COPING WITH LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

There is much to prepare for an overseas exchange. While we look forward to new experiences in a new environment, we may also need to bid farewell to loved ones. Long-distance relationships may seem hard to maintain. Here are some suggestions that you might consider for a successful long-distance relationship.

Communication

Recent technology makes keeping in touch easier, despite the distance apart between partners, but there are still pros and cons to every method of communication. The quality of the relationship is more likely to increase if both parties develop the ability to share feelings openly and honestly with each other.

Relationship

Prior to attempting the maintenance of a relationship complicated by long-distance, there are preliminary elements that must be present and healthy. Those elements are commitment, willingness to take risk, and trust.

Key areas to discuss continually with your partner are:

- Understanding each other’s expectations
- Discussing the possibility of growth together or apart
- Dependence versus Independence
- Lack of physical Interaction
- Lack of support from the other
- Loneliness away from the other
- Depression, anxiety and jealousy being away from the other

Coping strategies

Examples of pro-active things to be done as on-going maintenance for yourself:

Get involved in organisations or causes that you personally believe in. Put meaningful things in your life other than your significant other.

Help those who have challenging life circumstances. For example, volunteer at a nursing home or orphanage.

Make sure there are supportive people and places in your life now.

Every once in a while, do something that is atypical of yourself, although not self-defeating. For example, go to a movie on a weeknight or get your hair cut.

Tend to your spiritual needs.
Examples of specific strategies to try when the depression of missing hits you:

Let out the emotions: cry, scream, sing, exercise, go for a run, play a sport, take a walk.

Write a letter to the person, whether you send it or not, letting her/him know how you are feeling.

Write poetry or a journal entry or both.

Attend an event or activity that is fun for you such as going to a sporting event or concert.

Consider going to the Student Wellbeing Centre to talk about it.

Go see a movie: comedy to make you laugh, adventure to take you away, tearjerker to help you cry.

Go to the TV lounge or study lounge to have other people around you; don't stay alone in your room.

Call, visit, or study with a friend.

Take homework to a restaurant and do it over coffee or a meal.