

Spotlight on DECA

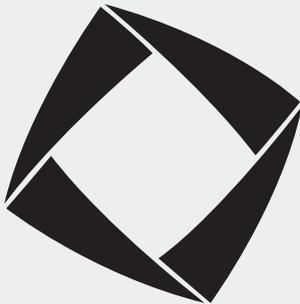
September 2018

Alumni Edition

Volume 42, Issue 1

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A Publication of Michigan DECA

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Articles and letters welcome for publication

DECA is committed to creating and maintaining a healthy and respectful environment for all of our emerging leaders and entrepreneurs. Our philosophy is to ensure all members, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, are treated equally and respectfully.

Any behavior in the form of discrimination, harassment or bullying will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all members to uphold and contribute to this climate.

Michigan DECA is supported by a grant from the Michigan Department of Education, to the College of Technology at Eastern Michigan University.

Welcome Back!

By **Michael Parr**, Lincoln Park High School, Class of 2008

Welcome back to another exciting Michigan DECA year! This year poses to be another historic year for our organization, as more students than ever will have the chance to attend and experience our leadership and development conferences. In November, Michigan DECA hosts the 2018 Central Region Leadership Conference in Detroit. During December and January, four District Conferences will be held each month all across the state. March will be the State Career Development Conference in Detroit, and the 2019 International Career Development Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida. During the coming newsletters, we will send information on how you can attend and assist with the District and State Conferences. The information about assisting with CRLC is in this newsletter.

As mentioned previously, the 2018 Central Region Leadership Conference is being held in Detroit the weekend of November 16th through November 18th. Students from across 12 Chartered Associations, as well as from Michigan, will spend an action-packed weekend in Detroit to learn and experience all of the excitement that moves our region. Members of the Alumni Division who would like to attend can fill out the registration form contained within this newsletter. Roles include facilitating workshops, general sessions, assisting with tours, and providing other support along with reconnecting with old friends. We encourage everyone to attend this conference.

Last year, the Board of Directors introduced DECA 2.0 as a way to improve our Division. During the first year of DECA 2.0, we have already seen progress including improving the flow of communication to our members and increase opportunities within Michigan DECA, along with connecting members for professional development and growth. Over the coming year, we will continue to implement our vision for DECA 2.0.

In support of DECA 2.0, we encourage all of our members to consider the following four questions and let us know your thoughts.

1. Why did you join Alumni DECA?
2. How can we make being a member a better experience?
3. What roles should Alumni DECA have?
4. What are the benefits of being a member?

The Alumni Division Board of Directors will use the feedback received from our members to continue to evolve our Division into the best organization that we can. Send your thoughts to gmparr714@gmail.com to be incorporated into the vision for Alumni DECA 2.0.

DECA 2.0 will enable Michigan DECA to experience long term growth, development, and stability. Each of us play an important role into helping to make this great organization even better. We look forward to working with our members in the coming months and years as we move to DECA 2.0.

DECA is my Family, Literally

By **Rob Clark**, Mona Shores High School, Class of 2006

For some “DECA family” is a phrase they use in high school or college. Then they move on, and their DECA siblings and DECA parent turn into their former classmates and teacher. For me, “DECA family” has a different meaning. Both of my parents, David and Dr. Brenda Clark, were DECA advisors who met at Western Michigan University while they were State Officers in Delta Epsilon Chi (Collegiate DECA). My first State Conference was when I was three months old. My younger sister, Courtney, was State President twice and my youngest sister Faith, has competed the last two years. DECA is both the family I was born into and the family I chose.

The one time I had a partner for competition it was my sister Courtney. My junior year we competed together in Advertising Campaign. We fought like siblings as could be expected, but it was great working with her and becoming state finalists. When Faith competed her freshman year, it was with two other girls in Financial Literacy Promotion Project, and they fought like siblings as well. It was funny and brought back those memories. Your fellow DECA members become like your siblings because you spend so much time together.

My sophomore year, the Mona Shores marketing teacher, Mr. Walker, developed Multiple Myeloma. We ended up with a long-term substitute for most of the year, so my parents were my de facto advisors. Mr. Walker came to the conferences, but the preparation was handled by my parents. This brought a new perspective for me because I had seen my parents prepare students for competition for many years, and now they were making sure I was ready.

Once Courtney and I graduated from Mona Shores, the DECA chapter ceased to exist. It would have been easy to just move on with life, even though my parents were still advisors at that time. Alumni DECA members quickly became some of my best friends. There were DECA bachelor parties and picnics, so that we could spend time together outside of conference settings.

The Hyatt Regency in Dearborn was like a second home, and for the first couple years it was strange going to Grand Rapids or Downtown Detroit instead. It’s really the people in DECA that made it feel like home. Going to conferences now is like a family reunion. Fellow alumni members are my long-lost cousins and advisors are my crazy aunts and uncles. If you haven’t been to a conference in a while, come back home to DECA.

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Alumni Member Spotlight: Ramsey A've

By **Stephen J. Hershfield**, Midland Dow High School, Class of 2008

Name:

Ramsey A've

High School/Graduation Year:

Advanced Technology Academy, Dearborn, Class of 2008

University/Major

Lake Superior State University, Class of 2012, Political Science

Current Job

Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Associate of the Chief of Staff for Global Sales



Tell us a little about your DECA Experience:

I joined DECA my senior year of high school, so you could say I was a late bloomer. After looking at the different topics, I decided to compete in Travel and Tourism. After the district conference, I simply fell in love with DECA. Next thing I knew, I was running for a position as a State Officer and won! In addition, I placed at the State Career Development Conference and headed to the International Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. One of my fondest memories was competing against all these large schools, it was a real underdog story. I was a brand-new member in a brand new DECA Chapter. It was exciting to know that I was good enough to compete with the large schools that have DECA classes.

What practical, life skills did you learn during your time as a DECA State Officer?

Two important skills I learned were clear communication and recognizing the important of presence. Clear communication is applicable to everything you do in life. Presence is knowing what you're saying and how you're saying it. This is important in business (and life) to understand how people perceive you – this includes body language.

Secret Talents?

I am a huge kayaker, these arms never get tired.

If you could provide advice to a typical high school DECA member, what would you say?

I believe the best advice is be bold. Be aggressive. Build a story (something that will make you proud).

What drives you?

I am a natural competitor, whether it's at work or socially.. Winning is the prize, but the journey is the treat. Looking back at the journey is the most satisfying part of winning.

Why did you join Michigan DECA Alumni?

I joined because I truly believe in DECA and the importance of DECA in high school education. My charge is to continue to be a part of that and provide my time, resources and experience to the organization and its members.

What is your favorite thing about Alumni DECA?

I love the State Career Development Conference. As Michigan DECA Alumni Members, we have a large group of us come back to volunteer and help coordinate the weekend. This is because it is truly a pure Michigan showcase. We show ourselves and other states why we are better. It has been fascinating to be a part of the journey from the Hyatt in Dearborn to the largest convention center in our State at Cobo Center.

So what's next?

Continuing my journey to SVP. I'm committed to doing whatever it takes to get there. I realize it's a long way out, but the journey is half the fun.

If you want to connect with Ramsey A've please feel free to send him a connection request on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ramseyave/>

Building Yourself from Good to Great

By Ramsey A'Ve, Advanced Technology Academy, Class of 2008

There are thousands of high performing students that compete and graduate from DECA each year. Many go on to universities across the world and begin a quest to become what society would classify as good career paths/outcomes. The question however, is what makes a path good vs. great, and what has to be done by the individual to sustain or advance either.

I just completed the book “Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don’t”. This is by far my best read this year and I believe it will help re-energize you no matter where you are on the journey. This article is part of 4 installments where I will share my take on going from good to great; not as a company, but as an individual charging out of DECA. Obviously each person’s situation and opportunities will vary.

To get started, below are the characteristics shared in Good to Great by Jim C. Collins, of companies who go from good to great. We will analyze two in each article going forward based on individuals instead of companies. I welcome your thoughts and feedback anytime.

1. Level 5 Leadership: Leaders who are humble, but driven to do what’s best for the company.
2. First Who, Then What: Get the right people on the bus, then figure out where to go. Find the right people and try them out in different seats on the bus (different positions in the company).
3. Confront the Brutal Facts: The Stockdale paradox—Confront the brutal truth of the situation, yet at the same time, never give up hope.
4. Hedgehog Concept: Three overlapping circles: What lights your fire (“passion”)? What could you be best in the world at (“best at”)? What makes you money (“driving resource”)?
5. Culture of Discipline: Rinsing the cottage cheese.
6. Technology Accelerators: Using technology to accelerate growth, within the three circles of the hedgehog concept.
7. The Flywheel: The additive effect of many small initiatives; they act on each other like compound interest.

Level 5 Leadership: Individuals who are humble and do what’s best for them and the teams they are a part of. No matter where we search, there’s a common theme among leaders and winners. I believe it’s critical to always be in battle mode for yourself. It’s great to entertain advice from family, friends, and mentors, but ultimately only you know what you want, need, and are willing to sacrifice. Being humble is recognizing there will be obstacles and barriers, but confident they will not deter your fight. One of the biggest obstacles that gets in the way of recent graduates is attachment to home, location, relationships, and perceived life created by family.

Almost every industry is represented in most states, but there’s always a mothership. The ability to unshackle yourself mentally from the aforementioned obstacles when planning will open broader doors. I challenge you to think back to the dream you had leaving high school. Where did you live, work, and what did you define as greatness? It’s never too late to battle for one’s dream. The best thing you can do for yourself and those who love you is become the best version of you. Level 5 leaders leave nothing to chance when developing themselves.



Product Management 101

By Kyle Studebaker, Jenison High School, Class of 2008

Careers in marketing can mostly be categorized into one of the four “P’s” of marketing – product, place, price and promotion. Most large companies have many departments designed to handle the responsibilities associated with marketing and it’s impossible for one department to truly own all four P’s as the company changes and grows. Product Management, Channel Development, Pricing & Incentives, and Communications are four departments at Steelcase that primarily handle our four P’s of marketing. I have the fortunate opportunity to work in product management as a Product Manager for the Steelcase seating team for the last two years, and it’s been full of learning opportunities.

There are many responsibilities on a daily basis in product management which call for your time, and it quickly becomes a main part of the job to prioritize and manage tasks to get the best use out of time. To truly understand and do well in a marketing career, it’s imperative to know the priorities and consider them daily.

Ultimately my goal on a daily, monthly and annual basis is to grow top line sales and enhance the bottom line margins. No company can continue to exist without sales and profitability built into products. But no good or service can be sustainably sold without providing desired value to the customer who chooses to purchase your product. As a product manager at Steelcase, I strive to provide value to our customers through enhancing their experience with the specific product lines I manage. This means it’s extremely important to have a strong pulse on understanding what your customers consider valuable with your products, and how to evolve your product portfolio to meet their ever-changing needs.

Salespeople on the front lines tend to have the best pulse with your customers to know what their needs are. The closer I am to our sales team, the better pulse I can maintain with market trends and needs related to my products. I started in sales when I first graduated college with Steelcase thanks to some wisdom my older brother gave me during the interview process. Even though he works in finance, he still told me “No matter what you’re doing, you’re always selling. So, you might as well learn that skill now.”

It seems to be a daily occurrence to sell an idea internally and craft a compelling message externally in order to obtain funding for a project or try to support a large sales opportunity. Selling is relevant to my job because I have to sell ideas and requests to people at Steelcase, in our distribution channel, with our customers and with many other stakeholders in the purchasing process for furniture. If I get an idea for a way to enhance my product, make changes to pricing, or pursue other channels to sell through, I have to sell that idea internally in order to get funding. When launching a new product or chasing sales growth with existing products, marketing is the team that creates the messaging.

It’s extremely important in product management and product development to know your customer! The more you know about your customer, the better you’ll be able to provide them solutions which they’ll continue to buy over time and/or promote your product for you. And the top promotional channel (as most of you should know) is still word of mouth. Without a strong brand and a good customer experience, you’ll never capture word of mouth marketing; and without that, your job will be very difficult.

Product management (a.k.a. product marketing) can be a very rewarding career. You interact with many different departments in the company – from sales to procurement to engineering – and it helps you really learn the structure of a large organization quickly. If you desire to get into product management, feel free to send me an email and I’d be happy to chat with you about it! Without products (goods or services) a company won’t exist. And every product must have a value to the customer it’s being sold to. Know your customer, know your markets, stay close to your sales team and always pursue creating good customer experience. Do all of that, you’ll grow your top and bottom lines and prove to be a successful product manager.

Simplicity is Genius

By **Stephanie Cardaris**, Chippewa Valley High School, Class of 2010

KISS: Keep it short and simple. This short simple sentence was one of the first things I learned as an officer when attending a nation-wide conference. It was as if almost every speaker we listened to had said some sort of version of it. Being a freshman in college at the time, I made mental note of it.

This short phrase stayed with me during my college career and helped me to excel in my journalism, marketing and public relations classes, especially as a writer. I even adopted it outside the classroom and began living it in my everyday life. Anyone that knows me can tell you that I get straight to point and do not have time to mess around.

As I started my career at Quicken Loans, I told myself to remember this mentality, as sales and financial information needs just that – short, simple, direct and no time for fluff. Funny enough, I found that the company thought the same way I did, in their own way.

Last year, I referenced to Quicken Loans' ISMs, or the principles we live by. As I dived into my career in the first year, I quickly had to learn the ISMs and stumbled upon this: Simplicity is Genius.

Simplicity is genius means breaking anything and everything down in its simplest form in this fast-moving and often complicated world. It breaks down communication barriers to ensure not only clarity, but value! You can never assume everyone knows what you are speaking about or at the same level of how you are speaking. Being simple will help keep everyone on the same page and yield a better result overall.

Now you may think I sound silly, but really think about how much we over explain, or over complicate situations in daily life, whether it be at home or at work. If we just took a second to break it down and said or acted in a simpler manner, it takes the confusion, miscommunication, and the complication out. It may sound easy to do, but really, I will still find myself tripping over words in an explanation that didn't need to be there in the first place.

Try it! Whether you keep in your mind simplicity is genius or KISS, I urge you to try it and see how easier things make become!



Guest Column: Why I Joined the Alumni Division

By Anna Sumpter, Petoskey High School, Class of 2018

It wasn't until my junior year of high school that I became involved with DECA. Immediately after joining, I knew I had to embrace as much of the organization as possible. I had never been very involved with extracurricular activities, but DECA sparked a flame within me and quickly became my passion.

My first year in DECA, in addition to competing in the Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan, I decided to run for State Office and was elected as the 2017-2018 State President. Serving Michigan DECA was one of the greatest experiences I have ever gained, and I knew when my term had ended that my time with DECA could not. I finally found an organization full of driven, like-minded individuals and I enjoyed being surrounded by this positive, determined energy. The conferences were motivational, yet informative and full of engaging workshops and networking opportunities that were difficult to find elsewhere as a young adult. I knew as I grew older that I would spend much more time gaining business and leadership knowledge through business school, internships, and professional conferences, but I wanted to give back the organization that facilitated these opportunities for high school students. Facing student loans to get through college, I knew I was unable to donate money, but I was more than willing to donate my time and energy to supporting other's DECA journeys.

After searching for different ways to stay active with the organization, I decided to get the Life Membership through the Michigan Alumni DECA Division. With the largest DECA Alumni Division, Michigan works to keep alums active and have an opportunity to give back. As an alum, we are able to attend conferences and assist in any ways we are best suited for. From running your very own workshop to give DECA members new leadership tools, to running sessions or judging events in your area of work or study, to assisting at conferences with raising money or organizing awards, this division gives endless opportunities to have a hands-on approach to giving back. However, joining this division isn't all about helping out at conferences, it allows you to access a network of past DECA members for the chance to form new professional connections.

As soon as I became an alum, I spent time reading our Alumni Newsletter and following the division on Facebook and Twitter. I was able to read engaging stories about where DECA had taken individuals and how to harness your DECA experience to advance your career. I could see who else had taken the opportunity to join this division and looked forward to networking at conferences. I quickly realized why joining this alumni division could be so powerful. Regardless of where life takes every DECA member, we still have these experiences together... some sort of common ground between people who may have never have met otherwise.

During my summer internship, I was able to connect to an executive who had competed in DECA (more specifically, Michigan DECA!) through a chapter I was very familiar with. That simple connection gave us ground to talk about the effectiveness and success that DECA gives young adults for their future endeavors. Now, he may not have been a part of the alumni division, but I realized that when networking with fellow alums, that common ground is already found. Many questions can be asked after that is understood; what chapter did you compete through? What event did you compete in? These questions and many more, allow me to see if we are in the same career field or maybe from the same area of the state. After understanding their DECA background, I can see if staying in contact could be useful to either party. By networking with fellow DECA alums, that conversation barrier is already broken and I can focus my energy on finding further things in common.

District Conference Time!

It's never too early to start thinking about district conferences, because they're coming up fast. Do you remember your District Conference? Everyone competes, some even competing for their very first time. You became so nervous but, somehow, it all ran so smoothly.

This is a great time for alumni members to come back and volunteer, either behind the scenes or becoming a judge for a particular event. The district conferences begin on December 16, and run through January 9. This would also be a wonderful opportunity to help build your resume, as you can use these volunteer hours when interviewing for different jobs.

District 1 – Tuesday, December 18 at Saginaw Valley State University

District 2 – Wednesday, January 8 at Ferris State University

District 3 – Thursday, December 20 at Kalamazoo Valley Community College

District 4 – Thursday, January 10 at Eastern Michigan University

District 5 – Friday, January 12 at Eastern Michigan University

District 6 – Friday, December 14 at Lawrence Technological University

District 7 – Saturday, January 12 at Lake Orion High School

District 8 – Wednesday, December 19 at Baker College of Allen Park

State Career Development Conference – March 8-10, Detroit, Michigan

International Career Development Conference – April 25 - May 1, Orlando, Florida

Sign up to be a judge: <http://www.mideca.org/support/be-a-judge>

There is only one requirement if you choose to judge an event - you have to have been out of high school for at least three years. If this isn't the case then have no fear; there are many different ways to volunteer at these conferences.



Life Membership: \$100.00

Michigan Alumni DECA members have the option to invest in a Life Membership. A Life Membership means just that - you're a member of Michigan Alumni DECA for life. No more membership dues. No more annual checks. Nothing to worry about. Life Members also have their State Conference registration fee waived - currently a savings of \$40 a year!

Life Membership Installment: \$25.00

With the installment plan, you can work toward your Life Membership over the course of five years. One payment of \$25.00 is due each year for five years. At the end of that time, you get all the benefits of a Life Membership.

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Former Chapter: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Scholarship Donation (Optional)

Yes! I'd like to contribute to Alumni DECA's fund that provides travel scholarships to DECA members that qualify to compete at the International level.

Amount: \$ _____

Michigan DECA is a 501(c)(3) educational association affiliated with Eastern Michigan University. Donations are tax-deductible.

Payment Options:

Check enclosed - Make checks payable to "Michigan Alumni DECA"

Please bill my Visa/MasterCard/Discover/American Express

Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____

Signature: _____ Card Verification Number: _____

(three digit code from back of card)

Mail to: Michigan Alumni DECA
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Or Fax to: 734.487.4329

Questions? Call 734.487.DECA



Central Region Leadership Conference Registration Form

The moment Michigan DECA members, advisors, alumni, and donors have all been planning and waiting for will be here soon. This year's Central Region Leadership Conference (CRLC) will be hosted in none other than the City of Detroit. This conference has been designed to help members put together the puzzle pieces done when planning for their college education and future careers. Alumni, get ready as members from all across the Midwest prepare to connect their puzzle pieces to Michigan DECA and all that it has to offer. This conference offers the opportunity to experience the difference this association has on the lives of its members and alumni.

Take a walk down memory lane, that is filled with experience, success, and first-hand knowledge to be a part of the connection. Join your fellow Michigan DECA Alumni November 16th-18th, and prepare to connect students from all across the Midwest, with skills from across the world. Alumni members will assist with practice competition on Saturday, November 17, 2018 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. They will also introduce speakers, monitor rooms, assist with workshops, and be a part of four floors of entertainment aboard the Detroit Princess. That's right, after an amazing day of workshops and city adventures, members will experience Saturday Night's Entertainment! It's a party like you've never seen at a DECA Conference. The Detroit Princess features four floors of entertainment – the first floor will feature a live concert, the second floor will have karaoke, the third floor will have casino-style games, and the top deck will be designed for delegates to hang out and view the Detroit and Windsor, Canada skylines.

The Alumni Board urges you to be a part of the connection that makes Michigan DECA different than other state association's alumni involvement. For more information on all that the conference will offer students, visit crdeca.org.

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Registration Deadline: October 16, 2018

Practice Competition Only (No Fee) Saturday, November 17, 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Fee	\$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing: Quad Room:	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> For the entire weekend		OR	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Housing: Double Room:	\$50.00
		OR	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Housing: Single Room:	\$140.00

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Payment Options:

Check enclosed
Make checks payable to "Michigan DECA"

Please bill my Visa/MasterCard/Discover

Card Number: _____ Card Verification Number: _____
(3 Digit Code found on the back of the card)

Signature: _____ Expiration: _____

Mail to: Michigan Alumni DECA
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI, 48197

Or fax to: 734.487.4329

Questions? Call 734.487.DECA