

DECA Rocks Rochester

Early in the morning of March 9, twenty seven Sachem East DECA members headed towards Rochester to compete in the New York State DECA Career Conference. Each had prepared for his or her competition for months, and the bus ride was packed with energy and dreams.

For Sachem East, the DECA program has grown tremendously over the past few years. Membership grew by over eighty members from last year, and with this increased membership came more students entering competitions. In January close to seventy students participated in the Suffolk County Regional Competitions, with eighteen students earning medals in different categories. Those students were automatically eligible to enter the competitions at the state level.

In addition to the regional entries, Sachem East also entered two written, research based manuals that the students were to present to judges in Rochester. The two manuals were for Community Service Projects and covered the "Sachem Is AWARE: A Parent Academy" and also "Pancakes for Parkinsons" events that were held over the past few months.

The competitions are broken into two elements – tests and role play/presentation. After the opening ceremony Wednesday evening, students undertook tests designed to measure their content knowledge of various business elements such as marketing, finance, business management and economics. These tests are calculated as part of the overall competitions.

Thursday's events are comprised of the role plays and leadership academy workshops. A role play is a situational problem that the student has ten minutes to prepare for and then make a presentation before a judge. The problems can range from describing economic impact of a new competitor to handling an irate customer. The student has an additional ten minutes to present their ideas to a judge who grades the competitor on a range of knowledge and performance based scales. "The role plays are often the most challenging aspect for DECA members – tests are second nature and the students can study different materials, but the role plays can be on any number of different topics and the students have to be prepared for many different situations. Each student practiced a number of role plays before heading to Rochester, and we ran scenarios with the students right up to the time they left for their competition," said DECA advisor Dave Ryan.

The excitement starts to build for the DECA members as the awards ceremonies begin. A mini-awards ceremony Thursday evening presents awards for some of the state-based competitions such as General Marketing and Free Enterprise. During the mini-awards ceremony, Freshman Taylor Kern was recognized with a Top 10 Medal for her efforts in the Free Enterprise Test category. Immediately after winning, Taylor spread the word to all of her friends and family through Facebook with the simple exclamation, "I won an award!" Also during the ceremony, DECA co-presidents Jailyn Cordoba and Pinar Kiran accepted a medal for the chapter for increasing membership during the current school year. "We were so happy to go on stage and accept the award. In September and October, all of us helped to spread the word about how great DECA is – and this is a great tribute to the people who helped make DECA so successful this year," said Senior Pinar Kiran.

After a DECA dance where students could mingle with other DECA members from across the state, students relaxed since all competitions had concluded. Over two thousand DECA members attend the State conference, and friendships are begun every year when the different chapters get together.

Friday morning brought the major awards ceremony after breakfast. As each competition is called to the stage, there is a nervous anticipation that runs through the convention hall. All the preparation, all the worry, all the effort comes down to that moment when you want to hear your school and your name called. As East DECA members walked on stage, their classmates cheered them on and yelled even louder when their names were called to step forward and receive their medals.

As the morning developed, Sachem East's name was called eleven more times -

Nicholas Bejarano was recognized for Top 10 in Test, Interview, Overall and captured 3rd place in the state in his category of Principles of Business Management and Administration. (East's First Top 5 Statewide Recognition!)

Gina Famulari captured a Top 10 in Test in Quick Serve Restaurant Management.

Michael Ferrera captured a Top 10 medal in Role Play 1 and Role Play 2 in Automotive Services Management

Christopher Koster claimed a Top 10 in Test for Quick Serve Restaurant Management.

Katie Pena won a Top 10 recognition for Role Play 2 in Business Services Management.

Aditya Ramesh won a Top 10 medal in Test and Role Play 1 in Retail Merchandising.

Pranav Sathyanarayanan was recognized for Top 10 in Test in Principles of Finance.

Also competing, but not finishing in the Top 10 were:

Michelle Aliquo, Teresa Alvarez, Davina Anderson, Joshua Baker, Amit Bapat, Bryan Benitez, Kunal Bhatt, Jaily Cordoba, Christina Crisci, Stephen DeLoatch, Brandon Eng, Mark Florian, Bismark Herrera, Pinar Kiran, Joseph Laricciuta, Kevin Lopez, Rocio Nunez, Shirleen Polynice, and Samantha Zito.

"Sachem East's DECA contingent is young and some of our freshmen and sophomores really impressed with their work ethic and placement in competitions this year. East DECA is primed for doing exceptionally well in the coming years with energy and enthusiasm to continue to excel at all levels of competition," said Dave Ryan.

Sachem East DECA will be competing in the Six Flags Marketing Day Challenge in early May. Students have been working on the marketing project for the competition and will be submitting their work in early April.

DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) is a nation wide co-curricular club centered on furthering business education in students.

