

*"Dating is more like a drunken hook-up than a nice dinner and a movie."*

JEANNE FUGATE, SENIOR,  
U. OF NORTH CAROLINA.

didn't have this type of access. At UNC, more than half of the students are women, which Fugate says translates to *imorgabond* in the eyes of some men.

"Men don't feel pressure to treat women nicely," she says. "They can be more predatory."

But women shop at the meat market, too. Willey says Marshall women are taking on the old stereotypical men's roles.

"It's hard to find a girl that you're compatible with," Willey says. "You find girls who like to drink a lot of beer and who look more for a one-night stand than for a boyfriend. My [male] friends, they're the ones who are being stood up."

So it's even more basic, then? We're replacing dating with sex?

#### Sex is the answer

Yes, according to Ellen Gootblatt, who speaks at more than 100 colleges and universities a year about relationships. Courtship, she says, has been reduced to "Hello. How are you? Let's go to bed."

"There's no such thing as dating on many campuses," Gootblatt says. "Students have a fear of other people knowing their business. What frightens me is the cavalier attitude they're adopting toward sex."

By the desperate questions students ask her — "Why doesn't he call?" "Why don't women like nice guys?" "How do you take a relationship from friendship to romance?" — Gootblatt has concluded that students have a huge fear of being alone.

That causes them to make bad choices, she says. Often nightly — a different selection each night.

"I want them to look inward first," she says, "and not to accept anybody just to have somebody in their lives."

The perceived casual attitude students have toward sex may be a sign of confusion about gender roles, says Rebecca Adams, an assistant professor in family and consumer sciences at Indiana's Ball State U. She teaches classes on marriage and family relations.

"We're in an era of transition, and it's a little uncomfortable for both genders," Adams says.

"Some women still want men to open doors for



them.... And there's still a big dichotomy with sex — it's still the walk of fame [for men] and the walk of shame [for women]. Some women are becoming freer, and that's good, but I hope they're being responsible."

But even Fugate wouldn't say that dating's dead.

"Just altered significantly. It's not the '50s idea of the drive-in, holding hands."

#### What was the question?

That's it. It's not that dating's dead. It's that it's so... done. Something our parents did and that we packed away with our band jackets and prom key chains.

"People are still doing the old-fashioned thing," says Renée Norcott, a senior at San Diego State U. "But only if they want to impress someone. In college, there are no parents to impress. Your friends aren't going to see you meeting someone at your locker like in high school."

Exactly. We're at college to meet new and different people, to expand our horizons. Not to hole up with one person for four years.

"I have a lot more fun when I go out with a bunch of people," says Robert Garcia, a junior at Florida International U. "I've never actually tried to meet a female [to date] at school."

Norcott has a boyfriend now, but she didn't jump into a relationship. "The first year, I casually dated a whole lot of people. Dates were more hanging out with friends than going on a formal date."

No, dating's not dead.

"Maybe sleeping," says Roger

Sikes, a sophomore at the U. of Central Arkansas. "It's harder to find someone who wants to settle down during college. They just want to have fun."

Since college is by its very nature a transitory experience, it makes sense to shy away from commitment.

"A lot of students don't know where they're going to be after graduation," Norcott points out. "They may not even know if they're going to be around next semester."

#### When the party's over

If dating's sleeping, when will it wake up? Just in time to enter the Real World, for many. Now, while you're surrounded by people of similar ages and interests, it's OK to be unattached.

After college, though, you may not live in a college town. The pool of eligible singles gets smaller. Relatives and friends — who when you were 18 said you were too young to get serious and that you should concentrate on school — begin making that ticking noise.

"The older I get, the more pressure I feel to have a boyfriend and to date seriously," UNC's Fugate says.

"People's priorities change," San Diego's Norcott explains. "They become more concerned with finding a person who would benefit them socially and be a lifetime mate. Going to a bar with beer on sports night might become going to a nice dinner."

FIU's Garcia compares the change to the transition from high school to college.

"There was this whole group of people you only saw during class. Once you graduated, you saw only your good friends. I guess the same thing might happen. You get better jobs, more responsibilities. You have less time to just hang out."

And once we have the means to date, suggests WSU's Cory, we may not know how.

"A recent graduate maybe needs to use different

