

**Academic Event Professional Conference 2019**

# **Organized Chaos:**

**How Arizona State University connects the dots across multiple campuses to share information and best practices**



- Teri introduction
  - Senior Coordinator for Office of University Events and Protocol
  - Liaison between the MECA Leadership Board and OUEP
- Phil introduction
  - Senior Coordinator for the Sun Devil Fitness Complex
  - President of MECA, a staff organization for event coordinators on campus

# Agenda



**About Arizona State University**

**What is MECA?**

**Resources MECA provides**

**The future of MECA**

- We are going to start by telling you a little about Arizona State University and why there is a need to share information and best practices for the event community
- Then we will discuss MECA – the staff organization created for campus event coordinators
- We will share with you the resources MECA provides
- And then take a look at the future of MECA

# Arizona State University

One university in many places



Downtown Phoenix campus



Polytechnic campus



Tempe campus



West campus

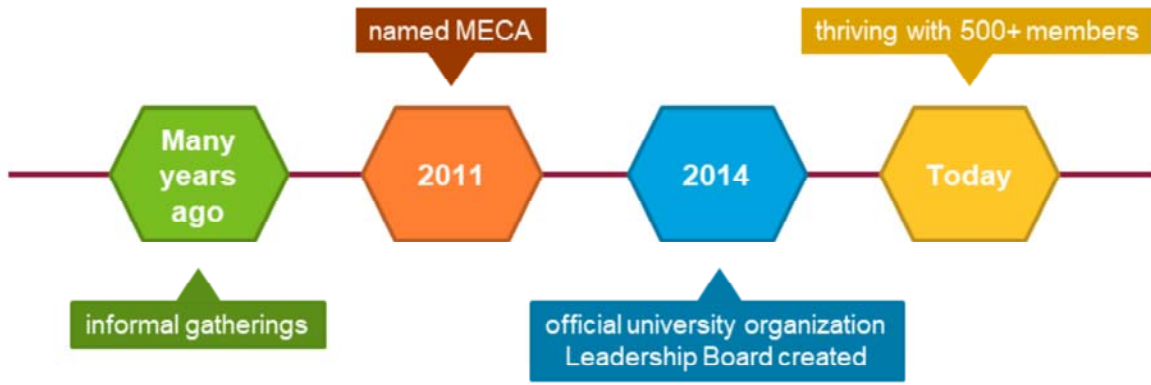
- Arizona State University (ASU) is the largest university in the U.S.
  - With 73,000 in-person students,
  - An additional 36,000 online students,
  - And 15,000 employees
- ASU is spread across four main campuses in the metropolitan Phoenix area
  - Unlike other universities with multiple campuses, ASU is considered “one university in many places”
  - While each campus has a unique personality and specific majors offered – we are all the same university
- With employees spread across four campuses, we have learned that the dissemination of information is key, especially for safe and successful events

# MECA

## Meeting, event coordinators and associates

- So, MECA was created.
- MECA stands for meeting, event coordinators and associates and it is the official organization for self-identified event coordinators at ASU.
  - What do we mean by “self-identified event coordinators”?
    - ASU does not have a centralized event office.
    - Instead, each college, school, department, etc. has its own staff that are responsible for event coordination.
      - In some units, those staff members are full-time event coordinators, like Phil and Teri (all our work is event related),
      - Other units have staff members split their time between their regular work and event coordination.
      - And then there are staff members – like project managers, administrative assistants, or faculty – who plan maybe one or two events a year.
- As of January 1, there are 545 self-identified event coordinators and associates at ASU that are part of the MECA community.
  - There is no fees, qualifications or requirements to join MECA. Anyone who wants to can join.
- We use MECA as the means to communicate necessary event resources and knowledge and to facilitate development opportunities to event coordinators across the four campuses.

## Timeline



- Over time, we have worked hard to develop MECA into a formal organization with structure and leadership.
- However, \*MANY\* years ago when MECA started, it was an informal gathering of several event coordinators every couple of months.
  - The gatherings consisted of sharing information, discussing procedures, new ideas and best practices with one another.
  - No one was in charge of the group. It was a collaborative effort to find time to get together, usually over lunch.
  - At some point a listserv was created and although it was rarely used, it offered a way to keep a “list” of the growing group and allowed means for communication.
- Around 2011, this informal group was named MECA and became more of an actual organization.
  - Meetings were scheduled on a regular monthly basis and venues, caterers and event vendors were invited to present at meetings.
- In 2014, MECA became an official staff organization that was recognized and approved by the university.
  - At this time, the MECA Leadership Board was created with defined titles and roles for each position.
- Today, MECA is a thriving organization that provides a channel for communication and vital information sharing to 545 members.

## Leadership Board

- President
- Vice President of External Relationships
- Vice President of Marketing & Communication
- Vice President of Networking
- Vice President Operations & Administration
- Vice President of Professional Development
- Vice President of Signature Events
- Vice President of Survey & Research



- The Leadership Board is responsible for overseeing MECA, planning monthly meetings and offering networking and professional development opportunities.
- Board members are elected by the MECA community and serve for two years.
- In addition to planning monthly meetings, each position has a specific focus:
  - President
    - Oversee of the Leadership Board and serve as official voice of MECA to the Office of University Events and Protocol and University
  - VP of External Relationships
    - Maintain MECA's relationship with external event vendors
  - VP of Marketing & Communication
    - Manage social media accounts and send communication to the MECA community
  - VP of Networking
    - Coordinate networking events
  - VP of Operations & Administration
    - Take and distribute meeting notes
  - VP of Professional Development
    - Coordinate professional development sessions/trainings
  - VP of Signature Events
    - Coordinate annual large-scale event (MECA conference, protocol workshop, vendor showcase etc.)

- VP of Survey & Research
  - Conduct surveys and gather feedback from MECA community

# MECA

Meeting, event coordinators  
and associates

Hello MECA Members!  
Please join us at our upcoming meeting:

**Tuesday, October 30, 2018**  
**11:45 a.m - 1 p.m.**  
Polytechnic Campus  
Academic Center Building (CNTR), Suite 110

#### Meeting Overview

11:45am: Check-in + Lunch, provided by [Waldo's BBQ](#)  
11:55am: Welcome from Waldo's BBQ  
12:00pm – 12:10pm: ASU PD (Alcohol permits + Event Planning)  
12:10 – 12:20pm: Pride Group  
12:20 – 12:25pm: MECA Wrap-up + Announcements  
12:25pm – 12:30pm: Walk over to Print & Imaging Lab  
12:35pm – 1:00 pm: Print & Imaging Lab Presentation & Tour

Space is limited!

[Register Here](#)

Looking forward to seeing you at our event!

# MECA

Meeting, event coordinators  
and associates

Hello MECA Members!  
Please join us at our upcoming meeting:

**Tuesday, November 13, 2018**  
**10:00-11:00am**  
West Campus  
Sun Devil Fitness Complex, 3rd Floor Conference Room

#### Meeting Overview

9:30 a.m. Check In  
10:00am Light catering provided by Celeste's Kitchen and Catering  
10:05am Welcome from Celeste's Kitchen and Catering  
10:15am Global Outreach and Extended Education Presentation  
10:30am AZ Bounce Pro Presentation  
10:45am Sun Devil Fitness Complex- West Campus Amenities  
11:00am MECA Wrap-Up

Space is limited!

[Register Here](#)

Looking forward to seeing you at our event!

- The most important resource MECA provides to its members is monthly meetings, which are planned by the Leadership Board.
- These meetings allow our members to meet and network with other event coordinators on campus and to hear from and learn about various event vendors and university partners ranging from:
  - Event venues and hotels
  - Rental companies
  - A/V companies
  - Caterers
  - Entertainment vendors (inflatables, DJ's, etc.)
  - University safety collaborators (Fire Marshal, Parking, PD, Health Safety)
  - Resources or services offered by the university (technology, marketing, printing)
- Here you can see examples of our meeting agendas from October and November of this year.
  - Generally, meetings include 3-5 presentations from vendors or partners, a meal or light catering and an optional venue tour.
  - We have found that the best way to get good attendance at our meetings is to offer free food. So we work with university-approved caterers to sponsor our lunches. It is a win-win for both MECA and the caterer.
    - We get free food and the caterer gets an opportunity to present in front of MECA in hopes of future business.



- Each month the meeting is hosted at a different on-campus venue. Most meetings are held at the Tempe campus as this is the largest campus with the most staff and most event space.
  - However, each year we host at least one meeting at each of the other campuses.
  - Hosting the meetings at a variety of venues (across four campuses) allows our members opportunities to learn about event spaces and see venues with a new prospective for future events.
    - For example, we hosted a meeting at the university's art museum and their staff demonstrated how the space could be setup and used for events.
- In addition to presentations from event vendors, partners within the university also present at our meetings.
  - You can see that in October, ASU's PD presented on alcohol permits and how PD can assist with event planning and safety.
- Attending the monthly MECA meetings really helps event coordinators stay on top of new information, changes in university policy and all other important information, while also getting exposure to various vendors and other MECA Members.
  - Monthly meeting attendance ranges from 30-80 people – so how do we communicate to everyone else who does not show up?

# Communicating across four campuses

## Listserv - the old way

Hello,

We are working on an event featuring the poster displays of our graduates. We are looking for 15 double-sided poster display boards. Could someone please point me in the right direction for where I could secure some for an event?

Thank you!

Happy Friday!

We have a free Red Carpet in great shape size 14ft by 3ft ready to go to the first person to claim it! It's fun for photo sessions or special events.

Hello!

We have students visiting from China (about 20) and we need to bus them to and from Tucson and Flagstaff. Has anyone worked with a bus company that they loved and are reasonably priced?

Thanks!

Hi all,

I have a grant-funded group that I support that is looking to do a fundraising event in the spring, but we want to make sure we are following ASU protocols.

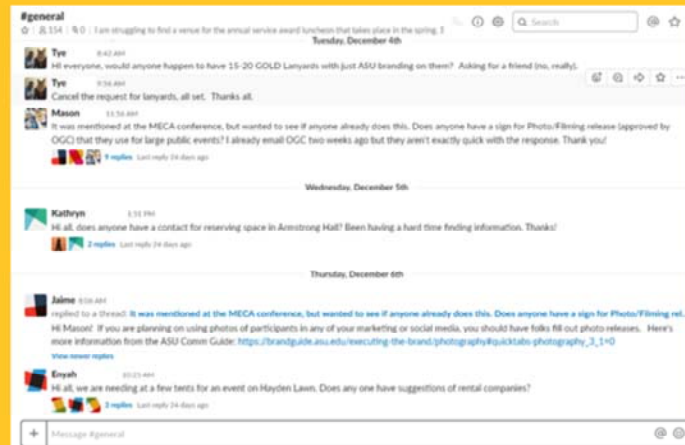
Does anyone have a contact name or know the process for this?

Appreciate all thoughts and suggestions!

- We used to use a listserv to communicate to MECA members.
  - If you wanted to be a part of MECA you joined the listserv.
  - You would then receive the meeting invitations and informational emails.
- Some of the challenges with the listserv is:
  - The software is getting old.
  - Scattered or nonlinear communication.
  - A lot of unwanted Reply All emails.
- Here are some examples of emails that were sent through the listserv.
  - As you can see, it was a great tool that was used for getting ideas, asking for help and sharing resources.
  - But while the listserv was helpful in communicating to the masses, it also clogged up your inbox (for every one of those emails, there are 3-10 Reply All responses).

# Communicating across four campuses

## Slack - the NEW way



- As of January 1, we have made a full transition away from the listserv and will now be using Slack exclusively for MECA communication.
- The purpose of using Slack is to create a one-stop-shop for all MECA communication that stays clear of your inbox.
  - With the listserv, there was only one way to communicate.
  - With Slack, you can:
    - Create multiple channels to specify your communication.
      - Users can subscribe to the channels they want.
    - Send direct message, allowing you to directly respond or reach out to a fellow MECA member.
      - This gets us away from the dreaded Reply All that happens on the listserv.
    - Add links to any channel for any and all information necessary.
- Channels
  - We currently only have one public channel - General.
  - We will add more as we continue to move forward without the listserv.
  - Future channels will be:
    - University updates
    - Random (I have 50 vases I need to get rid of, who wants them?!)
    - Meeting information and notes

- The Leadership Board has a private channel that is used to discuss MECA business.
- So far, Slack has been used to:
  - Market upcoming meetings
  - Announce job postings
  - Inquire about potential venues
  - Ask for a specific on-campus contact
  - Ask for information about or reviews of a specific vendor

# Signature Events

Bringing everyone together



**ASU** Arizona State University

# 2018 Event Vendor Showcase

May 16, 2018 • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Sun Devil Fitness Center - Tempe, Maroon Gym

Color	Vendor Type
Light Blue	Audio Visual
Orange	Catering/Restaurants
Yellow	Event Services
Green	Hotels
Pink	Promotional Items/Print
Light Blue	Rentals/Equipment
Light Blue	Venues

Hosted by  
Office of University  
Events and Protocol  
and  
**MECA**  
Meeting, event coordinators  
and associates  
Event Assist  
<http://specialvents.asu.edu>

- MECA concludes the academic year with the annual Event Vendor Showcase.
  - We invite all university-approved event-related vendors, suppliers service providers to the showcase.
  - Everyone on campus is invited to attend the showcase – you do not need to be a member of MECA.
  - This is an opportunity for campus event coordinators to have face-to-face time with vendors to make new connections, strengthen relationships and get new ideas.
- This is also MECA's only revenue generating event of the year.
  - We charge vendors about \$250 for a booth (with fees for add-ons, like a large space, corner spot, access to power).
  - Funds go into the MECA account and are used for special events, like guest speakers, trainings and professional development.
- The Leadership Board also hosts a booth at the showcase to recruit new MECA members and also touch base with the vendors we have developed relationships with.

# MECA Conference



## CONFERENCE AGENDA

11:30 a.m. - noon    **Check In**    **Outside Ventana A Ballroom, MU 241A**  
MECA Leadership Team

Noon - 1 p.m.    **Lunch & Events 101**    **Ventana A Ballroom, MU 241A**  
MECA Leadership Team

1:15 p.m. - 2 p.m.    **Session Block 1**

**ASU Special Events Program**    **Yuma, MU 225**

Michael Long, University Fire Marshal, Environmental Health & Safety  
Chris Espert, Assistant University Fire Marshal, Environmental Health & Safety

Please join ASU's Fire Marshal's office as they provide a general overview of the Special Events Permitting process. They will go through the Special Events Registry (online) and walk through the Registration process, as well as go over their fee structure and Pre-Event and Operational Event Inspection processes.

**ASU Student Media**    **Mohave, MU 236**

Maribel "Mickey" Peña, Manager of Student Media

Increase event attendance by making sure you take advantage of the right marketing and advertising opportunities available to departments through ASU Student Media. Discounted rates available to department on some options.

**Food Policies, Safety and Regulations at ASU**    **Navajo, MU 240**

Jeff Rensel, Director of Events & Operations, Memorial Union & Student Pavilion  
Veronica Oros, Manager of Food Safety & Health Sanitation, ASU Health Services

In this session participants will learn about food policies, food safety regulations and what is required to serve food on campus. Participants will learn about temporary food service guidelines and permitting, the Food Exception Request Form, the Approved Food Providers List, and the various options for catering/food services on campus.

- Last year, in addition to hosting the Event Vendor Showcase, we also held the Inaugural MECA Conference.
  - This was a half-day conference that acted kind of like an on-boarding (or Events 101) for staff new to planning events at ASU.
  - There were three 45-minute blocks, and attendees could choose from a variety of sessions that included:
    - Food regulations
    - Fire Marshal permits
    - Event parking
    - Emergency preparedness
    - Event software
    - Event expert panel

# What's in the future for MECA?

- Newsletter
- Tabling events
- Increasing our presence across campuses and really be a resource for both seasoned and new professionals.



**Questions?**





## Connect with us!

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