Minutes

ANU NECTAR Annual General Meeting 2019

DATE / TIME
Thursday 15 August 2019, 12-1pm

VENUE
Graduate Lounge, Fellows Café

CHAIR
Sophie Baker, NECTAR Coordinator

ATTENDING
Noman Akbar, Sophie Baker, Hannah Birke, Siobhan Bourke, Adi Chopra, Onoriode Coast, Annebelle Davis, Jimmy Doan, Rebecca Gidley, Hilary Howes, Bhavani Kannan, Ying Hsang Liu, Pouya Omran, Sergio J. Rodriguez Mendez, Matt Thompson, Melde Van Ingelgom, Tania Willis, Jacquelyn Zhang

APOLOGIES
Katherine Aigner, Michael Anenburg, Deborah Cleland, Nathalie Dehorter, Julie Francis, Umme Habiba Hossain, Lorrae Van Kerkhoff, Anne McNaughton, Claudia Munera, Moh Saadatfar, Dmitry Shishmarev, Trang Ta,

1 Welcome (Chair)

Thank you for coming and apologies.

Acknowledgement of Country.

Amendments to the agenda?
  - To item 5, Sophie added ‘How to improve the next AGM?’

2 About NECTAR (Sophie Baker)

This is the 2nd time we’ve held an AGM. NECTAR has been evolving in the 11 years of its existence. But our goal has always essentially been to:

  1. Enable early career academics to be successful
  2. Create safe spaces for ECA’s to form connections, and
  3. Participate in the academic practice of advocating for positive change to the institution.

NECTAR is funded by the University, which enables us to employ 2 FTE staff members in 2019. Currently, Hannah is a full-time staff member and Sophie and Melde are part-time.
3 NECTAR Co-Chair roles open for nomination for 2019-2020 (Chair)

The Co-Chairs welcome you to get actively involved in NECTAR, as a Co-Chair. If you are interested, please read the Co-Chair role description and nominate by Monday 23 September by contacting NECTAR on nectar@anu.edu.au or calling Sophie on ++61 2 61257165. If we receive more than four nominations, we will run an election.

4 2018-2019 report

4.1 General (Sophie Baker)
NECTAR has gained a quantum leap in its service output for ECAs in the last two years, according to NECTAR’s previous supervisor Glen O’Grady. Key achievements include:
- Obtained continuing funding for NECTAR starting 2019
- NECTAR Mentoring Program funded by all ANU Colleges for two years
- Successful program for Professional Development in 2018
- Evidentially influence the interdisciplinary research collaborations built at ANU, e.g. of out of the 37 ANU Grand Challenges in 2017, five had started where people met at NECTAR events.
- Communication reach to most ECAs at ANU gained through a collaboration with HR. Now all Academics levels A-C are automatically signed up for the mailing list.

4.2 NECTAR Forum 2019 (Sophie Baker)
The Forum is an annual event where ECAs engage in direct conversation with the University Executive. 116 people attended the Forum, which is our highest attendance yet (includes 80 ECAs and 30 ANU service providers). Over 95% were satisfied with the quality of the event and 84% thought the event gave them the opportunity to influence the future of ANU. The Forum report will be emailed to the mailing list, and will also be published on the website. We encourage you to have a read.

4.3 Mentoring (Hannah Birke)
NECTAR staff Hannah coordinates the Mentoring Program. Initially developed by the Joint Colleges of Science, the Program is now in its 2nd year at NECTAR and is open to all ANU ECAs. Feedback from last year’s mentees indicates that people felt a huge impact from their mentor on their professional career. E.g. at the start of the program, none of the mentees felt confident about applying for promotion or promoting themselves. At the end of the program, 30% felt very confident to do so. This is thanks to the contact with their mentor, and the professional development that is offered through the Program. We are applying for continuing funding for the Program, and if successful will open applications for mentees in March 2020.
4.4 Casual/sessional staff inclusion (Becky Gidley)

NECTAR Co-Chair Becky coordinates this initiative. In the past, NECTAR has been a passively inclusive initiative, but has not been able to reach out to everyone. For example, we are a currently a very research-dominated community, and are now working to reach out more actively to casual sessional teaching staff. This is what we have been working on this year:

- We have been able collaborate with ANU HR, to include them in the NECTAR mailing lists.
- In NECTAR communications, we have been actively addressing casual staff so that they understand that our initiatives are open to them.
- We are working on representation of casual staff on the Academic Board. Becky’s strategy is to make a start in her college, so that it can serve as a model for the other colleges. She is hopeful that the college will open up internal funding and establishing a mailing list of casual staff.
- Later this year, Becky and Hannah will work on an initiative to raise awareness about casual staff.

If you have ideas or want to help, please let NECTAR and Becky know. Now is the time to bring these issue to the Executive’s attention.

4.5 Internal funding for ECAs (Sophie Baker)

NECTAR wrote a letter to the Vice Chancellor to address bridging grants that ECAs could use e.g. when waiting on the outcome of a DECRA application. NECTAR has been collaborating with the Science Health Medicine Early Career Academic Development Committee (SHM ECAD), who have discovered that some schools allocate such grants, but that there is little transparency around the process. The University Executive are keen to have this type of funding available University-wide, and in a more transparent way. SHM ECAD are happy to proceed collaborating with NECTAR to advocate for this type of internal funding and NECTAR will need volunteers to help in this space.

ECAD is also building a Strategic Statement of ECA development support, which we hope will be piloted in SHM and later become a policy document of ANU. The Strategic Statement is about SHM making clear commitment to support ECAs on a platform of equitable access. This is currently in draft form and will be distributed to NECTAR active volunteers for comment in the near future (join this group by contacting Sophie, the NECTAR Coordinator). We welcome input from ECAs to raise our awareness to issues that affect you to ensure this improves issues.
5 Issues raised by the attendees

5.1 Parental leave of up to 6 months is not easily accessible to all ECAs
Context: For some ECAs, access to longer parental leave seems to depend on supervisor’s goodwill and their knowledge of how the leave is funded. It is also unclear if the time you take out for parental leave is added to your contract length, or just included.
Action: NECTAR to investigate further and forward to appropriate channels.

5.2 What is happening with CHELT trainings that used to be utilised by ECAs?
Context: Glen O’Grady, former director of CHELT, has left ANU a few months ago and has not been replaced. The professional development training programs he delivered included essential training for ECA (such as Principles of Tutoring and Demonstrating). These seem to have been put on hold indefinitely. Some ANU Colleges are filling the gap with their own training programs. Meeting attendees raised the concern that one college is creating a training which they thought was insufficient to the professional development needs of the relevant ECA, as the training contain little to no pedagogy development and focused on stressing tutors administrative duties.
Action: NECTAR volunteer Bhavani Kannan and Becky Gidley to draft, on behalf of NECTAR, a letter to Grady Venville, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, to raise these observations as concerns to the ECA community, and request evolution of future plans to cover the pedagogical development needs of ECAs.

6 Next NECTAR meeting

- Next NECTAR business meeting: Wednesday 4 September 2019, 12pm Fellows Café. Agenda: 2020 NECTAR Professional Development Program
- Next AGM: August 2020. NEXT AGM 2020 Agenda to cover reports from ANU College ECA subcommittees and ECA plus reports for the ECA representatives on the ANU executive committees.