

## Meeting 08/2022

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** was held from 12.00pm – 1.30pm, Monday 29 August 2022, in-person at the MGA Clayton offices, Clayton 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: Radhik Rammohan (Chair), Saham Hettiarachchi, Maria Lammerding, Lily Wen, Sarah May, Rose Huang, Anumanth Senthilkumar, Ken Chiu, Annie Roys, Serra D'mello, Sonia Daga

Apologies: Maggie Gendy, Phil Cairns, Michael Lin

In attendance: Jenny Reeder, Jessica Fimmel, Janice Boey, Zuzana Quinn, Amy Barwick, Leilani Duong

#### 1.3 Consideration of the agenda

“MGA Faculty Career expo” was added as item 4.2.10.

### 2. Minutes and Action sheet

#### 2.1 Minutes of meetings 07/2022 for confirmation

It was moved:

*That the minutes of MGAEC meeting 07/2022 be confirmed.*

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconded: Anumanth Senthilkumar

Carried.

#### 2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

### 3. Reports

#### 3.1 President's report

Noted.

#### 3.2 Members' reports

Members' tabled reports were noted and the following additional items were discussed:

Rose suggested creating a guide for new parents. It was noted that there was a Parents' Guide on the website so Rose suggested updating that information and using it to create a hardcopy book. Rose also suggested that the criteria for taking up the proposed Carer office-bearer position, should be that students had to be the primary carer of children, or a carer of a disabled family member, or a carer of an elderly family member. She agreed to bring draft paperwork for the position back to the next meeting. It was announced that Rose would be re-starting up the MGA parents' coffee club and would speak with Janice about creating hardcopy flyers to advertise the event. Finally, it was noted that there would be a parenting international networking event on 14 September.

Maria noted that she planned to meet with Michael to discuss a video and article for Mojo on the PTV campaign. She also foreshadowed that a Health grant proposal would be raised at the next meeting. Maria was also looking into how to record cooking classes.

Sonia recommended that MGAEC members should be more involved with the events being run by the MGA, by attending and using the opportunity to interact with student participants. It was agreed that if members didn't regularly meet and chat with individual graduate students then they could not know what was happening on the ground. It was proposed that there be a regular event for coursework graduates in the same way that the HDR social event ran every month. It was suggested that the event be a set day of the month, which would make it easier for running and promoting. Sonia agreed to investigate this.

It was requested that a weekly list of events and requests for volunteers be sent to MGAEC members. Janice agreed to implement this communication.

### **3.3 Staff report**

Noted.

### **3.4 July 2022 profit and loss report**

Noted.

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

Noted.

### **3.6 Sustainability report**

Noted. Radhik thanked staff for their work in the area of sustainability, and in particular Jessica who had been the driving force behind much of the work. The Caulfield staff Green team was congratulated for winning the Green Impact Cup competition which included teams from across Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia. It was noted that the MGA had launched a Sustainability webpage, showcasing the amazing array of services provided to support graduates, with sustainability at their core:

<https://mga.monash.edu/about-us/sustainability/>

## **4. Business**

### **4.1 Business arising**

#### **4.1.1 MGA members' retreat**

Saham presented a talk on Faculty-specific HDR careers support and proposed that the MGA run a careers fair for each faculty, inviting academic speakers, industry speakers and clinical speakers. Each Faculty event would be run separately over the

year. It was noted that when planning major events such as a careers fair it was important to know what students were looking for, so reference should be made to any data on the topic that was currently held by the MGA, as well as identifying what was already being delivered by faculties and schools. It was proposed that Saham form a subcommittee to work out the details. Rose, Sarah and Radhik expressed interest in joining the subcommittee.

Anumanth also proposed a large careers fair for both HDR and GPG students, aimed at attracting 20,000 students. Concerns were raised about the short timeline, the inclusion of sponsorship and the ambitious scope of the project. It was agreed that this idea needed much more consideration before it would be feasible. The committee directed Anumanth to form a subcommittee to work on the idea further. Sonia, Serra, Ken and Janice indicated interest in joining the subcommittee.

#### **4.1.2 JD online lectures**

It was noted that prior to the meeting to be held by the previous MGA President Caitlyn Neale with Law Faculty staff member Associate Dean Education Luke Beck, the MGA received an email from Luke agreeing to trial placing recordings of JD elective lectures online. The MGAEC considered this matter resolved until further notice.

#### **4.1.3 Education Committee TOR**

It was explained that the MGA had raised a number of concerns around the recently modified Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Education Committee, primarily the change to the MGA nominee to that committee. The nominee was originally “MGA President or nominee” and was changed by the Education Committee to be “MGA President or Education Coursework Officer” effectively resulting in the Education Committee terminating the MGA’s 2022 appointee to that committee, given the rep did not hold either of the nominated MGAEC positions. It was argued by the MGA that this terminology was too restrictive given the President was often an HDR student, leaving the MGA with only one possible appointee, who may not be able to take up the position. It was also argued that it should be the MGA’s decision as to whom to send to the committee.

A meeting was held with Education Committee Chair Sharon Pickering who expressed reluctance to change the TOR, citing a concern that “nominee” was too broad and could allow the MGA to send different people to the committee each meeting. It was explained by the MGA that under the current system, once a nominee had been appointed by the MGA, that person was appointed for the full year and additionally, the Education Committee had the power to prevent the MGA from sending a different person to each meeting as only the accepted nominee could attend. Sharon also expressed concern that the nominee might not represent the views of the MGA Education Coursework Officer or the MGAEC. It was explained that the MGA appoints graduate reps (who are not MGAEC members) to many university committees, and they are deemed by the MGAEC to be the official spokespeople for the MGAEC on that particular committee – the MGA works closely with all graduate reps on university committees and stands by the position taken by each of their graduate reps. The meeting concluded with Sharon agreeing to consider replacing the term under discussion and requesting that the MGA provide a specific term to replace “or nominee” that could be used to satisfy both parties.

The MGAEC discussed this matter at length. The MGA Education Coursework Officer, Ken Chiu, agreed to make himself available to attend the Education Committee meetings for the remainder of 2022. After further discussion it was agreed that Ken be officially appointed to the Education Committee to resolve the immediate issue of not having any representation on that committee. It was also agreed that the MGA continue to pursue a change to the TOR to prevent future problems where the MGA may be left without any representation in the circumstances that the President was an HDR student and the Education Coursework Officer was unable to take up the Education Committee rep position.

#### **4.1.4 PTV concession campaign**

It was reported that the MGA had met with University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association (GSA) representatives to discuss a joint position on the PTV transport concession campaign. GSA had proposed that the concession should be applied to specific graduate courses; only those that provided a pathway to a professional qualification. The MGA had stated that it would be preferable to run a campaign for Victoria to come into line with other states by providing a concession to all full-time graduate students, both domestic and international. Both parties agreed to consult with their respective committees to confirm their positions and hopefully find common ground with each other as it was agreed that a joint campaign would be much stronger and more effective.

A letter had been sent to the VC seeking her support of the campaign. Letters had also been prepared to be sent to G08 members, Universities Australia, and Ben Carroll. A petition had been started and there would be a booth at the sustainability “Be the Change” event to collect signatures.

#### **4.1.5 HDR petition for stipend increase**

Members noted that the MGA was preparing to lobby the university to increase HDR stipends. A report comparing the stipend increases with the poverty line and minimum wage, and seeking a stipend of \$37,000 had been finalised and would be submitted to GRC in the first instance.

#### **4.1.6 Change of auditor**

Given the poor level of service provided by the auditor this year, it was proposed that the MGA change auditors for next year. Three quotes were obtained and discussions were held with each of the providers. It was recommended that the MGA engage Sean Denham and Associates, not because of price alone but because their organisation's clientele were mostly NFPs of a similar size to MGA, including incorporated associations. They also came highly recommended by another Monash-affiliated incorporated association.

It was moved:

*That the MGA engage Sean Denham and Associates as the MGA auditors.*

Moved – Sarah May

Seconded – Maria Lammerding

Carried.

## **4.2 General Business**

### **4.2.1 Retreat for HDR Indigenous students**

Members noted that in conjunction with the Faculty of MNHS, the MGA was co-funding a writing retreat for Indigenous HDR and honours students. The retreat had been widely advertised and was open to HDR students and Honours students from any faculty. Approximately 12 students had indicated interest, and accommodation would be provided in Healesville. A previous MGAEC Indigenous committee member Cammi Murrup-Stewart who was now an academic with the Faculty of MNHS, had offered to attend and run the writing retreat. Cammi ran the same event for the MGA when she was on the MGAEC, which was very successful in engaging the Indigenous graduate community, and it was hoped that this event would prove to be similarly successful.

#### **4.2.2 MGA 2022 budget adjustments**

The committee was asked to approve a number of adjustments to the MGA budget to accommodate expenditure through to the end of 2022.

It was moved:

*That the budget adjustments as set out in Attachment 4.2.2 are approved.*

Moved – Maria Lammerding

Seconder – Anumanth Senthilkumar

Carried.

#### **4.2.3 MGA Graduate Groups funding and activities**

The power-point summarising the activities of the MGA Graduate Groups and a detailed example of a major Grad Group event (CCS Careers Expo) was noted.

#### **4.2.4 MGA Graduate Group regulations**

The formal MGA Graduate Group regulations had recently been finalised and were presented for the committee's approval.

It was moved:

*That the MGA Graduate Group regulations be approved.*

Moved – Anumanth Senthilkumar

Seconded – Sahampath Hettiarachchi

Carried.

#### **4.2.5 Semester 1, 2023 event planning**

Members were informed that Janice Boey would run a meeting on Friday 21 October for committee members to participate in planning events for Semester 1, 2023.

Details would be emailed out closer to the date. Interested members should email [janice.boey@monash.edu](mailto:janice.boey@monash.edu) to be included.

#### **4.2.6 Job Fair proposal**

This item was dealt with under item 4.1.1.

#### **4.2.7 MGAEC office space proposal**

Held over.

#### **4.2.8 PPA request for increased funding**

The MGAEC discussed the request from the Parkville Postgraduate Association (PPA) for additional funding along with a request for the details of how the MGA was spending the remainder of the SSAF collected from the Parkville campus.

It was explained that because the MGA ran a central budget, the MGA Finance team would need some time to work out Parkville's share of the costs of providing centralised services. Centralised services included advocacy, graduate representation on university committees, lobbying on central policy and procedural changes, CAPA and CISA fees, and general administrative and office costs. This would be completed over the next few weeks, provided to PPA and could be considered when allocating Parkville's budget for 2023. It was agreed that the MGAEC would determine the 2023 Parkville budget based on: the estimated Parkville SSAF income for 2023 as provided by the university; MGA central costs attributed to Parkville campus; and PPA proposed expenditure on HDR and GPG on Parkville campus.

In the interim, the MGA agreed to take over the costs and running of the Pharmacy intern lunch delivered in August this year, which was approximately \$3000, to provide some financial relief to PPA. The committee also agreed to a one-off top-up of \$10,000 to PPA for 2022, which would allow the PPA to run all their proposed events for the year.

It was moved:

*That the MGAEC allocate an additional one-off budget top-up of \$10,000 to the PPA for expenditure in 2022.*

Moved – Maria Lammerding

Seconded – Anumanth Senthilkumar

Carried.

#### **4.2.9 New OB positions**

Held over.

#### **4.2.10 Faculty Careers expo**

This item was dealt with under item 4.1.1.

### **5. Membership matters**

No business.

### **6. Next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in September at a date and time to be confirmed by committee members.

The meeting closed at 1.51pm.