

Students Sort Out Complicated Relationships

Despite occasional troubles and cumbersome details, many UNC students make tricky relationships work.

By KRISTEN HEFLIN
Staff Writer

On any given day when you watch people on campus, UNC couples can be seen sharing giddy smiles and playful nudges.

Students play the "game" in classes, meetings or bars, hoping to find the one who makes them stutter.

Some find that meeting their sweetie can lead to an unexpected and complicated romance.

Suzanne Branon, a sophomore English and education major, found her match in an unlikely partner.

Branon said she and her boyfriend are an inseparable duo despite their political beliefs.

"I voted for Bush," Branon said. "And he's the co-president of the UNC Young Democrats."

Branon said their conflicting political views cause more laughter than problems.

"He likes to talk politics all the time, and I just nod my head," Branon said.

Branon said she used to enjoy going out on the town but that her relationship with the quiet Democrat exposed her to new activities.

Branon says she tries to find time each day to see her boyfriend. "I've settled down a bit," Branon said. "We work on homework together."

Politics aside, Branon and her beau will soon celebrate four months together.

As Valentine's Day creeps nearer, Branon said she is looking forward to the chocolate-coated holiday for the first time in a long while.

"I hope he'll surprise me," Branon said.

Other students must deal with the unexpected strain that distance can put on romantic relationships.

John Hester, a senior international studies major, met his other half at a nightclub in Raleigh.

His boyfriend attends Appalachian State University in

Boone.

But Hester said the distance can be overcome with a little extra effort.

"You have got to try hard and be patient," Hester said. "The distance is not such a big deal, it's just finding the time to see him."

Hester said he spends most of his weekends in the mountains making up

for time lost during the week.

"This past weekend is the first in a month that I have stayed at home," Hester said.

Despite the limited time Hester can spend with his other half, he says telephone calls help to fill the void.

Valentine's Day for this couple will either include Japanese food or an outing in the mountains, depending on travel plans.

Erin Beeson, a junior public relations major, also deals with the strain of a long-distance relationship.

Beeson met her boyfriend, an Elon University student, through mutual friends.

"It was completely unexpected," Beeson said. "I guess that's why it worked out. You just have to keep your eyes open."

Beeson said maintaining a relationship with someone at a different school requires dedication.

"It's hard because you want to see them but you rarely get the chance, but that's what makes it better when they're around," Beeson said.

Because Elon is only about an hour away, Beeson said she and her boyfriend often surprise each other with visits during the week.

However, Beeson said she primarily relies on phone conversations and e-mails to get her through the week.

Beeson said she and her significant other plan to celebrate Valentine's Day with a weekend camping trip.

Despite the challenges that face these couples, the coming holiday gives them the chance to celebrate the successes of their relationships.

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