

California MEChA's hold summer state-wide conference

Los Angeles — “¡Que viva MEChA!” (Long live MEChA!) “¡Que viva el movimiento Chicano!” (Long live the Chicano movement!)

Shouting these slogans, 250 Chicano students and youth opened the California state-wide summer MEChA conference, held at the East Los Angeles Community College (ELACC) on the weekend of July 14 and 15. It was attended by representatives from over 20 high school and college MEChA's (Chicano student organizations), as well as representatives of the Black Berets, community youth groups, the United Farm Workers union, and the August 29th Chicano Moratorium Coalition.

Dalia Jaramillo gave an opening address in the name of the hosting ELACC MEChA. Ms. Jaramillo talked about the militant history of the MEChA's and the important role they have played in the Chicano movement — from fighting for Chicano Studies, to building support for the farm workers, to helping build the Anti-Bakke Decision

Coalition. She stressed that state-wide MEChA unity can help defend the gains made in the past decade.

The conference also included reports from the regional MEChA networks and chapters. The reports made clear that all the MEChA's are very active in both campus and community struggles.

Many MEChA's have been active in working with barrio youth, helping them build high school and junior high school MEChA's as well as to organize community youth groups. Most MEChA's have also helped raise money for the current California farm workers strike.

Workshops

The conference held several workshops on topics such as the Defense of Chicano Studies, Art and Culture, and the Farm Workers Movement. The conference passed a workshop resolution which reaffirmed MEChA's support for the farm workers strike, but expressed the MEChA's disagreement with the

UFW policy of calling in the immigration authorities to arrest and deport strike breakers.

One workshop summed up the statewide MEChA campaign for Cinco de Mayo, a significant Mexican and Chicano holiday. The conference voted to continue to develop the Statewide Liaison Committee set up during the Cinco de Mayo campaign. This committee is an important concrete development in building the organizational unity of the state-wide MEChA's.

The conference also unanimously passed a resolution from the workshop on the upcoming 1979 commemoration of the Chicano Moratorium, and pledged to help build for the August 29th Chicano Moratorium Coalition's September 1 demonstration in Los Angeles.

Conference condemns Revolutionary Communist Party

Before the conference even began, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) tried to force its way in and disrupt it. The RCP had to be physically



LA area band, Los Perros, performing at MEChA Conference (UNITY photo)

escorted out of ELACC, and they did not return.

The conference concluded by passing a resolution condemning the RCP for its history of trying to wreck and disrupt the MEChA's and the Chicano movement. The state-wide MEChA organization pledged not to work in any capacity with the RCP or its affiliate groups.

This MEChA conference was one of the largest summer conferences in years. It showed that the MEChA's are growing in size and activity, and so is their commitment to build and solidify their state-wide organization.

The next state-wide MEChA conference will be held the last week in October at San Jose State University.