

California DECA Leadership Guide

October - Minicons

Message to Chapter Officers

Hosting a successful DECA Mini Conference can be one of the most rewarding ways to prepare your chapter for future competitive events while fostering collaboration, leadership, and networking among members. This guide will walk you through planning an event, engaging attendees, and ensuring your event is a valuable experience for all participants.

1. Organizing a Mini Conference

Collaboration is Key:

A very successful Mini Conference is about collaborating with neighboring DECA chapters by using your state officers to the fullest. The following will demonstrate how to make your planning process painless:

Reach out to the chapters within proximity:

Start with the named chapters in the surrounding areas that you think would immensely benefit from the Miniconference. Write them a formal email explaining the vision behind the Minicon, what it entails in benefits, and how adding them to the mix will add value to all participants. You can do this on social media platforms like Instagram, or even chapter networking platforms like Slack for DECA.

State Officer Support:

Lean on your state officers for guidance, since many of them come equipped to help you with resources and experience. They will be able to assist in planning logistics and advise how you can best reach out to other chapters while also asking them to promote the event to ensure as much visibility and reach as possible in your district.

Set Clear Goals and Timeline:

Define your purpose-what will the Miniconference be used for: practice role-plays, workshops, or leadership development? Once you have defined your goal, establish a timeline that includes site reservation, outreach, materials collection, and obtaining judges.

2. How to Make Your Miniconference Engaging and Maximize Attendance

Create Values for Attendees:

One challenge is to ensure that your Miniconference not only interests students; it also attracts an audience. Here's how you can create an event that students will want to attend:

Compelling Workshops and Activities:

Design the event around interactive workshops, mock competitions, and guest speaker sessions appealing to a range of experience levels. For instance, have sessions on 'How to Perform Well in Roleplays' targeted at first-time competitors, yet at the same time, advice on 'Improving Your Written Presentation' for advanced members.

Promote Early and Often:

Publicize the Minicon through several options: social media, school newsletters, and email blasts. Create compelling flyers or graphics with all the details and post to Instagram and Slack. As available, plan an appearance in school or district-wide announcements to make sure the information is seen.

Offer incentives:

This could be done by issuing participation certificates, small prizes in practice rounds for the top performers, or other exclusive resources to leadership. If able, always provide refreshments; it often improves attendance and makes the event more hospitable.

3. How to Give Recognition and Competitive Feedback

Identify participants and gain confidence:

Recognition goes a long way in encouraging DECA members to move forward. Here's how to make sure everyone feels appreciated:

Public Recognition:

Towards the end of the Miniconference, award the participants for best performance, such as best roleplay, best in team collaboration, and leadership potential. Recognize this at the event but continue displaying appreciation for your participants by showcasing them on the chapter social media platforms. Constructive Competitive Feedback: Feedback is a key element in competitive success.

Ensure that your judges and officers are trained to provide constructive and actionable feedback. Be specific regarding what the participants did well and precisely where they can improve. This not only helps them improve, it will help build their confidence. Follow-up: After the event, send a follow-up email thanking all participants for joining in and mention in the email the event's highlights, providing links to photos taken at the conference and other shared resources. You should encourage participants to reflect on what they learned and how they can apply the feedback in future competitions to keep the impact of the Miniconference going long after it's over.

Ending Notes

It deciphered how to put on a very successful and impactful Mini Conference that will serve not only your chapter but also neighboring DECA chapters. In short, the keys to success will be collaboration, promotion, and meaningful recognition and feedback of participants. With careful planning and thoughtful execution, your Miniconference will become an annual highlight for your chapter and a stepping stone toward competition success.