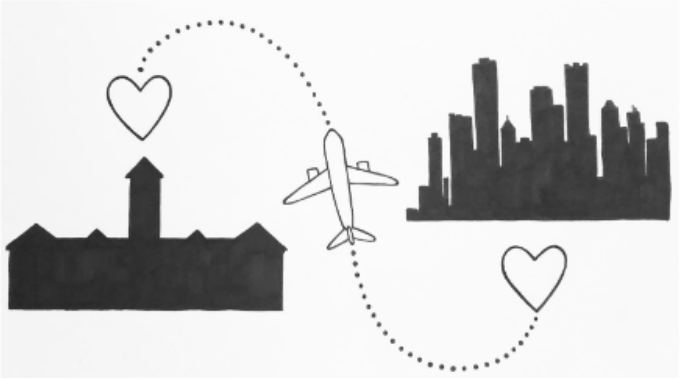
Distance Makes the Heart Grow Fonder

Riley Olsen, Student Reporter



Many college students view long distance relationships as a challenge that is not worth the price. Yet, while relationships that involve distance can be a frightening challenge, they can also serve as a powerful testament to the strength of connection, which can build a stronger relationship.

So, what's considered keeping up with a long distance relationship in college? Well, maintaining long distance friends/relationships in college requires simple things, such as staying in touch,
whether it's over FaceTime, texts, or even social media platforms. Additionally, it requires appreciating the time that is spent together, especially when going home or not getting to visit one another for some time. The time spent together and the experiences we've shared with our friends and family is something to keep in mind when feeling lonely or down.

It may not seem like it, however, being apart builds trust, creates more independence, and allows for a new perspective when getting involved in a new environment, like college, or making new friends. Yes, these things apply to friendships that become long distance, however, the same can be applied for relationships that transition to long distance.

As Dr. Marisa Cohen says, "Being in a long-distance relationship allows partners to retain a separate identity and an increased level of independence."

While time being spent away from each other can have its benefits, it also has its drawbacks. It can be challenging juggling a whole new school, and feeling alone. Students can often become isolated and jealous as they see their long distance friends begin to make new friends and fit into their new environment, hanging out with new friends or going to parties, which they see through social media posts.

"Of course, it's important that you listen to your partner, too, and let them reassure you if there's really nothing happening. Imagine how you would feel if your partner didn't trust you, and was jealous of the people you were spending time with," say Larry and Carla, handbell musicians from Holland, Michigan.

These feelings of jealousy can lead to overthinking and the constant anxiety of feeling like the friendship will fall apart, which can cause academic decline in studies.

It is roughly estimated that about 40% of long distance relationships fail. The same thing can be said about friendships; which means the 60% that's left, thrive and grow. While there are downsides of being in a long distance relationship, turning it into a positive is the best outcome. In order to do this, plan visits to see each other; whether that means going home together or visiting each other's campuses on weekends. Being apart can feel like a punishment, but it can create stronger communication from both parties. It allows one another to prioritize themselves and respect the others boundaries.