Mattering or Marginalized?
Supporting New Students in the Transition to NDSU
Spring Division Meeting, 2015

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Nebraska’s winning streak at 20 and gave coach Frank Solich his biggest victory.
“The feeling that one makes a difference and is significant to his or her university’s community” (France, 2011)
Mattering is positively related to:

• Emotional evaluation of self-worth (self-esteem)

• The belief in one’s own ability to be academically successful (academic self-efficacy)

• Actively seeking out appropriate help to solve a problem on your own instead of trying to get someone else to solve your problem for you (instrumental help-seeking)


**marginalyze**

/ˈmərjənalˈɪz/  
verb  
past tense: **marginalized**; past participle: **marginalized**  

treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.  
"attempting to marginalize those who disagree"  
synonyms: sideline, trivialize; isolate, cut off, shut out; disenfranchise, alienate, estrange, discriminate against
“There are thousands of kids here and half of the professors don’t know their students’ names. I get called ‘yellow shirt’ if I was wearing a yellow shirt instead of my name in a class of 15.”
“As a transfer student, I felt it was difficult to try to ‘jump in’ and find a place where I belong or make friends, as other upperclassmen have already built that ‘status’ or place within the university.”
• Surveyed all new undergraduate NDSU students (3,180 transfers and new freshmen) in September and December

• Response rate
  – 36% in September
  – 30% in December

• University Mattering Scale (UMUM-15, Megan France, 2011)

• Questions focus on mattering to the “NDSU community,” not a specific group or category
Strongly disagree: 1%
Disagree: 6%
Neutral: 27%
Agree: 53%
Agree strongly: 13%

DO YOU MATTER TO THE NDSU COMMUNITY?
• Transfer students and students who lived off-campus had significantly lower mattering scores than on-campus and non-transfer students.
  – Are there things we can do for transfer and off-campus students to help them feel they matter?

• There were low-scoring and high-scoring students in every demographic group.
  – We all have the opportunity to interact with students who feel they matter and students who feel marginalized
96% retained (fall to spring)
94% retained

Low / High
82% retained
Low / Low

79% retained
79% retained
96% retained
94% retained
82% retained
Practical Ways to Support Students’ Sense of Mattering

• Learn students’ names and use them

• Help students get involved at NDSU and make connections – being part of a team, group, or organization

• Show students that you care what happens to them – never be too busy to make someone feel they matter

• Be proud of students’ accomplishments and saddened by their failures
Practical Ways to Support Students’ Sense of Mattering

• Be intentional about reaching out to those who may be marginalized
• Give students opportunities to contribute to NDSU in meaningful ways
• Recognize that developing students’ sense of mattering to NDSU is everyone’s responsibility – your efforts to care for our students matter!
“Staff in the Dining Center are the nicest ever!”

-NDSU student
“I personally think NDSU does a great job at getting students involved and offering options to assist students in anything they could possibly need. This university does a great job at caring and supporting the students!”

– NDSU student
For more information:

http://tinyurl.com/NDSUmattering

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