

Introduction

- During the Chancellor's Welcome Address in the fall, he invited speaker Zach Mercurio talked about The Power and Practice of Creating a Culture of Mattering and the Chancellor and officially launched the U Matter initiative for campus.
- The goal of U Matter at UW-Whitewater is to work on changing the culture by helping all employees discover how they matter to the University's mission and infuse more positivity into our everyday experiences in the workplace. This is also essential for our mental health, as we spend 35% of our waking lives at work.
- Mattering is the belief that we're significant to the world around us. [Psychologists and sociologists](#) find that mattering arises from two types of experiences:
 - Feeling valued by those around us, and
 - Adding value to those around us.
- Try to look at this as a responsibility and privilege to play a role in trying to improve our overall work culture. We all want to make this an environment we want to be in and enjoy our time while we are here. We've faced many challenges around issues we cannot control like compensation that can make it feel like we don't matter, so it is important to find those things we can control and that's how we interact with each other.
- The Chancellor and other campus leaders are supportive of U Matter, but we need to do this together at the staff level to make a difference in changing that culture.

Script for #1: Why My Work Matters

On the cards provided on the table, on one side you will see a box titled Why My Work Matters. Take a few minutes to reflect and write down a time at work when you felt like you and your job mattered. After a few minutes, please share this story with the other people at your table if you are comfortable.

Provide an example. EX: The story I wrote down when I first did this activity was a moment with one of my former interns. After spending some time with her in our normal 1:1 meeting, she told me she really appreciated all my help and guidance not only with her internship, but also with some of the struggles she was having with anxiety and depression. She told me she felt like I was the father she never had. It was a really meaningful recognition of my time and effort, and I try to remember the privilege it is to have that kind of impact on students. I am very fortunate to have an opportunity to interact with students directly like this, but everyone here has an impact on students or campus in some way, even if indirectly.

When in your work have you most felt like you and your job mattered? Specifically describe that moment.

You will have a total of 15 minutes for this activity.

That's time.

- Was it easy or hard to think of a time? Why do you think that is?
- Who would like to share their story with the group?

Script for #2: My Purpose

In Zach's presentation, he shared the story of John F. Kennedy when he was about to give a speech to launch the Apollo mission, he asked a space center custodian, "What do you do here?" The custodian replied, "Putting a person on the moon." This custodian saw how what they did mattered to the larger mission and their contribution had purpose. Another example involved a housing custodian who found the most meaning in her work when she cleaned the restrooms on Mondays after the weekend SO THAT the students wouldn't get sick. She also knit hats for students in her building because when she saw students wearing these hats, they reminded her why her job exists.

On the other side of the card is a template for your Purpose Statement. Take a few minutes to complete the statement by filling in the blanks. Please share this story with the other people at your table if you are comfortable. You will have a total of 15 minutes for this activity.

That's time.

- What did you think of that exercise? What was challenging about it?
- What are some ways you connected your purpose contributes to a larger mission of the University?

Script for #3: Create Mattering

It is important to reflect on your own purpose and examples of how you felt like your work mattered. Ideally, this is something that others do for you (and hopefully your supervisor does for you!) For many of us, being acknowledged by our colleagues can be even more powerful than getting recognition from supervisors or winning awards. This last activity will focus on us paying that forward to a colleague. Think of someone you rely on or who has made a difference for you and write them a short message to help them feel Noticed, Affirmed, and Needed.

Complete the NAN card provided at the table to give to that person at some point in the near future if they are not here today. Please share this story with the other people at your table if you are comfortable. You will have a total of 15 minutes for this activity.

That's time.

- Who would like to share their story?

Closing

- As we wrap up this exercise, think about how you can commit to making sure your teammates don't forget their significance, don't forget that they MATTER.
- The last activity is to provide feedback in an Organizational Assessment Tool. We do not want you to put your names on this. This feedback will help campus leadership assess if the employees believe their supervisors are active in creating Mattering.

Materials Needed

- [Purpose Statement Template.pdf](#)
 - Purpose Statement Cards
 - WHY MY WORK MATTERS on other side
- NAN cards to leave with attendees.
- Pens
- You Matter Cards https://www.amazon.com/ThoughtFalls-Pop-Open-Cards-Compendium-Matter-30/dp/B093X6NXVT/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crd=51VEVYVO8TVW&keywords=you+matter+cards&qid=1705944256&sprefix=you+matter+cards%2Caps%2C140&sr=8-1-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&psc=1

Other Notes

- Pass on a You Matter card to someone else they work with on campus.
- If it wasn't for you... thank you card
- Outside of pay or benefits, what should the university or your leaders start doing to help you see your significance daily? What should we stop doing?
- Provide all employees an opportunity to translate how their work impacts the University's mission.
 - The story Zach tells of the custodian who provides a safe environment for students is really valuable. Perhaps that can be crafted as some kind of visioning exercise where people can dig into the "why" they do their job and how it contributes?
 - Example: Volunteering to work commencement. Seeing all of those students cross the stage really makes you remember the WHY behind doing this work, even if some of the tangible benefits are comparatively not as great like pay rate. The intangibles of working here, and how we all contribute, can be a powerful motivator.
- Facilitation Question
 - Facilitating a conversation where people first write down and then share the answer to this question:
 - When in your work have you most felt like you and your job mattered? Specifically describe that moment. Then, have them share at their tables and then have 1 story per table share with the large group.
 - Consider having them use the Purpose Statement Template to state their purpose.
 - Have them identify someone they rely on or who's made a difference for them. Have people share aloud to that person. Then, ask: What will you commit to doing to make sure your teammates don't forget their significance?