



Submission To	Postgraduate Council
Meeting Date	29 March 2021
Category	Select: Confidential or Non-Confidential
Authors	Diana Zhang, Ramanashree Palakshamurthy & Jerry Offor
Item No	[Governance use only]

Minutes

PGC Council Meeting

March 29th, 2021, 6:04 – 8:20pm (AEDT)

Colombo LG02 & Zoom online

Members in Attendance (on time)

Jerry Offor, Diana Zhang, Ramanashree Palakshamurthy, Simon Xu, Niharika Kodare, Emilia Nwakpa, Swarali Marathe, Constantine Tsounis, Mariam Soomro, Kalyani Patil, Christine Castor, Saltanat Paritova, Rabia Mobeen, Emmy Lau, Hugo Su, Viola Karungi, Cathy Deng, Liam Cheney & Min Huang

Members in attendance (after meeting opened)

Jing Sun (6:07pm), Chukwuka Madumelu (6:17pm)

Ex-Officio Members: Shruthi Shankar and Saurabh Kaura

Committee Members: Anita Trinh, Sardor Bakhtiyorov, Yiwen Li, Hrishi Patil, Thrupthi Manjula, Joshua Karras, Annie Chan, Michael Odutola, Gideon George, Azadeh Tavakkolinasab

Members absent without apologies: Dimple Lalwani, Vintii Aggarwal

Apologies: None

1. Meeting Opening

The President (Jerry) welcomed all members who attended in person and via Zoom to the fourth PGC Council Meeting. The meeting was declared open at 6:04pm.

- 1.1 An Acknowledgement of country was made
- 1.2 No apologies were received
- 1.3 Vice-President, Ramanashree mentioned that he will bring forward any potential conflict of interest prior to the relevant discussion point
- 1.4 Acceptance of the previous minutes was accepted by Councillor, Liam and seconded by Events' Officer, Swarali.
- 1.5
 - 1.5.1 One item was flagged for immediate discussion. Events' Officer, Swarali brought forward the issue concerning the PGC cruise following recent lifting of



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restrictions. As such, the previous capacity has been lifted from 220 to maximum cruise capacity of 950. A discussion about the logistics was raised to the floor.

- 1.5.1.1 There were various suggestions about when to hold the date (e.g., during June in the beginning weeks of Term 2, during September when the weather is more favourable for a cruise, avoiding mid Terms due to possible exams and/or internships). Other suggestions included the possibility of opening up to undergraduates in order to fulfil the full cruise capacity. It was mentioned that to break even, PGC would only need to sell at half capacity. Other suggestions included bringing entertainment on board (e.g. TV screens to play FIFA World Cup, networking games). The possibility of integrating an Alumni & student cruise was also discussed.

RESOLVED THAT a decision concerning the date of the PGC cruise would be made at the next Council meeting.

- 1.5.2 Women's Officer, Saltanat volunteered to be the meeting observer.

2. Matters for Decision

- 2.1 The President, Jerry Offor began by referencing the PGC January Meeting Minutes Section 4.3, whereby Vice-President, Diana called for greater transparency between the working of PGC and the student community. One of the ways this could be done is for the public disclosure of documents. A decision on this matter was brought to the floor.

- 2.1.1 Questions concerning what kinds of documents would be uploaded was raised. Jerry clarified that it would be all non-confidential minutes, monthly office reports, and quarterly reports. Vice-President, Ramana raised the suggestion of Term reports and that any officers who wish to vote against this motion may do so on an individual basis without need for explanation. Other concerns about redundancy of information were also discussed. Following discussion, a vote was held. Ramana opposed the disclosure of monthly office reports only. However, the majority of the Council approved.

RESOLVED THAT public disclosure of documents will be upheld and amended in the next review of the PGC Charter.

- 2.2 The President, Jerry began by referencing the PGC December Meeting Minutes Section 2.6, whereby Jerry recommended that a PGC Review Charter Committee should be chaired by Research Students' Officers, Mariam and Constantine. Due to an overload of work for Mariam, this Review Committee is now being handled by Constantine and Councillor, Liam. However, Jerry clarified that all PGC members has a say in what should be amended in the Charter and that these



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discussions being held today is to meet an upcoming Arc Board deadline concerning submission of Charter amendments. Councillor, Liam brought forward 3 main talking points as identified in the PGC Review Charter Committee:

2.2.1 The first concerns the problem where current graduates on the PGC are still able to serve despite completing their final assessable content. Therefore, it would be more appropriate if that position/opportunity could be given to an enrolled postgraduate. As such, the Committee recommended an amendment whereby any Office bearer or Councillor, should have 6 weeks to resign after the final assessable content for degree completion. President, Jerry clarified that the vacant position would be advertised publicly, and an internal vote would be held within the Council. Issues concerning the technicality of 'degree completion' was raised as PhD students have a different timeline, i.e. would it be 6 weeks from reviewers' feedback or thesis submission.

2.2.2 The second concerns eligibility of candidates during nominations for elections. Currently, nominations can be received from candidates who expect to graduate by the end of the year. Therefore, the Committee recommended that only those with a significant amount of the degree left to complete should be eligible (e.g. needs to serve at least 2 Terms or can't stand for elections if graduating in December). Concerns about how this would disadvantage students on a 1.5 year degree who would never stand a chance for elections as well as how this would apply to PhD students were raised.

RESOLVED THAT as a **Recommendation to the Board**: (i) Officers and Councillors are to relinquish their respective position within six weeks of completing final assessable content of postgraduate degree (both coursework and higher degree research students); (ii) No postgraduate student can contest PGC elections in the same year in which they are expected to complete their final assessable content (both coursework and higher degree research students) and that these concerns would be noted for the next amendment recommendation to the Arc Board. There were no other oppositions.

2.2.3 The third concerns the non-inclusion of the two (2) elected Higher Degree research students of UNSW Academic Board as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Postgraduate Council. There, the committee recommended their inclusion into PGC in order to better engage with postgraduate students of their respective constituents.

RESOLVED THAT as a **Recommendation to the Board**: the elected Higher Degree Research students of the UNSW Academic Board should become ex-officio, non-voting members of the Postgraduate Council.

The President, Jerry raised a motion to hold an in-camera session. This was seconded by Equity Officer, Chuka. The In-camera session began at 7:12pm and ended at 7:48pm.



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2.3 Events' Officer, Swarali raised the issue about current impediments surrounding financial reimbursements from Arc. She mentioned that purchases paid from personal financial accounts can take as long as 1 month for reimbursements to be made. Therefore, she raised the idea about opening a PGC bank account where a given amount of money from the PGC budget can be deposited (e.g. on a monthly basis). A vote to bring this issue to Arc administration was brought to the floor. The decision to negotiate with Arc was unanimous.

2.4 Councillor, Liam raised the issue about current Arc Board elections and the severe underrepresentation of postgraduates. He made clear that currently, there are no postgraduates sitting on Arc Board. Instead, the Board is populated with undergraduates and as there is a much higher volume of undergraduates at UNSW, the default election of undergraduate Board members is expected. President, Jerry continued the discussion and clarified that the Arc Board is the final stop for any issues concerning students, and that the position is for 2 years and cannot include members from PGC. PGC members discussed how currently, Arc does not seem interested in the postgraduate community despite PGC being listed under 'voice' on the Arc website. The decision to include mandatory postgraduate seats on the Arc Board was very favourable.

RESOLVED that as a **Recommendation to the Board**: that the ratio of undergraduate to postgraduate population should determine the number of seats on the Arc Board (i.e. out of the 8 elected students directors, at least 3 seats should be for postgraduate students) and that only postgraduate students are allowed to vote for their postgraduate representatives.

3. Matters for Discussion

Prior to the discussion items listed on the agenda, President, Jerry brought forward an urgent matter to the Council. He opened by saying that Councillor, Viola is someone who wishes to give fully to PGC, however her contribution has been lacking due to the fact that she is overseas. Councillor, Viola then expressed how she has felt her geographical location (i.e Uganda) and the time difference has made it too difficult to participate in PGC activities. She apologised for the inconvenience and for her inactivity. As such, she expressed her desire to give up her position to someone who is more committed.

RESOLVED THAT Jerry accepted her resignation and clarified that according to PGC regulations, the next person with the highest number of election votes would automatically be elected. Thus, the next person in line is Saurabh, as was told by the Returning Officer of 2021 PGC elections, and that Jerry will contact Arc CEO and Admin to properly induct Saurabh.



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- 3.1 Due to running severely overtime, President, Jerry referred PGC members to look at the Budget proposals that were submitted for April events.
- 3.2 Similarly, due to time restraints, President, Jerry recommended the discussion for postgraduate week to be moved to the next Council meeting.
- 3.3 Likewise, President, Jerry recommended that the presentation from Ex-officio members to be moved to the next Council meeting.

Due to an emergency call with executives of University College London (UCL) Students Union, President, Jerry needed to step aside from the Council meeting and handed over to Vice-President, Diana

- 3.4 Womens' Officer, Saltanat brought forward the current issues in the upcoming Tell me about your story and culture event. She raised the issue that more exposure for the event is needed as currently, only one submission has been received. While emails have been sent to all course co-ordinators, she requested for PGC members to help promote the event to their networks. She also clarified that the event consists of an electronic book and a flagship conference event held in person.
RESOLVED THAT PGC members will help push the exposure of the event and if possible, share a story as an example so that others will have a better understanding of what the submission will look like.

Due to several agenda items not being discussed, Vice-President, Diana suggested an emergency PGC meeting to be held in 2 weeks on April 12th. The motion to have an emergency meeting was raised by Vice-President, Ramana and seconded by Councillor, Liam.

A motion to close the meeting was raised by Councillor, Liam and seconded by International Students' Officer, Christine.

The Vice-President, Diana thanked everyone for attending the Council meeting. The meeting closed at 8:20pm.