

Meeting 05/2022

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** was held from 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Monday 27 June 2022, in-person at H801, Level 8, Building H, Caulfield Campus. and by zoom.

MINUTES

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 Attendance

Present: Caitlyn Neale (Chair), Melinda Krebsz, Phil Cairns, Saham Hettiarachchi, Maddie Herath
Apologies: Elnaz Mokhtari, Karyn Low, Amir Abyaneh, David Nash
Observers: Incoming committee members - Maria Lammerding, Lily Wen, Sarah May, Rose Huang, Sonia Daga, Maggie Gendy, Anumanth Senthilkumar, Serra D'mello, Radhik Rammohan, Ken Chiu, Michael Lin, Annie Roys
In attendance: Jenny Reeder, Sandra Azavedo, Jessica Fimmel, Amy Barwick, Zuzana Quinn, James Breheny

Caitlyn noted that both incoming and outgoing committee members were present and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

No items were added.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of meeting 04/2022 for confirmation

There were no corrections to the minutes.

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC May meeting 04/2022 be confirmed.

Moved: Phil Cairns

Seconded: Saham Hettiarachchi

Held over.

2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

The President's report was noted. Caitlyn began by reminding members that this was her last meeting with the MGAEC, and thanked the outgoing committee members for their contributions, and the MGA staff for their commitment, expertise and support.

Caitlyn added a further update to her report on the issue of JD students' access to online lectures; after some pressure from the MGA and LSS the Law Faculty had recently agreed to place recordings of JD lectures online for all students to access. However JD electives had not been included so Caitlyn had recently escalated the matter to the DVC(Education), requesting that the Law Faculty's decision not to allow JD students access to recordings of electives be reconsidered, especially in light of the fact that many students were forced to isolate due to Covid. A response had not yet been received.

3.2 Members' reports

Written reports submitted by members were noted.

3.3 Staff report

It was noted that some of the MGA events had low attendance, and a concern was raised about whether these events were cost effective. It was explained that while the MGA ran some large scale events, such as the free lunches, other events catered to graduate students' desire to develop friendships with other graduate students. This sometimes meant having smaller numbers which allowed events to be structured in such a way as to enable students to make genuine connections with each other. The MGA research shows that many graduate students rate making social connections as a high priority, and they also want tailored events, where they can meet like-minded graduate students, eg other graduate parents, LGBTIQ+ graduates etc. Many of these regular small events run by the MGA were low-cost but provided very important opportunities for those attending and looking for social engagement.

3.4 May 2022 profit and loss report

The May profit and loss report was noted.

3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records

The MGAEC meeting attendance records were noted. Caitlyn reminded members that attending the monthly MGAEC meetings was an important responsibility of all members, and that their regular attendance enabled the association to remain functional.

3.6 MGA Sustainability report

Held over.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 MGA Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the MGA held on Thursday 19 May by zoom were noted by the committee.

4.1.2 MGA annual audit report

The annual audit report for the MGA for 2021 had been completed by external auditors and was noted by the committee.

4.1.3 MGA members' retreat

The committee was informed that the annual MGAEC retreat had been confirmed to be held at the Yarra Valley Lodge, with a departure on Friday 12 August, and return on Saturday 13 August. All outgoing and incoming MGAEC members had been invited, and further details would be provided closer to the event. All members were encouraged to attend as the retreat provided an opportunity for the committee to work together to plan the following year's activities, as well as including training sessions and the August MGAEC meeting.

4.1.4 MGA semester 2 orientation program

Members were presented with the plans for MGA orientation sessions and activities to be delivered across all four campuses. Incoming members in particular were encouraged to volunteer with sessions running on their own campuses, as a way to contribute to the events and to see the MGA orientation activities in action.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 MGA Hoodies

Members were reminded to collect an MGA hoodie, and encouraged to wear the hoodies around campus so they could be identified as MGAEC members as well as to promote the MGA.

4.2.2 MGA annual ball

It was announced that the ball would be held on Saturday 20 August at the Park Hyatt hotel in Melbourne. As part of their role on the MGAEC, outgoing and incoming committee members were eligible for one ticket each to attend the ball.

Additionally, the marketing team was seeking three MGAEC members (incoming or outgoing) to be part of the judging panel for the MGA competition asking students to submit in 25 words or less who they would bring to the ball and why. The prize was for two tickets to the MGA Annual Ball. Members were requested to indicate their interest in being considered as a panel member. Phil, Lily and Anumanth expressed interest.

4.2.3 MGA papers to GRC steering committee

The MGA had submitted two papers to GRC steering committee for consideration: one on extending the GRCA eligibility to students who had passed the 4 year candidature mark; and one requesting a relaxation of the requirement to fulfil on campus attendance requirements within the business week. Once considered by the steering committee, both requests would be forwarded to GRC for a final decision. The request to extend GRCA eligibility to 4.5 years had been attempted by the MGA over a year ago and refused. However, a recent change in GRC Chair had opened up the possibility of having this proposal successfully reconsidered.

4.2.4 MGA feedback on the APC process

The MGA advocacy team had provided feedback on the APC process with suggestions for improvement and submitted this document to Professor Rob Brooks, Academic Board Chair, as part of an APC review process being conducted by the University.

4.2.5 MGA response to Education Committee

Members noted the MGA response to proposed changes to supplementary assessments as tabled at Education Committee.

5. Elections of office-bearer positions for MGAEC 2022/23

It was announced that the elections for office-bearers would be run by the outgoing committee, where incoming members only could apply and participate in voting for all office-bearer positions, for the July 2022 to June 2023 term of office. Caitlyn acted as Returning Officer, assisted by staff members Jessica Fimmel and Amy Barwick.

The office-bearer elections were conducted in accordance with Clause 31 of the MGA Constitution.

President

The Chair called for nominations for the position of President. Phil Cairns nominated himself and was seconded by Maria Lammerding. Radhik Rammohan nominated himself and was seconded by Anumanth Senthilkumar. Candidates were invited to give a brief speech and were questioned by committee members. An anonymous vote was conducted and Radhik Rammohan was declared elected to the President's position.

Vice-President

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-President. Sonia Daga nominated herself and was seconded by Radhik Rammohan. There were no further nominations. Sonia Daga was declared elected to the Vice-President's position.

Research Education Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Research Education Officer. Saham Hettiarachchi nominated himself and was seconded by Anumanth Senthilkumar. There were no further nominations. Saham Senthilkumar was declared elected to the Research Education Officer's position.

Coursework Education Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Coursework Education Officer. Ken Chiu nominated himself and was seconded by Maggie Gendy. There were no further nominations. Ken Chiu was declared elected to the Coursework Education Officer's position.

Women's Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Women's Officer. Rose Huang nominated herself and was seconded by Maggie Gendy. Serra D'mello nominated herself and was seconded by Anumanth Senthilkumar. Candidates were invited to give a brief speech and were questioned by committee members. An anonymous vote was conducted and Serra D'mello was declared elected to the Women's Officer position.

Queer Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Queer Officer. Phil Cairns nominated himself and was seconded by Radhik Rammohan. There were no further nominations. Phil Cairns was declared elected to the Queer Officer's position.

International Students' Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of International Students' Officer. Maria Lammerding nominated herself and was seconded by Phil Cairns. Maggie Gendy nominated herself and was seconded by Ken Chiu. Michael Lin nominated himself and was seconded by Lily Wen. Anumanth Senthilkumar nominated himself and was seconded by Radhik Rammohan. Candidates were invited to give a brief speech and were questioned by committee members. An anonymous vote was conducted and the bottom two candidates were eliminated. A second anonymous vote was conducted and neither of the two remaining candidates (Anumanth Senthilkumar and Maggie

Gendy) achieved an absolute majority. After a brief discussion it was agreed to postpone the election of the International Students' Officer to the following MGAEC meeting.

Indigenous Students' Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Indigenous Students' Officer. There were no eligible nominees. It was determined to advertise to fill this position as soon as possible as the regulations allowed this position to be filled even in circumstances where doing so would take the membership over 15.

Off-campus and DE Officer

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Off-campus and DE Officer. There were no nominees. It was noted that this position could not be filled outside the 15 person membership. There were currently 14 members and the Peninsula Campus Representative position was vacant, which made a total of 15, so it was confirmed that this office-bearer position would not be considered a vacant position.

6. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in July at a date and time to be determined by the incoming committee.

The meeting closed at 4.05pm.