

# MIZZOU

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## Around the Columns

### The long and winding road

Elina Tang is no fan of a straight path. Born in Wuhan, China, Tang traveled all the way to the U.S. to study molecular biology and microbiology at Tufts University. But after graduating, she decided to try marketing. So she was off to Harvard to earn a graduate certificate in administration and management while working at a biopharmaceutical



Chinese graduate student Elina Tang studies market business-to-business sales force management. Photo by Nicholas Benner

company, and finally to MU, where she expects to graduate in May 2011 with a doctorate in marketing from the Robert J. Trulaske Sr. College of Business.

“I was looking, but was not sure what I was looking for,” Tang says. “I love my husband and my children, but I felt like something was missing.”

She found the missing piece at MU doing marketing research. Her dissertation examines a three-dimensional approach to market segmentation for business-to-business sales force management. “I developed a statistical tool that is analogous to 3D glasses for business to business sales managers who face customers whose purchasing decisions are influenced by their past purchasing behavior, desired product benefits and their own downstream customers’ characteristics. That is, these are three dimensions driving customers’ choices that may be interrelated but are conceptually distinct,” Tang says. She enjoys her research because it applies to real world problems. “Why research something that isn’t a real issue?” Tang says.




Tang feels lucky to be at MU. “I have received excellent an education at Mizzou, from the

world-class faculty in the marketing department,” Tang says. She hopes to continue to conduct and teach marketing research after graduation. She distinguished herself as a first-rate instructor and was recognized by the Trulaske College of Business as an outstanding graduate teaching assistant in 2009.

So, as Tang continues down life’s road, she may have finally blazed her path. “Luckily after all these year I’ve found something I like,” she says.

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