VOICES

Raise Your Voice, Let Yourself be Heard!

http://www.iisc.ernet.in/voices

From the Students' Council

By now students would be thinking what Students' Council (SC) is doing after the election. We, at Students' Council believe in a systematic approach to addressing the issues raised in our manifesto. We remember the promises that we made and we are committed to fulfill them. Fortunately, this time there is enough participation from the students, pre-elections as well as post-elections. Enough volunteers are available for all the committees that work along with SC. The structure of SC and its present members are listed below. Students are encouraged to direct their concerns to the respective co-ordinators. The important points in our manifesto viz., scholarship hike, GARP funding etc., will be discussed in detail and students will be updated immediately after the CoD meeting. We might seek some information from you, which we think will help us in putting forth a strong case for pertinent issues. Please co-operate and provide the necessary information. SC sincerely intends to serve the student community.

Office Bearers

Chairman: Rishikesh Pandey
General Secretary: Suman Devadula

Steering Committee

Nominated members for drafting policies

Executive Committee

Coordinators of various committees
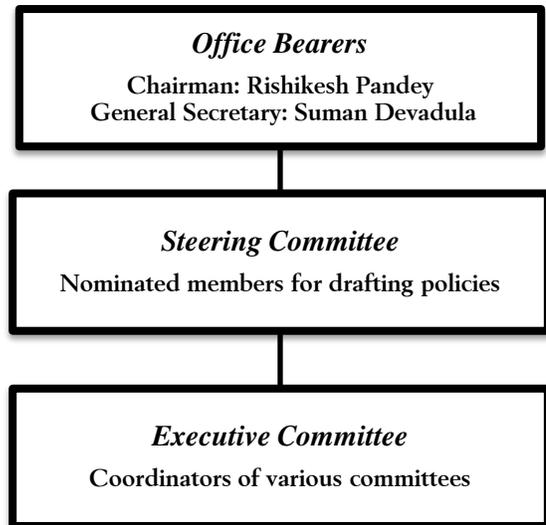
Given below is the list of committees along with the details of their coordinators.

S. No.	Committee	Coordinators	Email ID
1	Academics	Nagendra Pratap Singh	npsingh@mecheng.iisc.ernet.in
2	Amenities	Sivaram Perala	siva.perala@gmail.com
		Saurabh Aggarwal	saurabh.nitj@gmail.com
3	Hostels	Pratap Kumar Das	pratap.iisc@gmail.com
4	Placements	Adarsh Giri	adrash.giri.cedt@gmail.com
		Pallav Kant	solaris.pallav@gmail.com
5	Women's welfare	Ruchika Yadav	ruchika@physics.iisc.ernet.in
		Vijaya Sree Nukala	sree.nkv@gmail.com
6	Students Support Network	P S Sathish Kumar	sathiskumar@chemeng.iisc.ernet.in
7	Communications	Manoj Mahala	mkmahala@gmail.com
8	Environmental Initiatives	Mohanasundaram	mohan_nano@physics.iisc.ernet.in
		Ashok Kumar Mallik	ashok@ces.iisc.ernet.in
9	Cultural	Tanumay Datta	tan.swapnil@gmail.com
10	Health	Rajkumar Ambulage	rajkumar.ambulage@gmail.com
11	Social Initiatives	Sreevalsa Kolathayar	sreevals@civil.iisc.ernet.in
		Srikanth Reddy	srikanthreddy1103@gmail.com
12	Volunteers	Balaji B	balaji@ipc.iisc.ernet.in
13	Event & Fund Management	Prem Prakash Singh	premnano@mecheng.iisc.ernet.in

Street Light Facility Needs to be Improved

The Snake rescue volunteers in the campus claim IISc hosts around 12 species of snakes with most of them being non-venomous. The size of a venomous snake could be as small as 10-20 cms. The CES website on snakes suggests, "To avoid unnecessary encounters (with snakes), **walk on lit paths at night** and use closed shoes when walking in the wilder areas of campus". All the information given in the poster is correct, except that there are few well lit roads on campus.

The road leading from the Gymkhana cafe to the PD hostel is mostly dark at night with no street bulbs working. The walk from the Gymkhna to PD takes atleast four to five minutes. Pedestrians and cyclists find it difficult to commute to the hostel with the road full of pot holes. Of late, we have heard of snakes being spotted near PD hostel by both, the security and students. The issue of badly lit roads is not a problem of PD residents alone. The road leading from EE to Prakruti and the road between Library and Physics leading to Nesara are often found to be dark with little street lighting. With the institute electricity expense crossing one crore rupees, cutting down the electricity consumption is required. But with an IISc work culture of students working late night in their labs, well lit roads are something that should not be compromised on. Let us hope that the institute administration takes up this issue very seriously.

Shyam (MGMT)

From the Students' Council

Interactive Session of IISc AA Bangalore Chapter with Students of IISc

Students' Council has actively helped the IIScAA Bangalore Chapter towards their plan to start an entrepreneurship program that will benefit both the students and alumni of the institute. Understanding the needs of the students, programs that are already running at the institute and learning from successful entrepreneurs regarding support that they received from the institute were the objectives. In this context, an interaction session with the students was held on June 12 at ECE Golden Jubilee Seminar Hall between 10:00 - 12:00AM. Mr. Anand Talwai (President), Mr. Vishnu Vardhan Makkapati (Treasurer) and Dr. Sanjay Chitnis (Secretary) of Bangalore Chapter participated in this event.

A good number of students turned up for the interaction session providing feedback for structuring the entrepreneurship program. The ECE Golden Jubilee Seminar Hall was almost packed and the participants comprised of students from both science and engineering streams. Efforts of Students' Council towards helping organize the event were specially thanked.

Photo: Mr. Anand Talwai, President, IIScAA Bangalore Chapter interacting with the students

InSci Mentioned in MIT's Technology Review

Instrumentation Scientific Technologies (InSci), a start-up housed in the Society for Innovation and Development, IISc, has developed optical fiber sensing technology for structural health monitoring, under their mentor Prof. Asokan (Instrumentation). The sensor embedded fiber optic cables can be used in any industrial or civil structure to monitor various external stimuli such as changes in pressure, strain, or temperature. The safety-driven technology has wide scope for implementation globally in sectors such as aerospace, transportation, marine, oil and gas, materials testing, and chemical sensing.

Voices Always!

Venue: Tea Board Time: 9.30pm, February 2007

Voices weekly meeting

"Why do you want to join Voices?"

"I want to write, I enjoy writing, mostly poetry"

I had read some issues, felt I could also write and there I was pitching why I should be a part of the team. Some grand ideas were discussed, enthusiasm shared, apprehensions raised and there I was, a Voicean!

Always wonder if for me Voices was a way to realise my teen dream of being a journalist… wanting to see beyond the visible, read beyond the comprehendible and investigate beyond the existing. What began as a personal sojourn became a journey to understand the history of the Institute, unfold the realms of activities on campus and look at things in multi-dimensional perspectives. It became a catalyst of my IISc life and ensured never a dull moment. I looked forward to the weekly meetings and my day to day to-do lists always seemed to have Voices agendas imbibed. At Voices, I met people who helped me travel from being a technically challenged person to grasping some tenets of technology use. I learnt that the Gestalt principle holds good in all walks of life, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Voices members when they came together made a formidable team that dreamt and made reality many

firsts. Few months into Voices, I found the tag of Editor in Chief adorning my name. It was quite simple a task actually, because as a team we drew strength from each other; overcame little hiccups and big challenges. I labelled myself the PR for the team and vehemently we worked to brand Voices. The centenary gave us the opportunity to test new waters. A first Voices magazine, regular issues; the interaction session with Ratan Tata. The learning curve soared and we also realised that till we stretch our boundaries, we are unaware of how far we can raise the decibels. A leader is only as good as the team. And from the team I learnt many things; learned to be more pragmatic and diplomatic; reinstated my faith in being punctual and participative. Support from the Students' Council, the Director, the APC only helped Voices make new tunes and make them better each time. There have been moments when we have faltered but we have sprung back, having learnt something new. The readers who read our print version and the ones who keep the hits coming for our online version, I thank all of you for making Voices happen in this manner. Change is imperative and we now have someone new to lead the team; infuse newer ideas and newer challenges! As I now sit back and my team gives me a chance to write a retrospective article, I realise how the writers block can get the better of us. So, after some attempts and several weeks, here is my two cents worth. But let me clarify, am not bidding adios to Voices yet. To more writing, more tunes, more melody, greater decibels! Voices always!

Madhurima Das (MGMT)

IISc Planet

Over a hundred IIScians maintain blogs - many students, a few faculty; many regularly, a few infrequently. The writings range over numerous topics, from kitchen to IISc life and from cricket to Indian politics. While a few of them are linked via blogroll creating blog-cliques, most are scattered across the blogosphere. The idea of *community blogging* is to bring together these spreadout thoughts and create a notion of *writing together*.

This idea was first churned over by an IIScian, who prefers to be pseudonymous. He downloaded and configured Venus, an open source software for community blogging and tested with a set of bloglinks. The test run was then followed by a full-fledged configuration and tuning for IISc bloggers at NCSI server. Checkboxes to select only a few of the blogs was added, with Javascript to fade away the unchecked blogs. An FAQ to enable readers add/remove

blogs and a communication email id were created. With the permission from Prof. Giridhar Madras, the support from Mr. Filbert from NCSI and the list of bloggers from http://iisc.wordpress.com/, he created a planet of IISc bloggers, rightly called as *IISc Planet*. I jokingly call him "the god of IISc Planet".

IISc Planet works on feeds provided by individual blogs. It also has its own feed. Thus, using a single feed, one can subscribe to all the IISc bloggers. However, it would be a mistake to call it simply as a feed-aggregation. IISc Planet helps build a community. It encourages bloggers to write. And it showcases the diversity we IIScians have.

Visit http://www.ncsi.iisc.ernet.in/planet/ to read your friends. Write to the god of IISc Planet at planetiisc@gmail.com for getting added to the list.

Rupesh Nasre (CSA)

IISc Alumni Study finds 32 Scientists in NASA

An IISc alumni study states that 32 scientists from IISc are part of Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Goddard Space Flight Center - top NASA institutions.

Featured Blog: Getting More Students to Pursue Their Ph. D.s in India

The featured blog this month is a post by Prof. Abinandanan (Department of Materials Engineering) in response to an interesting Economic Times op-ed by Jaideep Srivastava (University of Minnesota) and Pankaj Jalote (IIT-D) that appeared some time back, in which the authors suggest that we adopt a technique that China has used to increase its Ph. D. output significantly.

Quoting from that article, "China has embarked on a bold strategy to address [the problem of low numbers of Ph. D.s] with the help of the US in an unexpected way. The programme is simple and brilliant. Ph. D. students in Chinese universities are given fellowships to spend 12 to 24 months in some US professor's laboratory, when they are ready to start their dissertation research.

During this period, the candidate defines his research problem, does most of the research work, and then comes back to complete his Ph. D. in the parent university in China. An attendant benefit is the collaboration created between the US and Chinese faculty, which can lead to more international exposure for the latter, something which is also high on the priority list of the Chinese administration. It is estimated that approximately 4,000 Chinese students will be the beneficiaries of this programme in the 2007-08 academic year."

Prof. Abinandanan, on the subject:
Let me come right out and say I don't like it. When we bemoan the (generally) poor state of R&D in India, we ought to examine the bottlenecks within our system and make every effort to remove them. An option that uses an external source of help can at best be a crutch; in my view, Srivastava and Jalote elevate this crutch and give it a privileged treatment! The US researchers are placed on a pedestal, and the opportunity to work in their labs is being cited as the 'feature' that will attract bright Ph. D. aspirants to our universities. It demeans the expertise of Indian academics by making them, at best, second class partners in the Ph. D. students' development. (Even if this is not what Srivastava and Jalote meant, I certainly don't see how the collaborative arrangement proposed by them can be thought of as one between equals). This is just not on.

[Aside 1: There are also other problems with their proposal: it's too small, and it's quite expensive. The numbers they cite for China (4000) and Pakistan (400) clearly are too small to make a big difference. Even their proposed numbers for India - about 1000 every year in science and engineering - for India represent less than 20 percent of the current Ph. D. output! Thus, even with their program in place, India will still have to deal with the problems that plague the remaining research enterprise.]

[Aside 2: Does India really need to increase its Ph. D. numbers? If all we want are more Ph. D.s, we can get them - including foreigners, and desi Ph. D.s who are working elsewhere - by paying the right price. If we believe this report, this price may not even be too high! Also, do we know what our current Ph. D.s do after their graduation? For example, do we have a thriving market for Ph. D.s in India, and if so, how big is it? Our R&D labs are notorious for selecting bachelors graduates for filling the bulk of their staffing needs. Finally, how many of our Ph. D.s go abroad, never to return?]

[For the rest of this post, we will assume that there really is a strong need to increase India's Ph. D. output. Read on ...]

Coming back to the proposal by Srivastava and Jalote, does India really need this external help for increasing its Ph. D. output? In engineering, the number of Ph. D.s is admittedly small (about 800 per year). Across all our engineering institutions, there ought to be at least 5000 faculty members who could, in principle, be graduating 2000 Ph. D.s every year without asking for any special favours! If I may put it using industrial terminology, there is ample "spare capacity" that we can press into operation, if only an adequate supply of "raw material" were available. The raw material that is in short supply is the bright young research talent with a solid academic training at the undergraduate level.

[Aside 3: Money is certainly a very, very important factor. We know that India's support for university research has been abysmally low; we really have been running our university research on the cheap. Unless funding levels increase, asking for more Ph. D.s is futile. It does not require great deal of smarts to realize that if you want to double the Ph. D. output, you should be willing to double the funding for academic R&D. Given the decades-long neglect of our universities, we may actually need to more than double the funding for academic research during the initial years]. Fortunately, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has announced huge increases in education funding over the next five years, so money for higher education may no longer be such a major constraint.]

Thus, the key question is: what are the ways in which we can ensure an ample supply of the right raw material to run India's Ph. D. enterprise?

The supply of students with a good undergraduate training. Out of some half a million engineering graduates, less than 25 percent are deemed by NASSCOM as employable. Let us use employability as a proxy for quality of undergraduate education. Then, if we can improve our undergraduate institutions to double this employability figure to 50 percent, our pool of Ph. D. aspirants would also double. Clearly, this requires rethinking and reforming our undergraduate programs and institutions. I have written about it before, so let me move on.

Enhanced supply need not translate into enhanced Ph. D. enrollment. We live in an era when our bright stars have tons of options to choose from. This implies that that we ought to find ways to make doctoral studies in Indian academic institutions attractive. This, in turn, demands that

we address financial and non-financial needs of our Ph. D. students. Here are some ideas to start with:

1. World-class academic infrastructure: well-equipped labs, excellent internet bandwidth, great academic library that works 24x7, uninterrupted power and water supply, etc.

2. An increased stipend: currently, it's around Rs.12,000, and it should be higher. [How much higher? Is the starting salary in a public sector company a good benchmark?]

3. Good on-campus accommodation. There should preferably be studio apartments for everyone (it should definitely be better than hostel accommodation), and one-bedroom apartments for married students. Nobody should be made to wait in a queue for on campus accommodation (which happens routinely in many of our institutions for married couples).

4. Academic autonomy: they should be able to work with advisors of their choice (with the advisors' consent, of course). In case they run into trouble with their current advisors, they should be able to switch to someone else without much trouble.

5. Financial autonomy: An annual grant of, say, Rs. 20,000, placed at the disposal of each student.

6. A comprehensive health coverage for the students and their spouses and children.

7. A reformed administration that treats Ph. D. students with respect. Currently, our students undergo a lot of procedural indignities, which must be removed. Payment of stipend, for example, must be automatic unless there's a good reason to withhold it.

8. Generous travel grants, that allow a student to participate in conferences within India at least once every year and in international conferences abroad at least once during the Ph. D. tenure. [Right now, students scrounge around for travel grants from multiple agencies.]

9. A well-maintained non-academic infrastructure, including facilities for games, sports, yoga, dance, aerobics, a swimming pool, a well-stocked, non-technical and multilingual library, and good places for socializing (eateries, coffee houses, ...).

10. A graduate student hall (with a refrigerator, a microwave, and a TV) in each department: Ph. D. students do spend long hours - even after dark - in the Department, and they need some non-lab space to chill out.

———————————————————————

What else do you think Indian institutions need to do if they are to become attractive destinations for a great number of bright young Ph. D. aspirants? Feel free to pitch in with your ideas.

Prof. Abinandanan (Faculty, MATERIALS)
[Follow Prof. Abinandanan at http://nanopolitan.blogspot.com/]

Letters to the Editor
(In response to the article Perspective: SC Elections 2010 which appeared in the June 2010 Issue of Voices)

This is a rather poorly written article and I am afraid to say that seeing such an article as the front page of a magazine that goes through the whole student community is pretty shameful. A newsletter for the whole student community should at least have a perspective and should at least give some fodder for thought. Blaming everything and everyone that comes along is not the way to go about an article.

The part that strikes me the most is when the author blames the student community for invalid votes.

"This brings us to the mentality of voters. The numbers of invalid votes cast for the Chairman and the General Secretary were 60 and 52, almost five percent of the total votes polled. Some of them were deliberately made invalid by marking for both the candidates or for none of them. I suggest such innovative thinkers to stand for elections next time and experience how it feels as each vote is counted. If one wishes to oppose Students' Council or its election process, there must be better ways than making a mockery by hiding yourself"

The author should take a few minutes to think about the reason behind such a response. What satisfaction does one get out of all this? This is not some illiterate community for people not to understand their responsibility.

If not anything else, this is just a means to show the indecisiveness of the voters. The result should have been a means to show the dilemma that the voters face, as there is nothing much to chose between the candidates. This could point to ineffective campaigning and generally the ineffectiveness or at least the lack of visibility of the SC.

There is one extra point I would like to point out over here. One of the most visible projects of the SC last year was the BCD. It was a great idea and if implemented properly could have been a great project by the SC touching the students' lives to a great extent. But sadly the drive has failed. If a single bicycle from BCD can be shown to be in working condition rather than sitting in the sheds next to the cycle shop, then it would have been meaningful.

An article about the BCD would have been more thought provoking than some dogs barking in new hostels or dating advice. I suggest that the authors of the articles should have a sense of importance about the issues. Issues that affect the student community should be reported. The editor has a leading role to take up to curb such rubbish and make this a respectable newsletter. Else Voices would be nothing but garbage and the resources going into it is an utter waste. The least you can do is save paper.

Joseph Vimal Vas (EE)

"Whosoever gave the clarification — the former students' council or the electoral officer — should note that departmental aliases like students@dept are not meant for publicizing the candidates or the elections. Sending emails to individuals may not be objected, but a mass email campaign should be included in the election bylaws as violating the code of conduct."

Is that so undebatable? When all Yahoo and Hacku can keep sending mails to students@dept for all the crazy competitions and when people can use them for all birthday bashings, why can't the candidates who stand for SC elections use them for propaganda? I do mean not only one single broadcast mail, but at least 1 mail a day on status updates per candidate.

Deepak R. (CSA)

Love Thyself

Until a few years ago, words like 'feeling low' (and also simultaneously, the other side of the coin, viz. 'getting high') were strangers to us. Growing up has its own flip sides, I believe. But of course, neither do I support frowning about what is, and unnecessarily glorifying what was or what could have been.

I have grown up. And I am happy about it.

Starting out at a good school, degree at a sought-after engineering college, leaving home for masters at a famed institute of technology and ultimately settling down for doctoral studies at another premier research institute. Perhaps we are at a wonderful stage of life where the hunger to learn is still there, yet with a contention and appreciation of what we have already learnt. And the learning of course is not confined to academics only, but also applies to life in general.

However, moving from school to college, from college to university, from university to institute, what is concerning is that we have perhaps been moving more and more further away from simplicity. Often times we are stuck at the superficial level of apparent intricacy and hence we take time in realizing that life is simple. And hence, beautiful.

In this premier research institute, there are workers, researchers and professors on one hand and messes, canteens and juice centers on the other where the former species collect for myriads of discussions, about almost anything under the sun. Yet, the vibrance is somehow on the lower side. We have perhaps made expressing dissatisfaction our foremost nature.

The funda of classifying friends must be well known to all of us. Some are amazingly close to us, some are trustworthy, some we would generally hang out with, yet from a distance, while some are mere acquaintances who can be called '*duur ka dost*', analogous to the '*duur ka rishtedaar*' of the Indian family tradition.

So one day early morning I was having a glass of mousambi juice along with a trace of fresh air hoping to increase the *sattva* element in my genes (for I heard from someone long ago that fruits are the perfect examples of sattvik food, and of course I had to pay 1500 bucks for learning this in the form of an 'empowerment' workshop, no free lunches my friend!), when a '*duur ka dost*' of mine bumped into me. It is a tradition here to have an initial greeting session, that is, asking for '*kushal-mangal*' in the form of the following question: 'How is your research coming along?'

Once that was over, I realized that my '*duur ka dost*' was a philanthropist, too. For, within a few minutes, and even without my asking for it, he showed his concern for me by cautioning me and pointing out what might be the disadvantages of working with the advisor I have chosen for myself for my doctoral work. That he might be very busy, that other than whatever possible by virtue of his position, he cannot render any help, and so on. I was not surprised. Such baseless accusation and apprehension was not new. And like the previous cases, I wanted to test my hypothesis once again.

So I asked him how his own advisor was. Initially he was generous. He told me that his own advisor did not have any of the problems which my advisor was accused to have. Was that also to make me feel envious? For, as predictable, when I asked him further, he soon delved deeper into problems, which according to him, were *unique* to his professor. That he cannot find his professor during his problems, that his professor presents new ideas and instructions at every meeting and so on. And hence, now, the prime motto of his is to somehow publish 1-2 papers, submit his thesis and leave this place for ever (and for good).

In ordinary cases, when two people are together for a work, difference of opinion is bound to happen. But what troubles me here is the skewness of expectations that the students generally have about their advisors. This, as I mentioned before, was not anything new. I am sure, professors would also be equally unhappy about students. All of us are perhaps trying to minimize our efforts and time in everything we are into.

As a result of which, eventually a time comes when both parties look forward to finishing the association somehow. And we call it – the awarding of the degree!

Sadly, with a very few lucky exceptions, this is the general trend among almost all branches of education. Not only here, but perhaps everywhere in the world!

That is why it did not take me time to realize that this '*duur ka dost*' of mine is not into his research simply for the love of it. He is lost in other complexities. My hypothesis, yet again, could not be rejected. And I cannot really blame him because the system stays healthy only with such apparent complexities.

In an independent incident, another of my friend was having a discussion with his advisor about an article he accidentally found in a journal. My friend was fascinated by the work those people had done, and with a lot of excitement of sharing, he went to his advisor. But, academics, alas, is not sacrosanct! And perhaps also not as pure as we conceive them to be.

His advisor, after listening for two minutes asked him – 'what transfer function have they used: linear or non-linear?', 'linear' my friend replied, still unable to understand what the professor is going to comprehend out of this and still with his excitement un-extinguished. Out came the reply – 'then we can apply the non-linear function, and publish a paper out of it'!

My friend was shocked at this reply! And grossly dejected. The whole purpose of finding out and appreciating a really good quality of research was lost!

No. The professor cannot be blamed either. He has hundreds of responsibilities to shoulder, and also has to incessantly do well on whatever 'performance index' has been set on him by the system.

All this is not new. There are novels, stories, TV series, and even a celebrated comic strip illustrating all these nuances and fallacies of a life in research. However, what we take out of this is perhaps not limited to entertainment alone.

And our learning is essentially the outcome of an age-old wisdom. Love.

To our professors, we may be students and to us, they may be professors, but we share identities that tie us together. We are all humans. And a simple thing such as respect for a person as a human being, for being the person he or she is, is viciously lost in the complexities that are churned up by issues totally material in nature.

I can discuss with my professor about Buddhist philosophy on Facebook, and he attends my music shows and cares to congratulate me if I do well in them. He lures me to studies by promising gifts when I am down with no appetite for exams, and many may find it difficult to believe, that he actually goes all the way to bring me the books that he had promised. And of course, I do not mind him being ruthless if I had been negligent and insincere. Neither do I expect him to spoon-feed me at this stage of learning. Ph. D. is the last stage in our education where we can raise questions freely, for, once this phase gets over, *we* shall be asked questions and *we* shall be liable to find answers. And I do not know

whether I am more happy for feeling so lucky, or more unhappy that this is a very very rare example in any of the educational institutes meant for higher studies.

I was a little surprised about the Ph. D. interview I had to face before admission here. I was not asked a single non-technical question! I expected at least one question that would make us ponder for a while: why would we want to do a Ph. D.?

And in many cases, I am sure the answer would be simple. But perhaps, unrealized.

Which is why we stop loving what we are doing. And when we are in such a fix, we start finding faults in trivial matters. Our expectations grow boundlessly and in wide and impractical directions. And eventually, we forget to love ourselves.

Do I need to mention about the unfortunate suicide cases that keep on happening in many institutes in the country? There have even been cases where students went absconding from their studying/working places! Our heads hang in shame on such news.

Beauty can be in all that we do, see or think about. If we love it while doing it, cleaning a room can give us as much bliss and joy as painting a picture or singing a song. And sometimes, to realize this, it is also important to go through troubles and to be sad. For when we are alone, we might start loving ourselves. And love life, too.

We all know this, don't we?

And sometimes, however, it is important to not work, too! For, by putting ourselves into trouble by not working, we might eventually come out with the knowledge of how to deal with the trouble, who knows? :-)

Arpita Mondal (CIVIL)

Don't Mess(I) with Me; It was Just so Klose

FIFA 2010, here I come
popcorn, chai & expectations more than some.
Glued to the screen here I stay
Watching teams 32 battle on field & have their say.
Big draws, small plays, highest goal of 7!

Slovakia is the 'God of War',
while Japan crushed Goliath tall!
European champs shown the door,
even as South Americans score.
Underdogs give surprises galore,
2 Asian countries give a resounding roar!

The final showdown is eagerly awaited;
Defend, Strike and Score....
Trust me, you will be left asking for more!

Madhurima Das (MGMT)

Gymkhana Corner

Gymkhana Club Convenor/Co-Convenor Nominations
The Gymkhana management committee had decided to invite nominations for new convenors and co-convenors for various clubs. The last date for filing the nominations was June 18, 2010.

IISc Futsal Tournament 2010
IISc Gymkhana witnessed the Futsal (Portugese/Spanish for half football) tournament from 25th - 27th June, 2010. 16 teams participated in the event. The brief results are:
Winner - "*Beta House*"; Runners - "*Nirvana*"
Best Player - *Nithin Poonacha*; Top Scorer – *Manjunath*
Best Goalie - *Siddharth Dhodi* (Alumni, MGMT)

Arjun Shetty (NIS)
Arpita Mondal (CIVIL)

Perspective
On Roads in Campus

I was almost shocked to hear somebody shouting in front of the Civil Engineering Department. Almost involuntary response of my eyes revealed that I was not alone. Other pedestrians and cyclists looked at the source of the shout. It was a faculty member. Another thumping loud noise clarified the reason behind the angry shout: a courier boy was driving his scooter on the crowded road with a speed well over 50 KMPH. The shout "Slow!" shocked him equally, he looked back and reduced the speed.

A few days prior to the above incident, I was passing by a group of faculty members near Organic Chemistry. Suddenly, one of them shouted, "Slow! Slow! Slow!". This faculty member was soft in his tone compared to the above faculty member from SERC, but the effect was the same. The pizza delivery boy was startled, looked back and reduced the speed at least until the end of the road.

In both the above incidents, it was someone from outside who was driving fast. But I have witnessed vehicles with IISc stickers and having boards of Government of India driving fast on the road connecting ECE and the library. The junction beside the Students' Council thus becomes a danger spot. The problem is exacerbated due to the presence of trees at the corners that hinder the road view. There are several pedestrians and cyclists crossing the junction especially during lunch hours. Interestingly, there is a speed-breaker on the road between the Students' Council and the Purchase Section where the road already has an upward slope and is actually mostly used by pedestrians and cyclists. To the extent my knowledge goes, a speed-breaker should be meant for speedy vehicles. It is essential that a speed-breaker be built on the main road for the vehicles coming from ECE side.

As far as I know, except at the subway, there is no mention of a speed limit in campus. Even if a speed limit is mentioned, there is nobody to enforce it. Having special personnel for the purpose may not be practically feasible. In such a situation, it is we - the residents of IISc - who should help in enforcing the speed limits. I appreciate the faculty members who shouted at the people fond of accelerators. We should all follow suit. Next time we see someone speeding up, let's tell him/her, "Slow! Slow! Slow!"

Another problem is of the horns. A few roads in campus are marked with the signs of No Horn - a few signs hiding behind trees. I do not expect auto drivers to follow the rules. However, I do expect it from IIScians - may that be students, faculty or non-teaching staff. It is very encouraging to see several car drivers (I assume them to be mostly faculty members) patiently waiting for almost ten seconds before the pedestrians give way. I whole-heartedly appreciate these drivers.

This brings us to the pedestrians. We have enough students in IISc who are so much engrossed in "research thoughts" that they fail to look back for vehicles while crossing the road. There is also no dearth of IIScians who walk in a line and cover the width of the road without bothering about vehicles. There are some who, on being notified by the fellow pedestrian, would give you space with a gesture of doing a favor to you, as if they own the land. One of my colleagues once said, "Roads are for pedestrians". I disagree. I consider regular roads to be for everybody. And if my bicycle startles some pedestrian crossing the road and he/she looks at me angrily, my response would be, "If you don't care for your life, why should I?"

Rupesh Nasre (CSA)

Futsal Tournament in Action
Photo Credits: IISc Football Club

Winners of the Futsal Tournament- BetaHouse
Photo Credits: IISc Football Club

Small Miseries

All the cleaning works in the hostel are done by the contract workers. These hostel 'ammas' deem it absolutely essential to clean the hostel ground (the cement quadrangle, mind you, not just the tiled floor) – scrape, scratch every speck of mud and empty the water tank and leave the hostel water-less. They pack their bags and leave at 4PM. I'm the one who faces a dry toilet when I come back to the hostel at night. They even keep rubbing the steps, hoping to make them shine perhaps (I wonder if they are competing to make Rohini win the 'cleanest hostel' award). If you protest, they claim there's water and so they are doing it. If you protest vehemently, they say you must speak to the supervisor. So you go hunting for the supervisor, who'd be twirling her thumbs in some corner of the hostel. She agrees to halt it and asks you to write a letter, stating why you stopped them from doing their 'duty'.

This was just one day. I haven't stopped them after that. How do you convince them you only want a decently clean hostel and not a sparklingly clean one, at the cost of already scarce water?

I sight no cobweb on my door and the paint is fresh. Yet cleaning my room door from the outside has suddenly become vital for their survival – it's among their list of 'duties'. When I hear a maid scraping outside my door at 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning - door knob and latch rattling, feet shuffling - removing imaginary dirt, I must tune myself to become deaf. I must ignore the urge to open the door and ask her to go clean some other door and leave me in peace. I wonder if the new contract workers' workload has been increased to make the worker's or the student's life more miserable.

At least the contract workers work; the permanent employees bask in sunshine. When I ask, I'm told that the hostel office has told them to 'just come and sit in the hostel and do nothing'. So you see them bathing, eating, chatting; and they get twice the stipend that a final year Ph. D. student does.

Another mounting irritation is things that go missing. What do the maids do with the mugs in the toilets after cleaning them? Take it home? I suppose, since I use the toilets, it's my solemn duty to go chasing after the maids, asking them, in my broken Kannada, where the mugs are. After every bout of cleaning, I must threaten to complain to the hostel office and then the mugs will be kept back in place. Fortunately, my friend and I take turns at this so I have someone to share the burden.

The maids (especially the permanent workers) have a habit of conveniently bathing in the hostel. The time they take to finish the job is many fold that of an average student. On days when there's water in only one bathroom, if you find an 'amma' inside it, you feel like breaking the door. To cap this, they wash their clothes in gallons of water and the amma's daughter and grand-daughter also bathe here.

My tolerance valve burst when one day I found my bucket missing. I went looking for an 'amma' and asked her if she knew what had happened to it (there are no secrets between them). She said some amma had taken it. I said I wanted to bathe and wanted it back. She called out some name and that person answered from inside the bathroom saying she'll give it soon. I went livid – the gall of the woman! Does she have no better job here than to bathe? And is this why the Institute employs her? Like a brawling fisherwoman, I fumed and ranted at her, demanding my bucket back. After a few minutes of losing my temper, energy and time, she put out a hand and let my bucket out. This time I did complain to the supervisor.

I suppose I must adopt the 'chalta hai' attitude and move on. Who cares how much water is wasted? If there's no water, just complain to the Hostel Office and fret and fume when nothing happens. Why let the maids' new unnecessary duties and misbehaviour bother you? You'll get used to it. After all, they say, even sitting on nails can become a habit.

Smrithi Murthy (MRDG)
With inputs from Monisha Bhattacharya (CES) and Subhashini Muralidharan (MCBL)
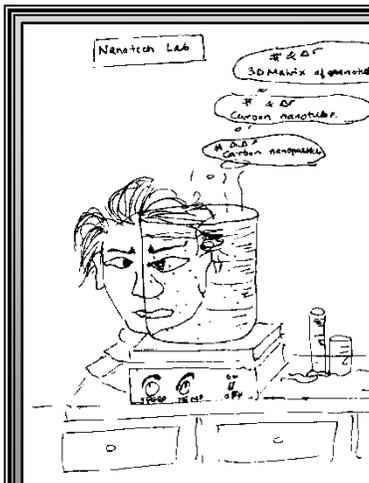
Rambling Wit

I have heard of people who stare at objects in the hope that they can move the object with the power of their thought. Today, I tried to make my lab experiment produce the desired result by sitting and staring at it...

Arjun Shetty (NIS)
Illustration: Mandar Dixit (MRDG)

Strange Encounters

At 2330 hours, I left my lab, unsure of my destination. It had been a long, hard and fruitless day. The kind of day that makes you wish tomorrow will be different.

Weary and hungry, I went to the one place I could get rid of both. Tea-Board. At this late hour, there is not much of a queue. So I could get my order pretty quickly. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind standing in a queue. What I mind is when the person in front of me makes his decision while standing at the counter. I mean, what was he doing all this while. Guessing what the person in front of him will order?

I collected my order in a huff and started walking towards an inconspicuous table in the corner. As I walked, I sensed that I was being watched. I get this weird, uncomfortable feeling when I realise that I am being followed in the ophthalmic sense. I could see him from the corner of my eyes. Since he did not seem like someone I know, I did not strain my peripheral vision too much and went ahead and settled down at the table.

I looked up and suddenly saw him occupy the space in front of me. Apparently the "following" was not limited to being purely ophthalmic. I wouldn't have been so surprised by his arrival under normal circumstances. But at this late hour, when a total stranger gets up from the place he was occupying, skips numerous other empty tables and sits in front of me at my inconspicuous table, I begin to wonder why. I took a closer look. My peripheral vision was right. I had never seen him before.

It was dark and he was darker. But I could make out prominent features. I definitely did not know him. He was not repulsive or anything, but there was nothing particularly attractive about him. He kept looking at me. I looked back down after an appropriate amount of time. He kept looking at me for an inappropriate amount of time.

There were quite a few things I immediately did not like about him. Firstly, I don't like it when someone takes a place opposite me without asking me if someone is sitting there. What if that place is reserved for someone? What if I am waiting for someone else to join me? Could he not have at least asked if the place is occupied? I cannot blame him too much for this. In fact, I don't think anybody asks me if the place is reserved before occupying a chair in front of me at my table. Perhaps they realise that someone like me couldn't be dining with someone else. My appearance must be sufficient guarantee that no one was, is or will be joining me at my table in the near future. I really don't think people should be judged by appearances and first impressions and panache and stuff like that. I hope you get the drift.

Second thing I did not like about him is the way he sat down in front of me. There was an air of arrogance in his body language. I may not be able to read the fine print. But the writing of his body language was clear. He sat down as if he owned the place and I was the one intruding on his privacy.

The third and the most annoying thing about him was the fact that he was still staring at me. I don't like it when strangers stare at me. Not that I never give them reasons to do so. Sometimes, I do commit antics that deserve stares. But, currently I was not in one of those antic moods. Nor had I done anything to attract this visual examination.

The sudden intrusion, the devil may care body language and the incessant staring, generated a natural dislike in me towards him. I tried to ignore it, looked down and moved my hand towards the sandwich in front of me. I noticed a slight craning of his neck towards me. I looked up. He did not care to crane his neck back. He was looking at my plate. He turned his gaze back towards me when he realised I had looked up. He craned his neck back, lifted his head higher and looked at me as if to question what I was so interested in. His blunt manner and the authoritative, challenging look irritated me. Not to be outdone, I put my elbows on the table, created a fist with one hand, clenched it with the other and leaned forward as if marking my territory on the table. I could see a glint which I assumed were his teeth that he was beginning to display as if mocking me and my aggressive stance.

Males have their own ways of asserting their dominance to other males. I never understood it completely. For example, I never know, when to lean forward and be aggressive and when to lean back and act as if I don't care. I wondered if I had over reacted. The continuing glint from his teeth began convincing me that I had not over reacted. I wondered if I would be more intimidating if I stood up to my full vertical dimensions. Or should I lean back and smile. Why should I smile? I should just lean back and frown? What about cracking my knuckles? Yes! I should crack my knuckles! I have seen guys do it in the movies lots of times. Bouncers, Gangsters, Henchmen, they all do it when they want to threaten someone. I don't see how an ability to crack knuckles is a measure of ability to inflict physical damage but it seems to do the trick. So I decided to crack my knuckles. The leaning forward with elbows on the table position I had assumed in the previous paragraph was conducive for knuckle cracking. Only problem was, my knuckles were not conducive. In the heat of this cold war, I had forgotten that I am not a serial knuckle cracker. Few silent, unsuccessful tries and I gave up, not wanting to lose any (more) imaginary ground in this battle for supremacy.

I reiterated to myself, ability to crack knuckles has no correlation to ability to inflict physical damage. I took a closer look at his physical attributes. He seems a healthy, muscular male specimen fully capable of holding his own in any contact sport. There was a smug look on his face after my knuckle cracking antic. Oh! How I would love to give him a closer look at my knuckles.

I began calculating the possible outcomes. I think it's unsafe to strike the first blow without thinking whether I am capable of bearing the retaliation. What were the parameters involved? I had not seen him move much but

from his build I guessed I cannot count on speed being on my side. Stamina? I recollected the time I had felt breathless by just rushing to the registration desk of the SnT run in an attempt to get there on time. I could not go and register myself. Not in that huffing and puffing state I was in. Strength? I cannot even crack my knuckles!! How does that even matter? What if he is actually stronger? But he is a bit smaller than me. Am I big enough? Does size matter?

Unable to find any clear answers, I turned my attention to the thing that was possibly the root of it all. I looked at the two sandwiches on my plate. All this contemplation had made me more hungry. The longer I looked at the sandwich, the more impatient I became. I decided it is not safe to strike the first blow. Regardless of the outcome of the battle, I will definitely suffer damage. I may not be sure if I have speed, strength, stamina on my side, but if I let him make first contact, I may at least have some rightful conduct on my side. Let me just pretend like I don't care.

Having made my decision to adopt the ostrich approach, I decided to dig into the sandwich. As I picked up the sandwich and brought it close, I expected the gentle flavours to neutralise the bad taste this unwelcome companion had brought. Just as I was about to bite in, I saw him twitch. I looked up suddenly, my body tense and overflowing with mental adrenaline. He seemed taken aback by my sudden movement. As I took a closer look, I saw the gentle curiosity in those eyes that I had not noticed so far. I could visualise him salivating behind those glinting teeth of his. He continued staring with the same intensity. Only this time, I felt like it was more a look of fascination and longing rather than malice.

I placed my sandwich back on my plate and closed my half open mouth. I cut the sandwich in half and offered one half to him. The astonishment in his eyes, if any, lasted only a fraction of a second. He ate with the same intensity with which he stared. The second sandwich was divided and treated in the same way. Before I knew it, both sandwiches were gone. The only remnants were the crumbs on my plate. He did not care to leave many crumbs. I was too amused to hold any grudges.

As I got up to leave and started walking, his eyes followed me. I looked back. For the first time, he lowered his gaze. He got up and started walking away in the other direction. There was nothing in his manner to show me any gratitude. Except for the wagging of his twisted tail.

Arjun Shetty (NIS)

About IPL, etc. etc.

They were the Sultans of Swing, the make or break boys, the mean merchants of pace, the fearsome foursome - yes, I am talking about the fiery pace battery of the Carribbeans of yesteryears. They redefined the limits of human endurance and stretched every sinew to extract that extra mile of pace. Nobody in the planet could bowl faster than them. Before you were done with Malcolm Marshall, you had Andy Roberts to contend with. Before he finished making a mockery of your defense there was Joel Garner and Michael Holding. We had a champion in Sunny Gavaskar and the grammatically correct Dilip Vengsarkar. Gavaskar used to go out there in the middle to face all these with merely a skull cap as his protective head gear. It did not come and go in sixty seconds. These were hardcore five day affairs and you can imagine the levels of concentration these batsmen were expected to have for hanging on to their wicket and more importantly, almost to their dear life. Every now and then, the red cherry would go past you within kissing distance giving a whiff of fresh air and you knew it better than anybody else that had the trajectory of the delivery been a few inches towards your body, you would be left with not less than 5 stitches on your face for the "sweet chin music". The field used to be almost empty with vast open acres ahead of you inviting you to play a shot and half the fielding team positioned behind the wickets ready to pounce on any mistake you make. The Kiwis too had a genuine gem in Richard Hadlee who was almost like poetry in motion .He was not fast alright – but he could bowl the nagging length in that corridor of uncertainty each time with clockwork precision. It really did not matter if you had the "driving" license - you would inevitably land up in the hands of the waiting fieldsmen.

Of late what comes to mind is the Ashes series of 2005 when Brett Lee, this time with the bat, was standing in between England and victory .Only 2 more wickets was what England wanted to regain the Ashes urn and at that point of time the new ball was taken with Steve Harmisson, Andrew Flintoff, Simon Jones and Sajid Mehmood, each capable of clocking 94 miles per hour, waiting to tear into Brett Lee and seal victory. Brett Lee stood there like a Rock of Gibraltar. He received blows in his knuckles, knees, elbow, ribs and shoulder - but he did not quit. He lost his wicket finally to the incessant pace attack and had to be shifted to the hospital almost immediately. In the evening, almost the whole England team lead by Andrew Flintoff was there in the hospital to enquire about his health or more subtly put, to salute this brave son of his country.

Mark Waugh, also an Aussie, did superb service to the game. He was known for his grace and style. He was not animated in his stroke play. He did not have any bat lift or follow through. Nobody even knew when the ball hit the bat and when it went to the ropes. There was hardly any time for fielders to move. Such was the power of his hand-eye coordination and his timing was priceless. There was never any flourish or perceptible flamboyance associated with his stroke play.

Subrata Chakrabarti (MECHENG)

Building the Green Cover

IISc celebrated the World Environmental day on June 5, 2010, by planting nearly 150 indigenous species of tree saplings at the New Aerospace building near 'D' gate. Prof. Balaram planted the first sapling. Students turned up in hundreds to plant saplings and mark the occasion.

The whole exercise was coordinated by Prof. Sankara Rao, CES, and organised by the IISc Green Gang. With the agenda of improving the native tree diversity in the campus, planting saplings of exotic trees in Karnataka was the agenda. The team led by Prof. Sankara Rao identified and procured saplings of rare and exotic varities of trees found in forests of Karnataka, mainly the Western Ghats. The next main task was placing identification tags on the saplings. Mr. Sridhar of IISc nursery helped in preparing pits and arranging for manure.

Among the saplings planted, there is a good mix of evergreen and deciduous (which shed the leaves seasonally) trees. Most of the trees are timeless and can keep on growing for hundreds of years. Most of the saplings are Flagship species (species chosen to represent an environmental cause) of the Western Ghats. Some of the exotic species planted in the campus include *Vateria indica* (Piney varnish tree), *Mesua ferreo* (Indian rose chestnut) and *Lophopetalum wightianum*. Most of the saplings will grow into tall trees and will act as a sound barrier to the campus.

The IISc campus has some rare species of trees. The occu--rrence of these trees is both ambiguous and bizarre. There is no information on whether these trees were planted in the campus or are they the result of the strange wilderness that occurred in the campus several years ago. Some of the rare species found in the campus are *Bolusanthus speciosus* (Tree Wisteria), *Limba bao*, *Pittosporum dasycaulon* (known as Boogri in Kannada) and *Artocarpus glaucus* (Artocarpus). There are also some native species represented by just one specimen in the campus like *Shorea roxburghii* (Taloora lac tree), *Syzygium laetum* and *Salix tetrasperma* (Indian willow). *Entada rheedii* (Snuff box sea bean or African Dream tree), a giant woody climber, is perhaps the only specimen in Bangalore and surrounding districts.

Planting the saplings is only half the job done. The job will be completed only if the student community makes sure that the saplings don't die out due to lack of water. If proper attention is given, the Institute can boast of a diversity that is unique with both exotic and native wild species, something unexpected in an urban setting such as Bangalore.

In the words of Prof. Sankara Rao, "with so much of diversity already existing in the campus, further efforts to bring in more of other species not represented would make IISc campus a unique arboretum in Bangalore and make this the only campus of an Institution with enormous diversity".

A Voices Press initiative with inputs from Prof. Sankara Rao (Faculty, CES)
Photo Credits: Sridhar (ISU) and Umesh (Aero)

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