

12. How do you really get a chapter up and running well? What strategies and activities seem to be generally more successful?

Lucinda Mason:

Your activities need to be student-driven, but it takes effort to get it that way. You're always going to have a core group who pull the load, so just start with a core group. Talk to them individually and see what they are interested in doing as DECA projects. Encourage them to get a few others involved.

Reward, reward, reward! If you have a store, give them free coupons in front of the class, or post a list of who's gotten a free coupon this week or this month. If you don't have a store, many times fast food restaurants will give you coupons for a free drink or free fries.

My DECA chapter is very co-curricular. I talk about DECA every day in every class. DECA announcements are posted on my board. Sometimes when something really important is going on, I set up a phone tree. Just keep working at it, it will happen. Also remember that some kids aren't going to participate in anything no matter what you do. You just have to work with the ones who do participate.

Al Gancarz:

Getting a chapter going and operating in a positive fashion will take time. My suggestion is to find a colleague (DECA advisor) to use as a ready source for help and information. Many new advisors feel overwhelmed with all of the information, deadlines, competition rules, and opportunities that DECA has to offer. Get help and keep at it.

Bill Lind:

Your students will make your chapter grow. Getting them involved in recruiting and decision-making is very important. After all, they are nearly adults. If you treat them like 9th graders you will surely fail.

Debbie Tixier:

I believe the most important thing you can do to get a program up and running successfully is to show how much you care about the students and the program and to be willing to spend your time building a program. A lot of the fun stuff is after school, on weekends, etc., and is definitely not included in your duty day. Pizza meetings, ice cream socials, movie nights, barbecues, etc. give those students who are not involved in other activities a place to belong socially. If you make it a fun place to be, they will continue coming and your program should grow.

We also market our program as a stepping-stone to college business degrees. Most of our students go on to college, and we tap into the fact that our community is very business oriented.

Dennis Sweetapple:

Develop a plan what do you want to accomplish in year 1 then 2, 3, 4, and 5. The activities you choose should be ones you like, so that your upbeat presentation will help the students approach the activity in a upbeat mode.

Mike Karpie:

Have fun at whatever you do. Get involved in community activities, run a bookstore, have fun meetings with food all the time. Let the kids plan everything. They will buy into it if they make the decisions and become a big part of your chapter.

We have ice cream socials, pizza parties and trips to the mall. We work local trade shows and just have fun—like skiing, shopping, going to the beach. You need to build a team first and then introduce DECA.