MERIT AWARD PROGRAM

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All formatting and submission guidelines, forms, and checklists are posted on Michigan DECA's website at http://mideca.org

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PREFACE

The Merit Award Program (MAP) is an instructional enrichment program for students preparing for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. The program is a competency-based approach to career preparation in the career cluster/pathways identified and is based on individual member achievement accompanied with a recognition program for each member.

MAP activities correspond to the competencies needed in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management occupations. The activities progress in depth and complexity from the bronze level to the silver level and to the gold level. Activities should be planned in relation to one another, to the career field and to the career objective of the member. The DECA advisor should guide the member in the proper selection of activities based on the member's individual needs and abilities as well as the total instructional program.

All participants must begin at the bronze level. Activities are not confined to those listed in this guide and the members should be encouraged to develop new activities. It is imperative that all activities be reviewed and analyzed in the planning stage so that they are all meaningful and relevant to the member's career interests.

Information contained on the following pages will give the advisor background information for class presentation. MAP should be initiated early in the school year so that members will realize the greater benefits from their involvement. A thorough orientation of the purpose and operation of the program is vital for the preparation of the members. The members need to know where they are going and how they will get there as well as "why." A special section has been designed to aid in orientating the members to the program.

OBJECTIVES

1. To broaden the opportunities for DECA member recognition at the local, state, and international level.

2. To provide a means for individual member expression of initiative and creativity.

3. To motivate members to assume responsibility for self-improvement.

4. To explore the opportunities available in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

5. To develop a greater awareness of the importance of marketing, finance, hospitality, and management in the economy.

6. To increase the college and career preparedness of DECA members.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Any active member in the High School Division of DECA is eligible to pursue an award. For each level of award (bronze, silver, and gold) the member must complete the required number of activities in the five (5) marketing, finance, hospitality, and management education instructional areas. All members must begin at the bronze level and complete a Progress Form indicating their intention of completing the MAP.

Suggested activities for each level of awards are presented in the member section. DECA members must select one career cluster/pathway for each award level and carry it through each activity. After selection of the career cluster/pathway, award level, and activities, members are required to list the activities on the Progress Form so that proper review and evaluation of the activities can be achieved by the members and their advisors.

MEMBERS' REQUIREMENT AND PROCEDURES

A. All members must begin at the bronze level.

B. Each award level is confined to one marketing, finance, hospitality, or management career cluster/pathway. A member may work on the bronze level in one career cluster/pathway then work on the following levels in the same or different area if their career interest changes.

C. The member may not perform the same activity in more than one award level. (A second speech may be given, but not on the same topic.)

D. Requirements for each award.

1. Completion of ten (10) activities is required for the Bronze Award. Members must select at least one (1) activity in each of the five (5) instructional areas, but not more than three (3) activities in any area.

2. Completion of seven (7) activities is required for the Silver Award with at least one (1) activity in each of the five (5) instructional areas, but not more than two (2) activities in any area.

3. Completion of five (5) activities is required for the Gold Award. Members must select one (1) activity in each of the five (5) instructional areas.

E. To determine whether any activity is worthy of considerations for a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, the following criteria has been established:

1. The guiding principle for selecting and evaluating activities for the Bronze Award should reflect acquisition of knowledge. This involves the collection of

facts or opinions for the purpose of furthering one's knowledge. A bronze activity may be accomplished by explaining, applying, developing, elaborating, illustrating, and evaluating subject information.

2. The guiding principle for selecting and evaluating the activities for the Silver Award should reflect analysis of knowledge. This involves the examination by comparing, examining, validating, defining, clarifying, and bringing together subject information.

3. The guiding principle for selecting and evaluating activities for the Gold Award should reflect interpretation of knowledge. This involves the explanation of facts or opinions for the purpose of interpreting. A gold activity may be accomplished by explaining, applying, developing, elaborating, illustrating, and evaluating subject information.

F. As a member pursues the Merit Awards Program, it is recommended that the DECA advisor periodically review the work of the project.

G. If through review, a member and the DECA advisor agree that more time is needed for the completion of a MAP project (than was originally stated in the Progress Form), an adjusted completion date can and should be made by the member and DECA advisor.

H. After all activities and criteria for a given MAP award level have been completed, reviewed, and agreed upon by the member and the DECA advisor, the member is eligible for the appropriate MAP certificate.

I. Notification of a member's completion of a Merit Award Level must be made by the DECA advisor.

PROGRESS FORM

Each participant is required to complete a Progress Form indicating their intention for completing a MAP Award Level. This serves as a contract between the member and the advisor for the completion of requirements for the award. When a member completes the Progress Form and decides to complete another level, a new Progress Form is developed. As the member progresses with the activities, the advisor should review the progress being made in case an adjusted due date needs to be made.

RECOGNITION

A. A certificate with appropriate seal for each level –Bronze, Silver and Gold– will be awarded to each member as they complete the activities of the program.

B. Local chapters may wish to give additional recognition of their own choosing.

C. Some state/provincial associations have other recognition for MAP participation. Check with your state/provincial advisor.

MATERIALS

Basic information materials for each level should be made available to each participant. It is suggested that the advisor duplicate the member section of this handbook for each member to use.

METHOD OF COMPLETING ACTIVITIES

Each activity in the Merit Award Program is to be completed in a professional manner. The specific method of completion should be varied. For example, speeches, reports, and interview might be appropriated for some areas, whereas posters, collages, or bulletin boards would be more effective for others. The choice is up to the members. However, the advisor should make sure that several methods of presentation are adapted into the total program.

Some activities within the different levels specify one type of presentation. This is not concrete. MAP encourages creativity and originality in the presentation of activities, so feel free to change or adapt the method of presentation to the objectives of the activity.

MAP TERMS

MAP - the abbreviation for the Merit Award Program

GMAP - Gold level Merit Award Program

Level of Award - refers to the three different levels of the program: Bronze, Silver and Gold

Activities - refer to the various tasks selected to be performed within each competency area

Member - a marketing, finance, hospitality, or management student who is a member of DECA

Instructional Areas - one of five (5) instructional areas of the Merit Award Program:

- Economic Understanding
- Human Relations
- Marketing
- Product and Service Knowledge
- Promotion

Progress Form - an outline of the activities planned by the member that also serves as a checklist for the satisfactory completion of the requirements for the award.

Career Cluster and Pathway - refers to the designated job areas which a member may select to carry out the activities relating to the member's career interest. These areas encompass the major career fields within a cluster.

Marketing
Marketing Communications
Marketing Management
Marketing Research
Merchandising
Professional Sales

Finance
Accounting
Banking Services
Business Finance
Insurance
Securities & Investments

Business Management &Administration
Administrative Support
Business Information Management
General Management
Human Resources Management
Operations Management

Hospitality & Tourism
Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services
Lodging
Travel & Tourism
Recreation, amusement & Attractions

MEMBER SECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Merit Award Program (MAP) was designed to strengthen the instructional areas offered in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management, and to give each DECA member an opportunity to work on self-improvement activities. MAP recognizes the ability, interest, and creativity of the individual DECA member.

The objective of MAP is to increase the employability of the individual in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management fields and to develop an awareness of these areas as a career choice. The program is intended to develop a better understanding of the importance of entrepreneurship, product and service knowledge, and customer satisfaction.

All members must start at the Bronze level.

GETTING STARTED

A. The member must first choose a career cluster/pathway for their MAP. It is suggested that an area recognized in DECA's Competitive Events Program be chosen by the member.

Marketing
Marketing Communications
Marketing Management
Marketing Research
Merchandising
Professional Sales

Business Management &Administration
Administrative Support
Business Information Management
General Management
Human Resources Management
Operations Management

Finance
Accounting
Banking Services
Business Finance
Insurance
Securities & Investments

Hospitality & Tourism
Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services
Lodging
Travel & Tourism
Recreation, Amusement & Attractions

B. Projects must be done in the area of your occupational interests, not an unrelated field. For example, if your area is Financial Services, then talk to a banker, not a salesperson.

C. Refer to the attached list of suggested activities for each project level. You are also encouraged to develop new projects of interest to you under the direction of your chapter advisor.

D. The DECA member should then list the projects on the Progress Form provided and assign completion dates for each project. The completed Progress Form must be reviewed with the advisor.

E. Plan ahead! Read all activities first, think about them, choose the ones you plan to do and schedule completion dates. Some projects are related to others, and you may need to plan. Other projects are long term, such as recording information or writing companies.

COMPLETING THE PROJECTS

A. All activities submitted must be typed in 12-point font. We recommend for the major content of the written entry to be double-spaced.

B. If any project calls for doing something physically, such as a window display, the member must provide evidence of planning, use of proper principles, and a picture (either drawn or photographed).

C. Headings of each activity must consist of and be in the following order: *Cover pages are not needed for each activity.*

- Award Level *(Bronze, Silver, then Gold)*
- Instructional Area *(Economic Understanding, Human Relations, Marketing, Promotion, Product & Service Knowledge)*
- Activity Title
- Member's Name
- Completion Date
- Write the content of the project:

1. First, explain the project. Write the project as if the reader knows nothing about the topic.
2. Complete the project in the most appropriate manner.
3. All references are to be footnoted and/or referred to in a bibliography at the end of each project.

D. All projects will be evaluated on an individual basis by the chapter advisor,

E. Members satisfactorily completing all ten (10) projects will be awarded a Bronze MAP Certificate of Completion. *

F. Remember, review the projects to see which ones should be started first. There may be the need to work on more than one project at a time since there may be a need to write for information or wait for equipment.

G. Refer to the Merit Award Program Minimum Standards that are in the Michigan DECA Guide.

BRONZE LEVEL
THE AQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

A. The first level of the Merit Award Program is the Bronze Award. The bronze level reflects the acquisition of knowledge. This involves the collection of facts or opinions for the purpose of furthering one's knowledge. A bronze level may be accomplished by collecting facts and opinions in ten (10) activities.

B. Once the career cluster/pathway is selected, you should then pick ten (10) projects you would like to complete. At least one (1) project must be in each of the five (5) instructional areas with the remaining projects distributed in the area of your choice, but not more than three (3) in any one area.

   Instructional Areas:
   - Economic Understanding
   - Human Relations
   - Marketing
   - Promotion
   - Product and Service Knowledge

C. After the ten (10) projects and due dates have been selected and approved by the chapter advisor, the individual may start working on the projects.

D. An average of two (2) typed pages is required for the bronze level. Some projects will be longer, and some may be as short as one (1) page. The projects do not have to be done in any particular order.

E. All projects will be evaluated on an individual basis by the chapter advisor.

BRONZE LEVEL | THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
ECONOMIC UNDERSTANDING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Interview a businessperson on how, why, when and where they started in business. Prepare questions ahead of time and review them with your advisor. Take notes or tape the interview.
- Write a paper on the role of profits in the free enterprise system.
- Develop a career ladder for your career cluster/pathway, with job descriptions and duties.
- Define what free enterprise means to you. How do you personally benefit from our economic system, as opposed, or compared to communism?
- Write a paper on how businesses are interdependent.
- Research and develop a business structure for a fictional business in your career cluster/pathway. Include various types of business structures possible and why you chose the one you did.
- Write a paper on career possibilities in your career cluster/pathway.
- Select an article on the economy, then summarize and react to it.
- Write a paper on the forms of business ownership, including the advantages and disadvantages of each form.
- Develop a paper on the economic conditions that influence prices and profit.
- Select an article from a magazine or newspaper on the economy as it relates to your career cluster/pathway.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

BRONZE LEVEL | THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
HUMAN RELATIONS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Make a list of desirable attributes looked for in an employee in your career cluster/pathway. Contact a businessperson in that area and ask them for their ideas for attributes of a good employee. Compare your two lists and comment on the similarities or differences.

- Keep a two-week journal of your store's employees' relationships. Elaborate on events that happen in the store between the employees.

- Make a list of twenty traits in other people that impress you as being good traits. Then, make another list of twenty traits which you would consider characteristics of a successful businessperson. Compare the two lists and note the similarities and differences.

- Select an article on human relations, then summarize and react to it.

- Develop your personal short- and long-term goals.

- Take total responsibility for bringing in a speaker for the class. Direct publicity, determine the occasion, do the introduction, lead the discussion, and appropriately thank the speaker.

- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

BRONZE LEVEL | THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
MARKETING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Gather facts from articles that indicate the importance of selling, then summarize and react to them.
- Create a poster or bulletin board on the importance of selling.
- Create a product feature and benefit chart for an item in your career cluster/pathway.
- Observe three (3) different selling situations in a local store and write a paper on how they could have been improved.
- Write a report comparing a salesperson to three (3) different occupations.
- Interview a buyer for a business in your career cluster/pathway to find out where and how they buy merchandise.
- Attend a buyer's show and report on your visit.
- Write to several companies for their product catalogs and merchandise information.
- Conduct a comparison-shopping survey on price difference on a product either in your career cluster/pathway or from the school store.
- Select a new product from your career cluster/pathway and chart its progress over the last year.
- Contact two (2) salespeople and compare what they sell, how they sell (door-to-door, inside, mail order, phone, Internet), and how they are paid.
- Write a report about an article on something new in marketing, finance, hospitality, or management, about a product or perhaps a trend.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

BRONZE LEVEL | THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
PROMOTION

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Prepare a point-of-purchase display for your career cluster/pathway.
- Create and sketch a display for a store in your career cluster/pathway, indicating props, merchandise, and lighting.
- Prepare a display for a product or service in your career cluster/pathway or the school store. Be sure and go through all the steps; plan, remove display properly, return items to stock, install, display, and evaluate. Use good principles of design.
- Using the evaluation form provided by your teacher, evaluate three (3) window displays from your career cluster/pathway.
- Conduct a survey on advertising costs for a product from your career cluster/pathway. Contact local and metro advertising media, such as newspapers, TV, and radio stations.
- Develop an advertisement for an item in your career cluster/pathway.
- Design and print the show cards for a display in your career cluster/pathway.
- Prepare a bulletin board promoting DECA and/or marketing, finance, hospitality, or management.
- Select a company in your career cluster/pathway and collect public relations articles on that company.
- Collect four (4) ads on the same product in your career cluster/pathway from four (4) different media. Compare the presentation of each of these media. How does it differ in the various media?
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

BRONZE LEVEL | THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCT AND SERVICE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Write a paper on selling points of two (2) products from your career cluster/pathway. Make a list of the selling points of these products or make a feature and benefit chart for the two (2) products.
- Trace a product of interest from development to final consumer.
- Give a presentation on product knowledge from a product in your career cluster/pathway.
- Write a paper on product knowledge, using at least three (3) different sources (i.e., Consumer Reports, Consumer Protection Agency, trade journals, manufacturers, or product information).
- Write a paper on consumer acceptance of a product from fad to fashion, to obsolescence.
- Select an article from a newspaper on a product in your career cluster/pathway; summarize and react to it.
- Select ten (10) items in your career cluster/pathway and determine how they could be packaged differently (i.e., Blister Pack Chapstick so it can hang on a peg rack).
- Other activities may be used with approval of your advisor.

SILVER LEVEL
THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

A. The next level of the Merit Award Program is the Silver Award. The Silver Award activities reflect the member's analysis of knowledge. This involves the examination of facts or opinions for the purpose of analyzing. A Silver Award may be accomplished by comparing, examining, validating, defining, clarifying, and bringing together information in seven (7) activities.

B. The member plans the Silver Award activities in the same manner as the Bronze. For the Silver Award, seven (7) activities are completed within the five (5) instructional areas. One (1) project must be from each area and two (2) projects may be distributed in the areas of your choice. It is recommended that the member participate in the same career cluster/pathway as the Bronze Award, but not required if the member's career interest changes.

C. After the seven (7) projects and due dates have been selected and approved by the chapter advisor, the individual may start working on the projects.

D. The Silver Award is more advanced than the Bronze and requires more thought by the individual since the projects are more detailed than those of the Bronze Award.

E. Silver award projects should average three (3) typed pages.

F. All other guidelines of the bronze level apply.

G. All projects will be evaluated on an individual basis by the chapter advisor.

H. Bronze level activities may not be repeated.

SILVER LEVEL | THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE
ECONOMIC UNDERSTANDING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Plan and coordinate a sales project for your career cluster/pathway, school store, or DECA chapter and oversee all operations. Keep a journal of your activities and make suggestions for improvement.
- Compare your career cluster/pathway with four (4) other career cluster/pathways. Report your findings in depth.
- Make a time chart showing the advances of capitalism since 1776.
- Research and report on the expected changes that could occur in your career cluster/pathway in the next 10 years. (Example: data processing, packaging, consumerism, shopping hours)
- Interview a representative of you local Chamber of Commerce or retail merchants' association. Attend a meeting, if possible, and report to the class on your experience.
- Visit the Employment Commission and determine how they help people obtain a job, what they can do for you before or after graduation?
- Keep a chart on three (3) companies in your career cluster/pathway that are listed on the stock exchange for a period of at least two (2) months. Watch for articles in the paper that cause changes in those company's stock prices. Give your opinion on what causes the stock price to change.
- Identify and fully explain the necessary steps for establishing a business in your career cluster/pathway.
- Conduct an inventory of store merchandise for a complete department. Complete all department totals and finalize all financial reports. Compare your inventory with the computer inventory.
- Research free enterprise in the U.S. Write a report on what "Free Enterprise means to me."
- Research a specific job or career area. Write a complete report on that career.
- Complete a report on the stock market and how it contributes to our economic system.

- Perform the accounting function of the school store for an assigned time. Keep the journals, general ledger, accounts receivable and payable ledgers up-to-date and prepare any required statements.

- Perform the duties of the DECA chapter or committee treasurer. Keep all journals, ledgers, and fund-raising activities up-to-date and prepare required statements.

- Research the advantages and disadvantages of forms of business ownership. Analyze each for your businesses and report on why you have chosen a specific form of ownership.

- Research and determine the federal, state, and local government regulation that will govern a business. Write a report on your findings.

- Using store equipment catalogs, research the cost of equipping a business. Report on your equipment needs by listing the type, quantity, cost, and total cost needed.

- Report on a book about how to start your own business.

- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

SILVER LEVEL | THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE
HUMAN RELATIONS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Write a paper on how employers could improve the morale their employees.
- Keep a journal of your activities as manager of the school store. Record all daily activities for two (2) weeks, including personal conflicts, problems, and grading. Make suggestions for improvement.
- Write a justification for the store policies customer's question.
- Write a paper on the importance of keeping store information confidential. (i.e., What would happen if a customer saw the cost of some merchandise and questioned the salesperson?)
- Write a book report about a personnel development book.
- Write a report on how clothing effects the customers' perceptions of a sales staff.
- Design, conduct and analyze an opinion survey on traits people find most desirable in a salesperson.
- Interview two (2) personnel managers regarding employee line-staff relationships. Report on your findings.
- Visit at least three (3) stores to purchase a similar product and write a report on how the salespeople were different and how they could have been better.
- Research and write a report on customer services in your career cluster/pathway for at least three (3) local companies.
- Write a report about how a company in your career cluster/pathway could improve its image in the community.
- Write a paper on the advantages and disadvantages of labor unions as they pertain to your career cluster/pathway.
- Develop four (4) human relation case problems that direct attention to four (4) specific problem areas of your place of employment, or employment in general.

- Design and conduct a “Customer Courtesy Campaign” for some aspect of the school store or your place of employment.
- Develop an accident prevention program for the school store or company in your career cluster/pathway.
- Train a new employee in some aspect of the school store. Use a major topic area such as display or special orders. Pretest and post-test them to determine the effectiveness of your training.
- Complete a series of entrepreneurial aptitude tests to determine your interest in business ownership. Report on your personal aptitudes for business ownership.
- Develop a personnel policies handbook for a new business project. Include specific procedures to follow, store organization structure, and information on hiring, training, and motivation.
- Write a report on the effect nonverbal communications as it pertains to your career cluster/pathway.
- Create a human relations role-play problem situation. Using this role-play situation, hold a mock competition with the members of your class.
- Design ten (10) job descriptions for assigned areas of work in a store.
- Create a new or totally revised job procedure manual for an area of work in a store.
- Develop a plan to achieve your personal short- and long-term goals.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

SILVER LEVEL | THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE
MARKETING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Perform and videotape a sales presentation. Analyze the presentation using an approved sales presentation evaluation form.
- Write a paper on the channels of distribution for a product in your career cluster/pathway.
- Make a comparative study of salary incentive plans for salespeople in your career cluster/pathway using at least three (3) businesses.
- Make a line graph or bar chart of merchandise sales for a business in your career cluster/pathway or the school store for each hour of a business day for one week. Analyze the chart for slow and peak times of sales.
- Write a report on impulse buying in relationship to a business in your career cluster/pathway or the school store. Identify the locations of shopping goods, convenience goods, and specialty goods.
- Complete a buying project for the school store and follow your project through all stages during the project. With permission, select a product, receive it, promote it, mark it down, if necessary, and write a report on the conclusion of your project. Keep your instructor informed of your progress during the project.
- Write a report on the trademarks of products in your career cluster/pathway.
- Plan a fashion show. Include descriptions and scripts to be used. Locate models, practice, and then videotape the presentation.
- Coordinate a fund-raising activity for the school store or DECA chapter. Plan out and implement all aspects of the activities, including promotion, merchandising, finance, and evaluation. Report on your activities.
- Research store layout. Draw a store layout for a business of your choice in your career cluster/pathway. Report on why this would be the best design possible for that business.
- Prepare a final newspaper advertisement layout for a product in your career cluster/pathway.

- Design a marketing research study (10-15 questions) for a product or service in your career cluster/pathway or school store. Conduct the research and report your findings.

- Research a store location. Design a form to evaluate 15 factors to consider in choosing a location. Then analyze three (3) specific location for your new business project using the criteria above. Choose a location and report on why you chose that location.

- Research and draw a store layout in detail, including room sizes, equipment, storage, receiving, entrances and exits.

- Design a marketing plan for a business in your career cluster/pathway or school store. Include store image, purpose, store name, target market, pricing policies and marketing mix in your plan.

- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

SILVER LEVEL | THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE PROMOTION

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Design a one-month promotional campaign for a business in your career cluster/pathway or school store. Include a calendar of activities with media used in advertising, special promotions, visual merchandising, and an analysis of cost involved for each promotion.
- Develop a year long sales promotion calendar for a business in your career cluster/pathway or school store.
- Prepare a newspaper advertisement layout for a store in your career cluster/pathway. Include a plan, rough sketch, and a timeline for when the ad will run.
- Interview two (2) public relations managers to determine their job responsibilities and how they differ. Report on your findings.
- Design a brochure that can be used to promote your marketing, finance, hospitality, or management program and/or DECA.
- Prepare two (2) 30-second P.A. announcements in your career cluster/pathway for the school. Record your commercials, being sure to coordinate them with current promotions.
- Create a bulletin board or poster on how you feel effective selling affects a business. (i.e., How are multiple sales cost effective?)
- Interview customers in a mall and determine how displays effect their buying.
- Prepare a one-month promotional campaign for a store in your career cluster/pathway or school store and analyze the sales results.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

SILVER LEVEL | THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCT AND SERVICE KNOWLEDGE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Research and report on customer services in your career cluster/pathway for at least three (3) local companies.
- Design, print and distribute a flyer for a new product from your career cluster/pathway or school store.
- Coordinate a specific computer activity for a week. Design and implement a project using a word processing, database management, or spreadsheet program that simplifies a store procedure, and can be communicated to others for actual use in class.
- Perform and videotape a store procedure demonstration. Analyze the demonstration in class.
- Write a check handling procedure and policy for a business or your place of employment. Develop an employee brochure and visual aids to help explain it.
- Prepare a paper on pricing in your career cluster/pathway.
- Prepare and give presentation to your class on product features and benefits from your career cluster/pathway.
- Role-play a DECA participatory event on customer complaints before the class. Conduct a discussion on how well it was done and how it could be improved.
- Construct a window display emphasizing features of a product from your career cluster/pathway or the school store, or how it differs from similar products.
- Make a presentation to the class on a product you feel should be sold in the school store.
- Draw a layout of a store in your career cluster/pathway. Show the traffic patterns and write how they effect the sales of various items.
- Contact the State or Federal Consumer Protection Agency or Better Business Bureau for information about what has or is being done about consumer protection. Report on your findings.

- Write a business letter to at least five (5) companies and request product information for one (1) product in your career cluster/pathway that you would like to sell. Compare and contrast the information you receive in a report.

- Research the differences between designer, national, private-label and generic brand goods. Report on your findings.

- Research and analyze five (5) products in your career cluster/pathway. List at least 10 product/features and benefits for each product. Include photographs, drawings, warranties, and consumer information.
- Complete a comparison-shopping survey for the school store, or for products and stores in your career cluster/pathway. Compare 15 products and/or services and their prices between three (3) stores then report on your findings.

- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

GOLD LEVEL
AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

A. The third and most advanced level is the Gold Award. The Gold Award activities reflect the individual's interpretation of knowledge. This involves the explanation of facts or opinions for the purpose of interpreting. A Gold Award may be accomplished by explaining, applying, developing, elaboration, illustrating, and evaluating subject information.

B. The activities are planned in the same manner as the Bronze and Silver Awards. The Gold Award requires completing five (5) projects. One (1) project must be from each area. It is recommended that the member participate in the same career cluster/pathway as the Silver Award, but not required if the member's career interest changes.

C. After the five (5) projects and due dates have been selected and approved by the chapter advisor, the individual may start working on the projects.

D. The Gold Award is the most advanced level and requires more thought by the individual. Therefore, the projects are more detailed than those at the previous levels. At least four (4) typed pages are required for each activity.

E. All projects are to be reviewed by the chapter advisor to ensure that they present the best work possible by the individual.

F. Completed Gold Projects will receive a certificate of completion.

G. The completed projects must meet these guidelines:

1. All 22 projects (Bronze, Silver and Gold) must be completed by the DECA member.
2. The official Merit Award Program Progress Form is in the front of each award level.
3. All projects are contained in an official DECA 1-inch binder.
4. Tabs are used to separate the three (3) award levels.
5. Each level has its own table of contents with page numbers.
6. All projects contain the proper heading.
7. All projects have references properly footnoted.

GOLD LEVEL | AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE
ECONOMIC UNDERSTANDING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Analyze the financial needs of starting a business. Report on the total cost involved in starting a business and sources of funding.
- Obtain three (3) to five (5) annual reports of businesses in you career cluster/pathway. Make a comparative analysis and recommend the company which would provide the best investment.
- Give a presentation on free enterprise to two (2) civic groups.
- Give a presentation on entrepreneurship to two (2) civic groups.
- Write an article on free enterprise to be submitted for possible publication in your school and/or local community newspaper.
- Check the stock market page in a newspaper (weekly) for two (2) months and follow five (5) companies. Report your findings showing an understanding of why business fluctuates.
- Identify the taxes involved for a business in your career cluster/pathway and licenses required. Explain the necessity for such licenses and ultimate use of taxes involved.
- Make a graph of employment trends of a particular national chain store, including a historical sketch of how many were first employed and how the company expanded. Compare with general employment conditions throughout the nation for the period involved.
- Create a power point presentation portraying the free enterprise system.
- Obtain the financial statement of a corporation and analyze the way their money has been invested.
- Complete the DECA Entrepreneurship Participating Event for a business in your career cluster/pathway.
- Select an aspect of business and research the local, state, and federal laws and regulations which influence its profitability.

- Establish an organizational plan for a beginning business, including initial outlay of funds to start the business.

- Analyze a company's sales and earnings and relate how the price of stock is affected.

Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

GOLD LEVEL | AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE
HUMAN RELATIONS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Develop a training manual for a business in your career cluster/pathway.
- Train another person for a job in your career cluster/pathway. Document your activities.
- Conduct a sales training program. Document your activities.
- Prepare a power point presentation about marketing, finance, hospitality, or management DECA and present it to a business organization.
- Show evidence of working with a youth organization in the capacity of directing or teaching.
- Organize a panel of employers and employees to discuss what each expects from the other.
- Develop and interpret a survey of customer buying habits in your career cluster/pathway.
- Job shadows a manager and document their interaction with employees and indicate how their actions influenced the employees.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

GOLD LEVEL | AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCT AND SERVICE KNOWLEDGE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Conduct a research study on the sales potential of a selected product or service.
- Select a business that you consider to be outstanding in your career cluster/pathway and determine why they have a good reputation and customer acceptance.
- Compare and explain how the shopping habits of customers in shopping centers are different from those in downtown area.
- Sell a product, analyze the sales activity, and evaluate the performance of the product after the sale.
- Create a sales presentation campaign for one product involving advertising, display and personal selling.
- Take a buying trip to a market area and report your activities. (Could be multiple showrooms or trade show.)
- Find out how prices are established for a product.
- Compare and evaluate profit-and-loss statements from various businesses and select items that are a result of efficient merchandising.
- Research demographics for your community. Use statistical information for determining what new type of retail establishment might be successful in your community.
- Make a merchandise plan involving what to buy, what's on hand, how to order, turnover rate of merchandise, and where to buy. Report your results in a presentation.
- Prepare a sales campaign for a product or promotion involving advertising, display and personal selling.
- Teach a lesson on one of the marketing functions.
- Other activities may be used with approval of your advisor.

GOLD LEVEL | AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE PROMOTION

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Interview public relations mangers of three (3) large companies. Report and explain their duties and responsibilities.
- Prepare a layout for a consumer information booklet, leaflet, or a brochure for a product or service.
- Gather facts and information regarding the cost of a sales promotion campaign. List media through which you would advertise and rate changes per individual contact.
- Develop a two-month sales promotion program including TV, radio, Internet, and newspaper advertising.
- Prepare a power point presentation about marketing, finance, hospitality, management, career, and technical education and/or DECA.
- Complete the DECA Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan Event or the Advertising Campaign Event.
- Plan, coordinate and implement a fashion show (if it relates to your career cluster/pathway).
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.

GOLD LEVEL | AN INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE MARKETING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Conduct a research study on the sales potential of a selected product or service.
- Develop a merchandise information manual.
- Interview several new employees to determine their knowledge of the products they sell and in what areas they need additional information or training.
- Make a power point presentation showing the various features and benefits of a product or service firm.
- Make a power point presentation about product knowledge that could be used to train employees.
- Research catalogs or merchandise that will be sold in a business project. Make a list of 50 individual items SKU's. Describe each item by type, brand, style, etc. (one department or more). List the cost, your retail price, and the markup for each item. Decide quantities to stock for each item chosen and determine the total cost(s) for the department(s). Justify why you chose each major line of goods.
- Develop a training program about a product or service.
- Other activities may be used with the approval of your advisor.