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## New York Gets New Start-up Lab

***Pace University opens up entrepreneurship lab, hoping to incubate interdisciplinary collaboration between students—and create some new companies in Lower Manhattan.***

Before they were entrepreneurs, Rob Caucci and Jeremy Pease were students by day and residence hall RAs by night. That meant after classes in Pace University's Lubin School of Business and computer science program, respectively, they would come home to "have to mediate dozens of conflicts every day between roommates," Caucci says.

In an effort born of that frustration, the pair launched their first company, a roommate-matching software called Resolutions, which they dubbed "eHarmony for college roommates." Then, after winning Pace University's 2010 Pitch Contest with that idea, the pair shifted their plans: They are now looking for a \$500,000 investment for their roommate cost-sharing and household management start-up, called [SpaceSplitter](#).

Pace is the latest university trying to foster just this kind of partnership—in which a business school student meets an undergrad programmer and begins a lasting entrepreneurial relationship. On Thursday night, the Lubin School of Business at Pace held a reception launching the school's new entrepreneurship lab, an open-floor-plan space decked in computers and [IdeaPaint](#) tucked into a corridor of Lubin School. The secret sauce: any student from any school within Pace may apply. The lab's director, Bruce Bachenheimer, who also organizes the Pace Business Plan Competition and Pitch Contest, said he'd gotten a call from a nursing student asking if she could apply for the lab, hopefully to find a collaborator for a piece of health-care software or an app.

"Entrepreneurship is interdisciplinary problem solving and no one can be expert at everything; therefore well-coordinated collaboration is at the heart of what we strive to instill in our students," says Neil Braun, dean of Pace's Lubin School of Business and former president of NBC and chairman of Viacom Entertainment. "The lab is a conducive space for students, faculty, entrepreneurs and city officials to identify opportunities and needs and build a plan to make something good happen."

Thursday night attracted other bold-faced New York start-up names, including Harold Levy, managing director of Palm Ventures and former NYC Schools chancellor, and Robert Walsh, New York City Small Business Services commissioner.

"New York is a thriving hub of entrepreneurship, but we're still in the second and third inning," compared with Silicon Valley's thriving technology industry and start-up scene, said Somak Chattopadhyay, a partner in Tribeca Venture Partners, who spoke at the Entrepreneurship Lab launch. "We've been missing a critical mass of incubators and accelerators." - Christine Lagorio

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