



“MEChA Nationals Conference Funding Proposal”

Proposed Motion: *Move to approve \$5,550 for the MEChA National Conference.*

Sponsor: *AS VP for Diversity, Abby Ramos*

Persons of Contact:

Guest Speaker: *Malcolm Oliver and company from Bellingham Police Department*

Date: Friday, February 26th 2016

Attached Document

Attached is the MEChA Budget

Background & Context

Founded in 1969 as part of the National Chican@ Youth Conference, Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@* de Aztlán (MEChA) is the largest and oldest Chican@ organization in the United States. It is a student organization that promotes higher education, culture, and leadership. MEChA was founded on the principles of self-determination for the social and political liberation of our people. We believe that political involvement and education is the avenue for change in our society. The term Chican@ is grounded in a philosophy, not a nationality. Chicanismo does not exclude anyone, rather it includes those who acknowledge and work toward the betterment of La Raza.

Our chapter at Western Washington University has been active for about 30 years. Since then MEChA de WWU has fought for social justice here in the Whatcom, Skagit and Western community. From issues in education, farm workers rights, and systems of oppression. We strive to continue to create spaces for Chicanx that foster growth and instill pride in there identity.

Every year a National Conference for Mechistas is held. This year the conference will be held in Tuscon, Arizona at the University of Arizona and at the local Pueblo High School. The conference will be held on March 18, 19, and 20th. In 2010 the state of Arizona banned Ethnic Studies (HB 2281). There will be workshops surrounding these issues and ways to work against systems of oppression in a university setting. During the conference there will be caucus spaces, an action, and keynote speakers that will share there best practices in meeting the needs of students of color. Students across the nation will be in Arizona in solidarity with Arizona and their fight against the banning of Ethnic Studies.

Summary of Proposal

The total cost for the entire conference is \$5,550 that includes travel, lodging, and meals. MEChA has been fundraising this conference since October. There will be 12 mechistas attending the conference. Attending the conference will bring new perspectives on community organizing, ethnic studies, and education to the mechistas here at Western. Mechistas here at Western work closely with Familias Unidas por la Justicia and high school students. Seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshman will be attending the conference. We all have been very active in our chapter by taking on leadership roles, organizing with FUJ on marches, organizing events on campus, partnering with other student groups on campus like Black Student Union, Social Issues Resource Center, Education Social Justice Minor, Ethnic Student Center, and plenty more.

Fiscal Impacts

The total cost for the entire conference is \$5,550 that includes travel, lodging, and meals.

Rationale

MEChA de WWU is hosting the Regionals Conference April 15,16, and 17th where all the MEChA chapters from Washington State and a chapter from Idaho. Attending this conference will enrich the perspectives of Western. Mechistas are in a variety of programs like Social Sciences, Humanities, Business, and others. The knowledge that we attain from this conference will be put to practice not only in a school setting but for our future careers. As students of color on a predominantly white campus we strongly believe this conference will empower us and create networking with other Latinx organizing across the country.