

South High DECA Excels at ICDC

By Rachel Brenner, DECA president

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The most recent competition for South High's DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) was the International Career Development Conference (ICDC). DECA members traveled to Anaheim, California to compete against students from across the globe. Our chapter brought 38 students, and nine were named Finalists, scoring within the top 20 of their respective 300-member events. This is a historically high 24 percent of our students! Furthermore, 32 percent of the students who attended ICDC were awarded a Top 10 honor, whether it be for their Roleplay or Test. Five students also placed within the Top 10 of their event. After advancing to the finals, **Celine Macura, Eugene Yi, and Kerr Yen Yoo** all placed within the Top 10 of their respective events. Even more exciting, **Aram Baghdassarian** won Third Place in Business Growth Plan, while **Kevin Ho** took Second Place in Advertising Campaign. Finalists in the Top 20 included: **Aram Baghdassarian**, Business Growth Plan; **Rachel Brenner**, Automotive Services Marketing; **Chi-An (Andrew) Chen** and **Adam Pramberger**, Stock Market Game; **Jiarong Fan**, Accounting Application Series; **Kevin Ho**, Advertising Campaign; **Celine Macura** and **Eugene Yi**, Hospitality and Tourism Team Decision Making; and **Kerr Yen Yoo**, Business Growth Plan. Winners in the Top 10 Test were: **Rachel Brenner**, Automotive

Services Marketing; **Abigail Efrem**, Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making; **Benjamin Kobliner**, Human Resources Management; and **Haley Raphael**, Business Law and Ethics Team Decision Making. Top 10 Roleplay winners: **Rachel Brenner**, Automotive Services Marketing; and **Celine Macura** and **Eugene Yi**, Hospitality and Tourism Team Decision Making.

At ICDC, students competed in a wide variety of events, ranging from Automotive Services Marketing to Travel & Tourism to Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan. Some students competed in a Roleplay event, in which students present inventive ideas from the viewpoint of a company employee. Students have 10 minutes to create an entire plan solving the problem their company faces; they are pushed to think both creatively and pragmatically. Other students competed in manual events. These students prepared for months, writing either 11- or 30-page papers, outlining their plans to increase the visibility or profitability of real companies. Despite their differing events, students devoted a colossal amount of time to preparing for ICDC. They poured over industry reports, practice tests, and review sheets, acquiring knowledge of industry jargon and trends. Students also worked with DECA's dedicated advisors, **Sheryl Demetres** and **Rick Vine**, practicing and honing their presentations after school and during free periods. Each year, the most successful yet unquantifiable aspect of ICDC includes the overall experience. Throughout the five-day competition, students network with others from around the world, spanning from Spain to Guam to China. They step outside their comfort zones, take leadership roles, and partake in new experiences. This aspect of ICDC is potentially the most rewarding and exciting.

Finally, a personal anecdote--I went from being a scared and easily intimidated freshman, with legs and voice shaking, during an initial practice Roleplay, to a senior who, at a Roleplay at ICDC, was congratulated by a judge on my wealth of knowledge and who offered me future employment at his automobile dealership. This four-year transformation in preparing me for the "real world" happened through DECA and our wonderful faculty advisors, Ms. Demetres and Mr. Vine. I continue to be amazed by their continued devotion to this organization and its members. Their dedication, intelligence, empathy, and kindness inspire not only me, but all DECA members. They have cultivated an unparalleled program that allows students to reach their maximum potential as they transform into self-assured future leaders.