

# Long-distance relationships can be worth inconvenience

A couples' counselor says trust, openness and good communication skills help keep relationships strong

By Ashley Griffin  
Freelance Reporter

Phone "dates," lengthy e-mails and quick weekend visits can be the cornerstone of long-distance relationships for students. Along with exams, late nights and social events, distance has been known to test the strength of many relationships.

"It's divine intervention," sophomore Kim Beeson said.

Beeson and her boyfriend, Reid Holzknicht, have been in a long-distance relationship for more than a year.

"We were kind of forced into it because we weren't going to the same college, but we knew we wanted to stay together," she said.

Sophomore Jenna Sutton said the choice to date long-distance usually happens without warning. She and her boyfriend, Aaron Audet, were friends during high school and began their romance shortly before freshman year. After she left for school, they missed each other and decided to try a long-distance relationship.

Even though both relationships were a bit unexpected, both couples agreed the benefits outweigh the costs.

"It is worth it virtually all of the time," Sutton said. "Even though the long-distance relationship is a lot of work, it is also very fulfilling. I'm a much happier person with Aaron in my life, even if we don't physically get to see each other."

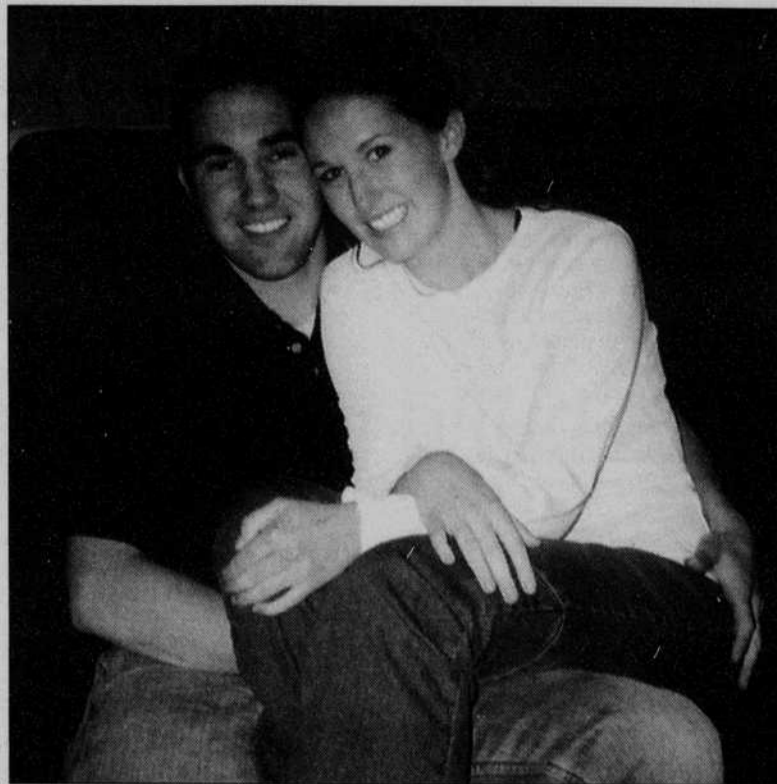
As Sutton said, maintaining a long-distance relationship can be difficult.

"The hardest part is not knowing when you are going to see each other next because of conflicting schedules and the cost," she said.

A love life that consists almost entirely of phone conversations and writing e-mails can strain relationships on a day-to-day basis.

"It is difficult not being a part of each others' everyday life," Beeson said. "You wish they could experience the same things as you, like the funny things that happen during your day that they might like, and they aren't there."

Many individuals maintain long-distance relationships with the eventual goal of relocating together. Sophomores Shannon Gilman and Matt Rettke



Courtesy

Sophomore Jenna Sutton said she and her boyfriend, Aaron Audet, began dating leaving for college. "I'm a much happier person with Aaron in my life," Sutton said.

dated long-distance last year until Rettke transferred to the University this fall.

**"When we started dating, we knew we were just college freshmen. Our agreement was if we change while we are apart and still grow together as people then it's meant to be. If we change and grow apart then we know we're not meant to be."**

Shannon Gilman  
sophomore

Gilman said they lasted because they communicated their future plans well.

"When we started dating, we knew we were just college freshmen," Gilman said. "Our agreement was if we change while we are apart and still grow together as people then it's meant to be. If we change and grow apart then we

know we're not meant to be."

Couples Counseling relationship counselor Cristi Cubito agreed with Gilman. Cubito said she feels a long-distance relationship can be a foundation for a healthy relationship because people have to learn to communicate well and honestly.

"It would be very important for them to learn communication skills," Cubito said. "They're really going to need to listen to each other in the most loving way possible."

She added that mutual respect and good self-esteem are key to successful long-distance relationships.

"It is about being able to talk about what you're really thinking and feeling and being able to be totally honest with your partner," she said.

Beeson shared similar sentiments about open communication within a long-distance relationship.

"Make sure you are on the same page and want the same thing," Beeson said. "Realize it's gonna take more effort than seeing each other every day. And trust them! And be trustworthy."

Ashley Griffin is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

# Feb. 14: A day for humiliation, heartbreak, forged valentines

An elementary-school upset translates into modern-day distrust and maybe recovery

By Beth Naidis  
Freelance Reporter

Carrying my plastic Safeway bag, I rushed into Mrs. Curtis' fifth-grade classroom and sat down as quickly as possible.

## REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

The day before, my class decorated its cubbies with heart and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles stickers, which nicely accentuated our name tags.

As soon as Mrs. Curtis let us, we sprinted to our cubbies to sift through our Valentines. I was looking for one in particular. I had a crush on a boy in the next-door class whom, to protect my pride, I will call Max.

Then I found it. Not an ordinary, pink and purple cartoon-covered flimsy

paperboard Valentine, but an envelope. This white envelope had my name, in distinctive boy's handwriting, unevenly scribbled on the front.

I opened it immediately, and to my awe, the words "To Beth, will you be my Valentine?" appeared. Pausing for a minute to catch my breath, I glanced around the room. I hastily gathered my friends into the reading corner and told them my news. By the time our class got to go to recess, the story had not yet traveled through Mrs. Curtis' room, but to Mrs. Krakow's fifth-grade class next door.

Two hours later, as I was playing the Oregon Trail game in the computer room, I saw my crush's friend. He started telling me in front of everyone in the class that Max didn't write me the valentine, he did.

"It was just a joke Beth, I didn't think you'd take it seriously," he said.

I know not everyone's childhood Valentine's Day memories involve heartbreak and utter humiliation, but

my most vivid Valentine's Day memory does.

Not all of my Valentine's Days have left me with such negative memories. I remember making big red construction-paper cards decorated in silver glitter for my parents and hoping to win the Valentine's Day cakewalk. I would revel in the joys of Valentine's Day bingo, a game I regularly won, and wait in anticipation to enjoy the vanilla cupcakes with three inches of pink frosting and sprinkles on top—the ones my parents would never buy.

But I have remained bitter. It's not that I don't appreciate the cards, the candy and an occasional game of bingo. I just can't trust the sincerity of Valentine's cards. So, nearly a decade later, I hope I'll finally be able to enjoy Feb. 14 for the candy-eating, pink and red, sparkly, love-filled day that it is.

Beth Naidis is a freelance reporter for the Emerald. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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