

Students Balance Love and Academics

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On a college campus, love can be a distraction from studies, it can break up friendships, and it is often destroyed when third parties interfere and temptations arise which cause one to be unfaithful. Because of the complexities involved with maintaining a relationship and studies, some college students choose to avoid falling in love, and some, nevertheless, value love and take it to another level.

Though there are strong odds against college sweet hearts, maintaining a relationship and one's studies is possible. Three vivacious, yet serious couples, tell of their success with love while they maintain friendships and, most importantly, their academics.

Jason Potter, an ECSU freshman, adores his special lady whom he'd rather not name. The "apple of Potter's eye," a student at Norfolk State University, is nearly forty-five minutes away from him, yet his love for her is strong. Potter describes her as quiet and easy-going, and said her personality is why he loves her so much. The two met in middle school and during their senior year in high school, they became a couple. Potter said he thinks about her often, but he balances his time between his studies, his sweetheart and his friends by setting goals. "I have to get my education first so I can take care of her just in case we get married, but usually, after I study, I give her a call," said Potter.

Potter said although he sets goals, balancing love and his studies isn't always easy. "Know what you are getting in to, because it is not as easy as it looks. Relationships are just like jobs, they both require a lot of hard work

and dedication," he said.

Duane Lenard, an ECSU junior, not only balances love and college, but also marriage. Lenard was recently married on December 29, 2000 to Tina Lenard, "his beautiful black queen," who is away on a military base in South Carolina. He and Tina met through a mutual friend a little over a year ago. He said he was not interested in how Tina looked, but Tina held his interest because of her good conversation. Surprisingly, Tina asked for Lenard's hand in marriage, and Lenard said he had no problem accepting.

Lenard said that he manages his time between Tina, studying and friends by dividing his time amongst the three. "When she is here, she is my focus and my real friends understand that. Also, as far as my work, I do my work when it needs to be done," said Lenard.

Lenard said that he has no plans of getting a divorce and; therefore, has no intention of falling to temptations that often cause relationships to end such as other women. "I would never look at another woman and ask myself why couldn't my wife be like that? The only person who should tempt me is my wife," said Lenard.

With all of the obstacle that are against college sweet hearts, Lenard advises couples to keep their relationship between the two of them, learn



Crishanda Rodgers and Johnathan Williams tell how they balance love and academics.

how to communicate with each other, and most importantly, while in college, learn how to divide your time between you personal life and academics.

Crishanda Rodgers, an ECSU junior, and Johnathan Williams, a student at Roanoke Bible College, met each other several years ago at church through family members. "It was the oddest thing because I was talking to God about something else when He put Crishanda in my mind," said Williams.

When it comes to having to divide their time between their studies and each other, the couple said they don't have a problem. "It's not that I don't think about her all the time, it's just

that anybody who has a lot to do can become creative and develop organization skills," said Williams. Rodgers agreed and added that she usually has no problem making time for her relationship and books. "I have written some of my best papers talking on the phone with him, but when I find that talking to him is a distraction, I call him back and concentrate on my work," said Rodgers. The couple said that as far as friends, they feel that they are blessed to have mutual friends who respect their relationship.

Most college couples who become threatened by temptations are usually tempted to explore other individuals, however, Williams and Rodgers, both whom are "born-again Christians," said the only temptation they try to avoid is the physical temptation of each other. "I pray a lot for us in that regard, and Chris believes in me and respects me as a man of God. She looks out for me as far as my reputation is concerned, and I do the same for her," said Williams.

Williams and Rodgers offered advice which has helped their relationship that they feel will also help others. "I would advise that couples ask themselves do they love the person they're involved with, or do they need the person? If they find that they need them, they are being selfish." Rodgers added that couples shouldn't waste their time with each other if they really don't want to be together. "Feelings change, love is a decision," concluded Rodgers.

Each couple agreed that dating in college and dating in general is complicated. However, each couple commented that dedication to studies and to loved one's is the key to a successful relationship while in college.

2001 Honda All Star Team's Ready for the NCT

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The Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Varsity Team has been on Elizabeth City State University's campus for over ten years now and is still going strong. The campus coordinator and coach is Derrick L. Wilkins, who has been with the team for six years. A group of volunteers assists the team, including Dr. Velma Blackmon, Janice Robinson, Laura Ann Barclift, Alexis Joyner and Drusiano Scerbo. In order to be selected for the team, students must first participate in the HCASC Campus Tournament and demonstrate potential for being an outstanding player on the traveling team.

As of November, those who were given this honor were Katrina Banks, Jamel Davis, Warren Gibbs, Deric Hardy, Joshua Henson, Kymber Taylor, Gregory Lawson, Deanna Moring,

Chaka Ruffin, Shannon Penn, Mark Ralph and Joseph Studivant. The squad practices twice a week to prepare for the National Championship Tournament (NCT). Their practice sessions consist of playing the actual game against a faculty team, writing down and discussing questions that may be asked and listening to professors lecture on a variety of topics. "A good team is balanced, therefore we have members who are strong in different areas, not the same ones," said Wilkins.

The five players who have been selected to represent ECSU at the NCT, which will be held April 7th-11th, 2001 in Orlando, FL are Joshua Henson, Chaka Ruffin, Warren Gibbs, Deanna Moring and Shannon Penn. They will stay at the Hilton Walt Disney World Resorts. Criteria for making the traveling

team consists of sharing the enjoyment of the game, having the willingness to come to practice, commitment to the team, having a good balance between depth of knowledge and speed, high self esteem, curiosity, ability to work cooperatively, knowledge in multiple areas and temperament.

The traveling team, which is the five players and an alternate, play games in eight minute halves and rotate between games. The questions asked, which are unknown beforehand, will range from natural sciences to sports. "I develop them to not only know the answers, but to be quick about responding to the questions," added Wilkins. At the NCT, ECSU will compete with sixty-four other Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The individual teams are in competition for \$329,000 in monetary grants to upgrade campus facilities, institu-

tional resources and to improve the quality of student's lives. The first place prize is \$50,000, the second place prize is \$25,000 and the third place prize is \$8,000.

In 1997, ECSU's "Giant Slayers" won second place. The money that was earned went to the Honda Account, provided scholarships and allowed for stipends to be given to the team players. "Last year, we were in the process of growing, but now we are in the process of rebuilding a good team, which I am really optimistic about, and I believe they are capable of winning," Wilkins enthusiastically added.

Sponsored by American Honda Motor Co. Inc., Campus All-Star Challenge is sanctioned by the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) and the Association of College Unions International.