

## Student Hits Home Run at Pace Pitch Contest

A bed that rises to the ceiling to save space. An SAT® video game. Electronic devices that look like plants. Seventeen contestants, including Pace students and faculty, presented these entrepreneurial ideas and more at the first-ever Pace Pitch contest in December. It was Rui Jin '06, a graduate student in international business, who won the \$1,000 grand prize with her idea for cultural immersions trips to China for students.

Jin was born in Beijing and was raised mostly in China. While at Pace, she found that, unlike her, many of her American-born Chinese friends had little knowledge of China and had some difficulties understanding the culture of their parents.

Once a leader of the debating team at Beijing University, Jin was able to keep her nervousness to a minimum during her pitch and gave the most energetic and persuasive pitch. "It was very exciting," says Jin about winning. "I was very proud that people had so much interest in my home country."

The contest was presented by the Entrepreneurship @ Lubin program in association with Pace Association for Collegiate Entrepreneurs (P.A.C.E.), Second Century Innovation and Ideas (SCI<sup>2</sup>), and the Small Business Development Center at Pace. It was financed by JPMorgan Chase.



Rui Jin '06

During Pace Pitch, each individual or team had three minutes to make a pitch, which had to be an original concept created by the presenter(s). The contest was open to all members of the Pace community as well as the general public. The pitches were presented to a panel of judges, including Emanuel Martinez, managing director of GreenHills Ventures, LLC; Charles F. Ryan, vice president of small business financial services for JPMorgan Chase Bank; Carolyn Chin, CEO of Cebiz Social Ventures; Clarence B. Jones, executive consultant for Marks Paneth & Shron, LLP; Brian J. Nickerson, PhD, director of the Edwin G. Michaelian Institute for Public Policy and Management at Pace; and Jerald Posman, director of Project Enterprise at Pace.

**Says Bruce Bachenheimer, PhD, clinical professor of management, "Pace's motto is *Opportunitas*, and I don't think there's anything more synonymous with opportunity than entrepreneurship. And there's nothing more important in teaching entrepreneurship than experiential learning, and this is experiential learning."**

While Jin's pitch remains unfunded, Nickerson offered her the chance to coordinate a trip to three cities in China this summer for a group of Pace faculty members and students. The trip was "not for profit, not for credit, but for fun," says Jin.

of history. "The industrial base is much different in the 21st century, and the immigrants the U.S. wants to attract are those who are highly educated or possess certain skills. For example, nurses from the Dominican Republic and the Philippines help ease our nursing shortage," says Blumberg. "The jobs for the unskilled workers coming today are for the most part low-paying, service sector positions."

In addition to filling labor needs, one major avenue for immigrants' financial success has been small business. The immigrant street peddlers of yesteryear have evolved into a plethora of small business owners, many of them doing quite well. Koreans, for example, are twice as likely as native-born Americans to own a small business; they own about 20 percent of all U.S. dry cleaning businesses and, in Southern California, nearly half of all liquor stores and one-hour photo shops. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the gross sales of Korean-American businesses totaled about \$46 billion.

The Bush administration's current policy toward this

labor segment is favorable to small business owners, including immigrants. "Small business is very important to this president," says Bruce Bachenheimer, PhD, clinical professor of management. "One of [George W. Bush's] first executive orders was that government agencies should not make any regulations that place a burden on small businesses."

*Even 100 years ago, immigrants realized that a college education was essential for upward mobility in American society—often not for themselves, but for their children.*

Many immigrants that are small business owners are also potential entrepreneurs. Bachenheimer contends that entrepreneurs possess certain personal characteristics, including a need for achievement, self-direction, and the ability to accept risks to succeed. Certainly, moving to a new country simply indicates an acceptance of risk, but the

goal-oriented "model minority" immigrants are the ones who use these characteristics to their advantage. "For America to be the land of opportunity, you have to create your own opportunity," he says.

While some U.S. immigrants today are doing well financially, others are not. According to a U.S. Census Bureau report on the foreign born, in 2002, 16.1 percent lived below the poverty level, compared with 11.1 percent of native born.

## Suffrage, and More

A hallmark of American democracy is the right to vote. Historically, the right was limited for some immigrants, and even when it became available, certain newcomers distanced themselves

from the ballot box. In the aftermath of the 2000 election, however, there is a growing interest among immigrant communities to participate in the electoral process.

Until the voting reforms of the 1880s, immigrants essentially were disenfranchised from the electoral process, says Christopher Malone, PhD, assistant professor of political science. "The government didn't run the elections—political parties did, giving rise to corrupt political machines," he says. "The constraints of the process—voting registration was limited to working hours and required filling out lengthy forms—kept many immigrants from voting. The message was, 'Come to America, work hard, but don't participate, electorally speaking.'"

Today, however, immigrants are relatively well positioned to flex their political muscle—if they so choose. According to a report by the American Immigration Law Foundation, 5.4 million new adult American citizens voted in 2000, and once an immigrant is registered to vote, he or she is more likely to vote than native voters. However, numerous obstacles stymie the potential power of this voting block. Many immigrants resist becoming U.S. citizens because of what Foerster calls "the myth of return." The ability to hold dual citizenship