Using Slack to Improve Staff Engagement

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Empower Staff

Support individual agency and create structures that allow staff to act nimbly, provoke change, and assert our roles in substantive academic endeavor.
Empower Staff - Increased Engagement

Support individual agency and create structures that allow staff to act nimbly, provoke change, and assert our roles in substantive academic endeavor.

Across our vibrant organization, staff seek to work more closely together and to set in motion a change process that enables a culture of experimentation, in balance with the high-trust suite of services our constituencies depend on. We foster a more agile, laboratory-like practice that encourages creativity and innovation, provides opportunity for staff development, reduces barriers and streamlines processes that make our library work with more speed and efficiency. We find and value within ourselves a breadth and depth of diverse expertise positioned to connect the seemingly unconnected. Our unique skills and knowledge substantially contribute to the heart and core of the University’s success in fulfilling its mission.
Slack

#orderunit

Lauren 10:06 AM
I have no idea
@Matt?

Matt 10:08 AM
yeah, just searched directory, not in there.

Lauren 10:08 AM
I’m not seeing a name pop up in email or when I search it

Mirjana 10:09 AM
replied to a thread: shoot
12 replies from Mirjana and you

Matt 10:09 AM
maybe a Cornell person, lemme check their site.

10:10 AM
I blame this person!

image.png

Lauren 10:11 AM
That’s weird... how did it go to us?

Mirjana 10:11 AM
Thanks Patrick!!! (edited)

Matt 10:11 AM
haha! I’m not sure if he submitted a contib for this and it ended up in our queue, but with the POOF, you never know!
I would just ignore it for now and I’ll follow up with Cornell on this,
maybe wires were crossed

Mirjana 10:12 AM
#butwiththePOOFyouneverknow
Ok, meanwhile I’m gonna check with mcb on this side
Michael 10:31 AM
I think this is the first Ukrainian comic book about guinea pigs piloting a catfish I’ve seen.
catfish.jpg

Lauren 10:52 AM
What’s the dialogue say? Do you know?

Michael 10:32 AM
sadly no

Matt 10:33 AM
you’ve never heard of the myth of catfish piloting guinea pigs in Ukrainian lore?
Pros & Cons of Slack in General

- Streamlined communication
- Informal - Lightens things up
  - Meme/Cats
  - Sharing work
- Accessibility
- “Least likely blocked by institutional firewall”
- Direct, private and group messaging
- Content is searchable
- Integration with other applications (Google, Trello, Survey Monkey, etc)
- “Safe Space”

- Accessibility
- Confusion over appropriate use/Miscommunication
- Too easy to communicate?
- Sending the wrong chat!
- Too informal
- Safe Space - Privacy? Still a “business software”
Implementing Slack

Setting up the account

Getting staff to use SLACK - “WHY?”

Meeting with Staff for Overview of Slack

Mandatory?

Answering other Questions from Staff

Expectations for use
What Worked?

- Easier to answer quick questions and make announcements
- Assisted staff to chat through smaller questions about workflows
- Gave staff a place to note immediately when documentation needed updating or clarification
- Overcomes cubicle walls & distance within a department
- Provides a daily forum for “show & tell”
- Easier to send documentation/links for immediate use
- Loosens things up by allowing staff to share humor and brightness with everyday tasks
- Personal communications between staff without supervisors, encouraged staff to ask other staff questions about workflows or tasks
  - Helped break down the silos!
What would we do differently?

- Expand to the entire division
- Make it mandatory
- Limit “gif-ing”
  - “If you’re not careful, Slack can become a distraction [and] take one away from the immediate task at hand and suck them into trying to one-up the last funny gif or find the perfect YouTube clip or image.” ~ Lockshin, 2018

Would we recommend it?

- Yes!
Questions?

COMMUNICATION

THE KEY IS
Sources


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