

# Champlain College, Mumbai

eNewsletter

## Software Engineer Dreams of Formula One

He doesn't have grease under his fingernails, in fact, he doesn't particularly like working in mechanics but Jijo Philip plans to work with the software that designs formula one racers. After graduation he hopes to move to Australia and work towards a technical directorship certificate to move into the high octane world of fast cars, screaming engines, and smoking tires.



Jijo Philip

When asked if he had ever driven a fast car himself, he smiled and said "Yes, a Mercedes SLK sportscar." It wouldn't be hard to imagine Jijo as a budding Felipe Massa or a Juan Fangio.

Jijo studied science at St. Andrews but a teacher convinced his father that he had a special aptitude for computers. After moving to Vartak Polytechnic, he decided that he really enjoyed programming but not the electronics part of the program. After graduation, he considered his options before deciding on Champlain College. "When I first debugged a program, I realized

that I had software in my blood. I want to concentrate on software design and development." He particularly likes the dynamic curriculum of Champlain. "Not only do I like the focus on my strength, programming, I like that we learn the newest software and computer languages." He also feels that the general education component of his program will enable him to explain his work to others more effectively.

"Even history makes more sense to me to be able to communicate with clients than does an Indian degree where I



would have to take mechanics and carpentry...not my best use of time." Jijo also feels that the community service requirement makes him aware of the broader world. Finally, he really appreciates the interaction that he's able to have with his professors and the administrators of the College.

It probably won't be that many years from now that we'll watch a formula one racer take the checkered flag and say to our friends, "Yes, Jijo worked on that project."

## Red Hot Chile Peppers

At the end of every semester, students fill out evaluation forms on their instructors, giving them important feedback on how to

improve. But what is really is done with these forms? Who reads them? How is the information gathered and what do



those numbers mean? Finally, what the heck is a red chile pepper doing alongside of the name of an English teacher?

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Some of the news that's fit to print:

- Summer session begins—Last week saw the start of a new semester. Make sure that you get your books!
- Graduation to be held on Bastille Day—Bastille Day is the same day as our graduation. Stay tuned for venue and guest speakers. Raj is working his magic once again.
- Football tournament—The International College, Champlain's academic partner in Mumbai, held a football (soccer) tournament for local area colleges this past month. We made the semi-finals, eventually placing fourth out of ten institutions.
- Anuradha to visit Burlington—Of course we will miss her here, but what better ambassador of good will and professionalism could we send to Vermont? Ms. Anuradha Ma'am will be leaving Mumbai at the end of August and returning in December. She will experience the beautiful fall foliage and crisp weather, but will escape most of winter's cold.
- New student council president—Rohit Waghela (The Pocket Rocket) has assumed the role of student council president. Good luck Rohit!
- Student Lounge to open soon!—Next Monday we'll celebrate the Grand Opening of the Student Lounge. Come in, have some treats, hook up your laptop, chat, and socialize. The lounge will be open from 9 to 5 everyday except Tuesday.
- Plans for new classrooms drafted—THiNC (and consequently Champlain College) has been given new space closer to the main office for classrooms. The rooms will be in the old building, ground floor so that access is easier to all. Stop by to see the plans in the office. Mr. Umri and his daughter have designed some great spaces!

## Red Hot Chile Peppers (Continued)

For quite some time there has been evaluation of faculty. Administrators might visit a classroom to observe a single lesson or several of them and at the end of each semester students fill out forms where they can rave or complain, moan or applaud...or say nothing. I've noticed similarities and some differences between students in the U.S. and students in India:

- Differences—Students in India don't trust the promise of autonomy whereas American students do...or don't care.
- Similarities—Different students in the same class can either love or hate the instructors. It is rare to find them indifferent.

In case you wonder what is done with the information that is gathered, here is the process:

1. Forms are distributed near the end of a semester
2. Students fill out forms
3. Forms are sent to neutral site and calculated
4. Results without student names are sent back to school
5. Administration goes over evaluations and meets with faculty to explain results

The results may affect an instructor's job, salary, etc. Or the results can provide the opportunity for faculty to critique his or her teaching and thereby improve. What happens is dependent on the individual faculty member and the administration of the college/university. In most situations the evaluation is seen as a tool to improve rather than as a punishment.

The evaluations that we use are from Kansas State University and have two unique aspects to them: 1) the numerical data is compared to similar classes and hence, the instructor may receive high (or low) marks, but still be listed above or below other faculty teaching the same courses in a similar college and 2) the instructors themselves determine what it is that they are trying to achieve and data on success or failure along those lines is calculated. That's why you might find a question that asks you to agree or disagree with a statement like: "This course relies on team-building techniques."

While these "official" evaluations are important, they don't help other students to determine what professor is the best one for him or her to take...and that's where student-run evaluations come into play. Some of them are scrawled on a paper on a wall: This professor is Hitlerian (That's not really a word, but you get the idea) or this professor is a knock-out but gives hard exams. Some of these are put on the web and that's where the chile peppers come in. Places like RateMyProfessor.com allow students to read what other students have said about a professor, get a numerical ranking, and even see if "they are hot." Whatever that means...it's measured by chile peppers!

## Man of Many Hats: John Neelankavil

John Neelankavil has been the heart and soul of The International College and the visible presence of Champlain College Mumbai for over six years. But what is more interesting is the many hats he wears as Director. A student of Edward DeBono who only talked of six hats, John Sir can be

found juggling student scheduling requests, teaching SOC 295, planning a marketing campaign, repairing the college's internet connection, dealing with disciplinary, even bowling for the faculty in cricket. Indeed, one might call John, the Top Hat!

