

ON OUR MINDS...

When, if ever, do you think you'll get married?



"I want to get married this year." Yoshi Koma, junior accounting major



"I'd like to be married by the time I'm 25." Kirk Whitney, undeclared freshman



"Right out of college, hopefully." Melissa Waters, sophomore business major



"I don't really know that I'll get married." Raina Wickham, senior anthropology major

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Many students wait before saying 'I do'

■ Figures from the Census Bureau show the median age for a first marriage for women as 25.1 and for men as 26.8

By Kara Cogswell
Oregon Daily Emerald

Students may be thinking about marriage while they're still in college, but most won't commit to "til death do us part" until after they graduate.

In a recent poll of more than 1,000 college students conducted by studentadvantage.com, a quarter of the students surveyed said they plan to marry as soon as they graduate from college. About half said they hope to marry before their 30th birthday, and 8 percent chose the response "single for life."

University students seem to be similarly divided in their views on marriage.

Sophomore Melissa Waters said she'd like to marry "right out of college, hopefully." Although not engaged, she said she is in a serious relationship and has even planned out the colors for her wedding.

"I think it's a good idea to be engaged in college and get married afterwards," she said.

Graduate student Sangeetha Divakar said she hasn't given much thought to when she will marry, but said it might be a possibility in five or six years. Marrying while still in school can be positive "if your partner is pretty supportive of your professional goals — otherwise, not," she said.

At 27, junior Yoshi Koma said he's ready to get married right now. Although not engaged yet, he said he has a potential bride in mind.

"I want to get married this year," he said.

Freshman Kirk Whitney said he's single for now, but he'd like to tie the knot by the time he's 25. Depending on what he decides to study, he said, he may still be in school then. Married students can be successful "if they're ready for it," he said.

Senior Raina Wickham agreed that student marriages could work out — under the right circumstances.

"It's a personal choice, and it depends on the person and the relationship they're in," she said.

She added that she doesn't expect to wed anytime soon.

"I don't really know that I'll get married," she said. "If so, a lot later in life."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, young adults are waiting longer to get married now than they have in the past. In 1970, just 36 percent of women and 55 percent of men ages 20 to 24 had never been married. By 2000, that number had risen to 73 percent for women and 84 percent for men.

The median age for a first marriage in 2000 was 26.8 for men, and 25.1 for women.

Dr. John Miller, clinic director for the University Marriage and Family Therapy Program, said people may be waiting until they're older to wed because they are more aware of high divorce rates, and they want to be sure their relationship is solid before they get married.

Many unmarried student couples come to him with questions about how they can improve their relationships, he said.

"The trend is toward ... more people wanting to do relationship work before they get married."

E-mail student activities editor Kara Cogswell at karacogswell@dailyemerald.com.

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