

Meeting 04/2024

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** was held from 2:00pm – 4:00pm, Friday 24 May 2024, at MGA Meeting Room, Clayton campus and by zoom.

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 2:00pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MGAEC President 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 Attendance & Apologies

Present: Saham Hettiarachchi, Jonathan Robberts, Aakash Saraf, Harshita Rathi, Rachel Lee, Ummatul Siddique, Phil Kairns, Calvin Chow, Ying-Xian Evelyn Lai, Arathy Kurup, Kritika Arora, Runali Patil.

Apologies: Mahima Chowdhury, Grace Bennetts and Jenny Reeder

In attendance: Charlie Li, HR Manger
Zuzana Quinn, Senior Advocate
Janice Boey, Acting Executive Officer
James Breheny, Advocate
Sarah Murphy, Advocate
ShinYi Chin, Marketing and Comms Manager
Ying Xu, Advocate
Leilani Hatfield, Student Engagement Officer

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

Item 4.2.4 “Sponsorship Officer” was added by Aakash Saraf.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of meeting 4/2024 March for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting April 04/2024 be confirmed.

Moved: Calvin Chow

Seconded: Jonathan Robberts

Carried.

2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

The President's report was noted.

3.2 Members' reports

Members' reports were noted.

3.3 Staff report

The staff report was noted.

3.4 March 2024 profit and loss reports

Noted with comment. Some events which were previously cut due to budgetary constraints had been reinstated due to the anticipated savings from the staff restructure.

3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records

The MGAEC meeting attendance records were noted as true and accurate.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 AGM

The MGA AGM was held by zoom on 16 May 2024. The only concern raised by constituents was the Federal Government's intention to change the TVG visa conditions; an issue on which the MGA was currently lobbying.

4.1.2 Migration Strategy Impact Report

Saham summarised the MGA's Migration report. He had met with an MP recently to discuss draft federal regulations and their impact on graduate students. The Home Affairs Minister said it was unlikely any proposals would be rolled back including the age limit & the visa length. The government's rationale was that graduate students didn't use TGV as a pathway to migration. The GO8 was still lobbying for a grandfather clause to exempt currently enrolled students from the newly introduced legislation but in the interim, Monash University was considering fast-track course completions for students likely to complete their courses before 30 June 2024, on a case-by-case basis. CAPA had not been active in this matter.

The response from Home Affairs was circulated to the committee. Discussion took place about further action the MGA could take, over and above the lobbying efforts to date. The committee felt it was worthwhile sending a letter to the opposition.

The committee also decided to send a second letter to Jason Clare (Federal Minister for Education) and Clare O'Neill (the Federal Minister for Home Affairs).

The MGAEC created a Visa Working Group. The following members responded to a call for interest: Umma, Arathy, Calvin, Jonathan and Saham.

4.1.3 Election regulations

A minor amendment was made to the MGA Election Regulations. Saham explained the purposes of the amendment.

It was moved:

That clause 5.14.4 of the MGA Election Regulations be amended to read “At no point prior to or after the declaration of results, will the vote count of individual candidates be made public or made available to other candidates.”

Moved: Arathy Kurup
Seconded: Aakash Saraf
Carried.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 MGA debit card for Marketing and Comms Manager

It was moved:

That Shinyi Chin, recently appointed as the MGA Marketing and Communications Manager, be granted an MGA debit card.

Moved: Ummatul Siddique
Seconded: Rachel Lee
Carried.

4.2.2 Student Visa Information Session

Ying Xu, MGA Advocate, introduced herself to the committee. Ying explained that she had recently completed a migration agent course. The MGA had plans to run a migration agency and space had been secured in the Clayton campus centre, with floorplans confirmed and renovations due to be completed in September. It was to be run as a pilot service for one year to gauge demand. Ying had scheduled a one hour information session on the student visa 500, in person and by zoom, at 3pm Tuesday 28 May, which was open to all students. An invitation was extended to MGAEC members to attend.

Ying also offered to run sessions for the committee on topics of particular interest. The committee requested a basic outline, flow chart or graphic of the visa process, to be prepared for the combined use of the MGAEC and students.

4.2.3 SSAF distribution

At a recent meeting, all the MSO Executive Officers discussed the idea of lobbying Monash University for an added percentage of SSAF. Currently all MSOs received 40% of the student SSAF from their own representative cohorts. There had been an increase in need and demand for consumables by students, and a sharp rise in the cost of goods and salaries. It was proposed that the MGA join with other MSOs and lobby for a 5 to 10% increase to their share of the SSAF, with the additional 5 to 10% to be taken from the capital development fund. The MGAEC was unanimous in supporting this lobbying effort.

4.2.4 Sponsorship Officer

Aakash spoke to this item. He noted that the MGA relied solely on the SSAF allocation from the University for its funding and therefore its existence. Aakash suggested sponsorships could be an income stream, akin to the proposed migration service. He proposed that a Sponsorship Officer position be created on the MGAEC.

Aakash agreed to draft a business plan and proposal and circulate it to the MGAEC for further discussion.

5. Membership matters

5.1 Cooption of member

There was a vacancy on the MGAEC. The June meeting would be the last meeting for this committee. With only one month prior to the new committee being inducted the committee felt it was not appropriate to fill the position at this time.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting would be held in June 2024 at a time and place to be confirmed by incoming and outgoing members' availability. The June meeting was the last meeting for the current MGAEC members. During the June meeting, the internal elections for the office-bearer positions for the incoming MGAEC members would be held. Only incoming members could participate in standing and voting for the new office-bearer positions.

The meeting closed at 4pm.