



January 5, 2011

To: Interested High School Counselors

From: El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlán (M.E.Ch.A) of University of Washington

Re: 16th Annual A.C.E Conference

The University of Washington chapter of El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlán, (M.E.Ch.A) is working in conjunction with the staff at the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA/D) to plan the 16th annual high school outreach conference. Students attending the conference will come from high schools throughout the State of Washington. The conference will cover the costs of transportation, and housing accommodations in a hotel in the University District, and provide meals throughout. Schools ARE NOT required to provide transportation for student to the University of Washington.

The goal of this conference is to instill within the students an enhanced appreciation for their identity, their culture, and for higher education. We further strive to prepare students with the information and the necessary tools to further advance their education. The program scheduled for the participants will feature educational and informative workshops, guest speakers, classroom visitations, campus exposure, cultural empowerment, and enriching entertainment. By covering the various aspects of college life, students will discover the value of attaining a higher education and will be informed about the steps they need to take in order to attain their goals.

On arriving visiting students will be welcomed on campus by the University of Washington, M.E.Ch.A chapter along with the Vice-President for the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, Dr. Sheila Edwards Lange. This day will include workshop sessions that are geared toward broadening the students' knowledge of their heritage and their opportunities for future in various academic fields including Medicine, Law, Education, Engineering and Psychology. In addition, we will feature a motivational speaker followed by campus tours and dinner. The evening will conclude with Noche de Cultura (Night of Culture) to be held in Kane Hall's main auditorium.

The following day, May 19th, is packed with educational presentations. This day is dedicated to presenting the students with the information needed in order to navigate through the college applications and admissions process. The students will acquire this knowledge through presentations by the UW Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity on topics such as Financial Aid, Personal Statements, and Admissions. Other workshops include cultural empowerment, Chicana/o poetry and presentations on the history of M.E.Ch.A. Current UW students will also offer their perspectives on the value of furthering higher education, as well as their personal college experiences. The day will conclude with a poetry slam.

Our organization was founded on the principle of empowering our community through education, cultural awareness, and political action. The Chicana/o, Latina/o population is the fastest growing population in the nation, yet the numbers enrolling into colleges do not reflect this rapid growth. Programs such as the M.E.Ch.A Conference are aimed at motivating Chicana/o, Latina/o students to pursue higher education and to provide them with the tools and support they need in order to succeed. We hope that you encourage your students to take part in this fulfilling experience.

With your cooperation, we hope to bring new faces to this year's conference; therefore we are granting priority to students who have not yet attended a National or A.C.E conference in the past. Since our focus is to motivate Chicana/o, Latina/o youth to pursue higher education, please encourage all students to apply regardless of GPA. Additionally, for liability reasons, we ask to be notified of any accommodations prior to the conference and *we ask that schools refrain from exchanging student attendees just prior or during the conference.*

MEChA de UW invests a lot of time and effort to organize a successful student run conference every year. If you would like more information you can contact our A.C.E conference coordinators with any questions or check out our website at students.washington.edu/mecha. We are confident that this event will be successful in promoting higher education to the Chicana/o, Latina/o community. ¡Qué viva la educación!

If your school district requires counselor chaperones at conferences outside the school district, please contact us as soon as possible to make arrangements. We welcome counselors to attend, but we ask that counselor take an observant role during the conference so the students' learning environment is not compromised. Therefore, we ask counselors not to remove students from the conference at any time. Emergencies are an exception but A.C.E coordinators must be notified.

MEChA de UW

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