

Cover Story
Not another brick in the wall

In Conversation with
The Director
Almost Famous
Murty VR Mantha

Big Stories

The Sacrilegious Privilege
The Rant of the Purple Cow



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Gaurav Bachhav, IIT-R, IIM-B (2012-2014)

Tanvi Jindal
GRE 1500



The First Aretian to make it to IIM-Ahmedabad:
Vasudha Khurana, IIT-R, IIM-A (2012-2014)

As a student with an engineering background, I did not think I needed much help preparing for CAT. As far as knowledge is concerned it is possible to get that from books but what I did need was encouragement, motivation and tips on how to go about studying and preparing. The one thing that is distinctly different in Arete compared to other institutes in my city was the personal attention each student gets. I found Arete to be specially helpful in my GD/PI/Essay preparation as their method laid stress on introspection instead of handing out answers on a plate. The patience with which Mr. Abhishek has supported and encouraged each and every student in my batch has been commendable.

I thank Mr. Abhishek Raj and Mr. Anant Mittal for all the time and effort they put in to help me realize my potential and reach this far.

Vasudha Khurana IIM-A
(Batch of 2012-2014)

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Ex-Chairman's Address

All these days when I was in Watch Out!, I'd often sit and wonder – what's our aim? I always knew we were certainly different in principle and approach from any other group on campus, and that chapos or bakar sessions couldn't possibly be the only reasons one would work for Watch Out! There had to be something more – the eye to identify and voice relevant issues, to be able to write and hope to be a mouthpiece of the people on campus, to be an instrument of change... very extraordinary claims, all of these. But at the same time, precisely the reasons why IIT Roorkee needs us to stay in rude health for as long as possible. While I take pride in saying that we've done well for most part of the score years that we've been around, there's also a sense of responsibility that it entrusts upon us to carry on the good work. The journey hasn't been easy. We've hit rock bottom more than once, but what was more important that we came out on top with flying colours every time we did. Surviving 20 long years in such adverse conditions without any material incentives on offer should be branded as nothing but absolutely remarkable, something that bears testimony to the conviction and all the creativity and hard work put in by generations of this organisation. And I feel honoured to have successfully led one such generation of extremely talented individuals for a year.

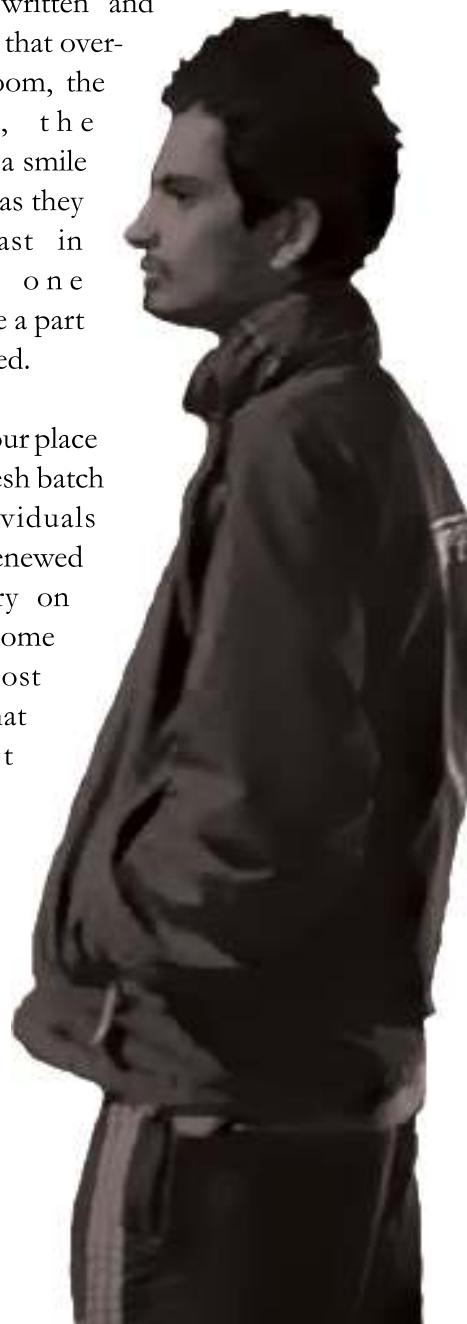
Back in the freshmen year, I had applied for Watch Out on a whim. 3 incredible years down the line and countless memories later, I consider myself plain lucky to have formed a part of such motley group of individuals, and by extension to have hoped to contribute, however humbly, to the betterment of this institute on the whole. This year we tried to make our news updates more accessible through the website wona.co.in, the WONNA blog and online social networks, apart from revamping the general tone and approach of news related content in our magazines. We also never hesitated to experiment, bringing out couple of newsletters with extensive coverage of major relevant events this year, namely Placements, Inter-IIT, Cognizance etc. Although it has been a year full of contradictions and challenging scenarios for us on

multiple fronts, nothing stops us from taking full responsibility and assuring you, dear reader, of the WONNA-esque class, you've always been used to, in the future.

Well, it's about time I bid adieu and all that. True to the nature of all good things, this extraordinary journey as a part of Watch Out! has, too, come to a final end. As I type away this nostalgically nuanced and sepia tinted version of my life and times here, an overwhelming melange of emotions grips me from inside. Reminiscences of the OPs that we took, the articles written and nightovers pulled in that over-crowded Cautley room, the recruitments, the meetings... all bring a smile to my face as much as they leave me downcast in memories of one magazine I was once a part of and so fondly loved.

As we retire to find our place in the audience, a fresh batch of talented individuals huddles up with renewed enthusiasm to carry on the legacy. For some reason, time almost stands still in that particular spot opposite the central library that shall always be my stairway to heaven. The circle is now complete.

All the best, guys. And thank you for everything.



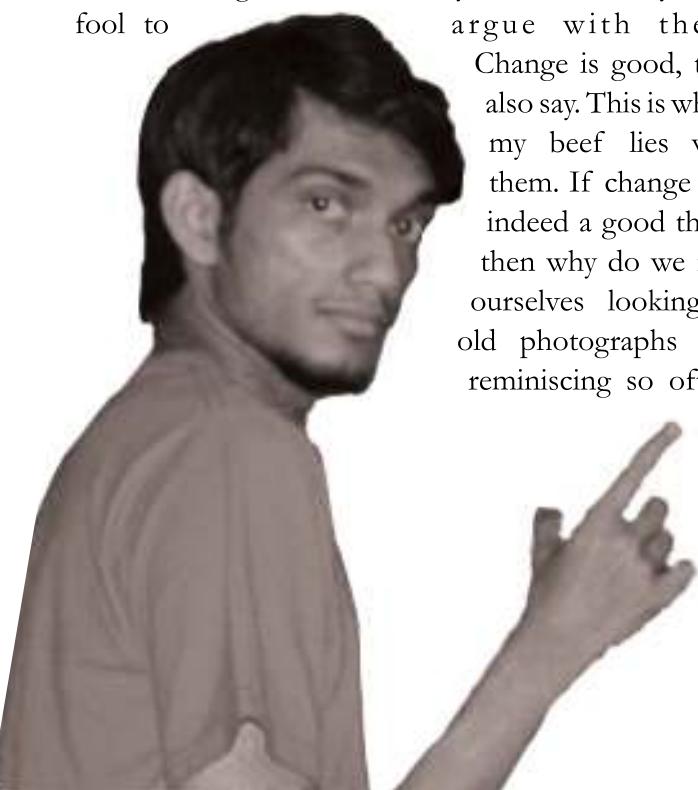
Suoicodilaipxecitsiligarfilacrepus

For better or for worse, I've always been a linear and logical writer. Okay, perhaps not so much logical as say, literal. Whatever the case may be, this is probably the reason why my poetry writing career peaked at 'Roses are red, violets are VIOLET GODDAMNIT!' thereby completely ruining the 14th of February for me forever (refer previous column for more details). For worse then, I suppose.

Another unfortunate consequence of this rather unenviable creative flaw has been my utter inability to wax lyrical on even the least maudlin of subjects. So pardon me if this article does not match up to your expectations on the sentiment scale – this being my last mag and all. But for all my tall claims of stoicism, I cannot in all honesty, deny that writing this particular article has been a lot harder than I had imagined. And not because my godforsaken MS-Word just crashed, and I'm typing this on Notepad with one hand as I hold a thesaurus in the other. Okay well, that too, but mostly because as I write this, I come to realize for the first time, the absolute finality of it all. That Watchout and I have parted for good.

Change is inevitable, they say. I couldn't agree more. Clichéd though it may be, it would only take a fool to argue with them.

Change is good, they also say. This is where my beef lies with them. If change was indeed a good thing, then why do we find ourselves looking at old photographs and reminiscing so often?



Nostalgia for one, would cease to exist. As far as I can see, the only silver lining in watching another batch graduate is the being at the receiving end of a sudden burst of magnanimity manifesting itself in the form of generous chapos. And I shudder to think of what it would be like when I'm on the other side. And not just because of the disastrous effect it would have on my bank balance.

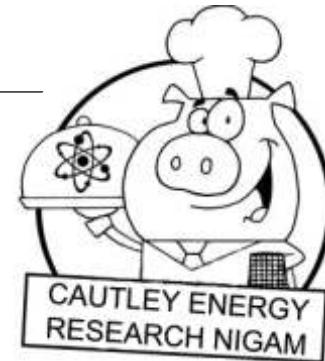
Farewells are meant to be bittersweet affairs - bitter because of the estrangements and goodbyes, and sweet because of the new avenues opening up to you in a whole new world. The farewells after my 10th and 12th class were replete with such mixed emotions. The WONAN farewell however, failed to leave any such saccharine aftertaste. When you've spent a good part of your college years with one of the most talented, vibrant and fun groups only to be shown the door later, it is but inevitable to experience sadness beyond measure. The only thing to look forward to now is the constant deluge of ennui and nostalgia that will follow.

It's been three years since I decided to act on a sudden bout of wayward whim and try out for the self proclaimed 'coolest group on campus', a considerable span of time in anyone's books. Three years that may, in the larger scheme of things, seem rather inconsequential. But three years that I will fondly remember as I take the occasional jaunt down memory lane god knows how many years from now. To say that Watchout has shaped me into what I am today would be an exaggeration. But it wouldn't be amiss to give credit where it's due.

I never expected that my last contribution to this magazine to be a schmaltzy piece devoid of my usual corniness. But then again, I never realized that my last contribution to this magazine would come so soon.

The show however will go on. The baton has been passed. A new set of names will soon adorn the page that once held ours. The wheel of time has completed yet another irreversible turn. For once however, I'd rather it hadn't.

Cautley Energy Research Nigam



Leon M.Lederman, the physicist who named it the God Particle, once said, that finding the Higgs Boson would be like undoing the confusion that would follow. Quoting from a book which is older than the Bible itself, the Clandestine Cautley Canteen Recipe Book (C3RB, for future reference)11:1-9, the Tower of EC story:

“ It came about as they journeyed down, that they found a plain in the land of Gaon and settled there. They said to one another, “Come, let us make pateez and bargars and burn them thoroughly.” And they used paneer for cheese, and they used paneer for sausage. They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a canteen, and a Large Hadron Vertical Collider (EC tower) connected to it, whose top will reach into heaven or from where we can look across the walls of KB.” BHUPPI came down to see the canteen and the EC tower which the sons of men had built. BHUPPI said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same old Maggi. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them”.

While the Director of CERN, presently known as Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire and formerly known as Cautley Energy Research Nigam was busy announcing the discovery of Higgs Boson, it must be mentioned that, WONNA hacked into the classified archives of the CERN, to expose the occult link between the successes at the LHC (EC Tower) and the Cautley Canteen. The Cautley Canteen, aided in its research by the EC tower, as explained earlier, aims at preparing each one of the sophisticated dishes mentioned in the book which have a connection too abstruse for humans to understand with the discovery of particles that complete the standard model. But after the discovery and the exposé by WONNA (the C3RB cables are now up on the website for the eyes of the general public), even Dr. Lederman is baffled, befuddled and confused beyond limits. Now that God helped in the discovery of the Higgs Boson, He has proven He exists. Now, according to a genius Mr. Adams, He has proven He doesn't exist because proof denies faith and without faith, He doesn't exist. Here's how the events actually unfolded on the day of the supposedly historic discovery:

Timeline 4th July, 2012

11.59 am

Knowing very well he is going to be served Paneer, Cautley matka orders Cheese Bargar.

12.02 pm

Bargar Bhaiya finishes his beedi and starts making the bargar out of nothing, onerously following the aforementioned book. He is conscious of the huge but secret role he is to play in the historic day.

12.08 pm

The canteen boy achieves the decibel level of a small jet plane as he shouts “Bhaiya, Bargar”. The unsuspecting Matka, takes his food, oblivious to the fact that the Bhaiya is the secret agent of God himself and the recipe is a grand design to give him great clarity, moments after the first bite.

12.12 pm

Surely enough, as the Matka takes a bite, he realizes that the 5 sigma signal at around 125 GeV is something dramatic.

12.15 pm

He knew the “eureka” moment a few hours before at the EC Tower, but, thinking over a cheese bargar always seemed to put things in perspective. (He has no idea about the C3RB.)

12.22 pm

He orders Cola shikanji from the Cautley Canteen and goes to the shop to get a message pack where he is asked to get his student's copy.

12.28 pm

He texts CERN about the recent developments, and they decide to hold a press conference.

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The Dark Night of the Soul

In the deepest vaults of fears, the ignoramus sometimes locks a few unrecognised ones but inevitably suffers a dreaded encounter with them. When the terrible occurs, life slips to a point of no return, just like when, as the myth goes, pandora opened the box of troubles. The metaphorical opening would be nothing but a deep consideration of reality, of life's purpose and its intrinsic meaning. With our daily preoccupations , we have consciously closed the door on these perturbing questions, contemplating on which, would frighten us more than Dracula or the great Cthulhu ever did, and loosen our hold on our perceived reality. You think, you therefore might not be. Whether you believe in God or the Goddamn Higgs field, whether you are a carpenter or a rocket scientist, the president or the man without a country, the convict or the jury, whether the 10 pointer or you pass as well as Queen Elizabeth might in a lawn Tennis match, you don't know an objective answer to the "why"s. A Nihilist is one who came to terms with the worst of human fears, someone who stopped and took notice of the huge holes in our understanding while the rest of the world continued the meaningless sprint. What do we pursue all day? To what end? are we good as we pretend to be? why should we follow the rules? Gushing along with this river of questions are perhaps

others: why should we study? Or be sociable? Or care about whether $P=NP$?

While the Nihilist has let go of the very strings that held his life, as we know it, together, having our morning coffee and reading the papers with a sense of detachment will have us making inroads in living our lives much better than doubting the existence of our existence. But, beauty lies halfway there, in the golden mean, as Aristotle once said. In the infinite real line of numbers, it lies at zero. So what if you aren't the man who knows infinity? So what if you can't answer these ontological questions? A marooned castaway would be better off in an obscure island rather than in the middle of the rough seas. Eat when hungry, sleep when tired, engage in work that makes you happy. In essence, we are all agnostics who have learnt that if all is not knowable, some things are. If you don't believe in indoctrination, perhaps you believe in education. If you don't believe in inherent morality, perhaps you believe in responsibility to the self and others. If you don't believe in order, you perhaps shouldn't believe in anarchy either. A Nihilist, by his own logic, shouldn't accept the very philosophy of Nihilism itself.

Graphene-The Material of the Future

Modern day computing processes require an increase in processing power of microprocessors without compromising on the chip dimensions. With distributed computing and quantum computing ready to flourish, the lack of quality semiconductor materials has been a major factor limiting their growth. But, not anymore.

The physics Nobel in 2010 was offered to researchers, Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov for their work on Graphene, their serendipitous discovery obtained by peeling a layer of graphite with an adhesive tape. 'Graphene', the term coined by Hanns-Peter Boehm, refers to monoatomic layer of carbon atoms. The intriguing properties of Graphene are due to the hexagonal chains of carbon atoms. This arrangement makes the material particularly strong, despite being so thin that a pile of three million layers would only be a

millimeter thick. For starters, Graphene is stronger than diamond, has about 200 times the breaking strength of steel and yet more stretchable than chewing gum. It is 97.3% transparent and referred to as a 'zero gap' semiconductor for it is one of the most conductive materials known.

Just when the scientific community thought the days of Moore's Law, which predicts doubling of transistors on a chip every year, were numbered, Geim and Novoselov in 2008 created the smallest possible transistor out of Graphene, which is 1 atom thick and 10 atoms wide. Last year, IBM reported Graphene transistors with an on-off rate of 100 GHz were developed in their labs. Because of its high conducting nature, prototypes of ultra-capacitors, photo-detectors and ultrafast lasers are also underway in numerous universities across the globe.

Researchers have found that passing water over a graphene surface generates a tiny amount of electricity. While it's not enough power to drive consumer devices, it is enough to power sensors used for discovering oil or gas. These sensors are placed in water that flows through cracks in the ground. As an added benefit, Graphene is inherently flexible as well as strong, making it simpler to wrap around sensors.

Graphene is probably the greatest material discovered

since the inception of semiconductor electronics and the rise of silicon. It hints at a world of electronics beyond silicon, an extension to Moore's law, and gives tantalizing vistas into the future with transparent batteries and stretchable screens. While we know little about the full potential of this wonder material, the possibility of us sporting augmented-reality flexible goggles or foldable smartphones, in the near future, never seemed brighter.

Almost Famous

After spending what seemed to be an eternity in Roorkee, Murty left it for the dry lands of Gujarat. While on campus, he was the president of Kshitij as well as the additional secy of the literary section. Apart from these credentials, Murty won the Tata Crucible quiz in his final year, and was also famous in the lawn foota circuits of IITR, known for being "boundlessly loquacious and immeasurably garrulous". He is an avid quizzler famous for his clever ways of working-out answers, a Simon and Garfunkel nut (Then, how has he not heard the sound of silence ?) and a talented writer. WON A wishes him the best at IIM-A and for the future.

WONA: No one is spared our customary first question.

MVR: My first crush was Nikitha Reddy, a third year archi student when I was in my first (Always the "dream big" guy, huh?). She was also in kshitij, that's how I knew her.

WONA: We reckon you among those with many names. Which one is the strangest?

MVR: I've had a few, the first being 'fernindo'. In the beginning of first year, a drunk bloke came up to me and said "You look like Fernindo, yah Fernindo." (Fernando, the Sri Lankan cricketer? We see the resemblance!)

WONA: Your quizzing dexterity has overawed a lot of us. What got you started?

MVR: I've been quizzing since 3rd grade, so I guess that experience counts.

WONA: Tata Crucible, IIM-A. How does it feel to be whipping up some recognition and fame?

MVR: I guess the IIM-A had a bigger impact, I don't feel much different though. But it's obviously great to be recognized. I would have liked it to have happened a little earlier (of course), because now the time is here to say farewell to the Institute. (The interview was taken towards the end of last semester.)

WONA: You were part of Kshitij. Your views on the WON A – Kshitij rivalry, if you believe it exists.

MVR: They both write different content. The only point where there could be rivalry is finance. They both go to the same market, and by now most shops are aware that these two independent magazines exist. Also, the recruitments perhaps. (Ah, yes. Especially in Kasturba)

WONA: Last but not the least, your views on WON A.

MVR: WON A is an amazing group, and have some of the most amazing people. But somewhere along the road you've digressed in the attempt to be humorous. Just go back to your roots and that would be perfect!



The Sacrilegious Privilege

Having a happening life or knowing someone who has one is often considered sacrilege in the profession of engineering. Budding engineers like us, who look forward to occasions like cultural fests, if and when they happen, as a source of getting to know people apart from the residents of KB and SB, need not be reminded of this fact. In these tough times of solitude and desperation, WONAs attempts to crack the code to the social (read social as dating from henceforth) world as JEE gets easier and the holy ratio keeps improving.

Disclaimer: The events and places mentioned henceforth are real and any reference to persons living or dead is purely intentional and deliberate. We are a news magazine after all!

The following are some astonishing excerpts from a half burnt diary found near the Archi department last semester, "Dear diary, last night was really fun. I was having a wonderful time with her and then the stupid internet in Jawahar bhawan stopped working and I could not access Omegle anymore." After some more probing into the matter, it was found that this diary belonged to a certain infamous student of the then 'final year Meta which we shall all remember as the Cogni batch. The diary continues, "I know I might not be among the prettiest ones of my sex but even he who never shuts up has an entourage and so does my arch nemesis, even though he ventures as a lone wolf in the quizzing arena. Maybe I should have been some xyz co-ordinator in cogni; it pains to know schlum too, that he who has beat me to it.

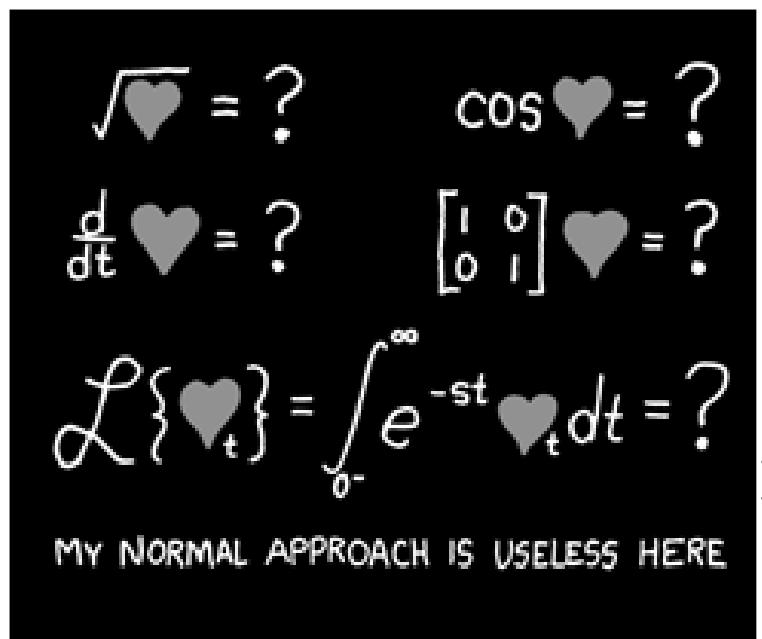
I bid adieu to this land of Afghani chicken and cautley foota and head to the wild west, where my baritone is my only hope."

A piece of information that was the highlight of last summer was that the number of girls clearing JEE had nearly doubled and using complex quantum probabilistic equations, experts at WONAs believe that the probability of a guy ending up with a girl at the end of next year has increased by a factor of 'e'. The probability of a girl scoring a guy is unaltered and hence remains unity. Each year, a guy or two who seem to ruin hopes of a thousand others with their good looks and natural charm, come along and invariably end up with the prettiest dames of R. The rest, in a bid to enter through the hallowed doors of the dating world, either resort to sports or the Cult Soc. The children of the lesser God take the moral high ground, join the NCC or NSS and finally take refuge in the shady recesses of the internet. So here's the first commandment: **Cultural Council or bust!**- If you do not get through to the mainstream sections and join the ones that produce future electricians and sound system technicians, it is advisable to upgrade yourself by the second year. If you choose a sport, it better be basketball and if you choose NSS, you better end up becoming the General Secretary.



Eventually, by the end of their first year, most female students are in relationships or at least seem to be. Most of the single male students (which would be nearly all of them) begin to screw their CGPAs and realise that there is more to life than grades, women and a future in general. This spiritual renaissance is a result of hours of internet surfing coupled with some western herbal techniques and extensive use of Russian and German fluids. Besides, a few gentlemen like Mr. Ganga Hill resort to textbook techniques of mating and become the epitome of desperation in their attempt to master

the 'game'. Some others like Mr. Beemar Brobhit, accept that it is not in their destiny to enjoy the company of the fairer sex and learn to be contended with the success of their favourite football team. However, fact remains that most residents of R yearn for female company and envy the fortunate ones and that brings us to commandment two: **Be prepared and shower daily**. One can never be sure as to when the opportune moment might arrive. Besides, rethink about your degree of 'straightness' while the Indian parliament debates upon Section 377.



Courtesy: xkcd

Now that we have established the need for IITR's love life, we must also realise that it is as competitive as the hunger games, second only to the race for getting a branch change. Hence, it is as difficult as staying on the top once you have reached there. Even though it may sound cliched, one must learn to respect the opposite gender and (this part is especially for the females) not take any undue advantage of the unfair ratio. For the gentlemen, learn to be gentlemen and follow some simple rules formulated over the course of history:

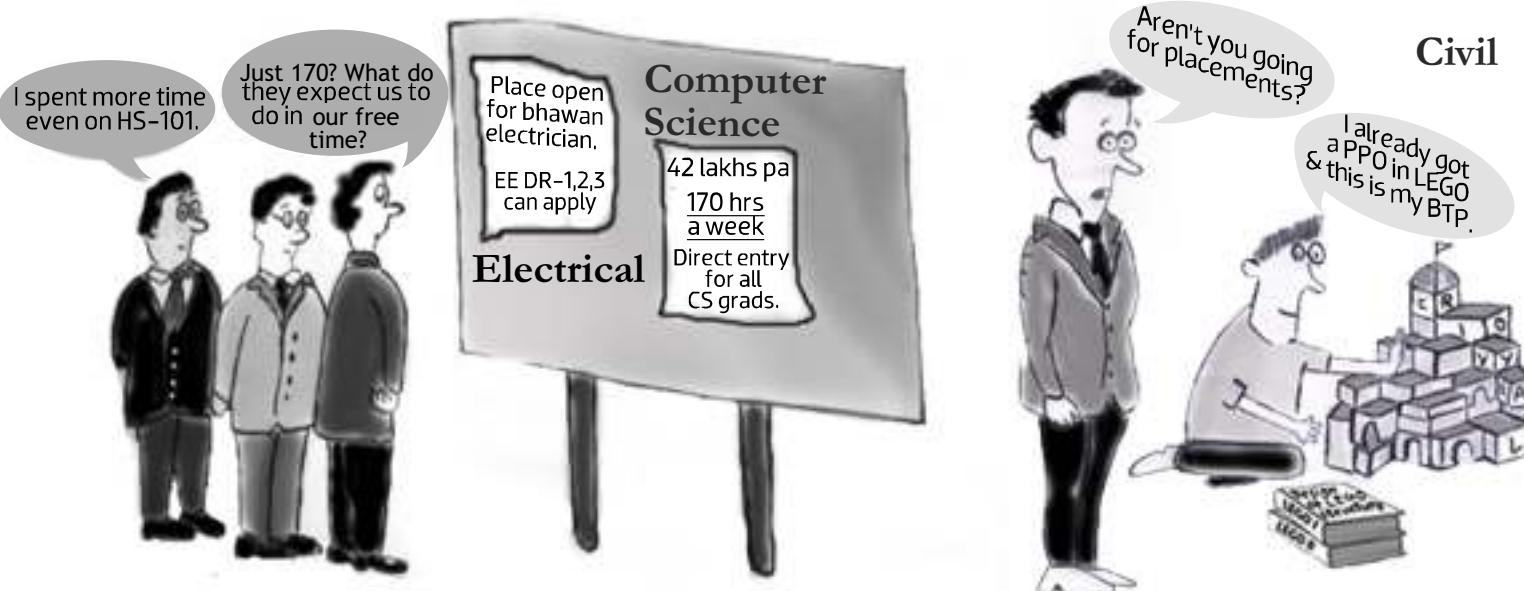
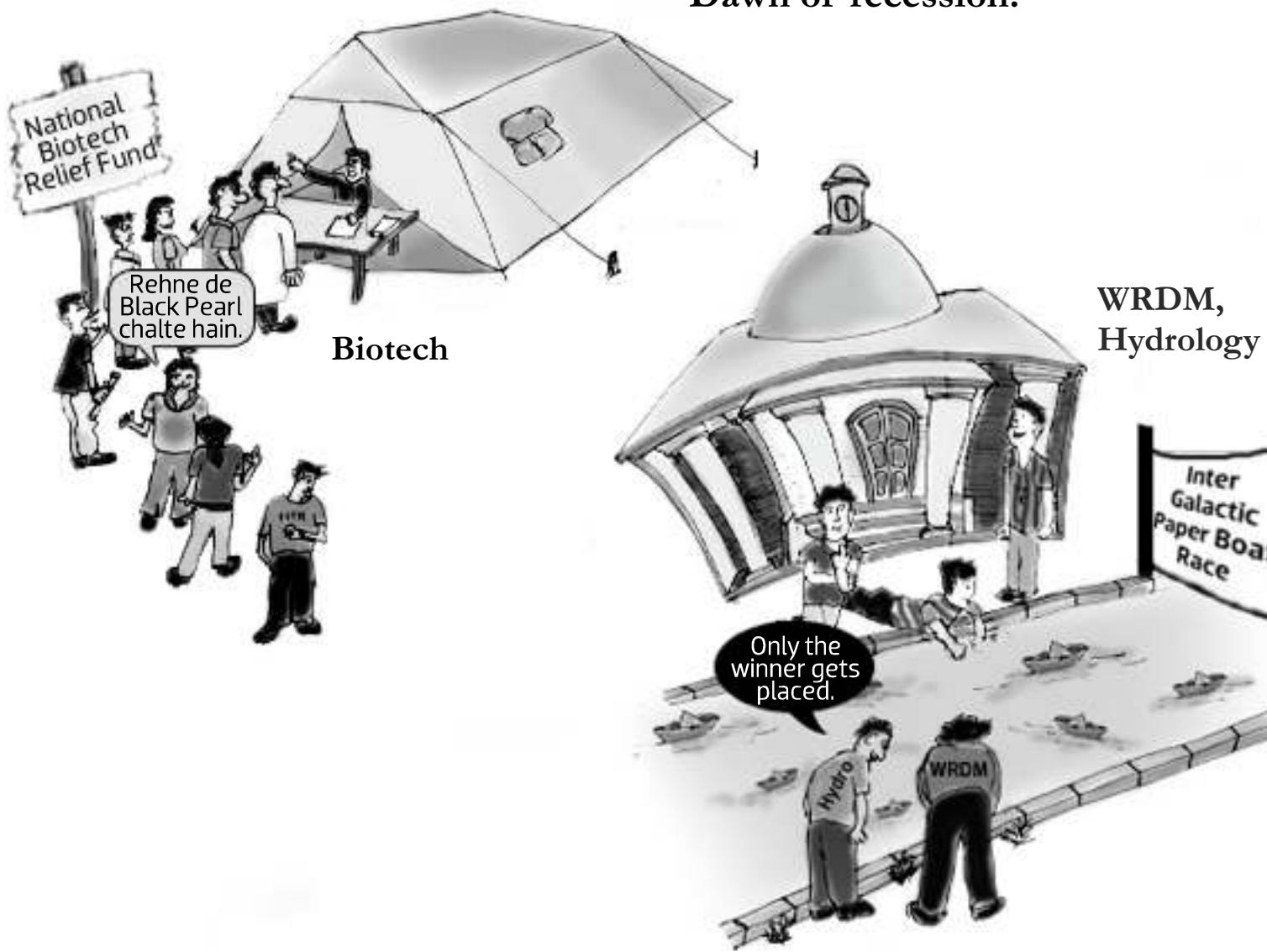
- Play basketball or learn to play the guitar.
- Stop complaining about low standards and remember that you aren't the best of God's creations either.
- Be nice and hygienic. Contrary to popular belief, the smell of sweat is not an aphrodisiac.
- Manage to increase your pocket money or start gambling, because you are going to need the bucks badly.
- For the really desperate ones, remember that all this doesn't matter and that there are things of greater importance and a band called Pink Floyd.

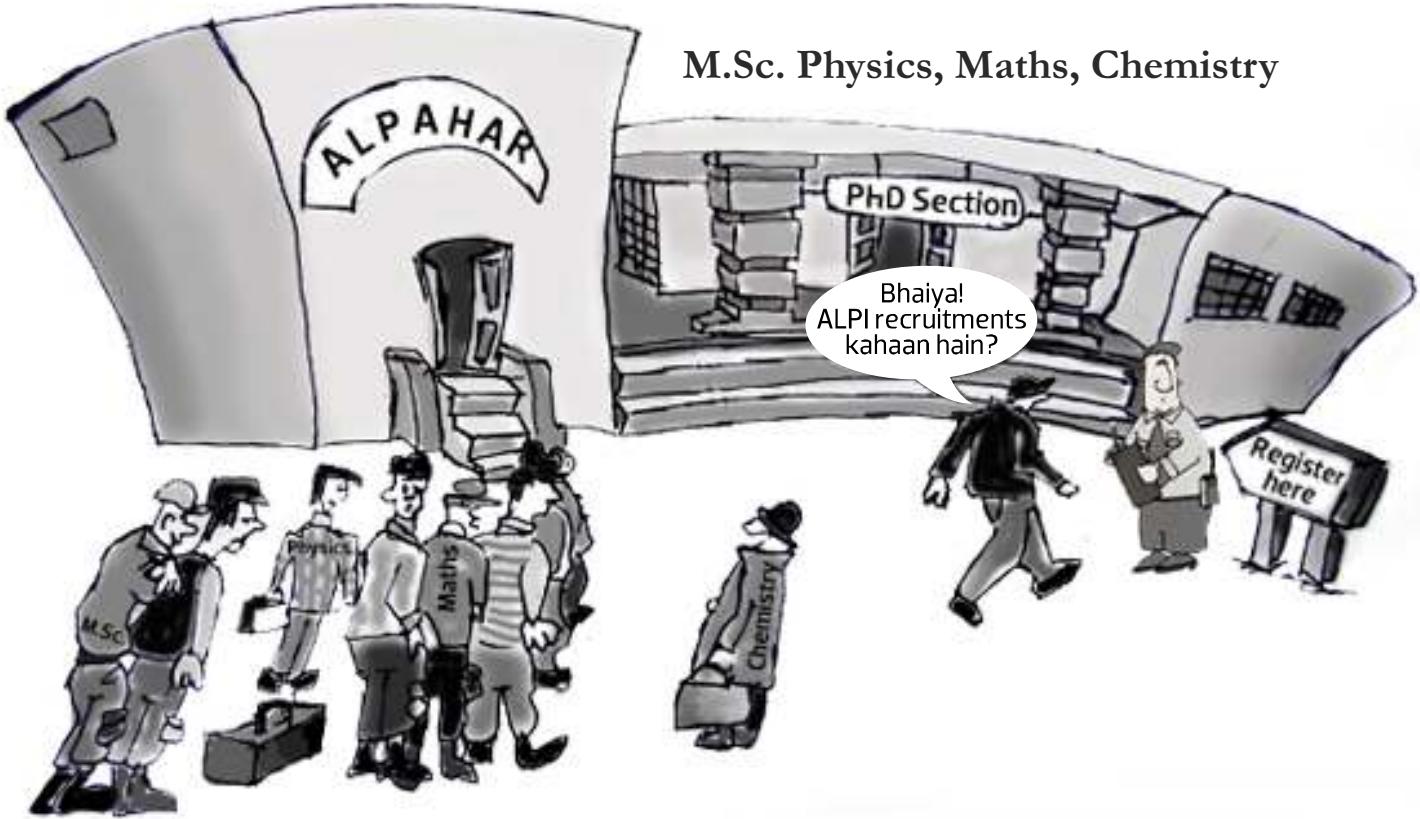
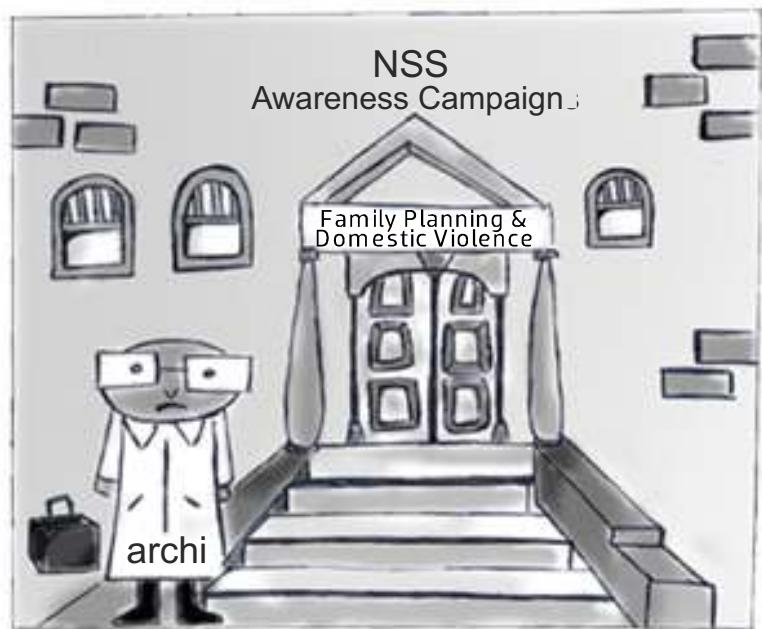
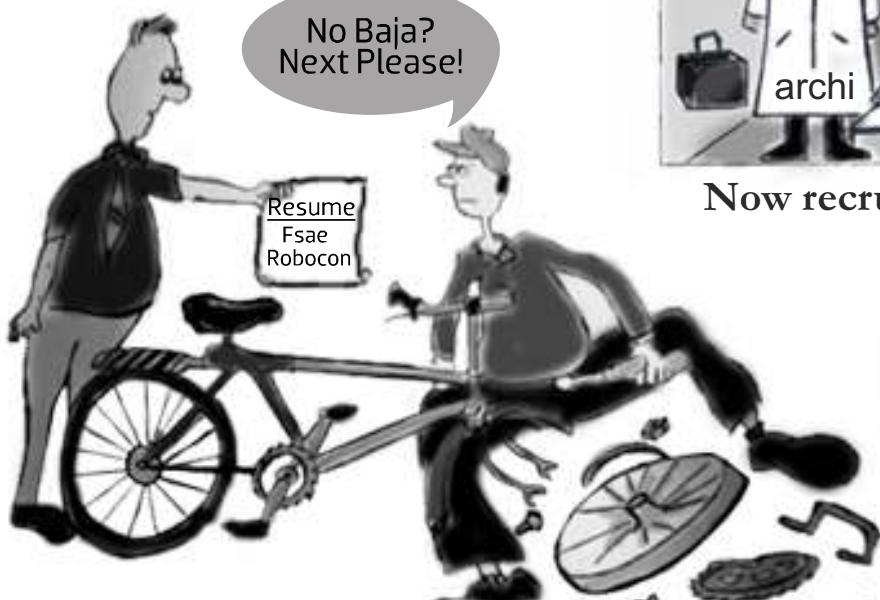
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'On-Campus' Placements

Dawn of recession.



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A black and white illustration depicting a chaotic scene. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit and tie lies on the ground, looking up. Behind him, a woman in a dark dress is also on the ground. In the center, a man in a light-colored shirt and dark pants is running away from the viewer. To his left, another man in a dark suit is running towards the viewer. The background is filled with other figures, some appearing to be in motion or falling. The overall atmosphere is one of disorder and panic.

Son,
I told you summer
was a farce

BATCH OF 2012



S E N A T E H A L L

Not another brick in the wall

For a long time now, IITians have been to investment banks and corporate firms what Pitbull has been to mediocre American pop singers: their only way to break even without someone else having to bail them out. The IITs have never been in the vanguard of what was, in part, the purpose of their creation: some good old research and infrastructure development in the country. The HRD ministry recently set up a committee to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of reforms which recommended that the IITs produce up to 10,000 PhD graduates by 2020-25, and surprisingly, there seem to be no doubts expressed about achieving this number considering the quality of research in the institutes. 'Wishful Thinking' is an understatement considering how new ground is broken everyday in IIT-R using machines from West Germany. WONA attempts to cover the state of research, mostly at the undergraduate level and the challenges that lie ahead.

It is a sad truth that according to most of the students in this institute today, being another brick in the wall is all there is to hope for. The rather repugnant transition from being an ambitious, Irodov-solving, diligent IIT-aspirant focussed on understanding the many intelligent pranks of QED and organic chemistry to the easygoing, negligent cookie, sponging off notes in a last-minute bid to pull off "decent" grades in the end-sems, is conveniently blamed on the institute and its grading system.

However, generalizing this transition would be talking through one's hat. There are many in the institute who in pursuit of their childhood dreams sacrificed their monetary interests to answer their calling. Such unstoppable forces battling against the immovable object that applied science represents, are scarce but have always been around in R.

The encouraging faculty members at the SRIC (Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy) office, say that there are about 50 UG students who are actively involved in research activities in various

Atulya Yellepeddi, a former Institute gold medallist (2009), is currently pursuing the MIT-WHOI Joint Program in Electrical & Ocean Engineering.

Rakesh Agrawal, B.Tech CSE, 1974, considered the father of data mining, currently heads search labs at Microsoft Research.

Amit Singhal, B.tech CSE, 1989, a PhD from Cornell University is currently the Director of Search Quality at Google.

departments. Contrary to popular perception, they believe that one can understand what research is about, even at an undergraduate level, although one may not be equipped to specialize as yet. Most among the faculty believe that superior software skills and a natural flair for application, both of which are valuable gifts for a researcher, are invariably present in most of the students here.



The outlays for Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy projects at IIT-R are crores of rupees every year. The Dean, SRIC, provides IPR support and promotes faculty research projects. The rules and guidelines have gotten more relaxed and research-friendly since the arrival of the new director. The interaction the SRIC office has with students, especially at the UG level, is zilch and perhaps justifiably so. However, Dr. Pradeep Bhargava, Dean, SRIC, has valuable advice for students with an aptitude for research early on. He says the best way to take one's interests a step ahead is through an academic intern. The SRIC office provides a research grant of Rs. 7,500 for U.G. students if such a grant is approved by the principal investigator. Here are some proposals which could be considered by the students and the faculty:

NewsLetter & Presentation

One step forward is bringing out a newsletter with information on various projects that are being pursued by the departments, say, once every semester. An R&D magazine called SCITECH is supposed to be published by the SRIC office but no one has heard of it in a while. A departmental newsletter, however, with details of research projects, would be highly useful; publishing and circulation would all be in a day's work for the departments. It's also in the pipeline that each department gives a presentation, perhaps, annually, to the students, briefing them about various sponsored research projects that will take place that year.

SURA

The Dean, SRIC, wants students to know that SURA (Summer Undergraduate Research Award) will be much more stingy from now on, ensuring quality, compromising on the number selected. Some of the SURA students continue working on their projects during the semester and give periodic presentations to report their progress. Lately, the research output of SURA has come under the scanner, as having publications in renowned journals has become a parameter to measure the performance of research. The Dean himself believes that academic interns outside are a better option for students when compared to SURA.

Journal Clubs and Student Groups

UG students pursuing research are usually lone wolves, doubtful of the existence of others from their pack. A huge motivation for these students would be company, in the form of student research groups. Looking at BAJA, ROBOCON or SDSLabs, which have demonstrated how student groups are more capable than the individuals taken together, through discipline and a P2P teaching and learning system, so to speak, forming theoretical groups seems a foolproof method

for accelerated learning. One may argue that research is basically a solitary activity and moreover discovering another soul pursuing the same research topic isn't a piece of cake, but a research group could work wonders.

The students of the Physics Department, started a physics journal club that engages in lectures that are attended even by faculty members, on various topics learned during their interns. It would be a good idea for other departments to take a leaf out of the Physics Dept's book and have their own discussion sessions. PAG (Programming and Algorithms Group) is perhaps the most active theory group. Started by Shashank Kumar, B.Tech, CSE, batch of 2012, it consists of passionate programmers from different departments who prepare for ACM-ICPC and conduct many programming competitions on campus. Perhaps the only other theoretical group was founded by Raghav Venkat, B.Tech, ME, batch of 2012. This group of math enthusiasts meets on the weekends, for solving interesting problems in the foundations of mathematics videlicet Algebra, Number Theory, Graph Theory and so on. Raghav himself, in his final semester, took very interesting, open lectures on Inequalities, Congruences and other such basic topics of high school mathematics, encouraging his juniors to pursue their mathematical interests.

Raghav Venkat, after his first year, was the youngest speaker ever to be invited to present his work at the International Congress of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics at Beijing. He worked on pattern formation in Type 1 superconductors in Simon Fraser University, Canada, as a summer intern, and gave a 90 minute talk at the Pacific Institute for Mathematical Sciences(SFU Chapter).

Institute Instrumentation Centre (IIC)

The Institute Instrumentation Centre has under its belt some successes in R&D, with its highly sophisticated equipment including a SQUID (Superconducting Quantum Interface Device) , TEM , EPMA (Electron Probe Micro Analyzer) and so on, a liquid Nitrogen

plant, an instrumentation center and a repair center. Mostly used by the faculty and the research scholars, there have been cases where B. Tech. students have benefitted from the IIC while doing their BTPs. The IIC should consider offering training to interested students at the undergrad level under the guidance of profs.

The total outlay for many faculty research projects has been over 20 lakhs and for some, up to 5 crores, in the past. The research homepage of IIT-R appears to have been updated last a few years back, so, one can reckon there hasn't been much done towards communicating to the students some of the successes various departments have had in many consultancy projects. The IIT was consulted in the construction of the Tehri Dam, the MIED has helped solve vibration issues in huge plants near Bhopal, the Earth Sciences Department set up CSCs for service delivery in the five border districts of Uttarakhand, the Department of Management Studies worked for the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology on National Competitiveness in a Knowledge Economy and so on, after 2005.

The question of the gap between academia and the industry has not been addressed satisfactorily by the institute. Not all courses have a curriculum that has been approved by industry experts, making getting A+s in various courses and the actual requirements of the industry seem like two irreconcilable political parties in a coalition. The number of MoUs signed with reputed foreign universities pitifully falls short of the other IITs'. But, securing an intern in a foreign university of high repute is mostly based on the individual resume and R is generally given the respect worthy of a top university from India, no matter the MoUs. In 2011, IIT-R awarded 134 Ph.Ds, IIT-K and IIT-B, 200, while MIT , more than 600. The government, in order to set up more IITs, has not increased the funding, which is currently 3% of MITs research expenditure.

Why pursue a Ph.D ?

Philip Guo, PhD in CS from Stanford puts it best, "Everyone has different motivations, but one possible answer is that a Ph.D. program provides a safe environment for certain types of people to push themselves far beyond their mental limits and then emerge stronger as a result. For example, my six years of Ph.D. training have made me wiser, savvier, grittier, and more steely, focused, creative, eloquent, perceptive, and professionally effective than I was as a fresh college graduate."

Shreyas Sekar, B.Tech E&C, batch of 2012, was the only freshman invited to attend the summer school for Theoretical computer science organised by IMSc, Chennai. There, he presented an original proof for the NP hardness of parameterised complexity of the connected vertex cover problem. Later, he worked on Computer Networks for congestion control under Dr. Gaurav Raina, IIT Madras. During summer in the third year he became one of the first to apply the 'Web of Trust' model to collaborative editing.

Mayday, Mayday!

The pressing issue is that the fraction of undergrads who go on to do a PhD is only about 1 in 60. The lack of research facilities in the country as a whole or the failure of the IIT to inculcate the zeal for research in students can be a few reasons. Sometimes, familiar obligations come in the way of pursuing a PhD, which is generally not considered the best way to "cash in" on the brand value of an IIT. Practically speaking, the dearth of engineers is an alarming situation the society is not equipped to handle. While we are all taught our roles as the brains behind every single facility that people these days cannot live without, we somehow feel no qualms about neglecting the mayday calls of the industry and find our groove in being a small fry in the corporate sector or switch gears to management and finance.

A decision to pursue research may be out of a genuine love for the discipline, an innate sense of social contribution, in order to stand out in a crowd of money hungry managers or to quench a deep intellectual thirst. As Shreyas puts it, "**It may get very frustrating and agonising; However, one small step for mankind is a giant leap for yourself**".

Verbatim



More than a year ago, there was a change of guard in the insti which supposed bright possibilities of a better future. In a long, wide-ranging talk, the Director, didn't seem to mind us eating into his lunch-time and explained the practical difficulties of the top job while urging us, students, to "be the change we want to see". Ms. Margaret, PS to the Director, immediately ushered us in to his well-kept office, where we learnt about his willingness to reach out to the students, our own lack of organization and as an aside, his excellent sense of humor. He suggested that we do away with a non-participative attitude and provide him with "one" large student body which he would address given his job doesn't leave him time for every small student group. From his office, he told us, it is next to impossible to make sure, single-handedly, that everything is in place. A truly

remarkable man, he believes that IIT-R is not sixth among the seven old IITs like the rankings seem to suggest and that the research and the students here are as good as in IIT-B. Excerpts from the interview taken on the 27th of April.

WONA: What changes have you noticed in the institute in the six months of your service here?

Director: It takes some time to understand the social milieu of a place. Having come from a very different atmosphere, certain facets of R did seem odd to me. For instance, the 10 p.m. curfew timing for girls or the 75% attendance requirement. The older the place, the harder it is to bring about changes. So, coming to terms with the fact that the cultural background demands certain disciplinary restraints, one learns to adapt with the system. Even the administrative system here requires some getting used to. It is extremely complex and layered and it is required for ideas to be sieved through these layers before getting implemented. The most annoying part is ,many a time I get to know that my plans never reached fruition only much later and what's more, just incidentally. The multifarious student organisation, SAC, which is supposed to represent all students, itself is burdened with a multi-level hierarchy and unnecessary formalities.

WONA: What are the aspects that you think still need to be worked upon?

Director: What I am really looking forward to improving is the quality of M.tech and Ph.D students. Since a good strength of old faculty is retiring soon, focus is being laid on hiring new ,young faculty members to bring about positive changes.(He brandished a list of faculty members who are nearing retirement and spoke of the lack of teaching faculty in our country in general).

WONA: Do you think that the research facility and the educational standards here are at par with the other IITs?

Director: I am actually, extremely satisfied with the ongoing research and education system here. I had a couple of friends from abroad come over and they gave me very good reviews about the various departments.

WONA: Even the good work that's done here never gets the required publicity. Do you think a media cell would serve the purpose?

Director: One of the major setbacks towards a positive change is the lethargic student body here. Complaining does not resolve a problem. If the institution lacks a media cell, even a group of ten dedicated student members with considerable contacts can set one up. With my job portfolio it will take undue time and effort to get a media cell created. Also, I find that there are numerous small sections/groups on campus but no healthy communication among them. A united student body is what is capable of getting things done. Remember that no one around here wants to dampen spirits or hamper progress. If you claim so, ask yourself, have you tried and has anyone? As a piece of general advice, educate yourself as well as you can and make yourselves worthy of being called IITians.

The Rant of the Purple Cow

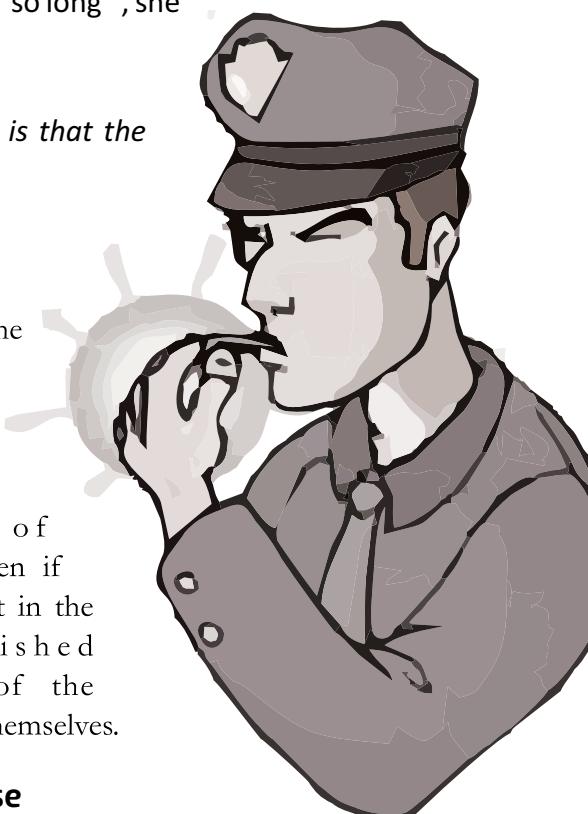
The time is 22:44 and the cool winds carry with them a whiff of impending rain. Outside Kasturba, a girl Y is seen bidding farewell to a senior who is visiting R perhaps for the last time, on the occasion of the convocation ceremony. Surely enough, it's not a rare moment in history but something Y would want to be allowed a mere two minutes for. She had been a good friend, the senior, and time was drawing nigh for the last goodbye. Deciding on the apt moment for the usual "All the best. Keep in touch", she is sorely interrupted by the guard who asks if she was leaving too. "No", she says, lost in thought. The gates are opened and the senior steps out. "You please enter back in", is all that is heard before Y faces the closed gates again, bemused. As she walks back to her room, she has enough time to ponder about the abrupt manner in which the "goodbye" moment had passed with due credit to the guard who clearly didn't have a taste for decent goodbyes. "It wasn't 'so long'", she thought, amused at her own pun even as it began to drizzle.

WONA muses that a unanimous concern among students and faculty is that the insti's transition from its UoR days is still incomplete in many ways.

Consciously Orthodox

"Andar Chalo" is the new catchphrase adopted by the guards posted outside KB as time for the all-important time deadline for entry into the hostel approaches. Girl students from all directions flock towards the small gate where a guard, blowing into his whistle that is heard like a banshee's wail for a good distance, mechanically repeats the catchphrase to the crowd squeezing in. The security personnel are, of course, not to blame for their friendly whistle-cooing or for being on the qui vive for "couples". Considering how well our country has managed to assume the mantle of the "moral police", it

looks like the insti too is in partial agreement with the concept of policing, even if certainly not in the distinguished company of the barbarians themselves.



More than just a catchphrase

Although we are sure nobody is alien to the fact, let's make no bones about it: Female students aren't allowed to exit their hostels (KB and SB) after 9 p.m. and are supposed to back by 10 p.m. strictly. This may not seem like a massive repression and it may well not be. The issue of a time deadline for girl students comes up time and again in general conversations among students and in the SAC meetings but by an unwritten rule, has become unmentionable to the authorities and is beyond the stage of redressal. It must be remembered that KB and SB house even M.Tech and PhD students who are all liable to follow the rule that first year boys in RJB aren't. The administration points fingers at our campus providing a vital, open thoroughfare for villages around

the area for not tightening up security near the gates. Therefore, this "lock-up" strategy might have struck as easy yet effective to stay out of harm's way. Instead, installing street lights can be a step towards averting eve-teasing and other such rogue incidents. Truth to tell, however unwillingly, these incidents just cannot be done away with altogether and certainly not by closing Thomason Marg. We would do well to remember that even IIT-Guwahati, placed edgily on the brink of continual violence in the recent past, has an imposed deadline of 12 a.m. while the other IITs wouldn't hear of a deadline. All the ululations about the insti trying to weasel itself out of unnecessary security issues by imposing roll-call have been almost unheard.

Most technical groups on campus make hay after the sun sets. SDSLabs and IMG, the two popular software related groups are known for their productive all-nighters and odd work patterns that include a few hours of rest.

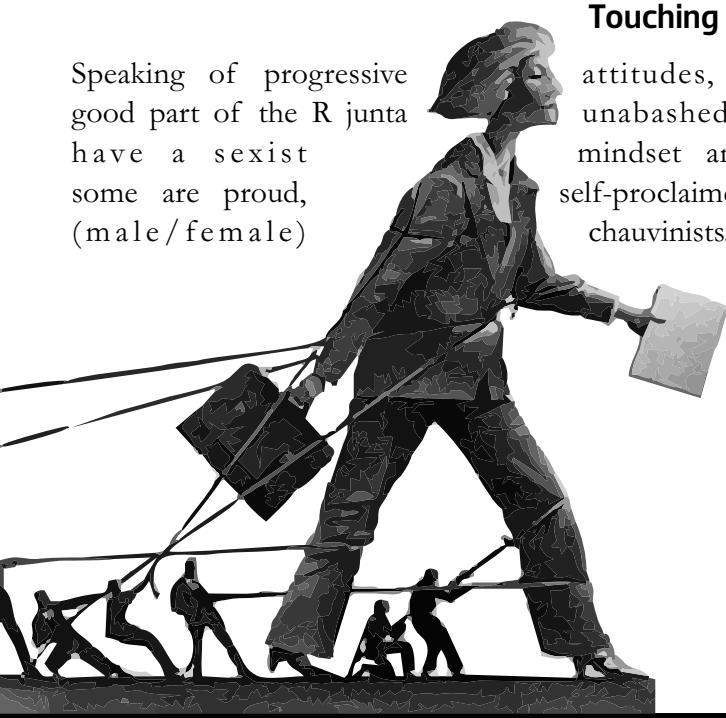
In fact, there is no provision for the morning lark to leave for work early either, since the gates remain closed till after 6 a.m. Unhealthy ratios are prevalent in groups like ROBOCON and BAJA, which consider the prospect of recruiting girls almost laughable. Moreover, female students are entitled to a harmless after-dinner walk on a

Dr. Babita Sinha of the Humanities Department says: “**I believe the students here are, at a point where they can decide the course of their lives and capable of exercising prudence. But, the admin also can't be blamed for its traditionalism which is deep rooted in our cultures. This is no game to pick sides but if given more freedom, I hope the students are mature enough for it. So, I say, less rules but with certain qualifiers. Remember that unsavoury incidents only harden the stance of the admin**”. The admin may be orthodox in its own way and the attitude of the security guards is a corollary. When they are ordered code red, the students bear the brunt. Girl students are made to sign in registers for arriving at three minutes past ten. On occasion, gates are sometimes closed at 8:50 p.m. If you aren't embarrassed

Speaking of progressive good part of the R junta have a sexist some are proud, (male / female)

Touching our own nose first

attitudes, a unabashedly mindset and self-proclaimed chauvinists.



cool spring night and it needn't be night-time research and innovation.

While as students, the girls are entitled to plead their case by giving genuine reasons for doing away with the curfew, it's also a small matter that male students aren't asked incriminating questions about where they are headed or what awaits them outside their rooms at 9 pm, which we assure you, is not cutting edge research or path breaking discoveries. Women perhaps face the accusing finger in the larger society but these rules shouldn't be meant as preparatory guidelines for foul realities.

Obfuscated

enough about being treated like a criminal, you could exchange things through the gaps in the acerbic gates in the girls' hostels under the prying eyes of the guards, of course.

Conservatism as a personal choice cannot be debated upon but when employed as a systemic ideology, is a serious detriment. The specter of narrow-mindedness and distrust continues to haunt the insti even as the junta thought our growing up years as an IIT would pass without effort, judging by UoR's acquired reputation. The following is an attempt by WONAs at citing instances, small as they may be individually, but crying for change nevertheless. They are but metaphors for the need for a progressive attitude, in both the students and the admin.

Talking to girls is a public image booster and almost never with platonic intentions. That many know shockingly little about their counterparts is evident from appalling stereotypes reserved for girls which remind us of the offensive twaddle Sir Conan Doyle came up with to describe Indians, a century ago. Some believe girls are posers, some others think they are tedious ghissus, some don't think they count, while for others, they aren't a part of their realities insofar as their fantasies. It doesn't end with skewed opinions such as these. “**I believe female students are given preferential treatment even by the administration and professors at times**”, opines **Kapil Suyal**, 3rd year, Chemical.

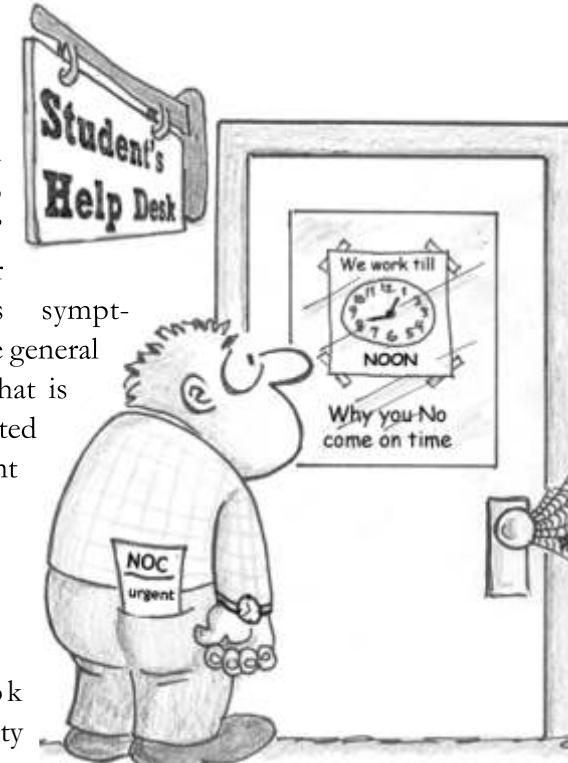
In some cases, the selection criteria into many groups of the cultural council are called into question. But, most profs disagree on the subject of preferential bias towards girls. A young faculty member from the EC department believes that gender is no cause for discrimination in the eyes of academia. In research,

tuition, testing, evaluation, as in everything else, no relative advantage has ever been given to females. So, claims of girls often ending up with undeserved extra internal marks or being given special academic privileges is a case of a bad workman blaming his tools if not unfounded mumbo jumbo.

Always at a wrong time

In case you have ever got a print-out from the ICC, you deserve a pat on the back for finding the right time to get it or you just have divine providence to be grateful to. The "timings" are upto 12:30 p.m. for a print-out, designed to serve those having light semesters or too many attendance backs to bother going for classes. The Bhawans and the Departments, of course, have printers, but they aren't for our use, just like some of the departments' library books. Even the saving grace of our pre-tech revolution campus, the library, which was previously open 24/7 at least for the benefit of the male students now has restricted timings, making the ATM

the only 24/7 operational unit. The "Ab nahi hogा" that we hear everyday is symptomatic of the general callousness that is sadly attributed to government services.



Wearing the blinkered hood

The departments along with all their labs close for the day by 6pm after which many students work for sections on campus or play some sport. With a 9-5 routine during which students just attend classes some of which are endured for the sake of attendance, pointless laboratory courses which most students complete for the 15-20% of the total marks and primitive, juvenile testing methods employed in many courses, IIT-R being recognised as a second tier IIT doesn't come as much of a surprise. **"As soon as I got there, it became apparent that the guys from the other IITs had used the 4 years much better"**, P S R Akhilesh, of batch 2012, P&I said, on joining IIM-A.

Open book tests are a rarity and for most

courses, solving the tutorial sheets is tantamount to getting a decent grade. Apart from limitedness in academics, there is no more logic in certain academic processes like the registration than in Mayawati's statue erection spree. It's high time we regarded the idea of the whole body of students doing our environment in by printing 6 pages each every semester, seriously and followed in the wake of IRCTC's move to make do with digital tickets in handheld devices.

The warm comfort of the status quo

While some students have retreated into uncharacteristic inactivity most others who are up on their feet, are mostly just enduring their 4-5 years here. Despite the best of efforts, different rules and restrictions have never stopped but hampered progress wherever there was to be. Right from the testing patterns and course syllabi to curfew for girls, the element of convention persists and defines the functioning of the insti. Fear of misuse of freedom

affects the growth of those deserving of more confidence and trust. Intellectualism and free-thinking form the cornerstones of our lives and yet we regard the maverick as the offender. The history and culture of the insti have always supported openness, expression and freely fuelled the growth of ideas. With assertions of being intellectually elite comes the responsibility of ensuring equality, original work, unconventional thought and rising above stifling biases.

Counselling Cell



Many experts have suggested that IITians fall prey to severe competitive pressures and considerable amounts of stress while others believe that the 4 years are a breeze after the gruelling coaching classes. WONA attempts to put this debate to rest and find answers from within the institute as we interview **Dr.Smita Jha** who is a key figure in student faculty relations on campus.

WONA: Do you think the students in IIITR are under any kind of pressure?

Dr. Jha: I can assure you from my personal experiences that the students are under immense pressure. Many cases of depression arise due to cultural barriers, language barriers and other causes of social alienation. Life is full of challenges, expectations, dreams and aspirations; Sometimes, students feel that they're going to fail.

WONA: So you don't think the stress is purely academic?

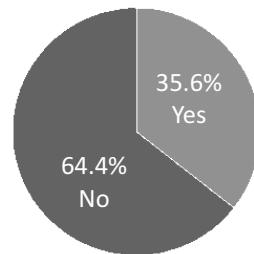
Dr. Jha: No it's not just academic. I have seen the language barrier to be a big discouraging factor. Besides there are relationship issues that worry some senior year students. I have come across many such cases of students consuming alcohol due to personal stress or peer pressure. Some students, who are very badly addicted, should be referred to rehabilitation centers.

WONA: Do you think disciplinary action must be taken when a student is found in possession of alcohol or drugs?

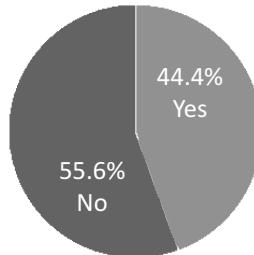
Dr. Jha: In such cases, I would rather prefer giving a warning first. There must be some counselling session familiarizing the student with how alcoholism and drug addiction adversely affect the student's health and mental capabilities. If the student still doesn't come around, the admin can consider cutting discipline marks. I'm not in favour of cutting the marks straight away.

WONA: What initiatives is the institute taking at the moment to help the students deal with such stresses?

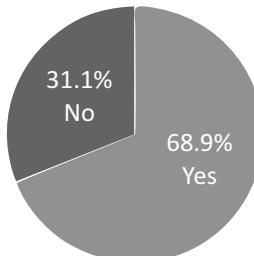
Dr. Jha: The institute has appointed a counsellor, Mrs. Shikha Jain, who is present in the Department of Management Studies, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, after 4 p.m. Also, from this year onwards, we're trying to form a student squad, under NSS, that would try to report about students in need of counselling or guidance, especially those who are shy to come out and talk about their problems. We've also been given our own Counselling office in the old central library and we're trying to rope in volunteers and invite well-known psychiatrists to hold seminars and counselling sessions in the institute at least once a month.



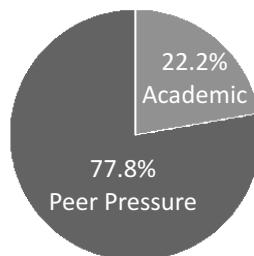
Do you think campus life is stressful?



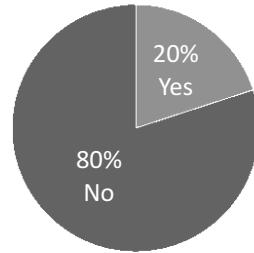
Do you occasionally feel homesick?



Do you have a friend who has fallen prey to any sort of addiction?



What do you think is the key contributing factor for the same?



Do you think the counselling cell is effective?

Lawn-vocation 2012

The insti's 12th convocation ceremony as an IIT and 161st, if one counts the UoR days, happened on the 4th of August, 2012. A student who passed out, summed it up on his blog humorously, "**my alma mater treated us like Vernon Dursley treated Harry Potter, and what's more, invited Peter Pettigrew to be the 'guest of honour'.**" On a more serious note, the very purpose of convocation, which is to award the degree recipients with their certificates was disregarded in this year's ceremony. Only PhDs were given their degrees on the stage while the others, stood up wearing their robes, when their respective HoDs announced their names like from a regular class list during attendance. Some of the students, clearly *petered* out, didn't see the point of sitting through the ceremony since the degrees were given two hours before in counters in the lawns outside the convo hall, to long queues of graduates. Students didn't bother expressing their disappointment to the media persons, who did their best to squeeze out some spicy detail, mostly because the admin stated that their degrees came with a one-year call-off period. Some took off in their robes to enjoy the light drizzle and take the customary hat-toss photos outside the main building.

During the rehearsal on the previous day, it was announced that the parents would not be allowed inside but can enjoy the live-streaming in the OP Jain Auditorium, but they were eventually invited to attend the meaningless ceremony. Tarun Verma (BTech, ME) got the President's Gold Medal while Saurav Prakash (BTech, MMED) was honoured with an ostensibly never-ending list of medals and prizes which included the Director's Gold Medal. The graduates and the post-graduates will remember Kapil Sibal, Union Minister,

HRD and Communication & IT, as the man who stole their thunder, just by appearing bravely among a bunch of students, some of whom couldn't be less happier to receive their certificates from him. Some rumours were spread about students wanting to boycott the ceremony and some small protests took place (which were handled well by the security personnel) just outside the gates. Nevertheless, the important ceremony, extensively covered by the media, passed smoothly. Perhaps inviting a non-political dignitary like Mr. Narayana Murthy or Dr. Abdul Kalam who aren't going around implementing changes in the education system that almost the whole of the IIT council and the body of students are opposed to, would have been a better idea, if the insti was trying to avoid a repeat of the IIT-KGP convocation.

All those who were hoping that Mr. Sibal would come up with a life-changing or at least a controversial address to give them something to remember about the whole affair, were disappointed, unless, one was blown away by his remark, "**India's secret of development was of course, IT**" after which came a dramatic pause and "**by IT, I mean, Indian Talent!**" Surely enough, everyone was smiling or sniggering, if they weren't asleep. It was a good speech, although not in the ranks of Steve Jobs' at Stanford or Bono's at UPENN. Leading architect Charles Correa, who gave a talk on urban planning that morning and Prof. Goverdhan Mehta, University of Hyderabad, were conferred honorary doctorates. For the rest of the insti, it was a weekend of chapos, farewells and on the lighter side, the one in which R squandered away the chance to appear in the national newspapers for the second time, for something scandalous.

Write to WON, spread NEWS!

The quintessence of this magazine is of course, presenting before you, dear reader, news from every nook on campus, in a fashion that has come to signify "WatchOut". Vague as that may be, we do believe that every batch in the last two decades or so, thanked their stars for such an extraordinary on-campus team, or more realistically, enjoyed reading the issues we have brought out, however infrequently in the recent past. In what we see as a big step for WatchOut, we have decided to make it more open. So, in case you want to tell us, anything newsworthy, or about this issue, or your annoying neighbour or anything crazy or serious, satirical or appreciative, anything at all about your life on campus, do mail us at letterstowona@googlegroups.com. We might not RSVP to you, but we are putting it all together for you, in our magazine, newsletter, website and the facebook page.

Does Intellect maketh the Uberman?

The steady patter of rain on your window pane offers you a simple joy. It comes with a sort of playful nonchalance, like a child with timeless innocence. It doesn't come riddled with promises to help you reclaim your life or rediscover your waning self. It makes you smile for simpler reasons. And a truly happy smile it is, when you haven't been tutored to be pleased at something.

It's when we start talking about these pretty, mysterious things, that we no longer know how happy they make us. What we really feel tends to blur under what we expect ourselves to feel. How can we experience that sudden, sweeping frisson of excitement when aphorisms from intellectuals and philosophers have already made us blasé? Yet, why is it that we let those aphorisms play in the back of our minds? And why are we so drawn towards those who seem able to use them to turn simplistic conversations into convoluted philosophies? Perhaps it is this very fuzziness that has us so awed. There's something about talking in riddles and about psycho-analysing seemingly simple situations that

overwhelms us. It's so picturesque for someone to sit on a sequestered rock and stare into nothingness, and get in touch with their true selves. If only we hadn't talked and read about these epiphanies. If only we hadn't attained just that level of intellect where we delve into precious little things and contrived an understanding of them. Perhaps we would still be feeling every bit, and every feeling would be ours and ours alone.

It's just hard to believe that our state of happiness, or the lack of it, could have anything to do with how well we can deliver and follow a dialogue laden with philosophical allusions. And it just doesn't seem right that some people should be happier because they seem better able to comprehend the intricacies of life.

The intellect, as it was meant to be, is something much deeper and calmer. It may not be something that can be worded at all or foisted off on another. It is perhaps something entirely silent and divine; something that sees each of us, in a different way, through life as we were meant to live it.

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The immaterial has become immaterial

Rather, ‘the non-corporeal has become inconsequential’ or in plain words, ‘that without a good CGPA is useless’. I entered this place, unaccustomed to the rule of nature that CGPA vs. time was the only graph I would ever be plotted on during my stay on campus. I ignored the rants of my professor, mother and my ex-girlfriend. Convincing myself of the fact that my acumen will transform into something much nobler than the cruel decimal, I suffered through trying times not letting the dreaded abbreviation soar sky high, believing that no course is lost if there was but one fool to fight for it. Proclaiming myself the quintessence of anything swell that was left of this place, I snoozed through mid-term

exams, became best friends with Mirinda and more importantly, inspired my juniors to carry forward the bequest, i.e. to take on the ghissu-infested biosphere.

It was only when I saw the notice of my dream company inviting students to apply, that I realised they didn’t really have a scale to assess the nobler traits which, I believed my intellect had gradually evolved into possessing, over the years, making me want to rip apart every nine pointer I had ever known. I wanted to say “so much for being cool”, but settled down any other way other than “Screw it, I’m too remarkable for my own good.”

The W-Team



Top Row (L-R):

Shivam, Shaumik, Gokhale, Guju, Abhishek, Dalal, Rishav, Saarthak, Shobhit, Ramani, Steph.

Middle Row (L-R):

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Bottom Row (L-R):

Chandana, Ria, Sneha, Nisha, Pillai, Manik, Harsh, Saketh, Raghav, Lavika, Shashank, Rishika, Bagga, Mohini, Mohina, Apoorva.

Sadani (the photographer)

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