**Friends of Psychology Early Career Award**

**Eligibility**

My name is Dr. Paul M. Garrett and I am an early career researcher (PhD awarded in September 2020). In 2021, I will be working as post-doc in both the Complex Human Data hub (0.5 FTE) supervised by Simon Dennis, and the Decision Science hub (0.5 FTE) supervised by Philip Smith. This contract will extend for three years.

**Proposal**

I intend to use $1000 to host a Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences early career academic conference. Note, I use Early Career Academic (ECA; rather than early career researcher) as psychology has early career teaching specialists and research specialists, and this event aims to support both.

In February and March of 2021, I founded the Psychological sciences Early Career Academic Network (PECAN) to facilitate peer-to-peer early career academic networking, resource sharing, advocacy, career development, and collaboration. I am currently working to formalize PECAN in the School of Psychological Sciences and have joined the school’s research and research training subcommittee to advocate for ECA issues. In the first week of advertising, PECAN gain 14 members and 25 ECAs have been identified as potential members. A document describing PECAN and ECA issues can be accessed [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/12z-myCz1jjrv4RTa0HnzW2oyFqQmW-QaWAedvJZhxfk/edit?usp=sharing). The proposed ECA conference targets several criteria ECAs must meet when apply for continuing contracts and grants that have been unavailable to ECAs in 2020 due to COVID-19:

1. Leadership opportunities
2. Conference presentations & symposia
3. Awards
4. Media engagement (e.g., University of Melbourne’s Pursuit)

And has three secondary benefits to ECAs:

1. Peer networking
2. Internal collaboration opportunities
3. ECA awareness (by the school, staff, and potential honours or PhD students)

Leadership opportunities (i) will be provided to myself and several ECAs within the school who wish to join this conference’s organizing committee. Distributing this workload will impact less on the other duties of the committee ECAs while giving them leadership experience for grants/jobs.

Table 1 is a draft conference format, with talks given in two ways: short-talks (15min + 5min question time) and blitz-talks (4-5 x 5min talks followed by a 20min open-floor discussion). This would allow up to 18 ECAs to present their work or ideas to other ECAs at a formal conference (ii).

Table 1. Draft talk schedule for the MSPS ECA conferences.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Event | Time | Event | Time | Event | Time | Event |
| 9:00 | Welcome Address | 11:00 | Blitz 1 | 1:00 | Short Talk 5 | 3:00 | Blitz 5 |
| 9:20 | Short Talk 1 | 11:10 | Blitz 2 | 1:20 | Short Talk 6 | 3:10 | Blitz 6 |
| 9:40 | Short Talk 2 | 11:20 | Blitz 3 | 1:40 | Short Talk 7 | 3:20 | Blitz 7 |
| 10:00 | Short Talk 3 | 11:30 | Blitz 4 | 2:00 | Short Talk 8 | 3:30 | Blitz 8 |
| 10:20 | Short Talk 4 | 11:40 | Blitz Discussion | 2:20 | Short Talk 5 | 3:40 | Blitz 9 |
| 10:40 | Morning tea | 12:00 | Lunch & Networking | 2:40 | Afternoon Tea | 3:50 | Blitz Discussion |

Awards (iii) can be made to celebrate the achievements of ECAs and presented for the best teaching and research focused short-talks, and best teaching and research focused blitz talk.

A summary of the winning talks and topics of general interest can be written in a short-form news format and proposed to the University of Melbourne’s Pursuit team (iv) as a means of highlighting the newest research produced by MSPS ECRs. I have worked on three Pursuit articles previously (one uncredited) and think this would be of interest to the Pursuit team.

MSPS ECAs are often isolated from one another and lack a sense of community. Although I am trying to address this with PECAN, a funded conference would make this immediately achievable and open opportunities for internal collaborations to be started among ECAs (vi).

This conference will be advertised within MSPS to encourage undergraduate students and staff to attend and learn about the new research ECAs are conducting in the school. This may encourage internal collaborations (vi) and allow undergraduate students to seek honours or PhD supervisors among the ECAs and their associated labs (vii).

Finally, this funding will draw attention to the newly created PECAN group, gaining exposure and potentially new ECA members. This will help PECAN build within the school (see PECAN aims in paragraph 3) and become a recognized part of the MSPS infrastructure (*a la.* GRiPS) that will provide leadership and networking opportunities in 2021 and the years to come.

**How will the money be spent?**

The money will be primarily spent on catering. I will seek sponsors for awards, however, remaining money may go towards awards too. I aim to arrange free conference booking through the School (e.g., hosted for free in the Redmond Barry Building) or at a similar university building if costs allow (e.g., Arts West or if a deal can be made, Melbourne Connect).

**Justification of the request in terms of career benefits**

As I have detailed above, this conference benefits my career (and the careers of other ECAs) by providing leadership opportunities necessary for successful grant and academic job applications.

This conference provides me and similar ECAs an opportunity to network across MSPS hubs, allowing new career benefiting research projects to be made.

This conference benefits my career, as it will help stabilize PECAN within the School. As I will be a post-doc here for the next 3 years, it is imperative I have an ECA community whom I can learn from and seek advice on upcoming grants and jobs, make workshops and conferences with, learn new analysis and methodological skills from, and seek psychological and emotional support from.

These resources, opportunities, and needed peer-support network has been missing for MSPS ECAs for several years, and their necessity has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. Please grant this funding request and help me build my career, and the careers of your ECAs.

**Award seminar**

This award comes with a seminar on my research. If awarded, I would give a talk on my research in cognitive and mathematical psychology, experience sampling, and COVID; and the question that most makes me ‘tick’: how to build supportive research environments. If given the award, I would present on my past research and career, and how this led to my PECAN initiative to help address the issues that face ECAs in becoming the next generation of Australian Academics.