

## Meeting 10/2021

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** was held from 1.00pm – 2.00pm, Friday 26 November 2021, by zoom.

### MINUTES

Arjun announced that as Caitlyn was unable to attend the meeting he would act as Chair. As the meeting did not have quorum, all motions would be deferred to an email vote from the full committee.

#### 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       | Arjun Sanjeev (Chair), Philip Kairns, Nathalie Farah, Elnaz Mokhtari, Maddie Herath, Priyanka Nathani, Elliot Anderson. |
| Apologies     | Caitlyn Neale, Karyn Low, David Nash, Merve O’Keefe, Deven Kumar.   |
| In attendance | Janice Boey, Jenny Reeder, James Breheny.   |

##### 1.3 Consideration of the agenda

Three items were added: 4.2.4 Approval of MGA debit card for Lisa Falla; 4.2.5 Call for LOTY panel members; 4.2.6 CAPA AGM.

#### 2. Minutes and Action sheet

##### 2.1 Minutes 09/2021 for confirmation

There were no corrections to the minutes. The motion to confirm was deferred to an email vote.

##### 2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

#### 3. Reports

##### 3.1 President’s report

Held over.

##### 3.2 Members’ reports

Noted.

##### 3.3 Staff report

Noted. There was a discussion around activities and whether they would resume in person on campus. Janice informed committee members that there would be several on campus activities running over the next couple of months, including the after-exams party and the

social bubble program. It was explained that in 2022 MGA would resume their usual schedule of on campus events which included monthly free lunches, sports programs, trivia night and graduate ball. However a suite of virtual activities would also run as this catered to students who were studying by distance, as well as to those students enrolled through the international campuses of Monash.

#### **3.4 October 2021 profit and loss report**

Noted.

#### **3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records**

Noted.

### **4. Business**

#### **4.1 Business arising**

##### **4.1.1 MGA welfare assistance regulations**

The committee was satisfied with the draft MGA Welfare Assistance regulations and agreed to put them to an email vote.

##### **4.1.2 Body-worn cameras**

The committee had requested that further information be sought from the Community Safety and Security team (CSS) about their intention to introduce body-worn cameras for security guards. The committee was satisfied with CSS's written responses to their questions.

#### **4.2 General Business**

##### **4.2.1 Childcare grants for HDR students**

It had been proposed that funding be set aside to establish a childcare grant program to support HDR students who were also parents. The reasoning was that while all students have had a difficult two years, graduates undertaking a coursework degree were largely still on track academically, but HDR students would continue to feel the effects of Covid delays over the course of their entire degree. Because their work was not semester-based, delays in 2020 and 2021 would have ramifications over their full candidature.

The MGA had lobbied against two eligibility criteria that had been applied to the GRCA program. Those criteria were considered to be indirectly discriminating against students with the responsibility of childcare, the majority of whom were women. Having been unsuccessful in having these two criteria relaxed to make the award selection more inclusive, it was now being proposed that the MGA provide funding directly to HDR students who have had to homeschool for over 7 months during lockdown, resulting in their progress having been negatively affected.

A grant of \$250 per child up to a maximum grant of \$1000 per student was to be made available upon application, to cover the costs of childcare for a portion of the end-of-year school holidays. This would allow recipients some free time to catch up on their research projects. Eligibility criteria would apply. This was designed as a one-off grant program in response to Covid and would not be ongoing. There was general support for the grant and it was agreed to put this to an email vote.

##### **4.2.2 2021 budget adjustments**

The committee was asked to consider the recommended budget adjustments for the 2021 budget. There were no further adjustments requested and it was agreed to put this to an email vote.

#### **4.2.3 2022 MGA budget**

The committee was asked to consider any new initiatives or programs they would like run in 2022. Funding ramifications would need to be taken into account when drafting the MGA budget for 2022, which would be circulated via email for approval in early December. Nathalie suggested that funding be allocated to the MET concession campaign which would run in 2022 in the lead up to the election, and this suggestion was supported.

#### **4.2.4 Approval of MGA debit card for Lisa Falla**

It was explained that Caulfield events staff member Lisa Falla required access to an MGA debit card in order to carry out her duties, which involved hiring vendors, ordering catering and purchasing prizes. The committee approved this request and agreed to put this to an email vote.

#### **4.2.5 Call for LOTY panel members**

Coursework members of the MGAEC were invited to participate on the selection panel for the 2021 MGA Lecturer of the Year award. Arjun and Priyanka agreed to participate.

#### **4.2.6 CAPA AGM**

MGAEC members were invited to contact staff if they were interested in attending the CAPA ACM on 4 and 5 December, to be held by zoom. There was no limit on the number of attendees but all attendees needed to be authorised by the MGA prior to participating in the ACM.

#### **4.2.7 Low income card**

Elliot suggested running an education campaign on the steps graduates could take to get a low income card which would then make students eligible for a MET concession. Nathalie suggested it would be helpful to instead identify the MET concession campaign as the central issue, but additionally provide information about the low income card avenue to a concession as an interim measure. There was agreement that the MGA should focus on the main issue which was that graduate students should be eligible for a MET concession, but it was also suggested that directing large numbers of graduate students to apply for low income cards might send a message to the Victorian government that change was needed and help generate support from students for the main campaign.

Maddie questioned the regulations around earning an income while in receipt of a scholarship, which she felt were unnecessarily restrictive. It was noted that some scholarship regulations were applied by the Federal government and therefore difficult to change, and some were applied locally by universities on top of federally mandated regulations, and therefore more easily able to be negotiated. Maddie committed to looking into the details of these regulations.

## **5. Membership**

Arjun noted that a number of committee members would be completing their courses at the end of the year and would therefore be leaving the MGAEC in December. He acknowledged the work and contributions of those members: Elliot; Priyanka; and Pranay. Arjun noted that he too would be completing his course and leaving at the end of the year.

The vacant positions would be advertised and filled by cooption as soon as practicable.

6. **Next meeting** – It was agreed the next meeting would be held in December 2021 at a time and date to be confirmed.