

# California Statewide M.E.Ch.A. Constitution

## Preamble

*To further enhance the philosophical objectives of M.E.Ch.A., we the Chicana/ Chicano estudiantes of Califaztlán hereby establish this constitution. M.E.Ch.A. is committed to the empowerment of our gente and the liberation of Aztlán. As MEChistas we believe that self-determination can truly be sought through: cultura, historia, education, and political involvement. Through this our people will rise above oppression, sexism, homophobia, and racism.*

*Thus, as Chicanas and Chicanos we will dedicate ourselves to taking our educational destiny into our own hands through the process of spreading Chicanismo in the spirit of comradismo/ carnalismo and by recognizing that the destiny of the movimiento will be determined by each MEChista accepting responsibility for carrying the movement forward.*

*In the past, the structure of M.E.Ch.A. allowed any individual wanting to organize a chapter on any particular campus the opportunity to do so. This could occur without prior knowledge of the history and philosophical objectives of M.E.Ch.A. Thus, vast numbers of M.E.Ch.A. chapters were created with dissimilar and contradictory objectives, as well as conflicting philosophies.*

*The following structure will make every MEChista accountable to its Chapter, every Chapter accountable to its Central, every Central accountable to its Region, and every Region accountable to the State.*

## Article I. Name

- Section 1. The name of this organization will be the California Statewide Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán.
- Section 2. In order to participate in this Statewide organization, all Chapters must take on the name of M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán).
- Section 3. The official symbol of this organization will 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 will be above the symbol with the phrase “La Union Hace La Fuerza” below.

## Article II. Organizational Goals

- Section 1. The California Statewide M.E.Ch.A. outlines the following organizational objectives:
  - A. To undertake the responsibility of uplifting and mobilizing our people through educational, economic, political, and social empowerment within our community in order to achieve liberation;

- B. To retain our Chicana/ Chicano identity and expand our cultural awareness;
- C. To take every opportunity to educate our Raza about our historia;
- D. To carry out plans of action concerning Chicanas and Chicanos in Aztlán.

### **Article III. Campus M.E.Ch.A.**

- Section 1. General membership consists of students who accept, believe, and work for the goals and objectives of M.E.Ch.A.
- Section 2. All Campus M.E.Ch.A.s will be based at a Campus within California.
- Section 3. Membership will be officially recognized by their respective campus M.E.Ch.A. with the following restrictions:
  - A. Active membership must reside with currently enrolled students at their respective campus M.E.Ch.A.
  - B. Undergraduate students are limited to six years active membership in an office of voting position in college and university chapters;
  - C. Graduate students will not hold an office position, will be limited to a two-year non-voting advisory role and will not be eligible for membership thereafter.
- Section 4. When M.E.Ch.A. meetings are being conducted and M.E.Ch.A. business is being discussed, voting will be limited to active members only.
- Section 5. Individual MEChistas cannot offer the endorsement of, or formally represent, any M.E.Ch.A. chapter(s) without their authorization.
- Section 6. If “working relationships” between a M.E.Ch.A. Chapter and any outside entities, organizations, and or individuals are violated, documentation explaining the violation must be distributed by the respective M.E.Ch.A. Chapter to its Central, Regional and State (Refer to Philosophy of M.E.Ch.A.: Relationship to Outside Organizations).
- Section 7. Each M.E.Ch.A. Chapter must gain its affiliation only through its respective recognized M.E.Ch.A. Central.
- Section 8. In order to be a M.E.Ch.A. Chapter, recognized by the Central, the Chapter must accept and abide by the following responsibilities:
  - A. Educate all members by providing, reading and thoroughly discussing:
    - 1. Historical documents of our Movement including El Plan de Santa Barbara, El Plan de Aztlán, and The Philosophy of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán.
    - 2. The Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán National Constitution, California Statewide M.E.Ch.A. Constitution, and their respective Regional, Central, and Chapter Constitutions.
  - B. Send at least one representative to Central meetings to be recognized as a voting chapter (Refer to Article IV, Section 5).

### **Article IV. Central**

- Section 1. The Centrales will be established by counties within their respective Region.
- Section 2. Isolated campuses will go to the nearest active Central for recognition.  
A. These isolated campuses must work towards establishing M.E.Ch.A. Chapters with the intention of developing their own Central.
- Section 3. Responsibilities of the M.E.Ch.A. Central include:  
A. To outline and implement plans of action for their particular area.  
B. To meet at least once a month.  
C. To screen, recruit, and educate campuses wishing to form a M.E.Ch.A.  
D. To keep a record of all officially recognized M.E.Ch.A.s in their Central and minutes of every Central meeting.  
E. To inform the Regional of the voting status of M.E.Ch.A. campuses pertaining to their Central.  
F. To seek fundraising strategies to fund activities, academic outreach, and a newsletter.  
G. To create a resource network between M.E.Ch.A. campuses in the Central.
- Section 4. Meeting Structure of M.E.Ch.A. Central  
A. Recognized campuses will alternate hosting Central meetings. The hosting campus is responsible for notifying each M.E.Ch.A. chapter within the Central.  
B. Each campus will have one vote and the meeting will be official when the majority (50%+1) of the voting membership is present.  
C. Educational Segments will be provided by the hosting Campus.
- Section 5. Voting privileges will be granted as follows:  
A. Any new campus wanting to become part of the Central process must gain its affiliation through the recognized Chapters within the Central.  
B. Once a M.E.Ch.A. Chapter has met the guidelines of their respective Central constitution the campus will then gain its voting privilege.  
C. If a Campus fails to attend two consecutive Central meetings, then they will lose their voting privilege.  
D. If a campus is denied voting privilege, they may attend two consecutive meetings in order to reinstate their voting privilege.
- Section 6. Responsibilities of the Central Representative include:  
A. To have an active membership in their Chapter at least one year prior to their appointment.  
B. To take a written report back to their Campus for discussion of Central issues.  
C. To bring campus M.E.Ch.A. minutes to Central meetings.  
D. To vote on Central issues in the manner that their Campus has decided.  
E. To be fully informed on all issues pertaining to their respective chapter and on previous Central meetings.  
F. To be present at least two-thirds of the Central meeting in order to be officially recorded as present.
- Section 7. The Central must have two standing positions which are the External and Internal Directors.

- A. The Central External and Internal Directors must have active membership within their Campus at least one year prior to their appointments (no exception).
- Section 8. Responsibilities of the Internal Director include:
- A. To have a neutral and non-voting status in Central meetings.
  - B. To make out agendas in collaboration with a hosting Campus and ensure that they are mailed two weeks prior to the next Central meeting.
  - C. To ensure that meetings are held on time and are productive.
  - D. To take minutes of all Central meetings.
- Section 9. Responsibilities of the External Director include:
- A. To have a neutral and non-voting status in Central meetings.
  - B. To be the official spokesperson for the Central.
  - C. To develop methods for recruiting prospective campuses for membership into the Central.
  - D. To head the Central newsletter committee (See Philosophy of M.E.Ch.A.: Goals and Objectives).

#### **Article V. M.E.Ch.A. Regional**

- Section 1. The Regional is a logistical, informative, and resource network committee defined by the region boundaries set by the Statewide and receives its direction from the voting campuses.
- Section 2. Regional Boundaries are as follows:
- A. Alta Califas Norte M.E.Ch.A. Región.
    - 1. The southern boundary will be the southern county lines of San Mateo, Santa Clara, San Joaquin, Calaveras, and Alpine as outlined in Appendix A.
    - 2. The western, northern, and eastern boundaries will be the remaining California state line north of its respective southern boundary (see Article V: Section 2: A: 1).
  - B. Centro California M.E.Ch.A. Region.
    - 1. The northern boundary will be the northern county lines of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, Merced, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Mono as outlined in Appendix A.
    - 2. The southern boundary will be the southern county lines of Santa Barbara, Kern, and Inyo as outlined in Appendix A.
    - 3. The western and eastern boundary will be the remaining California state line south of its respective northern boundary (see Article V: Section 2: B: 2).
  - C. Alta Califas Sur M.E.Ch.A. Region.
    - 1. The northern boundary will be the northern county lines of Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino as outlined in Appendix A.

2. The western, southern, and eastern boundaries will be the remaining California state line south of its respective northern boundary (see Article V: Section 2: C: 1).
- Section 3. A Communication Center must be established where all M.E.Ch.A. Regional information (i.e. minutes, phone list, etc.) will be kept and is responsible for maintaining contacts between other communication centers throughout the state.
- Section 4. The Regional will convene once a month with a quorum of 50%+1 of all campuses.
- Section 5. Voting Privilege
- A. Any new campus wanting to become part of the Regional Process must first gain its affiliation through their recognized Central.
  - B. M.E.Ch.A. Chapters must satisfy both Central and Regional guidelines to obtain voting privileges, which may be done simultaneously.
  - C. If a Campus has failed to attend two previous Regional meetings they need two-thirds approval of the Regional body or to attend two consecutive meetings in order to reinstate their voting privilege.
  - D. If a Campus is denied voting privileges, then they may seek this privilege at the next Regional meeting.
- Section 6. Regional meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order until an alternative method can be found.
- Section 7. The M.E.Ch.A. Regional consists of representatives chosen from their respective M.E.Ch.A. campuses.
- A. Regional representatives, with voting privileges, have one vote per campus.
- Section 8. Responsibilities of the Regional representative include:
- A. To take a written report back to their Campus, outlining issues under consideration (i.e. actions, workshops, or speakers).
  - B. To vote on issues in the manner their Campus has decided.
  - C. To be fully informed on all issues pertaining to their respective campus and previous Regional meetings.
  - D. To be present for at least two-thirds of the meeting in order to be officially recognized as present.
- Section 9. Only schools that have a M.E.Ch.A. and are recognized by the Central are allowed to join the Regional.
- Section 10. All non-M.E.Ch.A. individual(s) or organization(s) who wish to attend a M.E.Ch.A. Regional meeting must meet the following criteria:
- A. Have sponsorship from a voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapter;
  - B. Be approved by all voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapters to be present at the meeting.
- Section 11. When M.E.Ch.A. action items are being discussed, the non-M.E.Ch.A. individual(s) and/or organization(s) present may be asked to leave, upon a voting chapter's request.

## **Article VI. Statewide**

- Section 1. There will be two Statewide Conferences, one in the Spring and one in the Fall, which will have a focus, covering issues relevant to our gente.
- Section 2. The purpose of the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference is to unite all M.E.Ch.A. Chapters in an effort to maintain and reaffirm the principles and philosophies of M.E.Ch.A. The goal is to formulate a well-planned strategy in the form of resolutions and to take action on the imminent issues.
- Section 3. Statewide rules include:
- A. Only M.E.Ch.A. campuses certified by the M.E.Ch.A. Regional Process will be allowed to vote.
  - B. In a Resolution Circle, there will be one vote per M.E.Ch.A. Campus. Voting will be done by students representing their respective M.E.Ch.A. Chapter.
  - C. Non-voting individual(s) and/or group(s) can not attend or participate in any workshops or meetings wherein constitutional issues or resolutions will be discussed or voted upon, unless these individual(s) and/or group(s) meet both of the following criteria:
    - 1. Have sponsorship from a voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapter within its respective M.E.Ch.A. Region.
    - 2. Be approved by unanimous consent by all voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapters in attendance when these constitutional issues or resolutions are discussed or voted upon.
  - D. Non-voting individuals attending the conference shall not be allowed to participate in debate or discussion of questions before the Resolution Circle.
  - E. Individuals and/or groups with a history of party-building and cadre raiding inside of M.E.Ch.A. are not welcome to attend (See Philosophy of M.E.Ch.A.: M.E.Ch.A.'s Relationship to Outside Organizations).
  - F. All entertainment must be culturally oriented.
  - G. When constitutional issues or resolutions are being discussed or voted upon camcorders, tape recorders, or cameras will be prohibited.
- Section 4. Entities contrary to the goals and objectives of M.E.Ch.A. must not be represented at the M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference (i.e. paraphernalia, fliers, flags, etc.).
- Section 5. California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference Liaison Process:
- A. Hosting campus will notify M.E.Ch.A. Chapters of Liaisons one month prior to each meeting.
  - B. The third Liaison must be held at least six weeks prior to the Statewide Conference.
  - C. Prior to each California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference there will be a minimum of three (3) California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference Liaison Meetings with the intent of having equal input from all recognized M.E.Ch.A. Chapters into the Statewide Conference.
  - D. Each of the voting California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meetings must be hosted by a voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapter.

- E. Each of the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meetings will be held in different Regions. The Liaisons are to rotate in the following order:
  - 1. The first is to be held at a recognized Campus within the respective Region who hosted the previous M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference;
  - 2. The second is to be held at the respective Region who is not hosting the next California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference and is not the previous hosting Region of the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference;
  - 3. The third is to be held at the hosting Campus of the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference.
- F. All non-voting individuals and/or groups that wish to attend a California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meeting must meet the following criteria;
  - 1. Have sponsorship from a M.E.Ch.A. Chapter, which is recognized by its respective M.E.Ch.A. Region;
  - 2. Be approved to attend the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meetings by the M.E.Ch.A. Region in which the Liaison is being held;
  - 3. Be approved by unanimous consent at the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meeting.
- G. Final decisions regarding the California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference shall be made at the last California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Liaison Meeting.

- Section 6. The Statewide Conference must rotate from the Central to the Northern to the Southern.
- Section 7. Statewide meetings must be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order until an alternate method can be found.

**Article VII. Removal and Reinstatement of Centrales, Chapters, and Individuals**

- Section 1. Chapters and/or Individuals who work contrary to the goals and objectives of M.E.Ch.A. (including but not limited to party-building and cadre-raiding; refer to Philosophy of M.E.Ch.A.) may lose their recognition through one of the following processes:
  - A. Removal by Central:
    - 1. A voting campus must present a written statement against the chapter and/or Individual at a regularly scheduled Central meeting.
    - 2. At the next regularly scheduled Central meeting, the plaintiff and defendant must present their cases.
    - 3. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for campuses to discuss the matter.
    - 4. After the meeting reconvenes, the Central will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting Chapters in

the Central, is required to remove a Chapter and/or Individual's recognition.

5. Upon the removal of a Chapter and/or Individual's recognition, the Central must with a two-thirds majority vote, address the following items.
  - a. Period of time during which a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
  - b. Conditions that must be met before a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
  - c. The number of times a petition for reinstatement will be considered.

B. Removal by Regional:

1. A voting campus must present a written statement against the Chapter and/or Individual at a regularly scheduled Regional meeting.
2. At the next regularly scheduled Regional meeting, the plaintiff and defendant must present their cases.
3. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for campuses to discuss the matter.
4. After the meeting reconvenes, the Regional will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting Chapters in the Region, is required to remove a Chapter and/or Individual's recognition.
5. Upon the removal of a Chapter and/or Individual's recognition, the Regional must, with a two-thirds majority vote, address the following items:
  - a. Period of time during which a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
  - b. Conditions that must be met before a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
  - c. The number of times a petition for reinstatement will be considered.

- Section 2. Centrales that work contrary to the goals and objectives of M.E.Ch.A. (including but not limited to party-building and cadre raiding; refer to Philosophy of M.E.Ch.A.) may lose their recognition through this process:
- A. A voting campus must present a written statement against a Central at a regularly scheduled Regional meeting.
  - B. At the next regularly scheduled Regional meeting, the plaintiff and defendant must present their cases.
  - C. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for campuses to discuss the matter.
  - D. After the meeting reconvenes, the Regional will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting Chapters in the Region, is required to remove a Central's recognitions.
  - E. Upon the removal of a Central's recognition, the Region must, with a two-thirds majority vote, address the following items:

1. Period of time during which a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
2. Conditions that must be met before a petition for reinstatement will be considered;
3. The number of times a petition for reinstatement will be considered.

Section 3. The authorization to reinstate M.E.Ch.A. Chapters and/or Individuals will reside in the removing body. In such cases one of the following will apply:

A. Reinstatement by Central.

1. The Central must decide in accordance with, Article VII, Section 1, part A.5., when a Chapter and/or Individual may petition for reinstatement.
2. At a regularly scheduled Central meeting, the Chapter and/or Individual petitioning for reinstatement must present their case.
3. Any Chapter and/or Individual in opposition to the petition for reinstatement may present their case.
4. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for campuses to discuss the matter.
5. After the meeting reconvenes, the Central will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting chapters in the Central, is required to approve a Chapter and/or Individual's petition for reinstatement.

B. Reinstatement by Regional.

1. The Central must decide in accordance with, Article VII, Section 1, part A.5., when a Chapter and/or Individual may petition for reinstatement.
2. At a regularly scheduled Central meeting, the Chapter and/or Individual petitioning for reinstatement must present their case.
3. Any Chapter and/or Individual in opposition to the petition for reinstatement may present their case.
4. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for campuses to discuss the matter.
5. After the meeting reconvenes, the Central will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting chapters in the Central, is required to approve a Chapter and/or Individual's petition for reinstatement.

Section 4. Centrales who have had their recognition removed may regain their recognition through the following Regional process:

- A. The Region must decide in accordance with, Article VII, Section 2, part E., when a Central may petition for reinstatement.
- B. At a regularly scheduled Regional meeting, the Central petition for reinstatement must present their case.
- C. Any voting Chapter and/or Individual in opposition to the petition for reinstatement may present their case.

- D. After the proceedings, time will be allowed for Campuses to discuss the matter.
- E. After the meeting reconvenes, the Regional will vote on the matter. A two-thirds majority vote, by the voting Chapters in the Region is required to approve a Central's petition for reinstatement.

### **Article VIII.**

Statewide Constitution must take precedence and serve as a guideline for all M.E.Ch.A.s, this means that any M.E.Ch.A. chapter must not work against any goals or ideas that the Statewide Constitution is putting forth.

### **Article IX. Amendments**

- Section 1. Amendments to the Constitution will be as follows:
- A. Amendments and/or changes to the M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Constitution must be first submitted in writing at the first California Statewide Liaison meeting.
  - B. A Statewide workshop at the M.E.Ch.A. Statewide Conference is required for the proposed amendments
  - C. Passing of the proposed amendments will require a two-thirds majority vote of voting M.E.Ch.A. Chapters at the Califaztlán Statewide Conference Resolution Circle.

### **Article X.**

Ultimate authority as to any interpretation of this constitution or anything not mentioned within this constitution must be decided by the general body of California M.E.Ch.A. Statewide by a two-thirds vote.

**As amended at the Fall 1998 California Statewide M.E.Ch.A. Conference at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.**