Cultural differences complicate, enrich dating

By Ugo Ezeamuzie
Contributing Writer

Everyone is somewhere in between — who can tell if she is cute like you do back home? Although most people in multicultural relationships don’t explicitly think along those lines, they cannot completely ignore cultural differences when it comes to dating, and matters of the heart. Cultural differences are likely to play a part in every phase of the relationship marathon, from choosing whom to date to proclaiming “I do.”

So what part does it really play in predicting the level of success or failure in a dating relationship?

Does your significant other understanding your native language make all the difference in the world?

Diversity could be the driving force for a rich, dynamic and multifaceted experience or it can take an uncompromising detour to become a tedious addition to the complexities of dating.

“When it comes to dating, I don’t see color or race or culture, but I see them for who they are and make my decision based on that,” said Desola Kalejaiew, a first-year Chemistry major from Nigeria.

“Sometimes when I think about dating a person of the same color or cultural background, I think I know what to expect,” she said.

“But I think as a black person, when I think about dating a Hispanic or African, it will be a discovery because I don’t know what to expect and that is intriguing.”

“As long as you can hang out with someone and get along, then everything else can be worked on,” said Dev Chakrborthy, a fourth-year Electrical Engineering major of Indian heritage who is currently dating a Caucasian girl.

“Personal values and the chemistry between couples can overcome most cultural differences,” he said.

“When dating someone from a different culture, you get to experience a different culture and relationship style from what you are used to,” said Jing Su, a fourth-year Biomedical engineering major of a traditional Chinese heritage who has been dating a Caucasian. “Usually the western cultures are more romantic in a way. The way they show their affection is more liberal. In eastern cultures you don’t usually display your affection as much in a romantic way, especially in public,” she said.

There is no denying that dating someone from a different cultural background as you has its benefits; diverse experiences, education and the mystique associated with a foreign culture.

Nevertheless, there are times in the relationship when cultures clash and new perspectives are not easily welcome or appreciated.

“For example, I tried to explain to my Japanese friend that even though I don’t necessarily like it that much, but sometimes she doesn’t understand the pressures of my culture and family for a strong education (university or business) foundation over how much you like it,” he said.

Despite statements to the contrary, families and their willingness to accept or reject their children dating outside their culture play an important role in multicultural relationships.

Resource help relationships

By Joshua Cuneo
Online Editor

College is a time when most students grapple with issues regarding sex and relationships. Whether it is a conflict with a loved one, deciding whether to engage in consensual sex, or dealing with sexual harassment, Tech provides a wealth of resources to aid students in overcoming those obstacles.

These resources take on a variety of forms: contraceptives, pamphlets and brochures, books, programs, and people who are there to provide a shoulder to lean on in times of crisis.

Many students are not aware that these resources even exist, let alone that most of them are available free or at a reduced price.

In times of need, students have access to counselors, psychiatrists, pharmacists, counselors from the Women’s Resource Center, and even a dictionary of sexual terms.

The department also employs specialists to address any sex-related concerns that students may have.

Students can make an appointment to get confidential HIV testing for a small fee or to speak to a health educator on issues including sexual behavior and assault.

They also launched a campus-wide program called VOICE which stands for (Sexual) Violence Prevention and Advocacy Initiative.

The department’s website is also very comprehensive.

The site has links to sexual assault resources, communication tips on sexuality and practicing safer sex, and even a dictionary of sexual vocabulary.

There are discussions about the variety of contraceptives available to students on campus and where to get them, scientific studies on the effectiveness of contraceptives, and information regarding sex and alcohol.

Marion Tinio and Chun Chu, both fourth-year EE students, eat lunch together. Being from different cultures adds new layers of complexity to the dating process.
Safe from page 11

sex-related issues to visit the Department of Health, Prevention, or the Women’s Clinic, although the WRC library does provide some books on relationships and women’s health. Upton also advises expecting mothers or victims of sexual assault, whom she walks through the correct processes to get what they need.

In cases of assault, for instance, “that could be counseling, [or] it could be working with their professors if their academic performance has been impacted,” Upton said. “And… if students wanted to officially report the assault or harassment, then we could work through the campus judicial process or through the legal system.”

Upton sometimes meets with students to address other relationship concerns, as well.

“We’ve certainly met one-on-one with students who are having issues within their relationships,” Upton said.

“And usually this… has often been in relation to someone being harassed or stalked or even being a victim of domestic violence or dating violence.”

The WRC also co-sponsors programs with the Counseling Center that focus on relationship issues, whether it’s maintaining a healthy relationship or surviving a break-up.

The Counseling Center

The Counseling Center specializes in providing individual attention to students facing any emotional obstacle, including issues revolving around sex and relationships. The Center not only offers one-on-one counseling but also couples counseling—where counselors will meet with students and their partners—and group therapy that addresses sexual or romantic issues.

“I think the major one is defining intimacy…in [the] context of romantic relationships [or] sexual relationships,” said Roberto Perez, Director, Counseling Center.

“I think that society’s definition of relationships and intimacy has changed over the years and become more fluid…."

Roberto Perez, Director, Counseling Center.

Relationships have changed over the years and become more fluid. "I think that society’s definition of relationships and intimacy has changed over the years and become more fluid…."

The center also offers outreach programs on a variety of topics to students at the request of certain departments or student organizations. In addition, there is a self-help library where students can check out books on sex and relationships, among other things.

“We also have pamphlets and brochures that talk about…important information regarding coping with college and stress management, especially in a relationship,” Perez said.

GT Police Department

GT PD keeps its doors open 24 hours a day for students who find themselves the victims of sexual abuse or harassment, domestic violence, stalking, and other sex or relationship-related crimes while on campus.

“Basically, it’s handled like any other police report,” said Sergeant Carla Cook, the GTPD Crime Prevention Officer. “We get all the information from those parties, and [we take action] depending on the situation, whether it’s taking out an arrest warrant or arresting a party or just referring them to other organizations.”

Cook recommends that any victimized student or other resident of the Tech community contact the GTPD immediately.

If the crime occurred off campus, the GTPD will readily forward them to the correct department. Such crimes may include rape or other forms of sexual assault.

“Incidents of rape of stranger or stranger are pretty rare on campus,” Cook said.

“What we typically find is that it’s student on student, and there’s usually alcohol involved by one or both of the parties.”

Statistics for sex crimes on campus are low, but Cook warns that could be due to a number of underreported cases.

“Unfortunately, things like sexual assault and rape are very under-reported, and so a lot of it we don’t even hear about,” she said. So if anything like that were to happen on campus, we would ask for them to come in and contact us.”

Cases of domestic violence and stalking are also rare, although the introduction of Facebook profiles has led to incidences of online stalking.

The GTPD treats such cases with the same seriousness as other crimes and will investigate them with all due diligence, but students are free to go elsewhere for help.

“Either some sort of sexual assault or domestic violence incident were to happen on campus, we recommend that if they don’t want to come to the police department to file a report, that they should go out and seek some sort of help,” Cook said.

"I think that society’s definition of relationships and intimacy has changed over the years and become more fluid...."
“Single”—a risk that some people embrace with open arms and hopes of emotional freedom.

Others however, dread it, for they feel that without a significant other, people will see them as someone who is simply undesirable.

In the Tech community, there are students who exemplify both (Clockwise from top) Kym Chang, Sean Hicks, Katie Buckler, Elizabeth Ward and Joseph York are all undergraduates who are single. For some single students, relationships take precious time away from school work; for others, the Tech ratio does not favor forming relationships.

“Here I honestly don’t have the time [for a relationship]. That’s just the truth about it. Maintaining relationships [here] is hard. I had to maintain a relationship on top of class work, I would either fail out of school or fail in the relationship,” said Sean Hicks, a second-year Computer Engineering major.

Being single, in these cases, means that the extra time students do have could be spent doing activities that enhance their individuality.

Campus organizations are generally considered some of the best places to meet fellow students who share many of the same interests. They are also some of the best places to make friendships that can eventually evolve into more.

For many students, including Grace Kim, a second-year Biology major, romantic relationships work well when two single students start out as simply friends.

“[You can meet people] at fraternity and sorority parties and also clubs and organizations. I’ve met a few girls at clubs,” said Travis Macdonald, a fourth-year Management major.

However, there are disadvantages to being single.

One particular disadvantage is that single students miss the sense of companionship and stability that comes along with having a boyfriend or girlfriend.

“Being with somebody is always nice because you feel like, ‘Oh, at least someone thinks I’m cute,’” said Katrina Kumm, second-year Electrical and Computer Engineering major.

She also said that being in a relationship can give a person much more confidence due to the stability romantic relationships generally provide.

Because of this particular characteristic in relationships, when students break up, they tend to find themselves lonely and at a loss for a sense of autonomy.

“I love caring for somebody, but it’s nice to be out on your own and be able to do whatever you want without having consequences,” Kumm said.

After a break-up, the sense of self-reliance that follows can come as a bit of a shock, especially when the common schedule for people in relationships does not include taking time out for individual needs.

“You can discover a lot about yourself outside of relationships, too. You can look back and say, ‘Oh, I should have done this or that’ and that’s something that makes me happy,” Kumm said.
Physical from page 11

that you need to have sex to ensure sexual compatibility between you and your partner.

“I think saying that is the biggest copout there is.”

The effect that physical relations can have on a relationship can also vary because of differences between the two partners levels of experience.

“You have to be on the same page,” said Ryan Stroopiche-Fisher, a fourth-year Mechanical Engineering major.

“You have to talk about it and you can’t pressure or the relationship won’t work.”

“Most guys just beat around the bush... you have to come out and talk about it,” said his girlfriend Shalumite Wan, a fourth-year Polymer, Textile and Fiber Engineering major.

Discussion is always healthy for a relationship, but if the relationship is floundering then it may not be enough. Some people use sex in an attempt to bring passion to an otherwise lacking relationship—a copout, according to Sawyer, is misguided.

“It makes me sad that those people crave closeness and intimacy with others and try to fill it with sex because they are robbing themselves of the better experience they could have been given.”

“Just because we don’t have sex doesn’t mean that we don’t talk about sex,” Fosse said.

“A spiritual connection is the foundation of a relationship.”

I think you have to talk about it,” said Sawyer, “just don’t do it.”

Humbert felt that sex changes the whole dynamic of a relationship and that openness is important because “it’s so much harder to go back once you have crossed that line.”

“If even you want to go back it is difficult because you have created expectations,” she said.

The choice can be much harder when neither of the partners has any experience.

“When both people come into the relationship as virgins, then it makes the relationship a lot stronger than when only one of them is a virgin,” Curry said.

“You have a stronger bond for having been there together.”

“It just seems to me that I think [sex] will be better after marriage,” said Mandolky Johnson, a chemistry major.

He based his views “mostly on instinct” but that the way that he was brought up influenced it, Johnson said.

“I date a woman who is like me and plans to wait until marriage,” he said.

Shalumite and Stroopiche-Fisher agreed that couples should remain virgins until marriage, but according to them that does not mean marriage should be rushed into, either.

“Everyone is getting married. What is up with that?” said Shalumite.

They feel that the point of waiting until marriage for sex is lost if the process of getting into a marriage itself is rushed.

“Between the lack of women and the work and competitiveness at this school, I am single.”

Kevin Matovu
Fourth-year CompE major

However, sometimes the issue of the ratio is solved in how students choose to look at it.

“The ratio is just not in a guy’s favor. [But] it’s really about whom you know and who you decide to build relationships with. So I guess you can’t always blame the ratio,” said Kevin Matovu, a fourth-year Computer Engineering major.

“Being single, you have a lot of room for improvements and you can make improvements,” Kumm said.
Couples from page 11

Especially when it comes to
thinking about marriage, family con-
sent can play a paramount role. “For my
mom, as long as [my boyfriend] is responsible and I am
responsible and smart then she is
cool with it,” Su said.

“The communication barrier
between my boyfriend and my
parents is definitely a concern for
them,” she said.

“My parents speak Chinese, and
their English is not very good and
so it’s difficult to for them to com-
unicate with him.”

In spite of all the communication
barriers and cultural misunderstand-
ings, there is a lot that can be learned
from opening up to someone else
from a different culture.

“It helps to keep an open mind.
Being adaptive and ready for change
will help you experience, appreciate
and educate yourself about different
situations,” Chakraborthy said.

Hazing seminar educates Greeks, others

By Dlorah Jenkins
Contributing Writer

Hazing on college campuses was
the subject of a recent aware-
ness seminar titled “Come Out of
the Haze.” It was sponsored by Alpha Xi Delta (AXD) and Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) on Oct. 10.

While hazing is not a big issue at
Tech, the seminar was necessary “to
heighten awareness of hazing,” said
Glynis Conlin, member of AXD and
coordinator of the event.

Although the seminar was geared
primarily towards sorority and fra-
ternity members, members of other
organized groups on campus such as
the band, FASET and Ramblin’ Rock
Club, were encouraged to attend in
order to, “make all organizations
aware of hazing,” she said.

Mari Callais was chosen to be
the guest speaker at the seminar.
She holds a Ph.D. in Educational
Leadership and Research from
Louisiana State University and is
also the National President of Theta
Phi Alpha.

The seminar began with an
acoustic medley performance, which
served as an icebreaker and set the
stage for the crowd participation
and enthusiasm that supplemented
her lecture.

The seminar “would not talk
about hazing” specifically, Callais
said and instead would “talk more
about how it should be.”

Volunteers were asked to come
to the stage and hold up Greek
organization banners.

Callais listed some behaviors and
asked the volunteers to drop one of
their organization banners.

When she asked if they had ever
done any of these things.

Some of the behaviors included:
missing a chapter event and skip-
ing class.

The banner fell once again
when she asked if they had ever
spoken negatively of a fraternity
brother or sister, the banner fell to the ground.

The banner fell once again
with questions such as, “Have you
ever talked negatively of another
group?” and “Have you ever drunk
underage?”

The volunteers were asked how
they felt about it and one participant
said that it was “embarrassing.”

Mari Callais speaks at a hazing
awareness seminar sponsored by
Tau Kappa Epsilon and Alpha Xi Delta on Oct. 10 in the Van Leer

The fallen banner “reflects how
our culture represents how we,
fraternity and sorority,” Callais
said.

Answers included making friends,
partying, networking, fake IDs,
brotherhood and leadership op-
portunities.

However, Callais pointed out that
organizational rituals and values
should be one of the top reasons why
a person chooses to join.

“All Greek organizations
have rituals based on honor and
sisterhood or brotherhood,” said
Mary Frances McKenna, a member
of AXD.

“I think people will re-evaluate
their actions after listening to Dr.
Callais...All Greek organizations
have rituals based on honor and
sisterhood or brotherhood,” said
Mary Frances McKenna, a member
of AXD.

“If everyone in the Greek com-
unity takes their own rituals as seri-
ously as they can, they will definitely
be able to make good decisions and
practice good behavior,” she said.

PowerPlan

will be conducting on-campus interviews at the
Bill Moore Student Success Center on

Tuesday - November 8
Thursday - November 10
Friday - November 11

Information on PowerPlan Consultants can be found at
www.monstertrak.com or www.powerplan.com

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CLIPS AND QUIPS: Must See Comedy! This half-hour comedy entertainment program takes a hilarious stab at Hollywood, as well as interviews the hottest stars about their upcoming projects. Tuesday & Thursday 9:30pm

1940’s HOUSE: Must See TV on GTCN in October. Ever wonder what it was like to live in the 40’s? Find out as a 21st Century family turns back the clock to live in 1940’s World War II England. See what life was like then and how it compares to now! Tuesday and Thursday 3:00pm

OCTOBER MOVIES: True-life controversial high school basketball coach Ken Carter (played by Samuel L. Jackson) benched his entire undefeated team because of poor academic performance. What happened next?

GTCN Cinema @ 7 movie: Coach Carter

Coach Carter plays every night at 7PM (Friday 10/7-Thursday 10/13). Watch other GTCN movies this month: Miss Congeniality 2, Alexander, and The Longest Yard.

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To complete this survey, go to: www.gtcn.gatech.edu

GTCN is your on-campus cable network, so be sure to complete this survey. Your answers could directly effect GTCN programming in the future.

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