

Meeting 06/2020

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee**
was held from 4.00pm – 5.30pm, Thursday 23 July 2020
by Zoom invitation.

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MINUTES

The meeting opened at 4.05pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MGAEC acknowledged and paid respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this unceded land.

1.2 Apologies Attendance

No apologies received.

Elliot Anderson, Stacey Coe, Julie Dao Wendy Febrita, Damon Hu, Jessica Lu, Aman Madaan, Preeti Mehta, Samuel Miles, Caitlyn Neale (Chair), Emily Pryor, Joel Samu, Ke Xiou Tan, Ailsa Webb, Mazaya Windhiana

In attendance Janice Boey, Zuzana Quinn, Jenny Reeder

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

Aman noted that many students were unhappy with the cost of courses given the quality and online delivery. It was agreed this matter would be discussed under item 4.2.3.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes 05/2020 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting June 05/2020 be confirmed.

Moved: Elliot Anderson

Seconded: Emily Pryor

Carried.

2.2 Action sheet

The status of action item 3.2 regarding the MGA's request that MGRO staff attend a Q&A open to all HDR students was queried. It was explained that while MGRO had initially agreed to participate, no response had been received to repeated requests to confirm a date. However it appears that MGRO staff will attend individual faculty meetings to answer student questions, in response to MGA's concern that students have not been able to get answers to their questions at some faculty meetings.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

In addition to her written report Caitlyn noted that she had received some feedback from the university on the MGA paper submitted to Education Committee raising concerns about the application of Special Consideration.

3.2 Office-bearer reports

The written office-bearer reports were noted, with the following additions:

Julie Dao, Clayton campus representative, noted that Cleanaway had agreed to participate in national Recycling Week in November, and she was hoping to also enlist Planet Ark and Monash Sustainability Institute. Interest was called to form a working group and Ailsa volunteered.

Emily Pryor, Research Education Officer, explained that some HDRs had experienced a gap in income between the end of their regular scholarship and the start of payments from the Graduate Research Completion Award, which was causing some financial distress. This was raised with the university and MGA were advised that students could submit applications for the GRCA before their scholarship was exhausted, despite online information to the contrary. The MGA requested that this information be made clear in the online Fact sheet. Emily also noted that she looked forward to meeting with the faculty HDR reps at their next regular meeting.

Jessica Lu, Parkville representative, informed members that PPA were brainstorming events that could be run online for Parkville graduate students, especially those undertaking internships who worked full-time and were rarely on campus. Jessica also noted that there was no free ATO service on Parkville campus, and that this was something students would appreciate. The MGA to investigate hosting this service, as it is provided free by the ATO on all other campuses.

Mazaya Windhiana, Peninsula campus representative, noted that she was working to ensure Physiotherapy graduate students became involved in MGA orientation sessions. Mazaya also raised a concern that there had been some discussion about charging students for the use of the Peninsula campus inter-shuttle bus.

3.3 Staff report

Noted.

3.4 June 2020 profit and loss report

Noted. The Executive Officer gave a short explanation of how to read the profit and loss statement and what to look for when appraising the financial situation of the MGA.

3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records

Noted.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 Email motion: Change of bank signatories

The following motion was circulated by email and carried unanimously on 2 July 2020.

It was moved:

That the MGA bank account signatories are updated to reflect the recently elected office-bearers of President (Caitlyn Neale) and Vice-President (Stacey Coe) for the 2020/2021 term of office.

Moved: Julie Dao

Seconded: Jessica Lu

Carried.

4.1.2 COVID-19 update

It was noted that with the recently introduced six week lockdown the MGA staff would continue to work from home and all activities and events would be delivered online. The six week period would take us to week 3 of semester 2, confirming that second semester orientation would be completely online.

4.1.3 Study Melbourne grant application

Members were informed that the MGA application for funds to run a graduate to undergraduate peer mentoring program had made it through to the second round but was ultimately unsuccessful. Stacey proposed that the MGA should undertake a systemic search for grants and external funding.

4.1.4 CISA disaffiliation

During the April meeting the MGAEC had determined to disaffiliate with CISA after witnessing several years of CISA mismanagement, internal disagreements and failure to provide financial transparency. Robyn had written to CISA to advise them of the MGA's decision but had received no response. There was a brief discussion about the value of being affiliated with federal level representative bodies such as CISA.

4.1.5 MGA response to MSA 2019 SSAF report

The committee noted the MGA's written response to the MSA report on expenditure of 2019 graduate SSAF. Members expressed concern at the treatment of the graduate student community in this matter and inquired about the history and the possibility of taking further action. There was some discussion about the options open to the MGA to pursue the university's breach of the funding agreement. It was agreed that these options should be considered in more detail.

4.1.6 LinkedIn account

The committee discussed the proposal of creating an MGA LinkedIn account, noting that it was a good channel for students looking to develop their careers, and for research students wanting to build their research profiles. Twitter was also popular with researchers. The committee discussed ways in which to increase and improve student-led messaging through MGA communication channels. A working group was formed, comprising Stacey, Sam, Julie, Mazaya, Preeti and Janice. Julie agreed to convene the first meeting.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 MGA semester 2 program

The program of events for semester 2 was noted. All events would continue to be delivered online due to Covid restrictions.

4.2.2 MGAEC operations

The operations of the MGAEC were discussed and it was agreed that dates for future meetings would be fixed on the third Thursday of every month at 4.00pm until and if members indicated problems with this system. The committee would use Whatsapp for internal communications. It was also agreed that an online “retreat” would be developed to replace the annual overnight retreat for past and current MGAEC members. The MGAEC members would put forward a time and date for a 3 or 4 hour session and staff would provide a draft schedule.

4.2.3 Graduate coursework student concerns

Held over.

5. Membership

The elections were conducted for the remaining MGAEC office-bearer positions of Women’s Officer, Queer Officer and International Students’ Officer. Caitlyn acted as Returning Officer and explained the election process to the incoming committee members. Voting was carried out as per the MGA General Regulations via anonymous Zoom Polling.

Women’s Officer

Nominations were invited for the position of Women’s Officer. Ke Xiou self-nominated and Joel seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations Ke Xious was declared elected to the position of Women’s Officer.

Queer Officer

Nominations were invited for the position of Queer Officer. No nominations were received. It was agreed that the position would be advertised to the wider graduate student community.

International Students’ Officer

Nominations were invited for the position of International Students’ Officer. Joel self-nominated and was seconded by Sam. There being no further nominations Joel Samu was declared elected to the position of International Students’ Officer.

Indigenous Students’ Officer

Nominations were invited for the position of Indigenous Students’ Officer. No nominations were received. It was agreed that the position would be advertised to the wider graduate student community.

Off-campus and DE Officer

Nominations were invited for the position of Off-campus and DE Officer. Ailsa self-nominated and was seconded by Elliot. There being no further nominations Ailsa Webb was declared elected to the position of International Students’ Officer.

The Executive Officer noted that she would meet individually with each MGAEC member to discuss relevant projects and organise introductions to key university staff, now that the office-bearer positions had been determined.

7. **Next meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting would be held by zoom at 4.00pm, Thursday 20 August 2020.

The meeting ended at 5.40pm.