

Phoenix Pitch brings together students for innovative pitching competition

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COPY EDITOR

Several teams consisting of students from Chicago assembled at the Chicago Innovation Exchange (CIE) in Hyde Park on Friday, February 13. This is a newly opened building, owned by the University of Chicago. The event was the first annual one, which mainly focused on providing a platform for young entrepreneurs and like minded students to network and build connections.

They presented their startup or business idea with a clear cut goal and map, collected feedback and did some valuable networking. The IIT Mobile App Development (MAD) association played

a key role in making this event possible. Also, several IIT teams and students were seen actively pitching their ideas and discussing with entrepreneurs. The CIE played host to over 80 participants consisting of 25 teams

from local schools and universities. Students were seen from the University of Chicago, DePaul University, University of

Illinois at Chicago and our very own IIT. All twenty five participants were asked to submit a thirty second video pitch for the first two rounds of selection. The videos of all the pitches were played in front of all the contestants at the event and each contestant had to vote online for their top three picks. Then the top ten teams would go through to the next round. The quality of the videos in terms of presentation and innovation was pretty remarkable. All kinds of ideas were flying around and some had made their videos so impressive using their editing skills, making it very hard to choose for the contestants.

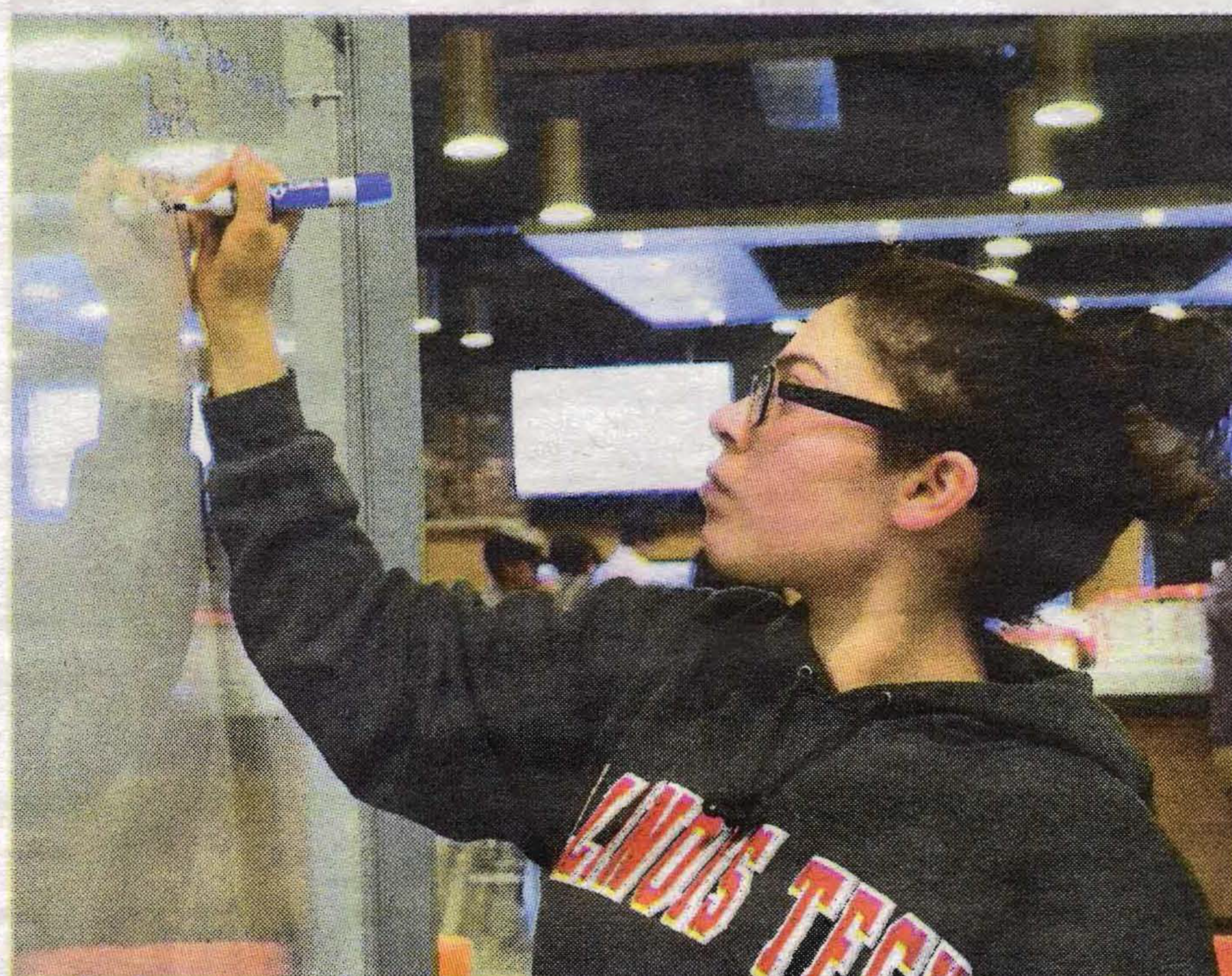
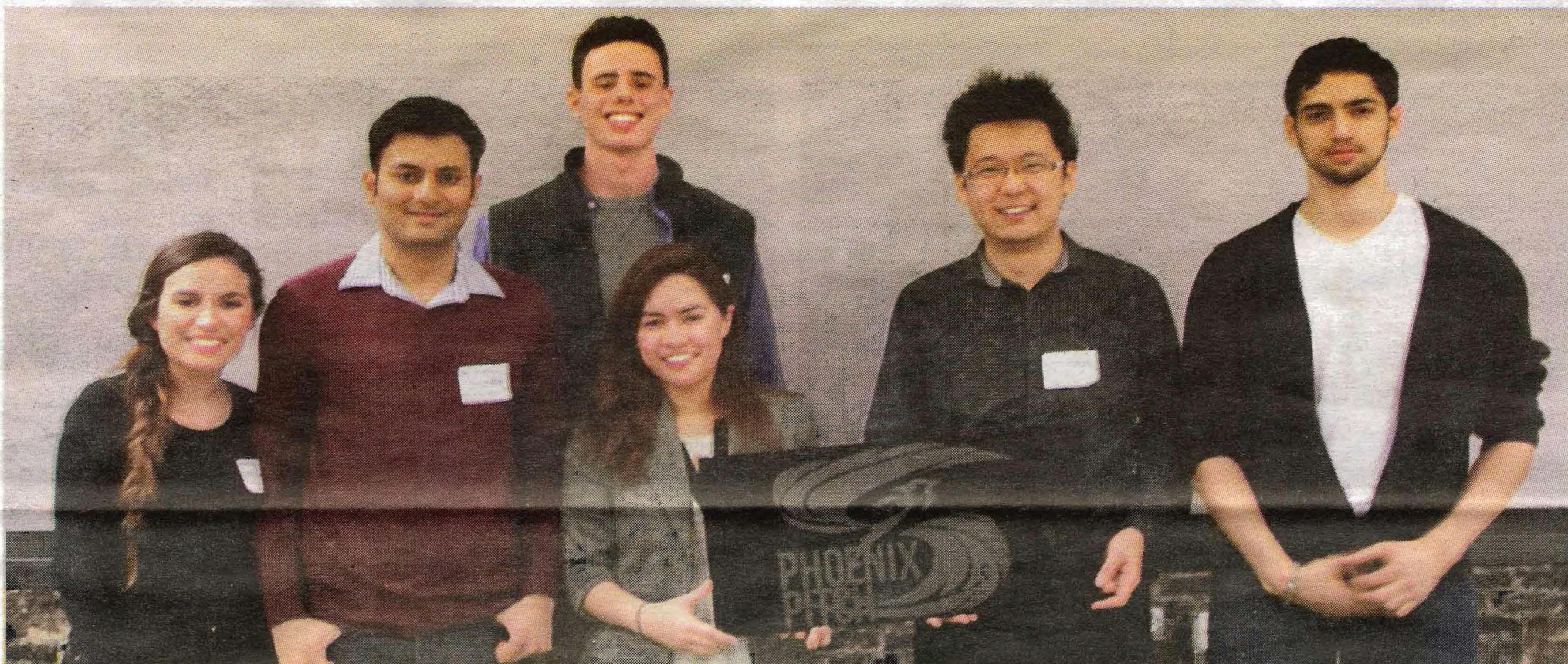
Ideas ranged from swapping jobs with someone, making blogging easy through a mobile app, to turning trash into tomatoes.

Ten finalists were selected and they had to provide a final pitch in front of six well

accomplished judges, namely Rick Zullo, Vice President at Lightbank, Alida Miranda-Wolff, Associate Manager at Hyde Park Angels, Imran Ahmad, Principal at OCA Ventures, Shradha Agarwal, President and Co-Founder of Context Media, Shreena Amin, Co-Founder and COO at Pretty Quick, and Bob Rosenberg, Adjunct Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship at the Booth School of Business. The final pitches were three minutes long and could have a Question and Answer round of up to four minutes. The contestants were given two hours to prepare for this. There were a set of mentors commonly available to all students to help them through and discuss real world issues. The judges rated each pitch on how innovative the idea was, the business viability and market value of the product.

The results were then announced by the judges, with Amazon gift cards being awarded to the winners. Coming in at third was none other than our very own fellow IIT

team, Trash-to-Tomato, consisting of Prasan-na Deshpande, Juana Villalpando and Ivaness Chiong. Their pitch was based on creating a system which helped restaurants turn their trash to tomatoes by collecting the waste, assembling and composting it and finally growing the tomatoes. They bagged a \$125 Amazon Gift Card. Coming in at second was Prepify, a startup which offers adaptive SAT study materials for free. The first place was bagged by GE Yang for his amazing creation, The Escherpad. It is a collaborative note-taking web application which saves a lot of time for students and members of the academia by short handing scripts and different styles with nifty shortcuts. The first place and second place winners were awarded with \$500 and \$250 Amazon Gift Cards respectively.



Photos courtesy of Phoenix Pitch

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