

Meeting 09/2019

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee**
was held from 2:00pm – 4:00pm on Thursday 12 September, 2019
in the MGA meeting room, Clayton campus.

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MINUTES

The meeting was opened 2:15pm

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

Present: Pooja Bhageria (videoconference), Julie Dao, Georgia Dudgeon, Nikhil Kathe, Jessica Lu (videoconference), Cammi Murrup-Stewart, Robyn Oxley (Chair), Roy Rozario, Egor Skaletckii (left at 4.1.2), Roby Vota, Xinxin Yang
Apology: Allison Ho, Travis Hong, Caitlyn Neale, Ash Solanki
In attendance: Janice Boey, Jenny Reeder, Jessica Fimmel

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

The following items were added to the agenda: 4.3.5 2019 budget review; 4.3.6 Disability OB role; 4.3.7 MGA Festival.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of MGAEC meeting 08/19 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting 08/2019 be confirmed.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Seconded: Roy Rozario
One abstention.
Moved.

2.2 Action sheet

The action sheet was noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

Robyn spoke to her report encouraging MGAEC members to attend the CAPA ACM and noting the MGA's support of the Climate Action Strike. Robyn highlighted the success of the MGA's SSAF campaign to date in educating graduates about where their SSAF was going.

3.2 Office-bearer reports

All office bearer reports were noted. In addition, members spoke to their reports on the following matters:

Egor Skaletckii, Coursework Education Officer

Egor noted that he was interested in creating a graduate student group focussed on sustainability. Interested committee members were invited to assist Egor with creating a group plan to be presented to the MGAEC for approval.

Cammi Murrup-Stewart, Indigenous Officer

Cammi highlighted the success and overwhelmingly positive responses from the Indigenous graduate students who attended the Indigenous Writing Retreat recently. The group were keen to see this retreat run again next year. Cammi noted that the initiative had been collaboratively funded by the MGA, the Office of the PVC (Indigenous Engagement) and Gukwonderuk.

Roby Vota, Queer Officer

Roby spoke to his report. He highlighted that all MGA Queer events were for Queer-identifying students and their Allies, and encouraged the committee to attend the upcoming Bisexuality+ workshop on Monday 23 September at Caulfield. Roby noted that the second week in October is Diversity and Inclusion week at Monash Uni, and MGA Queer would be running a Queer Game Makeover event for all students.

3.3 Staff report

The staff report was noted.

3.4 Profit and loss report July 2019

The July Profit and Loss statement was noted.

3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records

The MGAEC meeting attendance record was noted.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 CAPA ACM attendance

The following MGAEC members had expressed interest in attending the CAPA ACM and conference being held in Melbourne in December 2019: Robyn, Egor, Roy, Jess, Roby, Cammi, Ash, Nikhil and Pooja. As the MGA was co-hosting the event, there were seven tickets available to the MGA at no cost. Additional tickets would be purchased for any other interested MGAEC members as this was seen as a great opportunity for members to meet with graduate students from other university graduate associations to discuss common interests, such as the MET transport concession campaign, and to share ideas.

4.1.2 MGA funding dispute

The situation regarding the SSAF funding dispute with the university was being escalated via a social media campaign. The MGA was taking care to

present the facts and to keep the conversation focussed on the evidence, which speaks for itself. It was noted that unfortunately decisions from senior management were not always based on evidence but sometimes made for political purposes. The response from the graduate community had been overwhelmingly in support of the MGA with many graduate students extremely angry about the inequity of the matter and the university's lack of logic in weighing up the evidence. The MGAEC committed to the MGA exhausting all internal avenues before considering taking the campaign external to the university, in the hope that a fair and sensible outcome could be reached prior to that point.

4.1.3 Retreat priorities

The document containing all issues raised at the MGAEC retreat was noted. The MGAEC were encouraged to review the document and email Jenny with their feedback. Once feedback had been received, a shared document would be created for all committee members to:

1. Identify areas where concerns/suggestions can be addressed reasonably easily and/or /quickly; and
2. Identify the top three areas of concern/suggestion for each topic to create an action list for the office0-bearers to work through with the assistance of staff.

4.1.4 Advisory groups

With the recent creation of an MGAEC advisory group structure advertised through the MGA website and social media promotion, MGAEC members reported having received expressions of interest from graduates to assist in event planning and address issues. Georgia noted she had already been contacted by five graduate students and had scheduled the first Women's Officer advisory group meeting. The MGAEC were reminded to check their role accounts for emails from interested students.

4.1.5 Email motion on SSAF funding negotiations

An email motion and explanatory material was circulated. Fourteen members responded by the closing date and the motion was carried unanimously on 16 September.

It was moved:

That the attached text is used to inform the postgraduate community about the SSAF funding situation and to rally their support.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Carried.

It was noted that the document had received minor amendments after the motion had passed, in response to member suggestions for edits. The changes were presented to the MGAEC who were in support of the additional adjustments.

4.1.6 Report on MGA Monkey Mia trip

A report on the MGA outdoor trip for graduate students to Monkey Mia was noted. The report outlined the itinerary and included the responses from participants which were uniformly positive, for example:

“ There were numerous highlights—creating new friendships, the meals we made as a group, interacting with animals at the National park, and the stops at the gorgeous coastlines. It was great that the tour was not limited to viewing just pretty sceneries. Visiting the Pinnacle Desert, the trek in Kalbarri, and the HMAS Sydney II memorial made me learn so much more about Australia”

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 Postgraduate representation paper

The final version of the Graduate representation paper was noted, after a draft had been circulated to the MGAEC earlier this year. The paper would now be distributed to Faculty deans and other relevant staff, and placed on the MGA website for access by the graduate student community.

4.2.2 Information on Caulfield campus

The PVC (Student Experience) had requested information from the MGA on their Caulfield campus activities, to be included in the PVC’s presentation to University Council. The information provided to the PVC (Education) was noted.

4.2.3 MGA data on APC processes

The MGAEC were presented a confidential report on the MGA’s APC processes that included changes to internal practices.

4.2.4 Feedback on University Draft Retention Strategy

The feedback provided to the university on the University’s Retention Strategy was noted. The committee expressed concern that although the strategy was referred to as a university-wide strategy, only graduate coursework students had been included and there was no consideration of graduate research students.

4.3.5 Budget review

An amended budget was tabled. After review, the committee moved an additional \$760 into the CAPA ACM line item and \$10,000 into the MGA group grant budget. With the noted amendments, it was moved:

That the updated 2019 MGAEC budget be approved as noted.

Moved: Robyn Oxley
Carried.

It was suggested that should there be additional funds, the MGA could consider hiring a student disability researcher, to assist with the implementation of the new office-bearer role.

4.3.6 Disability office-bearer role

Cammi agreed to hold the role of Disability Officer until the committee membership was at a level that would enable a cooption to take place without

exceeding the membership maximum of 15. A role email account would be created and an advisory group would be advertised. Additionally, it was noted that the Monash University Disability Services had signed up to the GradWISE program. GRADwise is a program run by WISE employment, a not-for-profit government-funded organisation specialising in assisting students with disabilities to find employment. The program is currently running in several other Victorian universities.

4.3.7 MGA Festival

The MGA festival to launch the association's new name would be held in week 11 of semester (14 October – 18 October) across the main graduate student locations as noted:

- Monday 14 October: Peninsula campus
- Tuesday 15 October: AMREP, MMC, Parkville campus
- Wednesday 16 October: Clayton campus
- Thursday 17 October: Caulfield campus
- Friday 18 October: Law chambers

Members were encouraged to volunteer to help staff the stalls.

5. Membership

Nominations were invited for the position of Disability Officer on the MGAEC. Robyn nominated Cammi Murrup-Stewart who accepted the nomination. Roy seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations. The committee elected Cammi unopposed to the newly-created office-bearer role of MGA Disability Officer.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting is to be held on Caulfield campus in October at a time to be confirmed.

The meeting was closed at 3:25pm.