



<b>Submission To</b>	Postgraduate Council
<b>Meeting Date</b>	1 December 2020
<b>Category</b>	Select: Confidential or Non-Confidential
<b>Authors</b>	Diana Zhang, Ramanashree Palakshamurthy & Jerry Offor
<b>Item No</b>	[Governance use only]

## Minutes

### PGC Council Meeting

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 6:30-9:07pm (AEDT)

Michael Hintze Theatre (Tyree LG03)

#### Members in Attendance

*In person:* Jerry Offor, Diana Zhang, Jing Sun, Chukwuka Madumelu, Simon Xu, Emilia Nwakpa, Swarali Marathe, Constantine Tsounis, Mariam Soomro, Kalyani Patil, Christine Castor, Saltanat Paritova, Emmy Lau, Dimple Lalwani, Liam Cheney & Min Huang

*Via Zoom:* Ramanashree Palakshamurthy, Niharika Kodare, Rabia Mobeen, Viola Karungi, Hugo Su, Vintii Aggarwal & Cathy Deng

*Ex-Officio Members:* Shruthi Shankar and Saurabh Kaura

#### 1. Meeting Opening

The President (Jerry) welcomed all members present in person or via Zoom to the first PGC Council Meeting. The meeting was declared open at 6:30pm.

- 1.1 An Acknowledgement of country was made
- 1.2 No apologies were received
- 1.3 In the event of potential conflict of interest, the member at question will be asked to leave the room during discussions
- 1.4 No items were flagged for immediate discussion. Research Students' Officer, Mariam was appointed the meeting observer for the present meeting. The duty of the meeting observer is to comment on the meeting proceedings and recommend areas of improvement for the future. Group photos were then taken within and outside Tyree building.

#### 2. Matters for Discussion

- 2.1 Each Office and Council Electorate presented their proposals for Term 1, 2021

##### *President & Vice-President's Office:*

- President (Jerry) spoke about the need to unify the postgraduate community, increase student engagement, connect the bridge between PGC and the students, and create a more inclusive relationship.
- This would be achieved primarily through the initiation of the PGC Ambassadors Program and formation of PGC Executive and Non-executive Subcommittee. It was proposed that the Executive Subcommittee would be overseen by the



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President & Vice-Presidents, with the Secretary headed by the Coursework Students' Officers (Niharika and Simon)

- A centralised communication service would also allow PGC members to regularly meet and connect with students (either virtually or 1-to-1 drop-in consultations at the PGC Lounge)
- Questions were raised about the:
  - Eligibility criteria for PGC Ambassadors Program was raised  
*RESOLVED* that a subcommittee would be formed to review the criteria
  - Duration of the subcommittee members  
*RESOLVED* that the appointment is for 1-year
  - Overlap between the communication service and Nucleus Hub  
*RESOLVED* that the service would be specific to postgraduate student concerns. Communications with Nucleus Hub should also be established such that student enquiries can be directed to PGC

#### *Equity Office:*

- Equity Officer (Chuka) spoke about the promotion of inclusivity and understanding of equity concerns. In particular, the Office hopes to highlight Indigenous groups, cultural diversity, people with disabilities and from low socio-economic backgrounds
- This would be achieved through various events/initiatives such as: cultural festival that celebrate food, music, and culture; film premieres that showcase artistic diversity; and building a network of disability services available to students
- Questions were raised about the:
  - Frequency of film shows  
*RESOLVED* that a monthly event can be held as well as in conjunction with the International Film Festival. Regular film shows could also be hosted in partnership with Ritz Cinema
  - Increasing understanding of EDI issues  
*RESOLVED* that the Office can partner with UNSW EDI committee and seek potential training for all PGC members
  - Involvement of Indigenous students  
*RESOLVED* that the Office can contact Nura Gili for potential partnerships

#### *Events Office:*

- Events Officer (Emilia) spoke about the importance of hosting attractive social events where postgraduates can feel interested in. This will be a combination of flagship PGC and new events.
- The events will seek to increase publicity and engagement of PGC



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- The existing PGC events include O-Week stall and PGC Cruise (which will utilise the deposit paid for by PGC 2020). New PGC events to include: monthly meet & greet events where students falling under Zodiac of the Month will receive a free goodie; dance classes that showcase artistic diversity and provides active 'exercise'; and fundraising events with UNSW Alumni.
- Question time for the Events Officers and all subsequent officers were delayed **RESOLVED** that questions should be submitted and discussed in the Official PGC Teams Channel

#### *Research Students' Office:*

- Research Students' Officer (Constantine) spoke about the importance of building micro-credentials and hosting entrepreneurial and networking opportunities for HDR students. The office also stressed the need to understand the HDR community so that future events can be tailored and well-received.
- The events include the flagship *Pitch your Research Competition* where students are encouraged to explore entrepreneurship and develop a wide array of professional skills. A HDR handbook detailing various PhD pathways and success stories from UNSW Alumni was also proposed.
- Research Students' Officer (Mariam) walked through the *HDR Student Needs Assessment Survey* where a Qualtrics survey will be designed to determine and address common student needs.

#### *Women's Office:*

- Women's Officer (Saltanat) spoke about the need to empower and support female-identifying postgraduates at UNSW. Various events were proposed with draft timelines for its occurrence.
- Some of these events include: monthly get-together events that promote wellness, connectivity, self-defence etc; *Tell Your Story* conference that will create a strong and positive environment; Women Sports Day to be held in conjunction with Arc's SheCan initiative which will promote healthy well-being; and Women in Research Appreciation Day
- In addition, events that promote existing worldwide events such as Mother's Day and International Women's Day were also proposed

#### *International Students' Office:*

- International Students' Officer (Christine) spoke about the need to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for incoming and existing international students. In particular, highlighting the fact that current resources do not concern the mostly mature-age queries typically faced by international students.



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- Some of these events include the flagship *Postgraduate Pub* which will be held monthly and will engage students in a safe, active, and friendly environment, and to alleviate possible loneliness and isolation experienced by students. A Live database featuring resources specific to international postgraduates will be updated and curated with content ranging from legal services to accommodation and medical services.
- International Student Officer (Kalyani) also presented on key events such as migration seminars and providing pre- and post-arrival welcome events to incoming students.

#### *Coursework Students' Office:*

- Coursework Students' Officer (Niharika) spoke about the unification of coursework students across all faculties of UNSW and increase participation of coursework students in PGC events
- Of importance, is to facilitate the PGC Executive and Non-executive Subcommittee by contacting postgraduate societies on a faculty level. In the case where there isn't a postgraduate society, PGC should seek to support the formation of one. For PGC Executive Subcommittee (comprising of executives of postgraduate associations), a Meet and Greet Induction can be provided with access to leadership training. Other initiatives include the development of a course portfolio
- Coursework Students' Officer (Simon) spoke about the creation of a Course Co-ordinator Award that recognises staff members that have actively supported coursework students. In addition, the development of a podcast series that records all PGC-related workshops for future viewing.

#### *Councillors A:*

- The Councillors (Vintii, Hugo, and Emmy) spoke about their desire to engage the students through various social events. In addition, to showcase the postgraduate community by celebrating their uniqueness and value
- These include: the establishment of a PGC mentoring program; Humans of UNSW page; virtual events that support real-world postgraduate issues (such as filing tax returns and creating impact on LinkedIn); regular social BBQ's and get together's (e.g. playing Among Us internationally)

#### *Councillors B:*

- The Councillors (Liam and Cathy) spoke about the importance of networking and hosting events that support job-ready postgraduates. In addition, the need to expand social networks and provide a safe space to share personal issues.
- These include: Industry workshops; social gatherings at Centennial Park; and anonymous counselling



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At the conclusion of the proposals, the President (Jerry) informed that the President and Vice-Presidents (Diana and Ramanashree) will discuss and collate all ideas on December 17<sup>th</sup> and/or 18<sup>th</sup> at the PGC Lounge. Any Council member is welcome to join that meeting.

2.2 The President (Jerry) appointed Saltanat (Womens' Officer) to be the Treasurer/Finance Officer. It was clarified that all receipts and financial documents are to be submitted to Saltanat for book-keeping. Jerry clarified that there is currently no room for carryover between months and no budget spending allowed for December. Jerry stressed that all spending must be notified and approved by the President beforehand and that a request form for budget project approval will always be filled by the Officer carrying out the project.

2.3 The establishment of the PGC Subcommittee was formally presented by International Student Officers (Kalyani and Christine).

- The Non-executive Subcommittee is to fall under 3 main categories: Diversity and inclusion (to be spearheaded by Women's Officers, International Student Officers, and Equity Officers); Academic and professional development (to be spearheaded by Coursework and Research Students' Officers); and Operations (to be spearheaded by Events Officers, and Councillors A and B)
- The President and Vice-Presidents' will oversee the workings of all Executive and Non-executive subcommittees
- Benefits of all subcommittee members include AHEGS recognition and PGC-related events and activities, and discounted/free training (e.g. mental health first aid, professional development)

The President (Jerry) reiterated that the President and Vice-President's Office will strongly push for AHEGS recognition (particularly to the Arc CEO, Shelley Vallentine). Jerry also clarified that Council members can select which Subcommittee they wish to chair. Jerry also recommended the inclusion of a Sports Subcommittee to be chaired by Chuka (Equity Officer) and Liam (Councillor B) where events can be held in partnership with SRC. Finally, the induction of all subcommittee members will be screened (Expression of Interest form) and interviewed.

2.4 The President (Jerry) recommended that:

- Liam (Councillor B) should lead all members of Councillors A and B to design a PGC report template for all subsequent meetings.



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- Editorial and Videography team to be chaired by Diana (Vice-President) and Saurabh (Ex-Officio member)

2.5 The President (Jerry) recommended for the online communications team to be co-chaired by Jerry and Diana (Vice-President).

- Members responsible for Facebook, YouTube and Instagram to consist of Niharika (Coursework Students' Officer), Christine and Kalyani (International Students' Officer), Emilia (Events Officer), Constantine (Research Students' Officer), and Emmy (Councillor A).
- Members responsible for WeChat to consist of Simon (Coursework Students' Officer), Jing (Equity Officer), Hugo and Emmy (Councillor A), and Min and Cathy (Councillor B). The WeChat team will need to gain access to the official PGC WeChat account from the outgoing Vice-President (Naqash).

2.6 The President (Jerry) recommended that the:

- PGC Review Charter Committee should be chaired by the Mariam and Constantine (Research Students' Officers) and Diana as Secretary (Vice-President).
- PGC Communications to be streamlined with Diana (Vice-President) responding to all emails as point of contact. All relevant officers will be cc'ed and tagged. Follow-up responses from Council members need to cc the President and Vice-President. It was also clarified that official communication will occur through the Arc email address as well as the official Teams channel.

### 3. Matters for Decision

3.1 There was insufficient time to discuss this item.

*RESOLVED* that queries are to be addressed through the official Teams Channel

3.2 The President (Jerry) recommended that creation of PGC online videos will be supervised by Liam (Councillor B). However, all officers will be responsible for providing video content. It was also noted that two green screens (paid for personally by Jerry) are operational, one permanently in PGC Lounge with a second mobile screen. These screens are to be used for any virtual events held in 2020-21.



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#### **4. Other business**

- 4.1 The President (Jerry) recommended for the survey to be led by the President, Vice-President, Research, Coursework and Events Office.
- 4.2 The President (Jerry) declared that ex-officio members have been inducted.

#### **5. Matters for Noting**

The President (Jerry) informed that any questions and/or discussions can be discussed over lunch (to be personally paid for by Jerry and Diana (Vice-President)). It is proposed that the next Council meeting (mid Jan) will focus on the preparation of O-week with subsequent meetings to be held at the end of month. A survey will also be sent around to determine a suitable meeting time for 2021.

#### **6. Meeting Finalisation**

The President (Jerry) thanked everyone for attending the Council meeting. The meeting closed at 9:07pm.