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## THE INSTITUTE RULEBOOK : READERS DON'T DIGEST?

As a follow-up to our previous issue, *InsighT* presents its analysis & highlights what the student body thinks

To our surprise, when we first looked at the Institute Rulebook, we didn't expect to come across an ancient manuscript. We decided to carry out a survey to find out what students in the institute thought about this queer fact and the seemingly incontrovertible contents of the Institute Rulebook.

### The Questions

In our survey, more than half of the students didn't expect a typewritten version. A majority of them believe that there is a lot of room for change. A few suggestions that came in have been reproduced below.

- Rules in connection to disruption of network/proxy services and LAN Box tampering are not covered in the rulebook.
- The rules regarding a member of the opposite sex staying in the hostel room beyond a permitted time are, again, rather vague and not explicitly mentioned.
- While a few are of the view that the demarcation line considering initiation of a particular Disciplinary Action (Major, Intermediate or Minor) should not be left to the interpretation of DAC, a major chunk of the students believe that the blur therein provides scope for leniency.
- The ranges of fines must be clearly defined in cases of being caught with illegal drugs and/or alcoholic beverages. The rules and fines in cases of repeated offense and a person's unclear involvement should also be specified. Fines on smoking in public places should also be delineated.
- Another issue highlighted was the absence of a clause stating that a person's parents/guardians would be contacted in case of a breach of discipline. Whether to add such a clause is debatable considering most students here are adults. But if such an action is being taken, and presently it is, then it needs to be added to the rulebook.

We also had some startling discoveries made by some of our readers who read the fine print of the manual. In the section on Rights in Disciplinary Action a point that was made is regarding communication skills. Not everyone is phenomenal at arguing for themselves and a smooth talking offender might

get off the hook, while an introverted, timid student might be incorrectly implicated.

Regarding the Declaration signed by students, every fresher is made to sign a document while admissions which says "I will not join any coercive agitation for the purpose of forcing the hands of the authorities to solve any problem." This grossly reduces the ability of students in protesting malpractices, to just writing articles and making petitions, even in matters which might gravely hurt their future.

'Authorities should not indulge in parenting' is a sentiment many people shared. Students should be allowed to decide what is best for them (as long as it is not any unlawful activity). Another problem was with the draconian anti-ragging rules. Last year, people were fined indiscriminately to set an example. Jovial senior-freshie interaction should not be construed as ragging and punished likewise, especially if the freshmen involved are fine with it.

**Most students were of the view that these rules should be explained, streamlined and given to freshmen at the beginning of their stay in IIT. An obscure document that the general public is unaware of should not be the road to take when it comes to something this important.**

### The Answers

We put across the asked questions to Dean of Student Affairs, Prof. Prakash Gopalan. According to him, the rulebook is not being revised because it is low on priority. The institute enforces only a few more rules in addition to what the IPC does. Rules on using motorized vehicles and drinking alcohol majorly constitute the additions.

Again, it is not possible to list out every conceivable offense, although he did welcome the idea of the student body suggesting changes and considering it as a starting point. Affirming that in his tenure only 3 or 4 cases have been referred to the Disciplinary Action Committee (DAC), he addressed one of our prime concerns,

saying that members on the DAC are intelligent enough to see through glib talk and will not punish an innocent in any case.

Prof. Gopalan's retort to the declaration restraining students to protest publicly was that it is only meant to discourage people from taking recourse to violent means. People are free to complain to any of the Deans or Director in individual or collective capacity. And if they are still dissatisfied, they can always protest peacefully. He warned however that if a person takes the protest outside the institute, he shouldn't expect any help from the institute if the law holds him guilty. Also, a copy of the Rulebook is given to the students at the time of admission. So, there's no need for orientation of the same.

One important thing though, is that all the cases related to possession or consumption of drugs will be handed over to narcotics department from now on and no leniency will be shown. Also was evident his displeasure on reminding that students have been complaining of differential treatment as far as fines related to consumption of alcoholic beverages are concerned. According to him, such an allegation is entirely baseless.

Earlier people were fined and that used to be the end of the story. But it was seen that it didn't have the desired effect. So, parents were informed of their offspring's conduct as well. Regarding the stringent anti-ragging rules, he admitted that there has been only one case where few seniors have been fined for ragging despite the denial by the juniors.

Given the widespread lack of knowledge regarding the rules on breach of discipline, an explanation/orientation of the same for the students (old and new) should be seen as a must-do. That, though, only after the rules contained in a revised rulebook have been agreed to by the student representatives. And that, after the rulebook has been revised and actually handed over to every student.

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Mood Indigo and the Institute Cultural Council collaborated to hold the first ever IITB parliamentary debate competition. 92 debates were crammed into 3 unforgettable days, spanning from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009.

34 teams from across the country participated in this tournament. The core adjudication team comprised some of the best debaters in the world. Ms. Sharmila Parmanand from Philipines, multiple all-Asians champion, was the chief adjudicator. The other three members of the core group were Sidharth Chauhan, Uttara Gharpure and Prithvi Kapoor, all very highly respected members with solid credentials in the Asian debating community.

The competition comprised of 5 knock-out rounds spanning over two days followed by the "break". Based on scores the top eight teams went through to the quarter finals. This was followed by an exciting round of semi-finals and finals. The quarters and semis were knock-out rounds.

All of the top debates were video recorded, and the video clips are up on our LAN. The

## THE IITB NATIONAL DEBATE

*InsighT* looks back at three days of intense debating on a national stage

semi-finals and finals in particular had a large audience. In fact the finals had to be conducted in the LT because of the large turnout, which was a pleasant surprise and a bad shock for the organizers in equal measure!

The winner of this competition was the NLS A team comprising of Prabhat Mukherjea (popularly known as 'Baba' for his legendary debating skills) and Shivam Singh. The runner up was NLS B. Both teams were highly appreciative not only of the organization of the entire tournament but also of the themes and motions given to them. The finals were an exciting finish to a glorious 3 days of fabulous speeches and outstanding logic.

The debating scene in the institute has so far been limited to only a small section of people. But with the advent of the national debate more and more people have caught the fever. Another boost to the scene was given because many of

our students participated in this debate as adjudicators - an adjudicator being someone who gets to judge a debate.

Almost everybody from the institute cleared their adjudication test and became either Chairs or Panelists right from the beginning itself. Based on their verdicts and how well they explained their decisions to the teams, adjudicators were marked. Many people did extremely

### Motions from the debate:

**Finals: THBT the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 was a mistake.**

**Semi-final #1 : THW decriminalize incest.**

**Semi-final #2 : THBT anti-pornography laws are undemocratic.**

*Note : THBT: The house believes that, THW: The house will*

well in this. In fact, in the final, Akhil Srivatsan was one of the 7 panelists selected.

One of the members of the core adjudication core - Ms. Uttara Gharpure, deserves the bulk of the credit for that, for having trained most of the adjudicators for several Sundays preceding the tournament.

Thus, the tournament has served two purposes. First, it has served as a brilliant precedent for many such tournaments in the future. Second, it has improved the debating scene in IIT and now many people are eager to start debating and have got a better understanding of the nuances involved.

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## DEPARTMENT AMBIENCE COMMITTEES

Every department in the institute has various committees headed and convened by Professors of that Department. For the uninitiated, there are academic committees like the Dept. Undergraduate/Postgraduate committees handling the courses and syllabus for Undergrads and Postgrads, or the faculty search committees that hunt down suitable candidates to fill the prestigious post of an instructor in the campus. There are the others like the Seminar/Colloquium committees or the Labs/Computer Committee.

And then there are the non-academic ones like the newly inducted Ambience Committees.

The Ambience Committee has made its presence felt in only a couple of departments so far but it's very inception makes one wonder about what possible improvement it could bring about in a department.

A little probing has shed light on the exact functioning of this committee.

From Lab and Toilet renovations, and posters highlighting the research undertaken in the department to placing flower pots outside faculty rooms and the maintenance of the lawns/pavement outside the departments, a lot comes under its jurisdiction.

While some people who express wonder at inclusion of such a committee might feel that its duties can be easily undertaken by the Infrastructure or Space/Planning committees collectively, there are those who might very well be in favour of its inception. They have a valid point. Professors who spend close to 25 years here (on an average) and the Ph.Ds/Research Scholars who have come to look upon the department as their home, have a right to work in a relaxed and restful environment. All those for whom the sofas in the Lounge room become beds, the lawn outside the Department is the first thing they set eyes on early in the morning, an Ambience committee is a necessity.

The only concern felt is that this may very well turn out to be a new addition to the possibly ever growing list of committees. A quick survey elicited the information that each Department has about 12-15 committees (with a chance of a few others being in the pipeline). If the mushrooming of committees with no set plans in place and miscellaneous but vague plots keep cropping up, we'll be forced to draw an analogy with the government where various ministries are planned just to accommodate a chief minister's impressive retinue.

A need for new committees, not unlike Ambience, might be felt by various departments. But before they chalk out a plan, a serious thought should be put into making up for the lack of basic indispensable committees like Infrastructure and Budget which are most likely absent in some department or the other.

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## THE ENERGY GC : $E = \text{HOSTEL} \times (\text{GC POINTS})^2$ ?

A bold new initiative to reduce each hostel's power consumption -- did it work? Inslght digs deeper

Building on previous initiatives like Prayaas, Techfest came up with the novel idea that is the "Energy GC" today. Teaming up with TechniC for managing logistics and for effective implementation, Techfest launched this competition in September and it will continue till the end of November. At the end of every month the power consumption of each hostel will be observed. The one with the least consumption will be declared winner and awarded 4 points. There will also be a runner up with 2 points. Only in November [last month], these points will be 5 and 3.

The Department of Energy Science and Engineering had conducted an energy audit some time back. The Energy GC rulebook was drafted keeping this audit in mind and quite a few of the suggested measures are from the audit itself.

Hostels are allowed to implement any methods-from load shedding, power cuts, simple switching off of lights to devising light dimmers, timer circuits for automated turning off and the like

On talking to the Maintenance Councilors and Tech Secretaries of hostels we got some valuable insights. Most feel that it is more of a Maint GC rather than a Tech one - most measures in place include switching off lights and fans when not in use. Up until now, there has been no sign of innovation with respect to energy saving devices from the hostels. Most of them, being in run-down conditions themselves, cannot hope to purchase solar water heaters and other such expensive energy saving equipment. Devices like dimmers and motion sensors can be a feasible option - as is already being implemented by one of the hostels.

### Energy GC standings

For the month of September, the hostel-wise positions, along with percentage reductions are as follows:

1. Hostel 6 : 14.57%
2. Hostel 2 : 13.46%
3. Hostel 8 : 12.71%
4. Hostel 12 : 12.06%
5. Hostel 13 : 11.16%

Some councils have gone so far as to convince their hostel shops to sell only CFL bulbs. Some have labeled switches in bathrooms and corridors. The general emphasis is on imposition of fines and putting up of posters for awareness. This is indeed the GC with the largest participation - entire hostels participate and the aim is to conserve such a mindset - GC or no GC. Events like earth hour and load shedding in hostels have been proposed but none yet have implemented due to disagreement among residents of most hostels

There are some logistical difficulties as well. Construction work is in progress in some hostels and electrical devices such as welding torches are wired into the respective hostels' circuits. The units of power not consumed by hostelites, hence, must be subtracted from the hostel unit count. The official line is that this may, at max, lead to a delay in displaying the results, but that it can be factored in.

Many are of the opinion that the period of monitoring should be an extended one to ensure the value of the message. A few felt that some tech events to build innovative devices should be organised. Effective devices arising out of this venture could even be collaborated with E-Cell's initiative, E-garage which brings together tech enthusiasts and entrepreneurship enthusiasts to give potent technologies a commercial edge.

An overall view of the GC would be that it certainly is making its mark on the minds of everyone - it has almost become second-nature to some to switch off lights and fans on leaving the room. Certainly it is lacking on the technical front with minimal hostels implementing intelligent techniques due to scarce funds and abysmal conditions, giving maintenance representatives sleepless nights.

Our verdict-it is most certainly a good initiative, especially given the coupling that has been done with the General Championships. Maintenance Councils in the process, though, have become unwilling beasts of burden.

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**Eds Note :** We have already covered the Energy Audit in a previous issue, Inslght 11.1. To read more about the Energy Audit, please visit : [http://www.esi.iitb.ac.in/Energy\\_Audit\\_of\\_IIT\\_campus.pdf](http://www.esi.iitb.ac.in/Energy_Audit_of_IIT_campus.pdf)

## ALL THESE POWER CUTS!

Surprised by the number of power cuts we've been experiencing this semester? Inslght looks for answers

Our institute, even during the height of power crises all around, has ensured uninterrupted power supply to its students. The present semester, however, has seen more power cuts than probably the last three years put together.

One of these happened to occur on the night before a midsem, causing considerable heartburn amongst all. There have been interesting spinoffs caused by these too - an exponential increase in the number of mafia sessions, last minute postponements and subsequent preponements of midsems, study sessions at CCD and Subway and so on. We hunted for the heart of the matter.

### The Reasons?

Mr. B.K. Sahoo, Executive Engineer (Electrical) reveals that the major power failure during midsems occurred due to a failure of jumpers at the main substation situated behind the workshops, and maintains that the situation was dealt with utmost promptness, given the circumstances. The main power house, he informs, is almost 50 years old now and there are plans for a complete overhaul.

### The Proposal

The proposed power house, which will be an indoor one as opposed to the outdoor substation currently, is set to be the best among all the IITs. He cautions that to facilitate this, there will be several planned power-cuts in the coming year.

Also, the present substations will be upgraded and two new substations (at Bio-school and Convention Center) will be constructed to accommodate for the power demands of new hostels (14&15) and the Lecture Complex under construction, taking the substation count on the campus to 13.

However, amidst all the developmental work, he ensures that adequate measures will be taken to have as less power interruptions as possible.

### Current Statistics

The institute, at present consumes around 20 lakh units of electricity a month. However with the recent spree of new construction on campus, the authorities predict that our power consumption will double, to 40 lakh units. This is going to take our campus' power bill to a whopping Rs. 3 crore a month by July 2011.

The buzz about energy conservation and initiation of the Energy GC by Techfest and TechniC, couldn't have come at a better time. Initiatives like these will go a long way in curbing electricity wastage and reducing load on the infrastructure.

However, some departments have been found wasting power blatantly as reported by the Electrical Maintenance Division. Thus in order to bring about a real difference, there is a strong need to kick-start a similar movement in the academic areas as well. Also, new and innovative ideas to save energy need to be put into effect.

### A Few Suggestions by Mr. Sahoo

For starters, he feels that the institute should not collect the "electricity" component of the fees as a lump sum, and says that some mechanism should be made to take a specific sum. For example: each student pays the electricity component of his fees according to the per capita electricity consumption of his own hostel or department.

A news body like Inslght, he opines, should carry a small column mentioning the per capita power consumption of each hostel, or at least, the hostel with the maximum and minimum

**Some lesser known facts:**  
The institute buys power from Tata Power, and our main power house is 50 years old.

The institute has 11 existing substations, of which 5 are to be augmented. These 5 are:

**Main Power House**  
H1 Substation  
ACRE  
H12/13  
KReSIT

The new contracts for the augmentation of the substations are to be given to Siemens, which has been asked to take up preventive maintenance i.e. each substation will be switched off for 2 days a year for maintenance work.

The map of the institute's distribution system can be found at: [http://www.iitb.ac.in/deanpl/images/EMD/HT\\_Electrical\\_Distribution\\_SLD.pdf](http://www.iitb.ac.in/deanpl/images/EMD/HT_Electrical_Distribution_SLD.pdf)

values on a sustained and regular basis. This would maintain the levels of awareness created by infrequent initiatives like the Energy GC.

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# THE FACULTY SITUATION : UPDATED

Sustained protests by IIT faculty against the notifications of the Sixth Pay Commission have been making headlines for over a month now. Insight backtracks

6<sup>th</sup>:

The All India IIT Faculty Federation (AIITFF) resolves to continue pushing for principal demands after a day-long fast.

8<sup>th</sup>:

The Minister calls for a meeting with representatives from all IITs to express the Ministry's disinterest in yielding to the Federation's demands. He also states that MHRD would correspond only with Directors for further negotiations.

16<sup>th</sup>:

MHRD releases a new order which supposedly incorporates the demands of AIITFF. Further scrutiny reveals that the new order only has minor irrelevant changes sloppily made, stirring the protesting faculty.

16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>:

As preparation for a Federation Meeting in Kolkata on September 21, IIT Bombay conducts a survey of faculty members to gauge mass opinion on the clauses of Pay Commission 6. It is understood that a whopping 89% of faculty found the new structure incompetent to attract new talent.

## September

Faculty from the seven old IITs went on a token fast on Teachers' Day to make the MHRD take notice of their objections. The events that transpired during September are shown in the timeline below. The Kolkata meeting called for another day long token fast on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

### A Whiff of Hope:

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, Kapil Sibal says in an interview to Karan Thapar that the Ministry respected the fact that IITs were 'precious' and therefore not to be interfered with, and that his Ministry was in favour of flexibility and autonomy.

A prompt meeting to convey the same and express the Ministry's willingness for reassessment in case of bottlenecks in the future was arranged with IIT representatives on 2 October.

The "minor points" were asked to be discussed in a meeting of the AIITFF representatives and Directors of IITs. At this point, the case was

closed from the Ministry's side and newspapers were filled with reports of the issue being resolved.

Interestingly, the AIITFF is still dissatisfied with the raw deal they have received.

### The Grievances

Amongst other unaddressed problems,

1. The new notification has introduced multiple percentage restrictions which determine promotion of old faculty and entry of new. For example, it rewards 40% of the existing full Professors, by moving them to a higher grade pay (translation: Rs 1500 more per month). This automatically brings in rigidity into the system by predetermining the number of awardees. IIT faculty are not opposed to evaluation, but are opposed to any cap that restricts the number that can get rewarded if they satisfy the evaluation criteria.

2. The Sixth Pay Commission has introduced the PRIS(I) [Performance Related Incentive

Scheme] for IITs as opposed to PRIS(O). The former recognises an individual's work while the latter the system or 'organisation' as a whole. Consequently, the PRIS (I) would applaud a professor with outstanding results whereas the PRIS(O) would recognise the entire team behind the results, thus appreciating everyone who has contributed towards the success. This applies to all levels of staff. AIITFF has been pushing for the PRIS (O) to be implemented in IITs as it honours the IIT system.

3. In the earlier days, recognizing the rigour with which IIT selected its faculty members, promoted them solely on the basis of merit (and not on time-scale) and the fact that they frequently had higher qualifications than their UGC counterparts to start with, an Associate Professor in IITs got the same pay-scale (to begin with) as a Professor in the UGC. The present scheme proposed by the Ministry has put IIT Associate professors at a grade pay (Rs. 9,500) lower than the UGC Professors (Rs. 10,000). It must be noted that the Rs. 10,000

grade pay comes with an elevated level of perks. All these grievances have fallen on deaf ears at the Ministry, which is adamant about implementing its notification and perceives the faculty demands as a protest for a pay rise.

In the GBM held by IIT representatives on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, it was resolved that, "Any percentage limit on a cadre or on a part of a cadre is not acceptable. Therefore, to protect and safeguard the existing flexible cadre system we have decided to forego the higher Academic Grade Pay of Rs 12,000 for professors."

The Ministry had not heard about this one when this report was written. Hopefully the interval between writing and circulating this article has brought good news for our faculty.

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The question of student protests goes back decades – in fact that history is kind of hazy. From what I gather, there were some protests by students in the 80's which saw mass bunks to show dissent against the rustication of 2-3 students. Thereafter, a ban on such protests was made, preventing any such action in the future. Here is the status quo – one of the forms freshies fill before entering IIT Bombay makes them accept that they will NOT take part in any mass student protest. Our poor freshies sign it thinking there is no cause for concern – well, actually, most of them would sign anything they get just to get into IIT.

There may be those who would look beyond the utopian image and worry about such a draconian measure. In the end, however, he would say to himself, "Do I want to not sign this paper and sacrifice my admission into IIT just because I won't be allowed to protest? Or would I rather sign it, shut up, and go with the flow?" I, myself, being a student here, was one of them.

In fact, incidents like these are where students learn to cope with injustice, rather than stand up for their own rights. Taking this further, it has affected the way things work in IIT. Students naturally lose trust in authorities when they turn autocratic. Who knows how many events were planned and then canned to avoid any hassles with the administration? Or, for that matter, how many articles weren't published or toned down in various student magazines to avoid clashes with faculty?

Now, our own faculty goes on to fight for their right to a good lifestyle. No doubt one's compensation is a very significant factor in quality of life, and to that extent, students would agree that professors are justified in creating such uproar. But, the obvious bone of contention is the fact that they don't approve of their own students doing so. One section of IIT is doing something another section is banned from, in complete violation of the practice-what-you-preach system that should be in place, if you are looking forward to make well-rounded, global citizens out of your students. Are you?

No doubt, one will recall that some form of

protest against our administration has occurred despite such a ruling. The bike ban of 2003 saw a lot resistance from students, and institute student representatives had refused to work for a prolonged time period – this was the only way out since mass protests would put all degrees in jeopardy. However, such actions being less effective, their effect was temporary. The bike ban is across all batches today. The closest thing to a protest I have seen is at the end of my first year - the first time sophies had to stay 2 in a room (mind you, the issue of doubling up is important for students - as is compensation for faculty).

Many freshies, sophomores-to-be, went to OAT and a meeting with the DoSA was arranged. It basically ended at status quo – sophies had to be doubled, with no guarantee of single rooms in 3<sup>rd</sup> year. After that, the LAN ban didn't even see any tangible protest, just a lot of discontent amongst the students. Protests in earlier years had, at least, some effect – now even that effect seems delusive.

Last, but definitely not the least, some professors agree. I had done the article on the faculty protests on 24<sup>th</sup> Aug (those days when we had lots and lots of holidays!), and had interviewed a few professors from the IITB Faculty Forum. We asked them what their opinion of the protest ban was, in light of the faculty doing it. One faculty member said that if there are significant issues faced by students which are not being addressed after representations through proper channels (which the faculty made), the students should act according to their conscience.

My conscience tells me that something isn't right, hence this article. I hope that the concerned authorities act according to their conscience as well.

"At ten o'clock that night, the Director issued a circular ordering an indefinite closure of the institute. Moreover, all students were ordered to leave the campus by the night of Monday, March 10 and hand over possession of empty rooms to the Wardens. Failure to comply would lead to dire consequences."

For the benefit of those, who don't know about it, these were the words published in Pragati, a student yearbook. The institute involved, as you must have suspected by now, was our own IIT Bombay. Today when one looks back at what happened back in those days in 1980, the events seem almost unbelievable. But they did happen. And they left indelible black spots in the annals of our history.

What exactly led to the first and only student agitation of this scale in IIT Bombay? Why was the institute in the newspapers for reasons other than a technological breakthrough or a generous alumnus donation? Why did the then director, Prof. A. K. De, choose to take such extreme steps as above?

On the fateful day, a large body of students boycotted classes to assemble in the lawns with a charter of demands. The Director, however, categorically refused to consider these demands when he saw them. He also declined the student representatives' request to personally convey his reaction to the students assembled in the lawns, nor did he address them when they went to the second floor outside his office. That degenerated into slogan shouting, protest posters, scenes generally familiar to us, yet very alien against the backdrop of IIT Bombay and a "gherao".

The students eventually dispersed, albeit now with internal tensions about the further course of action. At night, around 10 o'clock, after 12 hours of the gherao, the Director dropped the bombshell demanding immediate and indefinite closure of the institute activities and a vacation of the institute premises within 3 days. There were no concessions offered. There were none on the vacation order even when the students tendered an apology and accepted the demands. The students then toed the line and the institute was empty by the 10<sup>th</sup> of March.

Who was right, will always be a debatable question, but perhaps also a question of little significance. That the actions taken were rather overreactions to issues, was a point huddled and accepted in both the factions, but that didn't salvage the loss that had been done, the loss of 21 days, or an equivalent 45 days of research, as estimated by the Institute itself; the loss of the repute of the Institute by the mudslinging exercises and by the students when they hurled slogans and shoved posters; the loss of assets such as pride, trust and security, the kind of assets which take a long time and effort to build, the ones we should take care to preserve under all circumstances, to prevent another 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1980.

Premal Shah was a fifth year dual degree student when he'd written this.

Note: The source of information for this article is the 1980 edition of Pragati, the student magazine of IIT Bombay at that time. Insight is thankful to Mr. Ram Kelkar (B.Tech EE, 1980) for providing the newspaper cuttings accompanying this article.

Opinion  
Student Protests  
Gautam Salhotra  
Fifth Year Undergraduate

Flashback  
March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1980.  
The institute's first and only large scale student protest

# AGREE, DISAGREE OR NEUTRAL?

InsighT examines the changes in the course evaluation system across departments, and proposes a few additional ones

At the end of every semester, students are used to filling up Course Evaluation forms for all the theory courses they took. While a few take this seriously, many others do not give it much importance, the common sentiment being that the whole process is pretty inconsequential. Also, many students do not even turn up on the day the course evaluation is done if they do not have specific grievances. Starting this year, the new system of mid-term course evaluation at the department level was introduced. We take a look at the old and the new.

## The Old System

The end-term evaluations had been made mandatory for all the courses by the Academic Office. This, however, did not include lab courses. The students were then asked to fill a questionnaire at the end of the semester. The questionnaire had a few statements to which the students had to express their agreement or disagreement, apart from a place at the end for writing comments. The forms were then collected by the Academic Office, which generated a sort of score for each instructor. This score is conveyed to the instructor and to the HoD, and the comments are also relayed.

**There had been a feeling amongst students that the entire exercise was pointless, as no noticeable change was noticed.**

In other cases, like the half-semester Environmental Science Course for sophomores or the course IC102 for first year students, students had to fill forms for as many as 4 professors in a single session. With about two dozen questions in each form, it made the whole procedure very monotonous, increasing the probability that students would fill circles without even looking at the questions.

In general, the attendance is always low just before the end-semester exams, which is when course evaluation was usually conducted, so the feedback collected at that point in time was not

representative of the majority opinion. Apart from that, there are many students who do not attend classes regularly, making their feedback pretty meaningless.

## The New System

Taking all the cons of the old system into consideration, mid-term evaluations were introduced. Apart from the GSAA, who pushed for it this year, a lot of credit also goes to the department General Secretaries, who made sure that it was executed well. A few GSecs had tried to implement something similar in the previous years, but neither was it well defined, nor was there much emphasis on the same. Presently, even though it hasn't been made compulsory, most of the departments have conducted these evaluations independently, the choice of mode of evaluation also being at their discretion. Here is how a few departments handled the procedure:

### Computer Science and Engineering

The evaluations were conducted online. The feedback went directly to the instructor and the decision rested in their hands as to what they wanted to do with the forms. The HoD was not directly involved. Professors in the CSE department are known to take feedback seriously, though.

### Civil Engineering

Conducted on feedback forms. The questions were subjective and asked a student to give his/her suggestions about various issues regarding the course. The forms were collected by the CRs and handed over to the DGSec. The HoD inspected and analyzed the feedback. This was followed by a one on one discussion between the HoD and each of the professors regarding the feedback. The professors were asked to talk to the students directly about the feedback. Overall, the DGSec and the HoD were very happy with the student response. In fact, a department open house was held recently to resolve problems further.

**Note:** Lab courses were included as well.

### MEMS

Course evaluations are conducted for all the courses (including labs) in the dept. roughly once a fortnight. The evaluation is conducted orally, the DG Sec. himself goes to the class in a free slot and asks them if they are facing any problems whatsoever. Once the session is over, the DGSec. makes a note of the 3-4 points that have been conveyed by a majority of the students, approaches the concerned faculty member and informs him about the issues students are facing. One possible problem with the system-a few problems that do not pertain to the majority may be skipped. Also, as these sessions are held in a free slot, many students might give it a miss.

### Chemical Engineering

Mid-term evaluations were conducted online. There were a few questions pertaining to every course and at the end there was some space for suggestions. The DGSec collected all the responses and then discussed the same with the CR. The DGSec/CR or both then approached the concerned professor and discussed the feedback with him. The Department G.Sec tells us that the number of students filling up these forms was not high, which was quite a disappointment.

### Electrical Engineering

Here too, the evaluation was done online. The DGSec collected all the responses and then filtered out the unnecessary ones. He made a report for each course which included the average rating generated for each parameter and a summary of suggestions. These forms were filled by only 30-40% students. However the DGSec did not consider this a matter of concern as he felt that only students who were looking for change would be interested in filling the forms sincerely and their opinion counted the most.

All in all, the introduction of mid-term evaluation is a promising change, although there is a lot of scope for improvement. The students are

content because the improvements are visible unlike previously when they just used to fill the forms without any faith and then forget about it in a day or two. Kudos to the Dept. General Secretaries and the GSAA for taking this initiative.

Although the mid-term evaluations are an effort to improve upon the term end evaluations and have been designed with the best interests of students and faculty in mind, one can do little about the complacent and sloppy student attitude. There is also the fact that it is completely up to the professor to take any action based on the feedback, and nothing can be done in case of the contrary.

### A Course Evaluation Proposal

In a utopian world, professors would come to the class and ask for feedback themselves. The students in turn would reply frankly and the desired changes would be made spontaneously. But that is expecting a little too much from everybody. A few changes could significantly improve the system though.

- Proper sit down feedback sessions after the end-semester exams giving students ample time to analyze and give their answers.
- The feedback forms at present have too many questions and they do not address several issues related to a course. The number of questions could be reduced while making them more comprehensive.
- A detailed report containing the gist of the feedback and the necessary steps that have been taken should be put up on department notice boards so that students realize the importance of their feedback.

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## A New HOPE?



## Implemented in full swing, the Sports GC OVERHAUL is already showing some promise. InsighT analyzes

It all started with the Dean of Students' Affairs' directive to reduce the number of sporting events by 25%. The students' Sports Council needed a way to cut down on competitions without compromising on the number of people participating, while maintaining the competitive spirit of the events and the enthusiasm of the students and hostels. The solution they came up with was to overhaul the entire Sports GC, and especially the point system used.

### Major Changes

Four major changes were implemented, all designed to increase competition and participation.

1. The point system was changed from 10,6,2 to 12,9,6, for the first, second and third positions respectively.

**Reason:** The 10,6,2 system is followed at the Inter-IIT tournament. But this tournament has only 7 teams (so far at least), whereas the inter-hostel GC has 12. So a team which is finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> does not gain a very great advantage over a team finishing 12<sup>th</sup>.

2. In individual sports, like Table-Tennis, Badminton and Lawn Tennis, the GC and Open events have been combined. The tournaments are of open format in which 8 players from a hostel can participate. All these 8 players earn points for the hostel, even for just turning up.

**Reason:** This encourages participation and allows more players to participate in the GC. All the points earned by these players are totalled

and the team with the highest points wins the GC. This is a good thing because games like Table-Tennis and Badminton are generally played by a large number of people in the institute, but under the old system, their participation in GC events was severely restricted.

3. Two GC points are awarded to hostels for crossing a particular threshold. In the Table-Tennis GC, every team which crossed 60 points overall, was awarded 2 GC points. In team games, this depends on the goal/points difference.

**Reason:** The motivation behind this was to encourage teams to participate with enthusiasm even when the team opposing them is much much stronger than them. However, these points are not awarded if a player from a hostel fails to show up. So, in essence, these points are participation points, which are earned collectively by each and every player from the hostel.

4. There is no restriction on the number of Inter-IIT players who can play for the hostel in individual sports. This is not such a big problem now as it was earlier because all players participate in an open format, where two Inter-IIT players may be pitted against one another.

**Reason:** With 8 players participating from each hostel, even second rung players will get a chance to participate, even if their hostel does have a few Inter-IIT players. Also since all 8 players are earning points for the hostel, one big player cannot carry the hostel on his shoulders.

The amount of points for first place is obviously very large, but not large enough so that it becomes decisive

Interesting outcomes in the GCs thus far: Table-Tennis - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions were from Hostel 2, and Hostel 2 won the GC.

Lawn Tennis - Two players out of the top 6 were from Hostel 2, but none were in the top 3. They still finished 4<sup>th</sup>. This suggests that there still remain some wrinkles which need to be ironed out with respect to the points system.

Badminton - The top 2 players were from Hostel 13, but all of Hostel 5's players did decently well, which is why Hostel 6 finished on top. This is a good example of the success of the system.

### Response:

The response from hostel sports counsellors and secretaries has been very good so far. Most approve of the overhaul and feel that it will ensure more participation and 'enthu' from their hostels. A few, however, are concerned about the Inter-IIT players participation rule, as they feel their hostels will be at a disadvantage in certain sports. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that this is the first year of this system's implementation, and that it can surely be refined in the years to come.

**Note:** As discussed with Prateek Mittal (GSSA) Siddhartha Das (UG Sports Nom) and Ketan Chopra (Institute Tennis Table Secretary)

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Hostel	GC Tally
1	0
2	14
3	6
4	18
5	14
6	16
7	11
8	11
9	14
12	2
13	18
Tansa	2

Placements at IIT Bombay have always been under the purview of students. But just because things have been happening a certain way, we shouldn't overlook the flaws. Keeping this important task in the hands of students has a number of problems that warrant a rethink on the entire system.

1. In the current process, student information including grades and resumes that are supposed to be confidential, job profile information etc. is concentrated in the hands of a few people. Also, these few seemingly have the authority to decide when to reveal such information to others. This raises many issues, especially considering that the person with this authority is your competitor rather than a detached person. There is a lot of scope for favoritism in resume reviews, communicating company contact details et al.
2. Since new placement nominees are selected every year, there is a significant overhead in bringing them up to speed with the established procedures. Also, since the motivation for most placement nominees to take up this job doesn't extend beyond getting a resume point or building personal contacts, they are likely, as has been seen in the past, to lose their drive to work after they get placed and/or the major companies have completed their hires. Even in the months before December, since the work is inherently repetitive and tends to get boring, it gets put on the backburner.
3. Another major question-what makes students capable of handling the work that the placement process entails? Besides learning to talk to company representatives, there is very little to gain. But learning on the job is too risky for the rest of the students since after all, their careers are at stake. Any mistakes made by a placement nominee as a result of a lack of required skills will ultimately hurt students, especially in the currently shaky economic situation.

**A Model for change :**

The idea is to completely take students out of the management of the placement process. Instead, we should focus on framing a better placement policy and researching companies that we might be interested in. We should then hand these over to trained professionals who can enforce the policies and contact companies. There are a number of reasons why this model improves over the status quo:

1. Any issues relating to lack of transparency in the system are mitigated, as the people privy to confidential information are completely detached from the student community.
2. Every department can be assigned one professional who focuses on companies relevant to his assignment. Also, since all the staff will be located in one office, there will be a lot more communication and coordination regarding companies potentially overlapping across multiple departments which beats the current "google group" system hands down.
3. At the very outset, since a person will be hired for multiple years, the overhead of re-training the staff every year is eliminated. In fact, since we propose to hire trained Human Resources (HR) staff, the only training they'll need is in the kind of education students in a particular department have so that they can match companies to them. This can be done easily since for the purpose of placements, a person need not be aware of the nitty-gritty of their assigned department and a broad overview is sufficient. Since they are working for a salary, and this is the only work they will be involved in, professionals will remain focused and motivated throughout the year, leading to a higher output of work. Also, a lot of manpower will be saved since, even in the opinion of current nominees, multiple nominees within a single department are highly redundant.
4. Trained HR professionals are better suited to handle the work of the placement process than students. They are experienced in dealing with companies and can in fact

empathize with their counterparts in the companies they are contacting. This will lead to better relationships with them and facilitate negotiations in our favor. This advantage can be clearly seen at the IRCC that has built excellent industry relations for IITB and is entirely handled by staff. Here, and at other offices in IIT, staff works for the benefit of students, apparently motivated only by their paycheck.

5. An added advantage of this model over the current system is the additional services that can be provided by professionals. Since most students don't have a clear idea of what they want to do, career counseling is important and can be provided by conducting in-house counseling sessions throughout the year.
6. Take the example of Stanford, whose system is representative of those followed in the US. Their career development center is run entirely by professionals and keeps the interests of students above those of companies and even Stanford itself. Once the student body has decided on its policy (like allowed time to decide on an offer, whether to reveal CPI to companies or not, etc.), contacting companies, arranging one-on-one resume critique sessions, industry visits, meetings with venture capitalists, etc. are all conducted by the office. While giving this example, I would point out that comparing our system with the IIMs is unreasonable since the students there usually have work experience or are trained in dealing with people. This makes them more than capable of handling the placement process, unlike students at IIT.

The very fact that IIT Bombay, both as an institution, and as a brand, has become a benchmark with regard to its exemplary placement records at least over the course of the last few years has been solely due to the collective efforts of all the student placement coordinators and the faculty members in-charge of the placements. Though a thorough insight of the system is very much welcomed, one cannot but acknowledge the efficiency and competence of the whole placement team, especially in light of the proficiency displayed last year, in spite of adverse economic conditions.

**Why the current system works :**

1. The current regime follows a very transparent system when it comes to revealing details of companies visiting, job openings, and job profiles to the students. The placement cell imposes strict penalties on the offender, when it comes to sharing confidential company contacts with people not part of the placement team, to the extent of a complete debar from the placements altogether. The placement cell also lays down guidelines for resume submissions and verifications after due consultation with all students to ensure accountability and a fair, uniform system. So there is obviously no question of favoritism when your own credibility is at stake.
2. Questioning the commitment of the placement nominees does not arise, especially in light of the fact that they are nominated by all the students of the department

information are to be completely detached from the student community is going to be the biggest deterrent. Students would feel a real loss of control, which, albeit a psychological one, should not be ignored. Furthermore, under the pretext of being "fair" to companies, somewhere down the line, the interests of the students would have to be compromised. Even the thought of students liaising with the trained professionals is a rather ambiguous one. Where does one draw the line? Where does one person's work end the others' begin? Also more fundamental questions – Who would they be hired by anyway? Would students have a say in it? Who are they accountable to? All of these call for greater clarity in the proposed model, even if there is a need for one.

2. Students representatives are better placed when it comes to deciding the companies to be opened up for their respective departments, as they would have a better idea about their own specializations, and would hence have an upper hand in negotiating with companies, as opposed to an HR professional, who would have no clue, given a whole cohort of departments existing, and not to mention the various inter-disciplinary programmes as well. Even if one were to try educating them about the same, considerable time and effort would have to be put in.

3. Why single out campus placements? Why not outsource other independent bodies (MI, Techfest, E-Cell, etc.) to trained event managers? The fact that the students part of these organisations have, beyond reasonable doubt, successfully managed to rope in corporate sponsorships at such unprecedented levels is a due testimony of our communicable skills, especially when comes to dealing with companies.

4. The Placement Cell has over the years taken a lot of initiatives to ensure students make an informed choice when it comes to deciding in which companies to apply for. This year alone, the Recruiter Relationship Development Programme was conceptualized, which endeavours to stabilize healthy associations with all existing recruiters into long term relationship. Besides, it also aims at familiarising new recruiters with the campus, thereby enabling them to effectively structure hiring strategies for mutual benefit. In addition we have forged an alliance with Career Launcher this year to arrange for one-on-one resume critique and personal interview sessions and also conducting Group Discussion and Resume writing workshops. The pre-placement talks have also been designed to inform students about various profiles offered, and future career prospects, both within the organisation and in the sector.

5. However, one can definitely vouch for the need of career counselors, especially given our habit of blindly aping seniors, without finding out for ourselves the relevant skill sets required for a particular job, the growth prospects and most importantly an expert's advice whether our aims and objectives would be met by a certain job profile or not. In the long run, this would definitely benefit students.

Essentially the point to be driven home is that it is best if students themselves are given the responsibility of carrying out campus placements and its related activities. A complete overhaul proposed, which suggests outsourcing it to a third party would do more harm than good. While there is no hiding from the fact that the current system may have its flaws, at the end of the day, one must realise that it is the interest of the students that must be kept above everything else, even those of companies, which would only happen if students are party to the whole process. There is a reason why placements at IIT Bombay are so revered and it is best if we just left it at that.

# VIEW COUNTER

**The Placement Process Should Be Outsourced**  
Rushil Goel

**Why Change What's Tried And Tested?**  
S.Harishwar and Ajanta

**Will IIT support this? Is this feasible?**

How does it fit in with IITB's objectives? The entire reason why IITB wanted to enforce industry internships for the Batch of 2006 was to encourage students to get into industry. Any change that improves the placement process would thus be supported by IIT. In addition, since faculty members are generally apprehensive of students dealing with companies, taking students out of the process will put them at ease. We can thus expect significant support from IIT in making the model feasible.

Besides IIT's support, students can meet a significant portion, if not all of the costs of the model on their own. Currently, around 1400 students sit for placements. Currently, Rs. 500 are charged to every student who wants to be a part of the placement process. As it stands, Rs. 9 lakh have been collected apparently for meeting the logistics of contacting companies, etc. We can easily increase the placement fee to at least Rs. 2,500. This will not be a deterrent since people will not stop sitting for placements due to the increased cost.

Also, this cost is peanuts in comparison to the kinds of salaries people get after passing out. And this is about the same price as that of CAT forms and much less than the expenditure involved in foreign graduate applications. This will then generate Rs. 35 lakh and removing the around 10 lakh for logistical costs, we are left with Rs. 25 lakh for salaries.

Even considering the relatively higher salary of Rs. 20,000 that an experienced HR professional earns in India (a senior IAS officer with 20 years of experience gets the same salary and we are not looking to hire IIM graduates), we can hire 10 people from these funds alone. Even 10 people working full time can meet the entire load of the placement process, but since IIT will contribute in meeting this cost, we can potentially hire even more people.

in question, in case of department placement nominees, who is accountable to his/her own department mates.

3. I choose to disagree on the fact that the placement nominees lose enthusiasm, and work inefficiently due to various other commitments a typical student may have. Throughout our stay at IIT, most of us take up a whole gamut of activities besides academics and take great pride in managing all these activities rather well, besides giving due attention to and focus on academics. I see no reason why campus placements should be an exception.

4. There have been no formal complaints from the companies being contacted by the placement nominees for their perceived lack of Human Resources skills or professionalism. Right from initiating contacts, to conducting pre-placement talks, to organising campus tours, and efficient coordination and scheduling on the actual day of placements, we try our utmost in putting the interests of the students and the reputation of the institution above everything else, and have been rather effective in doing so. The fact that placements this year, expected to reach unprecedented heights owing to the sheer number of companies confirming participation, covering a wide plethora of sectors, that too despite a shaky economic situation does firmly justify the status quo.

Though the current system may have its fair share of flaws, a complete overhaul of the entire system is absolutely unnecessary. In fact, a mere discussion on an issue of such magnitude, without there being a sacrosanct and structured framework for a new system is bound to raise eyebrows from not just students but also the institute administration and the Placement Cell.

**Is such a major change really necessary?**

1. The very reason that the people who are going to be privy to confidential infor-

# RESEARCH AT IITB : Different Takes

## INTERVIEWS WITH THE PROFESSORS

Professors who's tenures span generations, and undergraduates looking for much more from the institute than just research. In this two-part article, Inslght presents both sides

Nehru, a patron of science, believed strongly that science and technology had a prominent role to play in modernizing India and meeting the needs of its growing population. He envisioned that the various IITs he instituted would, over time, "provide scientists and technologists of the highest calibre who would engage in research, design and development to help building the nation towards self-reliance in her technological needs."

### How close are we today to realizing that vision?

Insight interviewed a cross-section Professors to get an idea of where research in IITB stands today, and where it is headed.

Speaking to professors of three different generations, we gathered a lot about research through the years at IITB. The unanimous belief is that focus on research has increased phenomenally since the inception of the IITs, with a considerable amount of that interest coming in over the last two decades.

Professor Ballal, who has been with the MEMS Department for three decades now, when asked his take on research, said "Research is about creativity. The best researchers are the ones who go crazy with ideas! In the '80s, funds were tight, but the number of sponsored projects, as well as government funding, have been rising exponentially ever since."

Professor Viswanathan, also at the MEMS Department for 10 years now, felt that the research at IIT was very diverse but not deep enough. The absence of systematic documentation hampers research, preventing new research scholars from pursuing the work of a previous student. He believes that great research comes out of digging deep, and digging skillfully into a specific area over a prolonged period of time.

Professor Gururajan, who just joined IIT Bombay only 3 months back, says "I joined IIT for the opportunity to do the two things I love - teaching and academic research in Materials Science. I do notice that a hierarchy has set in, and certain subjects are considered more 'elite' than others."

Research suffers because of this wrong attitude. Research is about respecting whatever it is you are working on."

This led us to question whether teaching and administrative duties hamper a Professor's focus on research. We got some different, yet interesting responses.

Prof. Ballal believes IIT administration is robust because it is handled by the professors themselves. If bureaucrats come into the picture, an educational institution cannot thrive the way IIT is. We asked three of the Deans what they felt about this.

Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Dean R&D was glad he was given the opportunity to effect change and influence the direction of research at the institute. Prof. Gopalan, Dean of Student Affairs, believes his office is his way of giving back to the institute. He and Prof. Banerjee pointed out the unfortunate reduction in their interactions with their students, but believe this lack of hand holding has made his research scholars capable of setting up and running their own lab independently.

Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri, Dean IR, was earlier Head of the Electrical Department. He spends approximately twenty hours every week on administrative work, spawning direct or indirect involvement. But then, he says "When you are privileged enough to work in a good environment, it is a duty of yours to give something back to it as well."

In Ballal Sir's words, "Gandhiji used the charkha everyday. It maybe repetitive and mundane but more importantly, it is meditative. For a Professor, teaching an undergraduate course is the same as the charkha was to Gandhiji. It keeps him grounded to the basics and brings out the best research from him."

Viswanathan Sir and Gururajan Sir believed that professors have to make a choice between teaching and research. Unless students are willing to approach courses with an attitude to learn and grow, teaching will not be beneficial to either party. So, have students really lost that attitude to learn and their intellectual curiosity, which was there a few decades back?

Most Professors believe that the quality of students has not changed but they are more career and result driven nowadays. Whether it is the way a problem is chose for a Ph.D or the attitude towards solving a problem, students focus more on the outcome than on the process.

Prof. Viswanathan says one can do good research only without the supervisor. Prof. Gururajan's reiterated that thought: "Student-student interaction is integral to research. This is not an individual activity. Helping each other and constant discussion is the only way to foster research. Putting all research scholars in one room rather than separate work stations in different labs is a method worth trying."

As far as undergraduates are concerned, Prof. Ballal and Prof. Gopalan believe that the JEE no longer identifies the creativity and craziness that research needs. The vicious cycle of difficulty level of the JEE leading to mushrooming of coaching classes is the crux of the problem.

Prof. Gopalan believes that undergraduates a decade ago delivered excellent research and a sharp downturn in their contribution occurred in the late nineties, when the Dual Degree Program was introduced. The DD project was taken lightly and the cascading effect was seen in the decreased quality of B.Tech. projects as well.

Also, with the Biswas Committee offering a lighter curriculum and more flexibility, students focus more on extra curricular activities. At the same time, if we are to introspect, the new curriculum is a breath of fresh air as compared to the extremely rigid Indian education system and the social norms are such that an Indian respects an engineer more than a painter. We do not make the choice of joining IIT at the age of 18 for what Nehruji wanted us to become but for a variety of other reasons. Are we wrong in making that choice?

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## IN OTHER NEWS..

The Dance Club of our institute has done us proud by appearing on national television (Sony Entertainment Television's show "Entertainment ke liye aur bhi kuch karega") and gathering accolades and praises from the who's who of the industry.

The Inter-IIT Aquatics' team performed splendidly well by bringing home four golds, four silvers and five bronze medals in swimming and a third place in the Water Polo Event. All four individual golds were bagged by Vivardhan Kanoria.

The event was, however, hit by a major bout of food poisoning which struck athletes from all teams and earned the IIT Kanpur authorities quite a few brickbats.

The final results are as follows :

Swimming	Water Polo
1 <sup>st</sup> : IITK	1 <sup>st</sup> : IITK
2 <sup>nd</sup> : IITKgp	2 <sup>nd</sup> : IITM
3 <sup>rd</sup> : IITB	3 <sup>rd</sup> : IITB

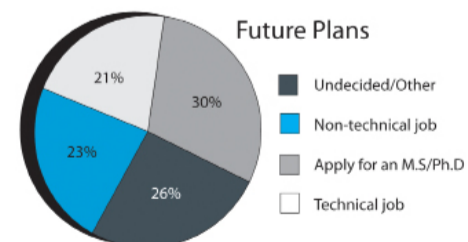
IITB's Satellite Team only recently signed an MOU with ISRO, thus giving direction to their future efforts.

Salient points mentioned include the following :

1. The satellite launch will be done by ISRO without any cost using the PSLV rocket.
2. All the components which are not freely available, will be provided by ISRO. (these include solar panels)
3. Testing can be done in the ISRO facilities.
4. Expert help will be provided when needed to the students
5. Regular reviews will be done in ISRO by their scientists.

## THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SURVEY

It has been observed that the contribution to students towards research is very little even after so many research opportunities in the form of URA, seminars, BTPs, DDPs and projects offered by the institute. A survey was thus conducted to find out reasons for this lack of participation in research. The sample audience varied over all years and all departments. The results are given below.



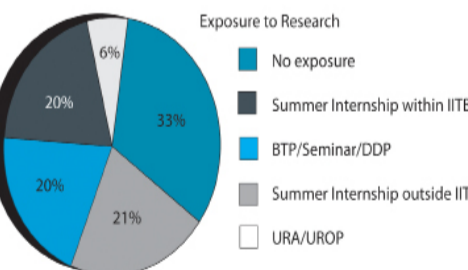
### Future Plans of the Students

On an average, 23 % of each batch was interested in pursuing a non-technical career after IIT. This data is valid only from the second year onwards. It is difficult to conclude from this data that what percentage of the students would have never gotten into research irrespective of the policies and the research environment in IIT. The mindset of student changes considerably in the first year. It could have so been that in the first year to the second year there was a considerable increase in the percentage of students wanting a non-technical job.

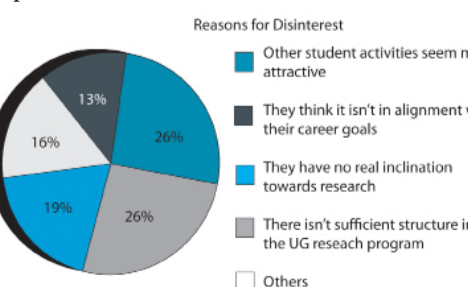
### Exposure to Research

The results of the students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year was as expected since in their 1<sup>st</sup> year they end up doing

common courses and there is hardly any exposure to their field. Also that is the time students generally adjust to the way of living here. But surprisingly only 36 % of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were not introduced to some form of research opportunity.



Another noticeable thing is the very low percentage of students opting for URA given that there isn't any CPI restriction now. But 29% of the students have done a project under some professor in IIT.



From this we may conclude that there is general lack of awareness regarding URA or a lack of seriousness of the student's approach towards the project. We have also tried to find out students'

opinion of the plausible reasons for the low contribution of UG's to undergraduate research, the figures are in the previous pie-chart.

### Subjective Responses of the Students :

Measures suggested to improve the research scenario included.

Creating more opportunities and an awareness of the available research opportunities.

A research orientation for freshmen explaining what research actually constitutes of, and explaining to them various research options at IITB.

More course projects instead of courses/quizzes.

Creative thinking should be encouraged in the course itself.

Extra-curricular activities seem more lucrative and it seems difficult to take the choice of taking up research.

Forming UG research groups. A more lenient grading system.

Monetary incentives.

The professors giving preference to 9 pointers does not go down well.

More collaboration with industry and creating awareness about them as well.

Note : The above results are courtesy the Dean R&D's office, and it's survey initiative.

Manas Racch can be contacted at manasrachh@iitb.ac.in.

Zephyr the annual fest of the Aerospace Department was held from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of October. What actually started as a 1 day workshop now stretches over 3 days and is joined by more than 15000 students and many eminent personalities.

Despite last minute changes in scheduling the lecture series saw a huge turnout of about 300 interested candidates. The first lecture was by Dr. Kota Harinarayana, an alumnus of IITB, on 'Networking India with regional air transportation'. The second lecture was by Dr. Naveed Hussain on 'Global Technology Collaboration'.

Workshops like the two day Boeing RC plane workshop sponsored by Boeing Inc. was the flagship workshop with about 100 shortlisted students getting an opportunity to make a beautiful flying vehicle out of Balsa wood with the help of the organizers. Zephyr also featured a Software workshop conducted by MSC Software Co.

Finally, with a staggering 300% rise in participation, Zephyr's competitions were well received. For the first time the problem statement of MachINFINITY, the RC plane competition was completed by not just one but 4 teams, all from IITB. Also, the winners of the Technical Design Challenge got Honeywell International internships.

## ACOUSTIC DUSK '09 : *And The Music Continues ...*



**T**hink distortion, metal, growls, drums, bass... You've got it! Staccato's Acoustic dusk is the haven of those amongst us who've an ear for what some call insane but what some call bliss. This year's AD was one of the biggest with around 35 songs to be performed.

A large spectra of songs were performed - the highlights of the evening being 'Comfortably Numb', 'Zombie', 'Supermassive Black Hole', 'Cocaine', 'Fields

of sound' and 'Nymphetamine' amongst others. Quite a few of senior Staccato members performed in their last AD. Ritesh 'Kolte', Shreyans Maini (Babban), Hemendra Shrivastav (Highmen), Divyash Pant (Bunkoo), Jaideep Bansal (JD), Saurav Agarwal, Robin Agarwal, Siddharth 'Birdie', Rohit Thakur (Baba) and Jayant Nagda were some of the those who've helped the institute's musical scene reach where it stands today. Taking time out of their hectic schedules, many of

the instrumentalists featured in more than one song. The three freshie bands - two from H2 and one from H10 - deserve mention. Music surely is seeping through to the roots.

With the restriction of performances in OAT as 10pm quite a few of the performers were disappointed as seniors and last-timers got priority to perform. Whether a screening process should be adopted to select performers or to spread AD over two days remains

a decision to be taken, considering the participants who were let down. The organisation was certainly better than last time and the event did kick off by 7:30pm. The off-stage sound quality was quite good though on stage, it was a bit compromised.

It was envisioned to have the peak of performances in the way of a tribute to Pink Floyd. And it was a treat... It was an Acoustic Dusk to be remembered, albeit the second time round this year!

### The Offbeat Page

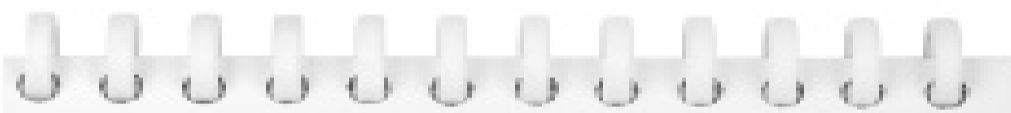
No central theme.  
No predefined genres of coverage.  
Just a montage of leisurely articles and snippets of information!

### OUR HOSTEL CANTEEN MINI-SURVEY

Rooted in a random late-night conversation, the idea to compare the rates of a few common items across canteens seemed an interesting one. We thought we'd try and find out if there were any sizeable (greater, than say Rs. 3) differences -- we compiled the data, and found a few minor variations. Take a look :

Item/Hostel	1	2*	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12/13
Aloo Paratha	8	10	8	8	8	7	7	8	8	NA	8	8
Maggi	NA	17	NA	NA	15	14	14	14	14	NA	15	12
Veg. Fried Rice	18	20	18	18	18	20	18	18	18	NA	19	15
Bournvita	NA	14	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	NA	13	7

\* : indicative of new prices, listed after a recent revision



### A CHECKLIST LESS ORDINARY

When I came to Stanford, I received something called "The Unofficial Guide to Stanford." Among many things, it contained a list of 50 things that one should do before graduating from here. So in our case, the list could look something like this :

#### 10 things to do before graduating from IIT

- 1) Climb Sameer Hill (preferably in the night)
- 2) Commit a DACable offense (and obviously not get caught!)
- 3) Visit a room in each and every hostel (including 1,10,11,12 & Tansa)
- 4) Go to Vihar lake
- 5) Visit Maddu after a night-out
- 6) Sleep peacefully in the library (minimum 2 hours!)
- 7) Participate in a PAF
- 8) Get intentionally wet in the rains
- 9) Go to the lakeside on a monsoon night
- 10) Stay without bathing for 14 days straight

Courtesy : Ashish Goel, an alumnus who's currently pursuing his Masters degree at Stanford.

If you think he's missed a couple of tasks, let us know by dropping an email at [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in). We'll publish the final list soon!

## PG SPORTS 2009 : SCORES AND MORE!

Insight reviews what is rapidly becoming the most eagerly awaited event of the year for PGs

PG life in the Insti has not been known much about. And even when we think about PGs the first thoughts that come to the mind are about studies and research. PG sports has gained momentum especially in recent times. Hence, this article aims to look at PG sports in an exciting new dimension.

This is what Ritwij Rastogi, Insti PG Sports Nominee had to say about PG participation in sports. "At all sporting venues you will find a PG involved, be it burning out at the court, cheering for their hostel in GC, attending workshops or trying their luck at Inter-IIT Trials. PGs, just like UGs, share the same excitement and enthusiasm when it comes to sports. The number is more at popular games like Cricket or Badminton than for lesser-popular games like Squash."

### The People Who Make It Happen :

All the department councils present in the Insti have a Department PG Sports nominee and this person is responsible for conducting Intras and supervising a team of PG's of his dept for the PG Sports tournament.

Hence the team managing PG Sports comprises:

- 21 Department Nominees led by the Insti PG Nominee and GS Sports
- Insti Secys for each sport

### PG Sports - The Event

"PG Sports is a real popular event of the year and PG's eagerly wait for it to start. It's like a festival and the preparation begins a long time in advance with practices, workshops, orientation etc. As most PG's do not get a chance to participate at inter hostel events, people came up with an idea of having a sports meet of their own to provide a platform and space to the postgraduate fraternity of the campus. Over the years the objective has drastically changed and PG Sports has become a highly competitive, adrenaline pumping clash between the departments, preserving its fun element at same time." says Ritwij.

PG Sports has a rich history spanning 7 years. It's an Inter departmental Sports festival conducted every year in two phases I and II. The two phases for this year's program are as follows :

	TT Boys	TT Girls	Baddy Boys	Baddy Girls	Chess Boys	Chess Girls	Carrom Boys	Carrom Girls	Total
Aerospace	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
Bio School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	14
Chemistry	0	0	2	0	2		2	2	8
Chemical	2	2	2	12	2	2	2	2	26
Civil	2	2	2	2	2	0	12	0	22
CSE	12	12	6	2	2	12	2	12	60
CSRE	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
CESE	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
CTARA	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	8
Electrical	2	0	9	2	6	2	2	9	32
Earth Science	2	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	10
Energy	2	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	10
HSS	2	2	2	6	2		2	0	16
IDC	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
IEOR	2	7	0	2	2	2	2	2	19
Mathematics	2	2	2	0	2		2	2	12
Mechanical	6	2	2	0	9		2	2	23
Metallurgy	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	2	20
Physics	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	20
SJMSOM	9	2	12	9	12	2	9	2	57
SYSCON	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	0	12

- Phase I in the Autumn Semester consisting of major indoor games like Table-Tennis, Badminton, Carrom and Chess.
- Phase II in the Spring Semester having all the outdoor sports (with Throwball being introduced for girls this year.)

This year the phases are being held in September 22<sup>nd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> (Phase I), with Phase II tentatively scheduled for end February - early March.

### The Results So Far (Phase I) :

Looking at the points tally below, we can

clearly see that CSE has done fairly well and has emerged as the leader. Following them is the SOM occupying the 2<sup>nd</sup> place and then come the Electrical and Chemical departments at 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> positions respectively. This is the calculation after Phase I and a lot more is going to come in the next semester, which will actually make the scene clearer and then we will be able to explain more about the actual departmental standings.

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## PORCUPINE TREE : 'NUFF SAID!

Still wondering how we managed to get them to perform at Mood Indigo? Insight talks to the people involved

Just one band surpassed downloads of all the games, movies and TV series combined in the month of September - Porcupine Tree. This psychedelic rock band from England is the toast of the campus and perhaps all the junkies in the city, if not the country.

Statistically, Google Analytics showed that ever since the announcement was made, the number of hits on the MI website as well as PT's website went up enormously. "Trains", "Wedding Nails" and "Lazarus" hit the top spots in playlists institute-wide.

The rumours of PT playing at Mood Indigo 2009 surfaced in the last week of August. Expectations ran high and confused students started pestering Aaron D'Souza and Rishi Sharma - this year's Pronites CGs. Here are a few excerpts of our interview with Aaron:

#### Q. When did MI first approach the band?

We first contacted PT in the first week of the summer vacations immediately after the endsems.

#### Q. How did you contact them?

Mainly through emails, about 150 of them, and some conversations over the phone with the band's manager and agent.

#### Q. What were the negotiations involved?

As expected, there were many ups and downs. The initial response was not encouraging as their manager told us that they do not tour during Christmas holidays. We were heartbroken until we received a mail which said that "the band may still be interested in the concert". Obviously, we replied positively but that wasn't the end of the story. For example, the band was initially adamant on

business class tickets, and all their sound and lighting equipment being transferred to and fro via freight.

Obviously, we negotiated, and convinced them to fly economy class. Further, we emphasized that the sound and lighting engineers here in India are a talented and experienced bunch, and that MI makes it a point to get the best in the business year after year.

Similar to these little points of contention, we faced a lot of obstacles and many a time the concert was this close to being called off.

But all's well that ends well and with the entire team working together, we managed to sign a deal in the first week of September.

#### Q. Have you worked out a crowd management strategy and a pass distribution system?

We haven't yet worked out all the details.

Note: At the time of printing, we were told that the pass distribution system was almost finalized, and that it would be made public in the coming few days on the Mood Indigo website, [www.moodi.org](http://www.moodi.org).

The team is also in continuous talks with the Security Office here at IIT for the security and crowd management arrangements. Further, personal security arrangements would be provided to the band via a private agency.

It is heartening to note that the band had no qualms or preconceived notions about playing in India, given the obvious paranoia that one can have as a non-resident.

#### Q. What about the concert playlist?

The track list is not decided by the band as of now but the concert would definitely have some tracks from the new album - 'The Incident'. But we will make sure they play some of their chartbusters. Further, revealing the playlist would somewhat dilute the effect of experiencing them play live, so we'll keep this under wraps till the very end!

#### Q. Why do you think PT accepted your offer?

It was quite obvious that we could not match the offers that the band generally receives. Money wasn't the only factor. With almost 50 concerts lined up this year we had to show them that we had an edge over the others. They were sold on the huge fan following they have in India, especially their popularity amongst the younger generation, and a festival that attracts attention from all over the country.

They soon realized the experience here would be very different from the hundreds of shows they have done in the past. Also, the prospect of promoting their new album to a nascent yet lucrative market here in India was rather appealing, and the MI team leveraged their arguments on the same. They are excited about performing in India and the package as a whole seemed to satisfy them.

**With this, we congratulate the Mood Indigo team on this huge breakthrough and hope for an all-out, concert of a lifetime on the 21st of December. See you there!**

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