

Newspaper Clips

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HT Mumbai

IIT-ians debate code to curb plagiarism, malpractices

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MUMBAI: India's first honour code, signed by the chemical engineering students of the Indian Institute of Technology – Bombay (IIT-B), was discussed by a panel of alumni and current students, on the first day of the institute's Student Alumni Meeting.

Though the panel discussion, titled 'Honouring the honour code' sought to address growing instances of plagiarism, unethical practices and cheating in the academic system and increase the students' understanding of the code and its implications, many alumni members and students spoke out against the code's viability and implementation.

Honour codes are a widely accepted concept in foreign countries, but this is the first time such a code has been signed in an Indian institute. Drafted by the department to curb plagiarism

ALUMNI MEET

To tackle plagiarism, malpractices and cheating, the chemical engineering department of the Indian Institute of Technology – Bombay drafted an Honour Code in August, for students to abide by

Each student of the chemical engineering department was made to sign a pledge that stated that they will not

indulge in malpractices or share their work with others during an examination. It asked students to credit sources, among other things

The code makes it clear that both sides – the giver and receiver – will face the same punishment, such as quitting an administrative position, denial of internships, a fail-grade or even rustication from the institute.

and other academic malpractices, this punishment-oriented code has not been taken well by many students, alumni or the faculty.

"The honour code was meant to ensure discipline. However, severe penal actions such as rustication are a bit much. Plagiarism is often overrated and such drastic codes are not the answer. There needs to be more brainstorming over this," said Aman Chowdhary, a second-

year student at IIT-B.

In fact, the Institute Student Mentor Program (ISMP) is in the process of drafting its own honour code, which will be considered for academic purposes

"Honouring this code is essential because everything finally boils down to trust. Who will trust an IIT-ian who can't honour ethics?" said Sharad Gandhi, an alumni on the panel

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Facebook skips IITs this year

Hit By Slowdown, Major Recruiters Give Top Institutes A Miss

Yogita Rao | TNN

Mumbai: Last year's placement season at the premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) saw Facebook make one of the most lucrative offers to a handful of students. This year, the social networking firm has not even registered for placements at any of the IITs, leaving several hopefuls disappointed.

Though the current global economic slowdown has not had a major impact on the total number of companies registering at IITs, some big names are yet to show up, placement co-ordinators told TOI.

At IIT-Bombay, for instance, approximately 210 firms have registered so far compared with last year's total of 280. Avijit Chatterjee, IIT-B professor-in-charge for placements, though, hopes the num-



Facebook made one of the most lucrative offers last year. But this time around, the social networking firm has not even registered for placements at any of the IITs

bers will rise by 100. Placements will continue till the end of the academic year in June. Chatterjee said that while Facebook won't be visiting this year, it has given a pre-placement offer (PPO) to a student.

In fact, at IIT-Madras, PPOs have already totalled 54 this year compared with 33 last year. "PPOs seem to be unaffected by the slowdown. We do not know how the season will play out but we are being cautious. Right now, only registrations are on and they may not translate into commit-

ment," said Chatterjee.

The buzz on campuses is that the social networking firm has fulfilled its entire requirement from recruitments last year and the decision to not hire is not restricted to Indian institutes. Facebook officials were unavailable for comment.

Surbhi Garg, overall placement co-ordinator at IIT-Delhi, said at least 10 of their regular major recruiters won't visit the campus this year. A total of 170 companies have registered so far and the institute expects the number to rise

to 250 by this month-end. Garg, too, said, "The situation seems a bit difficult this year as a few companies that came last year are not visiting the campus."

Harsh Sejwar, one of the overall placement co-ordinators from IIT-Kanpur, said negotiations are still on. "The global slowdown has affected placements but it is too early to comment on the entire season. Several companies are hesitating to come but are keen as we had good relations in the past."

Around 135 firms have registered for placements in IIT-K. "Some international companies from Singapore and Japan have shown interest, so we hope to negotiate further. Some others are delaying their decision to hire," he added. The graduating batch's strength at IIT-B has gone up by approximately 200 students.

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IIT-M forays into spirituality realm

DC | N. Arun Kumar | 14 hours 14 min ago



Chennai: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras which is known for imparting world-class technical education, has now entered into spirituality too.

IIT-M has started a new elective paper, 'Religion and Modernity', for its M.A. (Developmental Studies) students. IIT-M has also launched another paper, 'Integral Karma Yoga', in the general studies category. IIT-M's academic senate approved these courses at its meeting last week.

Dr R. Santosh, assistant professor of Humanities and Social Sciences, at IIT-Madras, who will be teaching the elective paper, said that students who would pursue the 5-year M.A. (Developmental Studies) programme would be able to opt for this elective paper in their fourth year.

"We will be teaching important aspects of all religions which will be relevant in the current era. Religion is becoming active in the globalised era and one can see it getting revived all across the world. So a student needs to know what is happening in spirituality too," he said.

Dr Santosh also pointed out that the paper would try to explore how religion was making a comeback in the current context.

Asked for his comments about the elective paper, Prof V.G. Idichandy, former IIT-M deputy director and professor emeritus at the Institute's Ocean Engineering department, said that there was nothing wrong in offering 'Religion' as an elective paper as the institute offered various subjects.

"The time is not far off when the IITs will provide more such courses, and we should be open-minded about offering such courses," he said.

HT Chandigarh

by the way

AARISH CHHABRA



PU the best in India, really?

It was my illegal shelter for over a year. My humble BA degree carries its logo. It has arguably the most beautiful university campus in India. It is also, as is well known, the alma mater of our Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But I am sure I wasn't the only one surprised at Panjab University suddenly becoming India's best.

You must've heard that PU has been ranked in the 225-250 group in the Times Higher Education (THE) world rankings for 2013-14, the highest among Indian institutions and 32nd in Asia. Like all things international, the chart is dominated by the US, which has seven in the top 10 and nearly half the top 100. UK comes second with 11 in the top 100. But undeterred that no Indian varsity was again not in the top 200 (only five in the 400 that were ranked), the stats have been bandied about and crackers burst. Now that we are almost done with the chest-thumping, let's look at the rankings at a fundamental level.

From India, 21 institutions participated — you have to submit data after

invitation — but the Times has not revealed names of the 16 that did not make it to the final 400. Response from the THE's public relations agency is that they would not like to "embarrass" institutions who were "brave enough" to participate but did not receive a ranking. Told that transparency may help read the chart more clearly, they only shared the figures that 13 of the 21 were public institutions, four private and the rest autonomous. Last year, the total was 14, while data since the start of the rankings in 2010 was not shared. This year, participation from India was highest.

The doubt-breeding no-names policy discounted, I am tempted to assume that Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Central

PU HAS BEEN RANKED IN THE 225-250 BRACKET IN THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD RANKINGS, THE HIGHEST AMONG 21 INDIAN INSTITUTIONS. UNDETERRED THAT NO INDIAN VARSITY IS IN TOP 200, RELATIVE STATS HAVE BEEN CELEBRATED WITH CRACKERS. AFTER THE DIN, IT'S TIME FOR A PRAGMATIC LOOK



Students celebrating PU's ranking in the THE charts.

HT FILEPHOTO

University of Hyderabad or the IITs did not participate. But, I would only underline 'our' university's chief shortcoming - over 50% of the teaching posts in PU and its 188 affiliated colleges remain vacant. The data — 1,586 sanctioned posts, 797 vacant and 79 occupied by retired teachers re-hired — was submitted by the PU registrar in a court recently.

Apart from the fact that it filled the form, what worked for PU was the citation of studies carried out by its scholars anywhere in the world. Though in research PU got 14%, it hit 84.7 on citation impact, which carried a third of the ranking weightage. Top PU officials say that had it not been for the studies at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, or CERN, in Geneva, the citation score would have fallen "drastically". PU's participant researchers (a fraction of the 2,000) get credit on all papers produced at CERN, the lab most famous for having discovered the Higgs boson, the 'god particle'. On most of the other 12 parameters, PU scored in the 20s.

"These days, if you have talent, you

also have to be able to sell it well. PU has done that and deserves credit for it. The IITs, whom we have defeated, so to speak, probably did not work hard enough on the presentation," said a senior faculty member. It's still worse than at least 225 of the world's universities.

But the argument is not to demean PU or its "bravado" in applying. The point remains moderation - which must be the norm on celebration but certainly not on ambition. Officials at PU acknowledge that the ranking, at best, would help put focus on academics and get corporate funding for sustainable research. That's a major reason why the union human resource development ministry wants institutions to participate. But the celebration has been out of proportion for a relative achievement.

Until PU gets the required faculty and does not have to struggle for funds every few years, until its mug-up-and-pass degrees achieve the same level as that of other top institutions and its students are employable, and until the participation in these rankings is more broad-based, believing that PU is the best university in India would only breed a false sense of achievement and a delusional inertia. That can do more harm than good. For PU's own sake — to borrow a fellow columnist's twisted phrase — reading too much into the rankings would be like the left arm of a black man: neither right nor fair. Let's spare some crackers.

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Are Indian institutions as poor as the QS and Times global university ratings suggest?

Gautam Barua Posted online: Saturday, Oct 05, 2013 at 0000 hrs

Are Indian institutions as poor as the QS and Times global university ratings suggest?

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE) recently released their 2013 global university rankings. In both sets of rankings, institutions from India are nowhere in the picture. In fact, their ranks have fallen compared to last year.

World University Rankings: Panjab University is top Indian institute, no IITs in top 200

Are institutions from India that bad? Have institutions from India been "lazy" in providing the right data? To show that there are problems with the rankings, I analyse the parameters of the IIT-Guwahati data (since these are available to me, but the results can be easily generalised to other IITs; IIT-Delhi and Panjab University data are also shown).

TABLE 1: QS RANKINGS

Rank	Institution	Academic Reputation (AR)	Employer Reputation (ER)	Faculty: Student Ratio (FS)	Citations / Faculty (CF)	Intl Faculty (IF)	Intl Students (IS)	Total Score
		40%	10%	20%	20%	5%	5%	100%
	Max marks	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
212	IIT-D (2012)	53.4	79.4	35.4	54.1	1.3	1.6	47.8
222	IIT-D (2013)	51.3	86.8	39.9	63.3	1.3	1.5	49.4
551-600	IIT-G (2012)	16.7	24.7	35.5	26.6	3.0	1.2	22.0
601-650	IIT-G (2013)	20.4	22.3	30.2	33.1	1.5	1.6	23.3

TABLE 2: TIMES RANKINGS

Rank	Institution	Teaching	Research	Citations	Industry Income	International Outlook
226-250	Panjab	25.8	14.0	84.7	28.4	29.3
351-400	IIT-D	33.8	23.0	38.5	-	15.3
—	IIT-G	22.0	12.0	54.0	17.0	18.0

The first table is for QS, and the second for THE. All scores are relative, with the top-ranked institution in each category getting a score of 100.

One, the faculty-student ratio of IIT-G is the best among the IITs, but it is showing a decline and is much worse than IIT-D's in the QS table. Clearly, there is an error here. Two, the IITs are not allowed to take international students at the BTech level. There is scope for increasing the number of foreign PhD students. But even here there is a restriction, as government assistantships can only be given to Indian citizens. Without aid, it is difficult to attract good international PhD students. Hiring international faculty on a regular basis is not allowed. They can be hired on contract for up to five years, but only if the salary is at least \$25,000 annually (so, effectively, only professors are allowed). The question remains: is the internationalisation of campuses an important parameter for excellence? Western countries have a clear advantage.

Related: Behind Panjab University's world ranking, push by ex-student PM Manmohan Singh

Three, 50 per cent of the weightage is based on "reputation" (AR: 40 per cent and ER: 10 per cent)

Business Standard

Business Standard Editorial Comment | New Delhi October 06, 2013 Last Updated at 21:38 IST

An ostrich-like approach

Global ranking will help Indian universities

The almost non-stop bursting of crackers at Panjab University's sprawling 550-acre campus in Chandigarh indicated that Diwali arrived last week itself for the institution's students and teachers. The festive spirit was more than justified; after all, being ranked as the top Indian university in global rankings is no mean achievement - even though many suggested that the crackers deserve to be spared, given the fact that more than half the teaching posts in the university and in its 188 affiliated colleges remain vacant, and their budgets are under severe stress. Still, this significant achievement by one of India's oldest universities apart, the recent global university rankings of Quacquarelli Symonds and Times Higher Education suggest two other things. First, not a single educational institution in India figures anywhere in the top-200 list; and, second, their ranks have fallen compared to last year. Even more distressing is the response from some of the directors of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Instead of examining why the IITs are so low in the rankings, they have questioned the rankings' credibility - by claiming that the rankings are linked to an institute's paying power and its willingness to buy advertisements and consultancy projects from those who run the ranking business, a charge that has been vehemently denied. Certainly, the high weights - as much as 50 per cent - for "reputation" in the rankings could bias them against the developing world's educational institutes. But the outbursts betray, above all, a head-in-the-sand approach in the IITs. Human Resource Development Minister M M Pallam Raju's assertion that the IITs need to get off their high horse and let the world know what they are doing is welcome.

This is important, since just 21 Indian institutions participated in the Times rankings. Reportedly, even Panjab University only did so at the urging of its notable alumni, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. For a country that added 5,000 new students and 10 new institutions every single day over the last five years, this is too low a level of participation. The IITs have also failed to persuade their undergraduates into careers in research, as a result of which their academic quality has suffered. The best IIT undergraduate students start work immediately, or do an MBA, or a PhD abroad. The IITs get their Masters and PhD students from other engineering colleges - students who are looking for an IIT stamp but are not always well prepared for the rigours of research. It's time all IITs paid serious attention to recommendations that they boost research - such as by setting up incubation parks within campuses, or choosing specific focus areas for each IIT, which could then become world-class.

But the government also has a role to play. Reputations can only be built if the institutes are aggressive in showcasing their work. Similarly, citations can be attracted only when people know about and are willing to recognise your work. All these mean global acceptance and require serious investment. The government has also limited the marketing ability of these institutions by severely restricting international students and professors in the IITs. This gravely undermines the Indian universities' efforts to improve their rating in global evaluation. That's food for thought for Mr Pallam Raju as well.

Half IIT qualifiers have fathers in govt, business

Mihika Basu Posted online: Mon Oct 07 2013, 03:12 hrs

Mumbai : Candidates whose fathers are in government service and business formed 47.21 per cent, or nearly half, of those who cleared the joint entrance examination (JEE)-advanced of the IITs this year. The breakup is 29.83 per cent whose fathers are in government service (against a registration of 28.71 per cent) and 17.38 per cent whose fathers are businessmen (registration 16.38 per cent). Of the 1,26,749 who registered, 20,834 qualified.

Significantly, only a small proportion of qualified candidates had listed engineering (4.61 per cent) and teaching/research (5.52 per cent) as their fathers' occupation.

Most of the successful candidates had educationally qualified fathers. Graduate and postgraduate fathers comprised 70.65 per cent (57.59 per cent of registrations) while illiterate fathers comprised only 8.10 per cent (8.70 per cent of registrations).

The middle income group crowded the list. Of the qualifiers, 33.87 per cent (41.05 of those registered) had listed their family income as being between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 4 lakh. Those earning up to Rs 1 lakh accounted for 11.60 per cent (19.53 among registrations). Those in the highest income group (over Rs 8 lakh) had fewer qualifiers (20.68 per cent) than the middle-income group but the highest success rate, with such having accounted for only 11.49 per cent of the registrations.

Students based in cities had a high success rate (64.78 per cent among the successful, out of 75.85 among the registered). Students from towns (15.99, 22.48) outnumbered those from villages (8.16, 12.74).

Fewer students took extra help than those who studied themselves, but the former enjoyed a higher success rate. Self-study students constituted 63.07 per cent of the registrations and 49.76 per cent of the qualifiers. Those categorised under "other modes" of preparation made up 36.92 per cent of registrations and 50.23 per cent of qualifiers.

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Pranab hails India-Belgium pacts in higher education

M. K. Venu



In this October 4, 2013 photo, President Pranab Mukherjee and Belgium's King Philippe inaugurate the Europalia-India Festival in Brussels. PTI

Having concluded his Belgium visit on Friday Mr. Mukherjee said he was satisfied that five agreements were inked between leading Universities of India and Belgium and “this will give an impetus to research and innovation in both the countries”.

Speaking to the media on board the special aircraft carrying the President’s delegation to Belgium and Turkey, Mr. Mukherjee said he had always placed special emphasis on improving the quality of higher education in the country by “promoting collaborations to strengthen research infrastructure in order to encourage innovation in our academic institutions.”

Mr. Mukherjee said Belgium has “world renowned academic infrastructure in higher education, especially innovation.”

“In view of the benefits to India from enhanced academic cooperation a high-level academic delegation of some of the top Universities accompanied me during my visit which concluded five agreements,” Mr. Mukherjee told the media.

The Vice Chancellors of Delhi and Hyderabad Universities and the JNU were among those who were part of the President’s delegation.

Overall, the President said he was very satisfied with the warmth of reception and the meticulous attention given by the government of Belgium to “every aspect of my programme which reflected the strength of our bilateral relationship”.

“Our economic partnership with Belgium is of particular importance as it has emerged as India’s second largest trading partner within the E.U. We discussed a number of important areas of economic cooperation including some in the pipeline. We noted our important joint efforts in the development and modernisation of India’s railways sector, cooperation in nuclear waste management and in science and technology,” Mr. Mukherjee told the media.

The President said Belgium reiterated its support for the reform of the U.N. institutions and for India’s permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council. “Belgium has fully supported our efforts for developing civil nuclear cooperation”, Mr. Mukherjee added.

in the QS rankings, and 33 per cent in THE (not shown in table). IIT-G got a score of 0 for academic reputation and a score of 1 in research reputation in THE. This is reflected in the scores for teaching and research. These organisations are now aggressively marketing their products through which institutions can enhance their “reputation”. Thus, we have been invited to advertise in their QS Top University Guide 2013 (with discounts if we opt to advertise in more than one language) and in other publications, to attend seminars and conferences (with registration fees of course), and so on. Can we rely primarily on reputations to decide ranks? Academics all over the world are asked their opinion of the top institutions globally and in their country. The chances of getting an IIT’s name included by a US professor are quite slim. The number of respondents is proportional to the number of institutes available for selection in that country. So the responses are heavily weighted in favour of developed countries. Respondents are not asked to give their inputs for each of the listed universities (it may be impractical to do so, as there is a large number of them). Instead, each respondent is asked to give a list of 5-10 universities he or she thinks are globally well known, and well known in their country. This method perpetuates the existing ranks.

Four, consider the categories CF and citations. The total number of citations in the last five years is divided by the number of faculty in the last year by QS. IIT-G had 323 faculty members in 2013, but only 220 in 2009. So its numbers clearly cannot be compared with institutions like Cambridge and Oxford, where the faculty numbers are almost constant. Further, since a five-year average is taken, one or two “star” papers can make a huge difference to the numbers. For example, a review paper “The Hallmarks of Cancer” authored by two professors from the University of California, San Francisco, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has about 10,000 citations. This paper alone will have boosted the CF figure of both these institutions significantly. THE uses a different method for citations and probably does not remove self-citations. The high scores of Panjab and IIT-G vis-à-vis IIT-D could be explained by this. Panjab University’s high energy physics group (and to a lesser extent IIT-G’s) is part of global experiments at CERN and Fermi Labs, and papers from that project have very high citations. Thus, a small group of international collaborations are providing a high score. Isn’t the median number of citations per faculty a better measure than the average (there are other issues, for example, citations in the sciences are usually much more than in engineering)?

So, what can we conclude from all of the above? Surely, it should be clear that the ranking of universities is not a simple task. We have only scratched the surface, as have QS and THE. There are so many other aspects of an educational institution that they have not even touched upon. Many of these aspects are qualitative in nature, and it is difficult to quantify them. This is not to say that Indian universities do not need to improve their rankings. They do, and to begin with, we will have to provide data to these organisations in the format they expect. Interactions are already on. But if we want Indian institutions to get appreciably higher QS and THE rankings, we must allow the institutions to do the following: a) spend heavily to aggressively market the institute among academia and corporations in the US and Europe; b) substantially increase the number of foreign students. The government must allow undergraduate admissions, allow assistantships for foreigners and remove ceilings on incomes for foreign faculty; c) hire a large number of temporary “teachers” to boost the faculty-student ratio (which counts the number of “academic staff”, and which apparently is done by many US universities); and d) create a network among Indian institutions to encourage citations of papers of other Indian institutions, that is, scratch each others’ backs. Finally, of course, all institutions must strive to improve the quality and quantity of research, teaching, industry interaction, etc.

The writer, former director of IIT-Guwahati, is mentor-director of the newly established IIIT-Guwahati

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Cisco, Google in talks to buy BB?

New York/ San Francisco: As its smartphone business struggles, BlackBerry Limited is in talks with Cisco Systems, Google and SAP about selling them all or parts of itself, several sources close to the matter said.

Such a deal would be an alternative to the preliminary agreement reached weeks ago with a group, led by BlackBerry's biggest shareholder, Fairfax Financial Holdings, to take the company private for about \$4.7 billion, a bid which has faced some scepticism because of financing questions.

The company, based in Waterloo, Ontario, has asked for preliminary ex-



CHANGE OF GUARD?

pressions of interest from potential strategic buyers, which also include Intel Corporation and Asian companies LG and Samsung, by early next week.

It is unclear which parties will bid, if any. But the potential technology buyers

have been especially interested in BlackBerry's secure server network and patent portfolio, although doubts about the assets' value remain an issue, the sources had said.

Google, Intel, Cisco, LG and SAP declined to comment. Samsung was not available for comments.

Possible bidders are proceeding with caution given the uncertainty around BlackBerry, which last month reported a quarterly loss of nearly \$1 billion after taking a writedown on unsold Z10 phones.

The value of BlackBerry's patent portfolio and licencing agreements is likely

to halve in the next 18 months, a company filing from this week shows, limiting its attractiveness.

According to analysts, BlackBerry's assets include a shrinking yet well-regarded services business that powers its security-focused messaging system worth \$3 billion to \$4.5 billion; a collection of patents that could be worth \$2 billion to \$3 billion; and \$3.1 billion in cash and investments.

Adding to the company's woes, it's likely to burn through almost \$2 billion of its cash pile in the next year-and-a-half, Bernstein analyst Pierre Ferragu had written. **REUTERS**