills, leadership qualities, coming up with innovative ideas and implementing them and being empathetic to people. Hence, great importance is given to leadership experiences in the application process which also requires you to write essays on specified topics.

Also, methods like group discussion and role-play are employed to gauge your comfort level in various situations that may arise at work. This is followed with an hour-long interview, which is mainly to determine your motivation level and how well can you fit in the organization. An open and pragmatic mindset is appreciated.

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**Competitions:**

Every year we come to expect innovative competitions in MI, and this year was no different – namely the solo debate, wordgames in the Newspaper format, semi mime and FAthlon. With the plethora of competitions on offer, MI once again managed to successfully cater to everyone across genres and talents. The Lit, Debating, Photography and FA events were well-liked by one and all.

However, MI found it really hard, once again, to distance itself from organization flaws and shortcomings, perhaps to even a greater degree than previous years. Lots of competitions stood delayed with avoidable reasons ranging from a slow laptop at the film making event that held it up for a few hours to the Quiz Master not showing up for the Gen Quiz to the Bollywood Quiz that was postponed by a day for not being set on time! Feedback to qualified teams was poor, and sometimes non-existent. The drum monitors and keyboard leads failed mid-performance during the Mantra semi-finals and this was just the beginning.

Advanced preparation events like Monalisa 0.9 (Digital Arts) were poorly executed. A highly delayed release of the theme in addition to a poor description of rules did not paint a very good picture of the organizing team. Musical instruments, though promised were never provided at the Street Play heavily biasing the resourceful IITB contingent team. The 3D surface painting event had no defined theme leading to very subjective judging. A surprising exclusion from the list of events this year was the Solo Impromptu Dance event, which has been quite a big draw in previous years. Why was it done? We don't know. But we sure did miss the event.

Overall, MI Competitions left a lot to be desired in both the framing and execution of the competitions. Its high time MI focuses more on refining their organizational issues than their competitions.

**Horizons:**

By the sheer quality of events up on show, Horizons deserved a huge round of applause. The International Music Festival will be etched in our memories for a long time, as almost all the shows having adequate audiences enjoyed

fact that the number of people in the OAT actually got close to the figures MI/Techfest project in the name of capacity was an indicator of the resounding success of the performance. Brilliant last minute crisis management by the organizing team. The Lantern Festival near the end was a welcome addition to the usual fanfare.

Classical and Fusion Nites were as good as always. Raghav Sachar's performance, though, did evoke rather mixed reactions from everyone.

**Informals:**

Informals '09 was high on ideas, with satisfactory implementation, or so we felt. While during previous MIs, Informals had a rather in-your-face profile, which is probably how it is liked best, this year's informals seemed rather low key. Not all of those who come to MI participate in serious competitions. Quite a few of them are here just to take in the feel of the place. Then again, what do you do when you're done with your event? In any other college fest you wait for your next event and probably take in the atmosphere. This is the idea informals was built on, or so we understand. And this year there was no "lukkha spot" as such for jobless people. The SOM Well has been that place in earlier editions of MI, but sadly, not this year.

The events were good-treasure hunt, Sarkar, aM I Talented, Heist, all of them had their fair share of minor and passable glitches. The overall execution was fairly decent. Pre-fest events like Race Against Time and Inglorious Quest got decently good responses too.

**The Everything Else:**

Amongst other things, one could feel the pirate air on campus. The atmosphere, for once, did reflect the theme pretty well. Skulls lying around in SOM foyer, the signpost outside SOM, the posters made up for publicity of individual events, the sun-dial ripoff, the skull cage opposite Gulmohar Café-the atmosphere was done up brilliantly.

Pre-registration was something that was implemented for every event without exception, which often led to lazy insti seniors being unable to register for events. The fact that you required an MI number even for a round of Paintball(for

**M od Indigo 2009**  
Views, Reviews and More!

thoroughly. The Art Fest / Callifest was also well appreciated and managed to attract onlookers. Just for the sake of cribbing though, most shows started with slight delays. Crowd management at a few music shows and the theatre fest was naïve. The Modified Bikes Exhibition never happened and the Sand Sculpture was not upto the hype. The MI Wall was way below expectations and the Graffiti Wall was a complete disaster.

With the variety and creatively diverse events offered like Ta Ra Rum, Legilimency, Juggling with Victor Rubilar, Pulsar Bike Stunts, Shadow Art and Ebru to name a few; we bow down to a breathtaking performance by Horizons this year.

**Pro-Nites:**

The biggest crack of them all was of course Porcupine Tree performing in OAT. Brilliant performance by the band. And contrary to whatever certain well-known people tweeted, the crowd was managed pretty well, without too much of a hassle. What was surprising, though, was that the usually tight security was apparently not so tight. Once inside, one could see lighters floating in the air and weed fumes populating the atmosphere.

Vishal and Shekhar cancelled at the last moment. And in came SEL, at the very last moment. The

once, All you need is a college I-Card wasn't correct) did seem like taking it too far.

The dance event featuring Shahid Kapoor and the queue for passes to the SEL performance on day four saw serpentine queues with the crowd getting rowdy at Convocation Hall which lead to quite a few nervous moments for everyone around. Finding a seat, or even a place to stand inside Convocation Hall was quite a task though, with every man, woman and dog fighting to get one look of "our beloved Shahid".

Also, this year's scheduling seemed near-perfect. A relatively small number of events with the same interest group coincided. And the schedule booklets were also pretty compact and reader-friendly.

And finally, MI, after all these years, introduced a paid event in form of the PT concert. Whether this is a harbinger of things to come, or it was done to accommodate the needs of the moment, it has undoubtedly set a precedent which is difficult to ignore. Organising teams in the following years might look at this as a benchmark and strive for even better bands. Whether that is a healthy trend or not is something most people would love to have an opinion on. But, let that not take us away from the fact that all of us did enjoy PT's performance.

## THE THEATRE FEST, 2010 : SNAPSHOTS, REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

Insight brings you glimpses of the four days that showcased the best plays from the institute and outside

Of all the days, Day 3 in particular was meant to showcase some of the best plays in the institute, written and performed by students. It did just that, covering quite a wide spectrum of both genre and theatre activities in the process.

Rivaldo, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, was the host for the day. In his stand-up acts of 5 minutes duration, he went full circle from 'No. 1 bestselling' books to a financial comparative analysis of marriage and back to self-help books, all of which had the audience in splits. It is rare to see a student audience stay put for a whole 3 hours of theatre performances without a single break, but that's all thanks to our host.

### Khwaab

Unlike all other performances, this was one play this writer had never seen or heard of. From the viewer's perspective, this play was more in the surreal realm; the main character was a writer, struggling, with both life and a novel he was trying hard to complete. The play was quite brilliant in concept and to put it simply some 'very cool stuff' by Vaibhav Chimpa, at the same time, one could say that at IIT, we haven't yet perfected the blackout but we're getting there.

### What's in a Name?

Push Push Sharma strikes once again. This monologue written by Snehil Gautam is easily what one could call a masterpiece. Kataria performs this piece with efficacy that comes only with performing the play some 1000 times and he has in all probability done so. Push Push Sharma is equally entertaining each time you watch it and surely one for the books.

Stand-up Comedy Tushar better known as Moody, held the audience with a hilarious gig in a way that only he can. While on the face of it, it's a done concept (Mahabharata), exploited to the limit by hostels at 'Socials' for years, but Moody brought in his own twist and put up a great show of slapstick comedy.

### Reflections

"Long time, no mime", someone said and that prompted 2<sup>nd</sup> year student Abhishek Lal to prepare one. After nearly three and a half years, a mime-act was staged at IIT Bombay by

students. There were a couple of fresh(ie) faces, all covered in paint of course, but there's hope then. Given the ease with which they pulled off a great show, may be we'll finally see 'Mime' as a regular feature in the Dramatics GC next year onwards.

### 604,800

Written by our alumni many years ago and performed as a part of an initiative to revive old plays, the execution was great and more such plays should be performed at IIT. As has been a feature of some of the best student performances at the theatre fest on the whole, the actors in this plays too were primarily second and third year students.

### Naali ke Kutte

This play won 1st position at the last Main CG Dram. It came 1<sup>st</sup> at Mood Indigo 2009. 'Nuff said. Quick on the action and brilliant on execution this is definitely one of the premier plays we have here.

### What Day 4 Brought With It

The fourth day of theatre fest, saw yet another set of 5 plays staged by theatre enthusiasts of Fourth Wall, the dramatics club of IIT. To begin the day's proceedings, we had a small 10 minutes English act, which was slightly obscure and difficult to comprehend. Though the recent attempts at theatrics in English have not been so well received by IIT audiences (we all remember the 'Pulp Fiction' sketch which had to be stopped midway last year), English plays do mark a new beginning (more a return of sorts, since yester years had many productions in English, even PAFs) for IIT.

The opening play dealt with the topic of futility of religion and its teachings, but fell somewhat short in its effort to put across the story teller's point of view. A poor diction amongst the theatre savvy and a complete lack of understanding of a performance amongst the snooty diction equipped 'East India Company' (damn that description of English speaking lot at IIT has become archaic! Let's bring it back) have always been a deterrent to good English plays coming out in the recent past. And in that respect, the opening act of the fourth day of

theatre fest was surely a pioneering effort (and since the crew comprised of all passing out seniors students, it was not a phoney one for resume's sake too) We hope that in future more English acts are attempted and we get better at them as we go.

### Shatranj ke Khiladi

A rendition of Munshi Premchand's epic story and inspired from Satyajit Ray's classic by the same name, this play was a welcome treat for most people. Interlaced with a few improvised and humor laden bits from many stories, the screenplay ensured that IIT audience who are many a times very restless (there are rumors that there is even a cult which believes that mockery, petty sounds and hoots when executed during a stage performance would help them attain nirvana), did not find a beautiful Hindustani act to be 'lacklustre' (read: *pakau*). There were some aspects to the act which could have been better, but there were probably many more which were splendid (and not being cynical morons or members of the Hooters' Nirvana cult we enjoyed those a lot more).

Employing some good stagecraft and brilliant costumes, the performance did the job well of taking people back into a period that is over a century old. The play delves into the country's past, and highlights through a satire how pure ignorance to something as grave as freedom, and an obsession with the seemingly more interesting (in this case Chess) has marked a major part of our nation's history. Both the actors on stage delivered strong performances and left little to be questioned about the acting prowess of new age IITian actors. Scripted in heavy Urdu and Lucknowi Hindi, the play's dialogues were more than delightful. A mix of storytelling and enactment, interspersed with small narratives went a long way in taking the act to a new level.

A break from the mostly vaudeville and slapstick acts that IIT seems to have specialised in, and a return to the classical form of theatre made for a refreshing experience.

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## PG PLACEMENTS, 2009 - 10 : IS THE GRASS REALLY GREENER?

Let's cut to the chase. When it comes to campus placements, post grad students have a raw deal. Statistics reveal that a mere 45% of registered masters' students have been placed so far\*, which is hardly comparable to the 63% figure for registered undergrads and DD students. We've put together an assessment of why the PG placement scene is as dismal as it is.

### Different Perspectives:

Undergraduate students looking for jobs have various options - those with not-so-spectacular CPIs make up for it with good extra-curricular participation. They're seasoned and trained, and spend their four years at IIT building strong resumes, while making sure they've got their "weaknesses" covered. They work on their communication skills, learn how to market their resumes, how to get their grades high enough for it not to matter anymore - all the while ensuring that they don't look like one-dimensional geeks.

Graduate students, on the other hand, come to IITB after they've had their share of fun as undergrads. Their days of organizing fests and participating in inter-college competitions are over, and they're here almost exclusively for the academic experience. Most grad students put up a very good academic performance - the statistics say so: of the 441 PGs signed up for placements, a whopping 78% have CPIs over 8. The best student, however, faces an unfortu-

nate setback: a recruiter is unable to determine whether a straight-A student has what it takes to represent the company internationally to clients.

### Opinions:

One master's student felt strongly that PGs don't use the short time they have at IIT to the fullest: "During the two years that most PGs have here, very few of them prepare for interviews and group discussions. They're not as 'polished' as the undergrads, and could work harder to make a better impression on recruiters."

The general feeling is that most companies come to IIT to recruit "JEE-cracking undergrads". The only way out, according to one student, is for the placement team to "approach companies exclusively for PGs." This isn't exactly a practical solution; companies may come with only a certain profile in mind, but definitely reserve the right to offer job opportunities to other groups. Focused efforts have been made by individual placement nominees who have got companies to recruit post grads with precise specializations. A few students who wish to remain anonymous feel that there is little or no appreciation for the job of the DPN. "Getting companies to come to IIT is no walk in the park, and the sooner students realize that the better," says one. The placement committee perhaps needs to invest more time in figuring a way out of this mess.

A third and perhaps more serious problem is the

way the system ignores the graduate specialization of students. Unlike B.Techs, M.Techs have narrow areas of expertise, and most of them would prefer a job in a related area. The system, however, overrides this concern. Many students apply for jobs they're not particularly keen on simply to make sure they're not left hanging at the end of the year. If they get one of these jobs, they're excluded from other opportunities that would cater better to their background. This only gives you a whole bunch of disgruntled grad students, all waiting for campus placements to end so they can look for jobs outside.

### Constructives:

What we need, perhaps, is a more organized manner of scheduling placements, accounting for both the sector of a company, as well as the specific job profile on offer.

There's a lot an individual can do to improve his chances. From preparing well for interviews and GDs to taking a little interest in non-academic activities on campus, it isn't hard to gain that edge. The placement team, for its part, can make workshops for such things more accessible. It can also invest more of its energy in making the placement experience a more inclusive one for the institute's senior citizens.

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\*At the time of writing the article, on 20/1/2010.

## MAIN GATE MUDDLES

The situation at IITB's Main Gate has been visibly deteriorating over the past few years, compounded in no small part by the ever increasing vehicular traffic. The road right outside, also known as Sri Adishankaracharya Marg, has been a cause for transportation woes for over a decade now. Being part of one of the most important links between the Central and Western suburbs, this particular stretch is a bottleneck at peak hours, adding a good hour and a half to travel time.

The MMRDA decided to address the issue of connecting the suburbs in the mid '90s with its proposal to develop the Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road. While most parts of the road are nearing completion, the Powai leg still drags along, amidst controversy, unsuitably positioned temples and unyielding shopowners. Thanks to the political red tape this road and its accompanying woes are far from over.

For any student of IITB, crossing this road is a regular hassle. Even at the red signal, vehicles charge along from all directions, and often near-collisions with pedestrians are missed. The dust and smoke are also unbearable. The letters proudly announcing our institute have disappeared into oblivion in the face of utter chaos at the gate, what with half of the wall being broken down to widen the lanes.

Faculty & staff living in quarters adjacent to the new wall are the worst hit. The noise levels in their homes are maddening till late into the night. Moreover, an onlooker from the road can clearly see into these apartments, suggesting an invasion of privacy. Of course, this wasn't how things were meant to be.

Actual construction activity started about four years ago when the World Bank, disillusioned with the lethargy of the officials involved, threatened to pull the plug on the project. Spurred into activity, things have begun changing. For the road widening, a substantial 15m of IIT's boundary area was taken away after demolishing the wall and cutting down the trees that lined it. Not only did we lose our green barrier to the polluted city, but we seemed to have gained nothing for the better.

A good 8 crore rupees was allocated by the MMRDA for a pedestrian subway at Y-Point gate and a vehicular subway at Main Gate but both projects were scrapped. A plan for a soundproof wall by a reputed international company was also shown the door. After repeatedly trying to put pressure on the MMRDA through committees and residents' bodies but to no avail, IIT has now washed its hands off any activities involving the highway.

We have been promised removal of encroachments and a flyover over the pipelines to access the area beyond for our evergrowing needs, in return for turning a blind eye to the highway situation. The looming question is however, are we going through too much now in the promise of a better tomorrow?

The future on many of these issues remains hazy but what is clear is that we deserve better. A respectable entrance, a safe crossover when we go out for something as simple as a pastry and the right to preserve the serenity of our beautiful campus is all we are asking for. We hope 2011 brings the expected end to this chaos.

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# InterIIT 2009: OUR FLAG CONTINU

The 45<sup>th</sup> Inter-IIT sports meet was held from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of December, 2009 at IIT Kanpur. This year's competition saw fierce battles of skill, perseverance and of course anti-cheering. Amidst the gripping, nail-biting finals, sentimentally induced outbreaks of violence and all the brouhaha that is Inter-IIT, IIT Bombay emerged victorious for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in a row, proving its mettle and finesse in sporting activities.

This year, a total of 15 IITs participated, giving IIT Himachal and IIT Indore their first taste of the tournament. However, these new IITs had restricted contingent strength and really failed to prove a point, taking home only the march-past points. IITB was the first to reach IITK, a couple of days earlier than all other IITs, probably inspired by the prospect of an exciting train journey ahead (Not to mention embarrassing eunuch encounters). As soon as they got there, our contingent started practising for the march-past which is a bit hard to digest since nobody ever practises for the march-past. But the hard work did pay and we finished third in the march-past.

## Insight catches glimpses and snippets from the 45<sup>th</sup> Inter-IIT sports meet:

### Cricket - Silver

The batsmen underperformed which was a disappointment considering that they had been in blazing form throughout the practice matches. The team had managed a straight 20-match winning streak during the preparation phase. Our captain, Vijay Meena, pointed out with statistics that save Pranav and Vivek, none of the batsmen managed to total more than 40 runs in 4 matches! On the other hand, the bowlers had a fantastic outing with Tarun Lawadia managing 9 wickets overall including a hat-trick in the opening match. This was the first ever hat trick by an IITB student. Tarun was the highest wicket taker of the tournament. The final match saw a nail-biting finish thanks to some gritty batting by the lower order. Chasing a target of 120 runs against IITD, the openers batted well for the first 6 overs and it looked as if it was going to be 2-in-2 straight inter-IITs for IITB. Then the top order crumbled, leaving the lower order to chase 44 runs in the last 5 overs. Vijay and Shailendra took the team close to the target, and there were 6 runs needed from the last ball with Vijay on strike. Alas he couldn't do a Javed Miandad and the team lost by 3 runs. Overall the silver was more of a consolation since the team really expected a smooth victory considering there were no changes in the core team from last year's squad.

### Badminton - Gold

The Badminton team has been effortlessly winning the gold for the past 4 years. But this year's semi-final had the temperatures rising. We were down 2-1 to IIT Roorkee. The next game was between Raunak and IITR's 1st seed Gautam. Raunak lost his 1st set. Everything rested on the next set. Had it been lost, IITB's triumphant, unbeaten streak would have been a closed chapter. But Raunak held his nerve and came back strongly to defeat his opponent. So here we are, 4 years and not a match lost, which coincides with the Inter-IIT career of Prateek Mittal. This was indeed a fitting end to his outing and hopefully somebody else would get a chance to shine at the big stage next year.

### Hockey - Gold

Compared to the disastrous campaign last year when IITB being the defending champs were knocked out in the group stages, this year's team gave a strong performance and went undefeated throughout. Moreover, they did not concede a single goal, where last year the team faltered due to poor goal keeping. Kudos to the keeper Mohit who ensured that we stepped up our

performance this year. The team had gone all out during the practice and was very motivated. The hard work and mesmerizing display under the leadership of Vijit Jalan proved that last year was a one-off. The semi final against IITM was the most crucial match. IITM was the winner from the other group and had run roughshod over other strong teams, notably IITR. Our team showed great aggression, resulting in a scoreline of 4-0 (all four goals scored by the LF Gurvinder Singh and fed by Pankhil Chedda). This victory served as a great morale-booster for the team ahead of the finals and they comfortably won against IITK 1-0. IITB was cheered by all other contingents, especially due to the untoward incidents which took place during the IITK-IITR semi finals (the match got so tense that the police had to be called).

### Table-Tennis - Bronze

Absence of a professional coach is proving to be the nemesis of our TT team as they had to settle with a bronze for the second consecutive time. We lost an intensely fought semi-final against Kharagpur, with the crowd frantically cheering (and anti-cheering) as the players battled it out in the midst of it all. The bright spot-Neehar Jathar-a freshie, in a long drawn and immensely exciting match, defeated their best player, who also happened to be among the top players at this year's meet.

### Volleyball - Silver

The team exceeded all expectations by reaching the Volleyball finals for the first time in the last four years. It is also significant considering that the team was devoid of its star spikers who'd graduated last year and had carried the team to a bronze medal in the previous year. Therefore this was easily the most motivated performance of the team as flair was replaced by grit and team play gained precedence over individuals. All of the matches, from the first game to the final, went to the decider 5th set. This gives an idea of how determined this year's team was. The semifinal against IITK was a defining moment for the team, as they came back from 2 sets down and beat the strongest team in the competition. This, on top of the intense anti-cheering coming from the spectators, both near the court and on the roof-tops of the hostels surrounding the court!

The final was diametrically opposite to the semis. IITB was leading 2 sets to nil and was poised for their most comfortable victory. Then things went terribly wrong and IITM went on to win. The captain Vipul Vikram felt that the team just lost belief after losing the third set and was also physically exhausted.

### Basketball - Gold

The basketball team put up a splendid show this year. The team showed great character in the final against IIT Delhi when they were trailing by 15 points till sometime in the second half and came back emphatically to win 50-48. It was perhaps one of the most memorable matches in Inter-IIT history with the crowd cheering and hooting their throats out. The captain K. Praneeth Reddy led the team by example scoring 32 points for the team out of the total 50. He has been a trend-setter and a true inspiration for the team. He started his sports career with inter-IIT cricket but switched to Basketball in his second year and achieved the distinction of being the best sportsperson in his third year. He also led the Inter-IIT contingent this year.



The future of the basketball looks promising with presence of 3 first timers in the team. The team also set a new record when they defeated IIT Gandhinagar by 102-22. One more positive that came out of this year's performance was that it was a team effort unlike previous years when the team used to rely on one or two players.

### Athletics

The athletics performance this year was dismal. The team managed just a single gold medal, 3 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals. We secured overall joint 4th position. What makes things worse is the fact that the athletics we have been winning the championship for the past 3 years. The main reasons for this sudden dip in our performance were:

1. Many of the key players from the earlier squads had either graduated or were sitting for placements.
2. Some of the players who were thought to be genuine contenders for gold medals suffered injuries at the 11th hour.

The team consisted of 19 players out of which 9 were freshers (attending the meet for the first time)

### Football - Gold

The football team won its 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive gold medal in Inter-IIT at this year's meet. Bombay's campaign started with matches against minnows, IIT Punjab and IIT Bhubaneswar. Both matches had a 3 - 0 scoreline. The semi final saw a resurgent IIT Roorkee team that held Bombay to a 0-0 draw. The match was decided in penalties with Bombay netting 3 against Roorkee's 2. In the other semis, Kanpur ripped apart Kharagpur in a 3 - 0 victory. The finals, was dominated largely by Bombay, with Kanpur getting just

one shot on goal. We finally won on penalties with the overall score being 3 - 2. Penalties seem to be the preferred method for us to win tournaments. The last 3 campaigns have all been decided by penalty shootouts (3 semi finals and 3 finals). The football team jokingly maintains that this is to let the opponents believe that they actually have a chance. The football team coach, Mr. Aman has a 100% success record. He joined in 2007 and has produced 3 consecutive gold medals since then. Before that, senior players and even pass outs find it difficult to remember when IITB had last won a medal. The players maintain that his influence has been massive and inspiring

### Lawn Tennis

The boys' team had been winning silver for 4 years, but came back empty-handed this year. The girls' team won gold last year but had to face disappointment this year. The courts at IIT Kanpur were slow which our team was not used to. Some influx of freshie talent is desperately needed to lift our team to a podium finish next year.

### Weight Lifting

Kudos to the team and the coach whose assiduous and honest efforts brought laurels once again. We managed a gold medal even though Rakesh Meena suffered an unfortunate injury during the camp.

### Squash Silver, Chess Gold

Squash was introduced as a demo game this time and our team managed silver. It may be converted to a regular game from next year. We also won gold in chess.

# ES TO FLY HIGH



## ANECDOTES:

1. This is from the table tennis semi-final between IITB and IIT Kharagpur. We were 2 matches down and the cheering squad of Kharagpur was large and loud. So, a small group of dudes from IITB started countering all the comments being passed all too loudly by the Kharagpur bunch. One such anti-cheerer was particularly loud and (trying to be) vicious. So we all started targeting him. He happened to be a little thick headed and wanted to immediately settle the deal with us outside 'Chal bahaar, dekhte hain kitna zor hai teri awaaz mein phir'. Unfortunately for us, he happened to be thick armed, broad-cheated, broad-shouldered, et al-from the weightlifting team, as we later found out while counting the number of lives we had left. Targeting one main anti-cheerer seemed to have done the trick for us - as the rest of their contingent quietened down, and started focusing more on the match than on the witty diatribes being hurled at them. We then proceeded to make it 2-2, with our team's freshie defeating their main player, who was also one of the best players at the meet. Sadly for us, we lost the decider 3 sets to 2, with the final ball sailing millimeters away from the edge of the table. And thus concluded the best match of the TT chapter of the meet.

The weightlifter met us outside, after the match - red and breathing hard - but apparently relieved at having won the match finally. Our voice-in charge hesitantly went up to him, summoned his voice up to a mighty...er...whisper 'Hehe, no hard feelings dude!' and he patted him on the back saying 'None at all dude, I'm a fifthie, I've experienced this all before, Haha!'

2. IITG wasn't aware of some of the rule changes done by FIH last year. When 2 of their players were awarded a red card for a game foul, the players tried to rough up the

referee. This instigated the referee to shower them with the choicest abuses, even threatening to take care of them after the match. Somehow the matter was sorted out and play could continue.

3. The Kanpur people were so confident of their football team, that their canteen guy had a bet with us that he would buy the entire team free coffee/tea if we won. Truthfully, in the semis, they ripped apart a strong KGP team 3-0 and looked very strong. The match experience got soured because of other reasons. But the canteen guy did buy us coffee in the end.

4. In a group match between IITK and IITR, IITK needed to score 119 runs while batting second in order to ensure progression to the semi finals on the basis of run rate. It all came down to the last ball of their inning, with 2 runs needed to secure qualification. The batsmen completed the first run and while coming back, the IITK batsman deliberately kicked the ball away and completed the second. Meanwhile, IITR appealed against the foul and the umpire raised his finger. The jubilation of IITR ended abruptly when IITK bent the rules in its favor and the umpire excused himself by saying that he was just calling the leg umpire. The drama went into a higher pitch with neither side accepting defeat. It all came down to a coin toss, and yes, IITK won this time. IITR should have progressed but IITK scraped their way into the semi-finals, where they lost convincingly.

5. The badminton final match was "Prateek Mittal vs. Prateek Mittal" as IITD's baddy captain was also named Prateek Mittal.

6. In the Football finals, several (atleast 50) Kanpur supporters gathered behind Manish Shetty (the

keeper) and started their anti-cheering. Standing behind the keeper is not allowed in Inter-IIT. Their anti cheering was rather offensive and extremely loud, and reached our coach and DOSA. Given that Kanpur had anti -anti-cheering squads that only targeted Bombay students, our coach got very angry with the abuses and went to the main referee (outside the pitch) and demanded they be removed. So he got the game stopped till that happened and well, the DOSA made sure they did move, albeit in a much more peaceful manner. So after a pretty long stoppage, which is unheard of in the history of Inter IIT football, the game restarted. After the match, (which we won), the DOSA fearing similar anti-cheering from us, stopped the entire contingent from celebrating and from anti-cheering and dismissed everyone from the field. It was a full blown argument which resulted in the stopping of the game, which thankfully restarted and resulted in our victory.

## THOUGHTS:

Quite a few people have felt that our facilities are not as good as those at the other IITs. We tried to unveil the truth on this and how we manage to outperform other IITs with such convincing margins if that is indeed the case.

Save the SAC field, our infrastructure is nowhere near IITK or for that matter even IITM. However our field is well maintained and the floodlights make it a heaven on earth for the footballers. The surface is pretty rough though which has led to some serious injuries in the past. The hockey field on the other hand is devoid of suitable lighting and after 6:30 the players find it really cumbersome to handle the small hockey ball. The monsoons make matters worse and about a month or two of serious practice are lost.

Then there are the basketball courts which are in a pitiful state when juxtaposed with the IITK courts. The players felt that even their hostel courts are better than our main courts. We have a single badminton court whereas others have at least three. The volley team lacks quality kits and

protective gear.

The upcoming SAC is expected to address all these issues and take care of all our infrastructure requirements.

Despite all formidable obstacles and challenges, our teams have been creating history. For example, 11 out of 15 records set up in the history of Inter-IIT aquatics are by IITB swimmers. The credit of our triumphant conquests goes to the coaches and of course the laboriously working players. Passion for sports and the regularity shown by our teams is commendable. They practice every day irrespective of the time of the year and that is our key to success. The weightlifters, along with their coach, start going to the gym right at the start of an even semester. The basketball team plays friendly as well as competitive matches in the even semesters too. For instance, they go and attend Inter-College tournaments in Bombay (like the one at VJTI). The badminton team practices pretty regularly throughout the semester too. The TT team, like the basketball team, attends 4-5 Inter-College tournaments in Bombay. The hockey team plays in the professional league conducted by the Bombay Hockey Association and is often blessed with the presence of Indian internationals every now and then, which is a huge morale booster.

The coaches also have a big say in the success. Even though we do not have separate coaches for all sports and the same coach handles more than one sport, they are dedicated to their job and ensure that the students are regular in their practice. The coaches help maintain a certain discipline by ensuring that the students are indeed working on the field and not just idling away their time. We also get separate coaches for water-polo, cricket, football and weightlifting temporarily for the inter-IIT period.

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# ION

in the news

**IFL** is back! Among all that's new this season, betting has been introduced to spice up the managerial role in IFL. Managers can now increase their earnings by betting on the outcome of the match.

Also, FPL or Fantasy Premier League is an online league that has been introduced to give everyone a chance to form their own teams, albeit virtually. Simply put, FPL managers buy players and form teams. Depending on the players' performance, the team value increases.

The opening ceremony, tentatively scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of Feb, at OAT will be held in collaboration with *Staccato* who will conduct "Battle of the Bands". The best band from insti will be playing anthems for the clubs.

Finally, transfers have been made completely online. This has been done to make the transfer process easier and more transparent. Newsletters with the latest transfer gossip and the who's who of IFL will be circulated.

Other important IFL dates, tentatively:  
8<sup>th</sup> February: Bidding Day  
25<sup>th</sup> February: First match day  
16<sup>th</sup> March: Last match day

**Yahoo!** India Research & Development, entered into an agreement with IITB to provide access to a cluster of servers running Yahoo!'s Open Source *Hadoop* software, and Web data, as part of an initiative to support the faculty and students of IITB in their research.

The partnership will support IITB researchers study areas such as advanced searching and ranking techniques aimed at bridging the gap between unstructured, semi-structured and structured data, information extraction and natural language processing.  
*(from the IITB homepage)*

**SARC** (Student Alumni Relations Cell) has come up with Alumni Student Mentorship Program to encourage the relationship between students and alumni.

**Aim:**  
The aim of the alumni student mentorship program is to provide students an opportunity to interact with alumnus on a one to one basis and have career related advice from them.

**Focus:**  
The focus of mentoring will be on career guidance. The alumni will give a perspective of field the student is interested in. Both technical and non technical career choices will be considered. Students will be able to opt for mentors in the field they are interested in and will have a chance to interact with them.

Do not miss the opportunity to utilize the experience of IITB Alumni to help you shape your career.

The program is being launched on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January.

For more details visit <http://www.iitb.ac.in/sarc/mentorship.php>

## The Biswas Committee Report

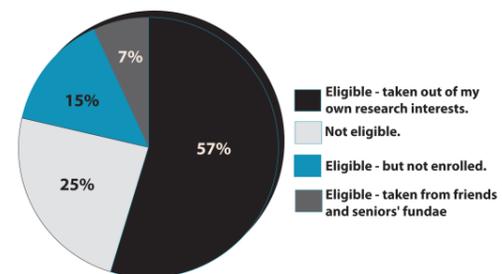
### THE NEW CURRICULUM – HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

The new curriculum now has three batches under its effect. To analyze, *InsighT* decided to take a look at its birth, implementation and effects :

The old curriculum was relooked at mainly because students were confined to strict curricula originally designed in the '60s and their disinterest stemming from this. Recruiters today demand multifaceted individuals having multiple competencies. The Committee came up with this framework to give students the freedom to choose their academic platter à la carte.

#### Minors:

While the idea of flexibility that minors give has been undoubtedly well received, Prof. Ballal, of Biswas Committee, was disappointed to see the narrow spread of popular minor choices. Given such freedom, he had hoped that students would experiment and not just "tread the beaten path." One reason for this could be that the departments offering core courses as 'minor' ones was not helping. Prof Alok Goyal (Civil Engineering Department) was of the opinion that the departments need to put thought and effort into the content of courses being offered as 'minor' in order to make it compatible to a non-core (of that field) individual. This implies 'minor' course material should be more of the interdisciplinary sort. And then again there is the general mindset of students. However, given teething problems, it may be hoped to see a change in trends as the years pass.



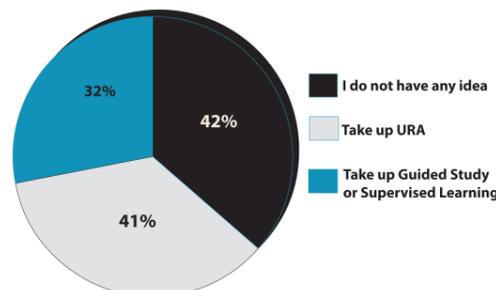
students given the increased time on their hands. Additionally, they firmly believe that the academic scenario is not looking up till the social calendar of students' is trimmed down.

#### At the student level:

To gauge the current awareness level of the students about the academic scene in IITB, *InsighT* conducted a survey among 420 Undergraduate students of the second and third year. The inlaid graph gives an idea of the general awareness of the new curriculum.

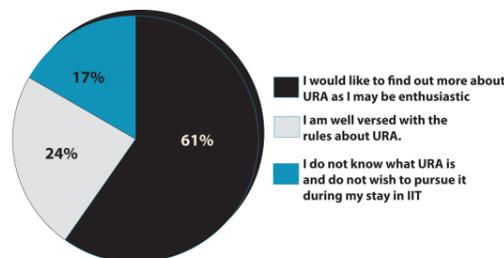
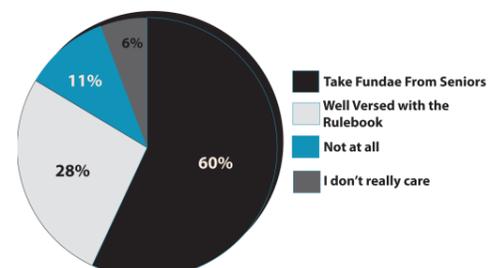
As for avenues for pursuing a particular field of interest, a good 42% of the students expressed that they had no idea what could be done in such a case. More people felt that a URA was the only way to do this, and seemed unaware of other opportunities like Guided Study, Seminars etc. It was disappointing to see that 43 students out of the 420 actually thought that the curriculum was the same as followed by the - '04, '05 and '06 batches.

Regarding Minors, 60% said they had based their choice on their own interests or on suggestions from seniors and batch mates. 60% of them had not enrolled for one despite being eligible. More than 90% agreed that they enjoyed the flexibility and freedom of time.



#### Competency:

It would be defined as the aptitude for application of course matter. By reducing credits (thus, load) and hence, intensifying courses it was sought to increase the competency of the average student. Also, as FFs were scrapped, it was envisioned to entail instructors demanding stricter quality in courses from students. While competency is a non-quantified parameter and cannot be analysed from grading statistic, we spoke regarding this to some professors of each department.



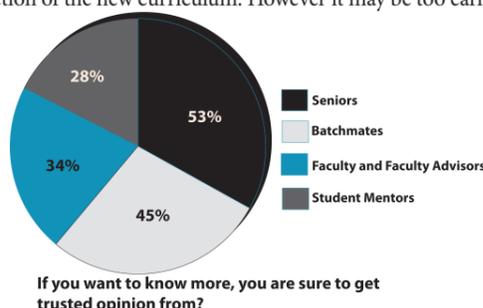
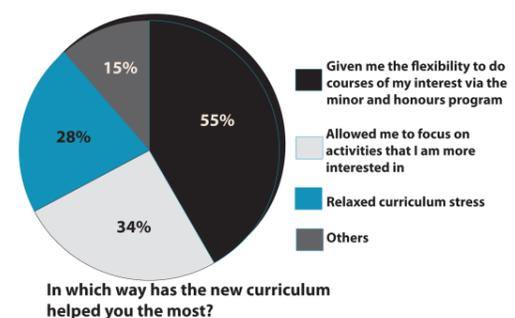
As for whom the students were sure to get trusted opinion from, seniors and batch mates ruled the day. 28% looked up to their student mentors too for information while quite a few (35%) also consulted faculty and faculty advisors.

To summarize, while most people surveyed displayed reasonable knowledge about the new curriculum, awareness about the relatively finer points (basically, anything other than Minors and Honours) was relatively low. This is a cause of concern, because these students are in their 4th/6th semesters now and at a point where they have to take decisions about the sort of electives/seminars etc. that they need to and can opt for.

#### Has the message got through?

It wasn't too surprising to see a somewhat harsh reaction from most professors. All of them unanimously agreed that the interest of students in academics, in general, has declined. IIT has become a "ticket to life" and pointed out the dearth of passion in them. Regarding competency

Coming to the point of competency, which was one of the major objectives of the new curriculum. Most professors are of the opinion that there has been no appreciable change in the competency of students, since the introduction of the new curriculum. However it may be too early to judge.



#### Conclusion :

The new curriculum is indeed praiseworthy and most faculty and students believe that this will go a long way in bringing about a change. It is now for students to be proactive, think for themselves and act, and not expect to get "carried with the flow."

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Another consequence of this change, as professors pointed out, are the logistics involved in implementing the new curriculum. Running the same courses in both semesters (to help back loggers), or even running the same course in multiple slots, puts added pressure on the department and a section of the already overworked faculty.

All put together, professors believe that the students are generally "happier" with the new curriculum. They would want to see greater enthusiasm from

**Campus Capers:  
Junk Disposal Dilemmas**  
Aditi Kulkarni and Rohini



Are you annoyed with all those rusty cycles dotting your hostel landscape? How about cobweb infested, out-of-use computers and other hardware occupying precious department space? Old scooters and bikes near the staff canteen, rotting furniture, ACs and washing machines conveniently forgotten in hostel backyards - where did this junk come from and how do we dispose of it?

**Look Around You:**

Step out of the academic area and a pile of scooters, bikes and cycles greets you near the staff canteen. It is said that when people, tired of seeing this sight daily, complained to the authorities, they were told that the owners of these abandoned vehicles might turn up someday and thus the institute is not at a liberty to dispose of them. With none of the owners ever coming back to claim their property, these vehicles have been rotting away in the rains, year after year.

**Electronic Waste:**

With ever advancing technology, it did not take too long for aging computers and other obsolete electronic items to be chucked out, only to be lying forgotten in some department corner. And this is the case with every department, nay, every hostel as well. Why anybody hasn't bothered to clear up the mess, you wonder, and are informed of a long drawn institute policy to ensure safe disposal of hazardous/non-hazardous electronics.

**The Disposal Policy:**

A visit to the Dean, IPS' office and a chat with Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Head, CC, helped answer a few questions. The institute has a waste management policy in place to deal with all the waste that gets generated on campus whether in the academic area or the residential ones. To begin with, every time non-electronic equipment is purchased by a department, an entry is made in the stock register. Similarly, when the equipment is outmoded, a procedure has to be initiated from within the department wherein the HOD or the concerned faculty brings this to the notice of a survey committee.

The equipment is inspected thoroughly by the committee and is written off by making an entry into the dead stock register. Only after it is written off, can it be scrapped. For selling the scrap annual tenders are floated. The highest bidder is sold the scrap once the scrap is weighed and the prices are agreed upon. The Dean, IPS, Prof. K.V.K. Rao mentioned clearly that disposal of outmoded equipment can happen only after the concerned department initiates this writing-off procedure. Without the department initiative there is little that he can do.

In the case of electronics, only those devices older than three years can be disposed of following a policy similar to above one. For example, once a computer's disposal process is initiated, its parts fall into two categories: hazardous and recyclable. Recyclable parts get taken care of, but in case of hazardous/toxic components (for example those containing lead) a safe disposal mechanism needs to be put into place which can ensure the involvement of only the certified e-waste recyclers, with prerequisite infrastructure for the safe electronic disposal.

**Initiatives & Spreading Awareness:**  
Shalini Tripathi, a member of The Earth Club

at IITB told us a bit more about the e-waste disposal project that has been initiated on campus. After consulting with several institute authorities, members of The Earth Club have formulated an e-waste policy and submitted it to the Director's office. After a test project to ascertain the operational feasibility and economic viability of this project, this policy would be crystallized as the "Institute e-waste disposal policy". Along with the others, Prof. Karandikar is getting this process up and running. It seems there is still hope here.

Coming back to dilapidated cycles, there is a brilliant way of re-appropriating them. The PRO, in a tie-up with a charity initiative called "The Bicycle Project" (read the update in the May-June-July edition of Raintree) repairs these old cycles and passes them to people in rural and tribal areas, who have to walk long distances otherwise.

The case with bikes and scooters that are RTO registered and licensed vehicles is different. Simply scrapping these vehicles registered in someone's name has security implications. Also there is a possibility of the owner coming back to claim his/her vehicle. In this case, after checking the necessary documents and ensuring the owner's identity, the vehicle is handed back. Thus the Security Office holds these vehicles for a period of one year after having been found or deemed as abandoned. But where do they collect all these vehicles for a period of one year? Right near the Staff Canteen!

The ideal procedure for campus authorities is to identify rightful owner of each abandoned vehicle and inform the concerned RTO office. This was tried but was found to be an extremely tedious process. Necessity is the Mother of invention. Once a sufficient number of vehicles gather in the accumulation area, their registration plates are defaced to destroy any possible identification before breaking each vehicle down into several parts and then selling these as scrap. This happens occasionally, the last time being four years ago.

**Other Tidbits:**

What about the garbage scattered all around? A "cattle-proof" dustbin is currently in the design phase and on its way. The Public Health office is responsible for the day-to-day solid waste management process. We found out that segregation of waste into bio-degradable and non bio-degradable works to a certain extent in case of hostels but not really in the residential areas. A biogas plant is in the offing and so are vermi-composting projects with pilots running in the residential areas currently. This is just the start - there is more to garbage and waste-management. Efficient segregation of wastes into glass/ metal/ plastic and recycling of paper are steps that emerge once waste is generated.

It's imperative to strive to be proactive instead of purely reactive. Cutting down on consumption or consuming responsibly is the best way to ensure that our campus remains clear of clutter.

*Eds Note: For more details, please visit the following weblinks:  
<http://www.thebicycleproject.blogspot.com/>  
and [http://www.iitb.ac.in/Magazine/Raintree-May-June-July\\_09.pdf](http://www.iitb.ac.in/Magazine/Raintree-May-June-July_09.pdf)  
**Photograph by Saurabh Tewari***

My FacAd is non-existent. How many times have you said that to yourself? Most of us despise our FacAds, which is if we know who they are in the first place. How did this happen? How is it that the professors entrusted with guiding us and helping us get through IIT have become the most hated professors of all?

Let's start from the beginning. When we came in as freshies, we had a dept. orientation. New and green, we were introduced to the HoD, the DGSec and most importantly, our FacAds. We were told that we should approach them with all our problems and that they would guide us through difficult times. We were told we could approach them anytime with absolutely any problem, be it academic or non-academic. Then all the fun started. Many of us did well in all fields, but many fell behind. While batches prior to 2007 really didn't need their FacAds for anything administrative till the second semester of the third year, the batches post 2007 have been in touch with them from the beginning. What with minors and honours and overloaded semesters. So how has the experience been?

For most, not so good. The most common complaint is that the FacAds don't know the rules. They haven't read the rulebook completely and bring it out only when we approach them for permission. Another common complaint is that the FacAds are uncooperative when it comes to doing something unconventional. But one thing that is common across the board is

**EDITORIAL**

**The Faculty Adviser System:  
Has It Become Redundant?**  
Mohit and Aishwarya

the statement, "During my entire stay at IIT, I can't think of a single time when my FacAd has made my work easier or a time when having a FacAd has proved beneficial". FacAds are considered nothing more than another hurdle in the system. More red tape.

**So, why is this the case? And if this system is so bad, why was it introduced in the first place?**

Well, trying to find the philosophy behind the faculty adviser system has proved to be a really difficult task. But everyone agrees that the system has gotten worse. Trying to analyse the real problem behind this revealed something very fundamental. It is the indifference of the professors within the system. Every professor is assigned faculty adviser duty. It is not a voluntary job. So it is obvious that there are going to be some disgruntled professors, who didn't really want to do this and are being forced to do it. While it is difficult to get professors to say it on record, for obvious reasons, some have gone on to call this duty as dogwork. They justify their indifference by saying that they're already overloaded with research and coursework and do not have the time or the inclination to sit and spend hours helping students who aren't really interested themselves.

**What has this resulted in?**

This has resulted in the FacAds becoming nothing more than additional red-tape in the already inflexible system. FacAds no longer care to keep themselves updated with the rules, they don't care to help students find electives more connected with their interests. Instead, it is left to the student to study the entire rule book, search for the best courses for himself and see if he can take them under the provisions of the rulebook. Once he's done all that, he now has to go with his fingers crossed and try to convince his FacAd to allow him to choose the electives that he has found for himself.

But this is just the easy part. It gets really tricky when the student is in trouble and now needs to go beyond the rules so as to, say, get his degree

in time. Consider this, the rulebook for batches prior to 2007 says the following, "The UG students (B.Tech., Dual Degree, 5-year M.Sc.) may be allowed overloading of one course in the regular semester from fifth semester onwards to clear backlog course(s) with prior approval of the UGAPEC, subject to minimum CPI of 6.5 and time-table slot availability".

**If you think a little about this rule, you'll see how this rule becomes totally ridiculous when it comes to 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Tech students. What are the chances that a fourth year student with one or more backlogs will have a CPI greater than 6.5? And is it right to force a student to stay back a semester just because he/she failed an elective in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester and now can't complete it in the 8<sup>th</sup>?**

When this question was posed to Manas Rachh, Institute Secretary for Academic Affairs, this is what he had to say, "Every rule has a philosophy behind it. It is important to follow the rules, but the reason we have faculty advisers is so that they can understand the philosophy behind the rule and bend it, if needed, on a case by case basis". Most FacAds refrain from using this discretion and applying the rules in spirit as well rather than in letter alone, even if it is for the benefit of the student, for fear of being reprimanded by the HoD or the Dean, who they consider to be equals (as co-professors). No one wants to get a letter from an equal saying that you cannot and should not have done this.

**Are the FacAds the only ones to blame here?**

Not really. While the ignorance of the faculty advisers can be attributed partially to their indifference, we need to accept that the rule book is pretty long and boring, and at times very confusing. Not many students have read it entirely. So maybe an orientation session at the beginning of every year, explaining the new FacAds the intricacies of these rules, the philosophy behind them and most importantly the extent to which they can be bent by the FacAds. Rather than instructing FacAds on what they cannot do, maybe it's time to tell them all that they can do.

**If everyone knows, what's being done?**

Currently, there is a move to tackle the two major problems. Ignorance and Indifference. To tackle ignorance, the ISAA says, a handbook is being made that will explain the rules and the philosophy behind them. To tackle indifference, the GSAA has proposed the formation of a Student Advisory Board(SAB). The SAB will consist of one or two students from each dept. and students can approach their representative with any problems. Each case will be dealt with individually and a report will be made for the review of the faculty adviser. It will contain all the rules pertaining the case and any other relevant information. This will minimize the amount of work that the FacAd has to do and now the FacAd has someone he can trust recommending on the best course of action.

Some amount of introspection is required on both sides. It's sad that the we now think that we're on different sides. The students need to understand that taking courses lightly all through their stay at IIT will definitely not help their cause and the faculty need to think about what to do with such students. The JEE isn't the perfect way to get students into IIT and we all accept it. Many who get in don't have the requisite engineering acumen, aptitude or most importantly interest! So what do you do when a student realizes at the end of his third, or worse, second year that he/she is not interested in engineering? Do we force them to do engineering courses that they aren't interested in and then fail them when they don't perform well, as is expected. Or do we help them pass out of here with bare minimum requirements whilst encouraging them to take up courses that they find interesting? Or is it the whole placement system that needs an overhaul?

# Startups in iitb: The new kids on the block

With help from E-Cell, Inslght presents a list of five promising startups that have emerged in the last year

The past year has seen several startups rise from mere ideas to market-ready business plans. With the entrepreneurial spirit alive and kicking, there hasn't been a better time to create your masterpiece from scratch.

## Vocetap (<http://www.vocetap.in/>)

Co-founded by Vivek Khandelwal, a fourth year student of the department of Chemistry, Vocetap is a startup which provides innovative solutions that help enhance the lives of people. Be it connecting to expert knowledge to get the right advice, finding jobs over the phone or other things that matter to the end consumer, Vocetap is developing them. Its flagship product is the knowledge engine.

Developed using proprietary algorithms and logic, it connects knowledge seekers and experts together over various media, including textual chat or voice. Vocetap has received seed funding from a Singapore based consortium. Vocetap has also won The Red Herring Global Top 100 award held in Los Angeles on the 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> of January. Prior to this Vocetap had also won The Red Herring Asia 100.

## ECPS India (<http://ecpsindia.com/>)

ECPS India is a product driven technology firm focused on the clean technology sector, and is the brainchild of Gaurav Parashar (CSE, 4<sup>th</sup>

year), Sunny Goyal (CSE, 4<sup>th</sup> year) and Abhijit Parashar (IIM Bangalore).

According to Gaurav, "Our niche is to provide IT enabled solutions to Emerging Markets which can achieve unsubsidized competitiveness, are scalable and have short innovation cycles." Their flagship product, Energy and Carbon Productivity Suite is an integrated software and hardware SAS solution to measure, monitor, manage and monetize energy and carbon emissions of an organization/ individual. ECPS suite is benchmarked at 10-15% improvement in energy efficiency and 15-20% reduction in carbon footprint. In the previous year, ECPS India has served clients like Intel, Infosys, Jain Irrigation and more.

## Vertosys

Vertosys is a clean technology start up working on micro-wind projects started by alumni and students of IITB and SJMSOM. Their innovation is in bio-inspired low-speed airfoil design for the vertical axis wind turbines (VAWTs).

VAWTs offer great advantage as they operate independent of the direction of wind and turbulence without the need of any yawing or other complex mechanism. Such turbines can be put up at places with average wind speeds > 5m/s in rural, remote, coastal, hilly regions and provide

1300 units of electricity annually. At present, Snehal Nimje, 5<sup>th</sup> year student of the Aerospace Engineering department handles the aerodynamics and manufacturing; Prashant Kumar, 4<sup>th</sup> year student of the Mechanical Engineering department handles the mechanical design and integration.

## Juggernaut

Harsh Jhaveri, 3<sup>rd</sup> year student of the MEMS department has been successfully organizing cricket and soccer tournaments in Ahmedabad under the banner of his Sports Events Management Company, Juggernaut. Juggernaut has been organizing six-a-side cricket tournaments in both cricket and soccer. With innovative concepts and customized service for the participants, Juggernaut has been trying to capitalize on the growing field of sports. Juggernaut has been instrumental in the rise of football at the local level in the Ahmedabad.

Inspired by Juggernaut's success, many other football tournaments have taken place kicking off a domino effect in the field of football. Juggernaut holds the Gujarat state record for maximum participation in both cricket and soccer tournaments with over 3000 players having played in one or more of the six tournaments held so far. Juggernaut's tournaments have received wide-scale publicity in leading

English dailies like The Times of India, DNA, Ahmedabad Mirror, radio coverage on 94.3 MY FM and national TV coverage on UTVi.

## An Idea Involving Luminous Tiles

Viraj Shah and Edul Patel, 4<sup>th</sup> year students of the MEMS department have started up with a company that makes luminous tiles. Presently, they are working on developing a strategy to commercialise the product.

Most solar solutions are based on using the energy from the sun and converting it to electricity. Very few concentrate on the simple fact that this energy can be used to produce light directly instead of electricity. The idea of luminous tiles is a revolutionary one and is based on the above thought.

Their company has developed a method to blend a specially designed light emitting powder to form paint, tiles and stickers. These products then act as batteries of light, storing the light at periods of high illumination and releasing it in times of low illumination. They can be used as excellent lighting solution in open areas such as roads, highways, etc and for disaster management purposes in malls, complexes and societies.

Eds Note: E-Cell's next event, ESummit, takes place on Feb 7, 2010. Do register early for the event on their website to hear from entrepreneurship's been-there-done-that guys.

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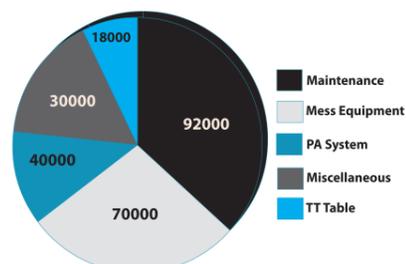
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# HOSTEL FUNDS ALLOCATION : USE IT OR LOSE IT?

Are the hostels wisely spending this money to address their pressing needs? Inslght finds out

Started as an initiative in the previous GSHA's tenure, the hostel grant proposal saw hostels getting additional funds, with the money sanctioned towards meeting growing maintenance costs for much required basic amenities and other requirements. The budget for most of the hostels was Rs 2.5 lac as planned and Rs 1.5 lac as unplanned money. Hostels that were comparatively more recent and in better condition got slightly lesser amount, viz. hostels 12 and 13.



## The Process

Three primary players are involved in this process: the hostel council, the hall manager and the Hostel Co-ordinating Unit (HCU). On behalf of the inmates, the hostel council identifies areas that require immediate attention. It was found that the crucial ones which arise are mess, maintenance and lounge equipment. Such as Geysers, Water coolers and Dryers. However, there were only a few instances where a GBM was held in order to get the consensus of the students. The formalities are generally handled by the Hall Manager. Three quotations are received from various bidders and usually the lowest bidder is given the contract.

## Our Analysis

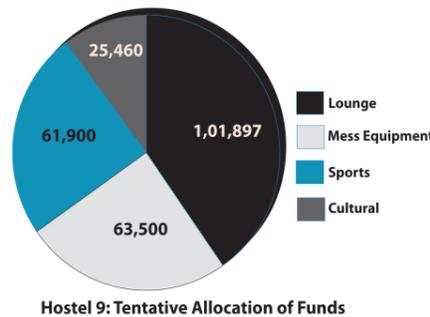
The Insight team has been able to lay its hand on the tentative list and distribution of funds

from a few hostels for this year. Some of the hostels such as H1, H3, H8 haven't formally decided on the allocation. Also, some the G.Secs of certain hostels like H12, H13 and H6 were unwilling to share the data. Three major areas identified were Maintenance, Mess and Sports. Unlike last year, there has been little transparency in getting the information from the usual sources, viz. the hostel councils.

Common items have been pooled in together, and for the sake of analysis some amount of specificity has been omitted. Proportional allocation to maintenance, mess and sports was 56%, 22% and 22% respectively (of the total budget). Maintenance includes lounge equipments, water coolers and renovation expenditure. The detailed lists are available with us.

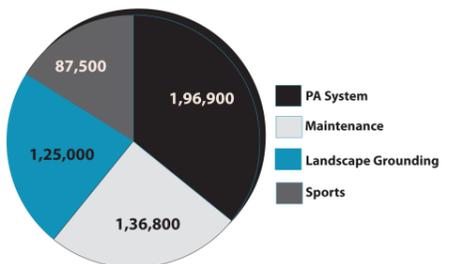
## The Issues

The effect of the sudden windfall has been compounded by some issues which the G.Secs and councils are facing. The time span within



which the hostels have to decide is relatively less given the fact that hostel maintenance/renovation is a crucial aspect as it is done only once a year. "The funds were announced somewhere in November last year and with the council being almost inactive during December we basically had a little less than two months to come up with

our shopping list", says Vishrut, the H2 G.Sec. The original deadline of January end was then extended by a month.



Hostel 11: Tentative Allocation of Funds

With only a general demarcation idea of planned and unplanned money, the onus is now on all the councils to decide and allocate money soon. Another underlying problem is the fact that unspent money can't be kept aside for a rainy day. The rationale is that if money is not used, that means the requirement is not immediate and thus the money is not needed, as allocations are only made for necessary and much needed facilities. Although most hostels have conducted council meetings in this regard, they will have to tread carefully when it comes to differentiating between optimal and haphazard spending.

With the recent directive to increase the intake of students in IITs, the grant is being viewed as a lifesaver. It provides a shot in the arm to the moderate hostel funds to accommodate the increased strength. It also gives the student council more freedom to spend according to needs.

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