

"Leadership is an Action not a position so act like it!"

Running for a state/provincial or chapter office can be one of the biggest and most rewarding opportunities in DECA and high school. Although the two officer positions differ in responsibilities, both can serve as an excellent source for personal and professional development. A chapter office can put you into a position where you are focused on creating positive community relations, developing a program of work, and building chapter membership. A state/provincial office positions you on a state action team where you work to accomplish similar goals as the chapter office, but on the state level. As a state officer you also perform duties such as chapter visitations, corporate visits, and public speaking roles at conferences. Like many other great opportunities you get back what you put into your office. It takes certain attributes to step into a state/provincial or chapter office; there are generally no experience-based prerequisites. However, there are a few outstanding qualities that make an officer. First and foremost a dedication to DECA is important; taking an office is a commitment for a year's length of service to the state/province or chapter. Secondly, in either position you must be willing to work with a team of DECA members who generally are a group of diverse and opinionated people. Working well within a team is important, being able to compromise and complete tasks as a team are also significant qualifications. In any officer position, communication with the state/province or chapter is vital to the success of the year. With these skills in hand, prepare for the application process and campaigning. Win or lose running for a state/provincial or chapter is a worth while experience. Chapter officer elections are generally operated through a speech and chapter voting process. Keep in mind, however, that processes differ throughout various areas, districts, and states/provinces. The application process and the officer experience are a great building block to a successful state/provincial officer campaign. The state/provincial officer

application process is generally a little more complex; it starts with a resume, transcript, and a paper application sent to a state/provincial

Advisor. From there you are usually invited to state officer interviews, which are established to ask questions so the state can determine the official candidates for state/provincial office. It may also determine how well you can think on your feet, speak publicly, or handle criticism. A phone call or letter may soon follow to inform you of your official nomination for state/provincial office.

In preparation for the elections at a state/province or fall conference, you will receive an informational packet containing rules and regulations for the campaign process and an overview of the tasks required of you at the state/province or fall conference. These tasks may include such items as a speech or impromptu questions. The best advice for a set of impromptu questions is to come as prepared as possible and have a positive attitude. The preparation of campaign materials varies; you will usually encounter the assortment of ribbons, buttons, pins, posters, and flyers. It is important that these materials not mere gimmicks but represent you as well as your campaign.

Upon arrival at the conference you are given a day or two to speak with as many state/province members as possible. Speeches and questions may follow an informal election process. Voting delegates are previously selected from the chapters and will attend the election session. After the election session you'll find yourself eagerly awaiting the results and those results are generally announced at the conclusion of the awards session. So you made it, now what? Well, a short year of what will soon be one of the best experiences of your high school years and the most rewarding time in all of your schooling. Consider it a challenge to make sure that when your short year is over you have left the organization better than it was when you began. Good luck!