

2007 National MEChA Advocacy Agenda

Gender and Sexuality



Proposed by:
MEChA de UCLA

Endorsed by:
Alta Califas Sur MEChA Region

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Historical Viewpoint and Purpose

Historically, MEChA has and currently fails to adequately address issues of Gender and Sexuality within our communities. This has led to the exclusion and marginalization of our raza womyn¹ and queer hermanos y hermanas.

The Chicano movement, since the 1960s, has ignored the important roles that womyn and the LGBTIQ community play in the success of our struggle. From its inception, the Chicano movement was extremely male-centric and heterosexist, and unfortunately continues to be so. Even its name, Chicano, ignores the Chicanas who contributed to the success of the movement and are part of our community.

The male-dominated leadership within the movement ignored and overshadowed the work of mujeres and LGBTIQ by often times placing them in submissive, stereotypical roles based on their gender and/or sexuality. The men of the movement dominated public spaces through speeches and the press, while the womyn were put to clean and do administrative work, essentially pushed to the side. The domination of men in the movement caused the issues and concerns of the mujeres and LGBTIQ raza to be ignored.

The LGBTIQ community has been more silenced than mujeres in the overall organizing of the Chicana/Chicano people. The stigma and unawareness surrounding the issues of joteria² has left our queer gente without a place to express their concerns and feelings. In MEChA, we emphasize the importance of providing support to the raza community on campus, but fail to recognize that the needs of our queer community are not being addressed.

As empowered Chicana and Chicano students, we should fight for the liberation, education, and empowerment of *all* our gente. We have seen in the history of our struggle, the prioritization of some issues over others. Placing importance on and ranking issues affecting our community will only further divide and weaken our struggle. It is necessary to realize that our raza community is not composed of one single identity; therefore, our dedication to end the oppression of our gente cannot be confined to one struggle. Homophobia, queerphobia, sexism, and racism affect every single one of us, and we should be actively organizing to combat these issues.

¹ Womyn: in an effort to separate mujeres from the historical dominance of men and recognize the difference in issues and struggles they face

² Joteria is a self determined umbrella term that is adopted by individuals who do not identify as heterosexual

Gender and Sexuality Component

Component

- Organize and educate on/off campus communities on issues of:
 - Homophobia
 - Queerphobia
 - Sexism
 - Heterosexism
 - Misogyny- hatred against women
 - Hate crimes against LGBTIQ community
 - Body image
 - Sexual health – sexual relationships
 - Relationship – abusive vs. healthy
 - Gender roles
 - Patriarchy/machismo
 - Family issues
 - Male privilege
 - Hetero privilege
 - Virgen/ Whore dichotomy
 - Sex talks
 - Sexual harassment
 - How to be a queer ally
 - Sex trafficking
 - Gender and Sexuality issues in labor (workplace)

These are not the only issues affecting our communities; therefore, there is no limit when it comes to organizing. However, the topics addressed in the Gender and Sexuality Component should be culturally relevant and contribute to the education/empowerment of our communities.

Committee

- The Gender and Sexuality Committee should be made up of general body members, but should not be exclusive. All interested persons should have the opportunity to be involved in the G and S organizing space.
- The committee should meet at least once a week to discuss and update on any topics.
- All members should have equal say in what issues will be addressed in this space, and all opinions and views should be respected.

Coordinator

- The Gender and Sexuality Coordinator position should be held either by a self-identified mujer or by a self-identified queer hombre or mujer. (The privilege heterosexual males have would make it difficult for them to identify and effectively organize around the issues affecting queers and mujeres in our community)

- To work on consciousness raising their respective MEChA chapters and the campus community in reference gender and sexuality
- To be responsible for at least one quarterly program dealing specifically with gender or sexuality issues, with at least one program a year being from one of the two categories (gender and sexuality).
- To be an active/voting member of the MESA Directiva.
- To form strong relationships with other gender/sexuality oriented orgs on campus and in the community to create a network for organizing and support.
- To ensure that issues of Gender and Sexuality addressed and discussed in all MEChA spaces.
- It is the responsibility of the Gender and Sexuality coordinator to set weekly meeting times for all committee members to meet and discuss

Recommended Events:

Chicana y Chicano Retreats

Definition:

The Chicana y Chicano retreats are intended to create a safe space for self-identified hombres and mujeres to discuss issues of gender and sexuality amongst hermanas y hermanos. The issues that Chicanas want to address in the Chicana Retreats vary according to what collective expectations or goals Chicanas want to get out of the Retreat. The same is applied for the Chicano Retreat. For example, during Chicano Retreats, hombres discuss and dialogue about gender roles, patriarchy, male privilege, heterosexism, and other issues affecting hombres inside and outside of MEChA spaces. A separate space should be created to allow MEChistAs who identify as neither male nor female to discuss issues affecting their specific gender.

Procedure:

- Select a Mujer and Hombre to be point people to coordinate the logistical aspect of the Retreats (Date, time, location, food, etc.).
- Hombres meet with other hombres in MEChA and Mujeres meet with other Mujeres in MEChA to create respective agenda, goals, and issues that will be discussed in the retreat.
- Find people who can be potential speakers, provide workshops, or lead discussions on the issues that were collectively brainstormed.
- Outreach to MEChistAs, community, and family to attend retreat.

Gendered Tlatokan Circle Dinners

Definition:

The Gendered Tlatokan Circle Dinners were created to address the gender roles deeply installed in our every day lives. As Indigenous people who were stripped from our traditional and spiritual ways and forced to follow the colonizer's patriarchal system, we face on a daily basis gender roles that deeply affect our comunidad. As MEChA, we are critical of our actions and pursue with great responsibility the end of these gender roles. Therefore, to address this issue, we reverse the roles

that are deeply embedded in our way of life to show that as critical Chicanas y Chicanos, we are willing to address and change these gender roles. The Gendered Tlatokan Circle Dinner is a night when an hombre volunteers his home and invites the MEChistAs over for dinner. The MEChistA, along with the rest of the compañeros from the MEChA chapter, cook a feast and play the role of the host for the night. In cases where MEChistAs identify as neither male nor female (Twin Spirited) or identify as transgender, they will have the opportunity to decide if they would like to cook or be a guest to the dinner. After the dinner, the mujeres, hombres and MEChistAs who identify as neither male nor female, separately, engage in Tlatokan circles (dialogue circles) and discuss gender roles within MEChA. When the different círculos are done dialoguing, all the participants meet collectively and discuss ways in which gender roles in MEChA can be addressed and worked on.

Procedure:

- Have an Hombre volunteer his home, apartment, etc.
- Invite all hombres and anyone else who would like to participate in the cooking and create a list of what people can make
- Have the MEChistAs who are not cooking coordinate rides to the home, apartment, etc. of the compañero who is hosting the dinner
- MEChistAs cooking continue playing the role of host for the MEChistAs and serve dinner
- The hosts eat after everyone has been served
- Break up into gender circles
- Come back to discuss as a collective and create recommendations, goals, expectations of each other and for the rest of the compañeras y compañeros in MEChA.

Forums/Workshops

Definitions:

Forums and workshops should be created to address any issues relating to Gender and Sexuality in your respective High School, College, University and Community. Issues of gender and sexuality are rarely addressed in our schools and community but play a great role in them. These forums and workshops should not only be intended for our MEChistAs, but for the entire community and schools since our LGBTIQ brothers and sisters are very much part of our community and schools. In addition, because issues of gender and sexuality affect us all, these forums and workshops are not only intended for our LGBTIQ brothers and sisters! It is expected that we outreach, invite, and address all people in our community.

Procedure:

- Pick an issue dealing with Gender and/or Sexuality that really needs to be address in your respective school and/or community
- Chose a facility or location for your forum and/or workshop
- Before proceeding, make sure the facility and location is confirmed
- Invite speakers, panelists, finalize the workshop or power point and make sure all guests are finalized and confirmed.
- Create outreach material to distribute through out the campus and/or community
- Have refreshments (free food always attracts people)
- Have one person in charge of logistics for the event

Tlatokan Circles

Definitions:

Tlatokan Circles are spaces where MEChistAs have a safe space to discuss whatever issue regarding gender and sexuality. These circulos are meant to provide all MEChA chapters and their members the opportunity to engage in dialogue with one another without the fear of opening up. They can be conducted in any location, inside or outside, on or off campus, where ever the chapter decides. These dialogue circles are also a great starting point for chapters who have not conducted any event regarding gender and sexuality. In addition, dialogue circles can be conducted with a few amount of people, thus, Tlatokan Circles are ideal for chapters with few members but can still be conducted with chapters with a lot of members.

Procedure:

- Get a group of MEChistAs together
- Collectively decide on a location where everyone feels comfortable
- Set expectations for one another. For example: do not interrupt the person who is speaking, give the person speaking as much time as they decide
- Try not to set a time limit to the talking circles so everyone can express themselves however long they wish
- End with a unity clap and collectively agree that everything said in the circulo stays in the circulo.

LGBTIQ Terms:

See attachment

References:

- <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/>
- <http://www.glaad.org/>
- <http://www.lambdalegal.org/>

*Passed by Consensus on March 22-25, 2007 at the
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