FIRST TIMERS GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL’S DECA CHAPTER SHINES AT NATIONALS

April 29, 2015 – Orlando, FL    Granada Hills Charter High School earned top ten finishes in Accounting Applications and Stock Portfolio Analysis at the International Career Development Conference (ICDC), a business competition held in Orlando, Florida last week. In just its second year in existence, the GHCHS DECA chapter placed three teams in the finals and two of them ultimately finished in the top ten of their events. It has been eight years since a Los Angeles area school placed in the top ten of an ICDC event, last achieved by Beverly Hills High School in 2007. There were almost 13,000 students competing in over 50 different events at ICDC.

Owen Setiadi, GHCHS Class of 2016, qualified for finals in the Accounting Applications event after placing first in California at last month’s state competition. “Competing in ICDC opened my eyes to opportunities that exist in the world,” says Owen, “It really challenged me and going up on stage means...”
a lot. It was the best feeling in the world.” ICDC attracts the top high school accounting students from every state in the U.S., all provinces of Canada and eight other countries including China and Spain. During the school year, approximately 120,000 of DECA’s 210,000 student members take part in competitive events, allowing them to compete for local and regional titles. The competitions simulate real-life scenarios and test student’s knowledge of business theory and practice. The top state and provincial winners move onto the final round of competition in Orlando where GHCHS sent seven students.

In addition to the Accounting Applications competition, GHCHS sent two teams to compete in the Stock Market Simulation and one team finished in the top 10 and the other in the top 20 out of 84 competitors. GHCHS finished first overall in an online investing competition in DECA’s West Region qualifying the teams to compete at ICDC. In this initial stage of competition, portfolio rankings were based on total return relative to the S&P 500 Index. Only the top 25 returns from each of four regions earned the right to compete at ICDC and 1,557 portfolios were submitted in the West Region alone. The ICDC stage of live competition focused less on total return and required student teams to prepare detailed analyses of the performance and strategies applied in their qualifying portfolios. Results were presented in a written report submitted in advance, followed up by a ten-minute oral presentation at the competition and a five minute follow-up question and answer session.

GHCHS students Emma Foster (Class of 2016), Brittney Alfaro (Class of 2015) and Emily Wang (Class of 2016) were one team of fictional stock analysts that called itself Lucky Penny Investments. Their strategy of Go Big or Go Home sought to maximize total return through the use of leveraging and diversification without hedging. They wooed the judges with a fully functioning website for Lucky Penny and a trust fall to emphasize the risk inherent in their investing approach.
Granada’s other team, *Winging It Investments*, consisted of Carly Small, Jennifer Xie and Christopher Diaz, all three from the Class of 2016. They, too, sought higher returns using leverage and avoidance of negatively correlated stocks. *Winging It Investments’* graphic displays shined in their presentation and the group received rave reviews and compliments from judges and fellow competitors. Both teams impressed the judges with their application of technical momentum indicators that included an explanation of Bollinger Bands, Relative Strength Index and Stochastic Oscillators. This ICDC stock portfolio competition is co-sponsored with SIFMA, an international trade organization that promotes the interests of the financial industry.

The stock market teams received coaching from San Fernando Valley business experts including Despina Crassa, formerly of Morgan Stanley, Gene Straub, Chief Business Officer of GHCHS, and Brian Miller of Payden & Rygel. The young students that competed undoubtedly learned important concepts about finance and stock trading. However, the lifelong lessons about leadership and teamwork will stay with them as they become the new generation of business professionals.

**CONTACT:** Marilyn Koziatek, Community Outreach, 818-360-2361 x314, mkoziatek@ghchs.com

**About Granada Hills Charter High School:** Granada Hills Charter High School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. As a fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,400 and an annual student wait list of almost 3,000. The School’s student body is considered one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 2,200 students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 nonprofit benefit corporation, the School's Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its $42 million operating budget. In 2014, BusinessInsider.com and Niche recognized GHCHS as the #1 public high school in California and #10 public high school in the United States of America.

**About DECA:** DECA is a 70-year old student organization that has a highly refined program of competitions and activities that promote financial literacy, entrepreneurship and leadership among high school students. DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in the fields of marketing, finance, law, business administration and hospitality. Headquartered in Reston, VA, DECA has 215,000 student members in 3,500 chapters nationally. DECA is a student organization that embraces Career Technical Education. It is highly regarded among state education administrators, and is recognized nationally as an activity that colleges like to see on an application. For more information, visit www.deca.org.