



Long-distance and on-campus couples strive to survive

By **Amy Vaerewyck**

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They are the ones sitting on the hall floor hugging a piece of plastic for hours-on-end, packing up for weekend visits and getting foot-long phone bills each month. They are the members of long-distance relationships.

"I'm definitely the [post office's] biggest source of income," said Leslie Francis, a Butler freshman whose high school boyfriend now resides an hour's drive away at Wabash College.

Michael Janulis, a sophomore at Ball State University, said his phone calls to his girlfriend Shannon Risinger, a Butler freshman, usually add up to a monthly bill of about \$200.

However, both Francis and Janulis said the money and hassles are worth their rewards.

"It's tolerable," Janulis said. "You have problems but you get a card in the mail, a phone call or a surprise visit, and it's worth it," Janulis said.

According to Janulis, who's been dating Risinger for nearly two years, mail, phone calls and visits help maintain the most essential aspect of a relationship: communication.

"Communication is the biggest challenge. Without it, there's not relationship."

Francis agreed, adding understanding and trust to her "top three must-haves" for a long-distance relationship. Although she had doubts when she and her boyfriend, Brandon, went their separate ways to college, she said their relationship has actually improved since the separation.

"We were really scared. We didn't know what to expect.

We just promised that, no matter what, we were going to try our hardest to stay together," she said.

A relationship counselor who gives advice on the "ThriveOnline" Web site, offered some tips on how to ease the pain of good-byes:

- Cook a special meal together on your last night.
- Leave a note in your lover's drawer or suitcase before you go
- Write letters to each other and mail them so that they'll arrive at home after you part company
- Make sure that you have plans for when you arrive home – make a date with a friend, start a new book, etc.