



Arc @ UNSW limited
PGC MEETING AGENDA
Tuesday, 17 May 2022
TEAMS/Arc Training Rooms
6:00 pm

Present: Joshua Karras (PGC President), Suhyun Kweon, Anthony Sunjaya, Reem Almasri, Dana Tribbia, Andrea Tsui, Sardorjon Bakhtiyorov, Ece Egilmezer, Hang Bui,

Apologies: None

Attendance: Atilla Brungs in-part (UNSW Vice Chancellor), Olivera Nesevski (incoming Coursework Liaison Officer), Umme Laila Urmi (incoming Equity Liaison Officer), Evelyn Szabo in-part, Eman Alzghoul, Abhirup Bhadra, Karina Grunewald Zola, Tong Xie in-part, Ahmed Hegazi, Tony Le in-part, Xin Wen in-part, Rehab Meckawy in-part, Sidra Sarwat in-part, Samrat Sarkar in-part, Ashraf Uddin in-part, Qihang Jiang in-part

1. MEETING OPENING

The meeting opened at 4:32pm.

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

Completed by the PGC President.

1.2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

1.3. Conflicts of interest disclosure

No declarations were made.

1.4. Previous minutes

1.4.1. Confirmation of previous minutes: 19 April 2022

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes from the PGC meeting held on 19 April 2022 are accepted as a true and accurate record.

CARRIED

1.4.2. Matters arising/ action list

The action list was noted.

1.5. Meeting administration

1.5.1. Items flagged for immediate discussion

There were no items flagged for immediate discussion.

1.5.2. Selection of meeting observer

E. Egilmezer was appointed as the meeting observer.

2. MATTERS FOR DECISION

2.1. That Olivera Nesevski be forthwith appointed as Coursework Liaison Officer and Umme Laila Urmi be appointed as Equity Liaison Officer.

The papers were taken as read. The PGC voted to appoint both above positions.

RESOLVED

THAT Olivera Nesevski be forthwith appointed as Coursework Liaison Officer.

CARRIED

RESOLVED

THAT Umme Laila Urmi be appointed as Equity Liaison Officer.

CARRIED

3. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no matters for discussion.

4. OFFICE BEARER REPORTS

4.1. President

The report was taken as read.

The President provided a brief orientation of PGC, acknowledging that PGC work is multi-faceted. The mission statement of the PGC members is to provide representation and opportunity to include, celebrate and educate members of the diverse postgraduate community. Year 2022 began with making a return to normal after the pandemic.

Further points raised:

- There is still room to ensure that PGC is engaging with the SDG goals at a deeper level, and that putting SDG goals forth in materials is encouraged.
- A call-out was made to anyone with statistics to share with the PGC to make data driven decisions.
- PGC is aiming to strive and develop a culture, especially now students are returning to campus, to make students feel proud of being at UNSW.
- There is work with the Vice Chancellor on potentially partnering with the alumni community and Alumni Centre of UNSW to form a bridging program, where an induction into the community can occur with conferred but not yet graduated UNSW students.
- Growing reach outside UNSW, PGC is looking to engage with other universities.

The President congratulated the new officers on being consistent, enthusiastic, team players, proactive, accountable, and well-balanced; mentioning that their professional and academic career will benefit in different ways from working within PGC.

Issues/notes from various PGC officers:

- Students are suffering because of the diminishing quality of online platforms due to return to campus. The PGC President will be having meetings on that concern.
- A request was made for the upcoming PGC Week that at least one officer from the portfolio of the event must be present.
- General confusion with what PGC and Arc each does in PGC week, and that a clearer picture of the roles is needed. It was raised that PGC is somewhat independent and while both work collaboratively at times, it is important for PGC to communicate to Arc with completed ideas instead of concepts.
- A day for Canberra students to go to Sydney campus within PGC Week needs to be organised.
- There should not be a separation between international and domestic students and that the PGC will work towards events that are invitational to all students.

Discussion about topics to raise with the Vice Chancellor for Item 7.1:

- International student diversity: Classes were comprised of over 90% of students from the same country. Possible way to combat involves setting quotas from different countries and

giving higher priority in the admission process to keep a diverse enrolment. Classes can be promoted by working with the relevant office for future students.

- Events to invite the Vice Chancellor to PGC week: Wine, Cheese & 3 Minute Thesis Competition, International Food Festival and Postgrad Party.

ACTION

THAT a meeting is held with M. McBurnie and J. Barallon to create a clearer communication surrounding expectations with PG Week.

THAT the PGC President raises the diminished quality of online platforms within relevant meetings.

THAT Canberra students visit Sydney is organised as per date determined.

4.2. General Secretary

The report was taken as read.

- Any website updates are to be sent to the General Secretary or T. Le.
- Emphasis was given to incorporate relevant UN SDG goals within events.
- Events are to be promoted by inviting both domestic and international students.
- Vice Presidents were reminded to update the monthly newsletter contents and that any volunteers are welcome for O-WEEK and Welcome Week.

ACTION

THAT all Vice Presidents and/or Liaison Officers collect phone numbers of the committee members to create a WhatsApp group to receive essential information.

4.3. Equity Vice President

The report was taken as read.

- There is offer from Arc for any portfolios wanting to do a movie night to hire out a cinema or discounted tickets.
- It was noted that Humanitix is favoured instead of Eventbrite, as they donate profit to charities and therefore the PGC will try and push for the incorporation of that.
- A budget will be set aside for catering for the wine and cheese event, which will be coming from Arc.
- The 3 minutes thesis competition is yet to finalise details and will steer towards having a more fun experience by presenting on how you feel.
- Speaker representing Student Support Services UNSW has been contacted for the mental health seminar.
- It has been raised in the Arc EDI meeting on the concern that there is no information on how to be a student and parent. A website is in the process of being built for students who are parents. Another oversight was that there is no information on domestic violence, which will also be discussed in the EDI meeting.
- Concern that there is no established budget for speakers. However, the matter is dependent on various factors, involving potential funding, as well as the profile of the speaker.

ACTION

THAT the General Secretary works with T. Le to transfer the "Immediate Help" page on the Arc website onto the PGC website.

RESOLVED

THAT PGC supports and advocates for the earliest possible transition to Humanitix.

CARRIED

4.4. International Vice President

No actual events were held. The brochure for international students has been developed and will be delivered during O-WEEK. Students will be introduced to the brochure as they arrive at the stall,

with the target of international students. There will also be an online version which will be shared over social media.

The pub event and visa seminar both saw a high number of people attending. The international Food Festival is proposed and in development for the PG Week.

ACTION

THAT the international student brochure is shared so other portfolios produce a brochure relevant to their portfolio.

4.5. Research Vice President

The report was taken as read.

PG Week:

- The same career coach from UNSW Employability will be used for PGC Week.
- A senior policy officer from Australia Academy of Sciences will be speaking at the Research Policy Translation event in PGC Week.
- Looking to support events that are run by other officers.

Issues to raise with the Vice Chancellor include that 40% of HDRs will not finish their degrees in time with their scholarship and that his support is wanted for maintaining the HDR completion scholarship, which can hopefully stay until at least 2023/24.

The committee members have been preparing the criteria for the Arc supervisor and research student awards. The awards will be changed to include research support staff as technical and administration staff have been a key support system during COVID lockdowns. In addition, GRS's feedback encouraged PGC to pursue a more clear and consistent marking criteria.

The draft criteria developed for PGC Research Student Award and PGC Research Staff Award was delivered to the PGC, with acknowledgement given to the Research Committee for the contribution of creating the criteria:

- The word limit for the nomination was 150 words, for which made the process harder with having to fit to the word limit. The Research Vice President noted that there is a limit because when assessing, attention is paid to the question and it is necessary to have clear assessment criteria, with focus on the actual number of achievements and facts, and not a lengthy introduction.
- Involve the Vice Chancellor to make a speech at the awards.
- Plan to propose a motion later to make the HDR survey become a standard for future PGC surveys.
- It was mentioned that being a student-lead award, it is important to naturally promote it instead politically competing, considering that there are other levels of awards out there. It will be good to share the award however and involve the Vice Chancellor. Setting up alignment with other universities is great, assuming they are already doing so.

Some students who were accepted into university back in 2020/21 have not received any visas. The GRS will be approached regarding the matter, as many of their scholarships are funded by industries and private companies.

ACTION

THAT the Research Vice President reaches out to other large universities around Sydney and provide the award models for them to hold their own awards.

4.6. Coursework Vice President

O. Nesevski provided a brief introduction to herself.

The committee members have been split into different teams, with members getting involved in each event within the semester.

Events include:

- Workshop for designing marketing materials and UNSW entrepreneurial and hackathon event (working with Arc).
- Possibly a careers industry event for international students. There has been meeting with the International Vice President and Hong Kong Australia Business Association to discuss plans for the event.
- Opportunity Australia will happen in Week 7, with a few changes being made to the program involving more checks on the benefit to the students and advocating the event to be student focused.

4.7. Canberra Officer

The report was taken as read.

Meeting is on the horizon with Oz Harvest to set up the Food Hub by addressing sustainable development goals. The date has been finalised to have Canberra students visit the Sydney campus during PGC Week.

4.8. Paddington Officer

N/A

4.9. Media & Communications Report

N/A

5. MATTERS FOR NOTING [discussed only on exception basis]

N/A

6. Q&A (if any)

N/A

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. Introduction, Updates & Discussion – President & Vice Chancellor Professor Atilla Brungs

The PGC President provided a brief introduction of the PGC to the Vice Chancellor and delivered a PowerPoint presentation – “PGC 2022: The year of a transformative return to a normal”.

The Vice Chancellor mentioned in regards to overarching values and translatable actions that the key is to have evidence of concrete impact of the actions of PGC, rather than merely what the University does.

Issues/points raised with the Vice Chancellor:

- There is a lack of diversity of cultures within classes, and it was questioned whether the University can focus on quotas during the admission process to create a broader diversity. The Vice Chancellor replied that limiting enrolment is more challenging because of the need to be fair and ‘background neutral’. The PGC can help reach out to other nationalities and create a wider market. The focus can be on the number of students from each country that enter the tutorials instead of enrolments so that the classes are diverse.
- In relation to marketing, UNSW does not have a reach to people in certain countries. The Vice Chancellor mentioned that there is a marketing budget which needs to be balanced, with more marketing budget spent in countries with bigger markets. In addition, the alumni network will also help spread the word.
- The PGC President invited the Vice Chancellor to Wine, Cheese & 3 Minute Thesis Competition, and International Food Festival.
- Increased complaints regarding the calibre of online classes. The Vice Chancellor noted that the issue is to be raised with R. Wilkinson whilst the PGC has raised with M. Crossley.

Online class offering will not be continuing for all with the return to campus. There will be a journey of transformation and in making sure the transition is happening properly.

The Vice Chancellor gave a speech on 6+ areas to prioritise that came from speaking with students and staff:

1. Shorten the focus on what the University needs to do in the next couple of years within the areas of its Strategy. The environment has shifted post-COVID and there needs to be a focus on the student community in 2022, rather than 2019. Key areas include student belonging, the use of physical and virtual campus, connection with students, and reflection on what works well and what needs improvement.
2. Lifetime learning with more skill building to support people all the way through their lives, even after graduating. How the University can work with PGC to build networks post-graduation, in that people can come back to the University for courses, services, and any type of education including sports, Clubs and societies.
3. How to focus on research translation and ways to enable research students to better connect with businesses during the time at university. Noting that connecting with businesses involves opportunities for internships, career development, network building, as well as translating research.
4. In relation to social impacts, the University is trying to accomplish too many things at once. There is a need to focus on fewer goals.
5. The University culture (student & academic culture) is important, especially considering return to campus, staff workloads and students. How to invigorate the culture to bring more positive experiences, noting that with the results of NSSS, gender misconduct is entirely unacceptable. The cultural impact of the University will also affect students who leave to transform the future workplace.
6. Make policies to become more trust-based, instead of demanding “do nots”, change to “what should be done”.
7. How to maintain financial sustainability (which involves financial, culture workload, operational, and action aspects), considering that there will be challenges in the years ahead with university financials.

Further discussions:

- Work will be combined and delivered to the Vice Chancellor, instead of contacting individually.
- The Vice Chancellor noted that rather than keeping in contact with alumni, shift to viewing them as members of the University, and that they continue to receive support from the University as alumni. The Research Vice President mentioned that some alumni were contacted by UNSW for donations. To this, the Vice Chancellor recalled that at another University, staff calling alumni shifted to students calling alumni to connect with them. No money was asked, but it was asked how the alumni could support them. The alumni provided internships and job opportunities for students, which was built into network programs. It was noted that building a mentoring network to keep alumni connected with UNSW is a good idea. The President mentioned that the alumni speed discovery sessions are currently in action, which matches alumni with students to provide mentoring.
- Points have been raised from the survey from HDR and PhD students who have been impacted by covid that there is no access to labs and that supervisors are leaving. There is, however, discussion around HDR scholarships being expanded. In addition, there has been a reduction in support for career development, which may be due to financial reasons.
- The Equity Vice President raised issues on the anxiety and depression levels in students, with a large proportion of students of concern. It was mentioned that the University needs to promote to a wider audience regarding the matter to bring more awareness.
- The Canberra Campus Officer gave thanks to the Vice Chancellor for the session, stating that hopefully PGC Canberra can also be a channel to support the strategies of UNSW.

ACTION

THAT the idea to distribute students evenly across tutorials and classes is raised with R. Wilkinson.

THAT the issue of declining online class quality is raised with R. Wilkinson.

THAT the issue of the mental health of students is raised with R. Wilkinson.

8. MEETING FINALISATION

8.1. Meeting evaluation

Everyone did great for the meeting. It was raised that a separate meeting for PGC week should be held as people were getting confused. Big issues were brought up, and considering the importance of them, they should be flagged for the end of the session instead of being raised in the middle of another's speech.

8.2. Next meeting date: 7 June 2022

8.3. Meeting close

The meeting closed at 6:51 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Karras', written over a horizontal line.

PGC President Signature – J. Karras

Date: 15 June 2022