



Slate User Group Community of Practice

(Still In Progress)

Phase 1: Define

What is your group's shared interest?

Facilitating efficient and pain-free processing of applications to UW-Madison Graduate School programs.

What is your shared practice?

Using Slate to review applications, process applications, communicate with applicants, and usher in new students.

Who are members of your group?

Graduate coordinators, program managers, and others who are in charge of organizing and/or overseeing the review of Graduate School applications in Slate.

Does your group have important stakeholders?

- Prospective students and applicants
- Application reviewers
- Program faculty and staff
- Other graduate program managers/coordinators
- International Student Services
- Graduate School Office of Admissions

How will community roles be defined and who will take them on?

TBD. Let's return to this one later.

What is your group's primary purpose?

- SLUG brings together Graduate School program managers, coordinators, and other Slate power users to share ideas and expertise on how we can best use Slate within our respective programs, brainstorm new solutions and uses for Slate, provide feedback to Slate developers, and become more efficient in processing our Graduate School applications.

What are other things this group can accomplish?

- Build camaraderie among graduate coordinators and managers
- A place to commiserate when necessary
- Identify tools that might make Slate more usable

What specific needs will the community be organized to meet?

- Provide feedback to Slate developers by identifying pain points and areas for improvement
- Addressing time relevant issues as a group
- Quick and efficient source of information, brainstorming and troubleshooting during the application process

What are the benefits to group members?

- Learn from and contribute to this group
- Have a theme or specific idea to ask about and discuss problems and potential solutions
- Community building
- Adding to skillset on best practices/problem solving
- Demos of best practices
- Building momentum for change when needed

What are the benefits to stakeholders?

- All stakeholders: sending a brief summary of changes or improvements that come out of this group and share with various stakeholder groups.
- Hopefully a smoother and more efficient application process with better communication
- Expanding the FAQs around things that we commonly encounter, and that could benefit various other stakeholders
- For Graduate School Office of Admissions:
 - A dedicated group of Slate super users from which to gather feedback
 - Help us prioritize our role out of features and fixes
 - An avenue for disseminating information about Slate

Phase 2: Designing the Slate User Group

What kinds of activities will generate energy and support the emergence of community presence?

- Live demonstrations: (1) communications out of Slate (workarounds to slate limitations),
- Specific topic and intention to discuss in an interactive way: (1) classify/bulk movement
 - Makes it so folks join when needed
- Small groups discussion
- Querying (homepage and custom)
- Ideas collected from group preferences survey:
 - General:
 - Slate user tips and practices
 - I think it would be good to come up with a rough agenda for Fall 2025 meetings (topics/themes)
 - How other programs use Slate. Tips and tricks. What works well. Areas for improvement.
 - I'm interested in efficiency tips, emails, and just getting ideas on how to utilize Slate better.
 - Options for group emailing in Slate, general best practices for how to use Slate
 - Slate functions, learning from others how they use it, how to help professors in slate (mine just want to stay out of it after the first round)
 - How to personalize/modify Slate to make it best serve a given program's needs.
 - Specific:
 - I'm curious how other programs are using their 5 program-specific buckets and I'd love to hear why they do it the way they do.
 - queries, building out the reader view - what data was helpful/not helpful
 - demos, experience with program specific queries, what has worked and hasn't for programs
 - Bulk communication processes, best practices for referring students to contact the graduate school's admissions team, and more efficient ways for checking that an applicant has provided all necessary materials
 - Eventually, learning how to build our own queries if that develops, also if it becomes possible to send mass emails from Slate, an opportunity to talk and learn about that.
 - Custom queries and data views.
 - Making decisions in bulk with applicants; using queries, working with faculty reviewers.
 - How to email applicants in Slate. Application design (is there a way to make the download more appealing to the eye and user friendly?)
 - How, on a daily basis, to efficiently and quickly track changes in applications (applications post-recommendation for admission).

What kinds of interactions (with each other and with the content of the community) will generate energy and engagement?

- Advertising the upcoming meeting discussion topics
- Idea
 - Group-think resource
 - Monthly topics individuals presenting Q&A
 - Structured agenda - specific topics (ahead of time)
 - Fall only programs
 - Clear goals and outline and timeline for the year (e.g., participating Slug members who get special permissions in Slate)
 - Getting to know each other meetings
 - Utilizing more breakout rooms within meetings

Can you award members for outstanding contributions to your shared domain? Or award them for service to CoP?

- Maybe save for later?

How will community members communicate on an ongoing basis to accomplish the community's primary purpose?

- Teams group for Grad Coordinators Channel (already exists)
- Slate group be mentioned on the onboarding checklist for new Graduate Program Coordinators/Managers (onboarding)
- Meeting in small groups can be helpful and bounce ideas off each other
- Q&A

How will community members collaborate with each other to achieve shared goals?

- Communication as collaboration - a knowledge sharing group
- Work and communication in sub-committees (e.g., emailing group)
- Members are committed to being engaged and participate
- Outcome driven goals (I'd like be able to do ____ better)
- Teams channel. Could drive the discussion/agenda items.
- Having a clear vision/goals.
- When agenda items are decided, that if there are specific group members that they could lead the discussion

What are the external resources (people, campus groups, etc.) that will support the community during its initial development

- Graduate School Office of Admissions! We're committed to getting this thing off the ground.
- Others?

How will members share these resources and gain access to them?

- Start here...

Phase 3: Grow

What is your CoP culture? The tone?

- Start here...

Which members are engaged in the activities and communications that have been designed? How are they engaged?

- Start here...

How are your CoP members viewed by non-members?

- Start here...

Are members of your group fun/playful/energetic? Or are your shared interests more serious?

- Start here...

How does your brand/image share this?

- Start here...

How will potential members learn about your CoP?

- Start here...

What would you like them to know about your CoP?

- Start here...

How do new members join? Become oriented?

- Start here...

How do new members move into leadership roles?

- Start here...

Phase 4: Perform

What kinds of community activities will generate energy and engagement and support the emergence of community “presence” (activities, communication interaction, learning, knowledge sharing, collaboration, roles and social structures)?

- Start here...

What is the emerging cycle of events/activities in your CoP?

- Start here...

What are the ongoing community processes and practices that will contribute to the liveliness and dynamism of the community and keep members engaged?

- Start here...

What are the emerging cultural elements of your community? And how should these elements be recognized within your brand/communication/activities?

- Start here...

What are the emerging roles or subgroups within your group? How are these filled?

- Start here...

What work products can members contribute to support individual and community goals?

- Start here...

How do members get recognized and rewarded for their contributions?

- Start here...

What are the emerging benefits of the community for members, subgroups, the community as-a-whole, the community’s sponsors, and other key stakeholders?

- Start here...

How does the community demonstrate return on investment (ROI) for its sponsor(s)? Members?

- Start here...

Phase 5: Transform

How do members the join, participate, lead and exit the community?

- Start here...

How are new potential community leaders (official and unofficial) going to be identified, chosen, developed, and supported by the community?

- Start here...

To what extent is the community serving its intended audience and accomplishing its stated purpose and goals?

- Start here...

How is success measured?

- Start here...

How might it do a better job?

- Start here...