Long-Distance Dating Relationships in First-Year

College Women

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Abstract

Romantic relationships can be the cause of great emotional joy and satisfaction, as well as great emotional pain and frustration; and while relationship challenges are often unavoidable, some are even uncontrollable (Duck & Wood, 1995). One such stressor upon which relatively few studies have focused, is the impact of physical separation with which first-year college students often find themselves dealing with. In fact, Guldner (1996) reports that 60-80% of college students report having some previous experience with long-distance relationships. Guldner further states that for a large number of these students, dealing with the separation inherent within a long-distance relationship has led several to end their own lives. In the present study we seek to gather a greater understanding and appreciation for factors that play a significant role in the maintenance or the dissolution of long-distance romantic relationships in first-year college students.

A total of 45 students participated in the present study. Participants completed a series of measures inquiring about their personalities and attitudes, feelings towards their partners, the influence of friends, and their own behaviors while on campus. They were tested on three different occasions; during the Fall semester when they were initially separated from their partners, five weeks later, and then six weeks after that. While the participants all began the study with a steady dating partner, they separated themselves into two groups during each of the two followup testing sessions based upon whether or not they were still dating that original partner.

We found no difference in mean distance and little difference in the amount of contact displayed and in personality characteristics between the groups. With the rapid increase of technologically advanced communication methods such as email, we concluded that phone calls and hand written letters no longer play the same role today that they once did in the past. Further, the separation of dating partners is something that can happen to anybody, regardless of their personality traits. Thus, while little difference was found between the groups on personality measures (e.g. locus of control and sex role measures), significant differences between groups were found in levels of infidelity, the amount of peer pressure that participants felt their friends exerted during their first few weeks on campus, and the levels of love and commitment displayed towards their partners, with the dissolution group showing higher levels on the former two, and lower levels on the latter two. This led us to conclude that it is not distance in and of itself that interferes with a long-distance romantic relationship, but rather it is that distance acts as a moderator impacting more concrete relational issues.

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Preface

<u>Topic Development</u>

Inside of an old, well used, ripped and torn, faded green notebook stuffed full of papers, lies the following sentence. "After reading two articles on relationships in late adolescence and at the college level, I think I've found something of interest. But can I devote the next two years to this topic?" Apparently it was a topic of particular interest for me, as I stuck with it from the very beginning; and two years later have completed an honors thesis on romantic relationships at the college level, never losing, but always using, my worn out, paper stuffed, green notebook.

Before knowing precisely what topic to chose for this project, I had entertained a number of notions, all within the context of relationships, and particularly college level, romantic relationships. Being repeatedly sent out to read up on various areas of psychological literature related to relationships, I was provided the opportunity to develop and fine tune a topic into a workable study.

Each day that I spent requesting journal articles from various libraries around the country, while reading other articles at our own library, I found both an expansion and a condensation of ideas that would ultimately become a part of my thesis project. I began to become interested with the idea of long distance relationships. It appealed to me as an issue of importance to students, with which a large number would quite likely have experience. I also became interested in gender differences in relationships, both friendships and romantic

relationships. Females are typically viewed as being the more emotional and relationship oriented sex. Though I wondered if it were being female or rather being feminine that produced relational inclinations in one's personality.

Along the lines of studying a college aged sample, I ran across Erik Erikson's (1963) theory of the stage of intimacy versus isolation. Individuals at the college level often experience issues of intimacy formation, trying to meet that special someone and, perhaps, fearful of spending the rest of their lives alone. I also entertained the possibility of studying superficiality versus levels of intimacy intensity in romantic relationships. I was curious as to the differences between relationships that are primarily physical in nature, lacking a deep emotional connection, as opposed to those whose constituent partners have deep emotional connections to one another.

To a degree I wanted to study all of these topics, but reality dictated that I must choose between them. At this point I sat down with the person who would later become my honors thesis advisor to discuss some options. In front of us lay a pile of journal articles that I had read while trying to choose a topic; within them lay a theme. It seemed fairly apparent that the bulk of the work was related to romantic relationships, as opposed to friendships, and that although some of the aforementioned ideas were present, there simply wasn't enough information or interest to warrant dedicating the next two years to studying all of those topics. In addition to the presence of the theme of romantic relationships in the pile of literature I had collected, another theme

was also present. This second theme was the original idea of studying long-distance relationships.

Having secured the notion of studying long-distance romantic relationships, I had next to narrow down the topic further. Dr. Dusek and I considered studying the separation of college dating partners during the winter and summer breaks versus hometown dating partners separated by one or both partners attending college. I chose the latter focus as it seemed to be the more common means of separation among college students. I then further decided to study those things that lead to a couple breaking up or staying together despite the physical separation should all other aspects of their relationships be equal to the romantic relationships of couples not experiencing a physical distancing of its partners. Then again, all other aspects (such as level of commitment, emotional connectedness, and levels of self-disclosure) may not necessarily be equal. These were issues that I sought to uncover in my honors thesis.

Scope of Project

Although a number of other researchers have examined long-distance romantic relationships, their efforts have been restricted mostly to separations due to military leave (Guldner, 1996). Individuals belonging to this category have a fairly large age range. At the same time there is another group of people, college students, who are often involved with long-distance romantic relationships and have been studied on a much less frequent basis. College students are a particularly important group to study as they are often in the

process of dealing with Erickson's (1963) psychosocial stage of intimacy vs. isolation at the same time that they are attempting to manage a long distance relationship. Of particular concern are first year college students. These students are often away from home for the first time, often far from the familiar social support systems on which they have consistently relied in the past, adapting to new academic stresses, and trying to both maintain old relationships, while at the same time creating new ones.

It has been reported that approximately one-fourth of all college students at a given time would consider themselves to be involved in a long-distance romantic relationship. This equates to over 1.3 million people. Clearly we are talking about a large population. Furthermore these relationships have been so difficult and so painful for a number of students that they have sought escape through suicide (Guldner, 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991).

Realizing the significant impact that romantic relationships have on individuals as well as the great number of people who choose to involve themselves in romantic relationships, it is easy to see why this is an important topic worthy of study. Drawing concepts, ideas, and literature from both the social and developmental areas of psychology, I have undertaken this honors thesis in an attempt to clarify and elaborate on issues regarding long-distance romantic relationships in first-year college students.

With greater knowledge about romantic relationships and particularly that which makes long-distance relationships unique, I hope that we will be

able to improve them, creating a better situation for both partners. I also hope that perhaps counseling sessions and campuses that offer workshops on romantic relationships will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the unique situation in which a quarter of their clients and audiences find themselves. It may be also possible to improve the lives of these students, making them better adjusted individuals with more solid relationships and perhaps, even to save some lives.

Although these may sound like rather ambitious goals, they are not something that I believe is impossible to achieve. Although I do not believe that this one study alone will save the lives of hundreds, I do honestly believe that it is a step in the right direction. This study has built upon previous work, just as future researchers will build upon what I have done here. As more knowledge and information is accumulated and shared, improvements will surely be made.

Issues and Concerns

During the process of this honors thesis I had a number of ideas that never made it past the drawing board. I briefly entertained the idea of studying not only the way individuals felt upon arriving on campus and being apart from their partners, but also studying the way that individuals felt and what they thought prior to leaving for college. I had considered studying the decision making process that individuals went through before deciding to attempt to maintain a relationship that was about to encompass a distance factor. Due, however, to time constraints and difficulties attaining a sample of high school

students intending to attend college and already involved in dating relationship, the idea never came to fruition.

Secondly, I had considered measuring the partners of participants here on campus. I thought that it would be interesting as well as informative to not only have the perspective of the student here on campus, but also that of the student's partner. Perhaps they would hold two completely different ideas of how the relationship was progressing. After all a relationship involves two people, so it makes some sense to study both individuals. I thought that it would be important to study both individuals so as not to attain a biased impression. Although I had no reason to assume that all individuals on campus away from their partners would feel significantly different from those not on campus, I also had no evidence that they should feel the same. Although funding was granted me to make this inquiry a possibility, having the requirement of finishing the honors thesis within two years time also prevented this idea from becoming reality.

I also thought that it would be an interesting idea not only to retrieve self-report measures with quantifiable results, but also to attain some qualitative data. I proposed to interview a subset of participants, a few who were able to successfully maintain their relationships as well as a few who were unable to maintain their relationships. In a brief one-on-one interview, I was hoping that I could gather information about what helped make some relationships work and what made others fail, possibly information that was not explicitly requested in the self-report measures. Just as with some of my

previous ideas, my advisor warned me that although these ideas had potential, they would most likely not be the most feasible for an honors thesis.

Personal Reflection and Growth

Relationships have been something that have always been of interest to me. I have always had a natural curiosity regarding the relationships of other people. I have always been interested in how people feel about others, their feelings towards and what motivates them to behave the way they do towards their partner, and how their relationships affect them personally.

I have had a lot of people speak with me about the ups and downs of their relationships. I have been there for my friends and family both through the difficult and painful, as well as the happy and joyous. Learning more about the ways in which relationships work will not only help me when I am listening to others discuss their own relationships, but it will also help with my own relationships.

Learning about the inner workings of relationships has the potential to make me a better friend, as well as a better boyfriend and future husband. I have learned to keep my eyes open for potential problems, not to take people for granted, and to make sure that too much time doesn't pass without calling. I have also even learned that, at times, it is important to stop learning about relationships and actually tend to them.

In addition to learning about relationships this project has taught me a good deal about psychological research. I have learned how long an entire study really takes as well as the immense effort that it requires. Although I

planned to have everything done at one point and progress at a steady pace, allowing myself plenty of leeway, things didn't always work out as planned. I have learned to expect the unexpected, for anything can happen at anytime and it often does. I have learned that little setbacks and small breaks can really add up over time. It may not seem to be a big deal at the moment, but over the course of time problems may build up, while time dwindles away.

Furthermore, although ambition provides inspiration and motivation, it can also be troublesome should it run wild. As mentioned above, there were plenty of ideas that I would have liked to make reality, but which were simply not possible.

In addition, I have learned the importance of perseverance and seeking help when needed. Although I was easily able to enjoy the moments of excitement thinking about the vast accomplishment that this honors thesis has provided me, the frustrating and strife ridden times were not dealt with as easily. Although at times I may have preferred just to throw in the towel, other moments where I received inspiring speeches or motivational talks, and encouraging words from others have kept me going. I believe that my advisor would be proud to know that despite my inherent inclinations towards independence, I am learning the importance of seeking assistance from others when appropriate.

I think that one of the most important lessons that this project has provided for me is the ability to see an entire psychological research study completed from start to finish. In the past, the majority of my work has been a part of

somebody else's work, whether it be preparing a manuscript, presenting a poster, running subjects, or searching the literature. This honors thesis, however, is entirely my own work. Although I was working the entire time with an advisor, I had the opportunity to make and implement the critical decisions, and put everything together in the form of this written text. Thus the integration of all these skills that I have previously developed is something that I consider to be quite valuable.

Advice to Future Honors Students

Before embarking on a project to which you are going to dedicate the next two years, I would advise choosing a topic of sincere and genuine interest. While you may think it easier to find a professor willing to be your advisor and then to find a topic of mutual interest (if such a topic exists), it would probably be more beneficial should you first focus on deciding upon a topic, and worrying about finding an advisor at a later point.

Try to imagine yourself two years from now looking at the last few weeks of the semester before you graduate. As that deadline stares you in the face, your other classes and assignments beg for attention, and you're in the midst of deciding what to do with your future, your honors thesis is yet to be completed. If you can imagine yourself being in this situation and still having the motivation to work on your thesis project, forsaking both food and sleep, then you have chosen a topic of sincere and genuine interest.

Motivation is essential. Motivation will get you through those long nights and the times of frustration when giving up seems like the only logical thing to do. Motivation, inspiration, and desire can be your best friends down the sometimes lonely road of completing an honors thesis. While it sounds prestigious to say that you're working on your thesis, keep in mind that you're the only one who can get it done. No matter how strong your support system is, in the end you are the one who needs to do the work. Thus I strongly advise you to find a topic that is of interest to you and something that you are confident that you can see yourself working on two years from now.

While there might be a temptation to begin your honors thesis as early as possible, as you imagine all the things that could go wrong and all the time and effort that will be required, it is also important to plan ahead. Take some time to sit down and plan what you're going to do. Make sure that it is feasible and that you're not overburdening yourself. Be sure that you know what you are doing and how you are going to go about doing it as opposed to just figuring things out along the way. While sometimes this is the best or only way to learn something, it is a time consuming and sometimes frustrating method. On the other hand if you have some idea of how you intend to go about something, you can be sure that you possess the skills and resources (time, money, classroom space, etc.) necessary to carry out your plans.

Again as you will be working on this project for the next two years, it is important to find an advisor with whom you can work, someone with whom you can get along and not just tolerate. It seems like a difficult task to find an advisor who is both interested in the same topic as you and is somebody with whom you get along, but it can be done. I remember questioning how I was ever going to find an advisor that would be willing to put up with me for the next two years through all the toils of a research project. Surely they must have better things to do and, if not, how am I going to find someone with whom I get along and who is interested in the same things as me, given that there is not exactly an infinite supply of Syracuse University faculty. Sometimes things just have to fall into place and happen.

In addition to motivation, faith is also important: faith in your work, your ability to find a topic, an advisor, and eventually complete your honors thesis. But during those times that motivation and faith are dwindling, and frustration and anxiety are high, do not be fearful of asking for help. Nobody is expected to have all the answers or be capable of doing everything on his/her own.

I was fortunate enough to have people around me to whom I could turn in my times of need. They were able to read something within the inflection of my voice that suggested I was in need of a pep talk and inspiration. I was fortunate enough to get along with my advisor to the point where we could talk about our own lives in addition to just business, and when I needed to I could call him at home. Particularly during the completion of my honors thesis when time was most critical, it was pleasant to know that I had people behind me, supporting my efforts, encouraging me along, and pushing me forward when needed.

Finally, make the most of the experience. Don't struggle to complete your honors thesis; but rather take the time to enjoy it. Try to view it not as an obstacle that you need to overcome, but rather an opportunity you chose to embrace. Good luck. ☺

Acknowledgments

I believe it most appropriate to begin by acknowledging my advisor,
Dr. Jerry Dusek. I may never know if he originally was willing to advise my
honors thesis because he genuinely wanted to help a student in whom he saw
potential, or if he was just out to get that gift certificate to the Syracuse
University bookstore that advisors are given as an act of appreciation from the
honors department; but either way I am thankful that he was willing to provide
me with his time.

Dr. Dusek was not just another professor, because with him, I was able
to establish a more personal relationship. Not only did we talk on a serious
note, discussing the progression of the thesis that had brought us together, but
also about our personal lives. As the topic of this thesis was relationships, it
seemed only natural that my advisor and I would at some point discuss our
own relationships. I appreciate having had an advisor with whom this was
possible.

Dr. Dusek understood and appreciated my tendency to work
independently. He would allow me to go off on my own, and wait to hear
back from me, confident that I was working on something and not simply
goofing off. When I couldn't be independent and required assistance, he was
more than willing to provide it in any way that he could. Should there be
something that I couldn't initially grasp, he would explain it as many times and
in as many ways as necessary. Although he was encouraging and supportive,
he also was demanding and had high expectations. I believe this was one of

the qualities which made me first consider him as a potential advisor. I knew that his expectations would drive me to strive for the best, though not in an overburdening way.

Further, Dr. Dusek was not too proud to get his hands dirty and do some of the work required to make this honors thesis a reality. He even provided me with his home phone number from the beginning. This provided me much needed support and encouragement when I became frustrated or lost my motivation.

I must also thank my second reader, Dr. Bruce Carter, for sparing my first born child. While initially he demanded a bribe in order to get everything done on time and in order to get a required signature, and thus credit for having completed this honors thesis, he eventually caved in.

More seriously, I would like to thank Dr. Carter for speaking with me on occasion about my future, my goals, aspirations, and possible paths that I might choose to take in life. I am thankful for the periodic encouragement that he provided, and particularly the inspiration that I desperately needed during the last week in order to complete this thesis on time. He was never the high and mighty, removed director that his title may suggest he could be, but rather a friendly, knowledgeable, and accessible resource who was always there ready and willing to lend a helping hand, an ear to listen, or a few words of encouragement and support.

In the past two years I recall having met with Dr. Judy Hamilton a number of times as well. She was a general overseer of my honors thesis.

Although not overly involved in the project, she was nevertheless amazingly knowledgeable about what it takes to complete an honors thesis, and particularly a psychology thesis. The knowledge base that she held without having the same insider perspective as my advisor, placed her in a position to provide a unique perspective. This perspective often helped me to reformulate ideas and to see things in a different light, a light that I couldn't possibly otherwise see from where I was standing.

Dr. Hamilton was often more motivated and excited about my thesis than I felt myself to be. I thought that this was kind of odd at the time, but looking back I can more truly appreciate her enthusiasm. She, just like the many others that have supported me these past few years, was also able and willing to maintain my motivation.

I could go on for pages about the many opportunities and experiences that Rob Foels has given me, or the doors that he has helped me to open, but regarding my honors thesis, perhaps the most important door that he opened was the cabinet in Huntington that held the Stata manuals. Even though we had stopped formally working together during the time that I had undertaken my honors thesis, he was constantly there to bounce ideas off, to help me when I was stuck, or simply put a smile on my face and remind me that I can get through anything that I set my mind to. He was always more than willing to do anything that he could in order to help me out; and most of the time I didn't even have to ask.

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It is I think impossible to know Rob Foels as well as I do and not to have had the opportunity to also get to know Tom Tomcho. I would like to thank Tom for providing much needed entertainment in the psychology lab on those evenings when we all had to work late into the night. Working hard can be mind numbing at times, and it's important to let loose, be silly, and have fun at times. I appreciate having had Tom to teach me this essential lesson. I would also like to thank Tom for the three small 3.5 inch presents that he gave to me when I helped him run subjects at Alpha Fee Fi Fo Fum.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my friends and family. Through them I have had many opportunities to learn firsthand about relationships and the importance that they exert in people's lives. I would like to thank particularly my picnic pal, Debbie, for always being there for me when I needed somebody to talk to and never getting upset when I let my studies occupy my time. I hope that she knows that she'll never come second to my studies. I would also like to thank Michelle for teaching me that you need to tend to your relationships and that people are what is most important in life.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for being so supportive of me. I would like to thank them for understanding what is important to me and not getting upset when I forgot to call or couldn't make it for a holiday.

To everyone that has touched my life while I have worked on this honors thesis, for the past four years I have been at Syracuse University, and for as long as I have known them, I wish to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude. I consider myself most fortunate to have known each of you and I appreciate all that you have done for me. Without your support and encouragement none of this would have been possible. Thanks for being there.

Long-Distance Dating Relationships in

First-Year College Women

<u>Background</u>

Romantic relationships are a part of our everyday lives. They are often the cause of pleasure and pain, joy and grief, satisfaction and frustration (Duck & Wood, 1995). With all the effort we place into romantic relationships, the important role that our partners play in our lives, and the amount of time we dedicate to their continuance, there is no doubt that these relationships are significant elements in the lives of many (Perlman & Duck, 1987). In fact, the mere act of having a romantic partner provides a sense of prestige, and provides a title (e.g., boyfriend, wife, lover) that increases the meaningfulness of one's life as well as one's self-esteem (Mathes, Adams, & Davies, 1985; Perlman & Duck, 1987).

An individual's need for a romantic partner is repeatedly reinforced in the media. The media provide an image of a romantic relationship in which everyone is supposedly involved. The media suggest that nearly everyone is involved in a romantic relationship, and that if one is not, there must certainly be something at fault with that individual, for otherwise they would not turn down something so wonderful and so desirable. Through this repeated exposure, society develops expectations of what a relationship should be. Movies, books, parents, friends, and music alike, depict a world that revolves around the magical realm of romance (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992).

But often reality dictates that romance is not as it is too often portrayed in the media. For example, relationships are not always full of passion and excitement. Conflict and challenges are inevitable. Although these problems may be troublesome, they also provide an opportunity for increased intimacy when dealt with in a productive manner (Duck & Wood, 1995). One such potential challenge to a romantic relationship is the physical separation of its constituent partners.

Being in a long-distance relationship (LDR) can be a rather exhausting and difficult situation. For instance, society suggests that a person is either single and free to date or involved with somebody else and off limits as a prospective date to anyone possibly interested. This leaves individuals in LDRs lost in the middle (Guldner, 1996). While on the one hand they are involved with somebody and thus feel that they should be faithful, another part of them suggests that given the physical distance they are actually alone, which implies that they should be free to date as they please.

There has been a good deal of research performed on the topic of long-distance relationships, though the majority of that research has focused on married couples (Spanier, 1976), specifically marital separations due to military leave (Guldner, 1996). At the same time, relatively few studies have examined the impact of physical separation in premarital relationships (Simpson, 1987).

Concurrently, there is a large population of college students involved in LDRs. Guldner (1996) reports that approximately 25-30% of all college students would consider themselves to be involved in a long-distance romantic

relationship at any given time, and 60-80% have had some prior experience in a LDR. According to the most recent U.S. census data, this would equate to over 1.3 million individuals (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). Further, Paul, Poole, and Jakubowyc (1998) remind us that although the study of adolescent romance is popular, the emphasis on this direction of study has been predominately oriented around safer sexual practices and has failed to adequately address issues of relational intimacy.

Despite this fact, romantic relationships remain one of the most significant concerns of entering college students (Paul et al., 1998), as their relationships with peers begin to supersede those with their parents (Prager, 1995). Several college students report that they would sacrifice most of their goals for the sake of their romantic relationship. Consequently, the success or failure of a student's romantic relationship has shown to be a strong predictor of life satisfaction, academic performance, and mental health (Paul et al., 1998).

As if dealing with the physical distancing of one's romantic partner were not difficult enough, college students also need to deal with a variety of other issues at the same time (Paul et al., 1998). This is particularly the case with first-year students, as it is quite likely the first time in their lives that they are leaving home for an extended period of time. Thus, they have to deal with issues of leaving friends (including platonic friendships) and family, adjusting to academic stresses, making new acquaintances, quite possibly settling into a new geographic area, and more; all without the support of those close and

personal resources consistently relied upon in the past (Lapsley, Rice, & FitzGerald, 1990).

Given the vast number of issues alluded to above with which college students are forced to deal, various colleges and universities have established a variety of workshops and programs designed to provide much needed social support. The response to these workshops is typically minimal (Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1986). However, when the topic of the workshop revolves around the issue of coping with long distance relationships, the response has been overwhelming (Westefeld & Liddell, 1982), thus further emphasizing the perceived importance of these relationships.

Identity Development

Around the time that students are adapting to their first year of college, they are also adapting to various developmental changes. Although college students have the luxury of time in which to contemplate their identities without taking on full adult responsibilities (Prager, 1995), the acquisition of identity remains a difficult task. Erikson (1963) states that at this age individuals are also dealing with the intimacy versus isolation stage of psychosocial development. In order for this to occur in a healthy manner an individual first must conquer the identity versus role confusion stage of psychosocial development and acquire a secure personal identity. Paul et al. (1998), however, argue that these two stages do not necessarily exist in isolation of each other. They state that although adolescents who have a secure sense of self have the capacity for more mature and intimate relations

with another person, the individual without a secure sense of self has an identity which may be based upon his/her romantic relationship. Thus, it is possible to attain intimacy without a secure identity, although this could lead to the developing identity being greatly influenced by the intimate relationship.

To elaborate, individuals who develop secure identities have deeper levels of love, more trust and positive interactions with their partners (Shulman, 1995), maintain their own sense of self within a relationship while incorporating their partner as part of their own identity (in a non-consuming manner), are able to develop and maintain stronger friendships, are more skilled at balancing their time and emotional resources, and have an easier time adapting to the challenges associated with college. On the other hand, individuals who have not yet established a secure sense of identity are more insecure of themselves, overdependent and overabsorbed in their relationships, self-defeating, socially isolated, and depressed (Paul et al., 1998).

Prager (1995) would perhaps contend with the assertions of Paul et al. (1998) by suggesting that being in a romantic relationship without a previously developed identity is not necessarily a negative thing. While it may be more difficult to maintain an mature relationship without possessing an mature identity, the relationship and the search for an identity may actually foster one another. Prager continues that clarifying an individual's goals and desires in life through personal self-disclosure may actually strengthen the relationship as people learn more about their partners and that which they have in common. At the same time, Prager continues, that having an intimate and trusting

relationship provides a means through which one may explore and clarify such goals and desires, by simply providing a caring listener to speak with.

It has been noted that a romantic relationship can be beneficial for the psychological well-being of a student. When students end a precollege relationship, they are better able to adjust to the challenges and new environment that college brings. However, if a student enters into a romantic relationship *after* entering college, this too can be psychologically beneficial (Paul et al., 1998). Whether or not beginning a new romantic relationship upon entering college bodes well for their psychological well-being, several students apparently are not willing to terminate a previous relationship as is evident by the over 1.3 million students that continue such relationships (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991; Guldner, 1996).

Difficulties Warrant Adaptation

Guldner (1996) discovered a link between physical separation and clinical levels of depression that exists in long-distance romantic relationships but not in geographically proximal relationships. Other researchers have found anger, anxiety, loneliness, social skills deficits, relationship conflicts, and even relationship violence to be related to the attempted maintenance of LDRs (Guldner, 1996; Lopez & Lent, 1991).

Hortacsu and Karanci (1987) reported that distance between partners is as strong a factor leading to the dissolution of premarital relationships as is general incompatibility. Physical separation from their partner is not something that people take lightly. Guldner (1996) reports a series of three stages

through which individuals proceed in response to separation. Individuals first protest the separation and become angry. Upon realizing that protesting won't improve the situation, they often turn to despair; a feeling of depression, knowing that a loved one is not near and that there is nothing that can be done to remove the distance factor. Finally, detachment occurs following prolonged separation, which serves to prevent further emotional pain.

At times the pain of separation is so devastating and students consider it so unbearable that they see no other means of alleviating the hurt than to end their own lives. Guldner (1996) reports that romantic relationships are the number one concern of college students during these years. This concern may be attributed to the fact that the single most common life stressor of those under 21 years of age who decide to end their own lives is "conflict-separation-rejection" (Guldner, 1996, p.290). This stressor apparently is more burdensome in young women than in young men as young men actually commit suicide over the loss of a loved one less often than their female counterparts. Gaylin (1986) hypothesized that this is because although a man views a relationship more as an achievement and a chance to elevate his own social status level, women invest their pride, confidence, and personal identity into their relationships. Thus, upon the dissolution of the relationship, a man merely returns to his former status level, while a woman losses a significant part of her being. This suggests that the maintenance of a long-distance romantic relationship is more difficult and exhausting for women that for men while at the same time it is also more worthy of a woman's time and effort.

Although it can be extremely painful for many first-year college students, the fact remains that over 1.3 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991) students remain in LDRs. It is a sacrifice that two individuals voluntarily take upon themselves. This sacrificing of one's own interests often shows concern and care for the partner, and is likely to strengthen the relationship (Duck, 1994). When two people in a relationship are satisfied they often ignore the negative aspects and focus primarily on the positive (Sternberg, 1987). Thus, although it is often a very difficult situation, the physical separation which a LDR inherently entails may actually serve to enhance the relationship, assuming that the involved parties are able to successfully deal with being apart from one another.

It has been stated that we are more likely to be attracted to those individuals who maintain a close physical proximity to us (Berscheid & Walster, 1978), as this allows for more frequent and personal contact. In fact, Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989) claim that frequent contact is one of the single most important factors in maintaining closeness with another individual. However, sharing a close physical proximity with another individual is not always possible. Sternberg (1987), on the other hand, asserts that there exist a certain number of factors that lead to the maintenance or dissolution of a romantic relationship regardless of the location of the constituent partners. If partners do not take one another for granted, give the relationship a high priority, tolerate what cannot be changed, create positive times with each other when together, and work through the difficult ones, the likelihood of a

successful relationship will be greatly enhanced. However, Sternberg states that if the couple exhibits poor communication, grows apart, cannot enjoy their time shared together, and lacks support and understanding during the difficult times, the relationship is much more likely to fail.

The inherent conflict that is unavoidable in any relationship need not necessarily be deleterious. In fact when partners work together to find mutually beneficial solutions the relationship is strengthened, and partners come to realize that their relationship is secure enough to weather such problems should they arise again in the future. However, the trust in the future of the relationship that solving conflicts and dealing with problems tends to produce must originate from the efforts of *both* partners (Duck, 1994).

It is important for both partners, and not just one, to put forth the necessary time and effort into making a relationship last. In addition to giving the relationship a high priority, sharing positive experiences together, and working through the difficult times, perhaps one of the most basic tenets of a successful relationship is simply listening. In fact, college students have rated self-disclosure as one of the single most important factors relating to relational intimacy (Prager, 1995; Shulman, 1995). This self-disclosure leads to greater levels of relationship satisfaction, intimacy, commitment, and a more constructive approach to problem solving.

Relational Investments and Identity Assimilation

The willingness to weather through difficult times and the desire to self-disclose personal information are examples of relationship investments. It

perhaps goes without saying that a lasting relationship requires the investment of its members. There are, however, two distinct types of investment that warrant differentiation. Extrinsic investments can originate from any potential partner (e.g., social or financial status, and physical attractiveness). Intrinsic investments (e.g., feelings of compassion and unconditional acceptance) are, however, typically linked to a specific partner and take time to develop (Simpson, 1987). Intrinsic investments are thus stronger than extrinsic investments and act to enhance further the likelihood of commitment.

Lund (1985) defines commitment as an intention to maintain a relationship that is strengthened by the investments that each member brings into the relationship as well as by the specific actions of those partners. The investments are typically intrinsic in nature (e.g., purchasing a gift, writing a poem, preparing a romantic dinner), in that they are designed with a specific partner in mind. This level of commitment can then produce the same level of closeness that Berscheid et al. (1989) suggest is necessary for the successful maintenance of a relationship. Consequently, a circular pattern is established, in that a strong relationship with intrinsic investments leads to commitment and closeness, and that commitment and closeness in turn lead one to develop a stronger relationship with more intrinsic investments.

When a relationship reaches this level of closeness, the partners act as though some or all aspects of their partner are actually the individual's own (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Although it may appear to be confusion of the self with the other, Prager (1995) asserts that it is much more. In fact,

Prager states that romantic partners seen as a couple actually add something to each other's identity. In losing oneself to a romantic relationship, one incorporates and assimilates part of one's partner into one's own identity, and part of one's own identity is incorporated into that of the partner. This complete giving of oneself results in no loss, but rather the gaining of a larger self (Gaylin, 1986). However, as Shulman (1995) points out, we must be cautious not to become overconsumed. Only in horizontal and non-hierarchical relationships, in which both partners are looked at as being equal can a proper balance of individuality and partner assimilation exist. For should one partner dominate the other, the assimilation would be unbalanced.

Dealing with the Distance

Different people will naturally adapt to LDRs in different ways. For some the relationship will be cumbersome and difficult; they will have a hard time working through the distance and a difficult time maintaining closeness, intimacy, and connection. Yet for others, the relationship will continue to be an exhilarating and wonderful experience, full of warmth, love, and joy, regardless of the physical distance separating the two partners. It is suspected that both an individual's locus of control and method of coping ought to assist in predicting whether or not their relationship will survive.

Dependent on an individual's past experience with reinforced behavior, that individual will be more or less likely to make the association between an action and the expected resultant behavior (Rotter, 1966). Those individuals who believe that a desired event is contingent upon their own behavior are said

to possess an *internal* locus of control. For example, an individual holding such an orientation who seeks a date is likely to actively ask out a variety of people until receiving an answer of yes. On the other hand, those individuals who believe that a desired event is contingent solely upon luck or chance, or that a desired event is otherwise out of their control, are said to possess an *external* locus of control. Thus, should the same individual seeking a date possess an external orientation, s/he may simply sit by idly waiting for something to happen, for this individual would believe that if s/he is meant to have a date, something will just happen without any additional effort (Duttweiler, 1984).

Regardless of one's control orientation, all individuals in a long-distance relationship will need to engage in some kind of coping mechanisms. Pape and Arias (1995) define coping as cognitive and/or behavioral efforts to manage stress. Helgeson (1994a) adds that positive expectancies will lead a person to engage in more productive coping strategies.

Perhaps an initial response to a stressful situation is to ignore it in the hopes that it will go away with time. This may be viewed as the simplest of the three most common coping strategies as it is solely a cognitive strategy; one in which an individual blocks out intrusive and bothersome thoughts. Although avoidance of a stressful situation can be useful in the early stages of the stressor and when used solely in a short-term manner, prolonged usage of avoidance is ineffective, and can even have a deleterious effect upon one's health (Ingledew, Hardy, & Cooper, 1997; Strentz & Auerbach, 1988).

Perhaps the initial shock of the situation leaves a person believing that there is no controlling the outcome. Though with time, in most situations individuals seek to maintain a perception of control and thus use a more active method of coping (Reese, Kliewer, & Suarez, 1997).

It is when stress dealing resources abound, or an individual feels that s/he has control and thus can conjure up helpful resources that that person is more capable of dealing with the stressors in a more productive manner (Ingledew et al., 1997). When a person has this feeling of control (or possesses an internal locus of control) s/he is more likely to engage in problem-focused coping, that is this person is likely to deal with a situation head on and engage in problem-solving tactics designed to improve the situation and alleviate the stress (Pape & Arias, 1995). Unlike with avoidance, those that engage in problem-focused coping use behavioral methods of stress management. Likewise if an individual feels that a situation is out of one's control, that person would be classified as having an external locus of control. Such a person is *less* likely to engage in problem-focused coping. In the past, researchers such as Rotter (1966) believed that these individuals took a passive approach to stressors, analogous to the avoidance strategy. However, more recent researchers have come to the conclusion that with the addition of resources such as social support, these individuals actually engage in another strategy, which has been deemed emotion-focused coping (Ingledew et al., 1997). Emotion-focused coping is a cognitive effort that attempts to regulate and control the feelings associated with the stressor so as to decrease its effects

(Pape & Arias, 1995). It is thus speculated that a person who possesses an external locus of control and lacks a resource such as social support, would be the individual most likely to engage in avoidance coping.

To further complicate things, Pape and Arias (1995) add that because emotional arousal can interfere with a person's cognitive appraisals of a situation and the ability to deal with these situations in the most efficient manner, successful problem-focused coping is somewhat dependent upon successful emotion-focused coping. To recapitulate, we can view these three coping styles along a series of levels. If a person has an external locus of control orientation and lacks social support, s/he is likely to attempt to avoid the stressor. However, if that person is able to produce a social support system, then s/he is more capable of emotion-focused coping. At the top level is the individual who possesses an internal locus of control orientation, and thus can engage in problem-focused coping that directly alleviates the stressor. Although it may be easier to do with a social support system, the person with an internal locus of control does not need social support to engage in productive problem-focused coping.

Hypotheses of the Present Study

We began the present study by hypothesizing that the two groups would differ in terms of the distance that partners would have to endure. Specifically, the maintenance group was expected to have been physically closer to their partners than the dissolution group.

We believed that contact would also be an issue of discrepancy between the groups, as well as over time. As academic demands built up, new friendships formed, and time progressed the maintenance group was expected to maintain consistent levels of contact over time. In contrast, the dissolution group was expected to have less frequent contact between partners over time In addition to contact, a similar trend was expected for number of visits. As time went on we predicted that the dissolution group would have less visits compared to the maintenance group, which was expected to hold a consistent increase in number of visits throughout the study.

We further predicted that a number of internal as well as external factors may be related to whether or not the relationships of participants would remain in tact. One such external factor we hypothesized to exert an influence between the groups was academic demands. We predicted that the dissolution group would have less time due to academic demands than the maintenance group, thus preventing them from making contact and visits as frequently as they would have liked to do. An internal factor expected to differ both between the groups and over time was the amount of love and commitment that the partners shared for one another. As time went on the maintenance group was predicted to hold consistent levels of love and commitment, while those levels for the dissolution group would begin at a similar, though lower level with the maintenance group and then drop over time.

With the higher levels of commitment predicted in the maintenance group, it appeared logical that levels of infidelity would remain low. Thus we

further hypothesized that the maintenance group would maintain consistently low levels of infidelity, increasing little over the course of the study. In contrast, the dissolution group was predicted to engage in increasingly greater levels of infidelity prior to the dissolution of their relationship.

We next sought to uncover potential reasons for partner infidelity. Some individuals may feel a need to simply have a partner with them at all times, that is to constantly be dating somebody. Other individuals may feel left out or alone when they go out with their friends and they are the only ones without a date. In addition, participants may feel the peer pressure of their fellow students, enticing them to be unfaithful to their long-distance partners. While it was hypothesized that the maintenance group would hold consistently low levels of each of these variables, we also predicted that the dissolution group would report greater levels of each of these variables immediately prior to the dissolution of their relationships.

Another hypothesis of this study was that the maintenance group would have consistently high levels of internal locus of control, as it suggests they would then be more inclined to take the necessary actions towards maintaining a relationship, feeling that the situation is not out of their hands. We hypothesized however, that the dissolution group would exhibit progressively lower levels of internal locus of control with the passage of time, and thus the perception that they cannot control the events of their lives.

Further, we hypothesized that the maintenance group would exhibit more active styles of coping. The maintenance group was specifically

predicted to perceive initially higher levels of problem-focused coping and social support than the dissolution group. The dissolution group in turn, was predicted to exhibit lower perceptions of problem-focused coping and social support with time. In addition, the maintenance group was expected to possess progressively lower perceptions of avoidance coping over time, while the dissolution group with time was predicted to exhibit consistently higher perceptions of avoidance coping.

A final pair of hypotheses relating to perceived gender roles were examined. Particularly, we believed that those participants possessing a feminine gender role orientation would be more relationship oriented, and thus belong to the maintenance group. On the other hand, those participants possessing a masculine gender role orientation would be less relationship oriented and more autonomous, and thus belong to the dissolution group.

Methods

Participants

An initial sample of 58 (51 female, 7 male) first-year college students were recruited at the beginning of the fall semester. These participants came from a private, urban, mid-sized university in the northeast. All came to campus this year with a steady boyfriend or girlfriend not currently on campus with them. All participants were provided credit towards the fulfillment of a course requirement for having participated in this study.

Due to the minimal number of male participants, we decided not to include the males in the final sample. During the course of the four months in

which the study took place, four females dropped out (for a total attrition rate of 7.8%), and two had broken up with their partners prior to the first data collection. This provided for a final sample of 45 female, first-year college students with partners not currently on campus with them at the time of the first testing session. Except for having to be a first-year college student currently dating somebody not on campus, there were no further restrictions for those whom were permitted to partake in the study. The final group was made up of a predominately (86.7%) Caucasian sample. A total of 4.4% were African American, 2.2% were Asian, and 6.7% classified themselves as other (mixed races or European). By the end of the study, 2.2% of the women were 17 years old, 91.2% were 18, and 6.6% were 19.

They had been dating their partner for a mean duration of 1.36 years. Some of the partners were as close as 35 miles away, while others were as far as 2064 miles away. The mean distance was 312 miles, and the median distance was 255 miles. 52.3% of the partners were away from home at another college, 6.8% were at home in college, 22.7% were at home in high school, 13.6% were at home working, one partner was away from home working, and another was in the military.

During the course of the study the 45 women divided themselves into two separate groups based on whether or not they were still dating the same partner. We began the study during the third week of classes. At that point all women in the final sample were still dating the same partner they had when they came to campus. At time two, 86.7% were still dating the same partner,

and by the end of the study only 75.6% of the women stated that they were still dating the same person that they were when they came to college.

Measures

Overview

Two similar though not identical booklets were prepared for the present study. One was designed for those still dating the partner they had when they came to campus (see Appendix A). The other booklet was designed for those whose broke up with their partners after the study had already begun (see Appendix A). While items regarding the relationship in the still dating group were phrased in the present tense, the same items in the dissolution group were phrased in the past tense. The dissolution group was additionally asked who had ended the relationship and why; two questions which were not asked of the still dating group. In addition, a scale of commitment and love towards one's partner was omitted in the booklet designed for the dissolution group.

Despite these minor differences the booklets for the two groups were nearly identical. Both booklets began with a series of demographic questions. They further consisted of previously published and validated measures, as well as a series of nine items I generated specifically for this study.

Coping Strategy Indicator

The Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI; Amirkhan, 1990) is a measure of strategies individuals use in response to stressful situations. It is a 33 item measure scored on a 3 point Likert scale and has been factor-analytically

woven to consist of three subscales (problem solving, seeking support, and avoidance). Unlike previous coping measures, the CSI is free from demographic influences such as gender, age, and education. This permits the usage of the scale without adjusting for the population. In addition, the CSI scales have been reported to approximate orthogonality more than previously developed coping measures.

Amirkhan (1990) also reported that the internal reliability is superior to its predecessors, with Chronbach alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .93 for each of its three scales. In the present study, although we found an alpha coefficient of .68 for the avoidance subscale during the first testing session, al[l] other alphas ranged from .80 to .95. Table 1 provides the specific alpha levels for each subscale during each of the testing sessions, as well as overall alpha levels of this measure.

Internal Control Index

The Internal Control Index (ICI; Duttweiler, 1984) was used to measure locus of control. The ICI has 28 items and is scored along a five point Likert scale. Duttweiler used Rotter's (1966) I-E scale to attain convergent validity. The resulting correlation (r= -.39), was negative because the score in the Rotter I-E scale results from summing externally oriented items, while the ICI score reflects an internal locus of control.

It was decided that the Rotter (1966) I-E scale would not be used for the present study due to a variety of criticisms that have been made against it in the literature. It has been shown that the use of a single external scale is

inappropriate, given that investigators using the scale have found it to have two or more factor-analytically derived scales. Duttweiler (1984) used varimax rotation to produce two distinct subscales of the ICI. Self-Confidence accounted for 76.9% of the common variance, and autonomous behavior accounted for the other 23.1% of the common variance.

In a test of the ICI, Meyers and Wong (1988) as well as Duttweiler (1984) found a total test alpha coefficient of .85. In the present study we found self-confidence to have produced alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .81 across times, and the alpha coefficients for autonomous behavior ranged from .74 to .84 (see Table 1).

Personal Attributes Questionnaire

The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) consists of 24 bipolar items measuring stereotypical personality characteristics. Each item asks respondents to indicate along a five-point Likert scale the degree to which the characteristic describes them. The PAQ is divided into three subscales: masculinity, femininity, and masculinity-femininity.

Chronbach's alpha coefficients were .85 for the masculinity subscale, .82 for the femininity scale, and .78 for the masculinity-femininity scale in the original data reported by Spence and Helmreich (1978). In the present study, alpha coefficients for the masculinity subscale ranged from .71 to .82, for the femininity subscale .69 to .75, and for the masculinity-femininity subscale .74

to .77. Table 1 shows the specific alpha levels for all testing sessions as well as the total test coefficients.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale is designed to assess a participant's attempt at responding in a socially desirable manner. Having participants respond to 33 true or false items, it is able to measure a respondent's attempt at faking good in such a way that is independent of clinical abnormalities (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). This is something which has been a problem with previous scales such as the Edwards (1957) Social Desirability Scale, which was standardized using a clinically abnormal population.

A correlation between the Marlowe-Crowne and Edwards scales (r= .35, p< .01) provides evidence of convergent validity for the former measure. The authors of the Marlowe-Crowne (1960) scale computed a Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficient of .88. In the present study the KR-20 internal reliability coefficient ranged from .77 to .81 (see Table 1).

Additional Items

In addition to the aforementioned measures, I developed a series of nine other items especially for this study. Specifically, two items asked about the degree to which participants perceived that academic demands prevented them from contacting their partners as often as they would have liked during their first few weeks on campus. One item read, "Time spent studying often made it difficult for me to contact (phone, email, letters...) my partner". Two

more questions asked the degree to which participants perceived themselves to feel left out when their friends all had dates and they did not during their first few weeks at college (e.g., "It bothered me that when I would go out with my friends and I was the only one without a date because my partner was not on campus"). Another pair of questions asked participants the degree to which they perceived their friends to have pressured them into being unfaithful to their partner during the first few weeks they were on campus (e.g., "My friends tried to convince me to be unfaithful to my partner"). Three additional questions inquired about the degree to which participants had a general need to be consistently dating somebody at any given point in time (e.g., "I have a strong need to always be going out with somebody"). All items were keyed on a 7 point Likert response scale and are reprinted in Appendix A.

Two questions regarding the number of visits that the participants made to see their partners and the number of visits the partners made to see the participants were summed into a single score called visits. Three other items, phone calls, emails, and hand written letters, likewise were summed into a single score called contact. Finally, three additional items were summed to create a single variable referred to as infidelity (the number of times the partner had kissed or passionately made out with, dated, or had sex with someone other than her steady partner).

As mentioned earlier, the booklet designed for the group whose participants had broken up during the course of the study was asked a pair of additional questions, not asked of the still dating group. They were asked

specifically if they, their partner, or both of them had mutually decided to end the relationship. We then asked an open ended question inquiring as to why the relationship had ended. These questions and the summarized items above are reproduced in Appendix A.

Lund Scales of Love and Commitment

In an attempt to better understand individual reasoning for maintaining relationships, Lund (1985) developed a series of scales designed to differentiate and measure love, commitment, investments, and rewards regarding a relationship, the first two of which are used in the present study. Lund defines commitment as the desire to continue a relationship, and love as the positive feelings a person holds for another. Each of the two subscales has nine items and is answered on a 7 point Likert scale.

Chronbach's alpha levels showed an internal reliability of .88 for the commitment scale and .91 for the love scale (Lund, 1985). In the present study, we found alpha coefficients for the commitment scale to range during testing sessions from .64 to .84, and for the love scale from .79 to .87. The overall test reliability coefficients ranged from .82 to .91 (see Table 1).

Procedure

Over the course of the study participants divided themselves between the two groups as mentioned above. Participants were tested three times over the course of 4 months. Each testing session was five to six weeks apart. They were tested in small groups of about 25.

During the first testing session, all participants were provided with a brief introduction to the study. They were asked to take the experiment seriously and to answer carefully and honestly. They were also reminded that their answers would remain completely confidential and anonymous. An informed consent form was then distributed to all participants. For those who were under 18 years of age, consent was obtained via a signed form from a parent or guardian, in addition to assent from the actual participants.

In order to keep track of the participants over the course of the four months in which the study took place, participant names were placed on the first sheet of the booklet. The only other information on this sheet was a subject number and a designation as to which group she placed herself. These sheets were then removed so as to maintain anonymity. This first sheet was used to form a list of participants so that during subsequent testing sessions, the booklets could be matched up with the same individuals.

At the end of the third testing session as participants left the room, they were verbally thanked for participating in the experiment and provided a one page debriefing statement. This reminded participants of the importance and purpose of the current study. It thanked them for their participation and provided them with our names and numbers in the event that they should have any questions about either their participation in the study, or the study itself.

Results

<u>Preliminary Analyses</u>

In an earlier longitudinal study Lopez and Lent (1991) found a significant correlation between autonomous behavior and commitment ($\underline{r}$=.26, $\underline{p}$<.05) during their initial testing, which consisted solely of individuals still dating at the end of their study. Within the present study a correlation was likewise found in the maintenance group at the first testing session ($\underline{r}$=.37, $\underline{p}$=.03), though there was no significant correlations between the two variables at either the second or third sessions.

In another study, Simpson (1987) reported that at a 3 month followup testing, individuals still dating their original partners had greater levels of autonomous behavior than individuals not still dating their current partners. A t-test used in the present study was able to replicate this finding ($\underline{t}$(41)=1.95, $\underline{p}$=.06). The maintenance group had a mean score on autonomous behavior of 44.0 ($\underline{SD}$=6.72), while the dissolution group had a mean score of 39.10 ($\underline{SD}$=7.80).

Ingledew et al. (1997) followed up their maintenance group one year after their initial testing. They reported a correlation of $\underline{r}$=.53, $\underline{p}$<.001 for avoidance, $\underline{r}$=.59, $\underline{p}$<.001 for problem solving, and $\underline{r}$=.55, $\underline{p}$<.001 for social support. Likewise, in the present study, each of the three subscales of the CSI were significantly correlated with themselves over time in the maintenance group. Avoidance had a correlation between the first and third testing sessions of $\underline{r}$=.56, $\underline{p}$<.001. Between time one and time three problem solving had a

correlation of r=.62, p<.001. Seeking support was more strongly related between the two times with a correlation of r=.86, p<.001. All of the correlations of the CSI subscales as they relate to themselves over time in the maintenance group are reported in Table 2.

Measuring the frequency of phone conversations between partners, Helgeson (1994a) found that the maintenance group had significantly more conversations over the phone than did the dissolution group. In the present study we did not find a significant difference between the groups in the number of phone calls made to partners. The mean for the maintenance group was 7.32 (SD=6.26) phone calls a week, while the dissolution group had a mean of 5.74 (SD=8.47) phone calls a week.

Measuring initial levels of a broader contact variable, Helgeson (1994b) found a significant difference between the groups, with the maintenance group engaging in more frequent phone calls, more visits, and writing more letters. We were unable to replicate this finding in the present study. The maintenance group had a mean contact score of 13.19 (SD=9.56), and the dissolution group had a mean contact score of 10.47 (SD=11.0).

Primary Analyses

Distance and contact.

We found that there was no significant difference between the groups in the distance that they were located from their partners (t(42)<1). Though nonsignificant, the maintenance group actually endured a greater mean distance

($\underline{M}$=322.44, $\underline{SD}$=392.95) than did the dissolution group ($\underline{M}$=280.40, $\underline{SD}$=158.46).

A 2 (group)X 3 (time) analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring the amount of contact between the partners showed no main effects, but did result in a significant interaction ($\underline{F}$(2,82)=3.18, $\underline{p}$=.05). Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of contact for each group over time.

A fairly new means of communication, email, was examined using a 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA. There were no significant effects.

A third 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA measuring the number of visits made between the two partners showed two main effects and an interaction. During the course of the study there was a strong main effect of time in that both groups made more visits as the semester progressed ($\underline{F}$(2,84)=10.66, $\underline{p}$<.001). At time one the mean score for both groups was 1.11 ($\underline{SD}$=1.47), at time two the mean was 3.24 ($\underline{SD}$=3.16), and by time three the mean was 5.27 ($\underline{SD}$=5.60). There was also a significant difference between the groups, with the maintenance group making more visits than the dissolution group, as would be expected ($\underline{F}$(1,42)=4.47, $\underline{p}$=.04). The maintenance group had an overall mean of 3.72 ($\underline{SD}$=4.44), while the dissolution group had an overall mean of 1.47 ($\underline{SD}$=2.16). The interaction ($\underline{F}$(2,84)=4.45, $\underline{p}$=.02) further showed the total number of visits to have increased significantly more in the maintenance group than the dissolution group. Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations for both groups over time.

It may be that perceptions of academic demands in the first few weeks of college are in part responsible for the discrepancy in the number of visits made by the two groups. A 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA measuring whether students claimed they would have contacted and visited their partners more if they had fewer academic demands, however, proved to be nonsignificant.

Love and commitment.

The Lund (1985) scales of love and commitment were not measured on participants if their relationships had dissolved. Thus, at the third testing session there is not a group of participants in the dissolution group with data for these two measures. That being so, a 2 (group) X 2 (time) ANOVA was performed on each scale.

For the love scale, a group by time interaction was found, along with a pair of main effects (see Table 5). The maintenance group had an overall mean of 54.56 (SD=5.72), while the dissolution group had an overall mean of 40.97 (SD=10.71). At time one the two groups had a combined mean of 51.4 (SD=8.87), and at time two they had a mean of 52.63 (SD=8.60). While the participants in the maintenance group slightly increased the levels of love displayed towards their partners from a mean of 54.44 (SD=6.01) at time one to 54.68 (SD=5.50) at time two, the dissolution group steadily decreased their levels of love. At time one the dissolution group had a mean score of 42.0 (SD=9.92) and at time two had dropped to 38.7 (SD=13.23). Figure 1 displays a graphical image of this interaction. A t-test also with significant

results ($\underline{t}(43)$=5.04, $\underline{p}$<.001) showed that the maintenance group possessed greater levels of love than the dissolution group specifically at time one.

The commitment scale likewise produced a highly significant interaction ($\underline{F}(1,37)$=8.51, $\underline{p}$=.006). The maintenance group had a mean of 52.39 ($\underline{SD}$=7.88) at time one and a mean of 54.05 ($\underline{SD}$=6.70) at time two. The dissolution group had a mean of 38.91 ($\underline{SD}$=12.92) at time one and dropped to 38.0 ($\underline{SD}$=9.97) at time two. Figure 2 provides a graphical summary of the interaction of commitment. A strong main effect between the groups ($\underline{F}(1,37)$=12.44, $\underline{p}$=.001) as well as a marginal main effect of time ($\underline{F}(1,37)$=3.20, $\underline{p}$=.08) were also found. The maintenance group had an overall mean of 53.22 ($\underline{SD}$=7.30), while the dissolution group had an overall mean of 38.63 ($\underline{SD}$=11.75). At time one the groups had a combined mean of 49.02 ($\underline{SD}$=10.95), and at time two they had a combined mean of 51.93 ($\underline{SD}$=8.93). A t-test showed that specifically at time one, participants in the maintenance group had significantly greater levels of commitment than participants in the dissolution group (t(43)=4.21, p<.001).

Infidelity.

In examining the relationship between infidelity and love, correlations in both the maintenance and the dissolution groups were nonsignificant at all three testing sessions. For the maintenance group, the correlation between infidelity and commitment approached conventional levels of significance ($\underline{r}$=-.29, $\underline{p}$=.09) at time one. Correlations between infidelity and commitment in the maintenance group were nonsignificant at the other testing sessions, as were

they during all testing sessions for those participants whose relationships did not last.

Once a participant had broken up with her partner she was no longer capable of infidelity, and thus at the third testing session there was a group of participants who had ended their relationships prior to the second testing, and were consequently unable to be unfaithful to their partners. This led us to separate the dissolution group into two, one group of participants who had ended their relationships prior to the second testing, and another who had ended their relationships prior to the third testing session, while omitting the actual third time from analyses. A 3 (group) X 2 (time) ANOVA led to the discovery of a significant groups main effect, time main effect, and an interaction (see Table 6).

The maintenance group had an overall mean of .55 (SD=1.96), the group that ended their relationships by time two had an overall mean of 2.14 (SD=2.92), and the group that ended their relationships by time three had an overall mean of 4.4 (SD=4.62). At time one the three groups had a combined mean of .47 (SD=1.25), which rose to .98 (SD=2.48) at time two. As for the interaction, the maintenance group had a mean of only .15 (SD=.61) at time one and .35 (SD=1.45) at time two. The group that ended their relationships by the second testing session had a mean of 1.5 (SD=2.35) at time one, and a mean of 1.67 (SD=2.88) at time two. Finally, the group that ended their relationships by the third testing session had an initial mean of 1.4 (SD=1.95),

which increased to 4.4 ($\underline{SD}$=4.62) by time two. Figure 3 shows a clear pictorial representation of these scores.

There is an abundance of potential reasons for student infidelity, regardless of whether or not that infidelity relates to the dissolution of one's relationship. One potential variable that we chose to look at was the need that an individual has to consistently be dating somebody. Although no interaction was present, a 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA showed two main effects, one between the groups ($\underline{F}$(1,43)=6.05, $\underline{p}$=.02), and one marginal effect across time ($\underline{F}$(2,86)=2.88, $\underline{p}$=.06). The dissolution group had a higher mean score ($\underline{M}$=10.30; $\underline{SD}$=6.62) than the maintenance group (6.67;$\underline{SD}$=3.96). The mean scores were 6.96 ($\underline{SD}$=5.02), 7.64 ($\underline{SD}$=4.84) and 8.07 ($\underline{SD}$=5.11) for times 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Another aspect potentially linked with student infidelity that we chose to look at was the degree to which participants felt left out or bothered during the first few weeks when they would go out with friends on campus and were the only ones without a date. A 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA however showed no significant results.

A third variable examined along the same lines as the previous was the degree to which friends on campus attempted to persuade the participants to date another person or to be unfaithful to their long-distance partner. A 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA showed a borderline significant interaction. In addition to the interaction there were similarly a pair of borderline main effects present between the groups and across time (see Table 7).

The means for the maintenance group were 3.12 ($\underline{SD}$=2.40) for time one, 3.35 ($\underline{SD}$=2.39) for time two, and 3.18 ($\underline{SD}$=2.10) for time three. Concurrently, the means for the dissolution group slowly increased from 3.82 ($\underline{SD}$=2.14) for time one, to 4.64 ($\underline{SD}$=3.64) at time two, and was 5.64 ($\underline{SD}$=3.41) at time three. Figure 4 presents a pictorial display of the group by time interaction of perceived peer pressure. The mean scores generally increased over time, being 3.29 ($\underline{SD}$=2.33), 3.67 ($\underline{SD}$=2.76), and 3.78 ($\underline{SD}$=2.66), for times 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The dissolution group had a higher mean score (M=4.70; SD=3.13) than the maintenance group ($\underline{M}$=3.22; $\underline{SD}$=2.28).

Locus of control and coping strategies.

A 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA was conducted on the levels of self-confidence that participants displayed. The analysis of this subscale of the ICI resulted in no significant findings. However, a 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA of autonomous behavior, the other subscale of the ICI, presented a marginal group effect ($\underline{F}$(1,41)=3.42, $\underline{p}$=.07). The mean score for autonomous behavior was 44.02 ($\underline{SD}$=6.27) for the maintenance group and 40.34 ($\underline{SD}$=6.54) for the dissolution group.

A 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA performed on the problem solving subscale of the CSI produced a marginal main effect of time ($\underline{F}$(2,86)=2.45), $\underline{p}$=.09), but produced no other significant results. At time one there was a mean of 21.49 ($\underline{SD}$=4.73), at time two the mean was 22.47 (SD=4.38), and at time three the mean was 22.53 (SD=5.15). Another 2 (group) X 3 (time)

ANOVA was performed on the second subscale of the CSI, social support, and resulted in no significant results. Avoidance, in a likewise manner, produced no significant findings.

Gender role personality traits.

The two most frequently employed subscales of the PAQ, the masculinity and femininity subscales, were analyzed. We used a of 2 (group) X 3 (time) ANOVA for each, and found no significant results in either analysis.

Qualitative findings.

Due to the small sample size, particularly within the dissolution group, the majority of analyses did not separate those participants whose relationships ultimately did not work out into two groups based on when the relationship dissolved. Instead, those individuals whose relationships ended prior to the second testing as well as those whose relationships ended prior to the third testing were incorporated into one larger all encompassing dissolution group.

The group of participants whose relationships dissolved by the time of the second testing session consisted of six individuals. Three of these individuals ended the relationship themselves, two ended mutually, and one was ended by the long-distance partner. There were an additional five participants whose relationships lasted past the second testing session, but dissolved prior to the third testing session. Of these five participants, four ended the relationship on their own and one was a mutual dissolution.

Of all the participants whose relationships ended during the course of the study, 64% stated that distance was a major factor leading to the

dissolution of their relationship. In particular, four of the six participants whose relationships ended by time two claimed distance as a reason. Likewise three of the five participants whose relationships ended by time three gave distance as a major reason for the dissolution of their relationships.

Some participants stated that distance was the sole reason for ending their relationships. One participant who ended the relationship herself simply stated, "It was too hard to have a relationship and be so far away". Others claimed that distance had little or no effect upon the dissolution of their relationship, as is expressed by the following woman who said, "I don't want a relationship now. I enjoy my freedom [and] I didn't want to make the effort". Finally a few participants claimed that distance led to problems in addition to the distance itself. "We decided that we couldn't uphold a long distance relationship. Phone bill got very high and I didn't really trust my partner anymore."

Discussion

We conducted the present study in order to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of long-distance romantic relationships in first-year college students. Of particular interest was the role of distance in these relationships, and how distance would impact whether or not the partners would remain together. A number of personality measures including the PAQ and ICI were used to determine if personality played a key role. The CSI helped us examine the issues of coping styles. A series of questions we created helped us to examine perceptions of peer pressure, academic demands, and feelings about

needing a romantic partner at all. Further, commitment and love were examined to see how they related to either the maintenance or the dissolution of one's romantic relationship.

<u>Preliminary Findings</u>

We began the present study by successfully replicating Lopez and Lent (1991) in correlating autonomous behavior with one's level of commitment. Autonomous behavior as used in the ICI may be thought of as a desire to take control, dominate a situation, or the possession of a "take charge" attitude. Thus, it can be seen that the participants who held the strongest levels of this "take charge" attitude at the first testing session had higher levels of commitment at the same time.

Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder (1982) state that individuals high in autonomous behavior will go to any extent to maintain the perception of control. Whether they actually possess control over a situation or not is irrelevant; it is the perception of control that remains important. Reese et al. (1997) state that even when an event may be objectively viewed as being out of the hands of people they will attempt to attribute control to themselves if at all possible. But it is fairly easy to see that not all situations can be controlled. Thus, with time, people may give up on their desired perceptions of control. Initially, committed college students may maintain a take charge attitude, consistent with the correlation between commitment and autonomous behavior. However, as time progresses this association may wane as individuals begin to realize that they have no control over the distance factor.

They cannot make their partner live physically closer to themselves or remain at the same university and move closer to their partners.

Our data also showed that autonomous behavior at the end of the study was different between the two groups, a replication of Simpson's (1987) finding. The maintenance group possessed significantly higher levels of this take charge attitude than did the dissolution group. With this take charge attitude came commitment at the beginning of the study, although the association had disappeared by the end of the study. This may indicate that maintaining greater levels of autonomous behavior may play a key role over time as relationship stressors continue, although not necessarily a continued role in the maintenance of commitment. That is, with the distance factor being ever present, autonomous behavior may help participants deal with the stress, but having a take charge attitude does not necessarily make a person more committed to her partner.

Helgeson (1994a, 1994b) reported levels of contact between partners to play an important role in the maintenance of a long-distance relationship. She found that those individuals who had greater levels of contact and well as more frequent phone calls were more likely to belong to the maintenance group. This is a finding that inherently makes sense. If you wish to maintain a relationship it makes logical sense that keeping in touch with your partner is an important issue. Of course, it is also likely that keeping in contact facilitates relationship maintenance. We, however, did not find a difference in the level of

contact between the groups. It is believed that the changing nature of our world may be at play here.

Helgeson (1994a) included phone calls and written letters in her contact variable. Today there is an overabundance of phone companies and calling cards from which individuals in this country can choose. Price wars between these companies are changing the face of phone conversations on an almost daily basis. Further, with more modern (particularly electronic) means of communication, hand written letters may not today play the same role that they played earlier this decade. This may help to explain the similarity between the two groups in terms of their average levels of contact. The number of written letters for instance, may be similar between the groups because neither group writes very many.

We took this into consideration when creating the contact variable. In addition to phone calls and hand written letters, emails were also examined. Six years ago when Helgeson's (1994a) study was published, email had yet to explode as the major means of communication that it has become today. Email and instant messages, two commonly used and fairly new modes of communication, may dilute the need to speak with one's partner on the phone as often as in the past. With modern technological forms of communication being at the disposal of today's college students, traditional forms of communication may no longer play such a vital role in the maintenance of a romantic relationship separated by distance.

Further, Helgeson adds that her finding must be viewed with caution. It was expected that the dissolution group, having broken off their relationship, would stop speaking to one another and stop writing letters to each other.

These replications provide support for the data presented in the present study. Despite the small sample sizes, the sample used here has been shown to be similar to samples used in prior research on several critical measures. That being so, it ought also to be a fair predictor and representative estimator of the entire population of first year female college students in long-distance romantic relationships.

Primary Findings

Contact and visits.

Initially it was surprising to discover that there were no group differences in the total distance between partners that participants would have to endure. The maintenance group actually had a mean distance of forty miles more than the dissolution group. Hortacsu and Karanci (1987) found general incompatibility and distance to be the two most prevalent factors related to relationship dissolution. We found that other factors were more important than simply distance in maintaining a relationship.

Once we saw that distance itself was not related to relationship maintenance, but in fact on the side of the dissolution group, we realized that while distance may be a stressor, there are clearly other factors which come into play in deciding the outcome of a relationship. Despite the similarity in the

distance with which the two groups dealt, the fact remained that there were still two groups.

The investigation into what might be at work began by looking at contact between partners more thoroughly. While those in the dissolution group did not differ significantly from those in the maintenance group in the amount of total contact that they had with their partner, they did experience a strong decrease in the instances of contact over time two and time three. This may be simply due to the same fact that plagued Helgeson's (1994a) data. It seems only natural that the dissolution group would engage in less contact, as they are no longer dating.

It is possible that while contact may have dropped in the dissolution group because they are no longer dating, contact may also have dropped *prior* to the dissolution of the relationship, and thus be a factor related to the actual occurrence of dissolution. Taking this into account, we can entertain a variety of possibilities.

Group differences may not exist because of factors such as email and instant messages. All students on campus are provided with email. This email service is extremely popular with students and so its usage may not fade with time. However, if one no longer wishes to speak with her partner, she is not likely to use email or any other means of contacting her partner. These individuals are the ones that are believed to already belong to, or be about to belong to, the dissolution group.

Attridge et al. (1995) stated that visiting one's partner is an important factor associated with relationship stability. We would agree that there is nothing quite like a face to face meeting. Although contact (phone calls, written letters, and email) did not differ between the groups, face to face visits produced a strong group effect. It was not surprising to find that the maintenance group had made more personal visits over the course of the study than did the dissolution group.

We also examined the possibility that student's perceptions of academic demands prevented them from visiting and contacting their partners as much as they would have liked during the first few weeks of college. Having found no time differences, it may be concluded that in the present study academic demands did not differentially prevent students from contacting their partners. Thus, even if academic demands were high and made contacting and visiting a long-distance partner burdensome, they nevertheless made the effort.

Personality issues.

Putting aside for the moment the actual number of visits partners made to each other and the amount of contact that they shared, we next looked into the issue of personality traits. Surprisingly few differences were discovered between the two groups. Autonomous behavior, as mentioned earlier, had a significant group effect. Across times, the maintenance group had more of an "in charge" attitude. We believed that the attitude of always wanting to run the show and be in charge would be related to the engagement of more active

coping. But we found no relationships between autonomous behavior and problem solving.

Problem solving did, however, change over time. This suggests that participants, regardless of the group in which they ended up at the conclusion of the study, changed their perceptions of how they coped with the stressor of the long distance during the first few weeks. Over time participants claimed to have engaged in more problem-focused, active coping. That is, initially they may not have taken as much action towards the maintenance of their relationships that they later *recall* having done.

Reese et al. (1997) remind us that perceived control over a situation is associated with greater levels of problem-focused coping. Participants in the present study, however, did *not* have control over their situations. This may account for the lack of association between autonomous behavior (the feeling that one can and will control a situation) and problem solving (or the actual putting of one's words into action).

With fewer options, one may begin to realize that a situation is out of control, and consequently engage in less problem-focused coping (Strentz & Auerbach, 1998). Strentz and Auerbach state that coping then has less to do with one's personality than with the specific situation in which a person may find him/herself.

In the present study, individual coping styles did not vary between the groups, nor did levels of self-confidence. Perhaps there would have been a difference between the groups had we examined specific situational coping

strategies. Recall that this is often the first time that students are away from home, they are dealing with issues that are new to them, and they are suddenly separated from the support networks that they consistently used in the past. Social support networks may have yet to be developed at college and general problem solving methods typically used in the past may not apply in this case.

In addition to coping strategies and locus of control, we looked at components of gender roles. It is commonly believed that feminine individuals are more relationship oriented than masculine individuals. This belief led us to the hypothesis that feminine participants would be more likely to belong to the maintenance group and masculine individuals would be more likely to belong to the dissolution group. Helgeson (1994b), however, points out that it is not quite so simple. There are a number of confounding factors such as the fact that masculine individuals are psychologically better off in a premarital relationship than are feminine individuals. In the present study, neither femininity nor masculinity was associated with whether or not the relationship continued or dissolved.

Relationship specific issues.

Thus far the notion of personality has shown not to be an overwhelmingly contributory factor related to relationship dissolution. A variety of researchers have concluded that distance in and of itself is not a significant factor related to relationship distress or dissolution (Guldner, 1996). Other researchers have not found differences between college students in long-distance versus close proximity relationships on reported rates of commitment

and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Dellmann-Jenkins, Bernard-Paolucci, & Rushing, 1994). These authors propose, instead, that a relationship would continue or cease to continue based upon the quality of the relationship, regardless of whether the partners were involved in a close proximity relationship or a long-distance relationship.

The proposal that relationship quality is the key seems to have some validity. Love was shown to differ between the groups and across time. An interaction suggested that as the study went on participants in the maintenance group began to feel increased levels of love towards their partners, while those in the dissolution group began to feel decreased levels of love towards their partners. From the very beginning of the study the participants that would later end up in the dissolution group displayed lower levels of love than those participants who would end up in the maintenance group.

A similar trend was discovered in the amount of commitment that participants felt towards their relationships. The maintenance group increased the levels of commitment that they displayed towards their partners over the course of the study, while the dissolution group decreased the levels of commitment they displayed towards their partner. At the beginning of the study, the participants that would become the maintenance group had significantly higher levels of commitment than those participants that would become the dissolution group.

This pattern suggests that there are overall greater levels of love and commitment, particularly from the beginning when couples were first

separated, a factor that Attridge et al. (1995) claimed to be of the utmost importance. Going into a stressful situation with greater levels of love and commitment, therefore, may be related to whether or not an individual's relationship lasts the test of time. Further, with the passage of time, if a participant's level of love and commitment increases, she is more likely to continue her relationship than if her level of love and commitment were to decrease. Of course, it is equally likely that as the relationship lasts felt levels of love and commitment may increase.

Positive expectancies, such as a committed and loving attitude, have been shown to motivate individuals when dealing with physical separations (Helgeson, 1994a). The barrier model of relationship dissolution, proposed by Lund (1985), likewise emphasizes the importance of commitment. Lund suggests that commitment is increased through the investment of one's time and efforts, which in turn increase one's desire to continue a relationship. As people prefer to prevent cognitive dissonance (Baron & Byrne, 1997), should they put the effort into a relationship, they will likely desire that the relationship continue. Lund continues to explain that this attitudinal desire for a relationship, as expressed by commitment, acts as a barrier to things which may otherwise challenge a relationship.

Prager (1995) states that high levels of commitment are related to more constructive conflict resolutions, and Sternberg (1987) reminds us of his triangle of love in which the decision/commitment aspect is what ultimately is responsible for a continued relationship. Committed and loving, or not, a

number of relationships involved a degree of infidelity, and a number of relationships did not last. Love was not correlated with infidelity, as might be expected. Commitment, however, was negatively correlated with infidelity at the beginning of the study in the maintenance group, suggesting again that initial reports of commitment bode well for positive relational experiences.

Infidelity overall was more prevalent in the dissolution groups. Recall here that with infidelity the dissolution group was divided into two groups based upon the time in which the relationship had ended. In the maintenance group levels of infidelity remained rather low throughout the course of the study. The group that ended their relationships prior to the second testing session had overall higher levels of infidelity than the maintenance group, and these levels slightly increased between the two testing sessions. The third group was the most surprising of all, displaying a level of infidelity between the other two groups at time one and rising to nearly four times that of the other groups by the second testing session. It is clear from these data that the participants who engaged in the most infidelity were those least likely to have a relationship at later testing sessions.

The dissolution group, the group that engaged in higher levels of infidelity, also had a greater need than the maintenance group to be consistently dating somebody. That is, at any given time during the course of the study those participants in the dissolution group stated that they had a stronger need than their relationship maintaining counterparts to be somebody's girlfriend. This need also increased over time within the groups.

This finding suggests that, over time, the urge to have a partner physically near oneself increases. Furthermore, it was the group that later ended their long-distance relationships that had the hardest time dealing with the separation and thus sought out alternate partners.

The groups may have differed on the basis of needing a partner at any given time, but they did not differ in their initial perceptions of being bothered when they would hang out with friends who all had dates and they were alone. Though not having a date may not have bothered the participants themselves, it perhaps bothered the friends of the participants, who more strongly pressured the dissolution group to date others and to be unfaithful to their long-distance partners than the maintenance group.

The maintenance group initially perceived low levels of peer pressure, which increased at time two and returned close to their original levels at time three. The dissolution group, on the other hand, perceived increasingly higher levels of peer pressure as the study progressed. This finding indicates that although the actual amount of peer pressure did not differ at time one, the effect that it had on the two groups may have been stronger on the dissolution group than the maintenance group.

It is possible that some relationships will not last regardless of the amount of love that two partners share, the commitment they hold for one another, the peer pressure exerted by friends, the general need to be with somebody, or the amount of infidelity present within a relationship. When it comes time to end a relationship there is a self-bias, in that most people

desiring to maintain their dignity and sense of control will view a breakup as being something that they wanted (Hortacsu & Karanci, 1987). This may help to explain why the majority of participants in the dissolution group claimed to be the initiators of the dissolution of their relationships.

Further it is important to remember that it is not the distance in and of itself that is responsible for the dissolution of the relationships presented here. Distance acts as a moderator and is less important than that which results as a consequence of that distance. One woman reported in an open ended question inquiring about the nature of the dissolution of her relationship, that "We decided that we couldn't uphold a long distance relationship. Phone bill got very high and I didn't really trust my partner anymore." This woman's comment provides support for the notion that, personality characteristics aside, distance has an effect on more concrete relational issues such as phone bills, levels of love and commitment, and the opportunity for infidelity, which in turn affect the quality of the relationship, and ultimately its outcome.

Limitations and recommendations.

While we sought to incorporate data from both men and women, only female participants were used, due to the insufficient number of males that signed up for the study. Helgeson (1994a) may suggest that this is not necessarily a bad thing, as she claims that participant sex is not related to relationship expectations or beliefs. Attridge et al. (1995) add that women are more aware of relationship events, evaluate relationships better than men, and are more likely to identify potential problems than their male counterparts.

Attridge et al. also state that women's assessments are more powerful than the assessments of men in predicting relationship stability. Further, women are more likely to end premarital relationships than are men (Helgeson, 1994b). Although it may have been fortunate for us to work with data solely from female participants as opposed to data solely from male participants, the study is as a result less representative of the population than it could have been had we been able to acquire a sizable male sample.

In addition to having solely female data, overall the sample size was small. This small sample size may have had some effect on some of the analyses that we chose to conduct. Some tests that may have otherwise been significant may not have reached the conventional levels of significance, for the sole reason that the sample size was too small. This again may present a hindrance on our attempts to present a representative sample.

The representative nature of the present sample may further be questioned on issues of diversity. Although there were no restrictions or constraints placed on individuals when they signed up for the study, the vast majority of participants were Caucasian.

Further, the particular measures used here examined student perceptions of their first few weeks on campus. While this is a legitimate and important area to study, it could have perhaps been more informative to, ask participants about actual changes over time instead of, or in addition to, perceived changes that occurred at the beginning of the study.

In the future, researchers may like to examine this area. There is significantly less research on initial perceptions than on actual changes. Both are important, though to what degree we do not know. Future researchers may then like to ask the question of which plays a stronger role in predicting relationship maintenance. Is it more important to start off on the right step, or keep a steady pace?

In addition to the inclusion of male participants, future researchers may also like to include upperclass students. While first-year students may be the most vulnerable, they are certainly not the only ones involved in long-distance relationships. Attridge et al. (1995) add that predicting relationship stability may also be increased by including data from both partners. While this has been done on occasion before, I do not know of any cases in which both partners have been studied in a long-distance dating relationship.

Another area often overlooked is the impressions that couples have about their relationships prior to arriving on campus. High school seniors and other soon to be college students planning on entering long-distance relationships have not been adequately studied.

Further I recommend that researchers wishing to further the knowledge base on long-distance relationships in college students keep in mind the changing society that lies ahead of us. Email and instant messages are currently popular, but have not been so in the recent past. This being the case, the literature on the effects of email is minimal. Over time the trend may be expected only to escalate. As video phones and web cams become more

common, couples involved in long-distance relationships will have a plethora of new ways to maintain contact. These new communication modalities not only are additional means of contacting one's partner, but also will allow for more personal contact, potentially bridging the distance between partners, making it less of an issue.

Perlman and Duck (1987) remind us of the importance of longitudinal data in studying a phenomena such as dating relationships. Only with longitudinal studies can researchers gather a fair understanding of the ways in which relationships grow together or apart over the course of time. It is specifically recommended here that future researchers study couples both prior to entering college and at least once after the semester break. The vast majority of past researchers have performed two testing sessions, one at the beginning of the Fall semester and one at the end. The present study added a third testing session, so as to permit the examination of linear and curvilinear trends. Others may desire to follow up on this work, as well as to take it beyond three testing sessions.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to examine specific relationship issues. There are a number of relationship issues that come into play regardless of where one's partner is located, such as levels of commitment and love, and partner infidelity. While distance is clearly a relationship stressor, it does not appear to dissolve relationships on its own. It is the separation that participants felt from their partners caused by the distance that led to relationship instability, not the distance itself. Thus, for example, phone

bills, money for food and gas when visiting one's partner, peer pressure to be unfaithful, and loneliness may play a more important role than one's personality. When a situation cannot be changed, such as is the case here, people, regardless of how they may view themselves, must adapt. Thus relationship specific issues tend to play a larger role in relationship stability than personal characteristics.

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Table 1

<u>Internal Consistency Coefficients of the Various Measures</u>

Measure	Testing Session		
	1	2	3
Coping Strategy Indicator	.81	.85	.90
Problem Solving	.81	.80	.86
Seeking Support	.90	.92	.95
Avoidance	.68	.81	.85
Internal Control Index	.80	.85	.88
Self-Confidence	.70	.78	.81
Autonomous Behavior	.74	.79	.84
Personal Attributes Questionnaire	.73	.70	.75
Masculinity	.79	.71	.82
Femininity	.69	.75	.73
Masculinity-Femininity	.74	.77	.74
Marlowe-Crowne	.77	.76	.81
Lund Scales	.90	.91	.82
Commitment	.84	.80	.64
Love	.85	.87	.79

Note. Overall test scores across all subscales are designated by the title of the complete measure.

Table 2

Intercorrelations Across Time of the Coping Strategy

Indicator Subscales in the Maintenance Group

	Testing Session	
Subscale- Session	1	2
Avoidance[a]		
AV-1	--	
AV-2	.58*	--
AV-3	.56*	.66*
Problem Solving[a]		
PS-1	--	
PS-2	.66*	--
PS-3	.62*	.75*
Social Support[a]		
SS-1	--	
SS-2	.82*	--
SS-3	.86*	.92*

Note. AV= avoidance; PS= problem solving; SS= social support

[a]n=34

*p<.001

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Contact Between

the Groups and Across Times

		Testing Session	
Group	1	2	3
Maintenance			
M	12.70	13.35	13.52
SD	8.21	9.85	10.74
Dissolution			
M	13.55	9.60	8.25
SD	10.39	13.62	8.93

Note. Contact is the sum of the number of phone calls, number of emails

sent, and letters written.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of the Number of

Visits by Group and Over Time

	Testing Session		
Statistic	1	2	3
Maintenance			
M	1.21	3.69	6.26
SD	1.51	3.18	5.90
Dissolution			
M	.8	1.7	1.9
SD	1.32	2.67	2.33

Note. The number of visits is a sum of both visits made by the participant to her partner and by her partner to the participant.

Table 5

2 (Group) X 2 (Time) Repeated Measures Analysis

of Variance of Love

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects					
Group	17.38	1	17.38	19.35	0.000
Error	33.25	37	0.90		
Within Subjects					
Time	0.99	1	0.99	6.15	0.018
Group*Time	1.15	1	1.15	7.14	0.011
Error	5.96	37	0.16		

Table 6

3 (Group) X 2 (Time) Repeated Measures Analysis

of Variance of Infidelity

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
		Between Subjects			
Group	71.49	2	35.74	7.25	0.002
Error	207.07	42	4.93		
		Within Subjects			
Time	14.36	1	14.36	13.65	0.001
Group*Time	17.43	2	8.71	8.28	0.001
Error	44.20	42	1.05		

Note. The infidelity scale is a sum of the number of times a participant has

dated, kissed, or had sex with someone other than her long-distance partner.

Table 7

2 (Group) X 3 (Time) Repeated Measures Analysis

of Variance of Perceived Initial Pressure

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
		Between Subjects			
Group	13.68	1	13.68	3.95	0.053
Error	148.72	43	3.46		
		Within Subjects			
Time	3.68	2	1.84	2.85	0.063
Group*Time	3.34	2	1.67	2.59	0.081
Error	55.52	86	0.65		

Note. Pressure is a measure of the perceived influence of a participant's

peers during her first few weeks on campus.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mean effects of love between groups and across time.

Figure 2. Mean effects of commitment between groups and across time.

Figure 3. Mean effects of infidelity between groups and across time.

Dissolution 1 refers to the group of participants that broke up by the second

testing session, and dissolution 2 refers to the group of participants that broke

up by the third testing session.

Figure 4. Mean effects of perceived pressure during the first few weeks

participants were on campus between groups and across time.
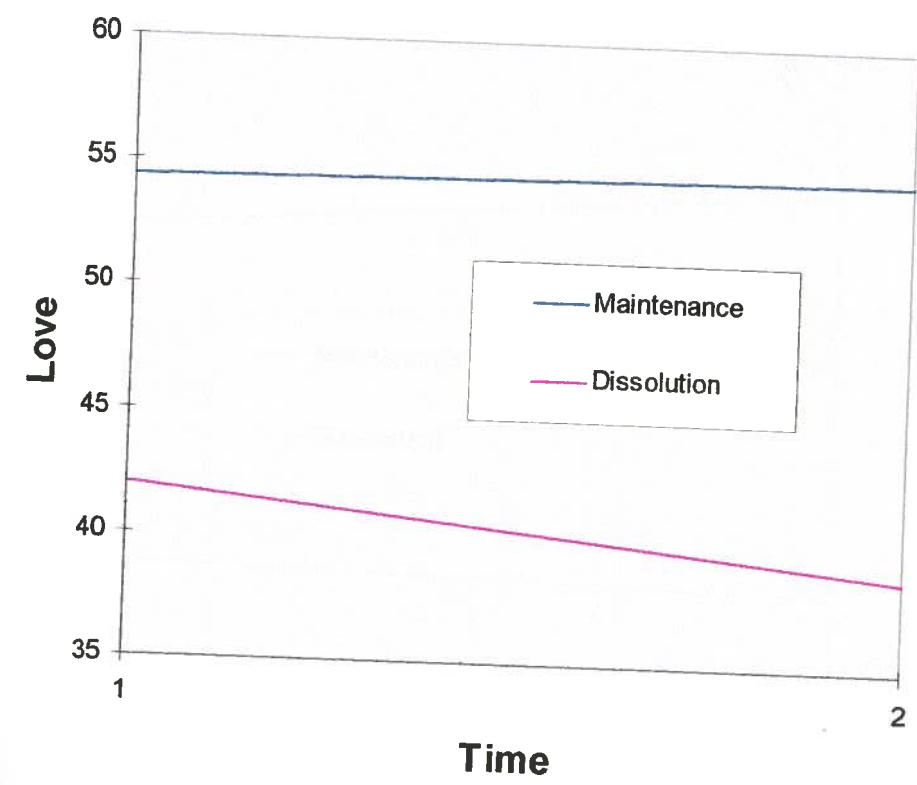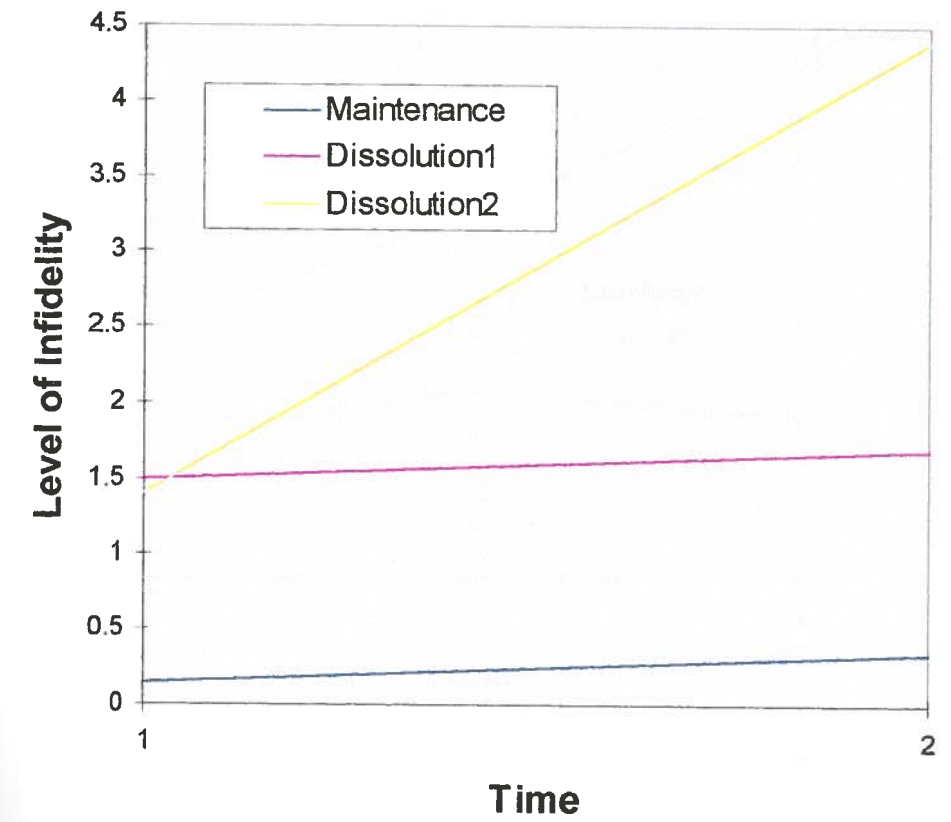
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Figure 1.
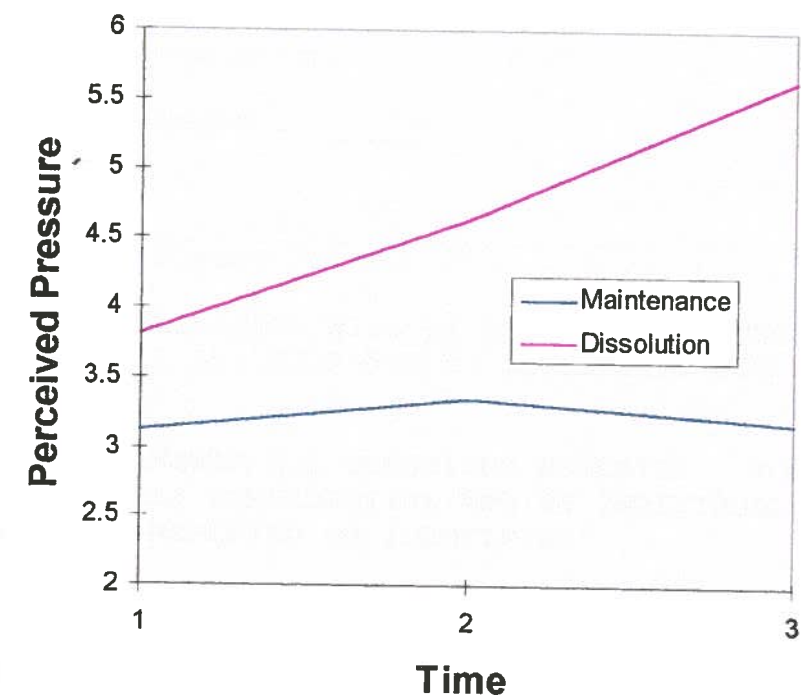
Long-Distance Dating
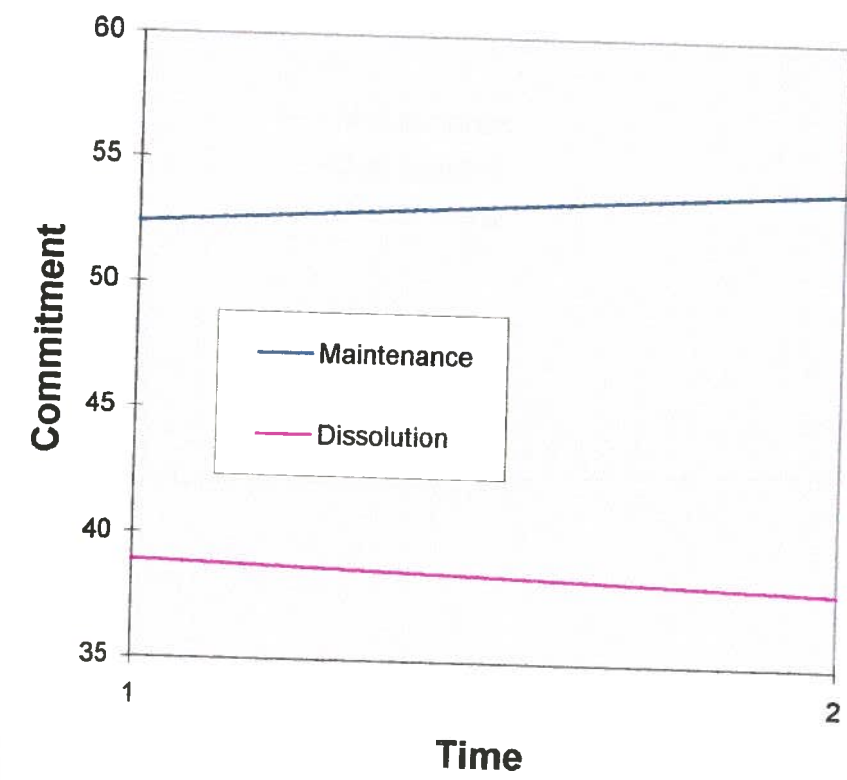
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Figure 2.
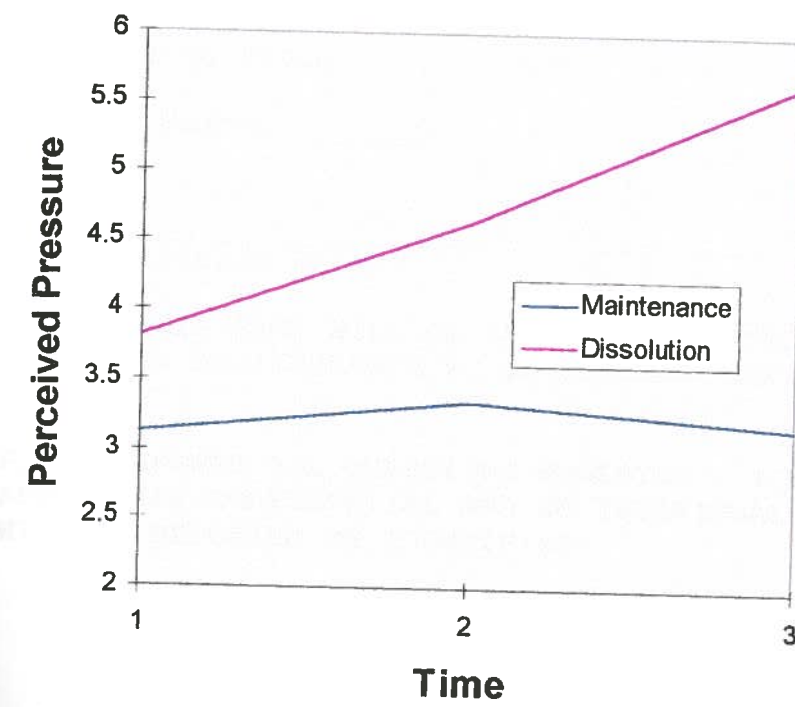
Long-Distance Dating

top

Figure 3

Long-Distance Dating

top

Figure 3

Long-Distance Dating

top

Figure 4

Long-Distance Dating

Name: _____
      (Please Print)

NOTE: THIS PAGE WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE BOOKLET. IT
IS NEEDED AS INSURANCE TO BE CERTAIN YOU RECEIVE
CREDIT.

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS HONESTLY. YOUR ANSWERS ARE
ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INDIVIDUAL'S INFORMATION
WILL BE REPORTED OR IDENTIFIED!**

Booklet Number: _____ (The investigators made up these

questions.)

Gender: Male   Female   Age: _____ yrs. _____ mos.
          (Circle One)

Year in school: 1   2   3   4   5 or more
                    (Circle One)

When you signed up to participate you indicated you were in a long distance relationship, that is, that you were going out with someone who is not in the Syracuse area.

Are you still going out with this person?   YES   NO
                                          (Circle One)

If you circled NO, please raise your hand. We will have a different booklet for you to complete.

If you circled YES, please continue.

How long have you been going out with this person?

_____ years _____ months

Are you _____ engaged or _____ married? (Check if appropriate)

In what city is your partner located?
_____

How far from Syracuse University is that? _____
miles

Is she/he (Check One):

_____ Away from home, at college.

_____ At home, in college.

_____ Away from home in vocational school or community college.

_____ At home in vocational school or community college.

_____ At home, in high school.

_____ At home, working.

_____ Away from home, working.

_____ Other (specify):

Excluding vacations (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring), how often have you gone to visit your partner this school year?

_____ times.

How often has your partner visited you at SU this school year?

_____ times.

In a typical week, how often do you:

Phone your partner? About _____ times a week.

(On average, how long is each call? _____)

Email your partner? About _____ times a week.

Write your partner letters? About _____ times a week.

While you are at Syracuse University how often have you:

Dated someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Had sex with someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Flirted with someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Passionately kissed or made out with someone other than your partner?
_____ times.

When you signed up for this study, you indicated that when you came to Syracuse University last August you were going out with someone who did not come with you. You were in a long distance relationship, your partner no longer being near you.
With this problem in mind, indicate how you coped with the long distance relationship during your first few weeks on campus by placing the appropriate number in front of each coping behavior listed.Answer each and every question even though some may sound similar. Please write your numbers clearly.

"1" means you used this strategy A LOT
"2" means you used this strategy A LITTLE
"3" means you DID NOT use this strategy AT ALL

_____1. Let your feelings out to a friend.
_____2. Rearranged things around you so that your problem
    had the best chance of being resolved.
_____3. Brainstormed all possible solutions before deciding what to do._____4. Tried to distract yourself from the problem._____5. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone._____6. Did all you could to keep others from seeing how bad things really were.
_____7. Talked to people about the situation because talking about it helped you to feel better.
_____8. Set some goals for yourself to deal with the situation.
_____9. Weighed your options very carefully.
_____10. Daydreamed about better times.
_____11. Tried different ways to solve the problem until you found one that worked.
_____12. Confided your fears and worries to a friend or relative.
_____13. Spent more time than usual alone.
_____14. Told people about the situation because just talking about it helped you to come up with solutions.
_____15. Thought about what needed to be done to

straighten things out.

_____16. Turned your full attention to solving the problem.

_____17. Formed a plan of action in your mind.

_____18. Watched television more than usual.

_____19. Went to someone (friend or professional) in order
to help you feel better.

_____20. Stood firm and fought for what you wanted in the
situation.

_____21. Avoided being with people in general.

_____22. Buried yourself in a hobby or sports activity to
avoid the problem.

_____23. Went to a friend to help you feel better about
the problem.

_____24. Went to a friend for advice on how to change the
situation.

_____25. Accepted sympathy and understanding from friends
who had the same problem.

_____26. Slept more than usual.

_____27. Fantasized about how things could have been different.

_____28. Identified with characters in novels or movies.

_____29. Tried to solve the problem.

_____30. Wished that people would just leave you alone.

_____31. Accepted help from a friend or relative.

_____32. Sought reassurance from those who know you best.

_____33. Tried to carefully plan a course of action rather
than acting on impulse.

Internal Control Index (No modifications.)

Duttweiler, P. C. (1984). The internal control index:
A newly developed measure of locus of control.
Educational and Psychological Measurement, 44, 209-221.

Please read each statement. Where there is a blank
_____, decide what your normal or usual attitude,
feeling, or behavior would be and write the letter in
the blank _____ that describes it:

[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]
RARELY	OCCASI- ONALLY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	USUALLY
(Less than 10% of the time)	(About 30% of the time)	(About half the time)	(About 70% of the time)	(More than 90% of the time)

Of course, there are always unusual situations in which
this would not be the case, but think of what you would
do or feel in most normal situations.

Please read each question carefully and write the
letter describing your usual attitude, feeling, or
behavior in the blank space.

1.   When faced with a problem I _____ try to forget
     it.
2.   I _____ need frequent encouragement from others
     for me to keep working at a difficult task.
3.   I _____ like jobs where I can make decisions and
     be responsible for my own work.
4.   I _____ change my opinion when someone I admire
     disagrees with me.
5.   If I want something I _____ work hard to get it.
6.   I _____ prefer to learn the facts about something
     from someone else rather than to have to dig them
     out for myself.
7.   I will _____ accept jobs that require me to
     supervise others.
8.   I _____ have a hard time saying "no" when someone
     tries to sell me something I don't want.
9.   I _____ like to have a say in any decisions made
     by any group I'm in.
10. I _____ consider the different sides of an issue
     before making any decision.
11. What other people think _____ has a great
     influence on my behavior.
12. Whenever something good happens to me I _____ feel
     it is because I've earned it.
13. I _____ enjoy being in a position of leadership.

14. I _____ need someone else to praise my work before I am satisfied with what I've done.
15. I am _____ sure enough of my opinions to try and influence others.
16. When something is going to affect me I _____ learn as much about it as I can.
17. I _____ decide to do things on the spur of the moment.
18. For me, knowing I've done something well is _____ more important than being praised by someone else.
19. I _____ let other peoples' demands keep me from doing things I want to do.
20. I _____ stick to my opinions when someone disagrees with me.
21. I _____ do what I feel like doing not what other people think I ought to do.
22. I _____ get discouraged when doing something that takes a long time to achieve results.
23. When part of a group I _____ prefer to let other people make all the decisions.
24. When I have a problem I _____ follow the advice of friends or relatives.
25. I _____ enjoy trying to do difficult tasks more than I enjoy trying to do easy tasks.
26. I _____ prefer situations where I can depend on someone else's ability rather than just my own.
27. Having someone important tell me I did a good job is _____ more important to me than feeling I've done a good job.
28. When I'm involved in something I _____ try to find out all I can about what is going on even when someone else is in charge.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

(No modifications.)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE as it pertains to you. Put a T or F in the space to the left of each statement as it relates to you.

_____1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.

_____2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.

_____3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.

_____4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.

_____5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.

_____6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

_____7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.

_____8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.

_____9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.

_____10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.

_____11. I like to gossip at times.

_____12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.

_____13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

_____14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.

_____15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

_____16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

_____17. I always try to practice what I preach.

_____18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.

_____19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.

_____20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.

_____21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

_____22. At time I have really insisted on having things my own way.

_____23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

_____24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.

_____25. I never resent being asked to do a favor.

_____26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.

_____27. I never made a long trip without checking the safety of my car.

_____28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortunes of others.

_____29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.

_____30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

_____31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.

_____32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.

_____33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Please answer the following questions by writing in the space for each question the number that describes your situation during the **first few weeks** you were on campus this fall.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I			I			I
strongly			neither			strongly
Disagree						Agree

_____ 1. Time spent studying often makes it difficult for me to contact (phone, email, letters...) my partner

_____ 2. My friends frequently attempted to set me up on blind dates.

_____ 3. If I had fewer academic demands, I would have contacted (phone, email, hand-written letters...) my partner more.

_____ 4. My friends tried to convince me to be unfaithful to my partner.

_____ 5. It bothered me that when I would go out with my friends I was the only one without a date because my partner was not on campus.

_____ 6. I did not feel left out when my friends all had dates and I did not because my partner was not here.

Use the same scale to indicate how each of the following describe you as you **generally** are.

_____ 1. I get down on myself if I am not presently going out with somebody.

_____ 2. I have a strong need to always be going out with somebody.

_____ 3. It does not bother me to be single.

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (no modifications.)

Spence, J. T. & Helmreich, R. L. (1978). Masculinity &
    femininity: Their psychological dimensions,
    correlates, & antecedents, Austin, TX:
    University of Texas Press.

The items below inquire about what kind of a person you
    think you are. Each item consists of a pair
    of characteristics, with the letters A - E
    underneath them. For example:

Not at all artistic   Very artistic

                A.....B.....C.....D.....E

Each pair describes contradictory characteristics--that
is, you cannot be both at the same time, such as very
artistic and not at all artistic.

The letters form a scale between the two extremes. You
are to choose a letter which describes where you fall
on the scale. For example, if you think you have no
artistic ability, you would choose A. If you think you
are pretty good, you might choose D. If you are only
medium, you might choose C, and so forth.

Now, go ahead and answer the questions by circling the
letter that you feel describes you.

1. Not at all aggressive
                                      Very aggressive

                A.....B.....C.....D.....E

2. Not at all independent   Very independent

                A.....B.....C.....D.....E

3. Not at all emotional
                                      Very emotional

                A.....B.....C.....D.....E

4. Very submissive
                                      Very dominant

                A.....B.....C.....D.....E

5. Not at all excitable
                                      Very excitable

in a major crisis
crisis
         in a major
         crisis

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

6. Very passive   Very active

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

7. Not at all able to devote   Able to devote
    self completely to others   self completely to
                               others

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

8. Very rough   Very gentle

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

9. Not at all helpful   Very helpful
    to others   to others

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

10. Not at all competitive   Very competitive

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

11. Very home oriented   Very worldly

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

12. Not at all kind   Very kind

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

13. Indifferent to   Highly needful of
    other's approval   other's approval

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

14. Feelings not easily hurt   Feelings easily hurt
A.....B.....C.....D.....E

15. Not at all aware of   Very aware of
    feelings of others   feelings of others

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

16. Can make decisions   Has difficulty
    easily   making decisions

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

17. Gives up very easily   Never gives up easily

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

18. Never cries   Cries very easily

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

19. Not at all
self-confident   Very self-confident

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

20. Feels very inferior   Feels very superior

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

21. Not at all under-   Very understanding
standing of others   of others

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

22. Very cold in relations   Very warm in relations
with others   with others

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

23. Very little need   Very strong need
for security   for security

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

24. Goes to pieces   Stands up well
under pressure   under pressure

A.....B.....C.....D.....E

Lund scales of love and commitment (no modifications.)

Lund, M. (1985). The development of investment and
    commitment scales for predicting continuity of
    personal relationships. Journal of Social and
    Personal Relationships, 2, 3-23.

Consider your current relationship with your partner.
Use the scale below to indicate how likely or true each
statement is of you, your partner, or your
relationship.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all likely, true, or much			Somewhat likely, true, or much			Very likely, true, or much

Please read each statement and write the number
indicating how likely or true you feel it is in the
space provided.

_____ 1. How likely is it that your relationship will
         be permanent?

_____ 2. How attracted are you to other potential
         partners or a single lifestyle?

_____ 3. How likely is it that you and your partner
         will be together six months from now?

_____ 4. How much trouble would ending your relationship
         be to you personally?

_____ 5. How attractive would a potential partner have
         to be for you to pursue a new relationship?

_____ 6. How likely are you to pursue another
         relationship or single life in the future?

_____ 7. How obligated do you feel to continue this
         relationship?

_____ 8. In your opinion, how committed is your partner
         to this relationship?

_____ 9. In your opinion, how likely is your partner to
         continue this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all likely, true, or much			Somewhat likely, true, or much			Very likely, true, or much

____ 10. I feel I can confide in my partner about virtually everything.

____ 11. I would do almost anything for my partner.

____ 12. If I could never be with my partner, I would feel miserable.

____ 13. If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek my partner out.

____ 14. One of my primary concerns is my partner's welfare.

____ 15. I would forgive my partner for practically anything.

____ 16. I feel responsible for my partner's well-being.

____ 17. I would greatly enjoy being confided in by my partner.

____ 18. It would be hard for me to get along without my partner.

Dissolution group.

Booklet Number: _____

Name: _____
      (Please Print)

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**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS HONESTLY. YOUR ANSWERS ARE
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WILL BE REPORTED OR IDENTIFIED!**

Booklet Number: _____ (The investigators made up these

questions.)

Gender: Male Female Age: _____ yrs. _____mos.
(Circle One)

Year in school: 1   2   3   4   5 or more
(Circle One)

When you signed up to participate you indicated that when you came to SU you were in a long distance relationship, that is, you were going out with someone who was not in the Syracuse area. You also indicated you no longer are going out with that person.

How long did you go out with that person prior to breaking up?

_____ years _____ months

In what city was your partner located?
_____

How far from Syracuse University was that? _____ miles

Was she/he (Check One):

_____ Away from home, at college.

_____ At home, in college.

_____ Away from home in vocational school or community college.

_____ At home in vocational school or community college.

_____ At home, in high school.

_____ At home, working.

_____ Away from home, working.

_____ Other (specify):

Excluding vacations (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring), how often did you go to visit your partner during the school year prior to breaking up?

_____ times.

How often did your partner visit you at SU during the school year prior to your breaking up?

_____ times.

In a typical week before you broke up, how often did you:

Phone your partner? About _____ times a week.

(On average, how long was each call? _____)

Email your partner? About _____ times a week.

Write your partner letters? About _____ times a week.

While you were at Syracuse University but still going out with your partner how often did you:

Date someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Have sex with someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Flirt with someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Passionately kiss or make out with someone other than your partner? _____ times.

Who ended the relationship? ___Me ___My Partner ___Both of Us

(Check One)

Why did the relationship end?

When you signed up for this study, you indicated that when you came to Syracuse University last August you were going out with someone who did not come with you. You were in a long distance relationship, your partner no longer being near you.
With this problem in mind, indicate how you coped with the long distance relationship during your first few weeks on campus by placing the appropriate number in front of each coping behavior listed.Answer each and every question even though some may sound similar. Please write your numbers clearly.

"1" means you used this strategy A LOT
"2" means you used this strategy A LITTLE
"3" means you DID NOT use this strategy AT ALL

_____1. Let your feelings out to a friend.
_____2. Rearranged things around you so that your problem
           had the best chance of being resolved.
_____3. Brainstormed all possible solutions before
           deciding what to do._____4. Tried to distract
           yourself from the problem._____5. Accepted
           sympathy and understanding from
           someone._____6. Did all you could to keep
           others from seeing how
           bad things really were.
_____7. Talked to people about the situation because
           talking about it helped you to feel better.
_____8. Set some goals for yourself to deal with the
           situation.
_____9. Weighed your options very carefully.
_____10. Daydreamed about better times.
_____11. Tried different ways to solve the problem
           until
           you found one that worked.
_____12. Confided your fears and worries to a friend
           or
           relative.
_____13. Spent more time than usual alone.
_____14. Told people about the situation because just
           talking about it helped you to come up with
           solutions.
_____15. Thought about what needed to be done to

straighten things out.

_____16. Turned your full attention to solving the problem.

_____17. Formed a plan of action in your mind.

_____18. Watched television more than usual.

_____19. Went to someone (friend or professional) in order
to help you feel better.

_____20. Stood firm and fought for what you wanted in the
situation.

_____21. Avoided being with people in general.

_____22. Buried yourself in a hobby or sports activity to
avoid the problem.

_____23. Went to a friend to help you feel better about
the problem.

_____24. Went to a friend for advice on how to change the
situation.

_____25. Accepted sympathy and understanding from friends
who had the same problem.

_____26. Slept more than usual.

_____27. Fantasized about how things could have been
different.

_____28. Identified with characters in novels or movies.

_____29. Tried to solve the problem.

_____30. Wished that people would just leave you alone.

_____31. Accepted help from a friend or relative.

_____32. Sought reassurance from those who know you best.

_____33. Tried to carefully plan a course of action rather
than acting on impulse.

Internal Control Index (No modifications.)

Please read each statement. Where there is a blank _____, decide what your normal or usual attitude, feeling, or behavior would be and write the letter in the blank _____ that describes it:

[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]
RARELY	OCCASI-ONALLY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	USUALLY
(Less than 10% of the time)	(About 30% of the time)	(About half the time)	(About 70% of the time)	(More than 90% of the time)

Of course, there are always unusual situations in which this would not be the case, but think of what you would do or feel in most normal situations.

Please read each question carefully and write the letter describing your usual attitude, feeling, or behavior in the blank space.

1. When faced with a problem I _____ try to forget it.
2. I _____ need frequent encouragement from others for me to keep working at a difficult task.
3. I _____ like jobs where I can make decisions and be responsible for my own work.
4. I _____ change my opinion when someone I admire disagrees with me.
5. If I want something I _____ work hard to get it.
6. I _____ prefer to learn the facts about something from someone else rather than to have to dig them out for myself.
7. I will _____ accept jobs that require me to supervise others.
8. I _____ have a hard time saying "no" when someone tries to sell me something I don't want.
9. I _____ like to have a say in any decisions made by any group I'm in.
10. I _____ consider the different sides of an issue before making any decision.
11. What other people think _____ has a great influence on my behavior.
12. Whenever something good happens to me I _____ feel it is because I've earned it.
13. I _____ enjoy being in a position of leadership.

14. I _____ need someone else to praise my work before I am satisfied with what I've done.
15. I am _____ sure enough of my opinions to try and influence others.
16. When something is going to affect me I _____ learn as much about it as I can.
17. I _____ decide to do things on the spur of the moment.
18. For me, knowing I've done something well is _____ more important than being praised by someone else.
19. I _____ let other peoples' demands keep me from doing things I want to do.
20. I _____ stick to my opinions when someone disagrees with me.
21. I _____ do what I feel like doing not what other people think I ought to do.
22. I _____ get discouraged when doing something that takes a long time to achieve results.
23. When part of a group I _____ prefer to let other people make all the decisions.
24. When I have a problem I _____ follow the advice of friends or relatives.
25. I _____ enjoy trying to do difficult tasks more than I enjoy trying to do easy tasks.
26. I _____ prefer situations where I can depend on someone else's ability rather than just my own.
27. Having someone important tell me I did a good job is _____ more important to me than feeling I've done a good job.
28. When I'm involved in something I _____ try to find out all I can about what is going on even when someone else is in charge.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

(No modifications.)

(Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1964). *The approval motive: Studies in evaluative dependence*. New York: Wiley.)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE as it pertains to you. Put a T or F in the space to the left of each statement as it relates to you.

_____1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.

_____2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.

_____3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.

_____4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.

_____5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.

_____6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

_____7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.

_____8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.

_____9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.

_____10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.

_____11. I like to gossip at times.

_____12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.

_____13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

_____14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.

_____15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

_____16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

_____17. I always try to practice what I preach.

_____18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.

_____19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.

_____20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.

_____21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

_____22. At time I have really insisted on having things my own way.

_____23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

_____24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.

_____25. I never resent being asked to do a favor.

_____26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.

_____27. I never made a long trip without checking the safety of my car.

_____28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortunes of others.

_____29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.

_____30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

_____31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.

_____32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.

_____33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Please answer the following questions by writing in the space for each question the number that describes your situation during the **first few weeks** you were on campus this fall.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I			I			I
strongly			neither			strongly
Disagree						Agree

_____ 1. Time spent studying often makes it difficult for me to contact (phone, email, letters…) my partner

_____ 2. My friends frequently attempted to set me up on blind dates.

_____ 3. If I had fewer academic demands, I would have contacted (phone, email, hand-written letters…) my partner more.

_____ 4. My friends tried to convince me to be unfaithful to my partner.

_____ 5. It bothered me that when I would go out with my friends I was the only one without a date because my partner was not on campus.

_____ 6. I did not feel left out when my friends all had dates and I did not because my partner was not here.

Use the same scale to indicate how each of the following describe you as you **generally** are.

_____ 1. I get down on myself if I am not presently going out with somebody.

_____ 2. I have a strong need to always be going out with somebody.

_____ 3. It does not bother me to be single.

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (no modifications.)

Spence, J. T. & Helmreich, R. L. (1978). <u>Masculinity &
         femininity: Their psychological dimensions,
         correlates, & antecedents,</u> Austin, TX:
         University of Texas Press.

The items below inquire about what kind of a person you
         think you are. Each item consists of a <u>pair</u>
         of characteristics, with the letters A - E
         underneath them. For example:

Not at all artistic   Very artistic

              A.....B.....C.....D.....E

Each pair describes contradictory characteristics--that
is, you cannot be both at the same time, such as very
artistic and not at all artistic.

The letters form a scale between the two extremes. You
are to choose a letter which describes where <u>you</u> fall
on the scale. For example, if you think you have no
artistic ability, you would choose A. If you think you
are pretty good, you might choose D. If you are only
medium, you might choose C, and so forth.

Now, go ahead and answer the questions by circling the
letter that you feel describes you.

1. Not at all aggressive   Very aggressive

              A.....B.....C.....D.....E
2. Not at all independent   Very independent

              A.....B.....C.....D.....E
3. Not at all emotional   Very emotional

              A.....B.....C.....D.....E
4. Very submissive   Very dominant

              A.....B.....C.....D.....E
5. Not at all excitable   Very excitable

in a major crisis
crisis   in a major
                                          crisis

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
6. Very passive   Very active

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
7. Not at all able to devote   Able to devote
    self completely to others   self completely to
                                 others

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
8. Very rough   Very gentle

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
9. Not at all helpful   Very helpful
    to others   to others

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
10. Not at all competitive   Very competitive

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
11. Very home oriented   Very worldly

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
12. Not at all kind   Very kind

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
13. Indifferent to   Highly needful of
     other's approval   other's approval

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
14. Feelings not easily hurt   Feelings easily hurt
                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
15. Not at all aware of   Very aware of
     feelings of others   feelings of others

                    A.....B.....C.....D.....E
16. Can make decisions   Has difficulty
     easily   making decisions

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                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

17.  Gives up very easily            Never gives up easily

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

18.  Never cries                          Cries very easily

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

19.  Not at all                       Very self-confident
     self-confident

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E
20.  Feels very inferior              Feels very superior

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

21.  Not at all under-                Very understanding
     standing of others               of others

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

22.  Very cold in relations        Very warm in relations
     with others                           with others

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

23.  Very little need                 Very strong need
     for security                     for security

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E

24.  Goes to pieces                   Stands up well
     under pressure                   under pressure

                                   A.....B.....C.....D.....E
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