

Slack FAQs

Q: What is Slack?

A: Slack is a cloud-based team collaboration tool which is used for communicating with members of a specific group. It has many of the same features of other online messaging apps.

Q: Are Senators required to use Slack?

A: No, Senators are not required to use Slack. However, we are hoping that this will be a way for Senators to communicate with each other prior to Senate meetings, seek clarification on issues facing the Senate, and develop amendments if necessary.

Q: What is the team Slack domain?

A: A team domain is the web address for the relevant group or team. If you type www.slack.com into your browser and try to sign in to your account, you will be asked for your team's domain. The address for the UMD_Senate Slack group is umdsenate.slack.com. When you are logged in to Slack on a computer, you will see the name of the Senate's Slack group, UMD_Senate, in the upper left corner. The underscore is not part of the web address.

Q: How do I log in to Slack?

A: This will largely depend on the platform you are using. If you are on a computer, go to <http://www.umdsenate.slack.com> and sign in to Slack using the email address and password you used to sign up for your Slack account. If you already use Slack for another purpose, please be sure that you are logged in to the UMD_Senate Slack group before posting Senate-related questions or information. Slack can also be accessed using a desktop app or iOS or Android app for mobile devices.

Q: Can I use a different email address than the one my invitation was sent to?

A: Yes, but the initial account set-up will need to be handled through your umd.edu account. You will create your Slack account by clicking on the 'Join Team' option from the invitation email you received. Once you click 'Join Team', you'll be redirected to page and asked to pick a username and password for your account. You'll receive a confirmation email again to the email that the invitation was sent out to. Next, you'll need to confirm your Slack account by clicking on the 'Confirm' button in the confirmation email.

At this point, your account is still linked to the email address that the invitation was sent out to.

Once your account is confirmed, you can change your email address from within your account settings at: <https://my.slack.com/account/settings#email>

Q: What platforms are available to use Slack?

A: Slack is available on a number of devices. You can access Slack online at www.slack.com, download the desktop apps for Windows or Mac, or download iOS or Android apps for your mobile devices. The log in email and password as well as the domain name for the group remains the same on all platforms.

Q: What is a channel?

A: A channel is Slack's name for a specific subsection of a group. For the Senate's purposes, we have created channels for each constituency group - faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students, specific Senate meetings, and other topics.

Q: How are the channels organized?

A: The Senate Office has designed the channels to be organized by constituency groups (faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students), by Senate Meetings, and a general information channel. The Senate Office may also occasionally create channels on specific topics. All of these channels are open to all Senators invited to the UMD_Senate Slack group. The constituency channels are intended for issues relevant to members of those groups, but any Senator can see and post in them. The general information channel is for all Senators to post information that may be of interest to the Senate or to post general comments or to ask questions about the Senate or how to use Slack.

Q: Do I have to be invited to join or can anyone join?

A: The UMD_Senate Slack group and associated channels require an invitation to join. We want to keep the discussions productive and useful for Senators, so we have limited the group to invitation-only.

Q: What is the #general_info channel?

A: This is the default channel that all Senators join after becoming part of the UMD_Senate Slack group. This is a space to ask questions about how to use Slack or post general items of interest. For example, you could ask a question about how to tag people, ask for clarification on the different channels, or post a link to an article or event that may be of interest to Senators.

Q: What are the constituency channels?

A: The constituency channels are separate areas within Slack for each of the Senator constituency groups (faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students), which will allow Senators to discuss issues relevant to their specific constituency. These channels are open for all Senators to view. The names of the channels are: #faculty_senators, #staff_senators, #gradstudent_senators, and #undergrad_senators.

Q: What are the Senate Meeting channels?

A: Each Senate meeting will have its own channel (i.e., 10-06-16senatemeeting). This channel will be for all Senators to discuss the action items on each Senate meeting agenda. The channel will be created and the agenda will be posted one week before each Senate meeting. All Senators will be added to each Senate meeting channel once the materials are distributed.

Q: What is the #presidential_briefing channel?

A: This is an area for all Senators to suggest topics for the Presidential Briefings at each Senate meeting. The Senate Office will continue to send Qualtrics surveys for feedback after each briefing, but will no longer send surveys for topic suggestions.

Q: How do I manage my notification settings?

A: To manage notifications, click on the bell-shaped icon near the name of the domain in the upper left corner. The notification menu will show options of sending notifications for "all

activity,” “only direct messages and highlight words,” and “nothing.” If you are on the desktop app, there is a link below these options to manage mobile and email notifications. On the desktop app, you can set your preferences for sounds, flashes, and where you would like the notification to appear on your desktop. You can also specify highlight words (explained below) and do not disturb hours.

Q: How do I address my comment to a specific person or group of people?

A: To address your comment to a specific person, type the “at” symbol (@) followed by their username. A list of people in the channel appears on the left side of the screen. To notify everyone in the group, type “@channel” anywhere in your message. This is called tagging someone. You can directly message other members of the channel outside of the main conversation by clicking the username of the person you would like to contact from the list on the left. Direct messages are private and do not appear in the main channel conversation.

Q: If I have a question for the Senate Office, how do I make sure the Senate staff is notified?

A: If you need the Senate Office to answer a question, be sure to tag @senateofficestaff. Senate staff will not be constantly monitoring every conversation, but we will receive a notification if you tag us. Senate staff will make every effort to respond promptly, but we may need to contact other people or offices to get the appropriate answer to your question.

Q: What are highlight words?

A: Highlight words are keywords that you identify as something you want to receive notifications about. You can identify highlight words in the notification settings menu. If you would like to be notified when someone mentions a specific topic, you can simply type that word or phrase in the highlight words box and you will receive a notification whenever a posting includes that word or phrase. For example, if you are interested in discussions on leave policies, you might type the word “leave” in the highlight words box to be notified about postings related to leave policies. You can also enter phrases such as “professional track faculty” or “sexual misconduct.” Because phrasing varies, it may be a good idea to type multiple versions of your highlight words in this box. For example, you can include “PTK faculty” in addition to “professional track faculty” so that you do not miss any of the discussion on your topic of interest.

Q: How do I post documents, pictures, and links in Slack?

A: Files, images, PDFs, documents, and spreadsheets can be dragged and dropped into Slack and shared with everyone on a channel. You can add comments to the documents and mark them to reference them later. You can also paste links from Google Drive, Dropbox, and Box. However, the documents from these links may not be viewable to everyone depending on the settings of the documents themselves. If you want to be sure that all members of the channel see a document, it is better to drag and drop the document itself into Slack.