

# Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán National Constitution

## Preamble

*Chicano and Chicana students of Aztlán must take upon themselves the responsibilities to promote Chicanismo within the community, politicizing our Raza with an emphasis on indigenous consciousness to continue the struggle for the self-determination of the Chicano people for the purpose of liberating Aztlán.*

*The following structure will make every Mechista accountable to its chapter, every chapter accountable to its central (where applicable), every central accountable to its region, every region accountable to its state (where applicable), and every state accountable to the national.*

## **Article I: Name**

**Section 1.** The Name of this organization shall be the National Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA).

**Section 2.** The official symbol of this organization shall be the eagle with its wings spread, bearing a macahuittle in one claw and a dynamite stick in the other with the lighted fuse in its beak. The acronym MEChA shall be above the symbol with the phrase "La Union Hace La Fuerza" below.

## **Article II: Organization Objectives**

**Section 1.** National MEChA outlines the following organizational objectives:

- A. To strive for educational, cultural, economic, political, and social empowerment within the Chicano community in order to liberate nuestra gente;
- B. To undertake the responsibility of retaining our identity and furthering our cultural awareness;
- C. To undertake the responsibility of uplifting and mobilizing Chicanos and Chicanas through higher education;
- D. To implement plans of action concerning Chicanos and Chicanas;

## **Article III: National MEChA Structure**

**Section 1.** National MEChA coordinating council (NMCC): To more effectively achieve its organizational objectives, National MEChA collectively delegates specific powers, duties, and responsibilities to the NMCC.

**Section 2.** The NMCC will have the following powers, duties and responsibilities:

- A. To maintain national communications among all recognized MEChA Regions;
- B. To facilitate the implementation of a National MEChA Advocacy Agenda developed annually at the National MEChA Conference;
- C. To be empowered to take national positions on behalf of National MEChA whenever it is deemed necessary or appropriate as suggested by recognized National MEChA regions;
- D. To ensure that the MEChA National Constitution is abided by regionally and nationally with respects to process and organization;
- E. To serve as the primary interpreter of the MEChA National Constitution in cases of constitutional questions or disputes;
- F. To follow- up on resolutions adopted by officially recognized MEChA Chapters at the National MEChA Conference resolution session meeting;
- G. To monitor the organization and progress of the National MEChA Conference by the National MEChA Conference hosting campus;
- H. To foster the growth and development of national MEChA leadership on a local and national level through special programs and projects;
- I. To work on the constant internal and external development of National MEChA;
- J. To meet at least three (3) times a year at differently recognized MEChA Regions.

**Section 3.** NMCC membership: There will be two (2) regional MEChA representatives (one male and one female) elected individual per recognized MEChA Region for one (1) year term.

**Section 4.** Regional MEChA Representatives will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- A. To be empowered by their recognized MEChA Regions to represent their respective regions and make decision on their behalf on the NMCC;
- B. To be responsible for the distribution of information attained at all NMCC meetings to their respective regional MEChA chapters;
- C. To attend all NMCC meetings and vote on all matters that comes before the NMCC;
- D. To be directly accountable to their respective recognized MEChA Region.

**Section 5.** NMCC Meetings:

- A. The NMCC will meet at least (3) times a year;
- B. NMCC meetings will rotate from each recognized MEChA Region;

- C. NMCC meetings will be hosted by recognized MEChA chapters within recognized MEChA Regions;
- D. NMCC meetings will be facilitated by one of the NMCC Co-Chairpersons;
- E. Quorum for all NMCC meetings will be two-thirds (2/3) of the recognized MEChA Regions;
- F. All NMCC meetings shall be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order until an alternate method can be found.

**Section 6. Voting and Decision Making:**

- A. Each recognized MEChA Region shall be allowed to cast only one vote at NMCC meetings, within the exception of the election of NMCC officers;
- B. All decisions of the NMCC with the exception of the election of NMCC officers require a two-thirds (2/3) approval of all recognized MEChA Regions represented on the NMCC;
- C. Believing that the direction of the NMCC must be guided by grassroots, all decisions of the NMCC may be reversed by recognized MEChA chapters in attendance at the MEChA National Conference by three-fourths (3/4) majority vote;
- D. If at least one representative from a region is not present at two consecutive NMCC meetings, voting rights for that region will be suspended at the NMCC Meetings. Voting rights will be reinstated at the second consecutive NMCC meeting in which the region is represented. All NMCC meetings held at the National Conference shall collectively count as one meeting.

**Section 7. NMCC Officers:** There will be two (2) NMCC Co-Chairperson (male and female) and one (1) NMCC Secretary-Treasurer, elected among the NMCC membership, whom will serve as the officers of the NMCC.

**Section 8. NMCC Officer Duties:**

**A. Co-Chairpersons**

- 1. To facilitate all meetings of the NMCC (The Co-Chairpersons will alternate facilitation among themselves);
- 2. To prepare formal agendas, in consultation with the Secretary-Treasurer, for all NMCC meetings;
- 3. To Keep consistent communication among all NMCC members;
- 4. To serve as the official representative and spokesperson for general public relations of National MEChA to the media and other organization or entities;
- 5. To serve as the national facilitators of the Resolution Circle at the MEChA National Conference.

**F. Secretary- Treasurer**

1. To keep the minutes of all NMCC meetings and present them at each subsequent meeting for official approval by the NMCC membership;
2. To assist the Co-Chairperson in receiving and issuing correspondences regarding the activities, course of action, and policies of the NMCC;
3. To record attendance at all NMCC meetings;
4. To maintain a historical file of all official NMCC activities and functions;
5. To help in the development of all NMCC meeting agendas;
6. To help in all administrative duties of the NMCC;
7. To be responsible for researching potential funding sources for National MEChA.

**Section 9.** NMCC officer Elections: There will be an annual election for the NMCC officers at the MEChA National Conference.

**Section 10.** All NMCC officers shall be elected every year and are eligible for re-election for a second term. No officers shall be re-elected for more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

**Section 11.** All candidates for NMCC may nominate another NMCC member for the position of NMCC Co-Chairperson or NMCC Secretary- Treasurer.

**Section 12.** Only members of the NMCC may nominate another NMCC member for the position of NMCC Co-Chairpersons or NMCC Secretary- Treasurer.

**Section 13.** Each NMCC Co-Chairperson (Male and Female) must be from a different recognized MEChA region than their counterpart. The NMCC Secretary-Treasurer must also be from a different recognized MEChA region than the two Co-Chairpersons.

**Section 14.** Each NMCC member shall be allowed to cast one (1) vote for NMCC officers. Voting for NMCC officers shall be done by closed ballot.

**Section 15.** Two NMCC members, from different recognized MEChA Regions and who are not running for an officer position, will be selected at large by the full membership of the NMCC to count and report back the results of the election of officers. The results of the election will be reported back to the full NMCC that same day and will recorded in the minutes.

**Section 16.** Only official recognized NMCC members will be allowed to vote during the election of NMCC officers.

**Section 17.** A simple majority (50%+1) of the NMCC membership is needed to win each officer position. In the case where more than tow people are running for a position and no one receives a simple majority, the candidates having the two highest counts will have a run-off election immediately thereafter.

**Section 18.** The newly elected officers will officially assume their roles

immediately following the National MEChA Conference.

**Section 19.** When a vacancy in any of the NMCC officer position takes place, the NMCC shall immediately conduct a special election.

**Section 20.** MEChA Regions:

A. The regional Committee involves both logistic planning and information distribution within its region receiving direction from the voting campuses;

B. National MEChA recognizes the regions defined by states.

**Section 21.** A regional communication center shall be established where all MEChA regional information (i.e. minutes, phone lists, etc) will be kept and distributed upon request.

**Section 22.** The region shall convene regularly with a quorum of 50% +1% of all voting campuses.

**Section 23.** Voting privileges: Any campus wanting to become part of the Regional Process must gain its affiliation and voting rights through their recognized regional.

**Section 24.** In order to be a MEChA chapter recognized by the Regional, it shall adopt and abide by the following responsibilities:

A. Orient all members by discussing and reading historical documents of our Movimiento including: El Plan de Santa Barbara, El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán, and the MEChA position papers of Philosophy, Constitutions, Relations to Outside Organizations, and Goals & objectives;

B. Make important aspects of the Chicano Movement relevant to Mechistas;

C. Send at least one (1) representative to the Regional meetings to be recognized as a voting chapter.

**Section 25.** Responsibilities of the MEChA Regionals include:

A. To implement plans of action for their particular region;

B. To meet on a regular basis;

C. To review, recruit, and educate campuses wishing to form a MEChA chapter.

**Section 26.** Recognized MEChA Regions will annually elect two (2) Regional Representatives (male and female) to represent their respective MEChA Region on the NMCC.

**Section 27.** Each recognized MEChA Region will establish an election process for their two (2) NMCC Regional Representatives that involves the full participation of all officially recognized MEChA chapters in their respective MEChA Region.

**Section 28.** All NMCC Regional Representatives selected by each recognized MEChA Region must be fully recognized member of their campus MEChA chapter and they must also be from a campus that is officially recognized by their MEChA region.

## **Article IV: National MEChA Guidelines**

**Section 1.** A MEChA National Conference shall be held once a year and shall rotate from state to state.

**Section 2.** The purpose of this conference shall be to bring all MEChA chapters together in an effort to bring a MEChA National Conference that maintains and reaffirms the principles and philosophies of MEChA.

**Section 3.** At the MEChA National Conference, steps will be taken to establish ties among the MEChA chapters in the spirit of Aztlán. The purpose of the National is to create a vibrant and responsive network of Chicano and Chicana activists who will respond as a unit against oppression and racism and will work in harmony when initiating and carrying out campaigns and liberation for our people.

**Section 4.** MEChA National Conference Rules:

- A. Only MEChA chapters recognized by their respective regions can vote;
- B. Individuals and/or groups with a history of party-building and cadre raiding inside of MEChA will not be able to participate or attend the MEChA National Conference (see MEChA philosophy papers: Relations to outside Organizations);
- C. Non-voting individual and/or groups can not attend or participate in any workshops or meetings wherein constitutional issues or resolution will be discussed or voted upon, unless these individuals and/or groups meet both of the following criteria:
  - 1. Have sponsorship from a MEChA chapter which is recognized by its respective MEChA Region;
  - 2. Be approved by unanimous consent by all recognized issues or resolutions are discussed or voted upon.
- C. All entertainment shall be culturally oriented;
- D. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is needed at the national level to decline any regional boundaries.

**Section 5.** All MEChA National Meetings shall be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order until an alternate method can be found.

**Section 6.** National Conference Liaison Process:

- A. Prior to MEChA National Conference meetings shall be a minimum of three (3)

MEChA National Conference Liaison meetings held with the intend of having equal input from all officially recognized MEChA chapters into the conference;

B. Each of the MEChA National Conference liaison meetings shall be held in different states chosen by the NMCC;

C. All MEChA National Conference liaison meetings shall be hosted by a MEChA chapter which is officially recognized by its respective recognized MEChA Region;

D. All non-MEChA individuals or organizations who wish to attend a MEChA National Conference Liaison meeting must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Have sponsorship from a MEChA chapter which is recognized by its respective recognized MEChA region;
2. Be approved to attend the MEChA National Conference Liaison meeting by the recognized MEChA Region in which the liaison is being held;
3. Be approved by unanimous consent the day of the MEChA National Conference liaison meeting by all the regionally recognized MEChA chapters in attendance.

D. Final decisions regarding the MEChA National Conference shall be made at the last MEChA National Conference liaison meeting.

**Section 7.** The MEChA National Conference hosting campus shall be required to submit a written report to the NMCC at each of the of the NMCC meetings that outlines their progress with respect to organizing the MEChA National Conference (i.e. funding, logistics, etc.) and the MEChA national Conference liaison meetings.

**Section 8.** The MEChA National Conference hosting campus must be prepared to attend any NMCC meetings in which a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the recognized MEChA Regions represented and the NMCC may have any questions or concerns regarding the MEChA National Conference.

**Section 9.** National MEChA Communication Center:

A. The MEChA National conference hosting campus is responsible for distributing the resolutions to all the regional communications centers one month (30 days) prior to the MEChA National Conference;

B. The MEChA National Conference hosting campus must forward all information regarding MEChA National Conference planning to next year's hosting campus within two (2) months after the MEChA National Conference.

**Section 10.** MEChA chapter may establish "terms of agreement," with any outside entities, organization, and/or individuals who they choose to have a working relationship with. If these "terms of agreement" are violated, documentation explaining

the violation must be distributed to all regional communication centers through the National MEChA Communication Center and NMCC.

**Section 11.**         *Donations will be taken through the following guidelines:*

- A. The Chapter which hosted the MEChA National Conference in the previous year will have priority to the money raised through the collection of donations. The money raised shall be utilized for the express purpose of providing them with financial recovery for the cost incurred for said MEChA National Conference;*
- B. A donation booth will be set up to collect donations at the MEChA National Conference. The donation booth will be coordinated by the NMCC and a representative of the hosting chapter;*
- C. The NMCC will require that the hosting chapter leave a section on the registration forms to allow for donations to be accepted;*
- D. The NMCC may ask for donations throughout the conference and two more times during the year. One in the spring and one in the fall;*
- E. The donations collected will be administered in accordance with the following percentages:*
  - 1. 10% will be designated to cover out-of pocket travel costs incurred by the NMCC with legitimate documentation;*
  - 2. 50% or less, depending on which is more, will be designated to cover any outstanding debt incurred by the chapter which hosted the previous MEChA National Conference with legitimate documentation;*
  - 3. 40% or less, depending on which is more, will be designated to cover any outstanding debt incurred by the hosting chapter with legitimate documentation.*
- D. Donations used to alleviate conference debt may only be used to cover the cost of on-campus facilities, food, and the printing of programs;*
- E. If the previous hosting chapter does not have any outstanding debt, then that 50% will be split in half. 25% will go to the NMCC and the remaining 25% will go to the hosting chapter. Thereby bringing their respective shares to 35% and 65%;*
- F. Funds will be allocated at the 1st NMCC/Liaison meeting following the national conference. By that time, donations, collected throughout the previous year and at the MEChA National Conference will have been collected and accounted for and the hosting chapter for that years MEChA National conference will by that time have documentation regarding their debt;*
- G. Donation collected and donations that are not spent will rollover to the next year. The incumbent NMCC is fundraising for the incoming NMCC, the hosting campus for that year's MEChA National Conference, and the hosting campus for the previous year's MEChA National Conference. The NMCC never sees any of the donations they*



*collect; they see only those which have been collected for them by the previous council;*

*H. All donations will be placed in an account administered by the NMCC acting treasurer;*

*I. All donations must be reported at the National Liaison and NMCC meetings.*

## **Article V. Admendments**

**Section 1.** Amendments to the MEChA National Constitution shall be as follows:

A. Amendments and/or changes to the MEChA National Constitution shall be first submitted in writing to the MEChA National Conference hosting campus two (2) months prior to the MEChA National Conference and shall be mailed out to the regional communication centers by the hosting campus;

B. A national structure workshop at the MEChA National Conference is required for the proposed amendments so that regionally recognized MEChA chapters have an opportunity to discuss proposed changes;

C. The general body shall vote on the proposed amendment at the resolution session;

D. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of officially recognized MEChA chapters present at the MEChA National Conference shall pass the amendment.

**Adopted on April 9, 1995 at the 1995 MEChA National Conference**

Hosted by MEChA at the University of California - Berkeley

**Amended on April 14, 1996 MEChA National Conference**

Hosted by El Sexto Sol de MEChA at the University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg

**Amended on April 14, 1997 MEChA National Confernece**

Hosted by MEXA at Michigan State University, Lansing

**Amended on March 18, 2001 MEChA National Conference**

Hosted by MEChA at San Diego State University

**Amended on March 30, 2003 MEChA National Conference**

Hosted by MEChA at the University of California - Berkeley