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US COUNSELING THEM

Nikunj Jha looks at the changed pattern of counseling, where students rather than professors did most of the 'chamkana' and 'fundae patakna'

The heat is gone, the rains upon us. The "Fresh(ie)ness" has set in, as it always does in the last days of July. Their counselling procedure this time around saw a departure from the established routine.

Up till recently, centralised counselling had been the norm in all IITs, including ours. While it is a good way to allocate seats according to the preference of the candidates on the basis of the merit list, consider that candidates have almost no idea of the course structure and academic challenge awaiting them. More often than not, they take the decision based on gut feeling or (mis)guided opinions of relatives and parents. Thus, at the time of counseling, the professors help a candidate formulate his/her opinions by informing them about the aspects of an engineering curriculum.

This year a new initiative was taken by introducing the concept of student counselors who advised the candidates by the General Secretary, Academic Affairs (GSAA), keeping in mind the current condition, wherein a lot of students who come to IIT are dissatisfied by their branches and hence perform poorly in studies. To attack the problem at the root level it was felt that the students should be counseled well and encouraged to choose their branch according to their interest rather than the prospective placement scenario of the branch.

Another motivation is that many a time, there is a disconnect between the student and his counsellor during counseling, which results in a failure to have projected a holistic view of things. The result is that the doubts of the candidates remain largely unanswered.

Also, a lot of candidates ask questions about the academic load, extra-curricular activities, hostel life and so on, which can be better answered by student counselors.

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Hence the need for such a system. This isn't the first time that such a thing has been tried. Most of the foreign universities have a similar system in place. Closer home, our School of Management (SJMSOM) has a similar system.

The New Counselling System

Under the new system, every student of IIT Bombay was eligible and allowed to be a student counselor. Initially, a mail was sent out to all the students which asked them to volunteer for the program. All the students who replied were invited to an orientation which informed them about their duties as a counselor. All of them were given basic information about other departments, although the information provided wasn't very comprehensive. The orientation also provided no information about the counseling procedures which the counselors had to pick up by themselves during the course of their duty. The counseling took place in two slots – one in the morning from 9:00 to 1:00 and other in the afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00. The counselors had to report in the morning

wherein 2-3 counselors were selected per department as per the requirement. In all 35 counselors were selected on an average everyday from 10 departments on a first come first serve basis. Some student counselors had also been invited from IIT Gandhinagar to guide the candidates about the environment in IIT-GN.

Initially, the professors from various departments were seated on the stage who answered the doubts submitted in written by the candidates. Once the submission of drafts and other documents as well as the choice sheet began, the professors vacated the stage. Student counselors took their place on the stage and candidates were allowed to go on the stage and consult them. Since all the counselors were not seated on the stage at a time, the rest of them helped the IITB Staff in handling the submission of documents and in crowd management. Moreover, some of the students roamed about and answered the various queries about the procedure of submission of choice sheets and the documents. The counselors were handling everything from checking of the documents, doubts regarding the proper way to fill the form, academic queries to making the necessary announcements from time to time. As a token of appreciation for their assistance each counselor was given a remuneration of Rs. 200 per day apart from the food coupons of Rs. 100.

The Execution

Approximately 3,500 students were counseled at IIT Bombay between 9th to 16th July from 10,000 students who had been selected for counseling, which implies more than one-third of the students were counseled at IITB, which increased the burden of counselors here. This made the student counselors even more indispensable because IITB administration in itself wasn't prepared to handle such huge numbers. "What was heart-warming was the support from Academic Office. In the absence of Dean AP, we had approached the Chairman JEE, Prof. Ameya K. Pani, who accelerated the execution of the student counselor program putting it into place in just 3 days", says Manas Rachh, ISAA.

The execution was definitely successful considering the myriad of roles played by the counselors and the earnestness with which they handled each doubt and each responsibility. The questions generally were directed towards the job opportunities in a particular branch and the future placement scenario in the same. All the counselors were given strict instructions to not make comparisons between different IITs and to always advise the candidates to choose the branch on the basis of their interest. Hence, the volley of questions thrown at the counselors regarding the comparison of academic standards at various IITs was diplomatically handled, much to the disappointment of the candidates who asked them. While some counselors disliked this censorship, the administration felt that answering such comparative questions on the basis of one's personal biases and perceptions is irresponsible and uncalled for.

AGNI - AND ITS TRIAL BY FIRE

Siddhartha Jain narrates the plaudits earned by the FSAE Team's most recent brain-child over the Summer

The IIT Bombay Racing team has done it once again! IIT Bombay Formula Student car AGNI was the best Indian car at the competition of the 6 Indian Teams present. Formula Student is an annual motorsport design competition held at prestigious Silverstone Racing Track. The event, held from 16th July – 19th July 2009, marked the peak of their success in student motorsport competitions. Formula Student is the most professional of all FSAE competitions and is promoted by legendary Ross Brawn, Team owner of Brawn GP.

The car sports a Honda CBR 600 F4i motorcycle engine and weighs just 275 kg with the driver included. A lot of effort was put in to make the car lighter and nimbler. Designed and built from scratch, the car is capable of covering 100m in under 6 sec. In competition all cars were put through a series of tests, including acceleration, sprint, endurance races and skid pads. The students' knowledge, creativity, and imagination were also tested in the equally important design, presentation and cost assessment elements of the competition. This involved students presenting their designs to a group of judges drawn from

industry and motor sport. Totally, a 108 teams from all the globe participated in the competition where IIT Bombay Racing got the 2nd place in Cost



Presentation and 9th in Business Presentation events. Considering it is as our 2nd year entry in Formula Student Competitions and judges were quite happy with the car design and team's effort.

The IIT Bombay Racing Team was hosted by Aston University, Birmingham during

their stay in UK. It was their 9th year in this competition and they were quite generous to help them out in any matter during their stay. But there is still room for improvement in every aspect of the car to compete against the best European teams who have been taking part in these competitions from past decade, using cutting edge technology at every step. But clearly, events like Formula Student and Baja are great way of practical learning and working together as a team.

Next on the calendar comes SAE Baja Asia to be held at the NATRIP Track in Indore. Confident from past achievements in this competition and recent success at FS-UK, the team aims at doing well at this competition. Every new competition entails designing and manufacturing a car from scratch. Work is currently going on developing IIT Bombay second ATV for Baja 2010 and designing next Formula Student car.

(Siddhartha Jain is a fourth year student of the MEMS Department, and co-head of the Media Team of FSAE, IITB. He can be contacted at siddhartha.jain@iitb.ac.in)

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WHAT THEY DID THIS SUMMER

Arvind and Mukul check out what the three student fests' bodies have been upto over the vacations

The team for Mood Indigo found itself deeply involved in the conceptualisation and planning of events of MI 09 which will be held from 21st to 24th December 2009. The marketing team has pulled off an excellent job by finalizing Tata Indicom as the title sponsor for the fest in just a couple of months. Also, despite being only in its conceptualization stage right now, MoodI 09 has received unprecedented coverage in newspapers across the country.

MoodI 09 is organizing, for the first time ever, an IIT Bombay national debate in collaboration with the institute cultural council. Also, the semester will be dotted with a large number of workshops and informal events for the institute's students. The details of these shall be given away at a later stage.

But being a part of the MoodI team has its own perks. The members of the team get nightclub entries, concert tickets and even paintball sessions as part of their work profile. Also the team has been frequenting Prithvi and NCPA to catch new theatre shows playing in the city, all in a day's work. Quite a dream job, wouldn't you say?

The Techfest team has had a busy summer. An informal chat with Nikhil Kashid (Manager, Media), revealed a quick glimpse into what the Techfest team has been busy with the past couple of months, and what to expect from TF in the months to follow.

TechFest has already updated the problem statements for Prayaas on its website, www.techfest.org, whose Beta version just got launched. Also launched is a new initiative called Utkarsh to complement last year's Energize and Elixir. The venues for this year's Nexus - The All India Robotics Challenge, now in its third year have been decided, with the problem statement concerning wireless technologies.

The Techfest problem statements are decided after thorough research and discussions with the professors of the institute. Thus, the managers found themselves shuffling through appointments with various HODs apart from heavy work schedule and long hours without food and sleep. The majority of time was spent in contacting sponsors, participants, academia etc. and conceptualising the final events of the fest. Also one might expect to see some cool pre-TF events also this year.

A chat with Ritika (Manager, Media) revealed some new initiatives in the ECell pipeline to complement the existing ones-Ideaz, Eureka and E-Summit.

The team is planning to launch a Startup Development Program. The basic purpose of this program will be to aid the existing startups of the Institute's students in legal and financial ways by helping them in contacting Venture Capitalists, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants and the like.

Also, we might expect to see an Entrepreneurship Club up and running very soon. The basic idea behind this new club will be to have informal discussions on matters pertaining to the latest technologies, environment and other innovations. It will also serve as a platform for people seeking help and forming partnerships for future projects.

The Freshie orientation is to be the start of their grand scheme of things, which will very soon be followed by the launch of Ideaz, the annual pan-IIT Business Idea competition.

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FROM HERE AND THERE

Geo-Referenced Area Management (GRAM++) : India's first fully indigenously developed GIS (Geographic Information System) software at the Centre of Studies in Resources Engineering (CSRE), IIT Bombay by Dr. (Mrs.) Parvatham Venkatachalam and Dr. B. Krishna Mohan. It was originally developed with the financial support of Department of Science and Technology (DST) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Agni : Agni, IITB's Formula Student Car was unveiled on Friday, 20th June at 3 pm in the Lecture Theatre (PC Saxena Auditorium) by Mr. Narain Karthikeyan, the pioneer of Formula Racing in India. Director of IIT Bombay and Dean, Aston University were the guests of honour for this ceremony.

Swarna : The Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay, held this year's Design Experience Seminar and the Design Degree Show, Swarna, commencing from 8th June and culminating on 14th June, 2009.

Red Letter Day for IITB and SINE : Friday, 3rd July was a red letter day for IITB and SINE. Two of IITB's revenue generating SINE companies piloted by youngsters (i.e., less than 30 years old) presented / demonstrated their high-tech products to a bevy of DST and other public and private officials and have been awarded matching grants from the Technopreneur Promotion Programme (TePP). These were IdeaForge and SEDEMAC.

Vanmahotsav : The IIT Bombay Tree Plantation drive celebrated its 18th year on Monday, June 29, 2009 on the slope of the hill behind Hostel # 4, continuing its tradition of planting almost 2500 saplings in different areas of the campus every year. The programme began at around 8:00 am with a half-hour entertainment programme put together by the school children of Kendriya Vidyalaya and Campus School. Two buses (one from the Main Gate and the other from Y-Point Gate) were specially arranged for the event.

Oxford Free Trial : With initiative from the Central Library and with support from Oxford University Press, Free Trial access had been provided for Oxford University Press's following online sources:
1. Oxford English Dictionary Online
2. Oxford Reference Online

Access was initially granted till 7th July. However, with support from the users, two journals have now been made available - the Quarterly Journal of Mathematics and the Quarterly Journal of Mechanics and Applied Mathematics.

CEP course in advanced programming in C++ : This course, aimed at IITB students and Institute Staff and dependents, started on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at the PC Saxena Auditorium. The classes were held four days a week: Sat and Sun (9 AM to 12:30 PM), Tue and Thu (6 PM to 8:30 PM).

Water-colour workshop : The Students' Gymkhana and Staff Club of IIT Bombay conducted a Water-coloring workshop (Advanced level) on 20th and 21st June for IITB students and campus residents. The workshop was supervised by prominent artist Mr. Milind Mulick who has many awards to his credit.

Note: The LDAP search facility has been shifted from <http://ldapweb.iitb.ac.in> to <http://camp.iitb.ac.in>.

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THE INSIGHT TRAINING INSTITUTE PRESENTS **Haan, JEE**

We all know about the decreased interaction between freshies and their seniors, and their consequent (perceived) lack of *fundae*. We came up with a unique solution. Since they won't learn much about IITB in their first year, why not make them learn before that? Imagine that the JEE was reinvented so as to test students' knowledge of IITB! The questions might look like the ones below...

- Instructions:** 1. This is a 3 hour examination. All questions carry equal marks. Attempt all questions. There is no negative marking
 2. This is also a take-home examination (unless, of course, you live in IITB)
 3. MI/TF/ECell/Main Building Cooperative Store welcome you to IITB (unless, of course, you don't get in)
 ***In order to make the JEE more entertaining, we have also printed ads and matrimonials

Physics

1. T_1 (blue) and T_2 (green) are two *tumtums*. T_1 is 30 m long and T_2 is 15 m long. The speed of T_1 , $V_1(x, t) = 3x^2t + 3t^2$. The speed of T_2 , $V_2(x, t) = 3xt - 5t$.

Initially T_1 is at $x = 0$ m and T_2 is at $x = 300$ m. At time $t = 0$, they start moving in a straight line towards each other. How long (in seconds) will they take to pass each other?

- A. 5 B. 10 C. 15 D. 20 E. Infinity, because when they meet, the drivers will stop and talk to each other

2. Initially, we have a professor at room temperature present in a classroom at 8:40 on a Monday morning. At 8:55 (when there are 5 students in the class, out of a possible 65) a student walks in. This causes an increase in temperature due to the specific disliking the professor has for this student.

At 9:05, a front-bencher discovers a mistake in the professor's working, and the professor has to erase everything on the board. At 9:15, course evaluation starts, and the professor cannot complete the portion he had set for himself. What is the final temperature of the professor (in Kelvin)?

- A. 298 B. 299 C. 300 D. 301 E. 6.023×10^{23}

3. Analyze the mechanics of the diagram shown on the right. Draw a free body diagram and find which of the students clinging so desperately to the *tumtum* will be the first to fall down. (Note: this is a very common situation every morning in IITB.)



There are only 6000 cakes of soap left in IITB

S.O.S.- Save Our Soap



IT IS TIME TO ACT IF WE WANT TO SAVE THIS ENDANGERED SPECIES AND ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN TOO CAN ENJOY ITS BEAUTY.

MATRIMONIAL

Wanted: groom for fair and lovely girl – IITian, (therefore) age no bar, height no bar, appearance no bar, (preferably) visits no bars.

Wanted: bride for IITian boy – female.

HINT

They forgot to jumble up the match-the-following options!

1. Read the chemical synthesis below and answer the questions that follow.

A is a hostel mess. Various deadly chemicals are prepared in it as follows: B is a watery, tasteless yellow liquid that is either too thick or too thin. B is poured on C, a grain that is usually white and soft elsewhere, but in the presence of A becomes brown and hard.

D is a collection of vintage vegetables floating in a muddy brown liquid. D is commonly and misleadingly called by an obviously false name such as *Shahi Paneer* or *Navratan Korma*. E is a silvery compound floating in sucrose syrup.

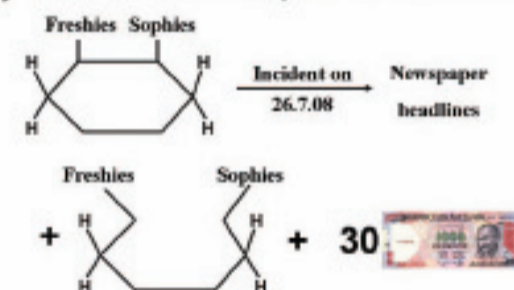
a. B, C, D and E are mixed. What is the result?

- A. *amrit* B. dynamite C. the hydrogen bomb D. cyanide
 E. Friday night's dinner

b. F is a person that ate B, C, D and E five days consecutively. What is the current state of F?

- A. healthy B. depressed C. sick D. critically ill E. dead

2. Look carefully at the reaction below, and find out where it took place.



- A. In the H4 mess B. Outside the H4 mess C. None of these

Chemistry

Mathematics

1. Let $f(S)$ = number of false promises made by candidate S in the elections in a hostel. Also, let the integral I be defined as follows:

$$I = \int_{t=\text{Election Day}-1}^{t=\text{Election Day}+1} f(S) dt$$

- A. I = infinity for S = any secretary
 B. I = infinity for S = mess secretary
 - infinity - delta for S = any other secretary
 C. I = infinity for S = mess secretary
 = 0 for S = lit secretary (he makes no promises anyway!)
 = 0 for S = wildlife secretary (because there is no such post)
 = 6000 for S = any other secretary

2. Match the following pairs, given that X = number of times an IITian in a particular year (a freshie, sophie, etc.) bathes in a week, and that Y = number of times the parents of an IITian in a particular year expect him to bathe in a week.

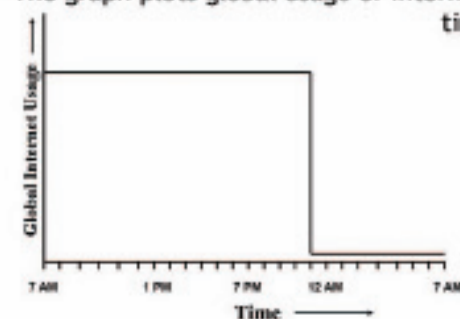
X = 3	Y = 14	1 st year
X = 1	Y = 5	2 nd year
X = 0.5	Y = 3	3 rd year
X = 0.002	Y = 0	4 th year

3. Let A and B be two events. Using Bayes' Theorem, match the following sets of A and B to the corresponding probability P(A|B).

Note: P(A|B) denotes the probability that an event A will happen if an event B has already happened.

A: getting an AA in a first year MA course B: the course is held under the new curriculum	0.001
A: getting to class before time B: <does not matter; any event>	0
A: Finding the SBI ATM empty B: The ATM does not work	1
A: liking one's hostel room at first sight B: having been exposed to psychologically traumatic incidents since birth	100

4. Give the reason for the sharp fall in this graph. The graph plots global usage of internet against the time of the day.



- A. Manipulation of the data by a freshie analyst
 B. Osama Bin Laden
 C. Global warming
 D. the LAN ban in IITB

5. Which of these numbers is purely imaginary?

- A. the NBD index of a 10 pointer
 B. the amount of money in an average fourthie's wallet
 C. the style quotient of an average IITian
 D. the number of people in an 8:30 lecture on Monday
 E. All of these

CONTEST

Find names of JEE coaching classes hidden in this page and mail us to win exciting prizes. The passage below is a good starting point.

"Attention all JEE time-never-to-come aspirants! Our dedicated rigorous training and course material will ensure that you become more brilliant than ever, fitter than fit! Our *vidhyarthi*s have always been the toppers, enroll with the best, we'll take care of the rest."

Question Paper Setters:

- The Four Horsemen (Niranjan Sridhar, Hemendra, Vishal Ranjan, Vaibhav Devanathan)
 The Unforgiven (Eeshan - 1, Neha - 2, Tanny - 3)
 Ktulu (Ghaza)

TREKKING IN THE RAIN

Niranjan on adventure treks in slushy mud under cloudy skies, about not just surviving them, but enjoying them!

Monsoon treks are something rather unique to this part of the country. Quite a few of us shrivel up at the very thought of slush all over us and slippery slopes, but the rain-drenched greens in their full bloom present a sight hard to argue against. The presence of the Sahyadris around Bombay makes for some awesome treks-day as well as night. Most of these are scattered around Karjat-Lonavala range of the Sahyadris. From extremely easy to fairly difficult, these treks are good way to relax and enjoy on weekends.

While treks on their own might hold quite a bit of charm, the rain factor makes it something rather unique. Overcast skies, gusts of blustery winds and waterfalls en route to the top are perfect antidotes to any fatigue you might experience while going up. Heck you might see something as insane as horizontal rainfall!(stop sniggering, you had to be there to see it)

What to carry?

1. Good shoes are a must. Otherwise you will spend half of your time just getting the grip of the slippery road.
2. Enough water and food. It is always better to carry packed food.
3. Torches are a must when you're out for a night trek. A group of braveheart mechie from H13 went out on a night trek to Matheran a couple of years back at 2 in the night. All the fatigue they experienced was from evading packs of chasing dogs.
4. You might just want to leave your cellphones behind. Also, umbrellas are generally useless. Carry a windcheater or a raincoat if you must carry something.

Here we give you easy to follow directions to three treks:

1. Peb Fort: Situated near Matheran, Peb Fort is slightly long and tough. Take an early morning train to Neral and ask around for directions to Peb Fort. Otherwise go out on the east side and look for electricity towers on the hills. Follow the electricity towers till the second tower. After that there are clearly marked arrows which will direct you to the top. Filled with tricky rock patches, rickety ladders and awesome wind on the top, Peb is a fulfilling trek.

2. Karnala Bird Sanctuary: The best time to go is early morning, when you can see the sunrise. Take a train

down to Panvel via Kurla or take a bus to Vashi and then to Panvel. Once there, hunt for a State Transport Bus which goes down to Karnala at the Bus Depot and get on. You always have the option of taking an auto of course if you're feeling rich. There's a fort at the top which is supposed



to be shaped like a thumb(none of us thought it even remotely resembled a thumb). The climb is good for beginners and doesn't take more than an hour and a half. The waterfalls enroute are scenic. If you're into birdwatching or appreciate nature in general, you'd find this to be the right place.

3. Visapur Fort: Situated near Malavali, Visapur is adjacent to Lohagad. Reach Lonavala by an early morning train from Karjat or Kalyan that is going to Pune. After Lonavala, take a local to Malavali. From there start walking towards Bhaje caves. One small path diverges from the main road and takes you to Visapur. The way to top is through thick jungle and trek is made better by the last climb through the waterfall near the top. Again this trek is a must for any trekking enthusiast.

Words of Caution: Do not try and imitate James Bond. There have been incidents in the past. And the slopes will be somewhat slippery as well. Also, do be on the lookout for overcharging auto drivers.

State Transport buses are a great alternative to cut down costs on your journey, so always be on the lookout for them. If you have an experience to share, do send it in to us.

(Niranjan Parab is a fourth year student of the Department of Aerospace Engineering. He can be contacted at niranjanpar@iitb.ac.in)

Continued From Page 1

Apart from that, common questions of genuine concerns were regarding the academic standards at the new IITs and the difference between a dual degree and B.Tech. program in terms of academic load and job prospects. Queries were also made regarding the minor program at IIT Bombay and the student life and academic load in general. Doubts concerning second counseling for the reallocation of seats and branch change weren't uncommon either.

To add to the above, there were a whole lot of weird questions which struck the counselors out of the blue and left them dazed for a while. As if the questions about ragging and drug and alcohol situation in IIT weren't awkward enough, people came up with even wackier doubts. Quite a few parents were asking about getting admission for their ward, claiming they had a recommendation letter from a politician high above. One of the parents wanted to know whether in a dual degree program you get a single certificate which certifies both your B.Tech. and M.Tech. degrees or two separate certificates, one for each degree. Apparently, the decision of branch rested heavily on that specific detail.

Analysis in Retrospect

Overall, if one looks at the plan, it had many immediate advantages. Student counselors were able to connect to the candidates pretty well which allowed them to handle queries easily and they were able to do more justice to the doubts as opposed to professors who generally failed to give pointed replies. The candidates in turn opened up quite easily to the students which resulted in a more candid Q and A session. Counselors also helped the parents clear their doubts about issues like documents required, procedure of filling up the choice sheet, second counseling etc. It was important because the IITB staff wasn't available to handle these doubts and the professors when they explained the system to parents in their official address weren't very clear. Parents could cross question the counselors here till they were clear about the procedures. Counselors also helped in crowd management and coordinated between the students and IITB Staff, thus making the procedure smooth. All in all, student counselors made the handling of such huge number of candidates possible which could have been an administrative nightmare had they been not there.

Although, the system worked pretty efficiently, it wasn't free of problems. The counselors weren't able to handle doubts about particular branches which exist only in other IITs like Mathematics and Computing, Paper and Pulp Engineering etc. Also there was no selection criterion for student counselors and no specific standards that they had to meet before being eligible for the post. Considering the big responsibility that counselors had there ought to be an eligibility criterion for it. "Next year we are looking at expanding the program to other IITs and having two student counselors from each IIT and they can handle doubts about branches particular to their institute", says Manas. This proposal of course will have to be approved by the Chairman JEE and other IITs. That and an appropriate selection criterion for counselors promise to greatly enhance the efficiency of this system.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, the success or failure of a plan depends on the response it achieved. One must say that this program was a win-win situation for all. The parents and the students were very happy to get candid and elaborate replies to the doubts they had. The IITB staff was pretty happy with the help that they got from the student counselors in handling the candidates. And most importantly, the counselors themselves were very pleased with their job. Although, the administrative work involved was resented a bit, but the healthy remuneration and other perks more than made up for the strenuous load. As Mayank Singhal, one of the counselors, puts it, "It was a nice experience helping students. I was reminded of the situation I was in two years ago when I was deciding my branch. I had no one to talk to. I am glad that these candidates did not have to face the same situation. They at least had someone to consult."

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SHOUTBACK

We NEED Feedback.

Help us improve, the way you want us to.
InsIghT also invites freelance articles

Email: insight@iitb.ac.in Newsgroup: iitb.insight

Web: <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight>,
<http://insightiitb.org>

Announcements

InsIghT is starting a new short story column in its print issue as well as on the bulletin board. The word limit for the same is **600 words**. Send in your entries to insight@iitb.ac.in with the subject as "Short Story".

The **Insight Internship Live Blog** is now online!

To know about what actually goes on in summer internships, please log on to <http://insightiitb.org/internships/>