

# STUDENT LIFE

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS SINCE 1878



**Snow and the holidays are on their way to WU. Find out what that means in Scene. Page 8.**

The intersection at Wallace and Forsyth presents a real danger, posits Forum editor Jeff Stepp. Find out why inside. **Page 4.**

The Bears rocked two recent tournaments with their stellar gameplay. Read all about that and more in Sports. **Page 5.**

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VOLUME 127, NO. 38

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2005

WWW.STUDLIFE.COM

## Two student groups share Olin Cup

By **Troy Rumans**  
Contributing Reporter

Somark Innovations, a biotechnology company started by Washington University alumni Mark Pydynowski and Ramos Mays, took first place in the Olin Cup Competition's all-around category, winning a prize of \$50,000. iMobile Access Technologies, led by Stephen Foster, placed second for a prize of \$20,000.

In the student category, introduced in this year's competition, Suzanne Shenkman Designs, led by MBA graduate Suzanne Shenkman, and homeWURk, headed up by junior Teddy Purnomo, split the \$5,000 prize. The Olin

Cup Competition also saw the marking of Dec. 1 as Robert J. Skandalaris Day in St. Louis. Skandalaris delivered the keynote address at the Olin Cup ceremony on Thursday.

Pydynowski and Mays met at the University during their undergraduate careers. After graduating in 2004 they went their separate ways, but shortly thereafter re-convened to form Somark Innovations, an enterprise that seeks to revolutionize the method by which livestock are tracked in the United States.

The two agree that the greatest benefit from winning the Olin Cup comes not from the prize money, but from the visibility their venture has received.

"[The Olin Cup] is the connection to the resources. The visibility that was created for Somark by the Olin Cup...the prestige, the press, the contacts...was incredible," said Pydynowski.

Somark Innovations is currently seeking approval in its first round of financing, a total sum of approximately \$3.5 million, as well as finalizing international patent protection and the formation of a partnership with a Missouri university to help with FDA/USDA approval studies.

A key difference this year compared to previous years was the student category, a new addition to the Olin Cup Competition.

"Just the fact they created

that category is amazing," said Pydynowski. "It's very hard for them to compete at this level—they still have full time jobs as students."

Pydynowski and Mays had experience starting companies during their University careers. Pydynowski competed in the Olin Cup in 2004, but did not proceed past the first round.

"I started four companies while in college," said Mays. "The amount of time spent was ridiculous. I don't see how I could compete at the Olin Cup [as a student]," said Mays.

Purnomo's team at homeWURk understands. His group consists of himself, junior Steve Xu, sophomore Alan Perlman, junior Ellen Lo and sophomore Aaron Budilov.

"We were the only undergrads. It felt strange," said Purnomo.

Despite that fact, Purnomo's team felt very strongly about how they performed in the Olin Cup, as well as the overall process.

"If you look at where our business was when we first started—our operations are so much different now. We grew a lot," said Perlman. "The Olin cup was like a support system."

HomeWURk revolves around the idea of supporting students in moving into a new room. The company offers online decoration of a dorm room, assistance in purchasing furniture and setting up the purchased items in the dorm room all for the

student. It plans to begin offering its services this spring semester.

"If you think back to your freshman year—you have no idea what your room or your roommate will be like," said Pydynowski, speaking about the company's services. "There's a significant convenience value that they're providing."

The Olin Cup has expanded significantly over the last few years, coinciding with the University's overarching push towards promoting entrepreneurship across all disciplines.

"The overall caliber of participation has increased a lot. The level is a lot more intense," said Xu. "They really want to get

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# University steps up international student recruiting

By Andrea Strand  
Contributing Reporter

While the nation is seeing an increase in foreign graduate student enrollment, Washington University has watched its rate slightly decline over the past two years.

As noted in the minutes of an Arts & Sciences faculty meeting, "2012 students applied for graduate school in Hilltop Arts and Sciences departments this year, 402 offers were made, and 190 students enrolled...somewhat down from a high achieved two years ago."

Across the nation, the number of enrolled foreign graduate students has increased even with declines in the number of applications, according to an annual report by the Council of Gradu-

so that is definitely a factor, too," she added.

To attract more international graduate students, the University has organized a conference in Beijing, China, the University's greatest source of international applicants, to be held next spring.

Among the invitees: eleven other American universities and many more Chinese universities.

According to the Arts & Sciences faculty meeting minutes, the goals of the conference are to "emphasize our interest both to the Chinese government and to Chinese students, and to raise the profile of Washington University among Chinese students."

Steiner-Lang emphasized the importance of bringing an international perspective

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other schools' involvement."

Purnomo noted that the tenants of entrepreneurship apply across all schools, rather than just a thing in which the business students dabble.

"The motto of the Olin Cup is innovate, collaborate, compete. Those three concepts are fully applicable to other schools. As long as you get people together, form a team with an idea, the school doesn't matter."

The Cup has been seeking to address the notion that the competition is for the business school and business people, rather than the entire campus. Though progress has been made, many students still feel ostracized or simply do not know it exists.

"Somebody pointed out to me once that [the Olin Cup] is supposed to be cross-campus, but where do these events take place? In the business school," said Pydynowski. "We need to get these kinds of events all over campus—in Crow, in January, everywhere."

HomeWUrK, in particular, seeks to bring students across disciplines together. It is actually part of a larger student

business, iWUrK, which houses enterprises across other disciplines.

All of the advertising for homeWUrK was done by artWUrK, a subsidiary of iWUrK, many of which are students from the Art school, or have backgrounds in art.

The Olin Cup implemented the student award in order to entice undergraduates and graduates to compete alongside business professionals. Even so, some say prejudices still exist towards certain student groups.

"I feel we're not taken as seriously just due to our ages," said Budilov.

Pydynowski saw it as well. "[Some professionals] think [students] are competing not for their company, but for the money. Somebody actually asked me if I was just going to go spend to prize on having a good time instead of using it towards my business."

The two student groups, Suzanne Shenkman Designs and homeWUrK, will be implementing their business plans.

Most importantly, noted Pydynowski and Mays, is the im-



COURTESY OF MARK PYDYNOWSKI

Ramos Mays (left) and Mark Pydynowski won the Olin Cup and \$50,000 for their bio-tech company, Somark Innovations, on Thursday.

portance of entrepreneurship in the world today, whether it be among students or business professionals.

"Entrepreneurship is oxy-

gen for capitalism," said Pydynowski. "The world become flat for competition. If you fail to innovate, you cease to exist."