

Meeting 02/2019

A meeting of the **Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) Executive Committee**
Was held from 2:00pm to 4:00pm on Thursday 28 March 2019 in
Video conferencing room B01, basement, 24 Sports Walk, Clayton campus.

Jenny Reeder
MPA Executive Officer
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MINUTES

The meeting opened at 2:00pm

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MPAEC acknowledged and paid respects to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of the land on which the committee met.

1.2 Attendance

Present Robyn Oxley (chair), Avinash Dahre, Jeane Freer (left at 3.2), Karan Mehta, Sameer More, Cammi Murrup-Stewart, Roy Rozario, Dev Singh, Egor Skaletckii, Ash Solanki, Chloe Tang, Roby Vota
In attendance Janice Boey (from item 4.2.1), Zuzana Quinn, Jenny Reeder, Vicki Stevenson (from item 4.2.1), Kimberley Trahar, Jessica Van Gent
Apologies Belle Lim and Emily Xue
Absent Claire Nicholls

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

The following items were added:

- 4.2.6 International student scams (Avinash Dahre)
- 4.2.7 Donation to Indigenous Uni games (Robyn Oxley)

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of MPAEC February meeting 02/19 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of the February MPAEC meeting 01/2019 be confirmed.

Moved: Devendra Singh
Seconded: Roy Rozario
Carried.

2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

Robyn's report was noted. She referred to the negotiations with the undergraduate student bodies about the amount of postgraduate funding going to each to cover use of generic services. In the past, the undergraduate bodies had received substantial

postgraduate funds without having to account for how those funds were spent. Postgraduates had indicated to the MPA that they wanted more funding channelled to MPA activities and less channelled to the undergraduates. Postgraduates valued access to clubs and societies run by the undergraduates, so the MPA wanted an agreement that would ensure continued access to this single service.

Robyn highlighted that a funding agreement had been reached with MONSU Caulfield, who had acknowledged the nature of the changing student population and its effects on the funding model. As a result of these discussions, the MPA and MONSU had a better understanding of each other's services and were in discussions about some joint events on Caulfield campus. Peninsula and Parkville funding agreements had been negotiated in December 2017, so the only outstanding agreement was with MSA, the representative body for Clayton undergraduates.

Robyn stated that there had been little progress with MSA, noting that multiple attempts had been made by Robyn to arrange a meeting but she had received no response from the MSA President or MSA Executive Officer. The MSA seemed to lack a genuine understanding of the facts and were unable to accept that the postgraduate population don't necessarily want the types of services they are offering. The DVC (Education) has now directed the MSA to attend at least two meetings with the MPA before Easter, in an effort to move the negotiations along.

3.2 Office-bearer reports

Jeane Freer, Peninsula Campus Representative

Jeane requested an update on who could be lobbied to get sit-stand desks in Struan House. It was noted that when these desks had been requested by another group through the SSAF Capital Development committee last year, the committee had not approved the request, stating that the provision of desks was a responsibility of the university and did not fall within the SSAF legislation.

Karan Mehta, Coursework Education Officer

Karen spoke to his tabled report. In the past month he had attended a number of meetings:

- The Learning and Teaching committee;
- The Caulfield Student Experience meeting; and
- The E-examinations meeting.

He highlighted that the MPA was going to have some practice examination laptops in the lounges for students to trial the system. He was also investigating if it was possible to get volunteers to provide peer support to those who wanted to trial the laptops.

3.3 Staff report & Semester 1 Orientation report

The reports were noted, and an additional page of the Orientation report tabled. Cammi informed members that CCD were keen to see more postgraduates on the AMiGO team. It was noted that there was now a postgraduate group as part of AMiGO, but as the MPA hadn't been invited to contribute to the original design or planning of the program, this was a late addition, and there had not been sufficient time to run a comprehensive recruitment campaign.

It was requested that the MPA consider the creation of an official LinkedIn account. It was noted that introducing additional forms of media required the staff resources to ensure that they were well run, including being regularly updated and monitored. At this stage the MPA was not in a position to take on additional communication channels.

3.4 Financial reports

The reports for January and February were noted.

3.5 Reports to university committees

Noted.

3.6 MPAEC meeting attendance records

Noted.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 Report from Queer Collaborations conference attendee

Alex Nguyen's report from his MPA-sponsored attendance at the 2018 Queer Conference was noted. Roby raised concerns that the conference was very undergraduate-focused and appeared to show a lack of inclusivity and separation between LGBTIQ groups. The committee expressed reluctance to send queer postgraduates to the event in the future. Jessica Van Gent noted that Alex's sentiments were similar to those expressed by one of the 2017 attendees and she would send the 2017 reports to Roby to consider. Roby noted that the Better Together conference attended in January was very inclusive, and recommended that the MPA consider this as the primary opportunity for queer students instead of the Queer Conference.

4.1.2 Mental health program

Discussed after item 2.2.

Jenny provided an overview of the proposed program highlighting that the concept of "It takes 21 days to change a habit" was used as an underlying message to give the program a week-by-week focus. The committee were invited to comment on the proposal. Jeane noted a few pertinent issues:

- Safer communities should allow people to bring buddies with them;
- HDR support needs to be intellectual support more so than social;
- Encourage MPA/Wholefoods collaboration (cooking classes, shopping classes).

The committee were positive about the program. The MPA staff aimed to roll out the program towards the end of semester one when the MPA reduces the number of coursework events due to exams, but which was a good time for HDRs.

4.1.3 MPA name change

The MPA name change was again brought to the committee for discussion. It was noted that while the committee could decide not to change the organisation's name, the change in nomenclature within the university meant that the name of MPA was looking outdated. If the decision was made to change the name it could be done at the MPA AGM (9 May, 2019), otherwise an SGM would need to be called. The change would take immediate effect on

the website, electronic communications and new print jobs, but all other changes would be rolled in gradually as current merchandise and stock was run down. There was a general consensus that if the term “graduate” was being used by universities across Australia, it was surprising that the University of Melbourne was the only postgraduate association that had changed its name. The item was set to be discussed at the April MPAEC meeting.

4.1.4 Update on funding agreements with undergrads

As noted in the President’s report, the funding negotiation with MONSU Caulfield had been completed. MSA is the only undergraduate association with whom the MPA do not have an agreement.

4.1.5 CAPA anniversary

MPAEC members were invited to attend the MPA-hosted CAPA 40th birthday celebrations which were to be held on Monday 1 April from 4:30pm – 6pm in the MADA gallery space on Caulfield campus.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 Staff contract renewals

The contracts of MPA Advocates Ying Xu and James Breheny were due to end in May 2019. Due to their excellent performance in these roles, it was requested that their positions be made continuing appointments from their original contract end dates. It was moved:

That Ying Xu and James Breheny be offered permanent employment in their respective advocate positions.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Seconded: Devendra Singh
Carried.

4.2.2 Rep for Fares Fair working group

Devendra suggested that the MPA continue its Fares Fair campaigning by creating an online form which students could use to record each instance in which they were late to university due to public transport delays. This could then be tallied and a total cost to students during the April Construction Blitz be used for lobbying purposes.

4.2.3 MPAEC elections

It was noted that the MPAEC nomination period for the 2019/2020 committee had now opened. All MPAEC members were invited to reapply and to spread the word to other interested postgraduates. A series of information sessions on what was involved in being as MPAEC member had been planned for every campus and major off-campus site. The nomination period closed at 5pm on 9 April 2019.

4.2.4 MPAEC meeting schedule

It was agreed that the MPAEC would move to a pre-decided set of meeting dates and times on a semester basis. This would be coordinated by the HR &

Finance Officer after release of the semester timetables, twice a year. This would not apply to the February, June, July and December meetings.

4.2.5 Debit card approval for new staff member

Due to the hiring of a new MPA staff member and to increase the ease of purchasing for events, it was moved:

That the MPAEC approve the issuing of a debit card operating from the MPA account BSB 033 181 A/C 345 569 to Vicki Stevenson, Events Coordinator.

Moved: Devendra Singh

Seconded: Roy Rozario

Carried.

4.2.6 International student scams

Avinash informed the committee that there were currently a number of official-looking scams targeting international students. Students were contacted via calls and emails from people suggesting they were from the ATO or Visa services. This scam was causing distress among the international student population as well as setting up a situation for potential identity theft. Avi requested that the MPA distribute cautionary information about these scams to postgrads via our digital platforms, our newsletter and our screens, plus flyers for distribution at upcoming events. The Comms and Marketing team will look into this, and will contact Safer communities to ensure the information delivered is correct.

4.2.7 Donation to Indigenous Uni Games

The Indigenous University Games are an annual sporting competition for indigenous university students. Robyn requested that the MPA assist in sponsoring the Monash team which will have five of the 15 participants as postgraduates. It was suggested that \$4,000 be allocated towards this event. The event is currently funded by the participating students, with some funds provided by Monash Sport, David Copolov and other student organisations. The MPAEC were keen to support the initiative and suggested that the attending postgraduates could be given MPA merchandise and have a group photo taken. It was moved:

That the MPA donate \$4000 to the Monash University Indigenous games team for the 2019 competition.

Moved: Robyn Oxley

Seconded: Roy Rozario

Carried.

4.2.8 Additional items

Devendra noted that he was running for University Council.

Sameer requested that the MPA lounges had a flyer near the door with information on how to register and what to do if the registration doesn't work.

5. Membership

No business.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting is to be held in conjunction with the bi-annual MPA Council meeting. The meeting will be held on Clayton campus on Thursday 18 April from 2:00 – 4:00pm.

The meeting was closed at 3:10pm.