

Meeting 07/2018

A meeting of the **Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) Executive Committee** was held during the MPAEC retreat, 11-12 August, 2018 at Peppers Moonah Links Resort, Mornington Peninsula

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MINUTES

Opened 5:30pm, Saturday 11 August 2018

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

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

1.2 Attendance

Present Eniola Ibraheem (Chair), Avinash Dahre, Jeane Freer, Roham Hosseini, Belle Lim, Dorothy Mak, Karan Mehta, Bec O'Connor, Robyn Oxley, Roy Rozario, Dev Singh, Ash Solanki, Chloe Tang, Roby Vota, Emily Xue, Philip Zheng
In attendance Jenny Reeder, Jessica Van Gent, Rhian Adlam, Caroline Barrow

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

No items were added to the agenda.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of MPAEC June meeting 06/18 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of the July MPAEC meeting 06/2018 be confirmed.

Moved: Robyn Oxley

Seconded: Devendra Singh

Carried.

2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

Noted.

3.2 Office-bearer reports

Further to the tabled reports, the following issues were raised:

Karan Mehta, Coursework Education Officer

Karan informed the committee that Monash University were attempting to change their Withdrawn Incomplete policy by tightening the eligibility criteria. He noted that the MPA was working with MSA and MONSU to strongly advocate against these changes. To date, most of the MSO-suggested changes had been incorporated and it was hoped these would be ratified at the next LTC meeting.

Avinash Dahre, Caulfield Campus Rep and Access & Equity Officer

Avinash encouraged MPAEC members to attend his event on Caulfield campus for Indian Independence day, hosted by the MPA in the MPA lounge. Avinash also inquired about the possibility of the MPA having an Instagram page. It was noted that the communications team had a busy schedule at the moment which included maintaining two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter), but that other social media platforms were always being considered, subject to having the staff resources to maintain those platforms.

The committee agreed that it would be useful for the MPA to have an Instagram account. It was determined that the MPA communications team would investigate the feasibility of creating and maintaining an Instagram social media account.

Devendra Singh, General Representative

Devendra noted that Study Melbourne could be used as a funding source for MPA-hosted international/cultural events.

Robyn Oxley, Indigenous Officer

Robyn announced that she had been successful in her application to attend the Aurora indigenous study tour of the US and UK to talk about indigenous representation in universities in October/November this year. The committee extended their congratulations. She was also planning to attend the annual NATSIPA conference, held in Canberra in September. It was noted that if any committee members were interested in learning about the national body of postgraduate indigenous students, they could find more information on the NATSIPA website <http://natsipa.edu.au/>.

Ash Solanki, Women's officer

Ash noted that she had met with the MPA Caulfield Campus Manager to discuss the best way to get in contact with women postgraduates. It was decided that a item would be placed in the MPA newsletter introducing Ash and asking for women postgraduates to contact her with ideas and issues that should be addressed.

On a separate note, Ash informed members that her course was costing \$17,000 per semester and yet had only four contact hours per week over a 10 week semester. The hours had recently been reduced from six hours per week over a 12 week semester, while the cost had risen. Ash questioned the value for money on her own course and was interested to know whether this was the case for postgraduates enrolled in other fee-paying postgraduate courses. A general discussion ensued and it was agreed that before this could be pursued, more concrete information would need to be collected in order to understand the scope of the problem and the level of discontent among the GPG cohort.

Belle Lim, Parkville Campus Representative

Belle updated the committee on CISA, noting that they had engaged an external auditor to review their financials, and she offered to update the committee when the report was

completed. Devendra noted in response to this that CISA had changed its auditor three times in the past financial year. He requested that Belle clarify with CISA the date of the audit. Eniola agreed to email CISA to ask them to disclose where their funding was coming from and provide details on their current audit. Once all information had been received the MPAEC would review their continued affiliation with CISA.

It was proposed:

That the CISA funding situation be clarified prior to the September MPAEC meeting so a decision could be made regarding the MPA's continued affiliation with CISA.

Moved: Devendra Singh

Seconded: Jeane Freer

Carried

[Abstained: Dorothy Mak]

3.3 Staff report

Noted.

3.4 Financial report

Held over.

3.5 MPAEC meeting attendance records

Noted. An adjustment was made to the record to reflect that Emily had submitted an apology to the July meeting.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 Fares Fair campaign

The Fares Fair campaign had built up a lot of momentum in recent months due to the upcoming state elections. The MPA had advertised the campaign in its newsletter and on social media. The majority of the campaigning had been coordinated by GSA (Melbourne University), thus it was agreed by the committee that the MPA should take a more active interest in the campaign. The following committee members expressed interested in participating in a campaign subcommittee: Devendra (Chair), Roy, Philip, Roham.

It was noted that the next Fares Fair event was a "Craftivism afternoon" on Thursday 23 August at 4pm in the CBD. The subcommittee agreed to consider the MPA undertaking a similar style of event and creating T-shirts to promote the activity. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to the campaign to have a PTV hub established at the Monash Clayton and Caulfield campuses.

Devendra noted that he had spoken to a staff member at Study Melbourne who suggested that PTV hubs enabled the provision of detailed information on international student PTV spends; information which could help the Fares Fair campaign.

4.1.2 Report on CISA conference

Noted.

4.2 General business

4.2.1 Off-campus position on MPAEC

Bec raised the idea of the committee including a representative position for off-campus and distance education students. She believed it was important that this cohort had a voice on the committee. The committee were informed about the extensive network of casual staff, events and support services that the MPA currently offered to the off-campus cohorts located in research facilities around Melbourne. It was noted that it was more challenging for the MPA to provide meaningful support and services to the distance education and online postgraduates. The committee felt that provided they continued to correctly identify the issues and needs of this cohort, it was possible for the current MPAEC structure to effectively represent them rather than establishing an additional representative position. This was true for many specific cohorts who did not have a direct OB position on the committee, such as faculties, schools, and part-time; clearly not all sectors could be directly represented on the MPAEC. It was noted that if a new position were to be agreed on, a motion would need to go through an AGM for it to be actioned. It was agreed that this issue should be discussed further by the committee.

4.2.2 Budget amendments for approval

An amendment to the events budget would be tabled at the next MPAEC meeting. This year the MPA had received over 26 group grants requests and would require additional funding to accept all new group requests. It was proposed that additional funds were moved into this budget line to allow more postgraduates to benefit from the group grants initiative.

That \$10,000 from the MPA staff salary budget line be moved to the MPA Group Grants budget line.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Seconded: Karan Mehta
Carried.

5. Membership

No business.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting would be held in September at a time and date to be determined by member availability. An availability sheet would be sent around for the week of Monday 10 September. The September meeting would incorporate the MPA Annual Council meeting which would provide an opportunity for the committee to hear from a broader cross-section of the postgraduate community by including all MPA and university-appointed postgraduate representatives on university committees.

The meeting was declared closed at 6:39pm.