

USU Students Win Awards at the Utah DECA Fall Leadership Conference

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Utah State University (USU) took home several prizes at the 2019 Utah DECA Fall Leadership Conference (FLC) in November. Michaela Leishman took first place and Drew Schafeitel and Kayden McCallum won second place in the team case study competition. This comes after twelve USU students qualified for the national DECA competition in the spring.

DECA is student organization with more than 215,000 members around the world and has impacted more than ten million students, educators, administrators, and business professionals since its founding in 1946. DECA provides students authentic, experiential learning opportunities to prepare college members for their future careers.

"From my perspective, student participation in our DECA club builds a bridge between what they are learning theoretically on campus to current, practical issues in organizations," said Alexander Romney, an assistant professor in the Department of Marketing and Strategy and the academic advisor for DECA at USU. "I have found that students wonder how the theories they are learning in the classroom will connect to the real challenges and problems they will face in their

future work. In the different competitions and events in which our DECA club participates, students are able to make this connection in a powerful way."

The opportunities DECA provides supplement the traditional classroom environment with projects and competitions that require students to push themselves, create practical solutions to real-world problems, and to apply their classroom knowledge. More than 90 percent of DECA members say their experience empowered them to be an effective leader and to connect school to the real world.

"DECA gives students the opportunity to put classroom knowledge into practice," said Jake Harrison, the current president of USU DECA. "The program is designed to put students in simulations that mimic the real business world. Case study competitions, such as the one we competed in at the FLC, require critical thinking and soft skills due to the short time frame and ambiguous nature of the prompts. In short, DECA has made obvious what my strengths are and what I need to work on and has given me a friendly venue to do so."

DECA pushes its members to put their knowledge into action and prepares students for their future through applied learning experiences and rigorous competitions. As a result, DECA is helping USU students distinguish themselves as leaders in their respective fields.

You can read more about USU DECA here: <https://huntsman.usu.edu/clubs/deca>