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## **Durango High School students experience international DECA conference**

120,000 students compete for international awards and scholarships as emerging leaders and entrepreneurs

**Atlanta, Ga.** – Durango High School (DHS) DECA chapter members attended the organization's 68<sup>th</sup> annual International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Atlanta, Ga., May 3-6, 2014.

DHS DECA members Charles McClung (Class of 2016) and Joaquin Valdez (2016) presented their 30 page business plan Black Bear Mountaineering in the Entrepreneurship Written event. The students earned the right to compete at DECA ICDC by placing 5<sup>th</sup> at the Colorado DECA State Leadership Conference earlier this year.

In addition to their presentation McClung and Valdez listened to the keynote address from NFL Hall of Fame quarterback and entrepreneur Fran Tarkenton with 17,000 other DECA members at the Georgia Dome during the #DECAICDC opening session. McClung and Valdez also took time from their busy conference schedule for tours of Atlanta's prestigious Emory and Georgia Tech Universities.

"It was an amazing experience and I am excited about the possibilities for DECA next year", commented Valdez. "As a first year DECA member, this whole experience exceeded my expectations and I'm excited to learn more about entrepreneurship and marketing next year. We already have a plan to get back to DECA ICDC Orlando 2015 and to try to make finals", added McClung.

During the school year, approximately 120,000 of DECA's 200,000 student members take part in the organization's [competitive events program](#), allowing them to compete for local and regional titles. The competitions are designed to simulate real-life business scenarios and test students' academic understanding and skills development. The top state and provincial winners put their talents to the test during the program's final round of competition in Atlanta. The DECA International Career Development Conference was the pinnacle of competition where students vied for international honors. McClung and Valdez's qualification for ICDC placed them in the top 5% of more than 3000 students competing internationally in Entrepreneurship Written. Nearly \$500,000 in scholarships and awards were presented to students and teachers for their achievements.

In addition to career-based competition, DECA members engaged in leadership academies and networking opportunities with over 60 internationally recognized businesses.

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. DECA enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, apply learning, connect to business and promote competition.

**ABOUT DECA:**

For more information about DECA, please visit [www.durangohsmarketing.weebly.com](http://www.durangohsmarketing.weebly.com) to see the conversation from this year's conference follow #DECAICDC on [Twitter](#).

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Caption: Durango High School DECA members Charles McClung (left) and Joaquin Valdez prepare to present their business plan Black Bear Mountaineering at the DECA International Career Development Conference in Atlanta May 3-6, 2014.

