

So, how did DECA come to be? What is your history?

The Development of DECA

During the period between 1937 and 1942, when cooperative programs in marketing education (distributive education as it was called then) were becoming more widely established, students in these marketing and distributive education classes began to form Distributive Education Clubs. This spontaneous effort on the part of students and teachers occurred simultaneously throughout the country.

Students Were Employed

First, distributive education students were employed away from their school campus at business training stations during the afternoon at a time when many of the other students in their school were involved with the school's extracurricular activities. The distributive education students were, therefore, missing a very important part of school life. Second, these students of distributive education had a common interest—their great personal desire for professional and personal growth. Third, they felt the need to belong, to develop professionally and socially, and to be a part of a group.

Clubs Began to Form

Clubs began to spring up all over the country. These local clubs adopted many names—Future Retailers, Future Distributors, Future Merchants and Distributive Education Clubs. Between 1941 and 1944, as the number and size of local clubs were growing, they began to realize the need for a more organized way to communicate with each other. A few states held statewide meetings of Distributive Education Clubs. By 1945, a few states had officially organized state associations and began holding state conferences.

National DECA Forms

In 1946, the United States Office of Education invited a representative committee of state supervisors of distributive education to meet in Washington, D.C., with representatives of the USOE and the American Vocational Association (now ACTE) to develop plans for the national organization of Distributive Education Clubs and to prepare a tentative constitution and an organizational chart. As a result of this preliminary meeting,

the national organization was launched, and the first Interstate Conference of Distributive Education Clubs was held in Memphis, Tennessee, in April 1947. At that meeting, delegates from 12 states unanimously adopted a resolution to form a national organization. The second national conference, held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1948, saw the adoption of the constitution and the official name, the Distributive Education Clubs of America, designated DECA, and the acceptance of 17 charter member states. These were: Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Washington.

National Headquarters Established

In 1953, a national headquarters for DECA was established near Washington, D.C., with the help of the American Vocational Association.