

Meeting 04/2019

A meeting of the **Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) Executive Committee** was held from 12:00pm to 2:00pm on Wednesday 29 May 2019 in the MPA Boardroom, C2, Caulfield campus.

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MINUTES

The meeting was opened at 1:10pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

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 unceded land.

1.2 Attendance

Present Robyn Oxley (Chair), Avinash Dahre, Belle Lim, Karan Mehta (from 4.2.2), Sameer Moore, Roy Rozario, Cammi Murrup-Stewart, Devendra Singh, Egor Skaletckii, Roby Vota, Emily Xu
In attendance Janice Boey, Zuzana Quinn, Jenny Reeder, Jessica Van Gent
Observers Georgia Dudgeon, Nikhil Kathe, Jessica Lim, Pooja Bhageria (Caulfield Campus rep – from 4.2.1)
Apologies Jeane Freer (Prior leave), Ashwariya Solanki

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- 4.2.8 Security concerns for international students (Zuzana Quinn)
- 4.2.9 Seminar offerings by MGRO (Cammi Murrup-Stewart)
- 4.2.10 MPA Returning Officer Report 2019

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of MPAEC March meeting 04/19 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of the April MPAEC meeting 03/2019 be confirmed.

Moved: Robyn Oxley

Seconded: Cammi Murrup-Stewart

Carried.

2.2 Minutes of AGM

Noted.

2.3 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

Robyn spoke to her report. She highlighted that negotiations with MSA regarding the amount of postgraduate funding to be passed from the MPA to MSA had now been referred to senior Monash staff. The MPA was disappointed with the unwillingness of MSA to negotiate in good faith, unlike other undergraduate student associations where agreement had been reached with Peninsula, Parkville and Caulfield campuses.

Robyn also noted her recent visit to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at Oxford University. The SOAS have begun decolonising the curriculum and learning spaces throughout Oxford University. Robyn gave a presentation on the the MPA and its operations. The response from staff and students was overwhelmingly positive and the information very timely, given SOAS is in the process of setting up their own association. The SOAS were particularly impressed that the MPA was student-driven, with self-determination at the core of MPA business. They praised the MPA as an innovator in the decolonisation of institutions.

3.2 Office-bearer reports

The written reports were noted.

Roby Vota, Queer Officer

Roby added to his report that he had received an invitation from the Clayton undergraduate queer representatives for MSA to coordinate both the postgraduate and undergraduate student representatives attending the Queer Collaborations 2019 conference. Roby thanked the MSA for the offer, explaining that the postgraduate queer community had decided that they would no longer send representatives to this conference, due to the conference being very undergraduate-focussed and poorly run. Instead, the MPA would send queer representatives to other conferences that had been well received by the postgraduate attendees. He also noted that IDAHOBIT was the previous week, where the main University event was to be hosted by the Social Inclusion team on the Friday. Disappointingly, the event had been cancelled at late notice without giving stakeholders enough time to organise their own replacement events. Roby raised his concerns regarding the handling of the event at the Social Inclusion committee, and requested it also be raised at the next SEN.

Karan Mehta, Coursework Education Officer

Karan informed the committee that the MPA proposal to allow for additional unpaid Family Violence leave for all coursework postgraduates and undergraduates had been passed at the most recent LTC meeting. He also noted that a network of faculty-based postgraduate education representatives was being formed, so that these postgraduate reps could connect with the LTC rep.

3.3 Staff report

Noted.

3.4 Profit and loss reports March and April 2019

Noted.

3.5 MPAEC meeting attendance records

Noted.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 NATSIPA conference

The MPA was successful in their bid to host the NATSIPA conference on Caulfield campus in 2019. The conference will be held from 24-25 October 2019. Robyn reported that she would work with NATSIPA and liaise with Jan Boey and Yulendj on funding and logistics.

4.1.2 Audited report for 2018

Noted.

4.1.3 Updated constitution

Noted.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 CISA and NOWSA conferences

Expressions of interest were requested from committee members interested in attending either of two conferences:

- CISA 2019. July 15 – 19. Perth, WA.
 - Belle (CISA) and Dev (CAPA) would be attending as representatives of their relevant national organisations.
 - EOIs: Egor
- NOWSA 2019. July 22 – 26. Sydney, NSW.
 - EOIs: Belle, Georgia, Cammi, Ash

The incoming committee would be emailed regarding their interest in attending as well.

4.2.2 Equity projects

The committee were invited to comment on a proposal that the MPA create an equity fund to assist low income graduates, those with carer responsibilities and those with disabilities. The suggestions included assisting with childcare costs for HDRs who were primary carers and had the opportunity to attend a conference. Cammi expressed interest in assisting MPA staff in developing the options for graduates with disabilities. Egor also liked the idea and offered to work on the project and liaise with DSS, for whom he works.

4.2.3 MPA staff positions

Two new staff positions were proposed:

- Marketing Assistant. 0.6 FTE, SUE 2/3, 2-year fixed-term contract. Caulfield Campus, reporting to the Communications and Marketing officer.
- Research Advocate. Full-time, SUE 4, 2-year fixed-term contract. Clayton campus, reporting to the Senior Advocate.

The tabled position descriptions were noted and discussed.

It was moved:

That the MPA creates two new staff positions, a 0.6FTE Marketing Assistant, and a full-time Research Advocate.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Seconded: Karan Mehta
Carried.

4.2.4 Study Melbourne projects

The availability of Study Melbourne project grants were highlighted to the committee, and members encouraged to think of events which could be funded through the grants. Belle noted that in her role as CISA Women's Officer she had successfully applied for and received funding from Study Melbourne which had been beneficial for her events. The committee agreed that while the funding targeted events for international students, it would be good if the projects were inclusive of both domestic and international students. Committee members had until August to come up with proposals.

4.2.5 MPA responses to Academic Progress changes

Noted. The Executive Officer acknowledged and thanked Zuzana and Kristy for preparing the MPA responses to the myriad of APC policies.

4.2.6 MPA submission on external advocacy

Zuzana spoke to this item explaining that the MPA was concerned about the rise of external advocacy bodies charging students for assistance. The issue has been raised at GRC and LTC, as well as with the PVC (Student Experience). The MPA communications team will develop a strategy to highlight the issue to the graduate community.

4.2.7 MPA submission on postgraduate welfare Quinn, Senior

Noted.

4.2.8 Security Concerns for international postgraduates

Zuzana noted that recently, the MPA advocacy team had seen an increase in students who reported cases of predatory behaviour. Examples included the recent Visa validity scam, where students received a phone call purportedly from the government telling them that they will be deported if they do not pay large sums of money to resecure their visa. In the past few days, a new concern had arisen around an unidentified male offering accommodation specifically targeting Asian female students. The MPA has reported all concerns to the Safer Community Unit and will work closely with the University to address these issues, and raise awareness within the graduate community.

4.2.9 Seminar offerings by MGRO

Cammi explained that she had had been approached by a student who believed there were gaps in the services that MGRO were offering to graduates, specifically in the area of post-study employability and academic jobs and grants. Currently, MGRO does not provide workshops or guidance in this area, and refers students to their supervisor. Cammi requested the MPA raise this issue with MGRO, or look to provide their own seminars if MGRO will not. The MPA staff will look into this further, and raise the issue with the relevant MGRO staff or at the GRC.

4.2.10 MPA Returning Officer Report 2019

Noted. The committee thanked Kristy for an excellent job as the Returning Officer for the MPAEC 2019/2020 elections, and Jan and the Comms & Marketing team for their promotion and marketing of the nomination and election periods.

5. Next meeting

It was announced that the next meeting would be held on Clayton campus in June at a time to be confirmed. Both outgoing and incoming members would be invited to the June meeting, which would be the last official meeting for the 2018/2019 MPAEC members.

The meeting closed at 1:12pm.