

DECA gets down to business

Students in DECA dominate regionals using business strategies

by Arjun Thakkar

On Jan. 24, DECA competed the Area Conference event at the Donald E. Stevens Convention Center in Rosemont, where thirty-nine members medalled and qualified to participate at the state competition.

Robert Bollweg, one of the club's sponsors and member of the business education department, said that this was the group's best performance yet.

"Out of the eighty-nine students we took, thirty placed within the top 3 for their series, which is definitely the best that we've ever done," Bollweg said.

Seniors Brian Koltin and Jacob Bleiweis, who have been on DECA for 3 years in a row, medalled and got 3rd place in sports marketing. Koltin is one of the presidents for DECA.

The competitive aspect of DECA consists of two methods of evaluation.

Before leaving for the event, each participant picked a topic to focus on, and they chose to compete either alone or with a partner.

The first assessment they completed was an online cluster exam that contains 100 questions related so each individual's chosen event.

At the regionals event itself, members competed in role plays, which are simulations in which a group of judges give a business



Students of all grades participated in the recent regional DECA conference on Jan. 24 in Rosemont | Bollweg

scenario and the competitors take ten minutes to plan a solution.

From the role plays and the test results, the judges determine scoring, where the top 3 per topic receive medals and qualify to compete at state.

Roshan Raj, a junior who placed 2nd with his partner in his section of Buying and Merchandising, described the role plays as a learning experience.

"You get nervous when you're waiting in between your role plays, but I come out of each event knowing a little more than I did before. Whether it's a new concept

or new communication skill, I'm constantly learning something new."

"Business is a subject where there really is no limit to what you can learn."

Junior Gabe Wineman had a similar reaction to the role plays. "This was my second year at the competition, and I felt much more comfortable. Public speaking is the

kind of thing that just takes practice.

"What I could have done better was the test portion of the event. With some more studying that could have improved," Wineman added.

Even newcomers to DECA were successful at the competition. Anna Shah, who placed 3rd in the Retail Merchandising Series, was the first freshman to medal at a competition.

Sophomore John Keenan also medalled, placing first in Principles of Finance.

"I'm excited to see what they can achieve in the next

few years," Bollweg said.

The club meets weekly in room W350, and the focus isn't just on the competitions. Bollweg said they also discuss other facets of the business world, including business simulations and host guest speakers.

Although attendance generally drops down starting in the spring, Bollweg mentioned that the club continues past the competitive season. "We have some really cool events and guest speakers planned for this year, even after the state and international events."

Kian Nematollahi, a member of the DECA Leadership Council, noted the difference between the program at New Trier and other schools.

"Our main competition is Deerfield, Highland Park, and GBN because these three schools have DECA as an elective that meets daily, whereas at our school, DECA is a club which only meets for half an hour every Thursday."

The state competition will take place from Mar. 9 through Mar. 11 at the Hyatt Regency in Rosemont. If competitors place within the top 3 at state, they could potentially continue on to the international competition in Anaheim, California.

Junior Elliot Chow, who received a gold medal in his event at regionals, explained the team's potential for growth from these events: "Business is a subject where there really is no limit to what you can learn," Chow said, "so the rest of the team will continue to study and learn about the world of economics to prepare for state."

Pussyhats reclaim femininity and empowerment

Pink, cat-eared hats dominate the Women's Marches, uniting women of all races and cultures

by Da Hee Kim

While the Women's Marches that happened across the nation were inspirational themselves, the pink hats worn during the protests, dubbed "Pussyhats", were particularly popular among women and young girls due to their symbolism and empowering backstory.

Created by the Pussyhat Project, the Pussyhats, which are pink with cat ears, were significant in that they encouraged the unity of women and girls displaying their passion for women's rights.

"The hats are there to help show the capability of women around the world," sophomore Ella Schotz said, who attended the Women's March alongside her sister.

"Banding together thousands of women marching for their beliefs in over 600 locations by wearing identical hats -- that's pretty insane," Schotz said.

Sophomore Michelle Capone was also amazed by the solidarity of women. "Seeing women of all different colors come together was extraordinary for me," Capone said.

The Pussyhats are far from ordinary hats that just happened to be worn at the marches. Many of the small details of the hats were chosen specifically to be symbolic of feminine power, including the color of the yarn.

The color pink, traditionally

thought of as feminine, was purposefully picked for the hats, showing that pink can represent strength.

"There's a huge industry surrounding the color pink for little girls, it's this 'Disney Princess' culture," art teacher and Feminism Club sponsor Gardiner Funo said.

"The pink hats embrace the color as something that is strong, rather than being weak, soft, and just pretty."

The official website for the Pussyhat Project similarly explains why they used pink. The founders believe that the qualities represented by pink, such as compassion and love, have been considered as weak, when those qualities are actually strong.

Schotz agreed with the significance of the use of the color. "Pink is typically a feminine color. This shows that you can be both feminine and a feminist at the same time," Schotz said.

The Pussyhats were knit by women, for women, as opposed to being bought in mass quantities. Since the items are handcrafted, the process of knitting shows a certain level of effort and care.

Junior and head of Knitting Club Meghan Rittmanic acknowledges the significance of dedicating oneself to knitting.

"It shows you put effort into the movement - into what you're doing - and it shows the community effort," Rittmanic said.

"The reason they weren't store-bought is to show a more personal element, especially since there are different styles and designs that you can make the hats."

In fact, the hobby of knitting is what led Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman to start the Pussyhat Project.



Women adorned in pink Pussyhats while marching for equal rights at a Women's March on Jan. 21 | Pussyhats.com

The Pussyhat Project combined Suh and Zweiman's knowledge of knitting with their desire to make a statement about women's rights at the march.

According to the website, the aim was to "Provide the people of the Women's March on Washington D.C. a means to make a collective visual statement and provide people who cannot physically be [present] a way to represent themselves and support women's rights."

The idea for naming them "Pussyhats" partially stemmed from recent political events, including a tape that was released in which Donald Trump made inappropriate comments about women.

However, the name mostly came from the general desire of Suh and Zweiman to reclaim the term from being crude to empowering. Junior Jack Mosele noticed

how the female anatomy was a main symbol at the Women's March.

"Though this isn't a symbol for all women worldwide, such as non-cisgender persons, many people associated the hats with the popular phrase 'Pussy Power,'" Mosele said.

"The hats spread the idea of 'Pussy Power' and equality of the sexes."

Despite the surge of feminine pride that the pussyhats and marches created, the feminist movement still has progress to make in terms of being inclusive of all kinds of people.

"It showed how far feminism still has to go," Capone said. "There was cis-sexism and white feminism in the march, despite the march being organized by women of color. Feminism-wise, I thought that we could do more for women of color and LGBTQ women." The future of feminism lies

not just in the hands of current women's rights activists, but also within the young women and girls of modern society who are interested in standing up for feminism.

Junior Olivia Schotz has suggestions for how younger generations of women can speak up.

"A good way is joining clubs and organizations that advocate for this issue," Schotz said. "Being a part of a group with other women and girls can help [each girl] feel more impactful."

Despite the current threats to feminism, the Pussyhats, arguably, still helped in turning thousands of passionate women into one loud voice.

"It united the women attending and let them know that we are stronger together," explained sophomore Emma Citow, "and a force to be reckoned with."