**D339 Task 1**

**Section A: Blog Post**

**The perfect tool for the job**

At Western Governors University (WGU), clear communication with concise set of goals is important for students to continue their success in performing and completing their assignments. Western Governors University assigns every student a mentor who guides, recommends, and unlocks classes for the student while also providing a class instructor they can seek additional guidance from. Often, communication is limited to email and a phone conversation via appointment. I propose Western Governor’s University (WGU) adopt what many other organizations are already using to maintain communication among themselves and with each student, a cloud-based collaboration platform called Slack. In the following blog, I will explain what Slack is used for and how it can benefit mentors, instructors, and students at WGU.

According to their official statement, “Slack is a messaging app for business that connects people to the information they need. By bringing people together to work as one unified team, Slack transforms the way organizations communicate,” (Slack, n.d.-b). Launched in 2013,Slack was originally meant to be an internal communication tool within the company Tiny Speck, as they were developing a game called “Glitch”. The founder and original author, Stewert Butterfield, convinced his investors to allow him to pivot what he had developed into a new project when Glitch was deemed a failure. Now, Slack is used in almost 80% of Fortune 100 companies and “there are over 100,000 organizations worldwide that use this user-friendly team communication and collaboration software,” (Krivec, 2024).

Slack is intuitive with a vibrant and colorful user interface. Known for it’s messaging functionality, members of a group or “channel” can also share files, media, initiate voice or video calls, and share screens. It allows for asynchronous communication which is ideal for the student who are on a time crunch. An official WGU slack with channels assigned to a particular class number can allow communication and collaboration with course instructors and students. Students can use Slack’s functionality to share their screens, initiate meetings, or send files to their course instructors during their scheduled appointments or ask questions that may be answered by other students in the channel. Instructors can host one big meeting to perform a Q&A for a difficult task or mass relay a new outside resource that a student recently shared. Mentors can directly message or DM via Slack instead of their messages getting lost over email. Finally, as a business that has a majority remote workforce, Slack would be an ideal platform for WGU employees to stay connected and share ideas.

The desire for a WGU slack channel is present. Below is an example of one of the many unofficial WGU Slack channels alive and growing on the platform:

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

But without an official WGU slack, unofficial channels such as “BS-Software” within “WGU-IT” are not as an effective resource tool that they could be. In fact this channel has been neglected for over 60 days:

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Academic possibilities aside, Slack is a great tool to foster community and provide networking opportunities within programs at WGU. “Slack workspaces can also be organized for socializing, building community, and connecting students to campus life. Some examples include: professional development events, virtual gatherings for mutual interests, and student-organized activities,” (Stanford Graduate School of Education, 2021).

Slack is already being used as an effective tool in many universities. “More than 3,000 colleges and universities have already been using either a free or paid version of Slack to help facilitate their distance-learning environment. That’s a total of 1.2 million users who use Slack at least once per month. Slack customers such as **Oregon State University**, **Yale**, **New York University**, the **University of Southern California** and **U.C. Berkeley** that have been using our channel-based messaging platform are now moving their day-to-day academic and educational operations into Slack to minimize disruption to students and faculty during these times,” (Slack, n.d.-a). Following the presentation of evidence, I am confident that Slack will emerge as a robust educational and collaborative tool for both WGU's students and faculty.

**Section B: Identify Employee Group**

The intended readership of this blog post comprises of WGU employees responsible for course program decisions. This would include program directors with contributing insight from course instructors and program mentors since they will see more of the day to day use of adopting Slack as a main communication tool.

**B1. Analyzing Business Etiquette**

In this blog post meant for the target audience of WGU’s program supervision, I describe the usefulness of the technology Slack as a collaboration and communication tool that can be utilized by employees, mainly course instructors and mentors at WGU. I made this blog post persuasive in how I focused on how this technology can be used to maximize effective communication between WGU employees among themselves and to deliver resources to their students. I kept my tone light and less formal due to WGU’s less formal way of communication, which mirrors their core academic values of transparency and personalization. Thus my word choice repeatedly showed examples of how course instructors can utilized Slack in different ways to help students succeed and I anticipate that supervisors would respond favorably to the idea of assisting students.

**Section C: Sources**

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