

Meeting 11/2018

A meeting of the **Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) Executive Committee** was held from 1:00pm to 3:00pm on Monday 3 December 2018 in Building 4, Parkville-5-505-Large Meeting Room, Parkville campus.

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MINUTES

The meeting opened at 1:12pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

We the MPAEC would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land.

1.2 Attendance

Present: Robyn Oxley (Chair), Devendra Singh, Avi Dahre (left at item 4.1.5), Roby Vota (left at item 4.1.5), Belle Lim, Jeane Freer (via Zoom), Roy Rozario (via Zoom), Ash Solanki (via Zoom, left at item 4.1), Claire Nicholls (via Zoom), Bec O'Connor (via Zoom), Dorothy Mak (via Zoom),
In attendance: Jenny Reeder, Janice Boey, Jessica Van Gent, Sunshine Kamaloni (Via Zoom)
Observers: Chris Titford, Cheng Sun (PPA President)
Apologies: Karan Mehta, Chloe Tang, Eni Ibraheem

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

The following items were added to the agenda

- 4.1.6 Credentialing of CAPA ACM delegates – Jenny Reeder
- 5.1 Final meeting – Robyn Oxley
- 5.2. Positions for cooption – Jessica Van Gent

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of MPAEC November meeting 10/18 for confirmation

Two amendments were noted: change of Queer conference name to 'Better Together'; and change of document title from 'Agenda' to 'Minutes'.

It was moved:

That the amended minutes of the November MPAEC meeting 10/2018 be confirmed.

Moved: Devendra Singh
Seconded: Roham Hosseini
Carried.

2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

All reports were held over to February 2019 meeting.

4. Business

4.1 Business

4.1.1 Overview of MPA services

Jan Boey, MPA Student Experience Manager, provided an overview of the services and activities the MPA provides to Parkville postgraduates.

4.1.2 Overview of Parkville campus student support

Chris Titford, Senior Student Experience Officer from the Faculty of Pharmacy provided an overview of the services the University provides to postgraduates. Chris stated that his role was to deliver and activate student experience on Parkville campus. He runs key faculty events, is a faculty contact for student organisations, and advocates for the faculty/campus to central University committees. He noted that he is involved in the organisation of events including the undergraduate orientation, Summerfest/winterfest, careers expos, the undergraduate peer mentoring program, as well as other university events such as R U OK? Day and D&I week.

Chris mentioned that while the Monash Connect team and the counselling service operated on campus full-time, many other university central services were either not present on campus at all, or attended campus infrequently.

There was discussion around the Parkville population, which was only 10% international. The university planned to double the capacity of postgraduate teaching and research.

Chris was currently working on: SSAF project funding; sustainability projects; and the improved recognition of diverse staff and students through the creation of more safe spaces and non-gendered toilets.

Chris acknowledged Cheng's efforts on behalf of the PPA.

4.1.3 Overview of PPA services

Cheng Sun, PPA President spoke about the Parkville campus, noting that it was a very unique campus comprising only one faculty. The faculty has four departments, there are 75 honours students, 190 interns (ITP) and approximately 200 PhD students.

Postgraduates in separate schools tend not to mix with one another so the aim of PPA social events is to bring everyone together. PPA generally run 2 events per month, with the most popular events being those with free food.

This year there was a Faculty review which the PPA actively participated in.

Cheng raised concerns around supervision issues with the view that supervisors should be provided with training. It was noted that Monash already had a comprehensive training program for supervisors so the issue might be about the application of the regulations and requirements by supervisors. Cheng was encouraged to refer individual students with supervisory issues to speak with the MPA advocate during one of their regular visits to the campus. Systemic issues could be raised with the MPA reps on GRC.

Cheng also noted the following concerns: the increased difficulty in attracting committee members to the PPA; more advertising of MPA services on Parkville campus to Parkville postgraduates was required; and PPA were negotiating more office and storage space for the organisation.

Roby requested that PPA also work on providing services to the Queer population, and offered his assistance in that regard.

4.1.4 Mental Health program

Jeane spoke to her draft program for addressing mental health concerns among postgraduates. She stressed that this was a really exciting opportunity for the MPA to provide mental health services to students. The program was aimed at practical actions that individuals and partners could do themselves. Monash was using the Amigo app to join students together – she believed the MPA could set up a similar IT/tech-based approach which would be self-sustaining and not require much staff time to run.

Other suggestions includes: providing a list of Mental Health apps and books currently available; establishing an eating club for postgraduates to cook together; approaching MGRO to allocate MyDevelopment points to those who facilitate the mental health events.

It was agreed that the success of any program rested largely on a successful advertising campaign. The MPA needed to get the message across that caring for yourself is a positive thing that you do when you come to Monash Uni.

Roby noted that MADA has a Wellbeing Officer in the faculty. The MPA could coordinate their efforts with faculty staff already working in this space.

Robyn called for expressions of interest to form a subcommittee to fine-tune and assist in implementing the program: Jeane and Avi expressed interest. It was suggested that Chloe and Ash may also be interested. Staff would be responsible for organising the subcommittee. Dorothy offered to assist after graduation in a voluntary role.

4.1.5 WeChat

It was explained that while Chinese students sign up for the MPA newsletter, they don't necessarily engage through the MPA facebook page, but instead prefer to use WeChat. One reason for the popularity of WeChat is that when students return home to China during the break, they cannot always access facebook or their Monash emails due to government censorship. While this

may not be a problem for information about social events, it can be a serious problem if students are not able to access information about APCs or pending hearings.

It was agreed that the MPA would run a six month WeChat trial to increase awareness of the MPA advocacy services among Chinese international students. The Advocacy team would establish a WeChat account to publish regular (but not frequent) English language posts regarding information related to advocacy including accessing assistance, APCs, plagiarism, exam cheating, important dates and tips to avoid pitfalls. The account would also provide links to advocates, and encourage international students to seek assistance in times of need. No other MPA information would be posted on the site.

4.1.6 Credentialing of 2018 CAPA ACM delegates

The committee was advised that Devendra, Dorothy and Roy would attend the CAPA conference on behalf of the MPA. Natasha Abrahams, CAPA President and currently enrolled Monash postgraduate and previous MPA President, was also attending the conference (at CAPA's expense) and requested that the MPA credential her as part of the MPA contingent.

The committee discussed Natasha's request.

It was moved:

That Natasha be included as a member of the MPA credentialed delegation to the 2018 CAPA conference.

Moved: Robyn Oxley (Chair)

Carried.

5. Membership

No business.

6. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Caulfield campus in February 2019 at a time and date to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 2:44pm.