

Aurora student to take on Ontario in DECA provincials



Aurora's Shrinidhi Seshadri has always had an eye for fashion and a head for business, and that potent combination came together this fall to land her in a Provincial business competition.

Shrinidhi, a Grade 9 student at Pickering College, an independent school in Newmarket, is looking forward to taking on students from across Ontario in the year ahead at the DECA Provincials this February.

DECA is billed as an organization that helps to prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management, in high schools and colleges around the globe. Through conferences and competitions, it instills professionalism and prepares youth to respond to authentic business cases and market demands.

At the Regionals, Shrinidhi, along with fellow Pickering College Grade 9 student Daya Grover, landed in the top ten for both their written exam and their case study. Jannat Naseem, Grade 11, also made the grade with a top ten ranking in her exam.

"I wanted to join DECA because I chose business as an elective and I thought it would be a great club to enjoy to help me with business," says Shrinidhi, adding that the case studies students are presented to analyze and solve put you into the shoes of different types of business people, whether it is an employee or a top-ranking executive.

"Since my (case study) was focused on apparel, what I ended up presenting was about two brands collaborating; one which was at a higher price point and one lower. It was interesting to be in that position and think about the different factors the brands might be [considering]. It was identifying if they should collaborate and see what their target demographic would be. Some people might not be able to afford a more expensive brand, but would it be beneficial to collaborate with a cheaper brand? It's important to also think about factors like fast fashion and how that can affect the brand image and overall environment."

While a partnership might bring both parties more profit over the short term, Shrinidhi argued it wouldn't be worth the risk as "we could lose our loyal customers because we're collaborating with a brand that participates in fast fashion."

As students squared off and made their cases at Regionals, looking on proudly was Senior School business teacher Brooke Overington who was just as new to DECA as the students, who were participating for the first time.

"It was obvious from the get-go how much they wanted to do well; I had never done DECA before, they had never done DECA

before, so we were going in just for the experience and then hoping, in future years, to build off of that," says Overington. "[The results] show that their hard work paid off. They were so dedicated, driven, and they just knew what they needed to do in order to perform well on competition day. I am so proud of them and excited to see what Provincials holds, and to see that whole new experience..."

Shrinidhi is also excited for the experience, adding: "Me and the other students who also made it to Provincials are meeting with Ms. Overington on a weekly basis and we're doing more case studies, but this time we're being a lot more critical and seeing different ways we can improve, just analyzing our cases better."

"DECA has been great just to improve my public speaking skills and how I analyze situations, which is helpful," she continues. "If I move onto Provincials all four years and looking at awards, that could also be helpful. I want to see the creativity in how people see a case. Maybe I solve it one way and others solve it in many different ways I never even thought of!"

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